

Do the Right Thing – Part 5 – What Did You Do posted – 8 August 2017

Knowing Hampton City Schools, as I do, and the recent focus on the claimed dependency on Medicaid funds to support the special education children with IEPs, I wanted to go back to 2012 to verify the use of these funds for buses. After all, that's what Hampton said the funds would be used for.

I first looked at the 2012 Annual School Report – Finance (ASRFIN) to see if this was truly how the funds were used. I wasn't surprised to see that there was no expenditures listed for such a purchase in the ASRFIN.

I asked Hampton City Schools –

“On June 20, 2012, the school board approved over \$200,000 of Medicaid reimbursement funds to be for the purchase of school buses. The annual school report - finance (ASRFIN) does not reflect that expense. Not in the FY12 or FY13 report. Where were the funds use noted in the FY12 ASRFIN?”

Hampton City Schools responded with the following –

“Please be advised that your request includes a question requiring information or research, not public documents. Under FOIA, all public records shall be open to inspection and copying by any citizen of the Commonwealth during the regular office hours of the custodian of such records, unless the records are exempt under the Act. However, FOIA does not require the division to conduct research or respond to questions such as the question in your request.”

There are several issues with the above statement.

1. It is a public document. The expenditures of Hampton City Schools are public and therefore open to scrutiny.
2. No reference to the Code of Virginia is made in denying my request for information.

I went on to ask Hampton City Schools if they knew where such payments should be recorded in the ASRFIN and offered to provide a copy of the document they filed. Since the law requires it, I also asked that they provide the code that prevents them from providing the information.

To be sure, I asked the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) where the purchase of buses should be reported.

What did VDOE tell me – “These are shown under Function 63500, Object Code 8200.”

HAMPTON CITY 2011-2012 ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT		PUPIL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT WIDE				
OBJECTS	ACTIVITY					
	Shade SOQ Defined Instructional and Support Expenditures					
	63300 MONITORING SERVICES	63400 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SERVICES	63500 SCHOOL BUS REGULAR PURCHASE	63600 SCHOOL BUS LEASE PURCHASE	63700 OTHER VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT PURCHASES	
2750 Retiree Health Care Credit						
2800 Other Benefits:						
	1,214.70	3,069.42				
Purchased Services:						
3000 Purchased Services						
3410 Public Carriers						
3420 Private Carriers						
3430 Transportation Services by Contract						
3800 Services from Other Government Entities						
Internal Services:						
4000 Internal Services						
Other Charges:						
5200 Communications						
5300 Insurance						
5400 Leases and Rentals						
5500 Travel						
5800 Miscellaneous						
Materials and Supplies:						
6000 Materials and Supplies						
6008 Vehicle and Powered Equipment Fuels		1,320,950.36				
6009 Vehicle and Powered Equipment Supplies		828,659.38				
Capital Outlay:						
8100 Capital Outlay Replacement				79,963.32		
8200 Capital Outlay Additions						
Other Uses of Funds:						
9000 Other Uses of Funds						
Page Total:	860,115.51	2,764,295.43	0.00	79,963.32	0.00	

As I thought...zero...zip...zilch. Hampton City Schools wanted to rush to spend the funds before July 1st or they didn't get to keep the funds. I know the funds were spent because the Medicaid funds are reported as revenue. The school board voted for the use of these funds for buses but no buses were purchased. Where were the funds spent? I can assure you that it is my belief that the funds were not spent on students with disabilities. Nothing was purchased to improve or ease the education of our special education students with these funds. Maybe the school board needed a retreat...or the superintendent needed a new desk...could they have been used for scrimmages needed by our football teams during the summer? I don't know and I bet the public whose funds these are will never know.