Chairman Thomas F. Murphy, Jr. 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. Kristin Russo, Mrs. Christine Monaco, Mr. Stephen Nelson and Ms. Martha Simon. Superintendent Eric Conti, Director of Operations Bob Cunha and Finance Manager Nichole Coscia also present. Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve minutes of 2/27/18; motion carried 4-0-1; Mrs. Monaco abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

MSMS Planning for Success

Principal Connors comprehensively reviewed the updated middle school Planning for Success document, which was included in the Committee’s meeting packet. He highlighted progress in the four main goal areas of: engaged learning, relationships, communication and facilities/operations.

The School Committee expressed thanks to Principal Connors for his years of dedicated service, leadership, and the care he showed students during his long career in Burlington. As this is a first reading, the Committee will take this under advisement and vote on it at the March 13 meeting.

FY19 Draft Budget

MSMS

The Superintendent stated that for this year’s budget process, a year-to-year comparison will not be available as it is a new format. Spending will fall under one of four main categories: BHS, MSMS, four elementary schools and district/central office. A FY19 Operating Budget document was distributed.

Dr. Conti explained that the middle school is requesting an additional staff member in special education for the Lifeskills class. The salary request is $8,767,606 which meets guideline (not including the requested additional staff member). The Operations & Maintenance request is for $142,327. Student enrollment is stable, with a 795 student population expected next year. In response to Mrs. Russo, Dr. Conti explained that the Bridge program is a trauma based program to support struggling students.

BHS Planning for Success

Principal Sullivan distributed a two-page BHS Planning for Success summary document. He reviewed the high school’s progress on the four main goals and stated that a draft NEASC report is being finalized. As part of that draft report, NEASC is recommending the updating/renovation of the BHS library to create a 21st century learning space. The School Committee congratulated Mr. Sullivan on providing a thorough plan. As this is a first reading, the Committee will take this under advisement and vote on it at the March 13 meeting.

FY19 Draft Budget

BHS

Principal Sullivan reviewed the request for additional staff of: a nurse, athletic trainer, computer science teacher, high school advisor stipend, instructional assistant, district-wide curriculum coordinator, and a school adjustment counselor/psychologist. The requested salary budget is $11,596,397 and the operations & maintenance request of $258,578. Principal Sullivan explained that athletics, guidance, and music (including the spring musical and the fall play) will now fall under the high school’s cost center. Mr. Cunha departed the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Guidance Coordinator Joe Attubato explained his request for an additional staff member of an adjustment counselor or psychologist to support students who have social/emotional needs but are not on an IEP or 504 plan.

Athletics Director Shaun Hart spoke about the need for an additional full-time certified strength and conditioning trainer with a flexible work schedule. He further noted that current trainers attend games but team practices are not covered. In response to Mr. Nelson, Mr.

1 FY19 Operating Budget
2 BHS Planning for Success Summary
Hart explained if the full-time position is approved, they’d only need 2 part-time trainers instead of the current 3 part-time trainers. BEA President Diana Marcus expressed concern about eliminating an athletic trainer with 28 years on the job, the change in working conditions, and the actual need as the high school will have a later start time in the fall. Principal Sullivan responded that no one said anyone is being eliminated or not doing a good job; this proposed position was presented during last year’s budget but it wasn’t approved. He further commented that Mr. Hart is identifying coverage needs/concerns, the School Committee has the choice to approve or not, they are trying to maximize services by providing what’s best for kids.

Warrant Articles Update

Dr. Conti reviewed the revised Warrant Article List³ which included updated pricing. Warrant articles are due March 30. The schools will have approximately $1.25 million for projects but the list outlines $1.8 million in projects, which are not in priority order. Mr. Nelson requested for the next meeting a prioritized list, identification of projects currently on the capital plan, and photos for proposed projects. Mr. Cunha rejoined the meeting.

Out-of-State Staff Travel - Approval

Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve out-of-state travel to Portsmouth, NH for BHS guidance staff on March 7; motion carried 5-0-0.

Summer School Literacy Program, Science & Writing Tuition Increase - Approval

The Superintendent reviewed a request to increase tuition for the summer literacy, writing, & science program. The request would help defray the cost of supplies and teacher compensation. The last tuition increase was in 2013 and an increase of $25 per week is being sought. The program runs in either a two or four week session. Mrs. Monaco stated she’d vote against it as it puts an additional burden on parents. Dr. Conti explained that financial aid is provided for families that need it, some students attend for free, the program provides required extended year services, and Title 1 funding is decreasing significantly. The School Committee deferred action on this increase and requested additional information on: revenue, expenses, number of students who attend and the percentage increase of costs over the past couple years.

In response to Dr. Conti’s invitation to provide feedback on the FY19 budget details/format, suggestions made were: email most recent budget changes as funding changes, provide a chart to identify what acronyms stand for, create a chart showing a summary of where teachers’ salaries fall on the salary scale (degree, step, lane), provide deeper backup detail, identify large increases (i.e. windows, textbooks, etc.), and requested that Ms. Coscia email the Committee more detail for the budget categories for each cost center.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Murphy announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to discuss contract negotiations and the approval of executive minutes and MGL Ch. 30A, Section 21 (a) to comply with or act under the authority of any general or special law – specifically GL. c 214, §1B – Privacy because holding it in an open session would have a detrimental effect on the position of the public body. The School Committee will only return to public session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 9:55 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations and review executive minutes. Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Nelson, aye; Ms. Simon, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 10:45 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Date submitted: 3/14/18
Date approved: 3/14/18

³ 2019 Warrant Articles