

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK
CITY HALL
MARCH 3, 1997

The Committee on Finance meets this day in Committee Room "A",
Department of City Clerk, at 5:00 o'clock P.M.

PRESENT: Chairwoman Nolan, Vice Chairman Rollins, Council President
Fargnoli, Councilman Igliazzi, Councilman Mancini-5.

Also present are Richard Rafanovic, Chief Engineer, Water Supply Board,
Sam Shamoon, Planning & Development, Phyliss Tennian, President, Teacher's
Union, Councilwoman DiRuzzo, Councilman DeLuca, Paul Vorro, School
Department, Barbara A. Poirier, Second Deputy City Clerk and Anna M. Stetson,
Assistant Clerk.

Chairwoman Nolan requests to take the matters out of sequence:

**Resolution authorizing the City Collector to cancel or abate, in whole,
the taxes assessed in the amount of \$17,202.12 for the property located
on Assessor's Plat 63 Lot 498, 300-302 Manton Avenue in accordance
with Rhode Island General Law Section 44-7-23.**

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: The reason that this was sent back to
committee was because we didn't have a lot of knowledge about it.

MR. SHAMOON: This is a property where there is presently a building
that is in pretty bad condition. At one time the PRA was considering having it
demolished but feels that the building can be saved. It has been used for 10
residential units and two commercial units. The PRA has a buyer, Dr. Onyasana,
who is going to acquire from the PRA basically at the value of the land, which is
about \$3.00 per foot. It comes out to about approximately a little more than
\$10,000 to the PRA. He will re-hab those buildings. There will be no subsidies or
additional payments or grants from the city to him. He will develop it into six
residential units. So the 10 residential, two commercial gets reduced to six
residential. The problem with this is the taxes that are owed on it would not make
this a viable project. In order to make it viable, the PRA is requesting that the
taxes be abated so that they can then turn and sell it. The PRA presently owns the
property.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN; Councilman DeLuca is that explanation
satisfactory to you or do you have some questions?

JOHN MANGELLI: I am here in regard to the property at 300 Manton
Avenue. It generally stated that there were 10 apartments and two stores and I
have a zoning certificate here that states that there are 8 apartments and one store.
That's from 1992. I have been involved with the building up to 1992. Originally

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it was owned by the federal government and it was given to the City of Providence at no fee. One of the federal government's priority's was that it was supposed to go to non profit or low income housing. I had submitted several proposals over the years to the Providence Redevelopment to do the building over. I was financing it myself and not seeking bank financing. The big article was the tax abatement. My only question is is this low income housing or not, and if you do grant a tax abatement can it be tied into a priority to following the federal standard of low income housing and non profit. I have a piece of property about 100 feet from that property.

MR. SHAMOON: My understanding is that he is not seeking additional subsidies so whether it is to become low income housing or not, I don't have the answer to that. The PRA could put stipulations on the sale of property if the council directs them to.

COUNCILMAN DELUCA: I don't think you are going to have anything but low income housing. Just some history on the individual that is purchasing this. Is he a developer? What kind of a doctor is he?

MR. SHAMOON: He is an investor and I do not know what kind of doctor he is.

COUNCILMAN DELUCA: Was there a bidding process for this building?

MR. SHAMOON: Yes, the PRA puts properties out for public bidding. They advertise their properties and invite developers and prospective people who want to develop or own the property and he was the one that was selected. He was apparently the only one who came forward on this particular property in this round.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: So this other gentlemen didn't come forward?

MR. MANGELLI: I handed in proposals almost every year. I talked to Bill Floriani going back four or five months ago. The only thing that he mentioned at that time is there was a meeting for a tax abatement. My only concern is that the building is a real eyesore for the neighborhood. Just as long as it is done right. I know the building thoroughly, but it is really dragging the area down. I hate to see someone go in there and drain it for income. I have a very good tract record. I have lived in everyone of my apartments that I have owned. It's right on Manton Avenue.

COUNCILMAN DELUCA: I just ask that a stipulation be put ...I would like to see the development plan...I had hoped that Mr. Floriani would have been here. I am totally in the dark on this issue.

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CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Why don't we schedule this for next week because we have a lot of things on our agenda.

COUNCILMAN DELUCA: You can pass this because I can contact Mr. Floriani and we can get together and not take up the committee's time.

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

Motion carries.

Resolution requesting the City Collector to cancel or abate, in whole, the taxes assessed in the amount of \$4,525.71 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.

MR. SHAMOON: The request here is to abate the taxes which is a corner parcel at the corner of Hawkins and Branch Avenue. It is presently vacant. The adjacent property owner would like to acquire it. The parcel is 3200 square feet. It is a small lot, it is not buildable.

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

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: My question is can you abate taxes already accrued? We don't have a tax treaty before us. You are asking us to abate taxes in the amount of \$4,500 and you are asking for all taxes that are accrued since 1996 until it's sold, I don't think you can do that.

MR. SHAMOON: My understanding is that it is just for the PRA, but the future owner will pay taxes on it. This isn't a tax treaty for....

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: You are missing my point. I don't think we can accrue in the future. You can't abate taxes that haven't been accrued. Once you have a number, you can abate that amount.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Do you want to come in again?

MR. SHAMOON: I could find out more about it. However you want to do it.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: You can't abate taxes from today until it's sold, is my point. You have to have an amount that you are abating.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: It says the amount of \$4,500 plus all taxes that accrue from 1996 until they sell the property. I don't think that is what the ordinance says.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: If you have an amount, we can abate it. Do you have that amount for 1996?

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MR. SHAMOON: I do not have that amount.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: That is the reason why it's required to have it attached. This is state law we are talking about, not just city ordinance.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Can we have a motion to continue this until we get additional information.

On motion of Councilman Igliazzi, seconded by Council President Fargnoli, it is voted to continue the abatement on the property of 248 Hawkins Street.

Motion carries.

Communication dated January 21, 1997 from Arthur M. Zarrella, Superintendent of Providence Public Schools, informing the Honorable Members of the City Council that a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the Providence School Board and the Providence Teachers Union Local 958 A.F.T. for 1996 through 1999.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: This is a compromise from the Trust Agreement and all parties agree to do whatever is necessary to make sure that we have a Trust Agreement within the near future. I am satisfied. I think it is a show of good faith on our part to accept it instead of the Trust Agreement. I think all the parties are satisfied. Does the committee have any questions?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Are you planning a meeting Mrs. Tennian with your board to make this Trust Agreement.

MRS. TENNIAN: What I hope to do is meet with my executive board to get preliminary approval to finalize the Trust Agreement and then bring it before my executive board prior to the next regular membership meeting.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Do you foresee any problems or do you think it's something that's palatable to all concerned.

MRS. TENNIAN: I think it's something that everybody wants. I never objected to the Trust Agreement itself, only the timing of it. I think it's in all of our best interest.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Do you think 30 days is reasonable for us to expect something?

MRS. TENNIAN: I think it will happen.

On motion of Councilman Igliazzi, seconded by Council President Fargnoli, it is voted to pass the Teacher's Agreement.

Motion carries.

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Communication dated January 21, 1997, from Arthur M. Zarrella, Superintendent of Providence Public Schools, informing the Honorable Members of the City Council that a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the Providence School Board and the Association of Providence Public Schools and Staff Administrators for the years 1996 through 1999.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Since this contract pretty much piggybacks on the Teacher's contract, do you have any questions for Mr. Vorro.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Will the administrators also be subject to review as the teacher's are going to be?

MR. VORRO: All administrators are included in this on a yearly basis.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: How about a new principal, do you do a little more evaluating?

MR. VORRO: What we have done recently when there is a new principal coming into place, we assign the more senior principal. We have an agreement to put....so there is an entry program that goes on.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: And there is a mentoring program that goes on if there is a problem with an administrator, you can bring in a senior person or someone from outside to work with that individual? Has that worked?

MR. VORRO: Yes it has.

On motion of Councilman Igliozzi, seconded by Council President Fagnoli, it is voted to approve the agreement with the School Administrators.

Motion carries.

An Ordinance in Amendment of and in Addition to the Classes of Position, the Maximum Number of Employees and the Number of Employees in Certain Classes in the Providence Water Supply Board and Repealing Ordinance Chapter 1996-44, approved November 15, 1996.

An Ordinance in Amendment of and in Addition to the Providence Water Supply Board Compensation Ordinance, approved November 15, 1996, and repealing Ordinance Chapter 1996-43.

MR. RAFANOVIC: We are submitting ordinances as indicated. None of them adds additional positions. We are requesting for the establishing of the senior administrative clerk. We are indicating five positions should be considered. Three of them are being contemplated to be filled right now and the result of that change is that the employees in this group are going to go to Grade 18. There is a change in responsibility and I have with me Mr. Russo, the Director of the

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Department of Transmission and Distribution who can go through the details of the changes of the assignment. The changes of work are conditions that have occurred as a result of changes in legislation such as thethe result of computerization of some of our work order systems. Better control over our paving responsibilities and related work. Those are not changes that have been started from our employees, but those are changes that we have initiated becausewe have been making these employees incrementally to do more and more work, consistent with these classifications and I feel that it is time to be fair...it has gone so far out of sync with the regional classification that it is now time to make that change. Similarly the senior meter reader technician, this will affect existing employees who are right now called meter mechanics. We have previously negotiated with the union the combining of meter readers and meter reader technicians into one group so we can mix and match as needed. We have also negotiated a provision that these employees, especially new hires, would be working a Tuesday through Saturday shift, which we dearly need, because we cannot enter many of the houses that are two member wage earners and frequently elderly people who will not let us come in unless one of their relatives is with them. So as a result of these changes, we needed to create a special class of senior meter reader technicians that will also work with all these people on a going forward basis. We need to train them so they can also test and repair larger meters. Right now meters 2" and larger are being done either by the property owners or by others upon our request, and that is not a very good arrangement when so called people who want to demonstrate that the water bill is different and is higher and have people repair the meters rather than us doing that. That is the objective of the senior meter reader technician.

The account collector is an existing class. We have two employees. Their responsibilities have increased substantially. We are not asking for a new class, we are just asking for a change in classification to Grade 18. There is one individual that we have. This is basically an engineering type of field individual. We are moving this grade up from 24 to 25, which is about \$25.00 per week.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Do you have the previous salaries of these people?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Yes, I have that. The distribution clerical assistant salary...I can give you the grade, the weekly pay or the yearly pay.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Are these different senior administrative clerks at different salary rates?

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MR. RAFANOVIC: Three of them have different salary rates. Three of them we are planning to move. Two of them are not going to be filled immediately, they will be filled at some future time when posting comes about. One of them is a distribution who is now a Grade 14, and will go to Grade 18.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: What is the pay differential between the two grades.

MR. RAFANOVIC: It's from \$502.98 per week to \$541.80.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Her duties have changed that substantially to warrant that raise.

MR. RAFANOVIC: They have. The next one is currently called a secretary and it will go from \$484.53 to \$541.80. That's about 11.82 percent. It's not an individual job. All three people will be doing the same work and they will be interchangeable.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Have you been working with Kathy Moretti on these?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Yes I have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: You looked over the Wyatt Study and what they are recommending for this type of position?

MR. RAFANOVIC: This position didn't exist when the Wyatt Study was considered. Ms. Moretti is aware of this, we are working with her, she understands....

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Did she finally get her figures from you that she was waiting for?

MR. RAFANOVIC: No. One of the reasons is that our personnel officer has been out for two weeks.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Not acceptable.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Let's continue this until this until Ms. Moretti gets her figures.

MR. RAFANOVIC: Let me explain first. These are new positions. There are no existing employees. I have the job specifications here. But there are no employees who have performed in that class now. They have performed in a gradually changing environment.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Some of the figures the Wyatt Study were waiting for the Water Supply Board never furnished. Kathy Moretti was waiting for the figures and she never received them.

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CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Do you want to continue your presentation? I don't think we are going to pass anything tonight.

MR. RAFANOVIC: I would like to finish it. I did explain that the position of the water technician...that salary is

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Is this from Senior Water Technician?

MR. RAFANOVIC: It's from Senior Water Technician to Senior Technician going from \$619.89 to \$646.17. It's about a 5 percent increase.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Then on top of that if the contract passes they will get an additional 3 percent on top of that?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Yes, these classifications adjustments are regardless or separate or in addition to contract changes.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: Any other jobs we haven't covered? Meter Reader Technician?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Meter Reader Technican is...

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN; Do they actually repair meters or do they just take meter readings.

MR. RAFANOVIC: They install and repair meters and the wiring and the remote devices and they will also do testing of meters as necessary. We have to test meters quite often. The Meter Reader Technican is actually a decrease from \$13.13 to \$12.73 and there are 11 people. The reason that it is on the ordinance is because it has an additional .50 cent per hour for a shift change from Tuesday through Saturday versus the standard workweek Monday through Friday.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: So that's a wash.

MR. RAINVILLE: That's more than a wash. It's a \$9,000 gain. The Senior Meter Reader Technician will go from \$12.55 to \$13.55. Certainly we cannot have a Wyatt Study on that because nobody has ever done that. This is something that we are asking authorizations to do and we have to acquire the equipment, we have to train the people and once they are trained, then we can move them.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: How technical is reading a meter?

MR. RAFANOVIC: I am talking about the Senior Meter Reader Technician. This is repairing of large meters.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: What's their salary range from?

MR. RAFANOVIC: From \$12.55 per hour to \$13.55 per hour.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: What has changed in their jobs that warrant a \$1.00 per hour increase?

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MR. RAFANOVIC: They would be required to learn and perform the testing and repair of large meters which now has to be done by contract. There are five of them. The Account Collector is a substantial jump from \$11.00 to \$18.00. Which is from \$466.58 to \$541.80 and that is 16 percent.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: What does this person do to get this kind of increase. Let's hold off until Kathy comes in. You have given her the figures she needs to talk to us about this.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: I think this is untimely right now especially since we are considering a contract right now. The meter reading...I know that we have talked about it at the Board for so many times concerning the automated meter readings which we are waiting for determination from the PUC and just to hear that Tuesday through Saturday would have been sufficient, but you always throw in these others with it.

MR. RAFANOVIC: We are business. We are a changing operation. We have to fit conditions as they arise. We generally try to make our workers to work beyond their classification for as long as we can. There comes a point in time that we have to make it square. We do not do it the other way around. We try to stretch our people, but eventually we need to treat them fairly.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: How many account collectors do you have?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Two.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: And how much are they earning?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Right now they are earning the dollar amounts I have indicated.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: You are giving them a 16 percent increase.

MR. RAFANOVIC: They are going from \$466.00 to \$541.00 per week.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: That's a hefty raise.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: If this contract passes they will be gaining those increase also.

MR. RAFANOVIC: That is something that I want to say when the city bargains with the union, they sometimes pretend we don't exist.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: I certainly want the wages paid at the Water Supply Board to be in line with other city workers.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: One thing that I do have to compliment you on is being able to gain the Saturday readings because it's so important that the readers couldn't get into the homes.

MR. RAFANOVIC: Let me mention something else and you are going to say when will this thing end. Right now we have a group of people that watch gauges. That's what their job is. That really represents 20 percent work and 80 percent sales. I am going to try to make them work 80 percent instead of 20 percent. That means that I am going to have to try and get them to do mechanic work at the same time. I am not going to get that for free. I am going to have to do something, but when I combine the operators into mechanics we are going to get more done, but that is the only way I can do it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: How is the progress going with installing the outside meters as opposed to the inside meters.

MR. RAFANOVIC: Slow because we don't want to put devices out that we will tear out later because we won't get the review. We are only repairing the existing outside devices that fail. I am trying not to install new devices other than finishing out a particular route that is about 90 percent completed. We are before the Supreme Court right now. We have appealed the Public Utilities Commission decision. I anticipate that we will be heard by June or July on that issue. We believe that the Commission acted ----and got involved in management positions because the installation of the radio frequency units is not going to cost one cent more than the Commission authorized in the last filing. That is the substance of our suit. IN fact the last time around there was no testimony by anyone contrary to our case, yet the Commission chose to make a decision, and we are appealing that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: What was their decision?

MR. RAFANOVIC: Their decision is that we are not to install automated reading devices and we are supposed to install the external plug ins.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: Why did they allow the Gas Company to install them?

MR. RAFANOVIC: I can't answer that. They have their rationale. We don't agree with them. They believe they are right, we believe we are right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: I think you build up a lot more credibility when you appear before them because initially the Water Supply Board was never prepared to appear before them and they felt that we were not up to

snuff, but by the same token, I think you have made great progress in this area and I believe it will allow you to do this.

MR. RAFANOVIC: It is one of those difficult things. If we at the Water Supply Board are to improve the efficiency and operation, we must be able to...it's very difficult to negotiate in a union environment and do this and then come here. We have to do these thingsI believe we have improved operation and efficiency significantly and in my basic experience in a unionized environment, you never get changes in existing working condition for nothing. You just don't get it.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: So you can get the information that you need to Kathy Moretti?

MR. RAFANOVIC; I will provide her job specifications and I will provide whatever I can, but I honestly feel that there are many positions that I am asking prospectively. Not each and every one of them, there are certain positions that I am asking propsectively and there is no way of existing employees to produce a report for Ms. Moretti that shows existing conditions. In the case of some of the jobs that Mr. Russo has, yes we can do that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: You can do it with the collectors. We have collectors downstairs in the collector's office.

MR. RAFANOVIC: I can do that with them and I can do that with the administrative clerks. I cannot do that with the Senior Water Meter Reader Technician because you don't have the equipment. I am not moving these people up until they complete training and want the ordinances in place. That is the condition that I have negotiated with the union, that all these people move upon completion of training. It isn't we will give it to you now, and maybe you will get training. No. The training comes first. You complete the training, you show proficiency and then we move.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: This is not costing any additional dollars?

MR. RAFANOVIC: They are talking some additional dollars.

CHAIRWOMAN NOLAN: I thought you said it was going to save you money.

MR. RAFANOVIC: Let me explain. It doesn't cost a rate increase. It doesn't cost additional dollars in the budget. It is internal, but the individuals will get more money. It is not costing in the aggregate. I am not asking for a budget increase.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT FARGNOLI: When you propose your budget for next year, why can't you put these into your budget at that time?

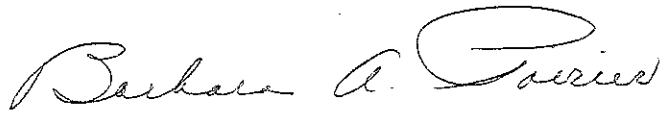
MR. RAFANOVIC: I am going to anyway. I am behind six months already.

On motion of Council President Fagnoli, seconded by Councilman Mancini, it is voted to continue the foregoing matter until Kathy Moretti receives the information from the Water Supply Board.

Resolution Reporting Receipts of Certain Gifts of Monies by the Board of Park Commissioners for specified burial lots in North Burial Ground.

On motion of Councilman Iglizzi, seconded by Councilman Mancini, it is voted to Receive the foregoing matter.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion of Councilman Iglizzi, seconded by Councilman Mancini, it is voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 o'clock p.m.


SECOND DEPUTY CITY CLERK


ASSISTANT CLERK