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Schools consider crossing guards

By: Matt Bower , Daily Times

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Warwick School Committee Chairman Robert Cushman is requesting that the City of Warwick accept NESCTC Security Agency's offer to conduct a free cost analysis to provide crossing guard services for Warwick Schools.

"Due to the fact they're willing to come in and do it for free, I think it's worth them coming in here and doing an analysis and see what they have to say," Cushman said. "We have nothing to lose." Cushman recommends going through with the cost analysis to make sure there are no unanswered questions when all is said and done.

"People often ask questions such as, 'Why didn't you take a look at it,'" he said. "If we find out from the numbers that it wouldn't be desirable, then we'd at least find out it wasn't worth pursuing." Cushman recently received a letter from the company, where it described saving the City of Cranston over \$500,000 per year through the utilization of its crossing guard services.

"NESCTC Security Agency, an international security management and consulting firm, has contracted with the City of Cranston to provide school crossing guard services, beginning with the school year 2005," stated the letter, from NESCTC Captain Lori-Ann Madonna. "While we can't guarantee that Warwick will save over half a million dollars a year like the City of Cranston, we will run a cost analysis and provide you up front with a rate quote and estimate of how much the City of Warwick will save by contracting with NESCTC/Crossing Guard Division."

Madonna, in the letter, said NESCTC combines safety, security, cleaning and incident reporting into one training program to ensure that all its crossing guards are working every day to make sure the children are in a safe, clean and friendly environment.

"This gives parents in the communities we service the peace of mind that they can close the door or go to work when their children leave for school, and know they will be safe as they walk to and from school," Madonna stated.

Cushman sent copies of the letter to both Mayor Scott Avedisian and the City Council and said he planned to bring up the issue at last night's budget hearing. "The Mayor is the one who negotiates contracts with the crossing guards and has full authority," Cushman said. "I want to get it out because it's relevant to what happened last week."

According to Cushman, last week the school department made a provocative presentation outlining the issues driving up cost in the school department and city budget and he believes these are the type of studies that must be initiated by the city and school department to save taxpayer dollars.

"It's just me throwing out an idea from a letter I received," he said. "Take a look at the numbers and decide whether or not it's worth doing."