PAWTUCKET CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
FINANCE COMMITTEE, & COMMITTEE
ON CLAIMS AND PENDING SUITS
SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

A joint meeting of the City Council Committee of the Whole, Finance Committee, and Committee on Claims and Pending Suits, was held on Monday, September 28, 2026, at 5:31 p.m., in the Temporary City Council Office, Room 204, 2nd Floor, 100 Freight Street, Pawtucket, RI.

Present on behalf of the Committee of the Whole – President Mercer; Councilors Araujo, Coderre, Moran, Moreno, Rubio, Stachowiak and Wildenhain.

Absent – Councilor Gregor.

Present on behalf of the Committee on Claims and Pending Suits - Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

Absent 0.

Present on behalf of the Finance Committee – Councilor Wildenhain, Chair; Councilors Moran and Rubio.

Absent 0.

Also present was Frank J. Milos, Esq., City Solicitor.

The Committee conducted a public input period, at which there were no speakers.

Councilor Rubio presided.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND COMMITTEE ON CLAIMS AND PENDING SUITS TOOK UP THE FOLLOWING:

Communication from Frank J. Milos, Jr., Esq., City Solicitor, to the Honorable Terrence E. Mercer, City Council President (Pavano v. City of Pawtucket CA No: PC-2012-3852)

This communication was READ AND ORDERED FILED.

Upon unanimous consent of the Committee on Claims and Pending Suits, the Committee entered into Executive Session at 5:33 p.m., pursuant to §42-46-4 and §42-46-5 (A)(2) of the General Laws of Rhode Island regarding pending litigation, on a roll call vote, as follows:

AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

Present for Executive Session was Frank J. Milos, Jr., Esq., City Solicitor

The Committee discussed Pavano v. City of Pawtucket CA No: PC-2012-3852

Upon motion made by Councilor Araujo, seconded by Councilor Moreno, the Committee returned to open session at 6:09 p.m., on a roll call vote, as follows:

AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

Upon motion made by Councilor Araujo, seconded by Councilor Moreno, the minutes of the meeting held in executive session were sealed on a roll call vote, as follows:

AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

The Committee reported that they provided the City Solicitor instructions regarding this matter.

Councilor Rubio presided.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, COMMITTEE ON CLAIMS AND PENDING SUITS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE TOOK UP THE FOLLOWING:

Communication from Frank J. Milos, Jr., Esq., City Solicitor, to the Honorable Terrence E. Mercer, City Council President (Firetruck Manufacturer Antitrust Litigation – Legal Services Agreement)

Upon unanimous consent of the Committee on Claims and Pending Suits and the Finance Committee, the Committees entered into Executive Session at 6:11 p.m., pursuant to §42-46-4 and §42-46-5 (A)(2) of the General Laws of Rhode Island regarding pending litigation, on a roll call vote, as follows:

Committee on Claims and Pending Suits:
AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

Finance Committee:
AYES – Councilor Wildenhain, Chair; Councilors Moran and Rubio.

NOES – 0.

Present for Executive Session was Frank J. Milos, Jr., Esq., City Solicitor.

The Committee discussed Firetruck Manufacturer Antitrust Litigation – Legal Services Agreement

The Committees returned to open session at 6:17 p.m., on a roll call vote, as follows:

Committee on Claims and Pending Suits:
AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

Finance Committee:
AYES – Councilor Wildenhain, Chair; Councilors Moran and Rubio.

NOES – 0.

The minutes of the meeting held in executive session were sealed on a roll call vote, as follows:

Committee on Claims and Pending Suits:
AYES — Councilor Rubio, Chair; Councilors Araujo and Moreno.

NOES — 0.

Finance Committee:
AYES – Councilor Wildenhain, Chair; Councilors Moran and Rubio.

NOES – 0.

The Committee reported that they provided the City Solicitor instructions regarding a Legal Services Agreement on this matter.

Councilor Wildenhain presided.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TOOK UP THE FOLLOWING:

Contract between the Pawtucket School Committee and the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, Local 930, A.F.T., A.F.L.-C.I.O., for the period beginning September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2029

Present for this portion of the meeting was Joanne Bonollo, Chair, Pawtucket School Committee; James T. Chellel Jr., Pawtucket School Committee Member; Randy A. Buck, Superintendent, Pawtucket School Department; Stephanie DeMaio, Chief Financial Officer, Pawtucket School Department; and Carey Edwards, Controller, Pawtucket School Department.

Ms. DeMaio provided answers to the questions that the Finance Committee asked on September 23, 2026.

She stated that there are 1068 employees in the school department and 715 teachers covered by this contract.

The fund balance as of the end of FY 2024/25 was $17,822,591. In the FY 2025/26 year, $4,626,991 was used to support the general fund leaving about $13,195,600 before the close-out of the FY 2025/2026 year.

She stated that there is no 5-year plan at this time. They are waiting to see where they are right now before starting a 5-year plan.

Regarding how they will fund the additional $17 million in the three-year contract, Ms. DeMaio stated that they will incorporate contract costs into multi-year planning, evaluate reserves, budget capacity, state and local revenues and other sources, while monitoring expenditures, enrollment and identifying efficiencies.

When reviewing the multi-year financial plan regarding use of surplus and other practices, President Mercer asked what her comfort level of success was.

Ms. DeMaio stated that difficult decisions will have to be made and they expect some challenges. She believes they will be able to control some items that weren't controlled before. They will look at areas they can pull back on, in order to make this happen.

When providing clarification on Section 24, Certified/Licensed Personnel Safety and Protection from Harassment – the right to leave a meeting in which prohibited behavior occurs; Ms. Bonollo stated that if a parent harasses a teacher, they can stop the meeting and shut off the parent communication system. It would then go to the administrator and then to the superintendent. Mr. Chellel stated that this section required the administration to take on any harassing behavior on school grounds or on school issued technology.

Regarding obligations beyond the three-year contract, issues such as enrollment, staffing, class size, special education, substitute coverage costs, right-to-read costs, healthcare and others need to be monitored.

There is a policy that administrators should receive higher pay than the highest paid teachers.

Ms. DeMaio stated in in 2025, the cost for substitutes was $1,843,081. Coverage cost was $354,639. Sick days cost $3,730,371. In FY24, absence figure for Pawtucketwas 24.3%. Last year, statewide, it was about 8%.

There are 64 teachers with outstanding Right-to-Read requirements, which could require up to eight days of training per teacher, depending on the needed requirements. This could cost up to $65,000 in class coverage costs and $22,500 in supplies.

President Mercer stated that the Right-to-Read requirements should have been up to date, because now it is causing teachers to be absent who must satisfy these requirements.

Ms. DeMaio reviewed the medical reserve fund and stated that she would suggest using $1.8 million of the reserve this year.

Councilor Araujo asked how the School Department plans to make up the deficit, which would be approximately $7.2 million, in year two?

Superintendent Buck stated that the School Department would ask the City for increased contributions.

Mr. Chellel stated that the teachers had extra minutes added to their work day, 10 minutes the first year and a total of 20 minutes over the three years. The teachers received smaller class size, the contract has more structure on absenteeism, and language regarding the need to redistrict schools.

Councilor Wildenhain expressed his concern about the affordability of this contract. He would recommend approving the first year of the contract and have the School Committee take another look at years two and three. The School Committee would have to bring this contract back to the teachers and then to the council for the one-year approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Richard J. Goldstein, MMC, City Clerk
Pawtucket City Council