

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

MAY 31, 1989

The Committee on Finance meets this evening at 6:30 o'clock P.M. in the Chamber of the City Council, City Hall, where a Public Hearing is held in accordance with the accompanying advertisement.

Present: Chairwoman Brassil, Councilman Dillon and Councilwoman Fargnoli.

Also present are Director of Administration Simmons, Budget Officer Prignano, Joseph Chiodo of the Finance Department, Mark Dunham of the School Department, City Internal Auditor Woerner, Council President Easton, Councilmen Annaldo, Lombardi and Councilwoman Young.

(Rose M. Mendonca, Clerk).

RELATIVE TO BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1989-1990.

Stephen T. Day, President of the Firefighters' Union is present and submits information to the Committee regarding a comparison of minimum manning of fire suppression and Cities having populations of 100,000 or more and states as follows:

**CITY OF PROVIDENCE**  
**NOTICE OF PROPOSED**  
**PROPERTY TAX RATE CHANGE**

The City of Providence proposes to increase its property tax levy to \$142,381,400 in the 1989-90 budget year; the property tax levy this year is \$137,219,800. THIS IS A PROPOSED INCREASE OF 3.76%.

It has been estimated that the proposed increase in property tax revenues will result in a property tax rate of \$23.68 per \$1,000 assessed valuation for Real Estate and \$57.45 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for Tangible Property and Motor Vehicles, as compared to the current property tax rate of \$23.88 per \$1,000 assessed valuation for Real Estate and \$57.45 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for Tangible Property and Motor Vehicles.

A property tax rate of \$24.70 for Real Estate and \$57.91 for Tangible Property and Motor Vehicles would be needed in the coming budget year to raise five and one-half percent (5.5%) more, as an adjustment for increased costs, than the property revenues being raised in the current budget year.

The City budget will be considered at a special meeting to be held at Providence Council Chambers, City Hall, on May 31, 1989, at 6:30 P.M.

The above property tax estimates have been computed in a manner approved by the Rhode Island Department of Administration.

Joseph R. Paolino, Jr.  
 MAYOR

**CITY OF PROVIDENCE REPORTS TO TAXPAYERS ON**  
**CURRENT AND PROPOSED BUDGET**

	Amounts Actually Budgeted for Current Year 7/1/88 - 6/30/89		Proposed Budget 7/1/89 - 6/30/90	
	OPERATING	CAPITAL	OPERATING	CAPITAL
1. Executive, Legislature & Judicial	3,946,114	26,000	3,779,119	14,200
2. Finance Dept. Administration	7,607,190	17,581	8,718,640	5,860
Debt Service	12,814,402		14,410,912	
Pension	10,149,198		9,824,958	
Fringe Benefits	10,675,700		13,286,000	
3. Public Safety	39,473,113	756,678	40,422,432	502,105
4. Inspection & Standards	1,864,570	1,070	1,907,928	
5. Public Works	8,276,962	687,214	8,864,932	518,175
6. Port of Providence	631,388	200	657,468	
7. Public Property	2,801,946	692,500	2,794,007	60,100
8. Recreation	891,268		797,428	
9. Public Parks	4,176,914		4,702,208	48,000
10. Education	90,717,567		100,735,287	252,713
11. Other Departments	3,244,489	182,433	3,867,628	5,800
12. General Public Assistance	19,072,950	4,900	12,629,000	2,000
13. Miscellaneous	1,827,180	2,000	2,207,374	
14. Grants	1,540,642		2,065,780	
15. Public Celebrations	9,890		8,702	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>215,271,873</b>	<b>2,340,195</b>	<b>230,471,112</b>	<b>2,369,976</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>				
1. Local Property	126,949,205		131,085,167	
2. Local Non-Property	8,440,500		9,216,000	
3. Transfer from Special Revenue	260,000		175,000	
4. State	22,704,612		17,487,124	
5. General Departments	7,167,772		6,124,612	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>217,625,449</b>		<b>233,047,743</b>	

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE DATA CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT IS ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

JEROME I. BARON  
 DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

"The people of Providence have always been behind the Providence Firefighters and while it is true Providence Firefighters have always enjoyed the full support from the people in every neighborhood of Providence, we now need the full support from the City Council. While your words of support for our dedication, our sacrifice, our courage and our hard work in protecting the lives and properties of the citizens of Providence,

MAY 31, 1989

are very much appreciated, we now need your action. Action in the form of basic minimum health and safety standards we are presently being denied!

Mr. President and Honorable City Council Members, Local 799 is here to work with you. Work with you for the protection of your neighborhoods and the City's Public Safety. This has not been an easy task. Since March, Local 799 has requested hearings with you to voice our concerns - and the concerns of our families.

This is not a money issue - it is about a health and safety issue we are here to address.

Local 799 intentionally held off the door to door campaigns and informational public pickets until we had given each one of you the personal opportunity you deserve as dedicated public servants to hear the facts and act.

Councilman Rollins, Councilman Lopes and Councilwoman Young have been very receptive to listening to the facts so as to best serve the interests of their prospective neighborhoods and the City as a whole.

I now ask each one of you to look at the Budget with public safety in mind.

Rhode Island has been drowning and the evidence is all around us.

Narragansett is doubling its Fire Department to meet the demands and impact of expansion.

North Providence is also doubling its Fire Department to meet public safety demands, and yet Providence has proposed a status quo budget for health and safety - Public Health and safety as well as firefighter health and safety.

I ask you to examine this startling error.

Providence has proclaimed itself a hot City. A City on the move. This is especially true due to the growth in population and the crush of new development.

Everywhere you look in every neighborhood, the projects are in full gear and the hot City gets even hotter. From the small single residents to the Multi Million Dollar Developments that total well over 1 Billion Dollars.

What of the impact on fire and police? status quo??? Why

MAY 31, 1989

Why are we so hot in hype and status quo in protection?

Councilman Petrosinelli's 4th Ward has much to be proud of: Park Slope Apartments, Wanskuck Mills Project, Housing on every available vacant lot.

Councilman Annaldo's Ward has already experienced the crush of Providence College on city services, on the impact their expansion has on our neighborhood.

I live in that Ward. I have seen the 3 new high-rise Dorms for students on the corners of Huxley<sup>/Avenue</sup> and Eaton Street built Brick by Brick.

On the River Avenue side sits the brand new high-rise priory for elderly retired brothers. Roger Williams Hospital built a new state-wide cancer treatment facility.

Council President Easton's speech two weeks ago at Roger Williams Park Casino made many more aware of the increase in new buildings in Washington Park as well as all the restoration work.

The Zoo boasts of its penguins, polar bears and Million Dollar Carousel.

Councilwoman DiRuzzo, Councilman Stravato - your district's increase in building of new houses and Neutaconkanut Park condo's -

Farmington Avenue Complex, Murray Street Complex are only a few of the many developments that will add to Manton Heights and the "Soho" at Imperial Point.

Yet status quo for public safety? Something is wrong.

Who must bear the burden of impact with no increases in public protection - ?

We all will in the end - but the Providence Firefighters' are hurting now.

Finance Committee - Chairwoman Brassil - in Fox Point, the India Point Development is most expansive - Hotels, High-Rises, Marina's and Restaurants. This expansion without protection is a danger to the residents and to the firefighters. Is this a status quo City I describe? I think not!

Not too long ago some of your districts had 2 and 3 fire stations. Today, cut after cut leaves us with just 1 in each of the 15 districts. All of you have only 1 station

MAY 31, 1989

and it is seriously undermanned. Look at the rest of New England. The eight other comparable cities and the protection they offer residents and firefighters. One station per district is not enough, but we are not here to address the need for new stations. The issue at hand is a request for the basic minimum levels of 4 and 5 per truck. That brings us to the Hot City -

The center of it all! The major Multi Million Dollar Capital Center Project - the Foundry - New Harbor Master Plan - 3 Luxury High-Rise Hotels - Citizens Bank Plaza - and these are just the tip of the iceberg. The Titanic would never sink, well it did - thousands died.

The high rises won't burn - wrong - they have and they will right here in downtown Providence.

The City's development is far from status quo - the City's expansion is far from status quo - the impact is there. The impact is a danger. We did not accept when we took the job. We know the inherent risks associated with a career in firefighting, but, were told the City would, within their powers minimize the risk, minimize the likeliness of injury or death. That is not true with a status quo budget.

A status quo budget in the face of over 1 Billion Dollars worth of expansion is criminal. No one. Civilian or Firefighter should be placed at a greater risk, to save on a budget? What is the purpose? Expansion is a reality - that must be equally matched in reality with man power.

The City's decision to cut the number of available Providence Firefighters, while taking all steps necessary to encourage the crush of new development downtown, directly threatens the health, safety and lives of the understaffed Providence Firefighters. The extensive new construction throughout Providence creates increasingly dense concentrations of building, people and vehicles, particularly downtown. It is obvious that the extensive urban development reshaping Providence requires appropriate public safety planning reinforcements for the public safety net known as the Providence Fire Department, a public safety net that protects and rescues more people from injury, death or loss by fire and other hazards than all other Rhode Island Fire Departments combined.

Rapid economic development and increasing concentrations

MAY 31, 1989

of buildings, people and vehicles require appropriate public safety planning. Would the City move a river without first shoring up its new banks? Why then should it foster economic expansion and encourage new downtown construction without taking appropriate public safety precautions? Unfortunately, "the city that works" does not require a Fire Department that works without creating undo hazards for the City's dedicated Firefighters.

Consider all the growth and development that Providence has experienced since 1969. A single point of reference, the heightened traffic and accident rates on Interstates 95 and 195, aptly demonstrates the nature of the public safety problems generated by dense urban concentrations. Nevertheless, the Providence Fire Department has capped and in some respect decreased the number of Firefighters from the level maintained by the City back in 1969.

Consistent with the Firefighters code of protecting civilian lives without regard to personal risks, since New Year's Eve, Fire Department Chief's have participated in rescue and pulling fire hoses at working structure fires. While such hard and dangerous work is commendable, it ignores the critical need for an adequate command structure supported by staffing levels sufficient to assure reasonable Firefighters and public safety. The City's refusal to maintain adequate four or five men on trucks directly threatens Providence Firefighters and creates substantial safety risks to the general public.

Day and night, Providence Firefighters put their lives on line to protect the property and lives of the citizens of Providence.

While the Providence Firefighters fully understand that their long-term exposure to smoke, toxic gases and hazardous chemicals dramatically reduces the risks to protect the people of Providence.

Fire protection is not just the number of fire trucks but the proper number of firefighters on each truck, each and every shift.

Best stated, the protection is best measured by how many firefighters can be at your home or business in the amount

MAY 31, 1989

of time necessary to keep a small fire small. Firefighters should not be asked to perform tasks where there is a demonstrated lack of manpower.

Manpower to perform with a reasonable degree of safety.

It is not fair to the community, to you, to your families, to the firefighters or to the firefighters families.

We believe this City is on another crash course with a tragedy similar to the 1977 Providence College Fire. That same night that 10 girls died, a Providence Firefighter was killed in the line of duty, killed in the line of duty at a separate fire.

Members of Local 799 Providence Firefighters can expect to die a full 10 years earlier than the normal population.

The present policy of 3 men on a truck threatens firefighters and increases your risk of death or injury.

Every other City in New England of comparable size runs with four or five men per truck. In Providence, disabilities occur at totally unacceptable rates. We need the minimum authorized National Standards without them the human and economic cost are unacceptable. The year just passed was a record setting number of disabilities, 25 permanent career ending disabilities while Hartford, Connecticut had only 3 injury disabilities - firefighters crippled in the prime of their careers. These numbers would be unacceptable in a City that has no growth, no expansion, no industry. This is not the case. Providence is "a City on the move". According to Newsweek Magazine "one of America's Hot Cities".

Just last week, two former New York City Fire Department Chiefs who are now expert consultants, testified in Providence at an Arbitration Hearing, that three men per truck constituted a dangerous practice that posed unreasonable hazards for the Public as well as the Providence Firefighters. "A crapshoot" to quote John J.O.! The manpower levels are inadequate to...a major down such as a high rise structure fire.

The deterioration and cuts in manpower can no longer be accepted. We cannot do the job safely any longer and the injuries and disabilities continue to mount.

Chief Moise's own sworn testimony in Hartford, CT and in

MAY 31, 1989

and in Providence, last week stated that the Providence Firefighters should be working with five and six on a truck instead of 3 if he had his way. The New York City Chief's stayed at the Biltmore Hotel and were disturbed by the conditions they witnessed - no sprinklered rooms and other dangerous features. The Fleet Building and Hospital Trust Bank are not properly protected for a fire - for manpower rescue operations occupants above the 6th or 7th floors would have a serious problem being rescued. The three man companies in Downtown Districts goes against all safety standards recognized in the Fire Industry. Dangerously below any expert advice.

The New York City Fire Experts toured the City and considered it a micro-cosim of New York.

Local 799 is here for your neighborhood's protection and their own. We cannot continue to have 5.7 times the National Injury rate.

National is 26 hours per man.

Providence is 155 hours per man.

Per 100 Firefighters we face no better - 40.2 vs. 29.2 Nationally and in New England 18.2 and 14.2.

We love the job, but the explanation for these disturbing injury rates should shock and appall you.

The chart of comparable cities shows Providence dead last in fire suppression manpower throughout New England.

The roll of the dice must end and we turn to you for action to stop our injuries with proper staffing on our 15 engines and 8 ladders, of 4 and 5 per truck.

We literally cannot live with a status quo budget.

Please take the time with the handbooks we are leaving you and reassess the City's Hot Future, I ask you, just how hot will it be! "

He further submits the following figures and the number of times rescues, ladder companies and engines have made runs:

MAY 31, 1989

Rescue Runs totalling 8,728 for 1989.

Engine company runs as follows:

	1988	1989
Engine 2	660	673
Engine 4	339	287
Engine 5	251	284
Engine 6	699	648
Engine 8	1092	1146
Engine 9	639	631
Engine 12	684	837
Engine 14	935	989
Engine 15	776	794
Ladder 2	289	295
Ladder 3	173	197
Ladder 6	295	293
Ladder 7		170
Ladder 8	290	269

Chairwoman Brassil asks if there any other people requesting to be heard and there are none.

Chairwoman Brassil questions the members of the Council if they have any questions for Mr. Day and they have none.

ADJOURNMENT. On motion of Councilman Dillon, seconded by Councilwoman Fargnoli, adjournment is taken at 7:10 o'clock P.M.

*Rose M. Mendola*  
CLERK

COPIED *[Signature]*  
COMPARED *[Signature]*