

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2016
WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL
400 PHENIX AVENUE, CRANSTON, RI 02920
EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 P.M.
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC MEETING
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION**

MINUTES

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. **It was moved by Mr. Fusco; seconded by Mr. Traficante 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. Wall – Yes.**

PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel:

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

PL 42-46-5(3)

A. District Safety Plan

Adjourn Executive Session

Call to Order - Public Session at 6:45 p.m.

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 by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mr. Wall. 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. All were in favor.**

Public Hearing

Students (Agenda/Non-Agenda Matters) - None
Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only) - None

Consent Calendar/Consent Agenda

Action Calendar/Action Agenda

RESOLUTIONS

POLICY AND PROGRAM

Resolution No. 16-01-16 BE IT RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trip(s) of Long Duration be authorized:

Field Trip of Long Duration for Cranston High School West Model UN activity to Boston, MA to participate in the Model UN hosted by Boston University (BOSMUN XV) at the Park Plaza Hotel. This is an opportunity for students to engage in Model UN activities and interact with students from other schools and states. Supervising teachers: Christine Luther-Morris, CHSW and Tanja Houck – teacher/chaperone. There will be nine (9) students along with the two (2) supervising teachers that are departing on Friday, February 5, 2016, returning Sunday, February 7, 2016. Participants will be taking the MBTA Commuter Rail, \$11.50 each way. Students and chaperones will be responsible for the cost of the trip, which is \$219.00.

A motion was made to approve by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mr. Colford. The roll was called; all were in favor.

Adjourn to Public Budget Work Session

Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for 2016-2017

(For additional information please see “Handout A” - Cranston Public Schools Proposed Budget for 2016-2017 on file with the Superintendent’s Office)

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – Mr. Balducci, why is the projected amount for 2015-2016 \$1.3 Million for 71 students. I am frightened to think about what this is going to cost me in 2016-2017. When we look at our entire budget for transportation and when I looked at this, I included everything. I included the salary of our Director of Transportation, the benefits, maintenance, gasoline, repairs and everything that came under that \$4.726 Million. If we take out the costs associated with just the Special Education Statewide Transportation for 71 students and the costs for non-public Statewide Transportation of 392 students, we are able to run a department for \$2.5 Million and that is the cost for running the entire department. I am not sure why it costs that much money for 71 students to transport. I did send an email to RIDE to get an answer because there is no savings as we were told and I can’t find an explanation for why these costs are continuing to go up. I have not heard a response yet, but I would like to see this district put a bid out to hire a company. I would say we would take it on ourselves again, but I think that is a monumental task at this stage in the game. Maybe later on we could look at that. I think right now if we put a bid out for Special Education transportation for these 71 students, I believe we would see a substantial savings. The only caveat I would make to that would be to see that in the bid process we make sure to maintain the aides and nurses that are already assigned to these students to make sure that there is a transition to a new company. At least they will have the continuity of those folks with them. I do not want to upheave these kids as far as their transportatio

Mr. Balducci, do you have any idea why these costs continue to go up like this? Is there any indication from RIDE?

Mr. Balducci stated - I do not. The only thing that I do ask from one year to the next of our carrier is if in their contract with the State, if they are seeing an escalation. I am usually told it is a flat fee. From a budgeting standpoint, that is usually good. Beyond that, I do not have the answer for you. I hate to answer you that way, but it is difficult as you can see. From January to the next month you will see that the price is different, never mind year after year. I try to give you information from 2-3 years. It fluctuates from one year to the next.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – It does not go from 71 to 147 students?

Mr. Balducci stated – That is correct.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – Do you think it is reasonable to pursue a bid? I know that other districts have left Statewide Transportation and have hired other companies on their own and have seen savings. That would be something that we could do. Honestly, I did calculations and if we used UBER and we paid them \$50 per day, for 71 students for 185 days, that is \$774,000. We can UBER them for less money. I would just like some kind of explanation or understanding and I do not know if I will get that information from RIDE. I think that we can do better.

Superintendent Nota-Masse – Mr. Balducci can you explain how it is calculated? He explained it to me and this will further muddy the waters.

Mr. Balducci stated – The original concept made sense where it was going to be a shared amongst other school districts. If a student in Warwick was heading to Bradley Special Education Services and we have a Cranston student who was also going there, a bus would come up from Warwick and pick up that child, come into Cranston and pick up our child and then continue on to East Providence. We didn't own the entire bus, we shared the cost of the bus. It may have had Warwick students and possibly some other community. Again, we shared that cost. However, from month to month and year to year, let's just say that Warwick makes the decision to take 4 students on that bus and transition them back to public schools. In total there may have been 26 students and we shared it with our 5 students amongst the total. Now that bus will only have 15 students, because 5 of those Warwick students are not long on that bus. Our portion just went up because we are spreading that bus costs over fewer students.

Ms. Simpson stated – If there are only 20 children taking the bus to school, but only 15 take it on the way back we are charged differently. We are charged in the morning and in the afternoon. It is month by month. One month we could be paying a \$10,000 bill and the next month we might only be paying a \$8,000 bill.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – It is my understanding that if a student is out sick for a number of days, we are not charged for those days, but Warwick might be charged more because of that?

Ms. Simpson stated – Correct. Warwick might be charged more because of that.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – There is a fluctuation in costs based on ridership every day?

Ms. Simpson stated - Yes. They are called "Users" and we are charged for each run, morning and afternoon.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – Is there a cap?

Mrs. Culhane stated – When this all first came to light, we had our battles with RIDE and we were also told that we would be levied a fine if we did not go on with Statewide Transportation, correct?

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – At the time we were told that we had to participate but that it turned out to be inaccurate.

Mrs. Culhane stated – If we decide to do our own thing, is there a penalty if we decide to do our own thing?

Mr. Balducci stated – Right now, I do not know. We would have to get the documentation from RIDE that established our initial introduction to the program to see if there is any language that would preclude us from leaving the program.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – It is my understanding that there have been several other districts that have left this program and have hired First Student on their own to do their runs and they have seen a savings.

Mr. Traficante stated – It is not going to hurt to investigate.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – I think we need to put that out to bid. The second area that I wanted to ask you about that I think we should be able to see a significant savings is our healthcare premiums. There is a very large increase - \$1.6 million. We know that West Bay Collaborative have been great partners, but a 24% increase over two years seems to say to me that we may need to look to see what else we could do. Can we get an explanation for that very large increase in premium?

Mr. Balducci stated – Yes.

Mr. Traficante stated – As a follow-up to what Chairperson Ruggieri is asking, I am on the Board at the Airport and we are in the middle of negotiating a contract there. We had a person from Blue Cross come in and he told us that the average State increase in Blue Cross 5.1%. Why are we seeing a 15%? Why so high?

Mr. Balducci stated – My quick response is looking at prior year claims. If you would like me to look at it further, I will.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated - I am wondering if we are buffering a little too much. I understand that we do have a \$5 million dollar surplus. Even if we used \$2 million of that, that would leave us with a \$3 million dollar surplus. That is livable. To have a \$1.5 million dollar increase in one area of our budget, is not good. I know that there are 2 other collaborative agencies in the state, maybe we reach out to them.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – I have asked Mr. Balducci for a copy of the agreement with the WB in case we do decide that we need to go in another direction. Before we can even entertain that we need to see what our obligations are to them first.

Mr. Colford stated – On a national level, it is my understanding that with Obamacare, at least in the private sector, some of these costs have increased 35%. I am a little concerned on the other side of it. If we are at 15%, we might a little too light. Like Mr. Balducci mentioned, if we get into this budget and are locked it and it does go on the high side, we do not have a lot of options. We need to look at very closely and be as accurate as we can.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – I think that is indicative of how this whole budget process works, we are guessing up to a certain point. It is unfortunate, but it is how it is set.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I know that we bring this up every year, did we ever get anywhere with talking to the City about coming on board with us? I know everyone talks consolidation and that is one place I think we clearly presented that a couple of years ago, but we are in a much better position that the City was. Anything more on that?

Mr. Balducci stated – No. They are satisfied with the organization they are using.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – With respect to the Orchard Farms line item, will you be moving the money from Hope Highlands to Orchard Farms for the kindergarten teachers?

Mr. Balducci stated – For right now, I want to keep them there. I do not want to move the dollars.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – So does Orchard Farms not include the increase of student classrooms? When I look at that, a kindergarten teacher's salary doubled in 2016 and again in 2017.

Mr. Balducci stated – I believe from 2015 this is how we were treating the use of the pilot dollars. From a budget to budget standpoint, this year I chose to leave the budget dollars in Orchard Farms. From a year over year it did not look like we were adding so much money to Orchard Farms for next year. Again, we have a grant to pay for those this year so I decided to leave this year alone.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – So I am clear, when we are done with all \$48,654 line item for Hope Highlands, it will be added to the \$153,754 at Orchard Farms?

Mr. Balducci stated – That will all take place once we go into the next fiscal year. When the move takes place, all the hiring, retirements and usually in November I start to move the dollars and then I will have actual numbers.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – That is all I have for right now.

Mr. Traficante stated – Mr. Balducci, are we going to see an official Capital Budget to approve before it goes to the Mayor?

Mr. Votto stated – We were with the Mayor the other day discussing the budget and I asked that question. We do not need to have a Capital Budget before then because they give us one for two years. When they went to Bond, it was for 2 years.

Mr. Traficante stated – With respect to the Medicaid, I know you level funded the administrative Medicaid for \$400,000 and you increased the direct service Medicaid to \$800,000, is that \$800,000 include the \$150,000 increase or is it \$800,000 plus \$150,000.

Mr. Balducci stated – If you go to page 14 of the budget, this year that revenue has increased. What I am proposing is an increase by \$150,000 going into next year which will be \$950,000. If you recall the response to Mr. Traficante’s question, looking at prior years and how they are trending, I left comfortable moving \$150,000.

Mr. Traficante stated - The total Medicaid budget, both direct and administrative, is \$1.35 million?

Mr. Balducci stated – That is correct.

Mr. Traficante stated – You feel comfortable with that number? I am looking at your trends for 2014 into 2016 and your 2016 trend was \$997,000 projected.

Mr. Balducci stated – Yes. Again, that would be just the direct services, not the total. The reason for the increase is because the Government has allowed districts new areas where we can bill and be reimbursed for services that were not allowed a couple of years back. It opened up an opportunity for us.

Mr. Traficante stated – With respect to the Custodians, you are talking about steps only - \$11,787. You put aside \$115,000 for further negotiations with the drivers, custodians and tradespeople.

Mr. Balducci stated – Correct.

Mr. Traficante stated - The contract can be opened for those discussions?

Mr. Balducci stated – There is a re-opener.

Mr. Traficante stated – Have they asked to be opened?

Mr. Balducci stated – No. Again, I want to be in a position to be prepared if that conversation takes place that there are dollars to have that discussion.

Mr. Traficante stated - So Mr. Jordan has not asked at this point in time?

Mr. Balducci stated – Not that I am aware of.

Mr. Traficante stated – With respect to Certified Administrators, you have \$106,769, I believe you told me that is approximately 60 administrators increase in salary?

Mr. Balducci stated – There was a discussion to create what I will refer to as a salary matrix for Certified Administrators. Based on the model that was instituted by the Superintendent, what I did was look at a particular Certified Administrator, where they are currently being paid and then based on a 4 or 5 step scale, moving them to the next closest step compared to their current salary. Doing that across the board amounted to that increase.

Mr. Traficante stated – Can you give us a breakdown for each administrator as far as what their salary was, what the increase would be. I know you moved it to the nearest step.

Mr. Balducci stated – I know it was done on a worksheet and I will be happy to share that with you.

Mr. Traficante stated - The Non-Certified Administrators is a straight 3% increase, correct?

Mr. Balducci stated – That is correct.

Mr. Traficante stated – Could you possibly give us in addition to that 3% number, what 1% and 2% would look like a well?

Mr. Balducci stated – Yes.

Mr. Traficante stated – I am only preparing for the worst case scenario. The middle school transition was \$2,269,367. That I assume, based on what the Superintendent's been talking about, is a team of 4 in the core subjects, correct?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – Yes.

Mr. Traficante stated – Is it possible that the same could be accomplished with a team of 3?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated –No. Each teacher is certified in content areas. You have your math, English, social studies and science. That would make us have to have dual certified people and because of the contract, the schedule is such that they can only teach so many classes per day. The best we could do with that would be the split teams of 6th and 7th grade. We tried to do that as much as possible. The numbers that we based this on are pretty tight.

Mr. Traficante stated – The 34 teacher assistants for each building?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – That is for all day kindergarten.

Mr. Traficante stated – That is 2 per classroom?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – That is 1 per classroom.

Mr. Traficante stated – That is 34 additional?

Mrs. Simpson stated – We have no teacher assistants in our Kindergarten classes. So once we go all day, every class will have one.

Mr. Traficante stated –There are none at the present time?

Mrs. Simpson stated – Correct.

Mr. Traficante stated – That is all I have for questions.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I am going to presume Certified Personnel costs, is that a placeholder account, \$2.9 million?

Mr. Balducci stated – That is a combination of the \$2.2, Sixth Grade transition and approximately \$900,000 for all day kindergarten.

Mr. Fusco stated – In your summary for each school, under Middle School, that looked like the RI Interscholastic League.

Mr. Balducci stated – Yes.

Mr. Fusco stated – I was not able to total up the fees for the high school. That is Interscholastic League.....

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – NEASC.

Mr. Fusco stated – I was still not able to add it all up.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – All High School principals need to belong to the Rhode Island Principals Association. They have to do that for us to participate in Interscholastic League sports. We also have to pay for the Charter School, even though they do not have any sports teams because their students home schools could be East or West, so we have to pay for Mr. Curran to be part of it as well.

Mr. Fusco stated – And they raise their fees every year?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – Yes.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – And there is a new administrative fee as well. We use to pay for our referees and the officials on our own. They have taken over that but are not charging us an Administrative Fee to do that.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – That kind of took some of the burden off the district to have to do payroll and mail things out. It is another fee that we are paying, but it is less of a burden for us.

Mr. Balducci stated – If you want to go to page 58, which is Cranston West. If you need an exact amount I can provide that to you, but if you look at the account structure to the left and the second one that is a 5 digit code, looking at the accounts. If you look at the one that had 51801, 7 lines from the bottom, it would be one that rolls up into that category.

Mr. Fusco stated – I was just trying to figure out what Miscellaneous was?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – With respect to NEASC, I have had the conversation with both high school principals because we pay \$9,000 a year to participate and be part of NEASC. That is our accreditation agency. We are getting the visit coming in 2017 for East and followed by West. There has been some discussion about moving away from NEASC and going to another agency that oversees high schools, but quite honestly they have been around a long time. It is a definite benefit for our high schools to be accredited through this agency. However, it is a lot of money and when the visits come, it is even more money. We need to also budget for that, which is around \$30,000 to get the accreditation for 10 years. You do not want to have accredited high schools. It would hurt the kids.

Mr. Fusco stated - I remember last week the Superintendent mentioned that we are looking to purchase more busses, I assume that is what the increase of \$350,000 for Transportation is?

Mr. Balducci stated – No. That goes back to our earlier conversation the Chair had regarding participation in Statewide Transportation.

Mr. Fusco stated – Where does the bus purchases fit in? How many busses are we looking to purchase?

Mr. Balducci stated - That line item.... ..it is a Budget reduction from year to year. Again, we are not looking to purchase at the same level that we did this year. To answer the second part of your question, we are proposing next year to purchase 3 used large busses and to replace 4 small buses with brand new buses.

Mr. Fusco stated – What will the position of our fleet be after that?

Mr. Balducci stated – With respect to the small busses that will leave us to replace 4 more. We were hoping to replace 15 last year, 13 small busses this year and it would have taken us to another 8 next year and then we will replace the entire fleet. We are extending that out 2-3 years.

Mrs. Culhane stated – The idea was that this would be a revolving process, correct? We would always be replacing something?

Mr. Balducci stated – Correct. It has been our goal to keep dollars in the budget and constantly replacing busses.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I know it was a goal of ours a couple of years ago to make sure that we did that because it had been ignored for too long. It is important to have a constant rotation of fleet replacements.

Mr. Traficante stated – I wanted to get back to the Capital Budget, the reason why I am asking is because with \$15 million dollar bond, we had to spend at least \$7 million plus within a 5 year period. What amount have we dedicated to this point, including the new Capital Budget?

Mr. Votto stated – The City only bonded over the 2 years, with \$2.7 million. Next year there will be a bond for 2 more years.

Mr. Traficante stated – So we will hit that \$7 million dollar marker and if we don't we do not get reimbursed by the State. On Page 8 of 11, it says Adult Education. Is that Adult Ed or Alternate Ed? I am trying to separate the VTA and the GED program.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – That is AEP I believe.

Mr. Balducci stated – I am going to direct you to the details section which hopefully will clarify your question. If you go to page 73, the detail section and it continues to the bottom of page 74. The AEP is listed.

Mr. Traficante stated – This has nothing to do with the GED or the VTA program?

Mr. Balducci stated –No.

Mr. Traficante stated – Do we appropriate any money for that?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – It is all Grant funded.

Mr. Balducci stated - It is all state and federal funding.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I am noticing 2 things at the High Schools. There is not increases in any art supplies or materials at both schools. Is that just something that the principals felt was okay to get by with this year?

Mr. Balducci stated – We made a decision to level fund all supplies and materials for the schools.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I noticed it with text books as well.

Mr. Balducci stated – Former Superintendent Lundsten made a decision to increase the appropriation to the schools by 10%. We felt that was significant enough that we could level fund that increase going into next year.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I am noticing that West has a postage budget of \$3,500, which has been the same the last couple of years. Then Cranston East is \$6,000. What are they using for postage and why is there such a huge discrepancy between the two.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – I can venture a guess that also Career and Tech has postage and that may offset some of the West postage.

Mrs. Culhane stated – What is a high school using \$6,000 worth of postage. What is going out with that?

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – Mailings to colleges, parents, outside agencies if they need it. We try and do as much as we can through email, but with colleges and things like that we have to send out documents.

Mrs. Culhane stated – It just seems like a lot for 2 schools.

Mr. Balducci stated – Again, from a budget standpoint, District wide we want to make sure we have postage dollars. As far as allocating it, we may have looked at prior year and left that amount from one year to the next.

Mr. Gale stated – Regarding Edgewood Highlands, page 3 of 11 – the “Equipment” lines. It drops by more than \$20,000 to \$9,000, why such a steep drop?

Mr. Balducci stated – My office will send out notifications to the schools and say “School “X, your annual allocation in total is \$13,000.” For budgetary purposes, how do you want me to account for that \$13,000.” That is a place holder figure. When the actual requests come in, they may make a decision to replace 2 copiers so they may shift more dollars into the “Equipment” line to accommodate that purchase. How they use it, is their choice. Budgetary, they may tell me to put \$8,000 into that account just to assign those dollars at that point. Once the school is up and running, they will be able to assess it better.

Mr. Gale stated – That answers my second question, which was about Rhodes. I am curious on the “Supplies and Materials”, it jumps up and down by \$15,000 from year to year. In 2013 it was \$55,00. In 2014 it was \$70,000 and in 2015, it went to \$57,000. I am curious why that jumps up and down so much.

Mr. Balducci stated – Can you direct me to the page?

Mr. Gale stated – It is on page 1 of 11, item number 17 “Supplies and Materials”.

Mr. Balducci stated – The category of “Supplies and Materials”, some of the expenses that are categorized in that is also utilities. Again, the Uniform Chart of Accounts defines “utility” as a Supply and Material. That group will fluctuate as you have electricity and natural gas. You are looking at actual dollars v. budget.

Mr. Gale stated – Thank you. I am all for set.

Mr. Colford stated – Regarding the Middle School transition at \$2.269 million, are there any one-time costs that are not going to carry over to the next year?

Mr. Balducci stated – Unfortunately, they are all personnel related.

Mr. Colford stated – I am all set.

Mr. Wall stated – This would be a follow-up on all day kindergarten for the Teachers’ Assistant. How many hours would that entail?

Mrs. Simpson stated – That would be for 3 hours per day?

Mr. Wall stated – I had brought that up with a kindergarten teacher and they mentioned how important it was for them to have Teachers' Assistants in the classroom. It is must have.

I have a couple of categories. One is in the section under "Testing", what is contained in the breakdown? Over the course of the whole budget, it cost the city approximately \$150,646. What is contained in that? I know the PARCC costs were included in that line.

Mr. Balducci stated – I will have to get that for you.

Mr. Wall stated – If you look on the same section under Cranston West and Cranston East, you will notice that there is a significant increase in that line. In West, there was an increase of \$113,000, a 300% increase? At East, it increased over \$12,000 for a 200% increase. That would be indicated on page 53 and 58. On page 58, in 2015, it was \$4,385; budgeted in 2016 for \$17,983. That number jumped out at me. There is a similar pattern on page 53, looking at East. Those are the two largest discrepancies that I saw. It seems that most of the schools testing went down slightly this year.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – I know that we have participated in PSAT for our kids, but it will not account for that much of an increase. I am not sure what RIDE charges us to participate in the Standardized testing. Mr. Rotz, do you know if that includes all assessments (i.e. STAR, Renaissance).

Mr. Rotz stated - It does. I wanted to check into it before I give you an answer, but it does include our standard testing's.

Mr. Wall stated – Those two figures stood out the most. If I could also, the next line under that would be "Testing, Supplemental Materials". That is an interesting line under it because that over the course of 5 years that are displayed here, depending on the school goes to zero and then up a couple of thousand. There is no real pattern, but if you look at that line over the years some years it disappeared and others it just popped up. What is that? Also, in the detailed section on page 70, "Mayoral Academy". I see \$125,000 for 2014; \$193,000 in 2015 and then I see a budgeted significant increase of \$314,000 in 2016. Is that just because we have more kids?

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – We are told by the State how much we have to budget before the students are actually send to the school. RIDE will say to us that they will estimate the number of students and adjust the cost of that and will present us with a bill that tells us we have to set aside "x" amount for the Mayoral Academy students. Then when actual registrations come in and it is determined how many of our students are going to these schools, we can then adjust the Budget back. We do not have a choice in the beginning as to the number.

Mr. Wall stated – Wouldn't we assume that number would be always be consistent. It just seems to keep increasing. Just these budget years, over \$1 million dollars.

Mrs. Culhane stated – It is all tallied up.

Mr. Wall stated – I differentiate between the Mayoral Academy and the other Charter schools.

Mrs. Culhane stated – It is my understanding that \$2.16 is encumbered by the State. Those are the rates set by the state. We have to set that money aside for all of those Charter Schools.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – They will tell us that they have estimated 35 kids going there and 25 kids going there. I do not know where they get their numbers.

Mr. Balducci stated – Had we taken RIDE’s original projection, it would have been worse. Again, we do look at trends. From Budget year to Budget year, this year is not as bad.

Mr. Wall stated – This trend that we keep going on, it is going to take a big chunk out of the Budget. I know there is legislation in the House right now.

Mr. Traficante stated - If I am not mistaken, they predicted numbers based on October enrollment at those particular schools? If we have 170 kids in October, they assume you will have 170 kids starting the following school year. Once they get the final numbers then it is adjusted by the State of Rhode Island. On top of that, the State Funding Formula all Charters are going to be reduced by 3-4% so it will be adjusted even further.

Superintendent Nota-Masse stated – Let’s not forget, especially the Achievement First school, they are adding a grade every year. I will say that Cranston compared to other districts in the State, fared pretty well. Though \$2 million out of our Budget is a lot of money, but percentage wise when you start looking at some of the other districts that take an exponentially bigger hit. We are fortunate that most of the kids stay with us.

Mr. Wall stated – Looking at page 72 in the same section under “Pest Control”. I assume it is going to be fairly consistent over the years.

Mr. Balducci stated – Let me speak on Budget Year 2016, that was an oversight. We are actually chairing correctly to that line item. Again, as we are approaching the second half of the year, I will move dollars from another category to that category to support those expenditures. As we building next year’s budget, we want to make sure we assign the budget dollars there. The reason why I placed \$10,000, is because we look at the \$8,00 and see how we are trending for this year, I believe that \$10,000 is sufficient.

Mr. Wall stated – On page 75 and it is just a question. There is a line item that says “Potential district wide compensation.” When I look across the budget, there are a lot of zero’s up and until that last line where we are budgeting \$284,137.00. Is there something that is going to happen?

Mr. Balducci stated – Those are just placeholders to assign the dollars. What will happen is when the expenditures are made, we will move those dollars over.

Mr. Wall stated – Thank you. That completes my questions.

Mr. Traficante stated – We are always concerned about asset protection. Why was there a reduction of \$100,000 for the new budget?

Mr. Balducci stated – We reduced that account to accommodate for both asset protection and security. As the Superintendent built the budget, a decision was made to reduce the security portion. We were budgeting for \$200,000, but going into next year we reduced it by \$100,000.

Mrs. Culhane stated – I would just like to comment that back when Chairperson Ruggieri and I were just on the School Committee, we were faced with looking at line items for \$500 and a \$1,000 and cutting. I still go through with a fine tooth comb, but we were nit picking every single thing. I am very thankful and grateful for the questions that were asked and it is good to see that everyone digs down deep into this budget. However, I am also thankful that we have come to a place where we are not cutting line items for \$50 and \$300 anymore. The School Committee has come a long way and no thanks in part to our great leadership and our teachers.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – Anyone else?

Mr. Gale stated – Mr. Balducci I wanted to thank you for all your work and everyone who has contributed to this budget. It is really great to see all these things. I have been following these issues since 2010 and the difference now is amazing. I commend you for all the work you have done.

Mr. Votto stated - You started off the conversation by suggesting that we spent \$2.5 million.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – I was saying that from the \$4.726 million, when I subtracted out the Statewide Special Ed and the non-public school transportation. That was the total line item for the Transportation Department.

Mr. Votto stated – On page 71?

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – Yes.

Mr. Votto stated – The Bus Drivers salaries are on page.....

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – They are all over the place

Mr. Votto stated - \$3 million dollars.

Mr. Balducci stated - The Uniform Chart Accounts requires those to be separate similar to the Bus Aides.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – If you look at the number of students that we transport....

Mr. Votto stated – I want to make sure you are clearly looking at the right numbers. There is \$3 million on page 6 and benefits, which includes the healthcare.

Chairperson Ruggieri stated – Honestly, just looking at that one piece and that is in that line, the non public transportation. That is where I was looking and more focused on that department. For 71-86 children, it is an excessive amount of money for that.

Announcement of Future Meeting(s) – January 28, 2016, February 8, 2016 and February 11, 2016

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Wall; seconded by Mr. Gale. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie A. G. Culhane
Vice -Chairperson

NOTE: Documentation referenced as “Handouts” are available for viewing at Cranston Public Schools, William A. Briggs Building, 845 PARK AVENUE, CRANSTON, RI during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) or you can send a request to Shartley@cpsed.net.