

To pay for next year's city services, I used a combination of revenues to meet our obligations. We utilized \$12.4 million from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for taxpayer relief. This will help pay for items such as schools, debt payments for infrastructure such as paving of roads, sidewalks and drainage improvements, police and fire and other essential services.

Despite some nominal growth of our economic tax base, we still had a gap in funding to pay for city services and schools. While I never want to raise taxes, after three years, I determined that was just not sustainable for next year. Reluctantly our taxes will go up by 2.85%. No other increases are proposed for sewer fees or any other fees.

In face of historic inflation, like every property owner, our costs of providing essential services and goods and services have gone up. City government is no different when buying gasoline, supplies and equipment.

To place the tax increase in perspective, we looked at several homes around Cranston. A three-bedroom colonial in Edgewood will see an increase of \$127 in taxes. In Garden City, a three-bedroom ranch will see an increase of \$138 in taxes. A duplex in the Stadium area will have taxes also increased by \$127. In western Cranston, a four-bedroom colonial would see an increase of \$209. No one likes to recommend an increase in property taxes, but it is a responsible action at this time.

Considering future budgetary pressures, I have directed a top to bottom financial review of all aspects of city government. While we will continue my commitment to deliver essential services, I am committed to reducing the size of our government. We are looking at collective bargaining agreements with employees and will ask their union representatives to work with us to face our economic challenges. Every expenditure will be evaluated for necessity, and we will look to more cost-effective alternatives. I will lead this reform effort as chief executive.

We will continue to effectively invest in our city to revitalize our business corridors and keep our neighborhoods and schools safe. Rolfe Square, Pawtuxet Village and the Knightsville area will continue to be shining examples of great public private partnerships.

As to economic development, I am expecting projects like the Cranston Print Works, Top Golf, the Brewery Trolley Barn site, and industrial projects at the former state prison and Western Cranston industrial area to launch soon. These will lead to an increase in our commercial and industrial tax bases to help the residential taxpayer.

I kindly ask that you help reduce our trash landfill costs by recycling whenever possible. As we move forward, we will find ways to reduce the cost of local government and deliver sound constituent services to keep Cranston on the right track.

You have my commitment to work to keep Cranston an award-winning community especially during this period of financial challenge. Please enjoy your summer and the beauty and amenities of our wonderful city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor