

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503

The Scranton School Board of Directors held a Special Meeting for General Purposes on Monday, January 3, 2022 in the Auditorium of Scranton High School, 63 Munchak Way, Scranton, PA 18508.

1. Call to Order

President Yanni called the meeting to order at 8:15PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Directors Cheseck, Cruz, Fox, Gilmartin, Holmes, Hume, McAndrew and President Yanni. (Mrs. Carol Cleary did not attend because she was not sworn in yet)

3. Transaction of Business for Which Meeting was Called

President Yanni announced the purpose of the meeting is for General Purposes and has been duly advertised.

4. Presentation

American Exchange Program by Mr. Jerry Skotleski.

A power point was provided to the board by email. Mr. Skotleski explained the American Exchange Program and how it works.

5. Public Comment

Vivian Williams, resident and parent, expressed disappointment with the appointment made this evening and reminds her of prior boards that were at odds and believes they are embarking on repeating history. Ms. Williams will continue to be relentless as parents voices need to be heard and listened to. Ms. Williams spoke of the struggles of virtual learning due to covid, thanked Director Yanni for listening and considering reconvening the re-entry committee as the rise of cases increase and it is imperative that we stay proactive at the administration level.

Dawn Hafner, teacher and parent, spoke of safety issues in schools and rules are not adhered to.

Rosemary Boland, SFT President, echoed Dawn Hafner and spoke of 5th grade students in the intermediate schools and the schedules are not working. Ms. Boland questioned the cost of the transportation contract on the agenda this evening and monitors on buses. Ms. Boland spoke of Marty Flynn and the \$1.8million in grant money and the use of that money. Ms. Boland expressed concern of the covid variants and hopes the district begs everyone to be vaccinated and boosted.

Ashley Dudinyak, parent, expressed concerns of the transportation contract and why a company would be picked who has no experience with the area and she is concerned about students being dropped off at the wrong stops and inclement weather for our diverse students.

Lisa Calciano, Pete's Garage, said she bid on a contract in October and she feels they didn't bid on the same contract as the company who is being rewarded the contract. Ms. Calciano said if they bid the way the contract is now their numbers would be drastically different and her question is who changed the contract and why didn't anyone tell them as they gladly would have submitted different bids and Ms. Calciano also questioned the cut out paragraphs.

President Yanni said they will be discussing this when they reach that motion on the agenda.

Ms. Calciano wanted to go on record to say this was not the contract she bid on so if they're comparing apples to apples this isn't it and something went awry, it seems like a 15 year deal and not a 5 year deal and that it seems a lot of the requirements were let go and she doesn't get it.

Joe Hartnett, retired teacher, spoke about two groups of men whose ages range from 20-60, who play basketball two nights per week in various school gymnasiums that play for their own liability insurance and was recently quoted a price of \$100/hour for the use of the gymnasium which they feel is outrageous and they are willing to pay \$500 for the season and they are grateful for the opportunity to use the courts.

6. Motions

6.01 Approve Bill List

List of Bill Payments: \$1,018,976.58

[Bill List 1-3-22.pdf](#)

Director Gilmartin made a motion, seconded by Director Fox; motion passed unanimously on roll call.

6.02 Approve Exception Bill List

Bill Payments

November 30, 2021	\$11,000.00
December 5, 2021	\$1,297,264.71
December 10, 2021	\$1,306,642.00
December 23, 2021	\$1,978,612.88
December 30, 2021	<u>\$ 18,335.58</u>
	\$4,611,855.17

Payrolls

December 10, 2021	\$2,789,035.35
December 23, 2021	<u>\$3,969,025.09</u>
	\$6,758,060.44

[Bill List \(b-2\) 1-3-2022.pdf](#)

Director Gilmartin made a motion, seconded by Director Hume; motion passed unanimously on roll call.

6.03 Approve Capital Improvement Bill List [Capital Bill List 1-3-2022.pdf](#)

Approve Capital Bill List as attached.

\$476,756.91

Director Gilmartin made a motion, seconded by Director McAndrew; motion passed unanimously on roll call.

6.04 Award Krise Transportation Contract

Award the contract for pupil transportation services 5 yr agreement with Krise Transportation Inc. per the attached pricing cost breakdown and RFP amendments. The Board authorizes the District Administration and Solicitor to draft contract language incorporating the attached cost pricing sheets, original RFP language and subsequent amendments to the RFP language as proposed and attached.

Director McAndrew made a motion, seconded by Director Cheseck; motion passed with (5) five affirmative and (3) three negative. Directors Cheseck, Fox and Holmes voted in the negative.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director McAndrew asked Mr. Pat Laffey to explain how he deals with every vendor that came in.

Mr. Laffey responded that the current contract for the bus services ends at the commencement of the 21-22 school year and the current one-year extension for the special ed transportation also ends at the commencement of the 21-22 school year. With those dates approaching the district formed a transportation committee to begin a RFP process for the services. The committee consisted of district administration including the Business Manager, the Director of Transportation and the Supervisor of Special Education transportation and representatives from PFM, one of which is highly versed in the transportation area of school districts, and the Chief Recovery Officer. The process consisted of a RFP that commenced advertising on September 27th, October 4th and October 11th. The district directly sought or was requested to send (the RFP) to approximately twenty firms. A pre-proposal zoom meeting was held by the Business Office and the RFP review team on October 11th. Mr. Laffey believed there were about twelve individuals present where they went through the entire document, the requirements of the document, any questions that the vendors may have had. Mr. Laffey implied that questions received at the pre-proposal zoom meeting were heard for the first time and we couldn't provide responses at that time but based on the questions they did receive during the pre-proposal meeting and by email over the next few days, the district distributed three different response documents to all firms that attended the meeting. Overall, Scranton School District received four proposals from vendors; they included Durham School Services, Krise Transportation, Pete's Garage and Red Top Transportation. Following the opening of the four proposals which was done publically at the Administration Building, the SSD held follow-up zooms with each vendor who submitted a proposal to review any exceptions that they had or questions they had with the submissions. In reviewing the proposals the committee reviewed all four proposals based on fees, the ability to provide services, background and experience and compliance with the RFP documents. During the review it was determined that some of the proposals did not meet all of the RFP document requirements. The committee's recommendation was to select based on a combination of meeting the requirements of the RFP document, price and ability to provide services. Each firm that was recommended has experience working in school districts as large as the Scranton School District and one is our current provider. Based on this process the committee recommended contracting with two firms which was allowable in the RFP document that the district did have that capability to not only award one contract but two contracts and the recommendation was for the large buses and supplemental van contract be awarded to Krise Transportation which is headquartered in Punxsatawney, PA and the van and special education

contract be awarded to Red Top Transportation which is headquartered in Scranton, PA. Mr. Laffey added they did provide a more detailed summary of the whole entire process including the recommendation to the board on January 1st and the meeting motions contain any specific provisions that are respective of each contract. To address some of the questions that did come up, Ms. Boland asked if the cost that we will be incurring is in excess of what we are currently paying and the answer to that is yes, the cost has gone up pretty significantly but it was competitively bid, and we have reflected that increase in the 2022 budget which was discussed during the adoption. Focusing on the bus side of it which saw the largest increase, Krise's of \$369 which does not include fuel, Pete's Garage, which does include fuel was \$400 and Durham which was \$476.24. Red Top Transportation focused their proposal solely on the Special Ed vehicle van and small bus services. In regards to amendments to the RFP document each bidder responded with exceptions to the contract which they reviewed and have determined to be acceptable for our recommendation. Again, the recommendation is based not just on price but also on compliance with the entire RFP required documentation.

Director McAndrew asked how many requirements were there and how many did Krise meet and did anybody else meet the same amount.

Mr. Laffey responded that the RFP process was obviously rather lengthy and it did allow for exceptions to the contract; for example maybe they didn't want to bid on the buses or maybe they wanted to bid on the vans, things like that it did allow for some exceptions to the contract but there were approximately thirteen required pieces of information that should have been provided or referenced in the response.

Director McAndrew said he sees that it is up to four hours and asked if we normally have routes that go past four hours.

Mrs. Julie Maloney addressed and responded no.

Mr. Laffey added that Ms. Boland referenced the monitors and that was included as an option in the RFP just to receive pricing. He believes it was more to provide the district an option to utilize that in the event that we couldn't staff a van or a bus that needed staffing. He believes they are covered in the motion that it would only be at the district's discretion but a friendly amendment could be made to clarify that.

Director McAndrew said he knows a lot of larger firms, maybe the size of Krise, they sometimes subcontract, and asked if there are any provisions that they will be the one doing the contract since they're awarded it.

Mr. Laffey responded that he is not aware of any provisions at this time or their intent to do so but if the board chooses he believes they can factor that in to the motion to be included in the contract.

President Yanni asked, regarding the RFP policy, does he believe that it was an equal policy that was put out to all of the bidders and that they all received the same Request for Proposal?

Mr. Laffey responded that everyone received the same documents.

Director Holmes asked if there are any checks and balances to where they don't live up to the current contract, what is that checks and balances and how does this work. Is there a clause or an escape clause or in-clause – he did write contracts for many years and he would always include in every contract if they did not live up to their end of the deal there would be some type of penalty so that it does not fall upon the district, it falls upon the person being contracted. Mr. Holmes added that he and Director Cheseck were not part of the negotiations.

Mr. Laffey said he would need time to research the RFP document.

Solicitor Audi added that the motion calls for a contract to be put together and that will be part of it, of course.

Director McAndrew sees they're going to have a bus depot in Scranton, in the city limits, and asked if that is going to be done before they start.

Mr. Laffey responded that in the discussions it was intended that they have located a property in Scranton he doesn't think they secured it at this time but if Solicitor Audi feels it could be incorporated into any contract language they will certainly do so. Mr. Audi said they can do that.

Director McAndrew said his two biggest concerns is moving the bus depot to Scranton, he thinks they have to make sure they do that and also that they're not going to contract it out to someone else.

Solicitor Audi said there actually already is a provision that the depot would be in Scranton.

Director Cruz asked if there is any way you can find out if the drivers that they'll be hiring will be local or from Punxsatawny because as the parent was saying, will they be familiar with Scranton and there wouldn't be any issues missing a bus stop.

Mr. Laffey answered that he can't promise that we'll know where the people reside however he thinks it's important that this process begin and that we start it early and it provides for the appropriate training.

Director McAndrew knows there is something about aides riding the bus, there's a price there and now we staff the busses with aides, is that more of a case if we need additional staffing or help?

Mr. Laffey said that was his understanding but as he just noted if a friendly amendment to the executive summary is necessary he thinks it can be done, however, it was his understanding that it's an option of the school district but it does not clearly define that in the pricing schedule.

Solicitor Audi added they did not commit to contracting monitors for the buses to Krise.

Director Fox admitted that she can't fully understand all of the RFP process but hearing somebody say that they could potentially offer something significantly cheaper than what we're about to agree on worries her a little bit obviously as a director so is that something, is this still the recommendation, she doesn't know what the process is and referenced Red Top and van services, but they said based off what we're awarding tonight they could offer a significantly different price range.

Mr. Laffey believes van costs were in that proposal as well and the Red Top van cost was a cheaper daily rate and the district reserved the right to reward two contracts instead of one or what was more financially beneficial for us and that's what we proposed tonight. In regards to the first question of the appropriateness of allowing a counter proposal he'd have to defer to the solicitor on that.

Mr. Audi responded that it was the committee's opinion that the ones that weren't selected did not meet the requirements that were asked for, the specific information that was asked for, he thinks Mr. Laffey referenced thirteen specific items and when most of the items were not even addressed or supplied that particular RFP was dismissed by the committee.

Mr. Laffey added there was a concern that it would be considered non-responsive.

6.05 Award Red Top Transportation Contract

Award the contract for pupil transportation services 5 yr agreement with Red Top Transportation Inc. per the attached pricing breakdown and RFP amendments. The agreement would be to provide various van and mini bus services at a quantity to be determined as necessary to provide the needed services.

Approve the five year agreement for contracted pupil transportation with Red Top Transportation Inc. The Board authorizes the District Administration and Solicitor to draft contract language incorporating the attached cost pricing sheets, original RFP language and subsequent amendments to the RFP language as proposed and attached.

Director McAndrew made a motion, seconded by Director Hume; motion passed unanimously on roll call.

President Yanni now gave Superintendent McTiernan the opportunity to address comments made during public comment.

Mrs. McTiernan spoke of the issues raised regarding hall duties and said that it's not a new issue, she's not going to deny that, and the administrators are having difficulty covering those buildings. Mrs. McTiernan added there used to be teachers that were on those duties and that made life a little easier and we are now trying to fill hall monitor positions so there would be individuals in the hallway and they will continue to figure out how to address those issues. Mrs. McTiernan spoke about restoring programs and getting some of them back and the possibility of extra duty which would lead to more individuals in the hallway. Mrs. McTiernan knows everything is not perfect and administrators in each building are working very hard to be in the cafeteria, on the hallway floors, checking the bathrooms; it's a big task and they have to find a way to make sure that we give them support, it seems to be at the intermediate schools at this time and they will continue to update the board.

7. New Business

President Yanni spoke of the district being awarded \$1.8 million in a Ready to Learn Block Grant and it is due to Senator Flynn's efforts on the school district's behalf and we are very appreciative of Senator Flynn's work for us. Mrs. Yanni asked Mr. Laffey to explain how we may be able to consider those funds towards a change to the payroll prep tax in 2023.

Mr. Laffey responded that on December 30th we received notice from the Department of Education that an additional \$1.8 million was added to our Ready to Learn Block Grant for school year 2021/2022. Mr. Laffey added that this is a grant and it has to be used on specifically allowable uses and the Ready to Learn Block Grant does have fifteen allowable uses. Currently we have received just over \$7.8 million so this brings the total to \$9,636,814 so the district has successfully identified allowable programs that we've been funding for the last few years with the funding source so the next task will be to identify an additional \$1.8 million of allowable uses that we'll say funded with local and non-committed state funds, those would be expenditures that have already been budgeted for in 2022. Once they identify those funds they will submit the application to the Pennsylvania Department of Education which is due by the end of January. Upon successful application process that will allow the district to kind of realize a surplus for those programs that we are going to fund with the Ready to Learn Block Grant and that he believes would present the opportunity for the board to commit or assign those funds for that specific purpose to be voted on at the appropriate time with the adoption of next year's budget.

Director McAndrew thanked Senator Flynn and spoke about how important it is to keep fighting for funding.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Director Chesek, seconded by Director McAndrew and the meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

By: _____