

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 17, 2012

Western Hills Middle School – 400 Phenix Avenue

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00 P.M.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC MEETING

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION

MINUTES

This meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the above date with the following members present, Chairperson Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mr. Bloom, Mrs. Culhane, Mrs. McFarland and Mr. Traficante.

This meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Lombardi and seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that the members convene to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel,) Discussion of Suspension of Employee A; Discussion of Termination of Employee B; PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation; (Ahlquist vs. Cranston School Committee), (Contract Negotiations' Update – Custodians, Secretaries), (Consideration of legal options regarding status of aid to education appropriation and legal advice relating to same). All were in favor.

Call to Order – Public Session was called to order at 7:20 p.m. with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mrs. Ruggieri,

Mr. Lombardi, Mrs. McFarland, Mrs. Culhane, Mr. Traficante and Mr. Bloom. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

The pledge of allegiance was conducted. The roll was called; a quorum was present.

Executive Session minutes sealed – January 17, 2012

A motion to seal these minutes was made by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante. All were in favor.

Minutes of Previous Meetings Approved – December 7 and December 12, 2011.

A motion to seal these minutes was made by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante. All were in favor.

Public Acknowledgements/Communications – Chairwoman Iannazzi stated – the School Committee would like to acknowledge Council President Anthony Lupino and Council Vice-president Rob Pelletier present this evening.

Chairperson's Communications – Chairwoman Iannazzi stated – I just want to reiterate that no vote was taken during executive session and no vote will be taken this evening regarding any potential appeal of the banner lawsuit. I would also like to take some time to just lay out some general ground rules this evening. Tonight's meeting is a work session intended to discuss the 2012-2013 budget and we are present here at Western Hills for that single reason. While I understand that

there may be members of the public that wish to speak on non-agenda items I want to lay out the rules. Speakers are limited to three minutes. When called upon please give your name and your address for the record. If you have prepared remarks at the conclusion of those remarks, we ask that you hand it in to our secretary. I am going to assume that given the crowd some of you are present to speak about the banner at Cranston West. Ladies and gentlemen, any individual that wishes to bully, intimidate, or speak ill will of Ms. Ahlquist while defending a banner that states, help us to conduct ourselves so as to bring credit to Cranston High School West, clearly does not understand the intent of the banner. Anyone who resorts to attacks this evening in their comments will be asked to leave. While we support freedom of speech, this School Committee will not support or condone any threats, bullying or fear tactics. I may not agree with Ms. Ahlquist but we can all recognize her bravery in standing up for what she believes in. Finally, on another note, we would like to remind you that the Board of Regents will be holding their hearing on Thursday, 11 a.m. to discuss the Achievement First Mayoral Academies.

Superintendent's Communications

Mr. Nero stated – There will be two parts to my presentation this evening. The first part will be in terms of my communication will be on this past Friday afternoon a scheduled trip that we had planned about two to three months ago, myself, President of the Cranston Teachers' Alliance, Lizbeth Larking, Katrina Pillay who is our I3 Coordinator, came with me to New York to speak to superintendent's

and union presidents from New York and the greater Northeast region in regards to the success that we are having in the implementation and development of our teacher evaluation instrument. I must say I was very proud of the district as being one of the leaders as we were talking with superintendents and union leaders who are having difficulty beginning this process and I wish them well and we are very thankful that we are where we are and not where they are right now.

The next item I would like to focus on is my budget presentation for this year. Mr. Nero presented his budget for 2012-2012 (see attached Power Point handout). Also see CPSED.net webpage for the Power Point).

Budget Presentation – January 17, 2012

Members of the School Committee, members of my Administrative Team, principals, teachers, members of the public, esteem council members, taxpayers of the City of Cranston. Tonight I present the Superintendent of School Proposed Budget for the 2012-2013 school year as I stated in my budget cover letter I am presenting a budget that is not substantially different from the previous adopted budget. Included in this year's budget are only those items that are either required by or support the new basic educational program regulations (the BEP) which have been in effect since July 1, 2010.

This budget insures that Cranston Public Schools students are provided with a comprehensive program of study that is "guaranteed and viable" which is in the BEP, in each content area and provides for student participation in athletics and curricular activities.

As a result of Cranston's ever changing demographics this budget

addresses the needs of our rapidly growing English Language Learning (ELL) population. This budget, “bottom line”, is the result of substantial programmatic cuts by the Cranston School Committee over the last several years. It also reflects an increase in State Aid for the new Fair Funding Formula. Most importantly, it reflects the dedication of its staff from its administrators, both certified and non-certified, some of which have not received a raise in the last six years and have seen their cost-share escalate to 25%. A special thanks to the members of our collective bargaining unions, especially the Cranston Teachers’ Alliance who have generously taken a 0% increase for two years in a row as well as an increase in their medical co-share to 25%.

I may point out that despite the difficult times that we have had in the past, our schools are still very successful. Last year 16 of our 17 elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (formally known as AYP); all three middle schools as well. I would debate if large urban/urban ring high schools, statistically can achieve AYP given the large percentage of students that are special needs. As the Committee knows, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the prestigious accrediting body just completed its’ five year report on Cranston East and it was virtually flawless and we even received accolades from the Commissioner who sent us a letter regarding that achievement. Our 2011 graduations were wonderful. At Cranston High School West, 96% of the students went on to college and at Cranston High School East; just a couple of tenths of a point below 80% went on to college. Some of our students

went onto the top colleges and universities in the country, many of them to trade and technical schools, and many going on to defend our country and our freedom in the military.

As always, the Executive Team is ready to assist the School Committee members in their inquiries in their pursuit of their fiduciary responsibilities of a School Committee budget due to City Hall by March 1, 2012.

Let me begin by saying that although this budget is not much different from previous budgets my verbiage from past presentations will be quite different.

Some time ago when I first became Superintendent of Schools in July of 2009 I stated that despite a variety of court actions and the difficult financial times that we experienced, Cranston Public Schools and the City of Cranston would be a going-forward model for other districts and cities in Rhode Island to emulate. As we read the newspaper and see the news what many other cities and towns are now facing we have already faced and addressed. I am proud to say that we are now seeing daylight at the end of the tunnel. Although another analogy that I might use, we are beginning to turn the corner. Folks I am tickled pink to present this budget tonight. We can now look ahead and not dream but be pragmatic and systematic as in the not too distant future we will be looking to implement programs that we once thought became extinct, including music, including the talented and gifted program. That despite running small deficits the last couple of years, we are presently working with, is balanced and I might point in many accounts, showing small surpluses which I will address in my

presentation.

During the 2006-2007 school year, as we were preparing the 2007-2008 budget, it became apparent that we would be level-funded. As the Assistant Superintendent at that time I stated to a number of people, it would take us at least four years to begin to get out of this mess. It is now four years. I am thoroughly optimistic.

The first slide of my presentation is a history lesson:

As I have publically stated on a number of occasions, by the conclusion of testimony in RI Superior Court in July of 2008 regarding the Caruolo Action, the district had already begun to reduce the “budget deficit”. In essence, we began paying down the loan by instituting significant reductions in most budget line items.

For example (bullet 1) beginning in August of 2007, based on my recommendation as the Assistant Superintendent, a city-wide committee was formed to investigate the feasibility of restructuring our present grade configuration in elementary school from grades k-5 to grades k-6. That study was to investigate if the elementary schools had adequate spacing and if there will be any cost savings with the reconfiguration. After six months of study there was evidence of potential cost savings with a new grade configuration. The committee approved a change to a k-6 by a vote of 5-2. As a result of this change, the first year savings was \$1,085,930. The second year savings was slightly above \$1,335,648 dollars. The average savings in the first two years moving forward was \$1,210,789 per year in 2008-2009 dollars. The January 2010 Performance Audit was extremely complimentary of this decision (refer to pages 8 and 9).

Slide 2 Bullet 2

Also, during the 08-09 school year the committee was in negotiations with the Cranston Teachers' Alliance; a year in which the members of that bargaining unit worked without a contract and without an increase in salary. Through these negotiations, the district was able to successfully make significant savings by increasing teaching time for Program Supervisors and Department Chairs at the high schools, while also eliminating middle school Department Chairs.

Prior to the 08-09 school year, Program Supervisors (17 total) taught one class per day while supervising their various city-wide departments the rest of the time. As a result of collective bargaining, four (4) Program Supervisors moved from teaching one class per day to two classes per day. Fourteen Program Supervisors moved from teaching one class per day to three classes per day. The result was a reduction in the teaching staff of 6.2 FTE's or a savings of \$437,697 dollars per year, in 2008-2009 dollars.

Also, there are six high school Department Chairs at each of our two major high schools. Their contractual teaching load per day is based on the number of teachers in their departments. The new CBA increased every Department Chair's teaching load by one additional class per day. That resulted in a reduction of our teaching staff by 2.4 FTE's for a total savings of \$194,532 dollars per year.

Before the implementation of the new CBA in July of 2009, middle school Department Chair positions were not filled when a Department Chair retired. As a result of the CBA middle school Department Chairs were eliminated. We were able to reduce middle school teaching staff

by a total of 3.5 positions for a savings of \$283,689 dollars per year in 2008-2009 dollars.

In total, the savings in the present CBA as a result of increased teaching time for Program Supervisors, high school Department Chairs, and the elimination of middle school Department Chairs was a savings of \$915,918 dollars per year in 2008-2009 dollars.

In addition to these aforementioned savings, the current Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Analysis performed by Sal Augeri as commissioned by the mayor, identified the following savings found to be above and beyond those projected in their audit, again the audit of 2010.

The projected savings that I am quoting exactly is from page 2 and that is in the smaller audit. The projected total savings of \$3,317,440 dollars if all program cuts were implemented as recommended. The budget/program cuts saved a confirmed (actual) savings of \$4,800,792 or \$1,483,352 more than the projected savings estimated by the auditors.

Bullet 4

Cost-sharing negotiations/co-pays with employees saved the District (and again I am quoting right from the audit) \$3,032,296 or \$1,832,296 more than the savings estimated. Since the audit was performed last March, the Alliance and the School Committee agreed to a new contract which provides for a 0% pay increase last year and next year and a reduction in steps. Instead of going from a 15-17% in their health co-share they went from 15 to 20%. That has resulted in further savings, not in the March audit report and not on this slide of an additional \$716,625 dollars.

Bullet 5

Other budget recommendations which is Appendix A which is in this budget and if you look at Appendix A, implemented and reflected in the FY2012 School Committee Adopted Budget, exclusive of the savings realized through Employee Cost-sharing/Co-pays (\$3,032,296), has resulted in an additional total budget reduction of \$1,768,496 dollars.

As you can see, Cranston Public Schools had a total cost avoidance of \$7,210,851.

For those of you with great math skills if you add in the \$716,625 in savings on the co-share increase, you have already arrived at total cost avoidance of \$7,927,476 dollars.

Now I would like to bring you to the expenditure category for this year's budget. The salaries increased this year; again without the help of the Cranston Teachers' Alliance it would have been significantly higher. I am going to paint some of these in broad strokes and Mr. Balducci will elaborate further on the spreadsheet later in this meeting. The salaries and steps this year have been a lot of adjustments will go up \$1,462,236 dollars. Had it not been for union concessions it would have been \$1.7 million dollars or about \$347,000 more on the steps. The raise on the other hand, had the teachers taken the raise of 3.25% would have been an additional \$1.4 million dollar hit to this budget. In total that contract saved \$1.8 million dollars. You have seen here, despite what people think, there is a slight raise in certified and non-certified pension – these are what I call the uncontrollables. Had we not had pension reform, instead of

this going out at approximately \$1.1 million dollars (when you add the certified and non-certified together) it would have gone up an addition \$5.8 million dollars without pension reform.

I would like to talk about health care. As you know we ran a deficit of about \$2 million dollar deficit. Last year we had four outstanding teachers die while in service and as many of you attended wakes and dedications in their regard. In addition to that we have had several teachers who had significant illnesses last year. As a result we ran a \$2 million dollar deficit. Our consultant through the WB has told us that we should budget between 0 and 3% of the budget and always I go with the more conservative higher number so this budget is going up 3%. This year we are running a surplus for the first six months of nearly \$1.4 million dollars. We expect that surplus to pretty much through the remainder of the year where we are looking at the possibility of not only paying off the deficit was having \$400-500,000 surplus looking forward to next year. The same applies to Dental. Utilities, we have made adjustments to these categories. Many of our schools have been converted to gas heat and as a result less oil. In the long run this will save us a lot of money.

Turnover allowance – this will be the last year for turnover allowance since we use UCOA we will put the allowances broken down into the various accounts. We have a provision in there for increased tuitions for charter schools, \$206,437, workers comp is going up 10%, gasoline for our vehicles, nursing services – contracted nursing services. For the first time in years I am putting in \$78,000 in textbooks and materials because we need them for our new science

and math programs.

As you know last year we outsourced the Horton program that will save us approximately \$450,000 - 475,000 dollars. We have been approached by other districts that would be willing to pay tuitions to have their kids come to this outstanding program. We will look at that in the second year. I have put in for an ELL coordinator; it is a requirement of the BEP. We cannot do without that for another year. I put in \$55,000 for band uniforms. We have removed the strings program, we have removed the chorus and band in the elementary schools and we cut significantly into the middle school program. However, if we are going to have a high school program then they have to be top shelf and the uniforms that Cranston East is using are uniforms that they bought on Ebay seven years ago from a high school down south in which they put the Cranston East's emblems on. The uniforms at Cranston High School West are only 24 years old and being held together by duct tape. I put in for an intercom at Western Hills Middle School because the intercom there is now 42 years old and when you touch the levers you get an electrical shock. The worst part about is it doesn't function within the building and we have significant shelter in place procedure and we cannot go without an intercom at Western Hills Middle School.

You are going to see an adjustment that I will let Joe explain to you. What we are going to do in Athletics is we are going to make Mike Traficante, AD, self-sufficient on his own revenue moving forward. We have not done gym inspections and repairs in four years. We finally brought a company in and we had to do some major repairs this year

and did them within our budget but I am putting \$10,700 dollars and this will wipe out the major repairs after next year and you will see going forward gym repairs because our back boards, equipment in the gym, need to be repaired. We cannot go on like this without it. You will see in this budget that we put in a cost avoidance of \$308,000 for teacher retirements. We have estimated we will lose 10 teachers this year to retirements and I put that in there as an adjustment. People need to realize it's one thing that they raised the retirement age because of the issues that we are having with the pension but the end result is going to be this will be eliminated in years. We put in for unemployment \$97,000.

Revenue

You need to know that with the Fair Funding Formula, before it was unfair, and Rhode Island and Cranston Public Schools will be the trend setters, people will want to emulate what we did and I will tell you why. You just read what happened in East Providence, they just had to front them their money for the next three months, they already have a problem there. North Providence, Johnston, Warwick recently lost to Caruolo of \$6.5 million dollars and that 5% adjusted that you read in the paper about. This is happening everywhere and in other districts where the fair funding formula will be adjusted. \$4.7 is coming to us; \$3.2 is in the fair funding and \$1.5 that the state has promised to give us as a result of the Federal Jobs Bill which you see right below that going away.

Summer school – we ran summer school last year. I am not raising the cost because we have already raised it enough. We ran a deficit of

about \$15,000. That is a pittance. What it would have cost us had we not done summer school, hundreds of kids would be back in their classrooms taking classes over again or coming another year to Cranston Public Schools at full cost.

This budget represents a total operating budget of \$133,566,028. The adopted budget last year was \$129,052,023. The increase is \$4,514,005 or 3.5%. Less the non-city revenue increase of \$2,913,617 we are requesting in new dollars from the city \$1,600,329 or 1.76% increase. Joe tells me he has been here for over ten years and that is the lowest increase we have requested.

Now you will notice on the bottom here as recommended by School Committee member Steven Bloom regarding some of the uncontrollables and the mayor was gracious enough last year to put into the budget a line called City Financed School Contingency Reserve. This morning when I met with the mayor I said, last year you put \$690,000 in the budget, I am asking for \$647,528. Mayor, not only have we not touched that money and we don't plan to touch that money but we are running right now and it will grow as we found another student that we were paying tuition has moved out of district, we are running a surplus of \$210,000 in that account. For the first time in a long time everything is moving favorably. All those uncontrollables that you see on the bottom \$1,583,177 dollars which is pretty much in line with the \$1.6 million dollars.

I have never been this optimistic. For the last couple of months we have been quite pleased because we knew how this was coming out. Mr. Balducci will review the spread sheet. We will also begin to

systematically and programmatically bring programs back.

Mr. Lombardi stated – Mr. Nero may I applaud you and the wonderful budget and a very optimistic budget. When you said Mr. Balducci will elaborate I am not sure he can elaborate on such a detailed budget presentation. I think we need to digest that. In light of the fact that there are so many people and so many people who want to speak on non-agenda items I would suggest to Joe that we forgo your further explanation and move on to further business.

Mr. Traficante stated – I congratulate Mr. Nero on presenting such a good budget. I also want to congratulate my colleagues who sit on the committee with me. We have had to make difficult decisions the past several years and as a result of those difficult decisions Peter was able to present such an outstanding budget so I would like to commend all of you for the hard work you have done.

Mr. Lombardi stated – to Ms. Larkin, President of the CTA, we can't thank you enough for what you have done, particularly in light of the year where teachers and education is under attack by Achievement First and all of these for-profit charter schools. Thank you.

School Committee Member(s) Communications

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center had their open house last week which I attended and I was struck once again by the programs that we offer, that this is the hidden jewel of a high school. My daughter is interested in one of the programs there and that is the reason why I was there. I listened to a teacher discuss his program but I also talked to a lot of students who are graduating or close to graduating and they really love that program

and talked about how they viewed that program like a second family because they were together so much and done so much work and that school, the programs are so wonderful. If you don't know anything about it make it a point to find out about it and the culinary program is going to start offering the Friday night dinner soon so keep an eye out for that. The kids do a great job.

Chairwoman Iannazzi stated – Since our last announcement of councilmen here at the meeting – Councilman Archetto has arrived so we would like to acknowledge him

Mrs. Culhane stated – I would like to announce that BASICS is going to have their Winter Concert next Thursday at Cranston East at 7 pm. Over 250 elementary school children will be performing band and choral selections. It is a wonderful program. There is a table outside that is selling raffle tickets, \$5 for a chance to win \$1,000 next week at the concert.

Mr. Traficante stated – I am proud to announce that on the front page of the January 16, 2012 Providence Business News the charter school in Cranston has been commended for its' financial literacy program.

Mr. Lombardi stated – this being my third term on the School Committee and I am proud to have an auditorium full of people for the Superintendent's budget. A lot of people, for some reason, I have received a lot of emails and perhaps I have become the spokesperson on the banner case involving Cranston High School West or perhaps not the spokesperson but a lot of people have been communicating and I want to truly say I appreciate everyone who is showing an interest in that particular issue irrespective of what side you come

down upon the issue I think it provides for a spirited debate, a respectful debate and as the chairperson said, I hope and I pray the nonsense of the antagonistic comments will come to an end on both sides. With that being said a lot of people are asking where are we going from here. What happens from here? Just so you know the answer in the nutshell for tonight's purposes is really nothing. The Beckett Fund is our attorneys; the Beckett Fund will be analyzing Judge Lagueux decision; the Beckett Fund will be reporting back to us in conjunction with Attorney Joseph Cavanaugh. At that point they will advise us from a legal perspective and then and only then will the School Committee contemplate what actions, if any, we will take after that. At that point the inevitable issue will be the School Committee will have to undertake the financial situation as it relates to pursuing or not pursuing a lawsuit. So I hope that puts everyone at ease as to what happens and when we came out here to announce we were going into executive session everybody thought we were doing something strategic or something earth shattering. We were not, we were merely going into executive session on many issues including the banner and our lawyers have not gotten into any specific details with us regarding that at this point. There are non-agenda items that people can speak about tonight but that's where the School Committee is at this point.

Public Hearings

a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda matters)

Patrick McAssey – Student

Spoke in favor of the banner (speech on file in the Superintendent's

office)

Eric Borelli – Student (speech on file in the Superintendent’s office)

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Taylor Grenga – Student

Spoke against the banner.

At this point in the meeting the Superintendent asked the audience members to set a good example for all the students speaking and be respectful.

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Jessica Ahlquist - Student

Urged the School Committee members not to appeal this. Stated Judge Lagueux is a Catholic and is conservative. Further stated – this is not about religion but about the constitution.

David Sears – Student

Regarding the budget – asked that we set aside money for textbooks. He feels the Springboard books are not good. Focus more on mathematics books. He also said his Italian class does not have enough books.

Marisa DiBiase – Student

Spoke in favor of the banner.

b. Members of the Public (Agenda matters only)

Christopher Young – Galilee, RI

Mr. Young stated - Overall standing is \$129,000,000 million dollars for the school budget is that correct? Mr. Nero responded – last year was \$129,000,000; this year is \$133,000,000.

Mr. Young stated -\$133,000,000 million dollars, that's a lot of money to spend. And also there is a surplus of \$1.4 million dollars this year? Response was – in the healthcare account and that account cannot be touched.

Mr. Young continued – so the overall spending projected in this budget...Mr. Nero interjected – I also have a \$6,000,000 million dollar loan that I have to pay back.

Mr. Young continued – so the overall spending is \$133,000,000 overall spending boy I guess we could focus on some other issues other than whether or not someone gets a raise.

Al Benedetti, Cranston

Mr. Benedetti stated – I just want to comment on the budget presentation. Over the past years the budget presentation has become clearer and tonight this is one of the clearest budget presentations I have seen. My concern is that I just wish that you went a little further, I do have some questions, but I will wait until Mr. Balducci makes his presentation.

Mr. Lombardi stated – typically we do that when the Superintendent presents his budget for the first time. We literally see it five minutes before you have so that's why we don't get into the give and take at

this time. We digest it and then come back with questions.

Ms. Iannazzi stated – typically we do that. We are going to adjourn to a public work session in which case Mr. Balducci can further explain.

Mr. Benedetti asked that we follow up with the student who has problems with books.

Consent Agenda/Consent Calendar

Proposed Consent Agenda – Resolutions 12-1 w/addendum, 12-1-2, 12-1-3, 12-1-4, 12-1-5, 12-1-6, 12-1-7 w/addendum, 12-1-8, 12-1-9, 12-1-10 w/addendum, and 12-1-11. Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante. All were in favor.

Superintendent Nero spoke about the four individuals on the agenda that are retiring. Linda Arruda – was in transportation for 29 years. I have known Linda for a long, long time. She proudly raised a son who is a Cranston police officer, who also worked as a Resource Officer for Cranston. Linda has been an outstanding worker for Cranston Public Schools and I wish her well.

John Carbone – this person I have gotten to know very well. He is retiring from Plant after 26 years. John was the president of the custodian union and a gentleman, a person of reason, always willing to listen to us when we were in negotiations. I wish him well in his retirement.

Dr. Ron Sion – Only in our district for nine years but he made a significant impact at Cranston East. As you know I presented his second book here. He is a brilliant man who will be sadly missed and

I wish Ron well.

Susan Bryan – We are losing a gem of a principal here, a real lady, as Sue Bryan has decided to retire at the end of this school year. She has been in Cranston for 20 years but in public education for thirty-six years. I wish Sue well in her retirement as well.

At 8:20 p.m. a ten minute break was called.

Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items

Alec Lowry – New Bedford Mass.

Spoke about religion in general and prostitution.

Lisa French – Cranston Resident

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Ray Boscia – Cranston Resident

Spoke about how we went the wrong way in doing this. Asked if a couple of words could have been taken off the banner in order to keep it up on the wall.

Oscar Tassone, Pawtucket, RI (speech on file in the Superintendent's office)

Spoke about the constitution and in favor of the banner.

Richard Tomlins, Cranston Resident

Mr. Tomlins thanked the members for their outstanding achievement in presenting this budget and for all their long hours they have put in.

Brian Maloney, Cranston Resident

Mr. Maloney spoke about the friendship between his daughter and Ms. Ahlquist. He also spoke about why we can't all cordially disagree.

Richard Leahey, Solid Rock Church

Mr. Leahey asked – in 18 years what will this verdict really matter? The prayer banner is a prayer and for Christians to say it is not a banner defeats the whole purpose of speaking.

Kevin Soscia, Cranston Resident

Apologized to Ms. Ahlquist for all the students that made comments that were directed her way and further stated although many people may not share your views you are entitled to your personal opinions. However, we are talking about church and separation. That is a lie there is no such law. It is the Constitution of the former Soviet Union.

Joe Dias, Cranston Resident

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Steve Ahlquist, Providence Resident

Mr. Ahlquist identified himself as the uncle of Ms. Ahlquist. He

thanked the School Committee members and the police department for the safety of his niece. He also urged the School Committee members to not appeal this ruling.

Mary Mattiese, Cranston Resident

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Dan Ciora, Warwick Resident

Spoke in favor of listening to the judge's decision; don't appeal the decision.

Kara Russo, Galilee, RI

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Christopher Young, Galilee, RI (Speech on file in the Superintendent's office)

Spoke in favor of the banner.

Peter Paoella, Cranston Resident

Mr. Paoella stated he was disappointed in the court decision to remove the banner. Mr. Paoella was also of the opinion that Ms. Ahlquist is a pawn in this entire controversy and asked that we fight this decision.

Kerri Kelleher, Cranston Resident

Ms. Kelleher asked that we look at the financial piece of this issue.

While representation for the original suit was paid pro bono I have been told there is approximately \$50,000 in costs that are currently coming to the district. An appeal could cost the district upwards of \$300,000 dollars. If anyone wants to support an appeal in keeping this banner up take this fight to the mayor's office and the city council's office and say to these people that have the ability to pay for this lawsuit appeal, you say to our School Committee we will financially back it. The school district does not have the money to cover the appeal. The mayor of the city and the city council can make that decision but this School Committee here tonight does not have the funding so my suggestion if all the people that are so passionate about the banner, please call you city council person in Cranston and demand that this is on the city council budget and the city council and the mayor take a public stand in support of this banner staying or going because this is not an educational issue, this is an issue of the city of Cranston, the entire city not just the school department. Every single elected official should be owning a part of this and should have to stick their necks out like you have tonight.

Ron L'Heureaux, North Providence Resident

Mr. L'Heureaux stated he filed a letter with the judge and a copy has been sent to all the members of the committee and stated - what I suggest is that we ask for a motion for reconsideration and address these issues because absent from the records is the mention of the Atkins Act and the New England Primer.

Al Lororchio

Mr. Lorochio spoke about history; he and his family have served in the military for many years and stated - we did this for the children here; for their freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. He was also of the opinion that the judge's decision was a mishap; we live in a democracy and the democracy rules.

Frank DiBiase, Cranston Resident

Mr. DiBiase spoke in favor of the banner. He also gave a history of examples of "sanitizing society".

Dwayne Albro, Cranston Resident

Mr. Albro asked that the committee to listen to everything that has been said tonight and stated – the banner is worth fighting for and should be kept up.

Bea England, Cranston Resident

Ms. England spoke in favor of the banner.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 12-1-1- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

Ariana Spaziano, Health & Physical Education

Eva Loezos, Elementary

Stephanie Metko, Library Media, K-12

Jeanne Rotatori, Chemistry

Sarah Knowlton, Special Ed Elementary/Middle

Harold Robinson, Special Ed Elementary/Middle

With Addendum:

Audrey Green, Art K-12

Pamela Rinaldi, Library Media K-12

Resolution No. 12-1-2- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement(s) of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Susan Bryan, Principal

Stadium Elementary School

Effective Date – June 30, 2012

Ronald Sion, Teacher

Cranston High School East

Effective Date – June 30, 2012

Resolution No. 12-1-3- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following individual(s) be appointed as volunteer coaches:

Cranston High School West

Matthew Fontaine – Boys' Basketball

Charles Pearson – Girls' Lacrosse

Resolution No. 12-1-4- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the

Superintendent, the following individual(s) be reappointed as volunteer coaches:

Cranston High School West

John Hagopian – Boys' Hockey

Resolution No. 12-1-5- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following coach(es) be accepted:

Michael Rachiele, Head Coach Girls' Softball

Cranston High School East

Effective Date – January 17, 2012

Brian Flinn, Assistant Coach Girls' Softball

Cranston High School East

Effective Date – January 17, 2012

Charles Pearson, Assistant Coach Girls' Lacrosse

Cranston High School West

Effective Date – January 6, 2012

Nicholas Ruggieri, Assistant Coach Baseball

Cranston High School East

Effective Date – January 17, 2012

Ryan Kavanagh, Assistant Coach Boys' Outdoor Track

Cranston High School West

Effective Date – January 17, 2012

Resolution No. 12-1-6- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified employee(s) be appointed:

Amber Perry, Bus Monitor

Transportation

Effective Date – January 3, 2012

Authorization – Replacement

Fiscal Note – 11945090/12145120 51110

Rebecca Lonardo, Bus Monitor

Transportation

Effective Date – January 3, 2012

Authorization – Replacement

Fiscal Note – 10345090 51110

Jessica Carbone, Bus Monitor

Transportation

Effective Date – January 3, 2012

Authorization – Replacement

Fiscal Note – 11845090/12245090

Gerald Lepore, Electrician

Plant Operations

Effective Date – January 23, 2012

Authorization – Replacement

Fiscal Note – 15249070 51110

Resolution No. 12-1-7- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

Laura Ceballos, Teacher Assistant

Cathryn Nota, Teacher Assistant

Shelia Scuncio, Teacher Assistant

Nicole Thibault, Bus Driver

With Addendum:

Ralph Falco, Custodian

Nicole Traficante, Secretary

Resolution No. 12-1-8- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified staff member(s) be granted a leave of absence without compensation as provided in Article X Section C of the Agreement between the Cranston School Committee and the Cranston Teachers' Alliance Teacher Assistant/Bus Aide Unit:

Lynn Casey, Teacher Assistant

January 2012 to January 2013

Resolution No. 12-1-9- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement(s) of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Linda Arruda, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date – February 1, 2012

John Carbone, Custodian

Plant Operations

Effective Date – March 12, 2012

Resolution No. 12-1-10- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation(s) of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Ronald Scopel, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date – December 23, 2011

Barbara Andreoli, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date – January 2, 2012

With Addendum:

Jennifer Donahay, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date – February 10, 2012

Resolution No. 12-1-11- Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, termination of non-certified employee B be accepted.

Adjourn to Public Budget Work Session

Mr. Balducci stated – I will begin by making a statement regarding the

Athletic Program. There will be a little something different in next years' budget. As the Superintendent mentioned we will be moving monies from the schools' operating budget but at the same token we are removing approximately \$68,000 of related expenses associated with this program. We are moving all of those budget dollars into a separate account. The reason we are doing that is twofold. Number one the Rhode Island Department of Education Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) is now requiring districts to reflect the monies received from game receipts be in a separate fund. So we are now in compliance with that requirement. Secondly, by so doing we are allowing our Athletic Director, Mr. Traficante, more control on how he chooses to spend the monies received from gate revenues and make this department more accountable.

Announcement of future meetings – January 23, 2012 and January 30th (if necessary)

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Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lombardi and seconded by Mrs. Culhane. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank S. Lombardi,

Clerk