



THE HEART OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY

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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Members of Council

From: Finance Director Vernon Blaze

Date: Friday, June 28, 2024

Re: Finance Office and Related Topic Updates

Dealing With Criticism, Stress and Second Guessing

CEO Jane Fraser is attempting to turn around what was once the largest financial services company in the world – Citigroup.

Citigroup operates in 160 countries, but its stock price has been *“stuck more than 80% below its high for 15 years.”*

CEO Fraser is taking “heat” from all sides. Following are some quotes from a *Wall Street Journal* article from this week that can help put into perspective the pressure that top managers and leaders face when tasked with difficult, monumental endeavors:

- Skeptics are everywhere – in the auditorium at the bank’s recent investor conference and upstairs in the offices of its headquarters.
- Doubters are easy to find. Regulators and shareholders want her to accelerate. Some clients think she’s moving too fast, including a top

Dealing With Criticism, Stress and Second Guessing – Continued

- investment manager that bristled at abrupt changes to Citi staff and services.
- There isn't a day that goes by without Fraser catching grief from one corner or another. The calls for change are relentless, and often contradictory. But she's grown used to it.
- *"It's OK,"* she said in an interview. *"I feel uncomfortable every single day. You have to have big ears and thick skin."*
- Shareholders wanted higher returns yesterday, but they also felt stung by failed promises.
- The bank has spent the past six months culling staff and closing businesses it had operated for decades, and more cuts are coming. Morale is near a low point.
- If turning Citi around weren't so hard, it would have happened by now.
- *"There are easier places to work,"* Fraser said.

Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA)

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) held its Northern Region Annual Meeting here in Independence at the Community-Civic Center last week.

Some facts and figures it announced at that meeting:

- It collects, processes and distributes local income taxes for Independence and 388 other Ohio cities and villages (There are no income taxes in townships) in 81 of Ohio's 88 counties.
- It collected \$2.2 billion for those 389 communities in 2023.
- Its Cost-of-Collections in 2023 was 0.89 percent.