TOWN OF BURLINGTON
Meeting Posting

Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by G.L. c. 30A, c §18-25)
BOARD: School Committee
DATE: November 19, 2019
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA

AGENDA*

1. Approval of 10/29/19 Minutes
2. Approval of Warrant
3. Public Participation
4. Information/Reports
   a). Student Representative – SCAB Representatives
   b). Subcommittee Reports
   c). Ways/Means
   d). Announcements
5. Instruction/Technology (7:15 – 7:45 estimated time)
   a). Elementary Space Needs & Potential Configuration – Discussion
   b). RESPECTfully Healthy Relationships
6. Communication (7:45 – 8:00)
   a). Monthly Financials
   b). Elementary Report Card & Parent Conference Reminder
   c). Policy Review – Students (Section J)
7. Old Business (8:00 – 8:30 estimated time)
   a). Athletic Field Maintenance
8. New Business (8:30 estimated time)
   a). Policy Updates: Wellness (ADF) & Concussion (JJIF) – First Reading
   b). Out-of-State Staff Travel - Approval
9. Public Participation
10. Executive Session – G.L. c. 30A Section 21(a) Subsection 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel – Superintendent. Location: Superintendent’s Office.
11. Adjournment

*Agenda subject to change
Chair Martha Simon 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. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr., Mrs. Kristin Russo, and Mr. Stephen Nelson. Superintendent Eric Conti, Business Manager Nichole Coscia, Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve minutes of 10/29/19; motion carried 4-0-1. Mrs. Russo abstained.

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve the warrant; motion carried 3-0-2; Mr. Murphy and Mr. Nelson abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Monte Pearson read a statement about concerns regarding the upcoming BHS musical production of Elf, requested that the School Committee cancel the play and schedule a non-religious musical in the spring.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative - SCAB
Subcommittee Reports

Student representative Bridget Conceilson commented that student council participated in a Thanksgiving dinner earlier this evening, spirit week begins tomorrow and the pep rally is next Wednesday. Senior Nick Latsis stated his class is fundraising by selling spirit tee shirts and are planning a dodge ball game. Junior Ally Shiradi reported the prom will be at the Marriott Long Wharf in Boston and they are planning fundraisers. Sophomore Jessica Joseph explained 10th graders are seeking a date and location for the upcoming winter dance. Dr. Conti stated the Equity Committee met in late October, will meet again next Tuesday and they are considering a survey to administer to middle and high school students.

Ways/Means

Announcements

John Iler and Sue Harrigan were in attendance.

Dr. Conti announced that Simon Youth Foundation had honored Jill McInerney as Administrator of the Year and Gerry Coughlin as teacher of the year.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

Elementary Space Needs & Potential Configuration - Discussion

Chair Simon began the dialogue by stating that 30 minutes has been scheduled for the public to participate in the conversation around elementary space needs. Dr. Conti explained that after a school project is approved by the MSBA, the state process to complete a new school is 6-7 years after the initial approval. No decisions have been made yet on what project the School Committee will submit to the MSBA in the spring. The MSBA has rejected the BHS renovation project that has been submitted for Burlington the past 7 years, MSBA representatives have visited BHS twice; however, BHS doesn’t have increased student enrollment pressure. There is student enrollment pressure at the four elementary schools, after receiving notification from the MSBA regarding the current BHS renovation submission from last spring in December the district will consider shifting priorities from BHS to an elementary school. He stated that NESDEC student enrollment projections for the next 10 years anticipates an overall 10% enrollment increase of approximately 350 new students with no additional classrooms at the elementary level to expand into.

Over an hour of public comment followed. Parent Jamie Greitzer stated she works in a school district where 2 small elementary schools were combined into one large school and some resources were lost (i.e. psychologist, guidance counselor, special education) and that students feel safer in a smaller school. Mr. Murphy explained one of the considerations would be 2 new buildings on the Fox Hill site with some shared common areas; currently some students are isolated in portable classrooms. Fifty-eight year resident Ronald Lamb explained he’d been involved in past school study committees and noted that parent participation is key in the process. Parent Chris Campbell stated school and class size do matter as it provides equity across the 4 elementary schools. Mrs. Monaco noted that the Committee’s first choice is to retain the 4 individual elementary schools but the problem will be if the state would be willing to pay for 2 schools. She further explained it’s important to know if a new school would be able to be constructed on the Pine Glen site which would entail conducting an engineering study, prior to making a decision on the Pine Glen site for a new building. Parent Adam Senesi stated the town has spending priorities in the next 10 years, suggested a 3 elementary school model, with a new school on the largest parcel of land, keeping students in their current school until a new school is completed and further...
explained the Pine Glen site would be available for another use like a police station, playground, or elderly housing. He enquired how staff from 2 buildings would merge into 1 building. Dr. Conti replied the intention is not to downsize staff, teacher volunteers would be sought, there will be operational aspects to any configuration chosen, the need is for more elementary classrooms, and there are pros/cons to each possible configuration. Chair Simon noted that the BHS renovation is currently projected to be $75 million. Mr. Nelson expressed dismay that the state doesn’t recognize and reward communities who take care of and maintain their school buildings, the town may need to self-fund the BHS renovation, and the town may not be able to afford 2 new elementary buildings. Mrs. Monaco thanked attendees Joe Morandi and Jimmy Tigges for their support and touring the special education programs at Pine Glen. Parent J. Bridges commented she’s a kindergarten teacher in another town, is not in support of a school with just pre-K and kindergarten, students don’t have a sense of community, and is in support of keeping both Pine Glen and Fox Hill as individual elementary schools. Parent Niki Kadilak commented that with 2 schools on one property there would be problems with recesses, lunch, etc. Board of Selectman Chairman Joe Morandi explained he’d toured the schools recently, saw the need for new schools, thanked the community for giving their input on possibilities and commended the School Committee for taking the lead on this project as well as creating the online survey for public input on the elementary schools. Parent Nikolas Daleleslis stated his family had moved from the Francis Wyman to Fox Hill school district prefers they prefer the small school feeling and student connections being made that are difficult at a large elementary school. He was not in favor of 2 schools on the Fox Hill site expressing concern about traffic, did not like the pre-K/kindergarten model and thinks smaller schools are more beneficial. Resident Elizabeth Orfanos spoke in favor of the community value in small schools, expressed concern about special education team & administration continuity, greater student academic growth comes with a smaller school, the importance for students and staff to feel connected, importance of school culture (which values are lost with the larger a school grows), complications with logistics and student scheduling with a larger school, and expressed support for keeping the current 2 elementary schools. Parent Jen Scanlon expressed support for the current 4 school configuration, small classes and inquired if Pine Glen would be renovated or replaced. Dr. Conti explained we don’t have that answer yet, it needs to be ascertained if the district can build on that property, and there would be no place for Pine Glen students to go during construction of a new school. He further explained that due to increasing student numbers they may need to start displacing art and music classrooms or to look at portable classrooms. Town meeting & capital budget member Myna Saltman stated that there aren’t specific details on the number of students in each class, had heard of class sizes as low as 14, suggested putting more students in each classroom, recommended sharing current student class sizes with the community, and expressed concern about special education team and administration continuity. Dr. Conti stated that district wide in Kindergarten through grade 5 the average class size is 18 students with some classrooms having 20 or 21 students. Mrs. Russo noted that a class size of 14 would be an anomaly for a year. Chair Simon explained that an important School Committee priority is keeping smaller class sizes at the elementary level. Dr. Conti stated that Pine Glen is 58,000 square feet, Fox Hill is 64,000 square feet, and with construction costs currently at $464 a square foot it would cost approximately $56.6 million to replace those two schools in today’s dollars.

SEPAC parents Meghan Nawoichik and Elizabeth Melo commented about the importance of the needs of special education students being considered. Parent Nicole Neidemeyer expressed concern with the traffic a mega school would create and further explained that Fox Hill is the only school not on a main road and she was concerned about safety. Mrs. Monaco explained that the Committee will seriously consider traffic concerns. In response to Matt Marino, Dr. Conti explained that student enrollment is not concentrated in any one school district, it’s approximately evenly distributed but right now there is enrollment concern at Francis Wyman with construction on Corporate Drive, Second Avenue, and Third Avenue.

Mrs. Russo stated that there were over 500 survey respondents as well as emails received about elementary space needs/configurations and thanked everyone for their input. Dr. Conti explained that the School Committee doesn’t need to have a final plan until April for submission to the MSBA. Chair Simon concluded that this discussion will continue at future School Committee meetings, welcomed people to come to meetings and commented that the School Committee wants to ensure that everyone is heard. Dr. Conti was requested to share the current elementary student enrollment and class sizes.
RESPECTfully Health Relationships
Chair Simon stated that a public awareness and prevention campaign that promotes health relationships for Massachusetts youth aged 12-18 has been put out by Lt. Governor Karen Polito’s office; the campaign is requesting that the School Committee pass a resolution to support this healthy relationships curriculum. Assistant Superintendent Larkin explained that the BHS Bridge program has chosen four modules and Health Coordinator Matt Jackling is just beginning to review the program. If voids are identified in the curriculum, then another module could be added. After a brief discussion, it was moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to adopt the Resolution to Designate Burlington Public Schools as a “RESPECTful School District; motion carried 5-0-0. Mrs. Monaco requested that Mr. Larkin follow up to ensure that BHS students who are different are treated respectfully by their peers. Dr. Conti read the RESPECTful School District resolution document out loud.

COMMUNICATION Monthly Financials
Ms. Coscia provided a brief overview of the monthly financials included in the meeting packet. The only revolving account in deficit is the lunch program ($32,000) which is due to lagging state reimbursement. Ms. Coscia has no concerns regarding the operating budget projections. Mr. Nelson stated he was encouraged with the revolving fund summary balances. He inquired if there will be enough funding to support summer custodians next year; Mr. Cunha replied that it costs around $100,000, the account is not taking in as much as they are spending, and they are planning to have enough funding for the summer custodians as long as they don’t have large expenses. In response to Mr. Nelson, Dr. Conti replied that the AfterSchool Program has a positive balance of $1 million but the program just hired an additional nurse, some of the positive balance may be earmarked for projects, however, the positive balance is reviewed regularly. Ms. Coscia commented that the AfterSchool program is a self-sustaining program and not a profit making program. Mrs. Monaco commented that an additional nurse is needed for the after school program as they incorporate varied students into that program. In response to Mrs. Russo, Ms. Coscia replied that there is no ceiling on the balances in revolving funds. In response to Mr. Iler’s concern regarding the lunch account deficit increasing an additional $3K this month, Ms. Coscia explained the state reimbursement is between $32K - $34K per month and she isn’t concerned. Dr. Conti replied to Mr. Iler that the AfterSchool program expenses include custodial fees as well as utilities. Mr. Iler inquired about an expense in the Accommodated account, line 68; did it get moved over to general education. Ms. Coscia commented that she would need to review it specifically and that it could have been a reclassification. In response to parent Kerry McConnell, Dr. Conti explained that the AfterSchool is researching if there is a way for parents to pay for child care online. Parent Elizabeth Melo commented that in light of the AfterSchool program windfall, the program should be able to fund/accommodate children with significant needs as a child in a wheelchair had to miss out on three field trips because the program told her they could not accommodate the wheelchair and there may also be students not being able to attend field trips due to support needed for students who have behavioral issues.

Elementary Report Card & Parent Conference Reminder
Dr. Conti explained that at the elementary level the district is piloting for this year two student report cards and two parent conferences. In the past, there have been three elementary report cards and one conference. BEA President Diana Marcus expressed concerns with this new pilot commenting that the announcement went to parents first and then elementary staff was informed, no impact bargaining was conducted, there has been no planning on how /when a second parent conference will be scheduled as well as the associated logistics.

Policy Review – Students (Section J)
At the Committee’s request, Dr. Conti has identified Section J – Students as the next group of policies for the School Committee to begin work on. A listing of current and new policies was included in the meeting packet.

OLD BUSINESS Athletic Field Maintenance
Mrs. Russo stated that she’d met with Brian, a representative of the Tom Irwin Company about fertilizers, application, and chemicals, on the schools’ athletic fields. She requested that the company provide three proposals by the end of November including man hours and costs to the school department for: chemicals with some organics, all organic, and an option to remove two chemicals with an alternative application. Mr. Murphy explained that he’d informed the Recreation Commission that the School Committee has not officially made a decision regarding athletic field fertilizers/application. Mrs. Monaco stated she supports an

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1 A Resolution to Designate BPS as a “RESPECTful School District
organic fertilizer program. Mr. Nelson commented that he didn’t think the Recreation
Commission would be able to provide the staff needed to maintain an organic program and
noted that the proposed two applications of weed treatment would take place in June and
August (if needed), the weed treatment dissipates within 24 hours after application, and the
fields to be treated would be closed for one week immediately after weed treatment. Chair
Simon proposed that the Committee table this conversation until the proposals are received
and to continue the conversation at an upcoming School Committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS
Policy Updates: Wellness &
Concussion – First Reading
The Wellness Committee has revised and submitted an updated Wellness Policy (JDF) to the
School Committee. As this is a first reading, the School Committee will take this under
advisement and vote on it at the December meeting.

Mrs. Monaco stated that the revised Concussion policy doesn’t cover baseline testing of
athletes; she requested that Dr. Conti have a staff representative attend an upcoming School
Committee meeting to clarify questions that she has. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded
by Mr. Nelson to table the first reading of the Concussion policy; motion carried 5-0-0.

Out-of-State Staff Travel –
Approval
Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve out-of-state travel for George
Ratkevich to the National Art Education conference in Minnesota on March 26-28, 2020;
motion carried 5-0-0. Moved by Mr. Nelson to approve out-of-state travel for Todd Whitten,
Michael Milton, and Sally DeLlano to Austin, TX for the National Conference for Social
Studies on November 22-24; motion carried 5-0-0. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by
Mrs. Russo to approve after the fact out-of-state travel for BHS Guidance Counselors on
November 13 to New England area colleges; motion carried 5-0-0.

BHS teacher Stephanie Fishel was in attendance to request that the School Committee revise
the dates of a previously approved trip to Europe, which needed to be cancelled due to low
student participation. Students will miss three days of school with the new dates of the trip.
Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Russo to amend previously approved travel to
London/Paris/Berlin to the dates of April 15 – 23, 2020; motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Parent Jamie Greitzer commented that a healthy relationships curriculum needs to begin in
the elementary school and not just in the 12-18 age group. Assistant Superintendent Larkin
explained that in addition to the new RESPECTfully initiative, social/emotional supports are
provided and support for parents will be offered during Parent University day.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Chair Simon announced that the body has a need for executive session – G.L. c. 30A Section
21(a) Subsection 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with
nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with
nonunion personnel – Superintendent. The School Committee will only return to public
session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Russo
at 9:25 p.m. to enter executive session. Mr. Nelson, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Mrs. Monaco,
aye; Ms. Simon; aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT
Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.;
motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert        Date submitted: 1/14/20
Recording Secretary       Date approved: 1/14/20