

MAY 28, 1986

CITY OF PROVIDENCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX RATE CHANGE

The City proposes to increase its property tax levy to \$111,280,776.31 in the 1986-1987 budget year; the property tax levy this year is \$108,847,318.29, this is a proposed increase of 2.2%.

It has been estimated that the proposed tax revenue will result in a property tax rate of \$72.49 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation as compared to the current property tax rate of \$72.49 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

A property tax rate of \$74.80 would be needed in the coming budget year to raise revenues and one half (5.5%) more as an adjustment for increased costs than the property revenues being raised in the current budget year.

The City of Providence budget will be considered at a special meeting to be held on May 28, 1986 at 4:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Providence City Hall.

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 REPORT TO TAXPAYERS ON CURRENT AND PROPOSED BUDGET AND PROPOSED FEDERAL REVENUE SHARING USE

	Amounts Actually Budgeted For		Proposed Federal Revenue Sharing Used		
	Current Year	Proposed Budget	Sharing Used		
	7/1/85-6/30/86	7/1/86-6/30/87	7/1/86-6/30/87	Capital	Use
	Operating	Capital	Operating	Capital	Use
1. Executive Legislative	\$2,690,119	\$23,900	\$2,854,832	\$26,730	
Judicial					
2. Finance Dept. Admin.	5,525,929	34,360	6,801,055	28,259	
Debt Service	13,149,998		12,982,358		
Pension	9,656,018		9,968,560		
Fringe Benefit	7,577,350		8,822,050		
3. Public Safety	25,817,137	841,173	33,447,011	459,648	745,876
4. Inspection & Standards	1,342,501		1,512,901	2,000	
5. Public Works	9,036,593	197,214	7,330,584	407,864	
6. Port of Providence	783,143	30,000	791,879		
7. Public Property	2,560,148	266,900	2,490,001	3,200	
8. Recreation	487,920	5,000	581,225		
9. Public Parks	3,263,866	105,330	3,658,890	7,500	
10. Education	71,200,000	100,000	75,146,776	190,330	
11. Other Depts.	2,032,394	4,276	2,230,391	4,150	
12. General Public Assistance	17,492,655	5,000	16,147,600		
13. Miscellaneous	293,700		78,000		
14. Grants	1,182,423		1,452,644		
15. Public Celebrations	6,350		6,900		
Total Expenditures	\$178,856,244	\$1,613,153	\$186,303,680	\$1,158,481	\$745,876
REVENUES					
1. Local Property	\$105,123,836		\$107,509,048		
2. Local Non-Property	7,561,985		7,016,700		
3. Federal	4,936,000		745,876		
4. State	56,765,401		63,793,247		
5. General Debts	6,088,812		6,849,325		
6. Transfer from Other Funds	-0-		2,294,829		
	\$180,476,034		188,209,025		

MAY 28, 1986

-2-

The Committee on Finance meets this day at 4:30 o'clock P.M. in the Council Chamber, City Hall, at which time a Public Hearing is conducted in accordance with the above advertisement.

PRESENT: Councilwoman Carolyn F. Brassil, Chairwoman, Councilmen Dillon and Farmer, and Councilwoman Fagnoli.

Also present are Finance Director Jerome I. Baron, Alex Prignano, and Mark Dunham of the Finance Department, Director of Administration John Simmons, and City Internal Auditor Stephen Woerner. (Rose M. Mendonca, Clerk and Sandra P. Ginsberg, Assistant Clerk).

Chairwoman Brassil calls the first person requesting to be heard.

JOHN DE LUCA (DaVinci Center)

Mr. DeLuca is Executive Director of the DaVinci Center and states he is also here as one of the representatives of the Multi-Service Center Executive Directors' Association.

Mr. DeLuca reads the following letter

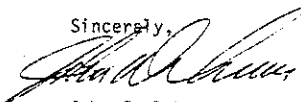
Dear Ms. Brassil:

Rather than a statement, I would like to pose some questions. The first of which questions is, whether or not it is the responsibility of a municipality to care for those of its constituents who are poor, hungry, frail-elderly and those generally struggling for survival. This is a question which we must explore. The taxpayer in paying his or her taxes does so in good faith with the hope and trust that the city government be comprehensive in caring for the needs of its residence. In paying the tax dollar, the taxpayer needs to be assured that he or she is purchasing proper police and fire protection and general public safety; that there are parks, recreation, sanitation, education and generally all those services that enhance the quality of lives of the residents of that particular area. A large part of these public services should include a social service delivery system. Without such social service delivery system a gaping void is left in those services expected from the taxpayer. Certainly the plight of one affects the lives of many and the quality of life of one affects the quality of lives of many, therefore, shouldn't the taxpayers reasonably expect that such services be purchased by the tax dollar? Perhaps some expect that the private sector; major corporations, United Way, various foundations are going to support a comprehensive social service delivery system. Certainly it is not totally their responsibility. Perhaps some expect the local churches and synagogue to be totally responsible for social service delivery. Certainly the answer to that also would be that it is not totally their responsibility. No doubt the church and the private sector will do their share but primarily where does the responsibility lie? Again, isn't it true that when taxpayers pay their dollars they can rightfully expect that in return that government, to whom they pay that dollar, should in return be assuring the general public that social services are delivered.

In the City of Providence there is a comprehensive social service delivery/network in place and that network in part is in the form of your neighborhood community centers. These neighborhood centers are very competent in their social service delivery. Their existence has been ephemeral at most with some centers more vulnerable than others. No doubt, the future of any agency is always taken year-by-year. There is no guarantee that they will exist several years in the future without a solid funding base. We must not take these agencies for granted. Is it the responsibility of the city to assume some of the financing from its tax base to support these centers?

We have a model here in the City of Providence which many cities throughout the country emulate. Will their existence continue to be year-by-year or can the citizens of this area expect that a social service delivery system supported through their tax dollars will be depended upon at a time in their lives when they may need it. Without such assurance, isn't it true that a gaping void is left in what should be a comprehensive approach to government?

Sincerely,



John F. DeLuca
Executive Director

MAXINE LEVENTHAL (Washington Park Community Center)

Mrs. Leventhal is Executive Director of the Washington Park Community Center and is also here as a representative of the Multi-Service Center Executive Directors' Association.

Mrs. Leventhal reads the following statement:

MAY 28, 1986

-3-

TO CHAIRPERSON CAROLYN BRASSIL AND MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

My name is Maxine Leventhal and I am the Director of the Washington Park Community Center. I am here to speak on behalf of the Multi-Purpose Executive Directors Association about the proposed budget cuts to our centers.

I would like to make known to the Finance Committee the impact these cuts will mean to the delivery of human services to the neighborhood people who utilize our centers. For Seniors, who would provide the daily mealsite program for approximately 600 seniors daily? For children, Community Centers provide daycare, after school care and Teen programs at night for hundreds of children each day. We provide emergency food, crisis counseling and intervention, commodity distributions and community meetings.

The Recreation Department uses our centers for their Summer Lunch Program to provide lunches to approximately 1,000 youths per day. Community centers play a vital role in serving the Seniors, Youth and those who are in need of emergency assistance.

I ask members of this Committee what other agencies in Providence could provide all of these services for so little money? I urge you to consider our request to make room in your budget to continue funding the Community Centers at the present level.

STEVEN PATRIARCA (Silver Lake Annex Community Center)

Mr. Patriarca is Executive Director of the Silver Lake Annex Community Center and is also here as a representative of the Multi-Service Center Executive Directors Association.

He reads the following letter:

In light of this afternoon's testimony I would like to reinforce one very important aspect of our request, the eleven Multi-purpose community centers are the only social service delivery system within the City of Providence.

The Center's have come to be the focal point within each city neighborhood for supportive and direct services. In addition, they also serve as the major delivery mechanism for City, State and Federal sponsored programs.

Any disruption of services allowed to occur will serve to create an environment of chaos, alienation and risk for many of our fellow city residents.

To this end we respectfully request your support.

DAVID MORTON (Elmwood Community Center)

Mr. Morton is Executive Director of the Elmwood Community Center and states it is his responsibility to better explain what it is the multi-service centers actually do.

There are four general classifications of activities at these Centers: Youth-Adult-Senior Citizen-General Area of many services to the public.

Their Senior Citizen programs offer one free meal a day, at lunchtime; their Social Services program deal primarily with the family; Day Care opportunities (which are growing to the point where they can no longer cope); After School Programs for children (which include study programs and recreation programs).

He states they are at the point now that they are helping the Providence Schools directly with the principals and teachers in order to come up with the tutorial programs that will be advantageous to the children.

MAY 28, 1986

-4-

They have special programs for minorities, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and also bi-lingual outreach.

In addition to all of these, there are a whole range of summer programs, which include basketball, camps, and other programs designed to keep the "kids" off the streets and doing something for themselves.

He speaks of Providence 350. He states all of his colleagues here, as well as himself, are involved heavily in the development of putting that program together for the summer. He states that if they had not taken the responsibility for it, it would not have been taken care of.

These organizations can and will meet the needs of the public and come up with programs that work.

KATHRYN MC GAFFEY (Nickerson Community Center)

Mrs. McGaffey is the Executive Director of Nickerson Community Center, as well as the Chairman of the Multi-Service Center Executive Directors Association.

She states that her organization is here today to request inclusion in the City's budget for \$310,700 to cover anticipated federal cuts.

She states that during this decade, the Community Centers have faced actual dollar reductions in school foods' reimbursements; in third-party Day Care reimbursements; in the elimination of previously funded programs. She states that even the United Way's allocations have not kept up with the inflation rate.

At the same time, she states the demand for services has increased. More elderly are at their mealsites. The Day Care demand has doubled as single parents try to support their families, and even families require two working people to pay the increased cost of living. Most men today cannot support a family all by themselves on their paychecks.

The hungry and the homeless are coming to the Centers in need of emergency services. Prior to 1982, there was very little demand for emergency food programs, but today agencies are spending thousands of dollars every single year for food. In addition to that, they provide staff to buy the food, hand out the food, and then to help the clients with the underlying problems (helping them to do budgets to find out why they ran out of food and what can be done about it).

The public and private school systems are both knocking on their doors, relying on them for tutoring and counseling that will keep youngsters in school.

As the local branches of the public library close or reduce their hours, they increased their libraries by begging, borrowing and got donations of encyclopedias and other reference books so the youngsters could do their homework.

MAY 28, 1986

-5-

The increase in demand for shrinking resources has had an impact on the Centers. Over the last decade, their fiscal management has gotten very tight, and they all think twice before they spend a nickel on anything. They work with a minimum amount of staff, when this is a staff-intensive industry. Their staff work multiple jobs for low wages. She cites as an example an employee of hers who processes emergency food applications, supervises kids in the gym, teaches ceramics to seniors, arranges for the rental of their gym and other rooms, locks up after nighttime functions, and teaches wood shop, all for \$4.35 an hour.

She states that the Centers can no longer compete with business and industry, that a Day Care Teacher with four years of college can make more money at McDonald's. Some of the Centers have had key positions open for months because bookkeepers will not work for \$12,000 a year.

Their insurance costs have also reached unheard of levels. Yet in spite of all the difficulties and pressures, they remain committed to meeting the needs of the Providence neighborhoods.

Collectively, the Community Centers cover the North, South, East and Western sectors of Providence, serving people of all races, nationalities, and ages. They feed the hungry and the elderly and provide day care to single parents and working families. They keep youth in school through their tutorial and counseling programs, and find shelter for the hungry and homeless and give them food and clothing.

She states that they also serve the City by their leadership role in the communities, by sponsoring Keep Providence Beautiful cleanups and supplying trucks, shovels and people. They organize Neighborhood Jubilee 350 Festivals by holding meetings at their Centers, taking care of correspondence and coordinating everything from food to entertainment through cleanup.

They also host neighborhood meetings on crime prevention, housing programs, and other items of community interest. The Mayor often uses their Centers for his neighborhood meetings, as has Representative Claudine Schneider. They are available to elected officials whenever they need information to get to or from their constituencies.

Mrs. McGaffey is of the opinion Providence needs these Community Centers for all the reasons she has mentioned, and more. She states these Centers are seen by the residents of Providence as the City's social service system. She states their job is a big one, and they cannot do it alone, nor continue to do the job with 30% less funding.

Something will have to "go" if the City does not pick up the reduction difference, and the Centers will have to make the tough decision as to whether they

eliminate Day Care, Tutoring, Senior Meals or Recreation, open accessibility or closed doors.

Mrs. McGaffey states that the \$310,700 can make all of the difference.

ROSE ANTONELLI, Human Relations Specialist (School Department)

Ms. Antonelli states that the School Department started with 21 Human Relations Specialists and have now been reduced to 9, according to what they have been told about the School Committee's bottom line budget. She states that her peers, parents, and students feel very sorry about this.

She states that Human Relations Specialists are an extension and an added dimension to the School Department on a para-professional level. They work with counselors, vice-principals, principals, parents and students, and especially with the minority students.

She continues that the City has many urban problems in the schools for which their skills are needed. She elaborates on their job duties and states that they identify student problems, with which they must be extra sensitive. Child abuse is a problem they often have to deal with, as well as security duties (inside and outside) to ensure things are going along smoothly.

Ms. Antonelli is of the opinion that the Human Relations Specialists are vital to the School Department.

JOSEPH FOWLKES (Providence Human Relations Commission)

Mr. Fowlkes states he is the Executive Director of the Providence Human Relations Commission and wishes to speak in support of testimony just given with respect to the Human Relations Specialists in the school system.

Fifteen or sixteen years ago, he states, he worked as an Investigator with the Commission he now directs, and at that time and subsequent years later, there were student riots in the schools. It was then perceived that perhaps individuals could establish a special relationship with the students and be able to work with them to develop a special rapport as a way to mediate and conciliate those problems. The School Department saw fit and put on some 21 individuals to perform this duty, and since that time the number has dwindled down to 9.

Mr. Fowlkes sees them as an important avenue in the School Department's administration in the fostering of better relations with students. He states that there are minority student problems, racial problems, social and domestic problems, and the Specialists are crucial to students without parental guidance or whatever guidance is important.

Mr. Fowlkes is of the opinion that they are doing an excellent job in working with the students in the schools, and he considers their work to be invaluable to the success of a harmonious school environment. Conceivably, if such individuals

were not present, conditions may revert back to some of the problems of fifteen years ago. He is sure the Council would not like to see that happen.

As a Human Relations person himself, he comes to ask for the Committee's support in maintaining Human Relations Aides in the School Department. He feels it is very essential, that they are very important, and he asks for their total support on this matter.

- - -

Chairwoman Brassil calls for anybody else who may wish to be heard, and Walter Sneed of the West Elmwood area steps forward.

WALTER SNEED (West Elmwood Neighborhood Resident)

Mr. Sneed wishes to speak on the Community Centers' issue and states that as a young individual in the Washington Park area, he can assure the Committee that the communities would be short-changed if they were deprived of the Centers because monies were not appropriated. He is on the Board of Directors of the South Providence Recreational Center and is active with the West End Community Center. He states that when youths cannot get what they need at home, the Centers fill the gaps, as they did with him when he was a youngster coming up.

He states there were six children in his family, and they had no father. If it wasn't for the Community Center in his neighborhood, he honestly feels he would not be standing before this Committee today as he is, and would instead be involved in a life of crime.

Mr. Sneed urges the Committee to give their full support to these Centers and states he would be behind them one hundred per cent if they did.

- - -

Chairwoman Brassil questions whether anyone present desires to speak on the Federal Revenue Sharing portion of the budget, and no one responds.

Chairwoman Brassil calls for any other member of the audience who might wish to speak, and there being none, the Public Hearing ends at 5:15 o'clock. The Committee will re-convene in Committee Room "A".

- - -

RECONVENTION

Mrs. Claire A. Hanscom is present and wishes to address the Committee relative to the School Department budget.

She is concerned about the supplies of the Reservoir Avenue, Roger Williams Middle School, and Central High Schools not getting to them. She states that when the school year begins, the teachers do not have enough Math, Science, and English books for all the children in the rooms.

Mrs. Hanscom asks the Committee to see if there is any way these schools could get these books and paper supplies, that she would be grateful.

MAY 28, 1986

-8-

Council President Easton is present and acknowledges that this problem has existed for years, off and on.

Chairwoman Brassil states that this Committee has to ensure that it goes in the right direction.

Council President Easton states that in many of the classrooms, they share the books, from one class to the next, and the result is the students cannot take them home because they do not have their own book.

Mrs. Hanscom takes issue with Council President Easton, stating that the students do take them home and if they lose them, their parents have to pay for them. Not all the children (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th) are getting their Math or their English books. Her son's teacher told her the children did not have enough Math books. He ordered 140 and only got 30. In another instance, he put in an order, and got "zero."

Councilman Dillon addresses a question to Director of Administration Simmons relative to whether there is a fixed amount per student budgeted for books, and he responds that there is (roughly) an allocation of \$470,000 and they are on a Basic Education Plan that designates the allocations.

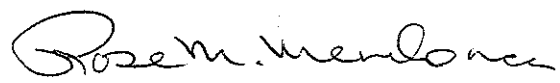
Chairwoman Brassil assures Mrs. Hanscom that this Committee will be in touch with Dr. Ricci to determine what is going on and why the children do not have the books. She assures her also that Councilman Dillon will get back to her.

Chairwoman Brassil directs the Clerk to communicate with Dr. Ricci and Assistant Superintendent Joseph Almagno to determine what the problem is at Reservoir Avenue, Roger Williams Middle, and Central High Schools with books and supplies. She wishes the Clerk to see if there is some kind of resolution to this problem.

Chairwoman Brassil states this meeting will re-convene tomorrow, May 29, 1986 at 12:00 o'clock Noon.

The Committee recesses at 5:45 o'clock P.M.


ASSISTANT CLERK


CLERK

Copied APG
Compared _____