TOWN OF BURLINGTON
Meeting Posting

Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by G.L. c. 30A, c §18-25)

DEPT./BOARD: School Committee
DATE: February 13, 2019
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington

AGENDA*  MEETING ONLY TO BE HELD IF 2/12/19 MEETING IS CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

1. Public Session

2. Executive Session – MGL c 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection 4 – deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto

3. Approval of 1/22/19 Minutes

3. Approval of Warrant

4. Public Participation

5. Information/Reports
   a). Student Representative
   b). Subcommittee Reports
   c). Ways/Means

6. Instruction/Technology (7:15 – 7:30 estimated time)
   a). Biliteracy Update

7. Communication (7:30 – 7:45 estimated time)
   a). 2018 Community Garden Report
   b). Middle School Student Art & Writing Awards

8. Old Business
   a). 2019-20 Draft School Calendar – Second Reading
   b). Financial Policy (DBJ) – Second Reading
   c). School Building Needs - Discussion

9. New Business (8:30 – 9:00 estimated time)
   a). Out-of-State Staff Travel – Approval
   b). Draft Accommodations for Religious Observances Policy & Regulations Implementation – First Reading
   c). Superintendent’s Mid-Year Goals Progress
   d). FY20 Draft Budget - Overview

10. Public Participation

11. Executive Session
    a). Approval of 1/8/19 & 1/22/19 Executive Minutes
    b). Potential Litigation

12. Adjournment

*Agenda subject to change
Chairman Russo called this meeting of the School Committee to order at 6:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Administration Offices, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts. Present: Mrs. Christine Monaco, Mr. Stephen Nelson (7:30 p.m. arrival), Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr. and Ms. Martha Simon (9:35 p.m. departure). Asst. Superintendent Patrick Larkin, Business Manager Nichole Coscia, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present.

PUBLIC SESSION

Chairman Russo opened the meeting for public session and then stated: the Committee had a need for Executive Session to discuss security. Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to enter executive session. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye; Ms. Simone, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye. Motion carried 4-0-0. The School Committee will return to public session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 7:00 p.m. to adjourn executive session and reconvene in public session; Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye, Ms. Simon, aye. Motion carried 4-0-0.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Committee observed a moment of silence on the recent passing of Burlington native Allison Donovan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve minutes of 1/22/19; motion carried 4-0-0.

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve the warrant; motion carried 3-0-1; Mr. Murphy abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative

Student representative absent.

Ways/Means

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

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

Blitteracy Update

Assistant Superintendent Larkin commented that it’s anticipated that BHS students will be offered the opportunity to apply for the Seal of Biliteracy under the direction of World Language Chair Renee Dacey; students will demonstrate their proficiency in more than one language including tests and the students would then receive the honor at graduation time. More information will be provided during the next school year, potentially no more than 50 students would apply, and a request for funding for administering the $17 test may be requested by BHS in their budget.

COMMUNICATION

2018 Community Garden Report

Mr. Larkin announced last year’s donation of 1,600 pounds of fresh vegetables to the Burlington Food Pantry from the Community Garden Complex located at the rear of Francis Wyman School. He and the School Committee thanked Jane McInnich for her service and time in managing the garden with Peter Coppola.

Middle School Student Art & Writing Awards

Mr. Larkin read the names of 14 middle school student who had received awards in the annual Boston Globe Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition.

OLD BUSINESS

2019-20 Draft School Calendar – Second Reading

A first reading for the 2019-20 School Calendar was held at the January 22 meeting. In response to Mrs. Monaco regarding Good Friday as a paid holiday for union personnel; Mr. Larkin noted it will need to be negotiated with a couple of the unions. Mr. Cunha noted the calendar is not finalized yet and there will be a couple options to discuss with the unions. Mr. Larkin further stated that this draft calendar shows Good Friday as a school day and with the feedback received from parents/staff the December vacation will not be 2 full weeks and school will resume on Thursday, January 2 and Friday, January 3. Administration wants to finalize the 2019-20 school start date, end date, holidays and vacation weeks to allow for family and staff planning purposes. Mr. Nelson arrived. Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve the 2019-20 school calendar as submitted with the modification that January 2 and January 3 will be school days, which will also alter the last day of school; motion carried 5-0-0. An updated 2019-20 school calendar will be provided at the next meeting.
Financial Policy (DBJ) – Second Reading

A first reading was held for the draft Financial policy at the January 22 meeting. Ms. Coscia noted this policy was a collaborative effort and some requested changes had been incorporated. Ms. Simon explained that her request under Financial Hierarchy to incorporate in the absence of the Business Manager that the financial analyst or the Superintendent would be the final authorizer had not been included and suggested that the Committee consider an amendment to make the change to the new DBJ policy. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve policy DBJ with the amendment; motion carried 5-0-0. The Committee and Mr. Iler discussed expenditures using revolving funds, transfers that are under the purview of the School Committee, and decided to keep the policy as approved with the amendment. The Committee requested that Ms. Coscia confer with Powers & Sullivan to clarify deficit balances in revolving fund accounts. Mr. Larkin distributed a draft of a new policy, Handling of Cash¹ which will be submitted for a first reading at the February 26 meeting.

School Building Needs - Discussion

The Administration is looking to ascertain from the Committee what the next steps are on filing a Statement of Interest with the Mass. School Building Authority that has an April submission deadline. The Committee discussed possibilities of: creating a subcommittee to review individual building needs, submitting a high school renovation project for an 8th time, or the possibility of putting forward an elementary project. At the next meeting, the Committee would like to discuss how to move forward with assigning a subcommittee and have the Superintendent’s thoughts on submitting an April statement of interest. The Committee requested that a meeting be set up with the Board of Selectman subcommittee, Mr. Murphy, Mrs. Monaco, Dr. Conti and the Town Administrator to begin discussing how to fund a high school renovation through town funding sources.

NEW BUSINESS

Out-of-State Travel Staff Travel - Approval

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve out-of-state travel for Sean Musselman to St. Louis, Missouri on April 11-12, 2019; motion carried 5-0-0.

Draft Accommodations for Religious Observance Policy & Regulations Implementation – First Reading

Mr. Larkin explained this draft policy has been submitted for a first reading in conjunction with the 2019-20 religious neutral calendar. The Committee held a protracted discussion with some of the concerns: deciding what holidays are more holy than others, not comfortable designating religious holidays, limitations of policy/regulations are burdensome and cumbersome, the policy would be difficult to control and implement, the policy is not necessary with Mass. general laws around religious observances, and parents have the choice on whether to send a child to school. Some comments included: with the number of required school days (180) that the list of religious holidays would become unwieldy, staff is generally accommodating but could be provided with the state law at the beginning of the school year and reminded that it needs to be followed, concern with overburdening teachers and needing to custom design homework, scheduling of test days, and no parental concerns have not been expressed to the School Committee. Ms. Simon countered with some of the following concerns: the current informal policy is not working, people are afraid to speak up due to potential backlash, teachers informally plan around religious holidays, and this new policy is a place to start. She further expressed concern around scheduling of field trips, tests taking place on religious holidays, the first day of school, students’ anxiety with having to make up school work and keep up with their class.

Mr. Larkin commented that the District Capacity Project created a cultural calendar and shared it with staff. He suggested surveying teachers to see how it could work better and also sharing the Mass. General law around religious observances. BEA President Diana Marcus noted that she can understand both sides of the matter as she is Jewish; however, she needs to speak in support of teachers and how important it is to have consistency and general understanding across all schools. She stated that a religious observance absence is considered an excused absence, students will need to make up their work but it would not be due on the day the student returns to school. Chairman Russo stated that we need to better educate staff and parents around religious observances, suggested the matter should be forwarded to the District Capacity Project for suggestions as well as how to better implement state law. Mr. Murphy commented that if a policy was to be needed that the first paragraph of the draft Accommodations for Religious Observances would encapsulate the law and it could be used as a policy. Ms. Simon requested that discussion on this subject be continued.

¹ Handling of Cash
Superintendent’s Mid-Year Goals Progress

This agenda item will be postponed until the February 26 meeting when Dr. Conti will be in attendance.

FY20 Draft Budget - Overview

Ms. Coscia distributed a FY20 Budget Overview\(^2\). The budget guideline is 3.75% and the draft budget shows a request of 6% of which 3% is for settled contract salaries and 1.2% is for restoring staff positions cut last year. Thirteen positions are being requested for next year. In response to Mrs. Monaco, Ms. Coscia explained there are no projected retirement savings for next year; only two retirement notifications have been received to date. Ms. Simon departed the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Ways & Means member Diane Creedon expressed concern about having enough funding; the budget is too tight and voiced the possibility of having to freeze next year’s budget in the first part of the year. Mrs. Monaco explained a meeting was held earlier this winter with the financial team and they negotiated a 3.75% budget guideline. In response to Mr. Nelson, Ms. Coscia explained the FY20 budget includes funding for assistant principals.

Mrs. Monaco requested a copy of this year’s unbudgeted expenses be provided at the next meeting, expressing concern with the current budget freeze and having enough funding to finish the FY19 school year.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

Chairman Russo announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to discuss: approval of minutes and potential litigation. The School Committee will only return to public session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson at 9:40 p.m. to enter executive session. Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye; Mr. Nelson, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye. Motion carried 4-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 10:20 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

\[\text{Signature}\]

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 2/26/19
Date approved: 2/26/19

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\(^2\) FY20 Budget Overview