

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 557

Approved November 22, 2011

WHEREAS, The Providence City Council and the Mayor of Providence are united in their belief that open and transparent government is essential for citizens to make informed decisions and hold officials accountable for the conduct of the people's business; and

WHEREAS, The policies and practices of the City of Providence should adhere to high standards which instill trust and confidence of local government in its citizens; and

WHEREAS, A public commitment by the Providence City Council and the Mayor of Providence to open government, transparency and establishment of new standards, as well as mechanisms to enact those standards, will facilitate the expansion of the public's access to its government; and

WHEREAS, In the spirit of the sentiment "Sunshine is the best disinfectant," as stated by United States Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, the City of Providence must provide uncomplicated and timely access to public records, and make processes transparent and open to public scrutiny in order to guard against government misconduct or mismanagement; and

WHEREAS, The people's right to know the process of governmental decision-making and to review the documents and statistics leading to determinations is basic to our society; and

WHEREAS, Advances in communications and information technologies have created more opportunities for the public to access information; and

WHEREAS, Fundamental to democracy is the right of the public to know what City government is doing, and how to access the various City departments, staff members, data and official documents; and

WHEREAS, The City of Providence posts public meetings and provides public records by request, in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws, § 42-46-8(a), the Open Meetings Act, and § 38-2-8(b), the Access to Public Records Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Open Providence Commission for Transparency and Accountability is hereby created.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission shall be chaired by John Marion, Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island and shall consist of fifteen (15) members: four to be named by the Mayor of the City of Providence, four to be named by the City Council President, and the following members (or their respective designees): the City Clerk, the City Solicitor, the Chief Information Officer, the Webmaster, the Director of ProvStat, and the Information Technology Specialist for the Providence City Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission shall perform an organizational assessment of the existing Open Government and public information technology, policies, and procedures and establish goals for increasing access to information, government accountability and transparency. To this end the Commission should:

- a) Propose a mechanism to make public information, hearings and votes accessible by suggesting changes to the way information is organized and presented on the City's website; and
- b) Investigate current technologies and propose the development of a state of the art citizen dashboard and applications to provide new capabilities that government departments can harness to improve services and responsiveness to its constituency at a lower cost; and

- c) Develop a feasible plan for implementation with consideration of the challenges inherent in the training and cultural change which is necessary for the adoption of new policies and technologies within city government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission shall include in its research the best practices regionally and nationally that have achieved quantifiable results.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission shall work to identify sources of funding to support the changes needed to make the City of Providence more open and accountable to its constituency, as laid out in this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission shall organize a public hearing, engage relevant community, business and labor stakeholders, and invite appropriate administrative staff to provide important internal and external information.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That ninety (90) days from the date of the passage of this Resolution, the Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to establish in the City of Providence an open and accountable government.

IN CITY COUNCIL

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READ AND PASSED

[Signature]
PRES.

[Signature]
CLERK
ACTING

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]
Mayor

Date: 11/22/11