TOWN OF BURLINGTON
Meeting Posting

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

AGENDA*

1. Approval of Warrant

2. Public Participation

3. Information/Reports
   a). Student Representative
   b). Subcommittee Reports
   c). Ways/Means
   d). Announcements

4. BHS Poet Laureate – Mikaila Gnerre

5. Instruction/Technology (7:30 – 8:00 estimated time)
   a). Elementary Space Needs - Discussion

6. Communication (8:00 – 8:30 estimated time)
   a). Monthly Financials
   b). Roselli & Clark Student Activity Account Update
   c). School Choice & International Students Activity Account
   d). Budget Transfer Expenses to Salaries – Approval
   e). School Student Groups/Clubs – Approval
   f). FY21 Budget Guideline

7. Old Business
   a). Wellness Policy (ADF) – Second Reading

8. New Business (8:30 estimated time)
   a). Revision of Proof of Residency Policy – Approval
   b). Out-of-State Student & Staff Travel – Approval
   c). January Town Meeting Warrant Article – Approval
   d). Athletic Fields - Discussion

9. Public Participation

10. 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 (7:05 p.m. arrival), Mrs. Kristin Russo, and Mr. Stephen Nelson. Superintendent Eric Conti, Business Manager Nichole Coscia, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present. Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr. and Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin absent.

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Mr. Nelson made the following statement: As you know, since the immediate family members of two School Committee members are teachers, the Committee cannot reach a quorum due to conflicts under the Conflict of Interest Law. We have been advised by counsel to invoke the Rule of Necessity to allow us to vote on any matter involving the financial interests of such family members, and by this statement, are invoking the rule. Detailed disclosures regarding the matter were made at the Committee’s April 11, 2006 meeting and recorded in the minutes, and are also on file with the Town Clerk and may be viewed in the Town Clerk’s office. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the warrant; motion carried 3-0-0. Mrs. Monaco arrived.

BHS Poet Laureate

BHS Poet Laureate Mikaila Gnerre recited her winning poem More Lies.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative

Student representative Bridget Conceison absent.

Subcommittee Reports

None.

Ways/Means

Jaya Voruganti and Sue Harrigan in attendance.

Announcements

Chair Simon announced that the MSBA notified the district that they did not support the SOI to renovate BHS. Mr. Nelson commented that this project has been denied by the MSBA for the past 8 years, they will continue to deny it, the Committee needs to identify a Plan B for BHS and discuss it with Town officials. He further stated that a Statement of Interest for an elementary project needs to be completed for submission to the MSBA in the spring. Mrs. Monaco noted that the Committee needs to have a plan on how to address the BHS renovation, maybe it’s a one, two, or three step process and it will have to be determined if we can build on the Pine Glen property (due to wetlands/ledge) which will require an engineering study and a funding source. Dr. Conti summarized explaining the MSBA has visited BHS multiple times and have commented that the SOI is well done but it doesn’t meet the criteria and there is not enough money to fund the 85 applications submitted. He further noted that BHS needs renovated classrooms, new science labs, new mechanical systems, HVAC systems, a design & engineering RFP will need to be written for both the high school and an elementary school and if the cost is significant, a warrant article will need to be submitted for May town meeting. Mr. Cunha explained for the BHS HVAC system: they are assessing preliminary paths for replacement, are redoing preliminary specs, are working with the Town to get a RFP together, two rough estimates have been received and will be compared to two performance based vendor proposals. He will provide an update during a January meeting. Mrs. Monaco expressed concern about the complexity of the process and who’d be in charge. Dr. Conti explained that we need to first write a RFP for design services/architectural services and Mr. Cunha stated that a warrant article has been approved to fund the needed research need for the HVAC system at BHS. The Superintendent explained that the current steps regarding the HVAC system at BHS are precautionary.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

Elementary Space Needs - Discussion

Chair Simon thanked parents for their recent attendance at the November meeting to provide input on elementary school space needs and also thanked the online survey respondents which included almost 600 comments. Dr. Conti summarized conditions/quality of the elementary schools noting that the statement of interest in the spring will be for an elementary project, the Fox Hill school makes better sense to submit due to enrollment pressure, explained the process, including design consideration, the timeline, and that the majority of respondents to the online survey wanted to maintain the current four elementary school configuration. He commented that parents liked the four neighborhood schools but expressed concern about the possibility of combining two elementary schools on one site.

Chair Simon reported that the online survey showed more than half of the respondents preferred keeping four elementary schools in their current locations. Building two schools on
the Fox Hill site was supported by only 9.4% of the respondents. Only 17% wanted to create a large Fox Hill School with 800 to 900 students. Just 18% of respondents preferred a pre-K and Kindergarten school at the Pine Glen location with three elementary schools for grades 1 to 5. The results are posted on the BPS website under the District tab. She reiterated the School Committee priority of maintaining class sizes, noted there is no space to accommodate additional needed classrooms, two of the buildings were built in the 1960’s, and classroom spaces are outdated. Mr. Nelson explained that if the state does fund an elementary project, it will take 7-8 years to complete, there currently are portables at Fox Hill, the possibility of the Town needing to self-fund in order to maintain four elementary schools, as well as the possibility of the Town needing to self-fund a renovation of BHS.

Mrs. Monaco commented that both Woburn and Beverly have had multiple school buildings approved by the MSBA and requested that Administration research their process.

COMMUNICATION
Monthly Financials

Ms. Coscia reviewed with the Committee the monthly financials which were included in the Committee’s packet. She highlighted the school lunch deficit (-$42,975) which includes contractual stipends for a clothing allowance and serve safe certification. She also explained that the large balance ($1,005,013) in the Before/Afterschool program: tuition payments are submitted ahead of time, transportation bills for field trips have not been received yet, expenses for new locks, and new walkie-talkies. Mr. Nelson suggested that at the end of June if there is a significant positive balance, that a tuition reduction be considered.

Roselli & Clark Student Activity Account Update

Ms. Coscia distributed and reviewed highlights of an update from Roselli, Clark, & Associates for the administration of the Student Activity accounts at the schools performed through June 30, 2019. The memo outlined improvements since their last report for FY17 as well as some improvements that still need to be made. Ms. Coscia explained that the following additional improvements had been completed since the September 30 memo: safes installed at elementary schools have been bolted down, schools have been supplied with an increased volume of checks, BHS accounts have been named, student parking permit fees have been turned over to the general fund, and student procedure forms have been updated. Mrs. Monaco suggested that instead of turning over student parking fees to the general fund that the parking permit be changed to a lease so that the BHS may administer the collected fees. The School Committee thanked all school staff for their efforts in completing these financial improvements. Ways & Means member Sue Harrigan expressed satisfaction with the Roselli & Clark update and was happy that more of the action items had been completed since the September 30 memo.

School Choice & International Students Activity Account

Dr. Conti reviewed the revolving account School Choice (line 373) associated with school choice and international student tuition. Some expenses for School Choice include: audio repairs at BHS, therapy dog expenses, removal of existing project adventure course, instructional services, and bill to restore district internet service. Expenses for international students included: a projector repair, Virtual High School affiliation fee, and payroll cost for the Tenacity Challenge. The Superintendent explained that this account allows for the BHS Principal to cover expenses at the high school as his Principal’s account budget was eliminated. Ms. Coscia is the gate keeper of this account, and the account also helps with year end expenses.

Budget Transfer Expenses to Salaries – Approval

Ms. Coscia submitted a request to the Committee to approve a transfer of $22,000 from health services to nurses salaries to allow for the hiring of a permanent substitute nurse through the end of the school year. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve a budget transfer of $22,000 from line 56 health services to line 15 nurse salaries; motion carried 4-0-0. Dr. Conti stated that an additional nurse may be needed in January and funding needs to be requested from the town.

School Student Groups/Clubs - Approval

Ms. Coscia requested that the School Committee officially vote to establish student groups/clubs at the six schools. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the establishment of student activity groups/clubs at Burlington High School; motion carried 4-0-0. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the establishment of student activity groups/clubs at the Marshall Simonds Middle School; motion carried 4-0-0. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the establishment of student activity groups/clubs at the 4 elementary schools as presented on the agenda; motion carried 4-0-0.

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1 Roselli, Clark & Assoc.
Dr. Conti provided an update on the meetings held to discuss FY21 budgets across schools and town departments explaining that a 3-1/2% guideline was negotiated with a 3-3/4% blended guideline for the school department. The Committee made comments expressing concern around a 3.75% guideline is not enough would feel more comfortable with 4%, there is a serious need for more school nurses to treat life threatening student needs, the need to restore two assistant principal positions, all union contracts are up for negotiation, not wanting to have to cut programs, understand that the Town Administrator is doing his job by being conservative with town funds, however, when the economy is good, more programs should be funded, the Committee appreciates the town’s help with building projects and Accommodated accounts, but the FY21 guideline looks exactly like the FY20 guideline, Burlington schools need to be ahead of the pack on school services, it’s the School Committee’s job to support and advocate for the school system. Dr. Conti noted that the town administration is looking after the long term management of town funds, the school department should start building a budget around the 3.75% guideline, and review union contract negotiations as it’s too early to add a 1/4% to the guideline now. The Committee also commented that there is no vote of approval for the 3.75% guideline scheduled, the budget process will begin with the guard rails of 3.75% to see how close the School department can come to that percentage and a FY21 Budget Calendar will be reviewed at the January 14 School Committee meeting. Ways & Means member Sue Harrigan commented that the schools need an additional nurse, would like to hear about restoring the two assistant principal positions, suggested seeing how close the FY21 budget can get to the 3.75% guideline, and union contract negotiations are in progress so it’s hard to predict how much funding will be needed and budget priorities may change as the process proceeds.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Wellness Policy (ADF) - Second Reading**

The School Committee had a first reading on policy ADF at the November meeting. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to adopt the revised Wellness Policy ADF; motion carried 4-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Revision of Proof of Residency Policy - Approval**

The Student Information Office has submitted the Proof of Residency Policy for two minor revisions, which will clarify terminology for new homeowners in Burlington and define the number of days a family moving within Burlington will need to verify a new residence. They are requesting the Committee to approve the revisions as kindergarten registration will be held in January. After a brief discussion by the Committee and the suggestion by Mr. Nelson to remove the words “disclosure statement”, it was moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Russo to adopt the revision of the Proof of Residency policy without the words disclosure statement; motion carried 4-0.

**Out-of-State Staff & Student Travel - Approval**

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve out-of-state travel for the BHS wrestling team and coaches to Hudson Falls, NY on 12/20 – 12/21/19, to Loch Sheldrake, NY on 1/9 – 1/11/20, to Middletown, CT on 1/17-1/18/20 and to Concord, NH on 1/31 – 2/1/20; motion carried 4-0. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve out-of-state travel for the elementary and middle school principals to attend the Innovative Schools Summit in Orlando, FL on March 26-29, 2020; motion carried 4-0. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve out-of-state travel for Carrie Fortunato, Jeff Pera, Marie Murray and possibly an additional teacher to the National Math conference in Chicago, IL on March 29 – April 1, 2020; motion carried 4-0. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve out-of-state travel to attend the National Superintendent’s conference in San Diego, CA on February 12 –16, 2020; motion carried 4-0.

**January Town Meeting Warrant Article - Approval**

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the submission of a warrant article for January town meeting to transfer remaining funds of $11,576 from the MSMS Cafeteria tables to the Pine Glen sewer pumps article; motion carried 4-0.

**Athletic Fields - Discussion**

Mr. Cunha explained that preliminary meetings have been held with the Recreation Department that also included Mrs. Russo, Mr. Murphy, and Mrs. Monaco. He stated that there is an additional cost of $1,200 per acre for an organic program for a total of $15,000 extra. The Recreation department will outsource: mowing, lining, prepping, and aerating the fields and when Recreation employees have received training they will take on more of the ongoing maintenance. Mr. Cunha noted that the full cost for maintaining all town fields is $150,000 which the Recreation department is responsible for but does not have sufficient funding for, which may entail creating a list prioritizing fields. Mrs. Monaco expressed concern about using synthetic fertilizer and weed killers and would prefer to use an organic
program of the schools' fields. She commented she would not be opposed to contributing to the extra costs for an organic program. Mrs. Russo stated that Recreation doesn't have sufficient funds to provide for a new program, supports an organic program for school fields, and noted that Irwin Company is well respected and have proven success with organic programs athletic fields. Chair Simon stated that more information is needed, she thought Recreation was currently using an organic program, suggested the possibility of a hybrid program, expressed safety concerns with fertilizers, and commented that the school department will continue researching the subject.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.; motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 2/11/20
Date approved: 2/11/20