

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK
CITY HALL
MARCH 10, 1997

The Committee on Finance meets this day in the City Clerk's Department, City Hall, Committee Room "A".

PRESENT: Chairwoman Nolan, Vice Chairman Rollins, Council President Fagnoli, Councilman Igliazzi-4.

ABSENT: Councilman Mancini-1.

Also present are Thomas Deller, Deputy Director, Planning & Development, Boyce Spinelli, Finance Director, Stephen Woerner, Internal Auditor, Michael R. Clement, City Clerk and Anna M. Stetson, Assistant Clerk.

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE CITY COLLECTOR TO CANCEL OR ABATE, IN WHOLE, THE TAXES ASSESSED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,525.72 PLUS ALL TAXES THAT ACCRUE FROM 1996 UNTIL THE PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY SELLS ASSESSOR'S PLAT 99, LOT 155, 248 HAWKINS STREET, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RHODE ISLAND GENERAL LAW SECTION 44-7-23.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Perhaps we could suggest that on these requests that they contact the council person from the ward.

MR. DELLER: The council person from the ward has submitted letters for this.

Discussion ensues regarding contacting the council people whose wards these matters are concerning to be sure they are before the committee or that the committee is sure that they have been contacted and what their position is.

MR. DELLER: This is the property on the corner of Branch Avenue and Hawkins Avenue. We are under contract to sell this property. It's a 3200 square foot lot that is pie shaped. The adjacent property has purchased the adjacent building and is renovating it into a ground floor, commercial, second floor residential and he needs additional parking. This property was bought for commercial use and to re-configure the intersection at Hawkins and Branch. Because it is so small we are selling the property at basically our cost. It isn't the money. We can take whatever proceeds we get from the sale and pay what we can towards the taxes but we are never going to be able to pay the full amount because we are not going to get that. If we can't clear the title, we are not going to be able to sell this piece of property. We are requesting that the taxes be abated and the property will be sold as soon as we get the official resolution from the council that

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it is abated and then the property will go back on the tax role as part of the adjacent property.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: I believe the reason that it was continued was that very reason of when it was going to be sold. Councilwoman Romano, I had spoken with her and she was going to try and be here tonight, but I understand that she sent a letter of support.

On motion of Council President Fagnoli, seconded by Councilman Rollins, it is voted to approve the foregoing matter.

Motion carries.

RESOLUTION REQUESTING TO ABATE THE TAXES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$17,823.95, PLUS ALL TAXES THAT ACCRUE FROM 1996 UNTIL THE PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY SELLS THE PROPERTY AT 257-261 LENOX AVENUE, PLAT 52, LOT 314 .

MR. DELLER: This is one of those houses that if action wasn't taken..we ended up getting the property owner to pay and clear title on a lot of issues. If we had to let this sit here, we would have had to knock the building down for around \$25,000.

On motion of Councilman Igliazzi, seconded by Councilman Rollins, it is voted to approve the foregoing matter.

Motion carries.

COMMUNICATION FROM MICHAEL R. CLEMENT, CITY CLERK DATED FEBRUARY 3, 1997 REQUESTING APPROVAL TO REFUND TWO POSITION IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE THAT WERE DEFUNDED AND TAKEN OUT.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Is it possible to get people in this job that actually perform stenography.

MR. CLEMENT: It will have to be posted first.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I am sure that you are aware of the new technology. They could sit down right now, take the testimony of the meeting, it's already on the disk, put it into the computer, and your minutes would be printed. You would never be behind again. I understand that it is a labor issue. I can think of no better time to address that labor issue than right now. Maybe if you speak with Joe Virgilio or work with the Personnel Department and tell them that you

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have to modernize the department, just show them how many years behind our minutes are. Just that fact alone...we can grandfather in everybody that's here.

MR. CLEMENT: What am I supposed to do in the meantime? Do I just work with what I have right now?

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I am all for this. Instead of hiring somebody that doesn't have the skills, hire somebody that does.

MR. CLEMENT: I want to hire a stenographer and a Clerk III. The Clerk III would just do the general stuff. It would take a big load off the regular stenos like doing the committee calls, the filing and some of the things that ...when a meeting is called for next week....

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I am going to support you on this, I am just saying the one condition of the Stenographer, hire someone who is a stenographer. I am not belittling anyone who is a stenographer. That's going to be an opportunity for you to start catching up and if we can negotiate that slight change that all future employees will have to have that skill. You know what will happen in two to four years from now when people retire? Your minutes will be up to date. We have five hour public hearings and you get them the next day. It's not because they are going home and transcribing them.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: How much would the equipment cost?

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: They have the computers.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: They would have to get their input device.

MR. CLEMENT: My equipment has to be upgraded.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: It seems to me that you are the Clerk of the Council. You clearly understand that we have a problem with our minutes and it seems to me that the most productive, efficient way is to get your computers updated, but get someone that can use that technology and get your minutes out.

MR. CLEMENT: The major problem that we have with minutes is the Retirement Board.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: What's happening now is that this meeting gets recorded and then Anna leaves this room, goes to her desk and in probably a few years from now, sits down, listens to the tapes and starts typing these minutes as opposed as pulling out the disk, popping it into the computer and pressing print. It happens in the court system. Those stenographers are sitting there for 8 solid hours typing all and the judge says that he wants the transcript of today's testimony on my desk. They put it into the computer and it's done before they leave the building.

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CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: A suggestion is that if you could hire somebody like that and then I would like to see the others in the office trained in the technology.

Discussion ensues regarding the training of the employees for stenography.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: If you could get one person, you could assign that person to any major long hearing that you know. As time goes on, you try to continually hire people with that skill and also train people that are here.

Especially the younger people that are going to be with the city for 10 to 15 years.

MR. CLEMENT: I have no problem with that. I just want to get caught up in this office and I want the work to be done on time.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: One person is not going to get us ahead.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: What are we two years behind on? What minutes?

MR. CLEMENT: Retirement Board minutes.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: What about the committee minutes?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: How about the Finance Committee meetings?

MR. CLEMENT: They are pretty much caught up to date.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI; What is the situation on.....

MR. CLEMENT: This is the situation. You create committees after committees. That's the problem.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I just want to say, you may not like the fact that we are creating committees, but that's the council prerogative. If we need to hire more people or get people properly trained to get the job done, then that's a council problem. The fact that we are starting more committees, you shouldn't be throwing that in our faces. It's our prerogative to do that.

MR. CLEMENT: I understand that, but what I am trying to do, I am just trying to point out the fact this is what causes us to be left behind.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Don't you think that the lack of technological support keeps them from being caught up?

Discussion ensues.

MR. CLEMENT: If we have that kind of equipment, we don't have that.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: That's the kind of thing we need. We talked about that. I will support the positions, but I will be honest with you, I think the person that you hire should be a stenographer. You should talk with the union. That's your job.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: I think we should do a study of just what the work in the City Clerk's office entails and how it has to be structured so we have the proper people and the number of people to handle it so that we have the minutes in a timely fashion because they are overworked. I would like us to have a good picture of exactly what the work schedule is around here, the work routine and who is responsible for what. We have had a problem when one was out on maternity leave. She is due back May 1st. I have a problem bringing in two other people without having the whole structure of this office brought up to the 21st century. With new technology and if we need to run some kind of a program to bring everybody up to snuff, we need to do it, because the girls in that office are overworked, they work out of classification, they do all the important things that need to be done and they deserve to be highly paid. We have the Wyatt study that is coming out with an assimilation of salaries for clerks, for stenographers, etc. Before I would submit to any new employees I would like to see a complete schedule of what this office is all about.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: I think that is a good idea and I think Michael could work with Kathy Moretti and come up with something and those job specifications, and at the same time we didn't question Bob Ricci when we gave him another person and we didn't question all the other departments when we gave them another person, and we went by the superintendent of that department, and in this situation I think that Michael should definitely work with Kathy to get those specifications so that we can get the type of person that we really need in here. I am tired of hearing about the Wyatt Study. I don't even think it exists because we paid all this money for this study and where is it?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Bob Ricci's assistant died several months ago and never was replaced. That was not a new position.

MR. CLEMENT: These are not new positions. They were just de-funded.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I think Mike should have the help. There is no clearer connection to any other department than the clerk's department, and there is no clearer reflection on the City Council than the Clerk's Department. I think we should be approving the minutes of the last meeting right now. I don't know any board or any committee that operates in any state agency, any other municipality that does not have the minutes of the meeting with the approval of the prior meeting. The first thing we do at the City Council meeting is we approve the minutes of the previous meeting. I think we could get a meeting with Boyce, Kathy and maybe the labor union and have them come here and tell them that we

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want to hire two new people, and here is what we want to do. We want to train them.

Discussion ensues regarding the hiring of a new employee in the clerk's department.

MR. CLEMENT: I appreciate that and I welcome that but I want to see if I could just get two people on board.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: After the meeting on Monday I will support the position. I think everybody feels comfortable with the position. I think that we should support the clerk's position whole-heartedly. I don't like the fact that there are outdated books in here.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: I don't like the fact that with the Retirement Board being questioned we have to send our records out to be transcribed.

MR. CLEMENT: That is another case that I would love to elaborate on, but that's a personal matter.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I have said this before. The fact that I moved to de-fund positions...people come before this council and make a case, especially the clerk's department which I think reflects on the council. I think we need to support them. That does not change my position. You should be moving toward the 21st century. Everyone is moving forward and we should have our clerk's office computerized.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Whenever we study computers, we are all concerned about other offices and we always leave out the clerk's office forgetting how important this office is.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: We have all heard comments by our colleagues that they don't like the fact that the clerk's office is behind on minutes. So we have this opportunity. Even if it doesn't happen in our tenure. Even if it's something that happens six years down the road.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Even the work that the clerk's do at the counter. The request that come in should be computerized.

Discussion ensues.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: If there are departments that should be overstaffed it is departments like the city clerk's department, the city council.

On motion of Council President Fagnoli, seconded by Councilman Igliazzi, relative to Section 42-45-5(1) it is voted to convene into Executive Session by the following Roll Call Vote:

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AYES: Chairwoman Nolan, Vice Chairman Rollins, Council President Fagnoli, Councilman Igliazzi, Councilman Mancini-5.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

RECONVENTION

On motion of Councilman Rollins, seconded by Councilman Igliazzi, it is voted to reconvene into regular session by the following Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Chairwoman Nolan, Vice Chairman Rollins, Council President Fagnoli, Councilman Igliazzi, Councilman Mancini-5.

On motion of Council President Fagnoli, seconded by Vice Chairman Rollins, it is voted to seal the minutes of the Executive Session.

COUNCILMAN IGLIAZZI: I think that if you put in a little effort, you will have happier employees and an office that will be run so efficiently that I think you will be satisfied.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: A lot of the work that the Council office does at one time was done by this office, so they have taken quite a bit of burden off this office. It's just a case like when the court needs records, they should be ready immediately and should not have to be sent out to be transcribed. That's unacceptable.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: So on Monday we will meet with Kathy Moretti.

COUNCILMAN IGLIAZZI: Maybe we can convince Joe that there will be new employees, new job classifications, more training for present employees. Nobody will be losing a job.

MR. CLEMENT: Can I get a motion tonight to get an ordinance going for just a clerk?

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Do you have any money in your budget?

MR. CLEMENT: I spoke to Alex about it and he said not to worry about it.

COUNCILMAN IGLIAZZI: Bring in Alex on Monday and we will do it all together.

COUNCILMAN IGLIAZZI: If we didn't have all these other committees we would still have the same amount of work.

MR. CLEMENT: You would not. That takes a lot of work.

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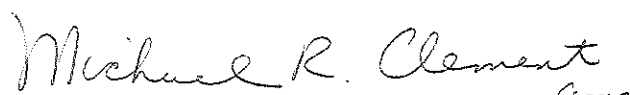
Discussion ensues regarding the amount of committees and the work that is involved for these committees.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Council President Fagnoli gave me a copy of a letter signed by Joseph Rodio saying:.. "Please be advised that this office represents the Providence Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #3 and the Providence Fire Fighters. In 1995 the FOP submitted a proposed Ordinance to the City Council for it's consideration and review. The proposed Ordinance set forth limitations on campaign contributions made by public officials of the City of Providence to elected officials including the Mayor. As of this date we have received no communication in response from you regarding the proposed Ordinance. We are formally requesting a meeting with the City Council as soon as possible in order to discuss the proposed Ordinance. In the event the City Council is unwilling or unable to enact the Ordinance, we intend to seek voter initiative in order to ensure that the Ordinance becomes law for the citizens of the City of Providence" What would we like to do with this.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: That is in my committee and I think the position of the committee was very simple. There are state campaign financing laws and we in the city are not going to start legislating campaign funds. Put it in that committee and we will take it up. Give a copy to John D'Amico and have him call me tomorrow. I think we took a vote. Our position was that we are not going to pick out little pieces of campaign financing. There is a state-wide campaign financing law, and keep in mind that the state financing laws bind municipal candidates. It had said that it would only cover state candidates and municipalities to determine their own campaign financing laws, then we would enact our own legislation. But it doesn't make any sense. You have federal for federal candidates, you have state for all state and all municipal

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: I think this is just a contract issue. They are having their problems.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion of Council President Fagnoli, seconded by Vice Chairman Rollins, it is voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 o'clock p.m.


CITY CLERK


ASSISTANT CLERK