BURLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2018

Chairman Russo called this meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Administration Offices, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts. Present: Mrs. Christine Monaco, Mr. Stephen Nelson, Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr. and Ms. Martha Simon. Superintendent Eric Conti, Asst. Superintendent Patrick Larkin, Finance Manager Nichole Coscia, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was held to observe the recent passing of long time resident Virginia Mooney.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative

Student representative Riya reported that positive feedback has been received from juniors and seniors with the new later start time; younger students noted it was hard to get used to but they like it. A 3:45 p.m. late bus has been added. Ms. Karmani brought up that all BHS students are only allowed on wifi at school on their school issued devices (iPad). Seniors were offered to install their personal device for $75. A robust discussion followed with some comments by the School Committee: thought it unsafe and unfair not to have cell phones, thought it was discussed and solved last year, students should have access to two devices, there are dead spots in some areas of BHS, requested an update at the November meeting to discuss possibly increasing cell phone service, and extending student wifi access to two devices. Mr. Cunha explained that students on their personal phones are able to make a phone call and to text (iPhones only) but not access school wifi. Mr. Larkin noted that priority for the wifi connection is for academic purposes and Dr. Conti commented some students have 3 or 4 devices. Principal Sullivan explained students are never denied to phone home during an emergency and they tell students to speak with an adult or nurse with any concerns.

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Simon stated that Youth & Family Services are receiving increased referrals after the SBIRT student screenings at the middle school and grade 10.

Ways/Means

Members in attendance: Sue Harrigan, Diane Creedon, John Iler, Jaya Voruganti, and Nick Priest.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

BHS Highlights

Principal Mark Sullivan, Assistant Principal Deacon, and English Chair Shannon Jannovitz were in attendance to provide the Committee an overview of BHS. Principal Sullivan explained that teachers are grouped into individual learning teams for staff meetings where the September focus was on collegiality. The October meeting will be Inclusion Best Practices and they are also reviewing the District Accommodation Plan.

Assistant Principal Decon explained the Be Smart program that was implemented five years ago at BHS which includes looking at what issues are trending, looking at issues regarding drugs and alcohol with the focus on smart decision making and choices. They have had speakers come in to talk about careers, mindfulness and Officer Sheppard provided a vaping presentation.

English Chair Shannon Jannovitz explained that digital writing has been incorporated into the four year English curriculum including student projects of creating a digital portfolio, working with BCAT on pre-production, persuasive film, creating podcasts, and a senior digital project that students present to teachers and groups of students. Principal Sullivan commented that a digital citizenship course requirement will be an upcoming graduation requirement and will be taken by students over two years.

Some School Committee comments regarding the high school presentation included: they were impressed with the post graduation focus for students, commended teachers and students for their collaborations, and appreciate the job teachers and administrators do with their students. In response to Mr. Nelson, Ms. Deacon replied that the Committee could support the high school efforts by providing opportunities for student internships.

COMMUNICATION

The Superintendent noted that it was STEM week in schools and Mr. Larkin spoke about some of the activities: coding, Costas Research Institute drones, a Flip Grid activity at Pine Glen, and BHS help desk students presented drones & coding to middle school students.
Mr. Murphy and Mr. Cunha attended a Board of Appeals meeting where they approved the request for the new high school sign to be internally lit.

Chairman Russo announced that Parent University will be held for a third year on Saturday, November 17 from 8:30 – 12 with keynote speaker Christopher Willard.

**FINANCE**

**Revolving Account Balances**

Ms. Coscia reviewed balances of revolving funds including: an ending balance to date of a negative $61,363 in the lunch program, however the state reimbursement will be received next month. Ms. Coscia requested that the School Committee fund the FY18 school lunch deficit of $5,593.33. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to fund the 2018 school lunch deficit of $5,593.33 from the school choice revolving account; motion carried 5-0-0. At Mrs. Monaco’s request, Ms. Coscia will supply a typical monthly state lunch reimbursement amount at the November meeting. The Sprouts revolving account also showed a negative balance of $22,558 but Ms. Coscia stated it will balance out as there is a couple week lag time from when student tuition payments are received.

**FY19 Operating Budget**

Ms. Coscia reviewed the list of voted changes totaling $358,991 to the approved FY19 budget. The current anticipated surplus is $287,945 with the largest portion of this attributed to the elimination of 7 staff positions. Dr. Conti explained that the school department is expecting to replace the 7 positions next year and they will be in the FY20 budget. There are 20 scheduled maternity leaves this year. The Superintendent explained the only variable will be the teacher attendance incentive, with a potential risk of over $100,000 but administration will watch it carefully. It was requested by Ms. Coscia and then moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to change line #31 maintenance, increase staff 5 to 7, and transfer $111,314 into the salary account from contracted services; motion carried 5-0-0.

Mrs. Monaco stated the budget and revolving account balances review was very informative and requested that it be reviewed each month at a School Committee meeting, but expressed concern with such a tight budget. She recommended a meeting be held prior to the yearly budget guideline meeting for FY20 to review what the schools will need next year and to include Ways & Means and BEA representatives. Dr. Conti explained there is a compressor not working at BHS and will cost approximately $40,000 to replace next year. Mrs. Monaco again requested that a running list of unbudgeted costs including new hires be created for FY19.

The Superintendent explained that Ways & Means subcommittee members, School Committee members and SPED Director Mary Houde toured the DSC program at Pine Glen earlier today; where teachers do not have planning time. As a result it was recommended and then moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve the addition of two instructional assistants at Pine Glen School to be paid for out of the accommodated account; motion carried 5-0-0.

Dr. Conti explained that Mr. Iler’s proposed policy and procedures document, which includes a spending policy needs to be reviewed by staff in the next few weeks prior to being submitted to the School Committee for approval.

**Student Activities Account Update**

Ms. Coscia explained that Powers & Sullivan provided a training for principals and secretaries on April 24. Each school has received the new policy and procedures and each checking account signer has received bonding information. At the conclusion of the school year in June, all staff were notified to close out all school bank accounts. One new checking account has been created for each school and checks were delivered to school principals in September. Quickbooks is being set up for each school to track checks from their individual accounts. She further stated that she is interviewing candidates for the financial analyst position and once she has someone hired, the top priority will be implementing Munis across the district.

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1 FY19: Revolving Fund, Budget, Changes to Budget, Projected & Deficit/Surplus
Powers & Sullivan Update

Ms. Coscia spoke with Powers & Sullivan today: all account information for low and medium risk accounts have been gathered. For high risk accounts, administration is continuing to work with Powers & Sullivan to provide the information requested. Mrs. Monaco inquired when the end of year audit for 2018 will be complete; Ms. Coscia replied that we don’t have a final completion date yet.

Online Purchasing System Update

Ms. Coscia stated that a Munis trainer came in prior to the start of school in September, trained three departments, and they are using the online system.

OLD BUSINESS
Special Education Program
Review – Subcommittee Appointment

The Superintendent stated that after a tour of the DSC program at Pine Glen today, it’s being recommended that a subcommittee be created to look at district special education programs. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to establish, approve, and appoint Mrs. Monaco and Ms. Simon to a special education program review subcommittee as well as Ms. Creedon and Mr. Iler; motion carried 5-0-0. Mrs. Monaco commented that it’s important for the subcommittee to be small, because as they saw today, visitors are quite an intrusion in the classrooms with students and the subcommittee will evaluate various district programs to ensure that they are funded properly and students are educated correctly.

Restraint Prevention & Behavior Support Policy & Procedures - Second Reading

A revised up-to-date Restraint Prevention & Behavior Policy & Procedures policy supplied by special education Attorney Tom Nuttall was submitted for a first reading at the October 9 meeting. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to adopt policy JKAA Restraint Prevention & Behavior Support Policy & Procedures; motion carried 5-0-0.

Fusion Academy Information

The Superintendent informed the Committee that a state regulation requires that the School Committee approve a new private school requesting to open in their community. Fusion Academy is a corporate school based in Michigan, runs a 1:1 model, and will not affect Burlington public school funding. Ms. Simon stated she’d spoken with a Fusion Academy representative, their curriculum matches Massachusetts state standards, and they have 50 schools in the U.S. Under DESE regulations, it’s an obligation of the School Committee to approve a private school and Ms. Simon read the referred to Mass. General Law regulation included in the School Committee’s packet. She further noted that Fusion Academy has gone to the Planning Board for permits, they are in the process of building a 20 classroom school on Summit Drive, and would come to a School Committee meeting to do a presentation if the Committee requested them to. After a brief discussion, it was moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mr. Murphy approve the request of Fusion Academy to open up a school in Burlington subject to obtaining permits and providing approved physical plant/safety documents and certificates; motion carried 5-0-0.

Ms. Simon thanked Ms. Vigneau for posting the new Fiscal Management policies on the school website and Chairman Russo commented that a request to post the BEA contract has been made and she’ll check on the status with Ms. Vigneau.

NEW BUSINESS
Acceptance of Eastern Bank Grant to Afterschool Program - Approval

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to accept the grant donation of $10,000 from Eastern Bank to the Afterschool Program; motion carried 5-0-0.

Out-of-Country Student Travel - Approval

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve out-of-country travel to Italy on April 12-21, 2019 for BHS students and chaperones; motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In response to Ms. Eileen Sickler, Ms. Coscia stated that transfer schedules are available electronically. Responding to Ms. Sickler again Ms. Coscia explained that the $148,000 offset for the Afterschool Program on page 6 line 59 was for utilities and their use of school square footage. Ms. Coscia responded further, that the excess of $460,000 in accommodated accounts is accurate but it could change tomorrow. Ms. Sickler stated she’d like to see budget to actual including encumbrances.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Russo noted the Committee had a need for executive session – MGL c 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection 7 – For the purpose of complying with any general or special law, specifically GL c214, Section 1B –Right to Privacy; and GL c 12A, Section 9. The School Committee will only return to public session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to enter executive session at 9:55 p.m. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mr. Nelson, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.
ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 11:00 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Date submitted: 11/20/18
Date approved: 11/20/18