

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION
MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2006
HOPE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
300 HOPE ROAD
PUBLIC SESSION: 6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

A public budget work session of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at the Hope Highlands Elementary School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante. Also attending were Mrs. Ciarlo, Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Laliberte, and Mr. Votto.

The work session was called to order at 6:10 p.m. The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Mr. Lupino stated that if the committee had no objections he would open the session to public speakers for fifteen minutes, have the committee discuss the proposed cuts to the budget, and then allow the public an opportunity to speak once more.

I. Public Speakers Regarding Proposed Budget Cuts

Linda Passett, Instructional Aide, Cranston Public Schools, 45 Charcalee Drive - Ms. Passett quoted Donald J. Leu, Ph.D., “By teaching a child to read, we change the world.” She stated that she started with this quote because beginning to learn to read starts in Kindergarten. It all starts in Kindergarten with letter recognition and letter sounds. Teacher assistants in the lower grades are extremely important. They are an additional contribution to the classroom. Not all children begin school at the same starting line or even ready to learn. For that reason, teacher assistants should be in each Kindergarten class and first grade classrooms to reinforce what the teacher has taught and in some second grade classrooms throughout the city where the population is most needy. Some children need to have lessons repeated many many times in order for them to comprehend these lessons. In Kindergarten, the child needs to learn the letters of the alphabet and the letter sounds. This does not come easy to every child. Some have language problems at home. She recently attended a Scott Foresman training class and found the following quote in his book: “The chief culprit behind the reading achievement gap is not phonics but a language gap.” Ms. Passett also found the following quote in the Scott Foresman reading manual: “The amount of vocabulary a child has acquired by the end of first grade predicts how well he or she will do in the 11th grade testing.” Research such as this proves that the more help the children have in the younger grades, the better the outcome on testing ten or eleven years later. Kindergartners learn their letters, then their letter sounds, and first graders sounding out simple words might not seem

like much to a person, but research has

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proved it. She implored the committee to keep literacy in the Cranston Public Schools. She asked the committee to remember that the road to college starts with Kindergarten.

Debra Svitl, Program Supervisor for Nursing Services, Cranston Public Schools – Ms. Svitl stated that she came to this meeting because there has been a nursing position in the 2006-2007 school year budget. Considering that this position may be cut, she asked to take some time to share with the committee some of what the fine nursing department does for the children of Cranston. She explained that there are twenty-nine sites that they service when they include all the public schools as well as the parochial schools. Eight of these sites have full-time nurses working there. They don't travel from school to school. Currently there are seventeen full-time nurses working for the school department and an additional two who work part time. With all these students, to date they have served 51,000 students. They have done 5,000 blood glucose levels for students with diabetes. They have performed 1,000 tube feeding procedures; over 9,000 medications have been administered. Nearly 4,000 immunization records have been reviewed, and in many cases, there have been referrals for further immunizations. There have been 1,800 special bus runs that require nursing presence on the buses for

students with special needs. In the school department, there are thirty-one students with diabetes and fifty-two students with seizure disorder. Of these students, many of them also have emergency medication orders so the nurses need to be available for that as well. There are 165 students in the school department with orders for EPI pens, medication to be given in the event of severe allergic reaction. There are 306 students who have a health care plan or an emergency care plan for which they have special health care needs or emergency care needs. Above and beyond all of this, in the daily routine of the nurses, they identify the students' health needs and also service faculty and staff; but most of the time is spent with the students. They will refer out services if necessary and evaluate any intervention that has taken place. They have done 306 emergency and health care plans to date. Immunization verification can be a very time consuming process. Communicable disease monitoring and control is always a very important issue that nurses are directly involved in. They have had a few very touchy situations this year. There are mandated screenings according to the Rhode Island rules and regulations. This is also a very time consuming endeavor for the nurses at all three levels. She further commented that she hoped the committee would consider the importance of nursing. She hoped it would come to reality that the district would have another full-time nursing position.

Susan Bryan, Principal of Stadium School and Director of Library Services – Ms. Bryan stated to Mr. Balducci that she had recently sent

a memo with how to disperse the allocation for book money for Horton but that she still sees it as a budget reduction in the proposed budget. She asked what happened with that recommendation. Mr. Balducci responded that it would be considered before a final budget is passed. Ms. Bryan went on to say that with the consolidation at the elementary level with itinerant

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schedules, they are now reduced from ten elementary librarians to nine to service seventeen schools. She further stated that she frankly feels that she is walking backwards because she would like to move the program forward by trying to adhere to the ALA Standards of a full-time librarian in a school that works equally in partnership with the reading person. She feels that she is going backwards because she has to look at patching up. She doesn't want to go backwards; they are just going in and covering the classes. That is not what the program is about. Now with the possibility of losing the seven secretarial staff that makes \$10 or \$12 an hour which is a \$53,000 line item in the budget, it is severely going to affect the quality of the program. These will be librarians who will be putting books back on the shelves, dusting the shelves, and keepers of the books but not teachers which is really what they wanted. She fully understands the deficit of the budget, but she wanted the committee to know that they are not moving the program forward but going backwards. Ms. Bryan offered her stipend to them to use. Mrs. Ciarlo was very supportive in

giving them an extra line item for the library books. The elementary librarians have told her that as much as they want the money for the books they are handicapped without that extra secretarial help. If they were polled, they would be willing to sacrifice the book money for the help because they are inundated because of the computers in the libraries. They just received another 300 plus books from Horton School with the closing of the school, and Ms. Bryan can't see her secretary. With one person shelving 2-1/2 days at Stadium School it will not get done by Friday.

Frank Flynn, President, Cranston Teachers' Alliance – Mr. Flynn stated that there were a lot of cuts being made that were very difficult, and the union doesn't like to see any of them particularly in the area of personnel. He asked the committee to consider closely cutting teacher assistants again. That group, more than any other group in this City, have been impacted. They still have people who were not recalled from the 2004-2005 school year particularly the building teacher assistants. Once again, they are receiving the deepest cuts in terms of personnel. There are two important reasons why this is not a good thing to do. The first reason is health and safety. The number of 270 that is being used of students prior to getting an additional teacher assistant at the elementary school level means that if that school has two lunches, there would be a teacher assistant supervising a cafeteria with 135 students in it. When one thinks about all the potential things that could happen in a cafeteria with chokings and disruptive behavior, that is a very difficult task to

expect one person to take on. Many of the administrators are very busy throughout the course of the day. They are not there to be an extra set of eyes in that cafeteria. It is truly a health and safety issue, and in many of the schools, the teacher assistants take the children outside during that same lunch period. There are up to 135 students running around outside, and it truly presents some health and safety issues that the committee needs to be aware of with one person responsible. It is not fair to that one person nor is it to the students who are out there. Secondly, there is an abundance of clerical tasks because of the increased accountability in schools with monitoring and recordkeeping. There are many forms that

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need to be filled out. He has been given indications that a lot of the copying and forms that need to be filled out and the clerical tasks will not be the responsibility of the teachers but rather it will be done at the school level or somewhere in the city. Part of the jobs of these people when they are not doing lunch or recess duty is to assist the principal and the teachers at the school doing clerical tasks, copying, and filing. When the staff is reduced in those buildings, then they won't be able to accomplish that goal. The responsibility will have to be done by someone, and he doesn't know who that person will be if these people are eliminated.

With regard to teacher assistants for this year, Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr.

Votto that for this year when they said they were cutting teachers assistants, how many more were being cut this year than last year. She asked if it were the increased number of teacher assistants that they were discussing cutting. Mr. Votto responded that last year they placed a moratorium on new hires. They looked at every position before it was filled for contractual obligation. Last year they had teacher assistants as well as secretaries who were not replaced through the attrition process. They looked at the numbers of students and the number of teacher assistants in the buildings. Through attrition, they didn't fill three additional teacher assistant positions.

Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that between last year and this year there are three elementary teacher assistant positions that were not filled. They did not cut the number of teacher assistants for next year as was done last year. Mr. Votto responded that there are additional teacher assistants based upon the criteria they used based on the number of students in the school. They tried to be fair to all the schools. Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that the number of cuts and inadequate funding over the years is gradually catching up, and she was the one who put teacher assistants in Kindergarten because she believed in it. She had not changed her mind, and she wishes the district could win the lottery to put them back in. They are absolutely needed. All of the testing and recording will not be of value if they can't get it recorded. She wanted to be sure that it was clear on the number of teacher assistant positions from one year to the next.

Mr. Lupino noted that there would be an additional brief public speaking portion after the School Committee discussion.

II. School Committee Discussion Regarding Proposed Cuts to 2006-2007 School Budget

Mr. Scherza stated that it was the unanimous decision of Administration that they do not recommend any cuts. Therefore, these are not recommended cuts. Administration has pointed out some areas that the committee could consider for cutting, but they believe that all these cuts come with a price to program, activities, etc.

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Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Scherza to state for the public the final adopted budget by the School Committee and the now amended amount they are looking at considering the adjustments to state aid, the adjustments made by the City Council, and any other adjustments made due to federal or state programs that have not been funded.

Mr. Scherza stated that the school district's adopted school budget is \$126,752,391. Mr. Lupino interrupted and stated that he thought the

budget was approximately \$129 million. Mr. Balducci referred to the first page of the cut list (which can be seen on the Cranston Public Schools' web site at www.cpsed.net) which identified the School Committee's adopted budget as being \$129,702,156. That was the budget that was adopted by the committee back in the spring when it went forward to the Mayor's office and eventually through the City Council process. He referred to the first page of the document which is a cover memo addressed to Mrs. Ciarlo. The cuts that are identified in the detailed pages brings the budget of \$129 million down to \$126.7 million. In the middle of the calculation, the City Council adopted a budget of \$123.8 million, and then approximately one week ago, the district received some information that the General Assembly was looking to increase state aid across the state for all school districts. This district is one of the benefactors of an additional allocation in the amount of \$327,000. He will then have a conversation with the City administration for them to make that change on their end. That will bring their total appropriation to \$124.1 million as compared to the district's \$126.7 million as is proposed in this document which will still be a budget shortfall of approximately \$2.5 million. That is the discussion the committee and administration need to have this evening.

Mr. Scherza noted that the committee had the backup information for the 2007 budget enacted by the House Finance Committee which reflected the \$327,000 in proposed state aid. That has to go before the entire House as a whole. Mr. Lupino asked if the \$327,621 was an

increase over what figure in Cranston's budget, and Mr. Scherza responded that it was an increase over level funding from last year. The level funding from last year was the figure administration moved forward this year initially. Mr. Balducci further explained that the \$327,000 was an increase over what the Governor proposed originally in his budget in January. As compared to this year 05-06 to 06-07, the Governor increased Cranston Public Schools' budget in state aid \$1.3 million so the \$327,000 is above the \$1.3 million. Therefore, Cranston's total state aid increase if passed by the General Assembly will be \$1.6 million as compared to what is being received this year in state aid dollars. Mr. Lupino commented that he thought the district had booked level funding, and Mr. Balducci responded that he had not because the information that had come forward from the Governor's office was in time for administration when they were building this budget for next year. The committee is looking at only the \$327,000.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 1 of the document for the proposed cuts. He explained that some of the items had a capital A in parentheses to the left of the item. Those

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funds would be money that would be paid by the city as the capital funds. This would be a similar proposal for next year as was done this year. This would not be treated as part of the budget request.

Mr. Lupino asked the total of all the “A” items, and Mr. Scherza responded that it was approximately \$700,000. He also indicated that under “budget cuts” everything there has a “0” except for the first two numbers. Because these were cut last year, they were not put back into budget requests this year so they can’t be cut again. Under Health/Dental Accounts, there is a proposal of (\$1,752,760) reflected in that account, and under New Personnel there is (\$200,000), and that has been reduced. The \$200,000 is what Mr. Lupino had requested earlier to be put into the budget. That would encompass ten teaching assistant positions district wide.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 2 of the document, Plant Equipment, (\$75,000). There is a letter “A” and that has been pulled out of the budget because it will be paid for by the City under Capital. The same situation holds true for Asset Protection for the physical plant in the amount of (\$158,150). That is also replacement from the City. Mr. Lupino referred to the Plant Equipment and Asset Protection and asked if this was the amount of the funding or was the amount of the funding going to be whatever the amount is in that year. He asked that if it was less than \$75,000, would the City appropriate less than \$75,000. If it becomes \$125,000, would the City appropriate \$125,000. Mr. Balducci responded that he didn’t think the City would appropriate the \$125,000. To answer Mr. Lupino’s earlier question, the total amount of the capital related items on this cut list is \$713,000. The budget that the Mayor prepared to go to the City Council was approximately \$124,500,000. To get from the \$123

million to the \$124.5 million, that is the use of the separate Capital fund. That is the \$713,000 that is being relieved from the school department's side of the budget as being accommodated out of the Capital fund where the City is maintaining the funding. At this point, this is the total amount of budget. If the school department requests \$158,000 in asset protection, that is all the City will give funding for because that is the amount the school district felt they needed for asset protection in the 06-07 budget. If the school department budgeted \$175,000, he would hope the City would honor that amount as a part of the funding out of that Capital fund. The school department will not receive any more money than is being reported in this document. Mr. Lupino noted that any excess would have to come from budget revisions and moving money around. However, this money can't be moved around. The City is dictating that this money can't be moved around in a round about way. Mr. Balducci commented that this is the first year that the City adopted this policy in using separate capital money on their side. The school district has had some latitude on how the money was spent because when a budget is prepared no one knows when the fiscal year starts what issues they will have, and in particular regarding asset protection. He didn't budget for a boiler replacement at Peter School in this year's budget, but he had to deal with it. He communicated with the City, and they allowed him to use some of the asset protection monies to accommodate that issue. He hoped he would be able to do the same thing next year. As far as the City is concerned, they

are looking only at the bottom line, \$713,000; and how the school department gets there, he may be able to move some monies around.

Mr. Traficante stated that if the Mayor and City Council did not give the school department that \$713,000, the school district's deficit would not be \$2.5 million but rather \$3.2 million.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 3 of the document, (A)Transportation-Vehicle Replacement, (\$100,000), and indicated that this amount falls into that same category just discussed. On that same page, there is another item of (\$99,000) for middle school sports. There has been much debate on this item. In the spring it was re-instituted in part, but that is again identified for next year. He also referred to (A) High School-Textbook Replacement. It was zero funded this year when they had to reconcile the budget, and for next year, it has been identified as being eliminated by 100%. The Building Teacher Assistants in the amount of (\$70,880) is one account where administration had \$553,405 for building teacher assistants district wide. They have identified \$70,880 which would reduce this line item to \$482,525. Mr. Lupino asked if this was a reduction in teacher assistants or was it not replacing them, and Mr. Votto responded that it was a reduction. It was a reduction of four three-hour building

teacher assistants, benefits and salaries. Mr. Lupino asked if Mr. Votto had identified the schools it would affect, and Mr. Votto responded that it would affect Barrows, Eden Park, Edgewood Highland, and Hope Highlands Schools. He noted that Hope Highlands has three teacher assistants. Administration used the same formula as last year by taking the number of students and how many teacher assistants were in the building. Barrows has approximately 230 students today with two building assistants. Last year they reduced it with certain schools, and they had even a greater number of up to 270; and they now have one. They tried to be equal in the way they treated those schools whose numbers fell within 270. At Hope Highlands, they have 362 students, and they had three building teacher assistants. They were put in the same mix as Orchard Farms that has only two and Peters with 300 students has only two. That is how they came about reducing the number.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 4 and indicated that there were no proposed cuts.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 5, (A)Elementary School-Textbook Replacement, and the same holds true with the High School Textbook Replacement which has been cut out. This will be part of what will be borne from the City Capital improvement, and that has been dedicated to the new reading series. He also referred to the Cranston East NEASC Account for Cranston East. Administration realized that they had already gone through their visit, and a big part of their

expense has been paid. This has been reduced by \$27,850 leaving a balance of \$7,000 for their response and interventions. Cranston West's is higher than Cranston East because they are in their self-study year, and they will have a lot of out-of-district costs for preparation, conferences, and training.

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Mr. Scherza referred to page 6 and noted that it had no recommendations because the accounts were all zeroes.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 7 and noted that several areas had been identified. He indicated that under Non-Union Library Clerks (7), the total amount budgeted was \$58,275, and this would eliminate seven library clerks. Under Guidance Counselors-Secondary School Personnel, administration found that it would be impossible to do this and found that they were able to do this because of the net compacting without adding any positions. Mr. Scherza referred to the Teachers Returning from Leave Account; this amount has been reduced by \$4,812. These are people returning from medical and other approved leaves. With regard to retirees, administration had to add money back into the budget because they budgeted for twenty and to date there are eight. The district did not realize the original number they anticipated. Mr. Votto explained that there are eight retirees which includes one coming on the June 23rd agenda. This number does reflect the eight retirees.

Mr. Scherza referred to page 8, Liability Insurance, and the amount for this insurance had to be increased by \$56,410. This is largely due to the district's experience in liability. Most of it is attributed to the flood last fall when there was a considerable amount of bus damage and the high insurance cost paid by the insurance carrier. Administration anticipated that there would be a rate increase given the amount of claims submitted. This is an actual cost rather than a projected cost.

Mr. Scherza stated that the total amount of cuts is a little more than one quarter of a millions dollars, which is \$256,330 to be exact. He further stated that beyond that he could not in good conscience recommend any other programmatic or personnel cuts.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 7 of the budget cuts document and indicated that he didn't understand secondary school personnel. He asked Mr. Balducci to explain it again. Mr. Balducci remarked that the beginning process of building next year's budget was when administration stated that the new personnel that they identified the district needed-- math coaches and special education teachers-- they were going to find that money elsewhere in the budget by compacting at the secondary level. They were looking for ten positions, five at each of the high schools. They were only able to scale back 7.5 positions. Then they decided when preparing this document that they would give full credit for those 7.5 positions off the bottom line

of the budget and not use that money elsewhere by funding a math coach or special education teacher. Some issues came up where that total savings was going to be approximately one-half million dollars. That was reduced down to approximately \$200,000 seen on the cut list because they have had to accommodate three elementary teachers because of class size; they set aside some money for one special education teacher. In speaking with Mr. Laliberte, he felt it was necessary that they had to use the money to accompany that. Money was also put one side for a .5 math coach. That approximate \$200,000 is the net savings of

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compacting 7.5 positions at the secondary level, but unfortunately using some of those savings to offset some positions that they do need to fund. Mr. Stycos reiterated that the district started out with 7.5, and then 3 went to elementary, 1 went to special education, and $\frac{1}{2}$ went to a math coach. Mr. Stycos asked if the \$282,000 represents three positions, and Mr. Balducci said that it did.

Mr. Traficante commented that the 7.5 positions saved approximately \$517,000. He thought it was more than three positions. He thought it was a .5 Kindergarten position at Glen Hills School, 2 at Waterman, .5 at Gladstone, .5 math coach, and 1 special education teacher which then would make the net savings \$282,000. Mr. Votto explained that the 2 at Waterman are correct. They had to open a half Kindergarten

class which is combined with Orchard Farms and Glen Hills. There is no .5 at Gladstone, and there is a full-time special education teacher for Bain and a .5 math coach. Mr. Traficante indicated to Mr. Stycos that he believed it was a total of 4 teaching positions which brings it down to \$382,000 from \$517,000.

Mr. Stycos referred to Mrs. Svitl's discussion regarding the extra nurse and asked if it was in this proposal. Mr. Balducci responded that it was one of those positions that was going to be funded from the compacting. The only money that was put back after taking credit for the compacting was three elementary positions, one special education position, and a .5 math coach. The new nursing position is not being funded in this budget. Mr. Stycos remarked to Mrs. Svitl that she told the committee a lot about what the nurses do, but she didn't mention why there should be an extra nurse. He asked Mrs. Svitl to elaborate why there should be an additional nurse. Mrs. Svitl stated that her department was able to have another full-time nursing position in one of the elementary schools this past year at Stone Hill School. One of the major changes that she has been able to follow through on is the nurses are able to get into the classroom more to teach health education. That serves to encourage better decisions, health behaviors, and health actions in the children. It also shows the entire school population that the nurses are a great resource help. It is such a beneficial situation when they can bring nurses into the classroom. Coverage has always been a big issue as well. When nurses are out, she is pulling nurses from their other assignments,

and it is leaving their assignments unattended. It would be a wonderful thing to have.

Mr. Palumbo asked that in terms of the nurses in the classroom, how much time would be made available for classroom duty. Mrs. Svitl responded that it would depend on the situation where she is able to allot more nursing time for whatever school it is. One of the advantages to having more nursing time in the school means that the nursing body is in the school rather than in his or her car traveling from school to school where they cannot directly service any student, faculty, staff, or parent. Some schools have more technology dependent children. They require medical procedures. Some of those procedures can be very involved and time consuming. She asked the nurses this past

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year to try to get into the classrooms more. They are great resources in the health field, and they have done a great job in making a difference.

Mr. Archetto asked Mr. Scherza if he were proposing a \$2.5 million shortfall with the indicated cuts, and Mr. Scherza responded that he was correct. Mr. Archetto indicated that the committee needed to think out of the box in order to settle this crisis. Mr. Scherza

responded that it would be the prerogative of the committee to do that. Mr. Archetto suggested to the committee that he knows that there are buildings the school department owns, perhaps the Special Services Center, to sell it to a private sector to raise \$1 million or more. He would like the committee to think about this for their next meeting. Mr. Lupino commented that the Cranston Public Schools own no buildings. The buildings are owned by the City of Cranston. When they stop being used for educational purposes they revert back to the City. In the past, the City has through the goodness of their hearts returned some of the monies to the school budget; but they are not bound to do that. Mr. Archetto responded that he was sure the School Committee could work with the City Council to turn over some of the unused property within the school department for cash to alleviate the budget crunch. Mrs. Ciarlo asked the committee to keep in mind that administration intends to use the Special Services Center for some of the district's returning students from outside tuitions to save money. She went to the celebration at Sanders School, and to see the number of students, at least twenty, that would be on outside tuitions back in Cranston, two of them graduated from Cranston West and one from Cranston East that they want to be able to do it at the elementary level. They want to be able to do it in a facility such as Special Services Center which would generate and save the district money; so there is more than one way besides selling real estate to be able to make good use and save money for the school district.

Mr. Lupino commented that as an alternate to the committee that Ms. Iannazzi formed to look into ways to collaborate with Warwick Public Schools, at the first meeting there were areas with very high interest. The first was the Charter School, second was bringing back the students from outside placements. They saw that as a way that they would like to look into adopting and be successful with. He concurred with Mrs. Ciarlo that if there is a building that is accessible it would be a good place to expand that program.

Mrs. Greifer stated that a short time ago when a discussion was held regarding the sale of a building one City Council member said that no way would they give the money from the sale of a building to the schools because the district couldn't guarantee how it was spent. Mr. Lupino added that currently there is a school building for sale in the City which is the Pettaconsett School. The City has re-advertised it several times.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Archetto to repeat his suggestion regarding the buildings. He said his suggestion was that there is a \$2.5 million shortfall. Even with the Superintendent's

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proposed cuts, if the School Committee thinks out of the box and creates innovative ways to raise \$2.5 million, he asked if there were any properties that the school department is not utilizing or

under-utilizing in order to consolidate areas where there is extra room to free up certain buildings, and then turn those building over to cash; have them appraised and work with the City Council to have some property to create some dollars.

Mr. Stycos asked that based on this document what was the administration's proposal to deal with this \$2.5 million. The committee has to balance the budget by the end of the month. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that at this particular point the administration is not recommending the cuts that are there. They know they have to bring it as closely in line as possible. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the committee has the option to go back to the City Council indicating the things the committee and administration have done going as far as they could go. They could ask the Council if they could help in any way. Reasonable people can come to the conclusion that the books have been looked at. They know what the money is spent on, and if there is any question on the spending of the money, the City can bring in whomever they want. With last year's budget, the committee ended up with \$1.3 million more than expected even though it was needed.

Mr. Scherza stated that at this point in time there is by Charter and state statute an obligation to reconcile the budget by June 30th. He also said that it was premature to go threatening the other City officials, both elected and appointed, that they want to go with Caruolo action. The first thing the committee and administration should try to do is reconcile the budget down to at least begin the

year and get moving. He knows it isn't popular, and it wasn't popular last year; but he doesn't think they have much choice. They have to take it from some of the areas that have been identified as somewhat fixed costs such as the health benefit line item. There may be some time until the third or fourth quarter to possibly have some type of supplement, whether it may be from the Council or administration. He wouldn't propose where to get it from. He suggested appealing to reason. He believed that the administration and the committee owed it to the city officials, city administration, and the City Council to sit down and explain to them where the district is. If they want to peruse it and bring in outside officials, it has been done before. The committee and the administration can show right now that with the fixed costs and the contractual obligations that they do not have enough money to operate the Cranston Public Schools for the 2006-2007 school year. There is no way with a gap of \$2.5 million that they can make it right now. They should sit down with all the entities to see what their response is first before moving on from here.

Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Scherza if there were any other areas, other than health care, that the administration has looked into that they possibly can consider. They are hoping to get some supplementary money during the course of the year. Mr. Scherza responded that they could consider utilities, plowing, etc. If the district has a good year, the heating costs could be \$500,000 to \$700,000 less; he was not suggesting that this was going to

be the case. No one knows what will happen with the price of petroleum at this point in time; it would be a roll of the dice. Hopefully, they could have a good year and not pay a lot for plowing.

Mr. Balducci commented that hopefully this Friday, June 23rd, the committee will be approving a contract with an energy management company, EEI. Part of that process is for them to show the district how they can save energy across the board for the district. He doesn't have the analysis with him, but the first year they are looking for some positive cash flow back to the district above and beyond the district's obligation to them as far as paying their management fee and other associated costs. When next year's budget was built, the increase to utilities across the board was approximately \$500,000. That might be an area where they can recoup that and then also achieve some additional savings with the use of this outside management company. Again, he is not willing to gamble at this point in making a half a million dollar adjustment to utilities and hopefully achieve it during the winter months. That is an area the committee and administration can take a serious look at and maybe use that as one of the areas where the budget can be reconciled as they move along in the process. He knows it is not a popular thing to do to go to the health account in making that adjustment right now, but utilities and some other areas in the budget could be used to try

to put back that money as the year progresses. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci if he had some areas in the budget besides utilities that he might want to share with the committee this evening. Mr. Balducci responded that teacher substitutes may be another example, but it is a lot to gamble on. The substitute account at this time has an approximate \$90,000 surplus. He wasn't sure how much of that he would have to give back because of payroll next week. That area was level funded, and this year they did have a good year so he didn't spend the entire budget. He found other areas to use that \$90,000; it was not that he was able to squirrel that money away. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci about outside tuitions, and Mr. Balducci indicated that this area was very lean with regard to the budget adopted next year. He did accommodate for some pending students since that budget area was prepared in January. Some of those pending students that were listed are actual students the district had to accommodate in outside placements. There have been some additional pending students that he didn't know about back in February when this budget was adopted. Now he has to accommodate for those students. He would not even look at this area of the budget right now for some possible budget savings.

Mr. Traficante commented that those who attended the budget hearing before the City Council heard from Councilman Barone that the budget the City Council would pass the school department had to live with. The committee has no choice but to reconcile this budget. Mr. Traficante went on to say that he mentioned at that particular

meeting that it would cause a great deal of hardship on the school department, and that is exactly what is going to happen. If the committee cuts \$2.5 million out of health care, that would be very irresponsible on their part. That will send up a red flag to City Hall and to

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the taxpayers of Cranston that the committee is not being responsible, and this committee can't afford to do that. There are several areas the committee has to look at. They have no choice, and they will give it their best effort. If the committee doesn't make it by the end of the year, at least they tried. In the meantime, the committee should be sitting with the City Council and the Mayor to explain their situation. The areas the committee should at least look at are energy conservation; Mr. Laliberte should look at the Horton School and the Special Services Center as a potential savings because there were a variety of programs the committee wanted to institute. There is between \$35,000 and \$235,000 as a potential savings there. The committee should look at all the usage accounts in the maintenance areas, substitute accounts, consolidation of services such as the committee being headed up by Ms. Iannazzi, the Consolidation Committee of which the school department is a part of with the City of Cranston, health care, annual orders which is about \$1.1 million, and last but not least, the biggest savings is in personnel. The committee should look at potential layoffs. He

referred to part-time personnel, possibly CAMS, and full-time secretaries. The committee has no choice but to reconcile the \$2.5 million. No stone can be left unturned. The committee has to give it its best effort, and he was sure they would. It is going to impact the effectiveness and proficiency of the Cranston Public Schools.

Mrs. Ciarlo indicated that the annual orders are based on what the school department paid in 2001. Both paper and costs have gone up tremendously since then, and this allocation hasn't been raised. She has a great concern about cutting this even more. She suggested that the executive staff meet with Mr. Laliberte to see how close to the zero balance they can possibly come. This is something they could entertain if it is the consensus of the committee to do that. Mr. Traficante added that after they attempted to look at all of these accounts, if they don't succeed, they will have no choice but to go Caruolo. That is a nasty word with the administration and a nasty word with the taxpayers of Cranston.

Mr. Stycos stated that he would like to second what Mr. Traficante said and asked that administration give the committee by Friday, June 23rd, a response to each one of those areas. The response might be that they can't make any cuts or they can make cuts. He further commented that there is an item in the budget which is cost for people returning from leave which has been adjusted in the document that the committee went over tonight, but they never figure the savings of people who go out on leave. He knows there are

people going out on leave, and he would like an estimate of what will be saved by the senior people who go out on leave and they are replaced by junior people. A pretty good job is done on estimating personnel savings from turnover of teachers. There are so many retirements, and there is turnover in all the other jobs; and the budget reflects that no one is leaving and everyone is moving to a higher step. The committee should receive an estimate of savings for those secretaries who leave, custodians, and principals. He would also like information on the status of Charter School enrollment. It was projected that this was going to be an additional \$300,000

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cost. At this point in the school year, there should be a fairly good idea of whether it is \$300,000 or less or more. Mr. Traficante indicated that this number has been adjusted with Mr. Balducci; he gave the numbers to Mr. Balducci today. Mr. Stycos stated that he seconded what Mr. Archetto said about looking at consolidating buildings. There are empty rooms according to information received earlier. There are empty rooms at Orchard Farms School, and the committee should look at consolidating. Maybe it isn't the Special Services Center building that should be sold. It may be Norwood Avenue or Horton, but the committee should look at these three buildings with the possibility of moving out of those buildings and asking the Council for the money. He didn't think the committee should go to the Council with a tin cup. If they could go with a

consolidation plan that included a building, it would be a lot more palatable politically. He would like to see the possibility of changing some of the full-time custodians into part-timers because he knows the part-timers are paid a lot less than the full-timers. He would like to get up-to-date information on guidance and maybe over the last five years the number of students and the number of full-time equivalents in elementary guidance. This is something that has been looked at in the past as possible savings. He asked where the \$450,000 surplus stands, and Mr. Balducci responded that it has been placed back into the reserve account and available for use in future years. Mr. Stycos asked if it is being used for something else, and Mr. Balducci responded that he hoped it wasn't. He has a few more weeks before the fiscal year ends, and it looks like it will be all right. The majority, if not all of that money, will be available for future years. Mr. Stycos asked if there would be an end-of-the year surplus, and Mr. Balducci responded that there was a carryover from 04-05 into 05-06. He is hoping to build on that and then make that available for future years as well. Mr. Stycos asked if the committee would know about this by June 23rd, and Mr. Balducci indicated that he would be unable to communicate out the surplus for this fiscal year by Friday.

Mr. Stycos further commented that the School Lunch Program should be looked at. In the last five years, the program has lost about \$250,000, and the School Committee has a contract coming up. They need to have a strategy for the Lunch Program. Mr. Balducci responded that the Lunch Program is not identified in this budget

because they budget both their revenue and expenditures separately. They have had deficits over the past five years, but prior to that they were able to achieve surpluses enough to cover those deficits where the school district has not had to make them whole for those deficits. They are still carrying a positive fund balance of approximately \$300,000. Similar to the school district's \$400,000, the Lunch Program has a \$300,000 cumulative fund balance they can use to offset their bad years moving forward. He agreed that this is an area that should be looked at to determine how the district provides its food service program in the future. Mrs. Ciarlo asked the last time it went out to bid for school lunch services, and Mr. Balducci believed the district went out to bid in 2002 or 2003 for those services. Mrs. Ciarlo added that this is one of the ways to make sure the district is still competitive. This is another option should it come to fruition. Mr. Stycos stated that he wouldn't support going to an outside contractor for the lunch program, but he felt

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they should look at whether or not prices will be raised. The committee, as they move into negotiations with the cafeteria workers, needs to have a sense of what that program can sustain without help from the general revenue fund. The committee can't negotiate large pay packages and then realize that the program is losing a lot of money. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the program still owes money from the past which amounts to approximately \$900,000, which when they

have it they pay it back. She was not suggesting that they go out to bid because they are looking for an outside agency, but it is a good idea to see what the competition is offering in terms of food and choices for students. The district has to make sure that it remains competitive and keeps its audience in terms of the food offered. Especially now that there is a craving for healthy food even at the colleges, and that is a good sign that it is healthy for the students as well.

Mr. Lupino referred to Mrs. Ciarlo's earlier comment that Food Service pays the district back when they have the money. Mrs. Ciarlo stated that they haven't paid every year, but usually they make a donation at the end of the year back in. It is at a very low rate. Mr. Lupino stated that he doesn't pay his mortgage when he has the money; the mortgage is due every month. Mr. Lupino asked Mrs. Ciarlo if the committee should pass a resolution that states that they have to pay back X number of dollars every year which would force them to raise their price of lunch. At \$1.25, it is still a great bargain, and at \$2.25 it would still be a bargain. The committee is relying on them to give back money if they turn a profit. Perhaps the committee should dictate to them that they have to pay the money back. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Balducci to come up with a plan. This could be some revenue that the district could enjoy this year. If the committee isn't satisfied with the plan, the committee could move to a resolution.

Mr. Lupino told both the committee and the public that the committee has no choice regarding the meeting date for Friday, June 23rd. He noted that this was the only date available for the committee before June 30th. The committee must approve some form of a budget by June 30th, and there is no available time the following week. Mr. Traficante is away, Mr. Scherza is away, as well as Mr. Palumbo. There are some conflicting meetings as well. Executive Session will be held at 5:30 p.m., and the public session is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. This will be the regularly re-scheduled School Committee meeting. Mrs. Ciarlo indicated that the committee's questions will be answered by Friday, June 23rd.

Mr. Stycos reviewed his questions for administration which included the savings for people going on leave; turnover savings from non-teachers; possibility of using more part-time custodians instead of full-time; elementary guidance; \$450,000 surplus; lunch program; the status of the Charter School tuitions; and the possibility of selling Horton, Special Services, or Norwood Avenue. Mr. Archetto clarified his earlier comment that it would not be exclusively Special Services but anywhere to consolidate services; it could be any building. The committee many not want to sell Special Services. The

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suggestion should be any building not utilized. Mr. Lupino stated that the school department doesn't own the buildings. The

committee cannot anticipate selling a building that they don't own. Mrs. Ciarlo added that she would prefer to discuss what the savings would be in utilizing that building for returning outside tuitions which would more than cover the cost of selling it. One of the reasons administration likes the Special Services Center for children is the fact that they wouldn't have to make as many changes there. They would have to put a sprinkler system into the Horton School, and it would be more suited to move the people that are at the Special Services Center into Horton and turn the Special Services Center into a little school so to speak. Mr. Lupino clarified that the answer to Mr. Stycos is not that the committee will sell a building and turn it into dollars that they don't have but to see what the alternative plans would be.

Mr. Traficante stated that he would much rather see the Horton School and the Special Services Center utilized the way that Mrs. Ciarlo has described it. It would cost anywhere between \$35,000 to \$85,000 for a special education student to be placed outside of this district. If even ten or fifteen of these students can be brought back to the district, it would be a tremendous savings to the school department. Horton School could be utilized for a variety of programs that the School Committee has been talking about for years such as full-day Kindergarten, etc. This is the opportunity the committee has, and they should do it. In the meantime, the committee can still generate money as well.

Mr. Archetto remarked that the only problem he perceived is that if the committee doesn't balance the budget then the City will be threatened with a Caruolo Act, and the committee will be in an adversarial position with the City Council which is not a good position to be in. If, on the other hand, the committee can work with the City Council on a property the committee designates, and it can be any property they designate such as Orchard Farms or some other building on the western side, he would rather be in a cooperative effort with the City Council who needs to give us dollars rather than being in an adversarial position. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the district doesn't want to be in an adversarial position, but she doesn't know that by consolidating buildings that it will win favor. She felt that they should show that there isn't an area where they haven't tried to eek out some money so that when they come as close to trying to whittle down the \$2.5 million to reasonable numbers, they are gambling on perhaps \$1 million to be taken out of health care. After this the budget should go over with a conversation with the people on the Finance Committee of the City Council indicating this is where the district is and this is what the district has done; and this is as far as they can go. If they can offer any suggestions or help to us, it would be important, but the district can't go beyond this right now. Mrs. Ciarlo felt that the City Council would be reasonable.

Mr. Lupino referred to his proposal for new personnel of \$200,000. He asked Mr. Laliberte if he knew how many Kindergarten, grades 1 and 2 would exceed 22 students, and Mr. Laliberte responded that he

could get the information for him. He didn't think

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there would be that many that would be exceeding it, but those that are they are using grants to put in either a class size reduction teacher or a teacher assistant that may be paid out of a grant. Mr. Lupino asked if the committee would have some assurance for the public. The class size statistics right now do not reflect any movement in or out of the district. Mr. Laliberte stated that the information was as current as last Friday. Mr. Lupino commented that in his district there are quite a few new developments going through and lots being cleared. He asked Mr. Laliberte to earmark what grants and where those teacher assistants would go. He further commented that Mr. Archetto had mentioned not getting on the bad side of the City Council, and he for one absolutely and positively would not support cutting \$99,000 from middle schools sports. The Mayor saw his way to give the district an extra \$1 million last year, and in some way or fashion, it was tied to replacing middle school sports, and the Mayor received the cooperation of the City Council to accomplish that. The Council was very supportive of this endeavor to reinstitute middle school sports. He reiterated his statement that he would not support that situation. Mrs. Ciarlo added that these students are being treated like yo-yo's. They were excited after being without sports to have them back. Now to turn around and say in September there won't be sports even though at the time they were

told that if the school district didn't get the money for the future, they weren't going to do it. She asked how one can explain this to the kids; she has a problem with this. If the committee can find any way at all to do it, they owe it to the kids. She concurred wholeheartedly with Mr. Lupino's support.

Mr. Lupino referred to the \$70,000 for the teacher assistants and indicated that it was four positions. He stated that he knew that all of the teacher assistants were under the same contract whether they are earmarked for special education or regular building teacher assistants or classroom teacher assistants. To his recollection, the last few years the committee has hired only special education teacher assistants because that is an area of need. If the committee cuts this area, his strong assumption is that this would be done by seniority. Mr. Votto responded that this was correct. Mr. Lupino added that this means that four special education teacher assistants will be laid off because they are the newest hires. Mr. Votto responded that this wasn't true because special education teacher assistants are different in the contract because they are separated. More importantly the State has passed regulations that require a teacher assistant to be certified or qualified by taking a particular test and passing it or fulfilling some obligations. To be able to be a special education teacher assistant, one has to be qualified by the State of Rhode Island. Those people would come from the three-hour building teacher assistants ranks so it would not affect special education teacher assistants. It supersedes seniority and is broken down

separately in the contract. Mr. Lupino asked if there has ever been a case where there is a three-hour regular building aide who left a special education situation that could actually bump someone who is now in special education. Mr. Votto responded that he did not have the answer.

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Mr. Lupino mentioned that the Council gave the district \$350,000 for the new reading series, and one of his strong suggestions was to defer payment to the publisher. Instead of paying for it all up front, stretch it over a period of time to lessen the impact on the budget this year. He asked if anyone had looked into this possible situation. Mr. Laliberte responded that the publisher already is giving the district the entire reading series up front, and what the committee has before them is half the cost of the reading program. Next year will be the second half of the cost even though the district will have had the books for over one year Kindergarten through Grade 5. Mr. Scherza added that the amount is one-half the un-inflated cost. The costs go up July 1st each year so that same book next year will cost a little more. Mr. Lupino stated that the district negotiated the price before hand. The district has a contract with them, and there is the possibility of asking the publisher to defer part of that next year into the third year. Mr. Laliberte responded that he hadn't talked with the

publisher about this. Mr. Lupino added that if the district can take \$700,000 and stretch it over three years as opposed to two years, they could pick up an extra \$80,000. Mr. Laliberte indicated that he would ask them between now and Friday.

Mr. Traficante indicated to Mr. Lupino that he had asked how many elementary classes were over twenty-two, and Mr. Lupino stated that the figure the committee received reflects the present. He was looking for assurances in October when they have the final numbers that those classes that have over twenty-two will get an aide in those classes. He wants to assure, particularly the people in western Cranston that have had these very crowded classrooms, that there will be some form of an aide there from grant funds. Mr. Traficante commented that at the present time approximately 19% of the elementary classes are over, approximately 40 out of 228 classes. This speaks well for this school system because they are trying to hold the numbers down. Mr. Lupino responded that he felt that it meant that the families hadn't moved in yet; they are waiting for the housing prices to come down.

Mr. Lupino referred to the library clerks and noted that the committee is talking particularly peanuts in a \$129 million budget. It is the work that they do, but it is also the work that they free up the librarian to teach and instruct the children. With regard to the \$282,115, he is concerned that he misunderstood what was going to be accomplished with the five and five particularly when the committee

was told that with the new high school reform that the district would need these people. Now administration is saying that they have to cut them because of dollars, but the reforms don't go away. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that one of the things that happened when they said they needed five more teachers, and they took the number of students they anticipated that would qualify, divided it by five, and said they needed five teachers in order to be able to do it. Administration looked at the actual numbers of students that are coming forward. The numbers are decidedly different from the easy way of saying X number of kids divided by five. Both schools came up with exactly the same number so she feels more comfortable knowing they actually have as close as they can the students who will be

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part of that program. What they don't have is the choices the students have made, and they are looking at that now to get an idea of what the class sizes will look like after all the choices have been made by the students. They are registering every day, and that will continue. There are students coming from other schools as well. Mr. Scherza added that as of this morning he checked with the directors of guidance, and individual students have not been matched up with schedules yet. Once that is done, there is a number that will have to be revised based on passing and failures, new enrollments, and then again how many students pass or do not pass in summer school.

There are many variables that will make those things go up and down.

Mr. Lupino stated that last year with the help of Mr. Laliberte, Mr. Votto, and Mr. Balducci, the committee was able to come up with a plan to utilize coverage for substitutes. He asked if administration came up with a figure that was identified as a savings by doing this plan. Mr. Balducci responded that in this area of the budget he was happy to report a \$90,000 surplus. Last year for the substitutes overall in the district he ran a deficit of approximately \$161,000, so he hoped that a lot of this is attributed to administration utilizing the coverage as aggressively as they did. Even if he spends a small portion of the \$90,000, that is approximately a \$200,000 net savings to the district. Mr. Lupino asked if he has been able to project that figure in this budget. He asked if it was an area to project a potential savings in that area. Mr. Balducci replied that instead of budgeting \$1 million maybe he could budget \$900,000 for that purpose.

Mr. Lupino mentioned that there were several re-assignments and positions that are being filled with lower paid personnel. There are at least three principalships where one principal is going from an elementary to a middle school situation. Another principal is going to an administrative position being replaced by a brand new principal. He asked the total of those savings. Mr. Votto responded that he did an analysis for Mrs. Ciarlo and Mr. Scherza, and the savings is approximately \$47,000. Mr. Lupino asked if it was reflected in the

budget document they have tonight, and Mr. Balducci said that it was not. Mr. Lupino added that it would be reflected in the document on Friday. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that this was brought up by Mr. Stycos regarding other than teachers who are leaving and the change-overs reflected there. She assumed this would be included as a part of that report.

Mrs. Greifer stated that any cut the committee makes to this budget below the \$129 million is going to hurt the kids in one way or another.

Some of the cuts won't be as noticeable. In no way, could she support cutting middle school sports. It is an emotionally fragile age, and she couldn't bring herself to vote for something that will jerk kids around at that stage of their life when they are least able to handle it. Also, she couldn't support cutting the library aides. They perform a vital function; they are directly connected to the children; they provide a direct service to the children, and she couldn't support that either.

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Mr. Stycos asked to go back to the special education outside tuitions.

He referred to Mr. Balducci's memo in which he stated that they had used last year's actual and added \$750,000 to accommodate pending placements. He asked where the \$750,000 comes from. He asked what the math was to come up to \$750,000. Mr. Balducci responded that Mrs. Verduchi, the secretary that oversees this area, identified

records that she has from the special education directors that contain student names and also pending outside placements, whether they are at Bradley Hospital or Valley Community School. In speaking with the special education directors, they feel that eventually that is where a particular student will be placed. It is just a matter of a timing issue. He had the student names with the likelihood of the outside placement. He then factored in what it is costing currently to place a student at that particular school. He identified the student, the outside agency, and did the math which approximated \$778,000. Mr. Stycos asked how many children this represents, and Mr. Balducci responded that it was eighteen students in total. Mr. Stycos asked that when Mr. Balducci is figuring these numbers if there was any factoring in for Mrs. Ciarlo's plan for the Special Services building, and Mr. Balducci responded that it was figured in at this point. Mr. Stycos stated that the administration has to decide. They can't say they can't sell the Special Services building because they are going to save money by keeping it and not factor in that savings in the budget. They have to do one or the other. He asked Mr. Balducci to factor it in.

Mr. Stycos commented that Mr. Zisseron was going to look at the bussing numbers and routes to see if it was possible to eliminate a bus run and maybe use RIPTA. He asked what happened with this situation.

Mr. Stycos stated that Ms. Bryan made mention of the Horton School

budget money. He didn't understand what she was talking about and asked for an explanation. Mr. Balducci responded that he believed what she was mentioning is that on the cut list library monies are identified under Horton School. They are in the budget; they weren't cut. He did not show that money being allocated to the two schools the students will be attending. That will be done during the school year as the dust settles and he knows where the students are. Monies will eventually follow them, and he will do a budget revision. The money is still identified in Horton as available, and he will make the adjustments after the fact. Mr. Stycos commented that in the budget the committee approved there was \$75,000 for new library books system wide. Mr. Balducci responded that the amount was \$36,000 which was a multi-year plan. Mr. Stycos asked if this figure had been altered in any way, and Mr. Balducci said that it was not on the cut list and has survived the process at this point. Mrs. Ciarlo added that this is over a three-year period.

Mr. Stycos commented that the district has three special education directors and two special education coordinators which ties in with Mr. Traficante's comments about eliminating some positions. He asked administration to look at this. Mrs. Ciarlo

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responded that she would like to look at all of the positions and not just these positions that have existed in one form or another.

Administration has streamlined it so that there is a director who covers grades 1 through 12 on the eastern side of the City and grades 1 through 12 on the western side of the City. They have a coordinator who has helped tremendously especially with those students who are in outside placements in the smooth transition of them coming back in. With the number of students the district still has she would hate to think that the district wouldn't have the coordinators along with the directors; they wouldn't survive that long because it is a very busy area. She would be willing to look at the whole area of administrative structure and not just special education. Mr. Lupino said that Cranston is also servicing Cranston students not attending Cranston schools. That is what some people fail to realize. They think about the special education student within these schools but by law have to service the other students. Mrs. Ciarlo added that if there are problems adjusting, they have to go to the particular school where the outside tuition is placed. There is much work to do by the coordinators to make sure that the students come back in a timely fashion. Administration will try to come up with a plan whereby they can try to save some money during the course of the year with regard to bringing back some tuitions that are out there right now. It has been so successful. There is an excellent director at Sanders Academy who has offered to act as a liaison with administration in moving the elementary component of this. She feels very comfortable that they will do a good job in this area.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that she wanted to make it clear that when she

brought up this question of the special education directors and coordinators she actually recognized what the coordinators do more than what the directors do. She felt that the coordinators were more important than the directors. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that administration would be happy to respond with what the directors do and what their responsibilities are. She knows that it is a complicated area, and it does eat into a great deal of the budget, but remember that the special education students have met in all but one area of the state mandates; and this just didn't happen. It happened with a combination of factors. She asked Mr. Scherza to define the difference between a director and a coordinator in Special Services. Mr. Laliberte added that the directors are state mandated. There is a certain number of children, and once that number is reached, there has to be a special education director in order to cover that number of children. Ms. Iannazzi asked if the district had to have three, and Mr. Laliberte responded that the district is 100 students short of three directors. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the non-public student population must be considered as well. Mr. Laliberte indicated that the district's third special education director deals with early childhood only which is a growing population in this City. There are also many young children who attend pre-schools and private Kindergartens in this City, and if those children have special needs, the district has to service them even if they are from different cities and towns. Mrs. Ciarlo remarked that one of the things administration is trying to do is when a pre-school child is recommended to be put in pre-school Kindergarten environment they are sent to a

pre-school. She asked why this district couldn't have its own pre-school and run it. Instead of paying outside tuition, the tuition would be coming to the district.

Mr. Lupino noted to the public that if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak on a budget item they could speak.

Maureen Morgan, 165 Pawtuxet Avenue – Ms. Morgan asked Mr. Scherza what the columns on the left on the budget cut list represented. Mr. Scherza responded that those columns represented the budget adopted last year for this current fiscal year. That is to be compared with the four columns on the right which is the proposed budget for next year; it is for comparative purposes only. She asked if balance remaining means money in the account, and Mr. Scherza said that it did not. Ms. Morgan asked if the budget had been reformatted as the City Council had asked, and Mr. Scherza responded that the budget had not moved into a different format as yet. Mr. Balducci added that administration has begun the process. He has taken some of the City Council recommendations. Mr. Traficante is sitting on that sub-committee to move in that direction.

Ms. Morgan referred to the Providence students and asked how much the district could realize on these students over the line, and Mr.

Scherza responded that the district could make literally nothing. Right now there is no provision that will make them pay. The Department of Education has not come to the district's assistance. The district would have to prosecute each one of those students, and it is not the school department that does that. The school department is not the funding entity. Ms. Morgan noted that she thought there was enough of them coming over the line that the district could make some money. Mr. Scherza continued that the responsibility for pursuing that in terms of prosecution lies with the city solicitor because the City Council is the funding entity. People saw recently in the media for East Providence where they had a ruling go against their school committee saying that they could not prosecute and recoup the funds because they were not the funding entity. Mr. Lupino commented that as the School Committee member who proposed the affidavit that the committee proposed last year it was never his intention to use it as a funding source. He did not take the child from Providence to court. The district by state law can't do that, however, it was supposed to be a deterrent for people coming over the line in the first place. Ms. Morgan felt that maybe the district could do something to make that happen; they could make some nice money. There are a lot of kids coming over the city lines.

Ms. Morgan asked what the printing amount consisted of. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that the district is required to have disciplinary code booklets that go home to the parents, and every student must have one. It is the printing of those kinds of materials that are

incorporated in that account. Ms. Morgan asked if the district could have the parents download the form from home to be returned. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that the district couldn't get 11,000 parents to do that, and it would become a chasing problem. Mrs.

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Ciarlo further commented that she gave Ms. Morgan only one example for printing costs. Mr. Scherza added that this included a number of handbooks used district wide. Manuals and correspondence, programs of study, and printed forms for special needs students are done in-house because it is cheaper. Ms. Morgan noted that printing on page 2 is a separate line item, and Mrs. Ciarlo responded that some of the printing is circulated to the parents. Ms. Morgan commented that the district should be able to do some of this paperless. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that this is one of Mr. Scherza's goals for next year, and Mr. Scherza said that they have started doing it administratively and with staff. They cannot legislate to parents and students because not all families have the resources to go that route. Mr. Lupino commented that it would open up a litigious nightmare. Ms. Morgan added that if the paper is decreasing, the document shows the same amount on page 1. Mr. Scherza responded that the printing costs and the paper are all increasing. It is not that they stay the same forever. Even though the dollar amount may stay the same, there is an increasing volume. Ms. Morgan noted that the document was printed only on one side.

Ms. Morgan referred to page 2 of the budget cut list, plant glazing, plant plumbing, plant painting, plant supplements and materials. She noted that this is all for school buildings that the school department doesn't own. Mr. Scherza responded that the school department doesn't own the buildings but does occupy them. Mr. Lupino added that the committee has the care and control of those buildings. That means that they have to provide the lighting, heat, and sewer fees. They have to keep them in good order and make sure repairs are made. Ms. Morgan stated that plant equipment is supposed to be kicked back by the city and plant asset protection is supposed to be kicked back to the school department. Mr. Scherza stated that it is done in part.

Ms. Morgan referred to page 3 of the budget cut list, transportation, and asked if outside busing would ever happen. She thought it was an expensive idea for the district to keep its own buses; \$50,000 for tires, \$125,000 for outside maintenance. Mr. Lupino commented that Ms. Iannazzi put together a joint committee to talk to Warwick about areas where they could save money by consolidating. Warwick has half of their fleet with an outside contractor, and they wish that they did not because they are a captured audience. The people talk about the fact that it is a union workforce, but the private companies have also unionized; and they run into the same situation as Cranston finding people who are qualified to hang around all day while they drive a bus for 1-1/2 hours in the morning and 1-1/2 hours in the afternoon. Companies such as Laidlaw and First Student run into the

same situation that Cranston does except at the end of the three years they can charge the district whatever it is going to cost. Mr. Scherza added that an analysis of this was done, and it was widely publicized by the Office of the Auditor General for the State of Rhode Island, and he stated quite emphatically that this was one area where Cranston could realize savings. This has been done by some independent eyes, and it hasn't been suggested that the district would realize savings there. However, he has been told that periodically this does go out to bid just to see how it matches up. Mr. Lupino said that it is being proposed right now for the state to

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provide the monies for any out-of-district transportation. This is where the district could really save some money.

Ms. Morgan asked for the difference between middle school sports and athletics. In response, Mr. Scherza said that middle school sports are sports that are interscholastic between grades 6, 7, and 8 after school. Athletics are usually referred to as being part of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League which is exclusively grades 9 through 12. This is not physical education. In the budget document, athletics is broken down much more extensively.

Ms. Morgan asked what CACTC meant, and Mr. Scherza stated that it means Cranston Area Career & Technical Center which is the

vocational school that is housed at Cranston West.

Ms. Morgan referred to Child Development and indicated that this is where they teach the students how to baby-sit, how to raise children and not get pregnant. Mr. Scherza responded it is to train students who are going to have vocations in that field working in the world with children at early childhood ages. It is a training program that is approved by the State.

Ms. Morgan referred to page 4, Elementary School Special Education Evaluations \$18,000. Mr. Scherza explained that according to Uncle Sam it started with the 94-1-42, and now it is under the IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities of Education Act. That is required by federal law. It is not an option to the district; it has been determined to be a property right.

Ms. Morgan asked if the district has inventories from the school for annual orders. She asked if administration knew the number of sheets of math paper for a given school. Mr. Scherza responded that they don't count sheets of paper, but they know how many reams of paper come in and how many go out to teachers on a per pupil basis. A school does not turn in an inventory to the point where they would count the number of pieces of math paper. The labor costs would far exceed the savings if people were using their time to do such things. Ms. Morgan said that at her child's school they have enough RISO supplies to make a hundred million copies a day until the end of time

because it is on automatic order, and it is not checked. She suggested to Mr. Scherza that he check the schools to what they need as opposed as to what has to be automatically ordered.

Ms. Morgan asked what NEASC stands for, and Mr. Scherza responded that it means New England Association of Schools and Colleges which is the accrediting agencies for schools.

Ms. Morgan asked what Charter School Tuition is, and Mr. Scherza stated that it is all charter schools for students who reside in Cranston attend. It could be the Met School,

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Beacon Mutual, New England Laborers, or any charter school. By state regulation, the district has to pay tuition for any Cranston student who makes that choice. That is their option, and the district is obligated to support it. The breakdown changes daily; the students leave and re-enter on a daily basis.

Ms. Morgan asked what the Sanders Program is and where it is located. Mr. Scherza responded that Sanders Program is a special program for students who have difficulty achieving in a traditional setting. The district uses a school that had been closed many years ago. This building also houses the food services offices as well. That saves the district an awful lot of money rather than paying on a

per-pupil basis out-of-district tuition. They are taking care of Cranston kids in Cranston and providing the services here.

Ms. Morgan noted that she didn't see chalkboards on this list and asked if it went away. Mr. Scherza responded that they are listed under asset protection. The chalkboards are being replaced on a rotating basis. In the budget presentation it is itemized in the power point presentation as to the exact number of chalkboards and how many at each respective location. Ms. Morgan asked if the white chalkboards require expensive pens to write on the boards. Mr. Scherza indicated that there is a material that goes over the boards rather than purchasing full boards. They require dustless, odorless markers, and that is required because there are many students who are allergic to dust. Mr. Lupino further explained that it is similar to a fiber board or masonite with a covering over it. Mr. Scherza added that if the boards are taken care of they last a very long time. It will vary with how they are maintained.

Mr. Stycos asked how it was decided what went on the "A" list. Mr. Scherza responded that it was decided last year by someone from the City Council. The City Council determined that some of those things would be paid from the capital type accounts. In the past, it could be for large orders of textbooks or asset protection. Administration did not propose it to the Council; the Council came up with the suggestions. They use the same process and they determine it. Mr. Lupino added that it was during Mayor O'Leary's administration that

there were some excess funds from the sale of the sewerage treatment plant that were earmarked. The committee put a roof on Gladstone School with that money, and the committee did a few other items with money the Council approved. There was some precedence that had been done. Mr. Scherza added that as far last year's budget and the budget before the committee, it was the City Council's decision to make and not administration's or the committee's. Mr. Traficante commented that he believed it had to have a capital connotation as well.

Mrs. Greifer moved to adjourn the work session.

Mr. Lupino stated that there is an area that is a sore spot with a lot of people, and he didn't know if anyone had broached this subject yet. There is an area the committee and administration have not spoken about, and this has been done in the past. As

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some of his colleagues know, he can't get involved in it; and that is with personnel. He didn't know if anyone on that side is willing to come forward with any proposal to either extend the contract or help the committee out to forego a portion of a raise. Mrs. Ciarlo asked Mr. Lupino if he wanted administration to ask, and Mr. Lupino indicated that she could if she wished. Mrs. Ciarlo stated that in preparation for Friday's meeting if the committee wished administration to propose and have a conversation they would be

willing to do that. It would be brought back to the committee from everyone and not just the teachers. Mr. Lupino stated that it is difficult times for a lot of people, and this is primarily the teachers and above. It is pretty hard to talk to someone who is a three-hour food service worker or a janitor who is making \$14.00 an hour. He would certainly think that from teachers on up that there might be some wiggle room. Mrs. Ciarlo asked if this was the wish of the committee. She asked for a consensus from them. Mr. Stycos stated that he would like to discuss it further in Executive Session. Mrs. Ciarlo suggested that it could be discussed in Executive Session on Friday, June 23rd. Mr. Lupino stated that the committee is under the gun with this. They had to wait for the state numbers. Mr. Traficante remarked that if the conversation starts today, the committee will not have an answer by Friday. For every action, there is a reaction. Every time a bargaining unit is approached to give up something, they will want something in return. This could be a long process. Ms. Iannazzi stated that it is not a process that should take place in public session. Mrs. Greifer stated that the committee may hamper themselves in the future if they do not explore every possibility of ways to reduce this budget. It is not that she is in favor of doing this, but she doesn't want to see the committee at some point in the future not being able to say that they did everything they could to explore cost saving avenues. Mr. Lupino mentioned that it is always assumed that if the School Committee exercises a Caruolo Action that it is an adversarial situation. The committee has one purpose which is to represent the students and the parents of the City of

Cranston in the public schools. That is set up by law. The committee is not breaking the law; they are not upsetting anyone; that is the fact of what it is. If one says that the committee is doing an adversarial action by going that route, he would totally disagree. That was put in place for a particular reason.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that the work session be adjourned.

Mr. Lupino noted that the regular School Committee meeting would take place on Friday, June 23rd, at 6:30 p.m. at Hope Highlands.

There being no further business to come before the work session, it was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Lupino, Clerk