



CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Council Meeting

Daniel R. Wall, President, Ward 6
Kristen E. Haroian, Vice-President, Ward 2
Emilia Vaziri, City-Wide
Richard D. Campopiano, City-Wide
Christopher E. Buonanno, City-Wide

Bridget R. Graziano, Ward 1
Andy M. Andujar, Ward 3
Frank J. Ritz, Jr., Ward 4
Michael A. Traficante, Ward 5

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held in the **Cranston City Council Chambers, Cranston City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, RI 02910** for the purpose of considering the following items listed on the agenda. Remote participation was offered. from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:

YouTube Livestream

The meeting was live streamed on YouTube. Click the link below to view the meeting:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtE9vwA1B1PQHuftrNPcZjg>.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 P.M. by Council President Wall. Council President Wall announced that City Clerk T. Nelson has joined the meeting remotely to take minutes. He thanked Director of Communications N. Renzulli for filling in to call the rolls this evening.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Director Renzulli. Stated as present: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilman Andujar, Councilman Ritz, Councilman Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilman Campopiano, Councilman Buonanno, Council Vice President Haroian, and Council President Wall. Also present: David DiMaio, Budget Analyst/Internal Auditor; Michael Igoe, City Controller; Robert Strom, Finance Director; Michael Marcello, City Council Legal Counsel; Christopher Rawson, Deputy Solicitor; Nicole Renzulli, Director of Communications; and Tracy Nelson, City Clerk (remotely via Zoom)

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – DOCKETED ITEMS

Steve Frias, 107 Garden Hills Dr., thanked the Administration and the Council for presenting a revised 4% budget. It is necessary to reduce non-essential services. The Senior Center is not essential. Many cities and towns don't have one. The schools have been level funded, yet they have not filed for the Caruolo Act because none of the cuts are mandated by state or federal law. When Mayor Hopkins started there were 197 jobs in general government, not including public safety or the library. Last year, the staff count was 178. These budgets call for 157 or 139. That's significant. Mayor Traficante in 1996 reduced staff by 20. In 2009-2010, Mayor Fung reduced it by 38. He thanked the Council for eliminating the Economic Development Dept. The taxpayers are not getting bang for their buck. The Director can apply for civil service or other open positions. A new position should not be created for him. Under the new Speaker of the House, the schools may be getting more money. The Senior Center started with 11 staff positions. That has ballooned. The Adult Day Care Center is almost self-funded. He wishes the Fire Dept. had done more. There needs to be more checks and balances. There should be more proactive people on the Audit Committee.

With no objections heard, the Council President took the agenda out of order. He turned the floor over to Councilman Andujar.

VII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

*Report from the Chair, Councilman Andujar, on the **SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held May 14, 2026: (votes may be taken)*

RESOLUTION In Support of the Rhode Island General Assembly Legislation Authorizing the City of Cranston a One-Year Levy Cap Exemption for Fiscal Year 2027 Not to Exceed Five and One-Half Percent (5.5%) Under R.I.G.L. Sec. 44-5-2; Sponsored by Council President Wall; considered by the Finance Committee May 14, 2026 (*vote may be taken*) [\[click to view\]](#)

Chairman Andujar reported the Finance Committee met on May 14, 2026 and took a majority vote to approve the Resolution. He urges Council to pass the Resolution.

Council President Wall noted the agenda reads “Not to Exceed Five and One-Half Percent (5.5%)”. Council voted last night to amend the resolution to read “Not to Exceed Four and Ninety-nine hundredths (4.99%)”. There is a scrivener error on line 34 of the amended resolution. The amount not to exceed needs to be corrected to 4.99%.

MOTION made by Councilman Andujar, SECONDED by Council Vice-President Haroian to approve the Amended Resolution, with the noted correction to line 34 to reflect 4.99%.

Discussion:

Councilman Buonanno noted the increase will not necessarily be 4.99%. That is the backstop. Everything is still on the table.

Councilman Ritz had a hard time passing 4.99%. It is a last resort to fix the problem. For weeks he has listened to residents and reviewed the impact of cuts. He hoped to receive a budget with a 5% reduction in operating expenses. He would be more comfortable with a 4% max increase. Even 4.5% provides key services while still respecting the taxpayers. He believes money can be found to restore the Senior Center and provide additional support to the schools. Realistically, the Senior Center may need to operate leaner. The schools will still be doing more with less. He would like a breakdown from the Senior Center of what a 10% reduction in operations would look like, while preserving core functions. The residents deserve to see the analysis. He would like to set up a one-on-one tour of the Senior Center over the next week. During the tour he would like to meet with each division to understand their functions, and what services are truly essential. His MBA is in lean operations. He manages budgets and operational efficiencies daily in his professional life. He offered to collaborate with any department. He thinks it would help the body if the school administration provided a tiered scenario of what an additional \$1 million, \$1.5 million, or \$2 million would look like. He understands there is already a plan in place for level funding. He would like a barebones breakdown from the CCAP Administration of how funds are used and the direct impact on residents. He would like to meet with their administration. We now have additional time with the delay to June 1. That time should be used productively. He and his colleagues will continue to identify efficiencies and cuts to balance the budget while restoring items without putting it on the backs of the taxpayers. To recap, he is more comfortable with a 4-4.5% increase or less; he wants to restore the Senior Center, but likely in a leaner form; he would like to provide additional funding to the schools, but with a clear breakdown of where that money will be used; he wants transparency around CCAP funding and impact; and he wants direct meetings and tours to better understand operational realities before making final decisions. Every department needs to have the mindset that they need to contribute something as Council works toward a balanced and responsible budget. He suggested the Administration operate on a “cash diet”.

Councilman Traficante agrees with Council President Wall and Councilman Andujar on the limitation. It would be unfair to allow this budget to be balanced on the backs of school children and seniors. Every department has a responsibility to the citizens of Cranston to participate and assist.

Council President Wall stated Council cannot go beyond a 4.65% tax increase tonight. If Council passes the resolution and the General Assembly approves, when we come back on June 1, we could go up to 4.99%, if we need additional appropriations. He called for a vote.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

Before taking amendments, Council President Wall called for a brief recess at 6:45 P.M. The meeting reconvened at 6:55 P.M.

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE REVISED FY 2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

CONSIDERATION of Amendments to the **Revised FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget**, including, but not limited to: all Expenditures and Revenues; and any and all departments and line items thereof
(votes may be taken) [\[FY26-27 Budget\]](#)

Councilman Ritz presented the following block of amendments:

- **Revenue Group 1107, Item 42151, Municipal Court, Building Code Fines, currently at \$100, increase revenue by \$9,900 for a new total of \$10,000**
- **Revenue Group 1203, Item 43300, Animal Control, Animal Shelter Impound Fees, currently at \$1,500, increase revenue by \$1,500 for a new total of \$3,000**
- **Revenue Group 1302, Item 44200, Division of Highway Maintenance, Public Works Highway Misc., currently at \$120,000, increase by \$30,000 for a new total of \$150,000**
- **Expense Group 1500, Item 56008, Public Libraries, Operation of Libraries, currently at \$260,721, reduce the expense to \$232,637**
- **Expense Group 1500, Item 56002, Books & Care, increase from \$111,916 to \$140,000. This is a reclassification of \$28,084**

MOTION made by Councilman Ritz, SECONDED by Councilman Andujar to approve the block of amendments presented by Councilman Ritz.

Discussion:

Auditor DiMaio clarified that the library amendments were housekeeping adjustments made at the request of Library Director Ed Garcia to move expenses from one line item to another. The net effect of tonight's amendments is \$41,5000, to be added to last night's amendments, to be reallocated as Council sees fit to balance the budget.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilman Buonanno will present the next block of amendments to be made to the Police Dept. Last night he presented an amendment that passed to reduce police vehicles by \$200,000. Today, he contacted the Police Chief because he imagined there was displeasure with the amendment. A couple things came out in their conversation. One is that the Police Dept. came to the administration with \$1.7 million in savings. He hopes the administration will act on that before the June 1 meeting. Having heard that information, he reconsidered the police cars. The Chief was adamant the vehicles are essential tools such as ballistic equipment, bullets, ammunition and tasers, to do their jobs. New cars also improve morale. For this reason, he and the Chief came up with a plan he hopes the Council will approve, to put the money back in the police vehicles line item and to increase some fees that will generate revenue that will result in a net zero from last evening.

Councilman Buonanno presented the following block of amendments:

- **Expense Group 1202, Item 53210, Replacement Vehicles – Marked, reinstating the \$200,000, bringing it back up to \$400,000**
- **Revenue Group 1202, Item 43202, Police Detail Cars, currently at \$500,000, increase by \$125,000 to a new total of \$625,000**
- **Revenue Group 1202, Item 43204, Admin Fee-Outside Details, increase from \$150,000 to \$225,000 (an increase of \$75,000)**

Councilman Buonanno explained the increased revenues. In conversation, Chief Winquist mentioned Cranston's detail car rate is among the lowest in the state. Increasing the hourly rate from \$20 to \$25 puts us in the middle versus the low end. Based on 25,000 hours of usage, the increased rate would generate an additional \$125,000 in revenue. Similarly, increasing the Administrative Fee for Outside Details from \$5 to \$8 per hour would generate an additional \$75,000 in revenue. These figures assume no increase in usage from last year. The brunt of difficult decisions has landed on Council. To be frank, the fact Council did not know that \$1.7 million had been offered is problematic. Whether that amount is accurate or not, Council should have known about it. He hopes there's consideration for that \$1.7 million for June 1, in addition to the \$1.2 million from the Fire Department to further ease the burden on the taxpayers and take care of our young and old.

MOTION made by Councilman Buonanno, SECONDED by Councilman Campopiano to approve the block of amendments presented by Councilman Buonanno.

Discussion:

Councilman Campopiano had a conversation with Major Patalano. The police department originally asked for \$650,000 for replacement vehicles. They conceded \$400,000. The cars are revenue generators. He fully supports the return of the \$200,000.

Council Vice President Haroian asked if she heard right that the Police Dept. offered over \$1 million? Council President Wall interjected. What else was offered cannot be discussed. It is not on the agenda. That would violate the Open Meetings Act. Discussion is restricted to the block of amendments.

Councilman Andujar thanked Councilman Buonanno on behalf of the residents of Ward 3 for restoring the police vehicles amount. He asked Councilman Buonanno to reach back out to the Chief to discuss line item 44500 - VIN verification, because as Cranston grows, it should generate more revenue.

Councilman Ritz plans to dig in a bit more and bring back other suggestions. He is open to suggestions from the departments, as their experts. He wants to make sure we are basing the increased revenue on historical transaction volume and the increased rate. Councilman Buonanno confirmed.

Councilman Traficante referred to Councilman Buonanno's comment that this will make the police feel better and morale will be better. No one in the city should feel better about anything while we are in this serious situation. He does not care if the Chief is going to feel better if they do this. They are doing it for the right reasons. He's glad the Chief came back and gave additional monies to offset the \$200,000. If not, he wouldn't vote for it.

Director Moretti stated the administration cannot support the increased revenues at this point. They need to hear it directly from the Chief. He's not aware of any deals the Chief has made behind closed doors. He wants to be sure the information is verified. It's terrific if the Chief has some adjustments that are favorable to the budget. The Chief is a straightforward guy. It is out of character for him not to advise the administration of a deal he made with the Councilman. Behind closed doors does not seem the right way of doing this. It should go through the proper channels. He does not advise restoring or adding any revenues until they have been vetted by the Finance Director and the administration. He urges Council not to pass the amendments at this time. They have another bite at the apple. There's ample time to have discussion with the Colonel.

Council President Wall contradicted Director Moretti, respectfully. If, by June 1, the administration discovers the Councilman was misled in any way, they are welcome to bring it up at that time. He urged passage.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

Council President Wall asked Auditor DiMaio to present the next amendment.

Auditor DiMaio and Finance Director Strom reviewed items to see where they could find additional expenditure cuts or additional revenue. The Fire Rescue 3rd party charges could go up 16%. He presented the following amendment:

- **Revenue Group 0000, Line 41522 – 3rd Party Rescue, increase the current \$3.5 million to \$3.6 million, an increase of \$100,000**

MOTION made by Council Vice President Haroian, SECONDED by Councilwoman Graziano to approve the amendment presented by Auditor DiMaio.

Discussion:

Councilman Buonanno would not mislead anyone. He knows his colleagues don't believe he would. The charter states a Council member cannot direct any department head. He

did not. He asked questions and received answers. Too bad if that's not good for the administration.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

Auditor DiMaio reported there is currently \$2,041,789 after amendments made last night and tonight for Council to allocate as they see fit. That is the net effect of increased revenues and reduced expenditures.

Council President Wall asked Legal Counsel if it was appropriate at this time to allocate the sum. Atty. Marcello asked to confirm the budget revenues and expenditures balance. Auditor DiMaio confirmed. Once Council allocates the \$2,041,789 the budget will balance. Atty. Marcello advised Council to allocate the funds now, subject changes on June 1. Council President Wall recommended splitting the allocation between the school department and the Senior Center. He took comment while Auditor DiMaio calculated the figures.

Councilman Andujar asked where the proceeds from the sale of Chester Barrows will go. It is not included in the \$2 million in allocations. Will the funds go here or to capital? Director Strom's understanding is that there is an agreement between the school department and the Administration that, at the time of the sale, \$750,000 will be directed to the school for capital expenditures. The balance will go to the city to be allocated to the reserve/"rainy day fund". It is not a maintenance of effort item. It is one time. Councilman Andujar asked if the agreement is in writing or if it still being worked on. Council President Wall asked if the document exists. Director Moretti indicated there is an email which has been sent to Solicitor Millea to reduce to writing.

Atty. Marcello asked if the property is owned by the city or the school. There should be a resolution. If they have an agreement, it is subject to ratification by the Council. Director Moretti explained there was an email exchange between the Superintendent and others. Council President Wall expects Council to see a resolution.

Councilman Traficante understands what Director Moretti said, but there's a second school, Waterman. Is that money going to the rainy-day fund? Director Moretti stated, yes. That is the intention. Director Renzulli pointed out that the email ties both of them together. She doesn't think the \$750,000 is necessarily tied just to Barrows. She believes it is upon selling both. Director Moretti was in the room when the verbal agreement was made between the Mayor and the Superintendent regarding the proceeds of the sale from Barrows, of which \$750,000 would be directed to their capital fund on a one-time basis for improvements. That's exactly why these things need to be reduced to writing. Director Strom was there also. It was agreed verbally, but then it was sent by email by the Superintendent. Council President Wall has the broad stroke substance. When Council receives it to ratify, he's sure they will get a recommendation on all the details from Solicitor Millea.

Director Strom asked how the Council is going to split the allocation between the Senior Center's divisions? Atty. Marcello recommended it be put in one line item for now, giving the Administration and Council time to reallocate once we get to the June 1 meeting. Council President Wall noted the Administration has control over the Senior Center. They would have some input with the Director. The Director has not been present when Council has met, but I'm sure he'd have input. The Council would be curious to hear anything he has to say.

Councilman Campopiano is confused. Has Chester Barrows been sold or is there an agreement for it to be sold? Council President Wall replied there's a verbal agreement between the school and the Administration that when it is sold, the school department will get \$750,000. They'll come before Council with an agreement and Council will ratify or not ratify. Director Moretti added part of the agreement allowed the Superintendent to retain Arlington, not decommission it, and use it for some of her early learning. The intent is for Arlington to continue but in the form of a consolidated pre-K for the city, under the Superintendent's control. Atty. Marcello wants to make the record clear that the school and administration may have agreements, but these are all city property, so the agreements are subject to ratification by the City Council.

Councilman Campopiano further commented that we do not have a sale price yet. We hope to get \$750,000. The school is still being used currently.

Council Vice President is confused. It is her understanding the school department planned to use Chester Barrows for special education students that were being bussed out of the city. Since the city would like to sell the school, they made a one-time agreement to pay \$750,000. Is that what she just heard? Council President Wall reiterated that right now there is no legitimate agreement until, as stated more than once by Atty. Marcello, it is ratified by the City Council. There's a "gentlemen's agreement". Director Moretti emphasized it has been agreed that the Superintendent is looking for Arlington for her needs and she can relinquish or decommission both Barrows and Waterman schools. At that point, they would go for competitive sale through the proper channels. Upon receiving proceeds, \$750,000 would be earmarked for the schools for their capital funds on a one-time basis. Council Vice President Haroian asked what would happen if it doesn't sell for \$750,000? Director Moretti believes it would be extraordinary if they didn't, but that could be provided for in the agreement. On advice of counsel, Council President Wall announced discussion is getting off the budget process because this money isn't in any of the documents presented tonight. It's a good topic for a future Council meeting, but not this one.

Council President Wall would like to propose that the pot of money found through amendments be split down the middle between the school department and the senior center. Before taking a motion, he will hear comments.

Councilman Campopiano asked if the \$2,041,789 is based on a 4% or 4.67% increase? Council President Wall answered it is based on a 4.67% levy increase.

Councilman Andujar thanked everyone for the money that has been found. The work is not over yet. He agreed with Council President Wall on the split.

Councilman Buonanno will support the Council President's suggestion. He hopes there will be more collaboration and more funds found before June 1.

Councilman Ritz is not in favor of allocating the \$2,041,789 now. He would prefer to wait and see what they get from the fire dept. It's possible they could fund the senior center at 80% and still give \$2 million to the schools. Council President Wall pointed out Council must pass the budget tonight, May 15. Council can make further changes.

Councilwoman Graziano will support the split. She hopes more money can be found by working with the unions before the June 1 meeting. The senior center and school department need more money, and she would like to revisit the CCAP funding after doing more research.

Auditor DiMaio reiterated Council must pass a balanced budget tonight. There has been a lot of speculation about additional funding, additional revenues, additional "give backs". The goal is to find other funding, but there are no guarantees. Council must focus on what we have in hand.

Council Vice President Haroian commented it has been eye opening to find out two different departments have been trying to meet with the administration and make concessions and it hasn't been done. It's very disappointing. Council may need to consider more cuts if jobs are not being done properly. She is happy to provide additional funding for the two departments mentioned. She would also like to look at CCAP. If Council could come up with all of this, it's very sad the Administration couldn't.

Councilman Traficante is pleased, but not happy, because there's still a lot of work to do. With the senior center we are short \$700,000. He's hopeful negotiations will provide that money back to the senior center. He has a question, though. Assuming best case scenario, and everything works out with union negotiations, does that impact the 4.65%? Council President Wall confirmed. Yes, it will reduce expenditures.

Councilwoman Vaziri supports the split, but she doesn't think it is enough. Like Councilwoman Graziano, she would like to give CCAP more. For clarification, can the council still make changes? Council President Wall confirmed; up to and including on June 1.

Councilman Andujar asked, hypothetically speaking, if there are further concessions or revenues, if it is correct General Assembly approval is not needed. Council President Wall confirmed.

Councilman Campopiano asked if any of the Council amendments will create a structural deficit. Finance Director Strom, at this point, would say no. There are no issues with the amendments that have been made. Councilman Campopiano thanked Director Strom. He does not want to find out down the line mistakes were made. Council President Wall is confident in the accuracy of Direct Strom's calculations.

Councilman Buonanno feels a lot more confident now that Director Strom is here. Some cuts may be uncomfortable for departments. He encourages the Finance Dept. and Administration to tell department heads they must stay within budget. There's got to be a system in place to ensure we do not go over the budget that is passed. That's how we've gotten in trouble. If they are in danger of going over, departments must reallocate within their department. It's not a free-for-all. He doesn't know whose responsibility that is. We cannot go over and have another deficit next year. If we do it again next year, there's no excuses anymore.

Councilman Ritz asked when we would go to the General Assembly for approval because we may not need that at this point. Council President Wall replied Council passed a resolution tonight. There was already a resolution when the mayor originally proposed a 7.45% tax increase. He did inquire with Representative Chippendale. We can all ask our representatives in the General Assembly to consider this. We would need to have the authority by June 1. Right now, we only have the authority to go to 4.65% and we only have that authority to go over the 4% cap because the Department of Revenue outlined protocols that allowed us to go over that. Truth is, as stated at the beginning of budget deliberations, Council may never get to that figure, and there's no guarantee the General Assembly passes the legislation.

Councilwoman Graziano feels the department head also needs to be accountable for managing their own budget. She is used to departments submitting a transfer request to balance a line item. She asked if there is a system in place that requires a department to notify the administration and subsequently notify the Council if funds are needed to balance an account. Council President Wall deferred to Finance Director Strom. He knows the Finance Director runs weekly reports. He asked how Council can get them. Director Strom confirmed he runs weekly reports and reviews every line item. He contacts the department head to tell them they are over budget on a line item and need to do a transfer. If it's a purchase order, and they don't have money to do a transfer, unless it's an emergency, they need to liquidate the purchase order. Councilwoman Graziano does not want to put the burden completely on the Finance Director. She believes the department head should have some accountability, where the administration can hold them accountable to bring these items to light, and issues can be reported to the Finance Chair at the next meeting. Director Strom explained the personnel in that department will be in speaking about the line item or purchase they would like to make with the division or department head. At that point, he is usually contacted to discuss whether they will process the request, take it from another line item, or cancel the request. Councilwoman Graziano asked if that is something that can be reported to the Finance Chair each month if they start to come up so Council can keep track. Council gets the financials, but they don't have 40 hours per week to look at them. Director Strom can provide the weekly reports to the Finance Chair at any time requested. It doesn't have to be monthly.

Councilman Traficante would like everyone to keep in mind we can negotiate with our safety services divisions to come up with additional money to give the senior center full funding. The original budget gave the schools \$1.5 million. That was erased with the revision. Hopefully we can return that money to the school department.

Council President Wall, before calling for a motion, will echo what many of his colleagues have said. He is proud of the work they have done as a City Council. The amendments were not a partisan divide. Council members did research on their own time. In a difficult situation, Council members stepped up and found allocations for two departments that serve our most needy people in the city, our young people and our seniors. He is proud to lead this Council. He asked for a motion to divide the revenue from the amendments between the school department and the senior center. Unfortunately, it's not an even number, so he's looking for a motion to give \$1,020,894 to the school department and \$1,020,895 to the senior center.

MOTION made by Councilman Traficante, SECONDED by Councilman Andujar to allocate, from the amendments, the amount of \$1,020,894 to the school department and \$1,020,895 to the senior center.

Discussion:

Director Moretti thinks that with the abbreviated timeline and in deference to time last night, he may have missed one important point, something that needs to be articulated, if it hasn't been understood, or maybe it's been misunderstood, but the administration did meet with all four bargaining units. Police do not have a contract. They are in the process of negotiating. He wants to clarify the statement that was made that the administration did not speak to the unions. The administration included concessions that came forward in this last budget as a result of discussions with all four bargaining agencies. Some things may not be in there that you've heard or stated that might be true or might not be true. Whatever they settled upon, if they're not in there, it was maybe not in the best interest of the citizens or the taxpayers. Any perceived concessions were not necessarily concessions and would have been more costly to the taxpayers and that's why they are not included in the budget. He wants everyone to know they did sit down, immediately at the request of Council, to look for concessions, as asked. He wants to make that clear. Perhaps executive session would be more appropriate to discuss any details.

Council President Wall called for a vote on how the allocation from the amendments will be divided.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

Council President Wall is pleased that motion carried very favorably. Before closing out amendments, this is kind of a segway, because Council will meet at least one more time regarding the budget. As he said last night, having this length of time perhaps gives more time to find certain revenue sources. There are suggestions that he has spoken to the administration about, at times with Director Moretti, that he wants on the record. As a former union leader he will not go beyond anything that's confidential in the negotiations the administration did have.

There are things Council considered a great deal, about fees and increasing them. He knows there are some fees we can increase and some that are regulated by state law. He does not have the capacity to research it on his own. He's going to need assistance, perhaps from the solicitor, to find some of those we can increase. He does not like to raise fees, but we need more revenue. He thinks the school department, the senior center, and other departments would like more revenue. He needs help on that in the next ten days. He knows it's a short timeframe, but if there are any other fees we can increase, he would appreciate that help. He will make a list.

One of the things he spoke to members of the Council and some members of the police department about over the years and everyone who speaks to their constituents hears about, is the distracted driver and speeding problem, especially in the school zones. We've been hesitant to do it, but looking at speed cameras, not only for safety, but it can produce additional revenue. Some of our neighbors in Warwick, Providence, Pawtucket and East Providence are generating revenue. Those who handle the speed cameras in our surrounding communities are telling him we can modestly net, not gross, after they take their fees, between \$1 million and \$2 million. He would like to work with the administration and the police department to address any concerns they may have. It is revenue we are not tapping into, but it may be necessary.

He has contacted Solicitor Millea and the Tax Assessor. Many communities throughout the state have what state law says is a factor between residential and commercial tax levies. State law says 1 to 1.5 ratio. Many municipalities have legislation to go beyond that and have a more tiered system. For people who have many rentals, or larger rentals, there's a higher tier. Providence has four tiers. Their residential is a factor of 1. Small rental properties are a factor of 1.75. They have their larger rental properties and commercial properties at 2. He can't tell what the revenue will be, but it's going to generate revenue if we can get legislation. Our residential taxpayers will not see those increases. People using more of the city services will.

He did speak to Director Strom, and he knows it's a tight timeframe, but many of our healthcare concerns are in our collective bargaining units. He, Councilman Buonanno, and Councilwoman Vaziri spoke to a retired Cranstonian who is an expert in this field. She knows there's savings the city could see if they avail themselves of someone with that skill as we go into negotiations. We may not see the benefit this year but going forward we need to look into it. Director Strom indicated he is in the process of going out to bid for a healthcare consultant. He suggested the individual contact him if they want a shot. Council President Wall stated she is not doing it for profit. He will give Director Strom her name.

The last thing he will get in to, without going into substance, is the concern that Council did not really get any details on meetings taking place or how they were going. Council usually gets updates on negotiations. This is similar. He and members of the public didn't think anything happened. He knows, as a former union officer, if there are concessions, the members need to vote. He didn't hear of anyone taking a vote on concessions. If he read correctly, everything in the contract must be voted on by the members. Did any union vote to give concessions? He does not want the substance. He agrees that should be in executive session.

Director Moretti will go through each of the unions. He asked the Solicitor to stop him if necessary. The Teamsters took a vote and did not wish to give any concessions. Council President Wall heard on the radio that the mayor said he did get concessions. Were there non-contractual concessions that he got? Director Moretti answered no. He does not know what the mayor said on the radio. He can only speak to what he knows. Council President Wall thinks he read in the paper and heard on the radio that every union, except the fire department, gave concessions.

Director Moretti can only answer based on what he knows, to the best of his knowledge. He mentioned there were people affected in the Teamsters based on voluntary terminations. There were a number of people in that bargaining unit that took the package. They contributed, if you'd like to say that, and it is reflected in the budget. But beyond that opportunity for employees, there weren't any layoffs. Council President Wall stated the administration met with them, not for contractual matters, but for staffing reductions, and bonuses if you will. Director Moretti confirmed. They then went to their body and voted down any give backs. Council President Wall asked about other collective bargaining units.

Director Moretti stated the Laborers were very affected by the buyouts. They didn't want to be the only ones, but the administration could go back to them if everyone participated. That didn't happen. There is no police contract in place, so there's no benchmark. Those negotiations are going on. Council President Wall does not want Director Moretti to say anything that would jeopardize the negotiations. Council President Wall would not expect that union to have concessions because they are negotiating their contract.

The fire department proposed deferments. There were no overall, outright concessions. They offered to defer anything in year one to later years. For example, raises in year one, and a couple of holidays, to the end, and they wished to extend their contract, but frankly to agree to near 6% increases over the next two or three years didn't seem to be in the best interest of the taxpayers. That's why there's no reflected savings of \$1.2 million or \$900,000 in the budget. The mayor would not present an increase of 2.9% every six months. That would only cause another problem in future years. They would rather address the problems this year and put it behind them than face some tough challenges in future years. Respectfully, they came forward in good faith. It was negotiated. The administration asked if they could shave those numbers and they said no, the membership would not accept it.

Council President Wall does not want substance, but he will say this, and he does not mean to be disrespectful, but it sounds like there was never a deal made between the administration and any of the collective bargaining units that was contractual. It was voted down by one collective bargaining unit. The other collective bargaining units never got to a deal on the table to take a vote. Without saying substance, he would urge the administration to keep grinding. He and Councilman Traficante sat on many negotiating committees. Saying no way was not an option. Not to be disrespectful, but the taxpayers deserve that. Director Moretti indicated time ran out. It wasn't a long period of time going back and revising the budget. There's a lot of work involved. Council President Wall noted they have ten more days. He suggested the administration give it a go. He would appreciate it. He knows it's a lot of work, but Council did a lot of work in a short amount of time.

Councilman Traficante wants to be sure everyone understands. There were no concessions from the Laborers or the Teamsters. The police are in contract negotiations, so he has to assume there's money in the budget for the negotiations. Director Moretti confirmed. Director Wall pointed out the amount cannot be disclosed. Councilman Traficante is not going to ask that question. He asked, since we are in a crisis, in terms of finance, if the administration is talking to them about getting zero in the first year. Atty. Marcello interjected and advised Councilman Traficante he cannot ask that question in open session. Council can get a briefing in closed session. Council President Wall thinks it may be a good idea to get an update in an executive session. Director Moretti believes he can say, in generic terms, the administration has

clearly expressed the financial condition of the city and the circumstances. They've expressed their understanding and appreciation of the situation. Director Moretti reiterated all four units came forward in good faith.

Councilwoman Haroian knows from her time on the School Committee that during negotiations there was a member of the School Committee at the meetings. Would it be possible for a member of City Council to be in negotiations? Atty. Marcello answered. Under the charter, the mayor has the sole discretion to negotiate collective bargaining agreements. Council has an obligation to ratify them. He will say, in other cities and towns he has worked for, to make things smoother at ratification time, they have allowed Council members in the negotiations either as observers or to get feedback, but that is totally up to the mayor. It is his choice, not Council's.

Councilwoman Graziano asked if it is possible, if the mayor agrees, to have Auditor DiMaio there. Atty. Marcello advised it is the same principle. Auditor DiMaio works for the City Council. There's nothing that stops the mayor or the administration, if they want, to keep the Council informed or to get a sense of where they may be going. Council has to ratify the contract so he assumes at some point the administration would like to know what the Council is willing to accept in the new contract. Given the crisis we're in, that certainly would be his recommendation, but again, the ultimate decision is up to the mayor. Director Moretti noted that has been past practice. Councilwoman asked if that would apply to any concessions that are being discussed now. Council President Wall stated Council has not requested anything yet, but if Council is meeting and they want to go to executive session, he's sure the administration would give details then. Director Moretti agreed. Council President Wall stated it has been past practice, when negotiating contracts, to get updates in executive session.

Councilman Rtiz agrees with asking for updates in executive session. One other idea, love it or hate it, from the big, beautiful bill, is a change to how you tax overtime. He's hoping if we have negotiations we could bring that in too. Director Moretti indicated that has been brought up and the city will do what they can to cooperate in order to have employees take advantage of that tax law.

Councilman Buonanno asked who sits at the table to negotiate contracts. Director Moretti replied typically it's the Personnel Director, at times the Finance Director, the Director of Administration, and at times the mayor. A lot depends on the ebb and flow of negotiations. It's an art as much as it is a science. Councilman Buonanno indicated there are people who do it professionally on behalf of cities and towns. Have we ever contracted any of them to act on our behalf. Director Moretti believes the administration knows its limitations. When the city needs to call in people who are better equipped, more skilled in those areas, they are called upon from time to time. Councilman Buonanno is not trying to insult anyone, but those people do this for a living. It may be wise to call them in.

Councilman Buonanno feels that a 1 for 1 deferment or a 1 for a 1.1 or 1.2 is a concession in his eyes. In terms of this contract, we've got three years to creep up instead of a big jump in a year. In his opinion, certain deferments, especially if it's as close to 1 to 1 as possible, would be viewed as concessions.

Councilman Andujar's issue is with communication. This whole situation, if Council had known about it sooner than later, we probably wouldn't be in the situation we are in. Although communication is getting better, it can still get better. Council members are finding out about extra money through social media or the radio. It shouldn't be that way. He hopes the administration can improve communication. Director Moretti deferred to Director Strom. He believes they put everything forward they could. If there is anything the administration was hiding, Director Strom should comment on that. Councilman Andujar advised Director Strom that before he arrived, Council got everything thrown at them in March. The reports Council was getting did not in any way predict the situation we're in now. He thanked Director Strom for coming. We have gone from quarterly to monthly reports. The communication is getting better, but he was in a meeting talking about this budget, hearing Dan York, where the mayor said he found extra money. Council did not get that phone call. It was disrespectful to Council to hear it on the radio. Before Director Strom arrived, Council did not get reports on time and the numbers were not the right numbers. He just wants the administration to improve communication so Council does not need to hear things on social media or the radio. They should hear it directly from the horse's mouth.

Council President Wall believes Councilman Andujar is referring to something that happened this week when we found out through the Department of Revenue that we could go to 4.65%. That morning, a media outlet had already sent him a question about it before he even knew about it. He learned about it three hours later when he called the Communications Director. There was a question about the revenue they found to save the senior center. Council should have been notified because the truth is that was misinformation. There was no money found. We are taking that money from the taxpayers. The budget was 4%. We have the ability to allocate funds as a Council, but there was no money found. The taxpayers need to find it. Director Strom explained he contacted the Dept. of Revenue last Friday. He didn't hear back until Monday of this week. At that time, they went back and forth with Steve Coleman at the Dept. of Revenue. Council President Wall interrupted. He is not saying Director Strom did anything wrong. He's saying it was messaged and the information was found out by many of the Council and members of the public, who texted him, that the mayor found some money. They didn't get this just out of their brains. They and several media outlets received this before the Council members had it. That's what he believes, if he's paraphrasing correctly. It's not an insult, but you've got to do a better job to respect the Council, especially in these trying times, because that was not the case. No money was found. Tonight Council is allocating those funds. They've been getting emails, phone calls, and texts with questions. Nobody found anything. We had to allocate it this evening. Truth is, it was told to the public in a manner that was not accurate and before the Council had that knowledge. Going forward, Council would appreciate it, if something does happen, they be given a heads up.

Director Strom had no communication with the media at all so he cannot comment on that. He and Dave DiMaio recently speak almost daily. They communicate constantly. He assumed Auditor DiMaio had conversations with the Council President and other members of Council. Council President Wall knows it was not Director Strom because at that time, he did not have the information. It was said on Dan York that "I found the money. It's solved by the mayor". We don't need to document it. It happened. There was no extra money. It's the way it was stated. People get enthusiastic. Perhaps the mayor was overzealous in the moment, and he spoke in a manner that made it seem like he found money. He didn't find any money. We found the ability to tax the people more. He does not want to grind down on it. It's not a point that can be argued. The facts are the facts and that's all there is. He does not need an answer. He's done with it.

Director Renzulli stated that on that day the mayor had five interviews scheduled and while all this information was being transmitted between people, she was not authorized to make nine phone calls. She was trying to get to the mayor. She can only do one thing at a time. She also cannot control another person and how they express their communication. She can only control how she would write it. She just wanted to address that, as the communications person. When you're in an atmosphere where people are going from room to room, she's on the phone with the Council President, he can hear her talking to people from other departments trying to figure out what's happening, It was very chaotic trying to get something done very quickly. She apologizes if anyone is offended by that, but only so many things are within her control. Council President Wall told Director Renzulli she did not need to apologize. She gave him the accurate information about the Dept. of Revenue giving us the ability to go to 4.65%. By way of explanation, perhaps the mayor was tired or overzealous, and he misspoke, but Council needed to hear it at that point.

Councilman Ritz thinks the Communications Director is doing a fantastic job, but you can't communicate enough. If you communicate to one Council member, they have a great relationship where they spread that out, and the transparency piece too. We are in politics. We get beat up every day. We could cure cancer and tomorrow's post would say look at all these doctors out of work. We can't win, so the more information we have, the better.

V. BUDGET ADOPTION

ADOPTION of REVISED Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027; As Amended by the City Council May 14, 2026: *(votes may be taken)*

Council President noted a scrivener error. The adoptions should read as amended May 14 and 15, 2026. Adoption would be subject to and contingent to the requirements of the Property Tax and Fiscal Disclosure Act. Atty. Marcello read the law. As the Council President stated, adoption is subject to and contingent of meeting the requirements of the advertising and posting requirements and the public hearing requirements of the Property Tax and Fiscal

Disclosure Act as set forth in RI General Law. And again, that's the June 1 hearing Council must have. He added that at least 8 votes to approve are required.

MOTION made by Councilwoman Vaziri, SECONDED by Council Vice President Haroian, and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL Adopting the **Revised** Operating Budget and the **Revised** Salary Schedule for the General Fund, the Sewer Fund, Ice Rink Fund, the Claims Committee (Insurance) Fund and the **Revised** Capital Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027 and adopting the **Revised** Capital Improvement Program for the four succeeding years (vote may be taken) [\[click to view\]](#)

MOTION made by Councilwoman Vaziri, SECONDED by Councilman Andujar to approve the Resolution.

Discussion:

Councilman Wall referred to bonded money. It may or not be released. Just because you have the ability does not mean you necessarily have to release it. If he's not mistaken, and he wants to be sure, it's always protocol, before you release any bonded money, that it be brought before the Council for their consideration. In these times especially, before increasing the debt service, Council wants to make sure, even though we have the ability, that it's absolutely necessary. This Council may not deem everything in that capital budget as necessary at this time. That will be the protocol going forward.

Councilman Campopiano stated Council has heard many people in the gallery talk about a moratorium on capital expenses. Just to clarify, we do not need a moratorium. We have a system of checks and balances where Council will approve anything going forward as far as capital projects. We can still go out to bond for the money, but the money is not spent until it is approved by Council. Council President Wall asked Director Strom to provide clarification for the record. Director Strom had this discussion today with Councilwoman Graziano. When the city goes out to bond, there's a list of the items we want to bond for. That's when they come before Council; to get approval for the particular items we are going to bond for in particular projects. We also go out for just authority. When we do that, it does not mean we have to go to bond. We could hold off for two to three years. It's not because you get the authority that you have to bond for that amount. The other thing, as far as debt service, when we got out and do an actual bond, we try and incorporate it so that it does not affect our debt service and it's over maybe a two-year period and the first year may be just interest only. It may not be principal and interest. We try to schedule it so it's advantageous to the city from a financial standpoint. Council President Wall thanked Director Strom. He liked the simple answer that Council is the checks and balances.

Councilman Buonanno stated there is a lot of confusion by the public that reducing some of the items in the capital budget will decrease the tax levy. He knows that's not the case. He asked Director Strom to explain it. Director Strom stated one is capital and one is the operating budget. It's two different things. The only thing that affects the operating is debt service and we control that debt service as much as we can because we don't bond for everything that's been approved in the capital budget. Some of that gets deferred to next year or even the year after depending on the urgency and need for the capital item. Councilman Buonanno gave the example of the track. Removing \$2 million from the capital budget and making it zero does not give the city an extra \$2 million in the operating budget. That's a very important point for the public to understand. When we eventually pass the capital budget of almost \$22 million, that's not coming out of the tax bills. It's not something we can take and give to the senior center and the schools and CCAP. He would like Director Strom to explain why it doesn't work that way. Director Strom reiterated because one's not related to the other. One's capital and one's operating. The only thing that affects the operating is debt service and debt service is based on what's already been bonded and what we've received in proceeds to do certain projects.

Councilman Ritz stated so when we borrow money for projects we borrow the full amount. So, if we're borrowing \$10 million, we don't take it as we need it where the debt service would fluctuate. Director Strom explained if you don't take the actual proceeds, there's no debit service involved with that particular transaction. Councilman Ritz asked, we don't take any floating variable rates, right; everything's a locked rate? Director Strom said no, we should know in advance. Once they get Council's approval, they get the fiscal advisor involved and go

out and meet with the rating agencies. We have them review and we ask a number of questions then they give us a rating and that rating determines what our interest rate would be.

Councilwoman Graziano has constituents asking questions. They want to know why we are going to expend this money and not give it to the schools. She thinks it's educational to show this money cannot be moved over to the operating budget. One of the items she did want to ask is that some of these line items have asterisks and that says that they will need additional bonding authority. Others do not, which means what? Director Strom replied that with additional bonding authority, we would need to get approval by the voters. It would have to go on the ballot. It would then become an authority that we could bond for. Council would know what was going on the ballot, obviously. Councilwoman Graziano continued. With the other items, there would be a check and balance with the City Council whether or not we were going to draw from the funded money that's already existing because those just require new issuance once money's been received through the bonding authority and we have the actual available cash are projects are being completed, we need to draw to pay the vendor for doing the work, but that would be a last step. The Council would know what that was prior to that.

Councilman Traficante, just prior to the meeting tonight, sat with the Finance Director. He asked him about debt service. He was informed debt service did go up because he had to correct the numbers in the previous year. He asked Director Strom to explain exactly what took place and the correction he had to make. Director Strom stated, if he ran a report just for municipal debt service, just for fiscal year 2026, it would show we are over budget from what was put into the budget. He does not know where those numbers came from, but what was expended is what was required to be paid for our debt service and that was over budget by a considerable amount of money. This year, what he put in the budget, whether it's 4% or 4.65%, it's the same. That's based on the schedule of our debt service, both principal and interest and it also shows on the sewer principal and interest as well, but the main thing in the operating budget is the principal and interest. That's a separate schedule from just the general fund. Councilman Traficante asked what took place in previous years and how Director Strom plans to correct it. Director Strom replied we are correcting it going forward. We can't go back and correct all the expenditures. Councilman Traficante would like to talk about projects. When a department wants to address a particular project, they go before the Board of Contract and Purchase first, correct? Director Strom confirmed. They submit a bid schedule, yes. Councilman Traficante stated it doesn't come before Council. Director Strom said no, but Council has representation at BOCAP. Councilman Traficante believes that's the point the Council President was trying to make; that Council would be informed about the project as it goes through the process. Director Strom can notify Council in advance what they plan on going to bond for and if they give their blessing he would move through the bid process.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION Authorizing the Adoption of the **Revised** Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 and the **Revised** Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2027 through 2031 pursuant to Section 6.12 of the Home Rule Charter of the City of Cranston
(votes may be taken) [\[Resolution\]](#) [\[FY27 Capital Budget\]](#) [\[FY27-31 CIP\]](#)

Council President Wall stated, once again, for the record, that any bond issue should be subject to approval by the City Council.

MOTION made by Councilwoman Vaziri, SECONDED by Councilman Andujar to approve the resolution. MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

REVISED ORDINANCE Making Annual Appropriation for the City of Cranston for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2026 and Ending June 30, 2027
(vote may be taken) [\[click to view\]](#)

MOTION made by Councilwoman Vaziri, SECONDED by Council Vice President Haroian to approve the revised ordinance, as amended. MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

VI. COUNCIL BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

RESOLUTION Authorizing the Assessment of Valuations and Levy of Taxes on Ratable Real Estate and Tangible Personal Property in the City of Cranston; tabled April 29, 2026

(vote may be taken) [\[click to view\]](#)

MOTION made by Councilman Traficante, SECONDED by Councilwoman Vaziri to table this Resolution which was previously tabled on April 29, 2026. MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

ORDINANCE Fixing the Date When Taxes Are Assessed, as of December 31, 2025, Will Be Due and Payable and the Date When Unpaid Taxes Will Carry a Penalty; tabled April 29, 2026
(vote may be taken) [\[click to view\]](#)

MOTION made by Councilman Traficante, SECONDED by Councilwoman Vaziri to table this Ordinance which was previously tabled on April 29, 2026. MOTION PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

VI. ADJOURNMENT (Vote may be taken)

MOTION made by Councilman Traficante, SECONDED by Councilman Andujar to adjourn at 8:52 P.M. All Ayes

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy A. Nelson, City Clerk