

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 23, 2015

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE, CRANSTON, RI

5:30 p.m. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC WORK
SESSION**

MINUTES

The School Committee meeting was held on the evening of the above date at the William A. Briggs Building with the following members present: Chairperson Ruggieri, Mr. Colford, Mrs. Culhane, Mr. Fusco, Mr. Gale, Mr. Traficante and Mr. Wall. Attorney Cascione was present during Executive Session.

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mr. Gale to convene to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws. The roll was called; all were in favor: Mr. Colford – Yes; Mrs. Culhane – Yes; Mr. Fusco – Yes; Mr. Gale – Yes; Mrs. Ruggieri – Yes; Mr. Traficante – Yes; Mr. Wall – Yes:

PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation:

A. Potential litigation/grievance – Legal advice

Call to order at 5:59 p.m. – Public Session

The roll was called; a Quorum was present.

Executive Session Minutes were sealed – Mrs. Ruggieri stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session. A motion was made to seal the minutes of the executive session. Moved by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mrs. Culhane. The roll was called; Mr. Colford – Yes; Mrs. Culhane – Yes; Mr. Fusco – Yes; Mr. Gale – Yes; Mrs. Ruggieri – Yes; Mr. Traficante – Yes; Mr. Wall – Yes

Adjourn to Public Work Session at 6:05 p.m.

Discussion on Solar Panels- Kenneth Filarski

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – We are going to have Mr. Kenneth Filarski and members of the City Council, Mr. Richard Santamaria and Mr. Mario Aceto discuss solar panels and issues that were brought to us.

Mr. Santamaria stated – I checked with Bob Strom and the cost of a new roof for Cranston West will cost \$500,000. Mr. Strom is willing to put it into the Capital Budget, which was one of your concerns. The goal was to put the new roof and the panel on at the same time. The other issue was the savings that we get from the panels would be

taken away from you. We cannot take it away from you. We can't do anything but level fund you. Mr. Filarski, what are the savings electricity wise?

Mr. Filarski stated – Conservatively projected at \$8,000-\$10,000 per year.

Mr. Santamaria stated – Ken (Filarski) has been looking for grants all over. What is good for the City is good for all of us.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – Just to be a little bit clearer, some of my concerns on something we just found out. Money that the City Council had ratified to be set aside in an account for Special Education and Music was used by the finance director or something else so that money is not in that account. I am not sure what is going on with that.

Mr. Santamaria stated – That is news to us.

Mrs. Culhane stated – There is about \$435,000 that is missing.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – When we ask who holds the reserve fund with any savings, the money is set aside for maintenance and repairs that are not covered under the warranty once it expires. The money is to be set aside in an account so if something were to come up, that is what will be used to fix the solar panels.

Mr. Santamaria stated - You want us to put it in an account?

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – I am asking this because when the discussion came up, that was a concern. The funds should be held for future repairs. We were concerned about who would be holding the funds.

Mr. Traficante stated – The savings we will get, about \$8,000-\$10,000, is going to be in the electrical bill, correct?

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – Yes, a cost avoidance.

Mr. Traficante stated – If that savings is in our electrical bill so to speak, then it will be our obligation to put that money aside not the City Council.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – That is what I am asking.

Mr. Aceto stated – Who pays your electrical bill every month?

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – We do.

Mr. Aceto stated - That answers that. It will be less of an electric bill. If you budget \$100,000 and you only spend \$92,000, what you do with your \$8,000 is yours to go back into the general fund.

Mr. Traficante stated – If that money were to go into a restricted account, would the City Council be able to tap into that fund? They hold the money not the school department, right Joe (Balducci)? If we save \$8,000 in our electrical bill and we want to put that money into a restricted account for repairs and maintenance for the future, in essence what Janice (Ruggieri) is concerned with is can the City Council tap into that restricted fund?

Mr. Balducci stated – The answer is no.

Mr. Aceto stated – Once you get your disbursement for your electrical bill or however you budget it, we do not go in there and say give us the difference. It is your bill, your budget line item and it would have nothing to do us.

Mrs. Culhane stated – Let's say we have a \$10,000 savings in the first year and we as a Committee would want to say in our next budget year, we saved this money let's put \$10,000 in a reserve account for maintenance and repairs. We would put that money in a reserve account, but would that money be reserved just for this?

Mr. Aceto stated – If it is on your side of the business, then what business would the City have to tap into your funds?

Mr. Balducci stated – We did this last year when we set aside a half a million dollars in the Capital Reserve Fund and we would not treat

this any differently. As we get closer to the year end and we see what is remaining in our budget and it shows \$10,000, basically you transfer \$10,000 and put it in a separate fund only to be used for renovations or whatever the School Committee states.

**Mr. Gale stated – Is that hard and fast? No one can touch that money?
Not the Mayor’s office, the City Council?**

Mr. Aceto stated – We can’t touch your money.

Mr. Balducci stated - We are in the care and control of our budget and our buildings.

Mr. Gale stated - The Mayor could not cut our line item by \$10,000?

Mr. Santamaria stated – There were two incidents, the salt barn for the sand and snow and the light at Atwood and Walnut Grove, which were put in restricted account. They are both in restricted receipt accounts and cannot be used for anything else. If it is in a restricted receipt account, it can only be used for that purpose.

Mr. Aceto stated – The Mayor can only do that once a year and he can’t do it without the Council’s approval. He can do fourth quarter transfers, but if the Council does not approve the transfers, he can’t do it.

Mr. Gale stated – Would you protect this money in that account?

Mr. Aceto stated – It is not our money to protect. Once it is in your budget and up and running, we have nothing to do with your utility expense line.

Mr. Collins stated – You have to be careful because that money may not be there. If usage goes up, there will be no savings. There are too many other variables that go into the utilities. All we are going to do is reduce the usage amount if the panels perform correctly. To bank on this \$10,000 extra in electrical savings, is not wise.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated - We understand that. There are two other things to discuss. One would be the \$1,500 that Mr. Filarski said is an extra cost for the structural engineering consultant, he said he would pay for it if the City would not.

Mr. Santamaria stated – We will reimburse him for that \$1,500 engineering fee.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated - If this moves forward, what else is the City looking to do beyond this solar panel. I assume this is just the beginning of a bigger picture.

Mr. Aceto stated – As you may recall when Obama first became

president, within the first 6 months there was a huge green energy incentive. We looked at Burrillville High School and the power plant there who are using thermal heat. The City has already done some sort of green energy study. I do not know the details of it, but it was done. I can see what recommendations were made with that plan so we do not have to do another plan and see if those are still viable.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated - Knowing what I know about our schools, we do not have any buildings with newer roofs.

Mr. Aceto stated – With the latest and greatest in the advancement of this heat pump technology, I don't know if you can do larger buildings and homes. I know I am building 9, new \$2 Million dollar gasoline locations and I am not putting heat in them. I am using heat pumps.

Mr. Santamaria stated – Ken (Filarski) is charged as the City's Grant Writer. He looks for grants to save us money. Anything he does or finds, he checks with John Lanni, he checks with me and in turn when it is related to you guys, we check with you. I would like to keep that way of doing things. If we find something for a school building, why would we say no to that? We are not separate, we are one.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – It is not something we are completely saying no to, we just need to make clear certain things. The roof needs to be

5 years old or newer and we do not have any. We don't have one yet.

Mr. Filarski stated – The timing is good because the Bond Referendum passed last fall and the City is able to put the half a million for the roof replacement in the Capital Budget for this year and pay themselves back once the funds are issued.

Mr. Santamaria stated - Bob Strom assured me that he would put it in the Capital Budget. I am just trying to alleviate your concerns, which is why we are here.

Mrs. Ruggieri asked if there were any more questions.

Mr. Fusco stated – Wasn't there a timing issue with the grant? Are we still in line to get that application in?

Mr. Filarski stated –There are two grant funds where the two state agencies are working together. One is the RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) where all the northeastern states put all their greenhouse gasses up for auction and RI was allocated a certain amount for that also. This allocation of \$1.2 or \$1.3 Million dollars is dedicated to Solar for Schools from the Office of Energy Resources will fund about 70% of this. They work with the Commerce Corporation which has funds through the Renewable Energy Fund, which comes from a surtax on our energy bills. There is a 30% of the cost of this panel, which will be the installation. That will come from

the Commerce Corporation. The first deadline is March 10th for the Commerce Corporation. If we do not make that one, the next one is in June. In the middle of that, there is an April 17th deadline for the Office of Energy resources for 70%. We are shooting for the March deadline to get our foot in the door early.

Mr. Fusco stated – Was there a date involved to getting this completed? Will we be able to get the roof replaced in time and have this money?

Mr. Santamaria stated – You're doing this all at one time, correct?

Mr. Filarski stated - Yes. The roof will be replaced and the panels will be installed at the same time. If I remember correctly, there is a nine month window, but I am sure that could be negotiated. If it is a viable grant and viable application and they know it is going forward, they will work with you.

Mr. Aceto stated – Where do we stand in School Buildings as far as that project with the Cranston West roof being done? Is it one of the top?

Mr. Votto stated – Tonight, Ed Collins, along with the Superintendent are recommending the Capital Budget. It is scheduled this year.

Mr. Santamaria stated – What we need is your blessing. We feel that

it is a win/win for all.

Mr. Traficante stated – Ken (Filarski) did a good job and explained everything well.

Mrs. Ruggieri asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Aceto stated – I can't emphasize enough that what Councilman Santamaria said. We have this Grant Writer, we have a track record, and it seems that there is still some skepticism that if we have something and we would like the School Department to look at it. It has taken a long time to get a majority on the Council on board thinking the same way when it comes to doing things on the school side. It is a very fragile coalition, if you will. If you think that there are funds somewhere else, let us know. I am sure you have grant writers also.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – No we do not.

Mr. Aceto stated – Give Ken (Filarski) a call and as long as he approves it with the Council President, which I am sure he will, this is a resource that is available to the entire City.

Mr. Santamaria stated – If you find something, let him know. Steve Stycos googled online a \$3,000 grant for a walking path in Western Cranston. It's not a lot, but it is free.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – I am going to be up front with you guys, it is a little disheartening for us to read commentary in the Cranston Herald last week from what other members of the City Council made about our Secretaries contract when none of us were able to be there to clarify their misinformation and misstatements about what goes on in an negotiation. To say that we are looking to try and start fresh and have a better relationship, open communications and things like that and then read stuff like that does not do anybody any good.

Mr. Aceto stated – You can't paint the whole Council with the same brush.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – If you could just pass that along. If anyone has any questions regarding any of our contracts, it would great to hear directly from those people so we can answer those questions instead of getting reprimanded when there is nobody there to make those issues clear.

Mr. Santamaria stated – Will do.

Adjourn to Public Session

Action Agenda

BUSINESS

Resolution No. 15-02-19 RESOLVED, that the five year (2015-2020) Capital Improvement Plan, as recommended by the Superintendent, be approved (see attached).

Moved by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mr. Gale. Discussion

Mr. Edward Collins, Director of Plants and Operations

Mr. Collins stated - A few years ago the School Department engaged in a process with RIDE for getting approval for funding, which I believe was approximately 60 cents on the dollar. They were put together by projects, priority and it was approved by RIDE. I was pretty much bound by the five year Capital Improvement plan. I was bound by the projects approved and bound by the estimates that were given. Along with that, when the submittal was done, there was a five year plan and everything was gauged out by the architect as far as priority. I took that and compiled a five year plan and took some other things into account. One of them is to make sure that every building had something going on in it. The sprinkler systems were first and we have to go with the priority things. If you look at the five year plan, the first three numbers in the first column, that is money that is not part of the five year plan that is money that has already been secured by the school. The other numbers are the middle school projects that I believe we went to bond for and are approved. The other two projects in that year are the two sprinkler systems,

Oaklawn and Edgewood, which I believe are in the design phase. The next year we will be looking at finishing up the middle school bond money at West and Bain for the science room. When you look at the number for the roof, its \$900,000, which is the B Wing and the gymnasium. The B wing is somewhere around \$500,000, depending on where the bids come in. The other part of that was the high school roof, which I thought was cheaper to do together. Since the solar panel project is coming, it will probably be separate. Everything after that will be gauged on importance and making sure we have touched every building. I think what is really important is that we focus in on the 2015-2016 year with the assumption that every year this can change. Some projects may become more precedent than others.

Mr. Gale stated – How much shuffling can you do?

Mr. Collins stated – As much shuffling as needed.

Mr. Traficante stated – The only restriction that we have is you have to spend at least half of that money within the next five years.

Mrs. Culhane stated – How was the decision based? Do we have a lot of hazardous material, asbestos flooring and things like that?

Mr. Collins stated – Some are asbestos floors and some are better looking floors. Again, when this was submitted a few years ago to RIDE, the architect and the engineer involved did this five year plan. I

could not really deviate from it. I could not make huge jumps this way or that way because then that would really be changing the whole plan that went to RIDE and what was approved on. The sprinkler systems were important. There are safety things that are important, as far as fire code, those need to be done first and some other health items and the asbestos flooring.

Mrs. Culhane stated – There are a few fire codes at Chester Barrows, which are not until 2018-2019.

Mr. Collins stated – Yes. Some of those things that are really not a high priority of being addressed or you can get away with. I think the school went to the state fire board and got some things that were labeled to be done now and some didn't.

Mrs. Culhane stated – The Park View science room and the Bain science room, that money is part of the \$15 million?

Mr. Traficante stated – No

Mrs. Culhane stated – Okay, so its not. So that bond has been sold?

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – Whatever was left.

Mr. Votto stated – There is \$4 million left on the bond.

Mrs. Culhane stated – So my question is that bond was approved by the voters 7 years ago so are we still going to be in the frame for the bond money that we have available?

Mr. Votto stated – I think we are going to have some issues with that. I can tell you when we did the windows, they came in higher.

Mr. Collis stated – We will not have enough money to go that far.

Mrs. Culhane stated – Do we have any recourse? That was what the bid was at that day and it was the Mayor who choose year after year to not sell the bonds. Do we have any recourse to recoup those lost funds?

Dr. Lundsten stated – No.

Mr. Votto stated – When we replaced the HVAC system, back then the bid was \$1.8 or \$1.9 and it came in at \$2.3 million. A number of years had gone by in that case too. I do have to say, in talking with the City they had agreed to give us \$600,000 out of the Career and Tech bond.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I just think it needs to be something that maybe we need to remind the city of when we are presenting our budget, this one in particular, and I know there are others, we had a bond that was approved 7 years ago and now it is going to cost us more money. It was a voter approved bond. We are on the hook for that money. If it

is \$2 million extra and we have to come up with this money even though the voters said they wanted it to be what it was then. I don't know how that word gets out. I don't think it really does get out, but I think it is important to note that. Again, this is an unexplained expense that we are on the hook for.

Mr. Traficante stated – The Mayor has an obligation to retire as much debt as possible and renew new debt. They are not only working with the School Department, but Public Safety, Public Works and Recreations. It is a delicate balance. You can only spend so much of the Capital dollars.

Mrs. Culhane stated – It just seems like an awfully long time.

Mr. Votto stated – I think Joe (Balducci) had mentioned part of RIDE's decision of giving us 5 years to spend half of it, kind of drives the bus.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – There needs to be incentives of the municipality to allow the bonds to be sold to get the work done.

Mr. Traficante stated – The \$710,000 for the Tech building, besides the installation of the welding station what is the remaining money for?

Mr. Collins stated – Exterior, ADA work and also with the welding

station the print shop has to be moved over. That is just based on what we have in funding because when the architect was hired to design it, there was nothing in the scope to provide any estimates. We are hoping the numbers come in at that.

Mr. Votto stated – Just to follow up, the ADA’s we are talking about is the audit that was done by RIDE and we were out of compliance in several areas. We have a plan in place for several areas that Judy (Dr. Lundsten) has committed to being completed by September 15, 2015.

Mr. Collins stated – There is also an alternate in that with sprinklers in the top level of that school. Depending on where the numbers come in, we also want to put sprinklers in the whole building.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – So looking beyond, this is the money that is tied into the two bonds out there right now. Moving forward we need to start building our own Capital Budget back up again. We need to start looking at other projects outside this realm to get done. Not this year, obviously. I think that is something we need to begin to look at on a rolling basis. Let’s prioritize and start adding to the list to start getting things done. When we are looking at this budget and budgets moving forward, we need to start planning and putting money in there. We need to start asking for money to start building these things up. We can’t do it overnight, but I think that everything we do from now on has to be long term. For years we have asked what did

not get done last year and why is it not in this year's Capital Budget and we never got that information. This has to be how we look at things.

Mr. Collins stated – All these items are just to bring us up to code. There is no enhancement.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – That is an issue.

Mr. Traficante stated – Besides the Middle School bond and the new bond, are there any more monies in repair and maintenance?

Mr. Balducci stated – Ray (Votto) mentioned the Career and Tech bond, a few years back as a little carrot to entice the district, RIDE said to give us your wish list and we will go out and market a bond. The reimbursement was at 52 cents back then, they added 4 additional percentage points on that. Back then the voters approved it a \$1.4 Million Career and Tech Bond. That has been sitting there for a number of years. To answer your question, other than that, which is specifically for Career and Tech, we have no additional.

Mr. Votto stated – You need to remember that Joe put away \$500,000.

Mr. Traficante stated – What we should be doing is next year go after another Repair and Maintenance Bond.

Mr. Colford stated – You need to start now.

There being no further discussion; the roll was called; all were in favor.

Resolution No. 15-02-20 RESOLVED, that the Cranston School Committee will allow Ken Filarski of Filarski Architecture, Planning and Research to start the process of applying for a grant to fund the installation of solar panels. The Cranston School Committee also reserves the right to reject any grant for this project unless a contract satisfactory to the Committee is entered into by all necessary parties. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mr. Gale. The roll was called; all were in favor.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gale; seconded by Mr. Colford. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie A. G. Culhane,

Vice Chairperson

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Cranston 5 year CIP Plan

PROJECT TITLE BUDGETED PROPOSED TOTAL

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
1. CACT Building ADA welding	710,074.00				710,074.00	
2. Park View Windows	2,300,000.00			2,300,000.00		
3. Park View science rooms	550,550.00				550,550.00	
4. Bain science rooms	600,000.00			600,000.00		
5. Western Hills Science rooms	577,903.00				577,903.00	
6..Cranston West roofs	977,903.00			977,903.00		
7. Cranston West hazardous material				779,145.00	779,145.00	
8. Cranston East HVAC	769,295.00			769,295.00		
9.Cranston East Fire Code issues				958,272.00	958,272.00	
10. Du Temple Hazardous material				192,723.00	192,723.00	
11. Dutemple Fire Code	311,150.00			311,150.00		
12. Watreman Hazardous material				13,970.00	13,970.00	
13.Norwood Fire Code	153,400.00			153,400.00		
14. Stone Hill Sprinkler system	294,612.00			294,612.00		
15. Stone Hill ADA reapirs	142,600.00			142,600.00		
16.. Woodridge Sprinkler system	399,838.00			399,838.00		
17. Woodridge hazardous material				291,400.00	291,400.00	
18..Gladstone Fire Code	300,950.00			300,950.00		
19. Gladstone hazardous material				188,500.00	188,500.00	
20, Oaklawn Kitchen ceiling repairs	3,630.00			3,630.00		
21.Oaklawn Sprinkler	125,000.00			125,000.00		
22. Oaklawn Windows	548,735.00			548,735.00		
23. . Edgewood Sprinkler	175,000.00			175,000.00		

24. Edgewood health and safety	432,250.00	432,250.00
25. Edgewood ADA/exterior doors	35,960.00	35,960.00
26. Edgewood HVAC	310,000.00	310,000.00
27. Peters floor drains	22,860.00	22,860.00
28. Peters Fire Code	0.00 107,950.00	107,950.00
29. Stadium hazardous material	55,245.00	55,245.00
30. Stadium Fire code	94,298.00	94,298.00
31. Eden Park Fire Code	162,500.00	162,500.00
32. Garden City Fire Code	103,025.00	103,025.00
33. Gardden City ADA repairs	66,950.00	66,950.00
34. Rhodes hazardous material	130,820.00	130,820.00
35. Rhodes Fire Code	183,520.00	183,520.00
36. Glenn Hills sprinkler	181,500.00	181,500.00
37. Glenn hills window replacement	72,600.00	72,600.00
38. Glenn Hills ADA repairs	12,100.00	12,100.00
39. Glenn Hills hazardous materials	631,509.00	631,509.00
40. Chester Barrows Fire code	177,320.00	177,320.00
41. Chester Barrows Health & Safety	262,900.00	262,900.00
42. Arlington hazardous material	117,180.00	117,180.00

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Totals 3,860,624.00 3,035,386.00 1,908,915.00 1,903,952.00 1,714,608.0

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