



January 7, 2018

Dear Fellow East Siders:

We opened the year with a major snow storm, which I hope you were able to manage successfully. Because of the storm, **garbage pickup this week will be delayed by one day**, so please put your garbage out Monday night (January 8) rather than tonight. This week's letter discusses the City Council's recent leadership election and the opportunity to serve on the Providence External Review Authority Board.

Shortly before the Christmas holiday, the City Council elected David Salvatore as President. Normally, these elections happen only once every four years at the beginning of the term, but this election was necessary because of the resignation of Councilman Aponte as President in May, 2017. He was succeeded on an interim basis by Councilwoman Matos, who had been elected President Pro Tem (also in January, 2015). Council President Salvatore was instrumental in working with the administration to address the City's serious financial issues during the "Category 5 fiscal hurricane" of 2011-12, serving as Chair of the Pension Reform Committee. That committee developed a significant pension reform plan that averted the risk of bankruptcy. The \$170 million in reforms also opened a limited window of time in which to develop a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the City's long-term financial issues that continue to loom. I am hopeful that Council President Salvatore will refocus the Council on the need to raise the level of concern and action on this issue.

As part of this reorganization, the City Council will consider a resolution at its meeting on Monday, January 8 to form a Committee on School Department Oversight, which I expect to be assigned the full portfolio of City Council responsibilities in this area, including approval of School Board appointments, collective bargaining agreements for School Department employees and the School Department budget. It is my hope that this committee will help the City Council make a useful contribution to the quality of our public schools while working in coordination with the School Department and the School Board. As a former School Board member, I am sensitive first to the importance of that body's role in setting education policy, and the importance of the School Department's role in executing that policy without unwarranted meddling from the City Council. With that said, the School Department will be facing significant budgetary challenges in the coming years due to the scheduled end of "make up" increases in State educational aid, as well as the uncertain future of federal educational aid under the current administration and Congress. In this posture, the City Council will play a role in helping to determine the level of local funding that will provide adequately for the legitimate educational needs of our children in public school within a framework that is compatible with the City's other critical missions.

The Providence City Council is soliciting applications for the Providence External Review Authority ("PERA") Board. PERA board members will:

- * Create and implement community outreach programs;
- * Review police department policies and training procedures and make recommendations for change;
- * Receive complaints that allege misconduct by a police officer or officers, including, but not limited to the use of excessive force, inappropriate language or conduct, harassment, theft, and discrimination;
- * Perform other functions as authorized by the Providence Community-Police Relations Act.

If you are interested in serving on this important board, please submit a cover letter and resume to Nick Freeman at Nfreeman@providenceri.gov no later than **Saturday, January 20, 2018, by 11:59 p.m.** The City Council will elect seven PERA Board members from the pool of applicants.

Sincerely,