

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL

-APRIL 20, 2026-

Regular meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, April 20, 2026 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by the Council President.

II. ROLL CALL:

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall -8.

Absent: Councilman Andujar -1.

Also Present: Nicole Renzulli, Governmental Affairs & Communications Director; Christopher Millea, City Solicitor; John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor; Michael Marcello, City Council Legal Counsel; David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst; Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committee; Ron Ronzio, Stenotypist.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the body.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND CITATIONS

- *Citations congratulating Julia Rego, Grace Petitbon and Lexi Montalban in recognition of their creativity and engagement in civics for designing a new I Voted Stickers selected by the Board of Canvassers for use in the 2026 elections in the City of Cranston, which shall be the first ever I Voted Stickers created by a local student in the history of the State of Rhode Island.*

Director Renzulli presented Citation on behalf of the Mayor.

Council President Wall and Nick Lima presented Council Citations.

- *Citation congratulating Steven Piscopiello of his selection as the 2026 recipient of the John “Jack” Cronin Award by the Rhode Island Recreation and Parks Association. This distinguished honor reflects your exceptional leadership and steadfast dedication to advancing the parks and recreation throughout the City of Cranston.*

Director Renzulli presented Citation on behalf of the Mayor.

Councilman Campopiano presented Council Citation.

- ***Citation Recognizing the Department of Public Works for its Critical Contributions During the 2026 Blizzard***

Director Renzulli and **Councilman Buonanno** presented Citation on behalf of the Mayor.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ***Approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2026 Regular Council Meeting***
- ***Approval of the minutes of the March 30, 2026 Special Council Meeting***
- ***Approval of the minutes of the March 30, 2026 Special Council Meeting***
- ***Approval of the minutes of the April 15, 2026 Special Council Meeting***

On motion by Councilman Traficante, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2026 regular meeting, March 30, 2026 special meeting, March 30, 2026 special meeting and April 15, 2026 special meeting as a block and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC COMMENT – DOCKETED ITEMS

Andy Andujar appeared to speak via Zoom as a citizen and apologized for not being present in person this evening. He congratulated all the awardees today for the Citations and also would like the citizens of Ward 3 know that he was not in support of the Citation for DPW as he knows they were put in harm, but his name appears on the Citation anyways. Also would like the public to know that the Council is working diligently to solve this financial crisis in the City.

VII. RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Proclaiming April 2026 Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.
Sponsored by Mayor Hopkins, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilwoman Vaziri, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

Resolution in Support of Fully Funding State Aid to Libraries to the Full Twenty-Five (25%) Percent. *Sponsored by Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno and Council President Wall.*

Ed Garcia, Director of Libraries, appeared to speak and thanked DPW, Highway and Parks and Recreation for the amazing job they did during the storm cleaning the libraries and getting them back open. He stated that the Governor has level-funded State Aid to Libraries in his FY27 Budget, which means that it is level-funded at a 24.1% rate instead of the prescribed 25% by law. Even though the decrease is \$9,500, any little bit of money helps and if it were fully funded, it would bring another \$23,000 in revenue for the library. He has worked to get bills introduced in both the House and Senate in the General Assembly and asked that the City Council consider passing this Resolution to ask the General Assembly to fully fund the State Aid to Libraries.

Council President Wall stated that he is in full support of this and knows how important our public libraries are to educate our students and how important it is to the public.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilwoman Vaziri, it was voted to adopt the above Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Council Vice-President Haroian, Councilmen Traficante, Ritz, Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano and Vaziri asked to be added as co-sponsors.

Councilman Buonanno stated that we have one of the best, if not the best Library Director in the State and we should all publicly acknowledge Director Garcia and the job that he does for our public libraries. Our libraries are the most used libraries in the State of Rhode Island and that is a tribute to the commitment that we have as a City and the commitment that Director Garcia has. He visits the library with his daughters approximately two times a week. He always has a book with him and reading is one of the most important thing we can do not only for our children but as we become adults to keep our mind sharp.

Councilman Traficante stated that he goes back many years with several Directors of the Cranston Public Libraries and they have not only been superb for the City of Cranston for the children of our City, but most important they have been self-sustaining with very small appropriations from City government. Kudos to them.

Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Resolution and motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

Resolution honoring Rosalba Zanni for her years of service and dedication to the City of Cranston. Sponsored by Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall.

Council President Wall presented Citation.

On motion by Councilman Traficante, seconded by Councilman Campopiano, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

VIII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

A. *Report from the Chair, Councilwoman Vaziri, on the CLAIMS COMMITTEE meeting of April 6, 2026* Claims Paid

No action needed.

B. *Report from the Chair, Council Vice-President Haroian, on the SAFETY SERVICES & LICENSES COMMITTEE meeting held April 6, 2026*

No action needed.

C. *Report from the Chair, Councilman Andujar, on the FINANCE COMMITTEE meeting held April 6, 2026:(Vote may be taken)*

1. *3-26-01 Ordinance ratifying School Committee’s Collective Bargaining Agreement with Rhode Island Laborers District Council 1322, Tradespeople/Mechanic Unit. Introduced Pursuant to Charter Sec. 11.02.1.*

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to adopt the above Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Campopiano stated that he does not know if it is possible to delay this or tap the brakes, but there is a lot of uncertainty in the City right now and he does not know if he can support this without knowing what is going forward. They do a wonderful job and it is nothing against them, but he does not know where we stand. He is asking if it is possible to put this off, if not, he is not going to be able to support it.

Councilman Campopiano motioned to table this Ordinance. No one seconded the motion.

Councilman Traficante stated that he will recuse from voting on this because he is a member of the New England Laborers Union and was also a former member of Local 1322.

Council President Wall stated that when this came before Committee, he did mention when this came up that although they are small raises within this collective bargaining unit, ultimately, these are mechanics and tradespeople who save the School Department money. He was in favor of it. Usually, he is against any increases at this point just because in this expenditure, we actually save because if we had to go out in the open market for the skill set of the members of this collective bargaining unit possess, it would cost us exponentially more. This is why he will support it this evening. He sees Mr. Crudele in the audience and asked if he had any information he would like to share with the Council.

Michael Crudele, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Public Schools, appeared to speak and echoed what Council President Wall stated. The amount that is in the fiscal impact included in the Council's packet does not even come close to what it would cost if we had to contract this work out. They have 23 buildings, 3 plumbers, 2 electricians, 2 carpenters and 2 HVAC people that handle all 23 buildings. It is a huge task and they do it flawlessly on numerous occasions. They have also been asked by the City to work with Parks and Recreation. They have put up safety lighting at a few of the facilities. They also have four mechanics in this group, who are working constantly on our fleet of buses, which is approximately 85 buses handled by four mechanics. If they were to go out and contract this work it would not even come close to what you see in the fiscal impact.

Councilman Campopiano stated that he is not faulting them, he is not saying they do not do a good job, they do a wonderful job, but at this present time, he would just feel more comfortable if it was just delayed. We have to face our constituents, it would just be easier to defend if it was just after we knew what was going on and everything was settled and revisited and he is sure it would be no problem whatsoever. Mr. Crudele stated that he is a taxpayer himself and totally understands, but he just fears that the deficit we are looking at would be that much greater if they contracted outside and they lost these men.

Councilman Ritz stated that he agrees that the timing on this is tough, but having been a former School Committee Member, he knows this is a small group and a skilled group so to lose them without this small increase, he thinks is a tougher loss to the City. He agrees that it saves us more money than having to not only send this work out but then retrain people into this, is the balance here. Mr. Crudele stated that there are thirteen members in this unit and financial impact for 2026-2027 was \$112,863.

Council Vice-President Haroian stated that she thinks we are all a little uneasy with this like Councilman Campopiano said, but having been on the School Committee, realizing that this is thirteen people, these men are specially trained and we are dealing with School buses. We are in financial trouble is an understatement, but she will be supporting this this evening.

Councilman Campopiano stated that he is not saying no, he is just saying table to next meeting.
Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Graziano, Councilman Ritz, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilman Buonanno, Council Vice-President

Haroian and Council President Wall -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilman Campopiano -1. Councilman Traficante recused.

2. Consideration of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilwoman Graziano, it was voted to approve the list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

Advice and Consent of Mayor Hopkins’ appointment of Robert Strom as Finance Director.

Director Renzulli stated that Mr. Strom has served this City already for over a decade as its Finance Director, he is acutely aware of the issues within the City and its Budget and is the best person to help bring us forward.

Mr. Strom appeared to speak and stated that he has been Finance Director for approximately 22 years. He was in Woonsocket for nine years, 13 in the City of Cranston, 12 with Mayor Fung and one with Mayor Hopkins and he would definitely appreciate the Council’s support and confidence in him to come back and try to get the City through this difficult time. As everyone knows, there is a lot of work to be done and, hopefully, can get some resolution for the Administration Council and more importantly the taxpayers of the City of Cranston.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to approve the Advice and Consent of Mayor Hopkins’ appointment of Robert Strom as Finance Director. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

D. Report from the Chair, Councilwoman Graziano, on the **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE** meeting held April 6, 2026

No action needed.

E. Report from the Chair, Councilman Andujar, on the **ORDINANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held April 1, 2026:

No action needed.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR UNDOCKETED ITEMS

Marcia Fowler, 35 Milton Ave., appeared to speak and stated that some of her concerns are not meant to show disrespect, but Cranston High School East, without a doubt, needs a new outdoor track, but she is concerned with the proposed location for the possible track. Cooney Field is a public field that is used by people of all ages and all physical abilities all year long along with the Cranston High School East Marching Band from August to November and they all use the field and track. Over the past nine years, she has seen the public fight to keep Doric Park as a public park, she has seen the fight to reopen the track at West so the public has a safe flat surface to walk on, she has seen the public fight to keep the pool open and there was a chance that a well-used basketball court was going to close and become a splash pad at Doric and recently a ball field was paved over. What we need is not another park to close to the public, but more public parks to be developed. She does not believe a new outdoor complex funded by a long-term fundraiser is something to be considered. This would keep all fields open and also not cost the taxpayers any more money and it won’t take away our public field, but would give us an additional resource without using our money on a bond and paying interest on a bond.

Steven Frias, 107 Garden Hills Dr., appeared to speak and stated that as to the tax increase, this is the largest tax increase since 2009 when Allan Fung was Mayor and we had cut from State Aid at approximately 8.8%. There were some other ones, 2003, Mayor Laffey 12.8%, Mayor O’Leary 11.5% and then under Mayor Traficante in 1995-1996 of approximately 11% and 9.5%. The largest in 1917, 19%, World War I inflation. Some may wonder what happened after those tax increases. The Councils had a lot of turnover after those tax increases. Approximately 4-6 people in each Council did not come back, they usually lost re-election. That is why he really hopes to do spending cuts. To get to 4% you are going to need to have approximately 6.5% spending cuts. You are going to have to level-fund the Schools to do that. The School staffing has increased according to the Audit Report of the City Auditors. It has gone from 1462 approximately 10 years ago to approximately 1548. They should be level-funded. The student population has been going down by 1,000 during that same time period. The problem for the Schools is that State Aid is not increasing at the same rate it did a decade ago. The City is increasing and the State is not. Also, you need to reduce public safety by about \$2.5 million. He is not talking about firing people. In 2009-2010, Mayor Fung and the Council approved agreements that allowed for 15 vacancies in the Police and Fire. There are no vacancies in the Fire Department. If you go from 204, you are going up from 196 to 204, that was an error in his opinion and this Council approved that a few months ago. You should be trying to get it back down. The Big Beautiful Bill, it allows for Overtime to be free for the first \$12,500 or \$25,000, that is something the Firefighters are going to get now and Police. They should be willing to give a little back right now. Also, you need about \$2 million in savings in general government. That is about twenty positions being reduced. He thinks you can do it at the Senior Center, not all twenty, without significantly materially impacting services. And if you had to, if there is an employee who is not capable of getting out a few thousand dollars in free federal money, even with the assistance of another employee, over the course of two years, he does not think you should continue to fund that position.

Tonya Signore appeared to speak and stated that she agrees with Councilman Campopiano about putting off the raises for another month or so, but she can see the other side. Also, there are many jobs in the Briggs Building that costs millions just to run that building. She does not know if an Audit was ever done or should be done on it and if all positions are necessary. Some are, but some may not be. A lot of money goes there and a lot of money goes to the Superintendent of Schols. She thinks it would be great if Cranston had more blue ribbon schools as well.

X. ELECTION/APPOINTMENT OF CITY OFFICIALS

- ***Re-appointment of Carol Cooney to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/5/2026 through 1/5/2029***

On motion by Council Vice-President Haroian, seconded by Councilman Traficante, it was voted to approve the Re-appointment of Carol Cooney to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/5/2026 through 1/5/2029. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

- ***Re-appointment of Justin McCarthy as Alternate 1 to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/28/2026 through 1/28/2029***

On motion by Council Vice-President Haroian, seconded by Councilwoman Graziano, it was voted to approve the Re-appointment of Justin McCarthy as Alternate 1 to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/28/2026 through 1/28/2029. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

- ***Re-appointment of Mario Carlino as Alternate 2 to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/28/2026 through 1/28/2029***

On motion by Councilwoman Graziano, seconded by Councilman Traficante, it was voted to approve the Re-appointment of Mario Carlino as Alternate 2 to the Tax Assessment Board of Review for term 1/28/2026 through 1/28/2029. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

Mayoral Appointments:

- *Re-appointment of Robert Coupe to the Planning Commission for term April 7, 2026 through February 1, 2030.*
- *Appointment of Alan DePalo to the Historic District Commission for term April 3, 2026 through November 1, 2027.*
- *Appointment of John Colasante to the Historic District Commission for term April 3, 2026 through November 1, 2027.*
- *Appointment of Eric Army to the Historic District Commission for term April 3, 2026 through November 1, 2026.*
- *Re-appointment of Jillian Finkle to the Historic District Commission for term April 3, 2026 through November 1, 2028.*

No action needed.

XI. REPORT OF CITY OFFICERS

None.

XII. EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Legal Expense Analysis

No discussion.

Request to be continued in service for one year, Detective Lieutenant Stephen Brooks, Cranston Police Department, as of April 2, 2026 through April 2, 2027.

Director Renzulli appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

Request to be placed on pension roll effective April 17, 2026, at end of day, Chief Daniel Marcinko, Cranston Fire Department.

Director Renzulli appeared to speak.

On motion by Council Vice-President Haroian, seconded by Councilwoman Graziano, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall 8.

XIII. COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

- ***Budget Process.***

Council President Wall stated that he placed this item on the docket for two reasons. As we discuss the Budget process, he wanted to go over a few items that are contained in the Charter that are apropos as we go forward in the budget process. He asked the technical clerk to display a handout on the screen. He stated that Charter Chapter 6 is where the budget is discussed. We are getting to the point where we are

partly through our hearings and starting to discuss what would happen regarding our action on the Operating Budget. The Council has to act on the budget according to our Charter by May 15th and he read Section 6.09 of the Charter. Our Appropriation Ordinance requires a 7.45% increase. Knowing that, if we do not act or we voted it down, it would go in as how the Mayor introduced it to us. If we did not have enough time and took no action at all, it would be the Mayor's budget. Section 6.21 is where it is worth discussing. It states that "the City may not increase property tax levy cap by more than 3%, but no higher than 4% above the amount levied for the previous FY unless approved by an affirmative vote of at least a majority of the entire Council and at least one of the conditions set forth in RIGL 44-5-2, which is outlined", so one of those conditions would have to be met to go to 4 and we would have to have at least the majority vote. At that point it also states "furthermore, the City may not increase the property tax levy by more than 4% above the amount levied in the previous FY unless approved by affirmative vote of 4/5 of the entire City Council and at least one of the conditions in the RIGL". The way he reads that, it is 7 out of 9 Council Members. Those two things coupled together create a problem. He does not know where we are at this point, we are not quite done with that process, but as he states over and over, there is no guarantee that we are going to pass that 7.4%.

Councilman Ritz asked, if we vote yes and it is 7 out of 9 then we still need State approval and then it would become the new tax increase? Solicitor stated that without State authorization you can't approve 7.5%. That is the first problem. As Council President Wall stated, if you take no action, the Charter provision states that the Mayor's budget as submitted takes effect. The problem again, it is requesting a 7.45% increase, again, can't be done. That raises several possibilities, none of which are particularly good and Mr. Strom could probably speak to it better than him. He can only state what the legal options are and the legal options basically when it comes to budgets and when it comes to a City or town that is in economic distress and the city or town is unable to, for whatever reason, solve it internally, the only options at that point is to go to the Auditor General, have them do a review. The Auditor General will not come in and run the City. They may make suggestions, but it would still be up to this Council working with the Administration to come up with a solution if you go down that road. The other nuclear option would be a Central Falls scenario, a Providence School Department scenario or Town of Johnston scenario back in the late 90's where you contact the Auditor General and tell them you cannot meet your obligations based on this budget that you have currently and that probably begs the question of what happened. He thinks we are in agreement that if the Council and Administration do not enact a budget going forward, we would have to operate based on the prior year's budget going forward, but that is a temporary fix. Discretionary spending would have to be frozen and obviously contractual obligations, payroll, pension contributions and things like that would still have to be met, but there would probably be a freeze on all discretionary spending. Worst possible case scenario would be appointment of an overseer as they did in Central Falls, Johnston and Providence School Department. That is basically saying to the State, sorry we are too far in the hole, we cannot meet our obligations. As to what Council President Wall was talking about with Section 6.21 of the Charter, State Law does not allow you to exceed 4% unless the General Assembly gives authorization or you go to the Auditor General. You have to certify it, the Finance Director has to certify that one of the conditions contained in the Statute have been met. It is considered an emergency type situation. It has to be something that is genuinely an emergency and we can't meet those obligations. That scenario, if you can't get General Assembly approval, what you do is you go to the Auditor General. If the Auditor General, and it is a big if, says ok I'll let you exceed it, it comes back in front of you and you are right back in the same position because now you are going to have to vote whether or not to exceed that 4% and give 7.5%. Ultimately, it comes back into your lap whether you go to through the General Assembly or go through the Auditor General. The nuclear option if you really can't meet your obligations and it is affecting some categories you mentioned, is State takeover.

Councilman Ritz asked what happens if we go to the General Assembly and they do not allow us to exceed the cap? Solicitor stated that it would have to go back to the Mayor, but ultimately, it is going to end up in your lap. The one scenario that he is really not certain on is what happens if none of those things work. Only thing he can think of is at that point would be to get some type of clarification from the Court. It might require a

Declaratory Judgement and put it in the hands of a Superior Court Judge because our Charter does not go that far.

Council Vice-President Haroian asked if you can go to the General Assembly without this Council voting on a majority on a Resolution. Can the bill be submitted and heard on the House floor if we did not pass the Resolution? Attorney Marcello stated that the General Assembly could act without a Resolution of this Council. The reality is that they will not act without a Resolution of this Council. They want the Mayor to support it and they want the Legislative Body before they move on it.

Councilman Traficante asked if the Mayor could go to the General Assembly himself to try to ask for the 7.4%. Attorney Marcello stated that he could, they will not pass it without a local Resolution, that is not a law, it is just a practice, policy that they have. The problem is if you do not act by the 15th, the Mayor's budget is a nullity because it is above the 4% and he does not have authority to submit. His opinion, the budget goes back to the Mayor and he has to submit a new budget within the Charter provisions or 4%. There is a provision in the State Law, 45-2-3.2 that states "unless otherwise provided by a city or town Charter, in an emergency caused by a failure of a city or town to approve an annual appropriation measure, the same amounts appropriated in the previous FY shall be available for each department and division thereof, subject to a monthly or quarterly allotment in accordance with seasonal requirements as determined by the city or town Chief Financial Officer, provided that expenditures for payment of bonded indebtedness of the city or town and interest therein shall be such amount as may be required regardless of whether or not an annual Appropriation Ordinance is enacted by the City or Town Council". So, first thing that would happen is we would revert to last years budget, the last year's rate, bond payment would have to be made no matter what it is and that is the default initially while this whole thing plays out.

Councilman Traficante stated that assuming worst case scenario and the City Council does not come to an agreement, budget refers back, it goes to the Mayor, the Mayor cannot exceed the 4%. The budget then becomes the previous year's budget in the interim, however, in the interim, since we passed Resolutions and Ordinances approving contracts which exceed that amount, he asked what happens then? Attorney Marcello stated that that is a good question, you do not have enough money to pay those individuals. Whether that means temporary layoffs, bumping, job freeze, furlough days, that is something that would have to be discussed and that is an Administration issue.

Solicitor stated that the spread between what State Law allows and what our Charter allows in terms of a tax increase versus what the Mayor says we need is a huge spread. The difference between 7.5% and 3% is huge. There are mechanisms in place under State Law if you find yourself in a genuine fiscal emergency. There are avenues you can pursue, but they are not pleasant. You are going to forfeit control both the Administration and the Council are going to forfeit considerable control so the longer this goes on the more dire he thinks the situation becomes, the more you are going to be looking at one of the options he outlined earlier.

Council President Wall stated that the Council has sat through long hearings and even if everything they complained about and even if everything they said was wrong and need to be cut, they probably found less than \$1 million in savings and only way they can find savings is if they do bring people back to the table, some of the Unions back to the table. The problem is the Council does not have authority to go to the Unions. They do not know what is being done at this time and they are going to have an Executive Session to discuss that matter.

Councilman Buonanno stated that when the Director of Administration stood before us a few meetings ago he said they saw this in August and here we are finding out about it now. If we knew about it in August, September, October and November it would have given us some more time to contemplate this stuff as opposed to being under the gun right now and that makes serving our constituents a lot more difficult. If this Council does not get to the seven votes to go over the 4% does that mean we fail to enact the budget and the Mayor's budget goes into effect and if the General Assembly approves something more than that it goes into effect or does that mean he has to trim his budget to

4% tax increase and we go through it again? Solicitor stated that he and Attorney Marcella discussed this the other day and the way the Charter provision is written is kind of poorly drafted because the interpretation is that anything short of approval or anything short of you amending it and voting to approve it is not adopting the budget and therefore the Mayor's budget as proposed would take effect, but the problem is we have a budget based on a 7.5% tax levy which can't happen legally. Councilman Buonanno stated that the whole thing doesn't make sense. If we do not like a budget we vote it down it gets enacted, correct? Solicitor stated that he thinks the intent was if you do not like it, change it, that is why you have the power to amend. Rhetorically, if you can't take the time to sit and go through the budget and amend it to get to a place where you like it, well too bad for you, the Mayor's budget is going to rule the day. That is what he thinks the intent was.

Attorney Marcello stated that the Charter provision is designed to make sure that the City always has an operating budget, so if the Council does not act, the Mayor's budget gets enacted and the Mayor has certain parameters within the Charter of how he can go. The problem is the Mayor submitted a budget which is beyond those parameters which needs General Assembly approval. He thinks both Solicitor and he agree that if the Council fails to act or does not adopt anything short of adoption, we go back to the Mayor's budget, but the Mayor's budget cannot be enacted because it is above the cap set by State Law. In his opinion, the obligation then falls on the Administration to re-submit a budget within the parameters that are allowed by Charter. Councilman Buonanno asked if this means we start over again. Attorney Marcello stated that he believes you have the ongoing provision that you are operating under. Solicitor stated that at some point, someone has to submit a budget.

Councilman Traficante stated that he would like to bring up a personal experience, in the early 90's the federal government eliminated a variety of federal funds that were given to cities and towns, such as general revenue sharing, and they had a situation where he had to go back to the Unions and had to ask permission to go back to the Fire, Police, Laborers and School Department and had to sit down and renegotiate the contracts with permission, so he could meet the budgetary expenses. If push comes to shove, we may have to do exactly that.

Council President Wall stated that if he is not mistaken, once you renegotiate that contract, it has to go before the members.

Councilman Campopiano pointed out that if it does go beyond the deadline and we have to go to the next session, it is going to compound the debt because we are still working with last year's. He asked if that is correct. Mr. Strom stated that if we did revert back to this year's budget we are currently in, there are holes in this year's budget which would be compounded again next year. Right now to get us to where we need to be with the 7.5% proposal is about \$15 million. If you go to 4%, which is the cap, that is 8, you still have a shortfall of about \$7 million and that is significant. You can go through that budget and if you can come up with \$7 million, you should be the Finance Director because you are not going to find it. They have gone through every facet of the budget.

Council President Wall referred to Section 6.15 of the Charter and read into the record. He stated that as he looks at this section, it states that each department, board, commission, office, agency, except School Committee shall submit to the Mayor requested allotments and appropriations for the entire FY quarterly. He asked where that document would be and can members of the Council have that document for the next few years so they can look at where they went off the run. Mr. Strom stated that when he was Finance Director in the past, this was never done. Council President Wall stated that he does not have the authority to direct the Finance Director to do it, but the Charter requires it. Mr. Strom stated that he can provide information the Council President would like to see but it is not from the department head, it is from our financial system. Council President Wall stated that there seems to be a disconnect with our allocations and how much we are spending. That is where a lot of our problems are. There is a frustration that we are spending money, but there does not seem to be a mechanism to stop us from spending money. Mr. Strom stated that he can provide a weekly or bi-weekly expense

accounts for each department and it will show which accounts are over budget and they could give a light to that department head to explain why it is over budget.

Councilwoman Graziano stated that she thinks what Council President Wall is saying is you need to come up with a process to execute this specific section of the Charter. We want to see this executed. Also, accountability, if the department is over the first, the second and third time, when is it flagged and where is accountability? She would like to know what process the Administration would like to set up and what process the Council should set up. Mr. Strom stated that he believes that a few weeks ago the Mayor sent communication to each department to not spend any additional money unless it was totally essential or emergency.

Councilman Traficante stated that all these problems could have been averted if when developing a budget it became a more realistic budget that we do not have to overestimate or revenues or underestimate our revenues. We should not be having these kind of problems. He was surprised and taken aback that the Resolution he received to extend the tax levy to 7.45% was submitted by a Representative that is outside of the City of Cranston. Not one single Cranston Representative or Senator submitted that Resolution. That tells him something.

XIV. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

None.

XV. COUNCIL BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

None.

XVI. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS

The following items of new business are listed for reference and for a vote to be referred to the appropriate Council sub-committee for a public hearing. The Council President may call for a motion to consider one or more of the new business items as a block:

- 4-26-01 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10, Chapter 32, Section 020 and Section 030 of the City of Cranston Code of Ordinances, 2005 entitled “Stop Intersections-Enumerated” and “Multi Stop Intersections-Enumerated” (Alpine Estates Dr./Caraway Dr.). Sponsored by Councilman Ritz. To Be Referred to Ordinance Committee May 6, 2026.***
- 4-26-02 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 3, Chapter 08, Section 050 of the City of Cranston Code of Ordinances, 2005, entitled “Tax Assessment Board of Review”. Sponsored by Council President Wall. To Be Referred to Ordinance Committee May 6, 2026.***
- 4-26-03 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 17 of the Code of the City of Cranston as amended, entitled “Zoning”. Sponsored by Councilman Andujar. To Be Referred to Ordinance Committee June 3, 2026.***
- 4-26-04 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 17 of the Code of the City of Cranston as amended, entitled “Zoning”. Sponsored by Councilman Andujar. To Be Referred to Ordinance Committee June 3, 2026.***

****Resolution in support of the State of Rhode Island General Assembly amending Cranston Tax Exemptions. To Be Referred to Finance Committee May 4, 2026***

Advise and Consent of Mayor’s appointment of Richard Mancini as Fire Chief. To Be Referred to Finance Committee May 4, 2026.

CLAIMS to be referred to the Claims Committee meeting of May 4, 2026 as follows:

<u>CLAIMANT</u>	<u>TYPE OF CLAIM</u>	<u>DATE OF INCIDENT</u>
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Dean Estates I, LLC and Winn Management Co.	Property Damage	3/20/2024
CSM, LLP/USAA/ Jason Vonkriegenbergh	Property Damage	11/30/2025
Taryn Gilchrist	Property Damage	1/26/2026
Joanne Cournoyer	Property Damage	2/12/2026
Chad San Bento	Property Damage	2/22/2026
Peter & Lorraine Ignagni	Property Damage	2/23/2026
Peter & Alexandra Mason	Property Damage	2/24/2026
Joan Prior	Property Damage	2/24/2026
Antonia Lee/Allstate	Property Damage	2/24/2026
Clare Kim	Property Damage	2/27/2026
Roberta Preziosi	Property Damage	2/27/2026
Dana Holmgren	Property Damage	2/27/2026
Joseph Scianna	Property Damage	2/28/2026
Leonard Wyeth	Property Damage	2/28/2026
Edward Gourke	Property Damage	2/28/2026
Emely Lopez	Property Damage	3/1/2026
Paula Rocha	Property Damage	3/2/2026
Mason Daurado	Property Damage	3/2/2026
Janice Olivier	Property Damage	3/2/2026
Abir Al Najar	Property Damage	3/3/2026
Kira Judd	Property Damage	3/3/2026
Ashley Branagan	Property Damage	3/3/2026
Kayla Clunan	Property Damage	3/4/2026
Stephanie Enright	Property Damage	3/4/2026
Taressa McMahon	Property Damage	3/4/2026
Patrick McAssey	Property Damage	3/4/2026
Cau Le	Property Damage	3/4/2026
Hunter Pierce	Property Damage	3/5/2026
Elady Cepeda	Property Damage	3/5/2026
Kathleen Torregrossa	Property Damage	3/5/2026
Nary Chhay	Property Damage	3/6/2026
William Dickie	Property Damage	3/7/2026
James Mendonca	Property Damage	3/7/2026
David Palumbo	Property Damage	3/7/2026
Pedro Germosen	Property Damage	3/8/2026
Wendy Lincoln	Property Damage	3/8/2026
Haydee Reyes	Property Damage	3/9/2026
Thomas Giorgi	Property Damage	3/12/2026
Domingo Tejada	Personal Injury	3/14/2026
Laurie Lindemann	Property Damage	3/16/2026
Kaitlyn Harrison	Property Damage	3/16/2026
Frank DiIorio	Property Damage	3/19/2026
David Knasin	Property Damage	3/23/2026
Sampalis Vasso	Property Damage	3/25/2026
Alfred Guido Palmieri Jr.	Property Damage	3/25/2026
Donna Granieri	Property Damage	3/26/2026
Glenna Pansay	Property Damage	4/2/2026
Dora Claribel Aquino	Property Damage	4/4/2026
Alec Hirschberg	Property Damage	4/10/2026
Laurie Anne Oneil	Property Damage	4/12/2026
George Cabral	Property Damage	unknown

Council President Wall asked for a motion to refer all the above new business to their respective Committees if there are no objections. There were no objections.

On motion by Councilman Traficante, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to refer all above New Business as a block to appropriate Committees. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting

“aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Traficante, Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall -8.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. sec. 42-46-5(a)(2) Litigation – Discussion of Legal Bills from Law Department

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Council Vice-President Haroian, it was voted to go into Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. sec. 42-46-5(a)(2) Litigation – Discussion of Legal Bills from Law Department. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall -7. Councilwoman Vaziri was not present for roll call vote.

The Council went into Executive Session at 9:15 p.m.

Present in Executive Session: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vaziri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Council Vice-President Haroian and Council President Wall; Christopher Millea, City Solicitor; Michael Marcello, City Council Legal Counsel; David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst; Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees.

XVIII. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilman Traficante, it was voted to come out of Executive Session. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vazri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno and Council President Wall - 7. Council Vice-President Haroian was not present for roll call vote.

Council President Wall indicated that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilwoman Graziano, it was voted to seal the minutes of Executive Session. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Graziano, Councilmen Ritz, Traficante, Councilwoman Vazri, Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno and Council President Wall -7. Council Vice-President Haroian was not present for roll call vote.

XVIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

None

XVII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

None

XX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

Minutes approved as written May 18, 2026

Attest: Tracy A. Nelson, City Clerk