

**CITY OF PROVIDENCE  
RHODE ISLAND**



**CITY COUNCIL**

**JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

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No. 34 City Council Special Meeting, Thursday, April 28, 1988, 7:30 P.M. (E.D.T.)

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**IN CITY COUNCIL  
MAY 19 1988**

**APPROVED:**

**PRESIDING** *Rozanne Manlowe* **CLERK**

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

**NICHOLAS W. EASTON**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: Council President Easton,  
Councilman Annaldo, Councilmen Cola,  
Dillon, Councilwomen DiRuzzo, Fagnoli,  
Councilmen Farmer, Glavin, Lopes, O'Con-  
nor, Petrosinelli, Rollins and Stravato—13.**

**Absent: Councilwoman Brassil and  
Councilman Lombardi—2.**

## INVOCATION

The Invocation is given by COUNCILMAN MALCOM FARMER, III.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COUNCILMAN DAVID G. DILLON leads the Members of the City Council and the Assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

## CALL FOR SPECIAL MEETING

COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.:

April 15, 1988

The Honorable Rose M. Mendonca  
Providence City Council  
City Hall  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Madame Clerk:

Pusuant to Section 406 of the Providence Home Rule Charter of 1980, I am this day requesting a special meeting of the Providence City Council to

be held on Thursday, April 28, 1988, at 7:30 P.M. in the City Council Chamber to consider the following ordinances:

(A) Budget message and appropriation ordiannce setting forth in detail estimates for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 1988, and ending June 30, 1989.

An ordinance making an appropriation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1989.

(B) An ordinance establishing the classes of positions, the maximum number of employees and the number of employees in certain classes in the City Departments and repealing ordinance

Chapter 1987-30, approved October 20, 1987, as amended.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

(C) An ordinance establishing a Compensation Plan for the City of Providence and repealing ordinance Chapter 1987-31, approved October 20, 1987, as amended.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.  
*Mayor of Providence*

(D) An ordinance providing for the assessment and collection of 1988 taxes, being based on one hundred percent (100%) of the 1988-1989 fiscal year tax collection.

Received.

## FROM THE CITY CLERK

The City Clerk reads the following Warrant with the City Sergeant's Return Endorsed thereon, Certifying that He did Notify the Members of the City Council of the Special Meeting to be held Thursday, April 28, 1988 at 7:30 o'clock P.M. (E.D.T.) by Personally Delivering a Copy of the Warrant on April 21, 1988.

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK  
City Hall

To Ralph Guglielmino  
*City Sergeant*

Whereas, His Honor, Joseph R. Paolino, Jr., Mayor of the City of Providence has, pursuant to Section 406 of the Providence Home Rule Charter of 1980, requested the City Clerk, in writing, to Call a Special Meeting of the City Council to be held on the 28th day of April A.D., 1988, at 7:30 o'clock P.M. (E.D.T.) for the purpose of Enacting the following:

Budget message and appropriation ordinance

setting forth in detail estimates for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 1988, and ending June 30, 1989.

An ordinance making an appropriation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1989.

An ordinance establishing the classes of positions, the maximum number of employees and the number of employees in certain classes in the City Departments and repealing ordinance Chapter 1987-30, approved October 20, 1987, as amended.

An ordinance establishing a Compensation Plan for the City of Providence and repealing

ordinance Chapter 1987-31, approved October 20, 1987, as amended.

An ordinance providing for the assessment and collection of 1988 taxes, being based on one hundred percent (100%) of the 1988-1989 fiscal year tax collection.

You are therefore, hereby commanded and required to summon each Member of the City Council to that Special Meeting, as Called.

*Hereof*, Fail Not, and make true return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon.

Given under my hand and Official Seal of the City of Providence, State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, this 21st day of April A.D., 1988.

ROSE M. MENDONCA  
*City Clerk*

April 21, 1988

I, Ralph Guglielmino, City Sergeant, do hereby certify that I have notified each Member of the City Council of the Special Meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday, April 28, 1988 at 7:30 o'clock P.M. (E.D.T.) in the Chamber of the City Council, City Hall, Providence, in accordance with the subject Warrant by delivering to each Member, a Copy thereof.

RALPH GUGLIELMINO  
*City Sergeant*

Received.

## NEW BUSINESS SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

### AT EASE

COUNCIL PRESIDENT EASTON declares the Council Stand at Ease at 7:55 o'clock P.M. to Reconvene at the Call of the Chair, and Appoints MAJORITY LEADER GLAVIN and MINORITY LEADER FARMER to Escort HIS HONOR, MAYOR JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR. to the Chamber of the City Council.

**HIS HONOR, MAYOR JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR., Presents:**

EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
City of Providence, Rhode Island

April 28, 1988

The Honorable Members of the City Council  
Providence City Hall  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Council Members:

Tonight I present for your consideration the Budget of the City of Providence for 1988-1989. Each year we have set a standard of responsible fiscal leadership, and have fashioned a controlled spending plan that maximizes services with limited resources. We have continued to implement new management procedures, to restore the fiscal integrity of our City, and to invest in the future. This year is no exception.

But, this year, we can't point to bold, new neighborhood programs or increases in services as we have in other budget messages. We're simply continuing on the successful course we've already set, providing necessary growth in essential services — in police, fire, and most importantly, in education. This budget keeps us moving cautiously forward.

This month marks the end of my first four years in office. In a way, it's the end of my first full term. As I look back on these four years, I remember — as all of you do — the chaotic fiscal situation we found when this administration took office. Our bond rating had collapsed, and the economy of the City was sliding slowly backward. It all started with the \$3,258,262 budget deficits of 1976-77. Our first challenge was to restore fiscal integrity to Providence, and we did it. But, the job isn't done. We cannot rest on our laurels.

The priorities of this budget are clear. We are

continuing to responsibly control growth in municipal spending while rebuilding our infrastructure, providing services people want, directing limited available resources where they are most needed, and continuing the professional management of City finances that has already restored our bond rating to an "A" saving us at least half of a million dollars, and reduced the deficit. Our goal is to completely eliminate the deficit by next year.

In fact, tonight I can say for the first time that the budget I'm presenting doesn't need to include funds to pay off the deficit. That's an accomplishment that we all can be proud of. You, the members of the City Council, have been instrumental in making that happen. You have adopted three consecutive budgets that ran surpluses, and we have been able to all but wipe out the deficit we inherited. Together we began four years ago this month to turn this City around and set a new financial course, a responsible course that followed honest budgets and sound management policies.

We may not be able to afford all that we want for our City — in fact we've turned down many requests from every Department Director, and there's not much that's new in this budget — there are no new jobs and no salary increases beyond the 4.7 percent negotiated in the contract. But what is new is our desire to find a new approach to future funding. We can no longer rely so heavily on property taxes as our greatest revenue source. Therefore, tonight I am signing an Executive Order establishing the Mayor's Special Commission on Alternatives to Property Tax.

I am asking this Commission to recommend not just alternatives, but actions to implement them. I have asked Gary Sasse, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Public Expenditures Council to Chair the Commission. I will be serving on this Commission and have asked the following community leaders to serve with me: Joel N. Tobey, President and Chief Executive Officer of Amica Insurance; Herbert W.

Cummings, President of Citizens Bank; Robert L. Mushkin, Executive Vice President of Fleet/Norstar; Michael Van Leesten, Chairman of the Board of Rhode Island Housing; Michael R. Marra, President of Cowan Plastic Products Corporation; Professor Thomas J. Anton, Ph.D. Brown University; Reverend John F. Cunningham O.P., President of Providence College; Marcia Reback, President of the Providence Teachers Union; Councilwoman Carolyn Brassil, Chairperson of the Finance Committee; Senator John J. Bevilacqua, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Representative K. Nicholas Tsiongas and the Mayor of Providence.

This is the year to finally make it happen! We must seek new revenue sources to lift the tax burden from the backs of neighborhood homeowners who want more services — who want to stop drugs from poisoning our children — homeowners who want to rebuild our schools and our educational system, our parks, and our roads — homeowners who want clean, safe drinking water, and clean, safe streets.

The \$217,448,195 budget I am proposing tonight keeps us moving cautiously forward. It is a conservative revaluation budget that is based on a proposed \$25 tax rate for residential property, and a \$60 tax rate for automobiles and tangible property.

This year there are many unknowns in the budget. We based our budget projections on a prudent fiscal model that included a conservative 15 percent abatement figure to ensure that all potential changes in the final total assessment would be accounted for. As the picture becomes clearer, I intend to work closely with all of you, when the tax roll is certified and our revenue base, including State aid, is more defined, to control spending and reduce the tax rate as much as possible.

It is a prudent budget that invests in education, police, and fire. It is a budget that shows a modest 6.8 percent growth because we have chosen to continue moving slowly forward on a responsible,

measured course; and because many fixed costs have dramatically increased. Blue Cross has increased for City and School employees by 12.5 percent or \$750,000. And workers compensation claims have doubled from \$550,000 to \$1 million.

As I have said, the new model upon which we based our budget projections was responsibly conservative. It included a 90 percent collection rate because we're optimistic we can increase collections. To ensure that our collection rate does not go down in a revaluation year and that it, in fact, goes up, I have instructed the Director of Finance to develop and implement a new Tax Collection Policy in conjunction with The Rhode Island Public Expenditures Council and the State Department of Administration. What the City is owed, it intends to collect!

The budget I am proposing includes an increase for education. We're not only proposing a bond issue in November for a total of \$107 million for the restoration and maintenance of our school buildings over the next 20 years, but we're including a requested 10.5 percent increase in the School Department's overall operating budget this year. This budget includes \$6 million more in City funds for education. Of that \$6 million, \$1.2 million comes from increased costs that the State has unfortunately chosen to let the City pay for, increases that come from encumbered State set-aside funds for educational programs Providence already provides. What this means is Providence is being penalized for already addressing an issue that the State is just beginning to recognize.

But a responsible City administration cannot — in good conscience — turn its back on education even if it means a modest increase in growth. As I have said — education is everybody's business. It is an investment we have chosen to make — now — because the cost of doing nothing is even greater.

There are no luxuries in this budget. We are holding the fiscal line everywhere we can, and cautiously increasing where we must. But most

importantly, we are continuing management programs we began together four years ago that set fiscal standards and procedures and helped curb growth. But we cannot turn back. We must continue to move this city forward. We must build on what we have begun.

Let us not lose sight of the investments we have made and will continue to make in our neighborhoods. With sound fiscal planning we have put more police on the streets of this city than ever before and raised the Police Department's table of organization from 412 to 440 officers; and this budget calls for a new police school to add 50 more police officers keeping the police at full complement. In just four years we have almost totally replaced an entire fleet of worn out, broken down, old police cars with 111 new vehicles, and this budget adds 30 more top of the line, fully equipped police cruisers. We bought over 300 new radios for every officer on patrol and we're adding more radios this year. There's even a new clothing allowance for police officers in this budget and funds for 10 new typewriters.

Overall, though we all want to hold spending down, everyone in this city — in every neighborhood — no matter where I go — asks for more funding for police. The price for safety is never too high! It's a price we must be willing to pay if we want to wage an effective war on crime and drugs with an army that is equipped to win in a city that is willing to fight.

In the past four years we have added three new rescues to the Fire Department, a new 90-foot Tower Ladder truck, and we have held two fire schools. The budget I propose tonight includes two additional new rescue units, another new fire school, 55 new firefighters to ensure a full complement in the Department, and a modest increase in the Fire Department budget. No! Let's not lose sight of what good fiscal management has allowed us to accomplish.

Let's not lose sight of the \$30 million investment we've been able to make in our parks, an investment that will bring new ballfields,

sports facilities, and clean, safe playgrounds to every neighborhood in the City. Good management and strong fiscal policies have allowed this administration to go beyond brick and mortar and to invest in the future. We are planning dramatic renovations to the Roger Williams Park Zoo. This is a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we're taking it.

City government is running well. It has been modernized and professionalized under this administration, and we have put it to work in the neighborhoods. The Department of Public Works has begun a new road \$3 million repaving program under the Road Improvement Trust Fund to fix roads that have not been paved in 25 years. And, under this budget, an expanded street sweeping contract will increase services to every neighborhood and the downtown, and will increase the frequency of those services.

This year revaluation has been a challenge to my administration. We have tried to mitigate the impact of increased values with a Property Tax Relief Plan that includes a 35% homesteading exemption and a two-tiered tax system. We've included a tax freeze for low income families who earn less than \$17,500 per year, and expanded the elderly exemption to include homeowners who are not just 65 years old, but 62 years old. This is a good Plan. It's a fair Plan. With it some homeowners are "bumped". Without it all homeowners are "banged". I know that on May 24th, all Providence voters will see the importance of approving the Property Tax Relief Plan. But we must get the message out! Voters must understand how important this referendum is. If they approve the referendum we can keep taxes down. If they don't approve it, everyone's taxes will go up.

We have met difficult challenges this year. We have faced a fundamental change in this City's economics. We have seen rapid growth in housing values and the impact of that growth on many families whose parents and grandparents built our neighborhoods. But we are a city that can adapt to change. We are a strong community that

can capitalize on change if we continue to show the kind of leadership that the people of Providence deserve and expect. That leadership is prudent but aggressive, creative but responsible.

We have proposed a prudent budget and developed a creative Property Tax Relief Plan. We are aggressively seeking alternative revenue sources including additional state aid, and

responsibly managing a government that will lead this City proudly into the next century.

Sincerely

JOSEPH R. PAOLINO, JR.  
*Mayor of Providence*

## RECONVENTION

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT EASTON** Reconvenes the City Council at 8:15 o'clock P.M. and directs the Clerk to Call the Roll to Ascertain if there is a Quorum Present:

**Present:** Council President Easton, Councilmen Cola, Dillon, Councilwomen DiRuzzo, Fargnoli, Councilmen Farmer, Glavin, Lopes, O'Connor, Petrosinelli, Rollins and Stravato—12.

**Absent:** Councilman Annaldo, Councilwoman Brassil and Councilman Lombardi—3.

## PRESENTATION OF BUDGET ORDINANCE

**HIS HONOR, MAYOR PAOLINO** Presents:

An Ordinance Making an Appropriation for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1989.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, on motion of **COUNCILMAN GLAVIN**, seconded by **COUNCILMAN DILLON**.

The motion to Refer, is Sustained.

## PRESENTATION OF ORDINANCES

**COUNCILMAN GLAVIN, COUNCILMAN DILLON and COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI (By Request):**

Ordinance Chapter 1987-31, approved October 20, 1987, as Amended.

An Ordinance Establishing the Classes of Positions, the Maximum Number of Employees and the Number of Employees in Certain Classes in the City Departments and repealing Ordinance Chapter 1987-30, approved October 20, 1987, as Amended.

An Ordinance Providing for the Assessment and Collection of 1988 Taxes, being based on One Hundred Percent (100%) of the 1988-1989 Fiscal Year Tax Collection.

An Ordinance Establishing a Compensation Plan for the City of Providence and repealing

Severally Referred to the Committee on Finance, on motion of COUNCILMAN GLAVIN, seconded by COUNCILMAN DILLON.

The motion to Refer, is Sustained.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion of COUNCILMAN GLAVIN, seconded by COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI, the City Council Adjourns at 8:20 o'clock P.M. (E.D.T.).

*Rose M. Mandonea*

City Clerk

April 28]

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