

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

DECEMBER 7, 2011

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:00 P.M.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORK SESSION

MINUTES

The Public Work Session of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at the Briggs Building with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mr. Bloom, Mrs. McFarland, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mr. Traficante, Mr. Lombardi and Mrs. Culhane.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried that the members convene to Executive Session Pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel, PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation; (Contract Negotiations' Update – Custodians), (Consideration of legal options regarding status of aid to education appropriation and legal advice relating to the same).

Call to Order – Public Work Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was present. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Executive Session Minutes Sealed – December 7, 2011. A motion to seal these minutes was made by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mrs. McFarland. All were in favor.

Public Work Session:

Ms. Iannazzi announced that items were going to be taken out of order tonight; beginning with item (b) first:

Traffic Safety Camera Systems' Presentation by Smartbus Live

Making the presentation tonight are Mr. Alfred Cardi, President of Smart Bus Live and Andrew Analdo, a consultant for Smart Bus Live.

Please see the portfolio for Smartbus Live on file in the Superintendent's office. Mr. Cardi noted that there was actually a law passed in RI and the status of that law is on Page 2 of the handout. It was just amended recently. It was amended on June 26th. They increased the penalty for passing school buses in the State of Rhode Island to \$250 to \$500. Due to the severity of the offense most tickets are being issued at \$500. Mr. Cardi also explained "Nathans' Law" to the committee. At this time Mr. Cardi reviewed the portfolio. After

reviewing the portfolio, Mr. Cardi asked if there were any questions from the committee.

Ms. Iannazzi commented that Mr. Cardi could start by explaining to everyone what other cities they are in and the revenue sharing in the other cities and what they've decided to do with the revenue.

Mr. Cardi

We're presently in Providence, Johnston, East Providence, Westerly, Portsmouth, Exeter/West Greenwich, and in Burrville as well. We are also working very closely now with some cities into Connecticut, Georgia, Virginia; the revenue sharing part – every district is different.

Unfortunately there isn't a lot we can do about that; the Law is specific as to where the money goes. Some districts have sent all the money to the school districts; some sent with appropriation to where the money goes; some districts split the revenue. Ms. Iannazzi reported that the way the law is written, the money goes to the city.

Mr. Traficante noted that they went through this a couple of months ago; at that time the Mayor made it very clear that we would have to go to an RFP. Mr. Traficante also made note that legislation wasn't in place at that time; now it's in place. Mr. Traficante stated that he would like to see it in Cranston; however, before he says "yes" as a member of the School Committee, he would like to see it in writing from the Mayor of the City of Cranston that we're going to get a certain portion of that money. Ms. Iannazzi reported that Superintendent Nero and she already had this conversation.

Superintendent Nero

I know that Westerly owns its own fleet; in Westerly I would ask Joe to reach out to them because we also own our own fleet. Also because this was advertised, we've already received phone calls from companies who want to be on the bid list on this. Also discussed at this time was advertisement being allowed on the buses and would the revenue go back to the City or the School Department. We have to ask the question if the Mayor would be willing to share in the luxury of this revenue. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Lombardi noted that it isn't whether you own your own fleet; it's the fact that the issuing department is the City of Cranston and that revenue is sent to the City of Cranston. It's critical that we entertain a cooperative effort with the Mayor's office and the City Council that says that any tickets generated as a result of this activity goes back to the school department or a portion thereof. There has to be a revenue sharing process. The Mayor's argument may be that the municipal court judges are on their payroll and the Police Department's on their payroll, etc.; however, this is something we would be allowing on our fleet. Mr. Lombardi noted that whether or not we own our fleet is irrelevant because the entity that's receiving the revenue; safety's first, revenue's second.

Mr. Bloom asked what happens to the other 87 ½ % and who issues the tickets; the State or the City. Mr. Cardi answered that it is the City

who issues them. It would be as follows pertaining to the law:

- 12 ½ % goes to the State**
- 12 1/2 % goes to the City**
- 75% goes to the Vendor that's providing the equipment.**

Mr. Bloom asked about the table showing actual tickets issued and for 40 buses 1,376 tickets were issued and if this is correct. Mr. Cardi answered, "yes". A discussion ensued.

Mr. Lombardi asked if he would be able to identify a Smartbus by going by it. Mr. Cardi answered by saying that right behind the stop arm, four windows back you will see a black camera box and right underneath the stop arm in two inch lettering it says, "live video monitoring in use". It is labeled on the bus and the cameras are on the side.

Mr. Traficante asked, on average, what is the average of cost sharing with the various administrations in school departments. Mr. Cardi answered as follows:

- Providence it's 100% to the school.**
- Johnston appropriates all the funds to the school.**
- East Providence stays all with the City; and they were happy to keep police officers on details at the schools.**

It was noted that we need to have a resolution passed that we'd like to do this contingent upon some sort of revenue generating scheme

between the City and the School Department relative to the fines that are given.

Ms. Iannazzi asked if there has been any play at the State level to modify the statute to allow all of the money to the school district or even to split. It was answered, "No"; to get this legislation through was a big deal to do and because Smartbus has an office with 20 employees and keeps growing, it is a tremendous cost and \$1.8 million in technical assistants and technical people go out and repair things so they had to submit all kinds of financial information so they have it set down and basically most communities were very pro-education and they felt they should give it to the school system, for example, in Providence. There was also a lot of cooperation in East Providence. A discussion ensued. Mr. Lombardi commented that since we've done some non-binding resolutions that we send to the legislature about how we feel about certain things, we should draft a resolution, sending it to the City Council requesting that they collaborate with us on the institution of Smartbus Program and that we work out a formula; even if it is a 50/50 split. As long as there is some split on this. He reiterated that the first and foremost is the safety of the children and secondly is that we split the revenue.

Mrs. Culhane asked about the turn-around time from a budgetary standpoint. How long are we looking on a return on these fines? Mr. Cardi noted that typically fines that are paid within the month are allocated so for example, fines paid in November, they already

received the report so the money goes over to the City in a couple of days and they are paid as the vendor around the third week of the following month. He also noted that collections are around 80% over four months. He noted that the Police Chiefs have been on board with this. Sometimes; however, the fines are reduced at arraignment and that's per the judge.

Mr. Traficante commented that the Mayor made it very clear when he talked to him that he would definitely go to an RFP. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Zisseron noted that he is glad that they do have a law to back this and he would be in favor of this. He would put it on certain buses and he could almost guarantee a ticket per day.

Mr. Cardi announced that they are in four other States; seven other Cities and three more so he.....a discussion ensued.

Mr. Lombardi added that the resolution should be something along the lines communicating to the Council with a courtesy copy to the Mayor; with a courtesy copy to the Chief Judge of the Traffic Tribunal and the Police Chief of the City of Cranston; indicating that we are in favor of this; that we leave the imprimatur of the City Council and that we share in it on a certain percentage basis.

It was noted that the most important thing for anyone who is

appointed or elected is the public policy and if that makes it happen then we all share and the base is bigger and we all move forward.

A discussion ensued regarding a percentage of profit.

Ms. Iannazzi noted that we have a resolution in January and suggested that we ask in our resolution to schedule a meeting with the Council to discuss it. We can have them present during that meeting.

Mrs. McFarland asked what type of organization is Smartbus? Are they incorporated; are they an LLC; etc. Mr. Cardi answered that they are actually an LLC and they have a DBA of Smartbus which is a Rhode Island Corporation. There are five partners; he will supply a list of those partners, as requested. They have 14 employees that work with them in the field. They pay taxes here. Also, as they put more buses on the road they make more jobs for the State. They maintain and insure all of their equipment. Mr. Cardi also added that he lives in Cranston. Mrs. McFarland asked Mr. Cardi how many competitive companies are in Rhode Island. Mr. Cardi answered that no other company does live monitoring, to his knowledge. There are many companies that sell cameras. Our system provides actual live monitoring of the exterior.

Mr. Cardi added that if the district elects to have interior cameras, they would put those in; which are three additional cameras; one in

the rear, one in the front and one going down the stairwell. If we choose not to have interiors, they just don't install them.

Monthly Review of Year to Date Expenditures

Mr. Balducci reported on the hand-out, "Year to Date Expenditures as of November 30, 2011" at this time. He explained this summary to the members of the committee and administration. (On file in the Superintendent's Office)

A question and answer period followed at this time. A discussion ensued in regards to the CAC&TC budget shortfall in this revenue category, which is due to the fact that 14 fewer Johnston students are enrolled this current year as compared to prior school years.

Mr. Balducci noted that they will monitor this. Ms. Iannazzi pointed out that Davies closed their Cisco Program and it is her understanding that we picked up three students from North Providence in the past couple of weeks. Mr. Balducci noted that this is the first time he's heard about this. Mrs. Culhane suggested that perhaps some of the colleges could offer us something. A lot of the colleges go out into the high schools to teach them about our programs. Mr. Nero noted that these are difficult times for school districts and a lot of them are doing everything they can to keep students from going into these programs. A lengthy discussion

ensued.

Mr. Nero suggested that this committee have a work session on this and invite Ms. Coutu to come over and go over everything because she is certainly knowledgeable in this matter.

Mr. Lombardi asked about athletic revenue and whether we generate any of that revenue. Mr. Balducci answered that the City gets the rental fee and the rest would go to the Interscholastic League.

Mr. Balducci continued to explain the hand-out to the committee. He noted that the Revenue Shortfall will be reported out in December. He also reported that at this time, the budget looks to be in good shape.

Mr. Bloom asked about the summary page and the \$10 million difference. Mr. Balducci pointed out that the very last page explains this and it only reflects certain categories.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lombardi and seconded by Mr. Traficante. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank S. Lombardi

School Committee Clerk