

RECEIVED

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TOWN OF BURLINGTON

Meeting Posting

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

DEPT./BOARD: School Committee – **VIRTUAL MEETING using WebEx Technology***

DATE: June 23, 2020

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

This meeting is being held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 20.

AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Warrant
3. Approval of Minutes of 3/10/20 and 6/9/20
4. Public Participation
5. Coronavirus Update from the Superintendent (estimated time 7:00 – 7:45)
 - a). Burlington SEPAC Awards
 - b). Equity Committee Update
 - c). School Committee Summer Meeting Schedule
 - d). ELE Coordinator
 - e). Preliminary 2020-21 School Year Guiding Principles
6. Communication (estimated time (7:45 – 9:00))
 - a). School Building/Facilities Update & BHS Maintenance/System Failures
 - b). Subcommittee Assignments - Approval
 - c). Remote Learning Policy – First Reading
 - d). FY20 Transfer of Funds – Approval
 - e). CHNA 15 Grant Fund - Approval
 - f). Anticipated Year End Purchasing
 - g). Superintendent Summative Evaluation - Approval
7. Adjournment

***MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION ON NEXT PAGE**

****Agenda subject to change**

When it's time, join the Webex meeting here.

Meeting number (access code): 129 118 8620

Meeting password: tuesday

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

7:00 pm | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) | 3 hrs

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BURLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2020

RECEIVED

By Town Clerk's Office at 9:53 am, Jul 27, 2020

Chairman Monaco called this WebEx virtual meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: Mr. Carl Foss, Ms. Martha Simon Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr., and Mrs. Katherine Bond. Superintendent Eric Conti, Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin, Business Manager Nichole Coscia, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present. Ways & Means subcommittee members present: Sue Harrigan, Diane Creedon, Jaya Voruganti, Robert Neufeld, and John Iler.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Monaco read the following statement: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the School Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. He further explained that the Chat function is on; please type in a comment or question and the Chair will call on commenter. Chairman Monaco further explained she'd like to tighten up how the meeting is run and requested that anyone who wants to speak, please put your name only in the chat box, do not type in a question or comment, and the Chairman will call on you. She further reminded attendees that this is a business meeting of the five School Committee members and not a public hearing, the School Committee will be asked for comments first, then Ways & Means members, and after that, questions from the audience will be taken.

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Ms. Simon and seconded by Mr. Foss to approve the warrant. Ms. Simon, aye; Mr. Murphy, abstain, Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Mr. Foss, abstain. Motion carried 3-0-2.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve minutes of 3/10/20. Ms. Simon, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye, Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Mr. Foss, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0. Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve minutes of 6/9/20. Ms. Simon, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye, Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Mr. Foss, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In response to Town meeting member Shari Ellis, Ms. Coscia replied stipends are contractual. Dr. Conti further explained that the majority of people had begun stipend work and planning when school began remotely. All FY20 stipends were agreed to be paid as part of a one-year BEA agreement. Ms. Ellis inquired if tutors and substitutes were also working during the school closure; Dr. Conti replied that tutors were working with individual students, building permanent substitutes did some work during the closure and per diem subs didn't work, so they weren't paid. Ms. Ellis commented that going forward in the next contract negotiations, that administration think consider that if staff are not performing duties, that they don't receive full pay. Dr. Conti responded that can be considered but for the past three months they have been discussing working conditions.

In response to town meeting member Eileen Sickler, Ms. Coscia confirmed that the definition of encumbered means accrued and to be paid. Ms. Sickler commented that Ms. Coscia mentioned that in July there may be some unexpected invoices received; Ms. Coscia explained that processes were put in place to ensure that it would never happens again.

Parent Lynn Gauthier expressed concern about reopening planning for the fall and how to get parents involved in the process including parent forums. Dr. Conti explained that he'll communicate with parents as soon as the new guidelines are received, parents and staff will be surveyed for things such as are your children planning to use bus transportation services etc. He further commented that early indications are that schools will need to plan for three learning scenarios: remote, hybrid, and full return to school buildings. Plans need to be put together, he anticipates that a tentative plan will be available by mid-July but that a lot of school reopening plans will be proscribed by state regulation to ensure student/staff health and safety. Individual school districts cannot change a state directive however; parents will be given an opportunity for input.

Coronavirus Update from
The Superintendent

Dr. Conti explained that he'd provided a coronavirus update as he was speaking to Dr. Gauthier. DESE guidelines have been delayed, the schools will need to prepare for different scenarios, and he thanked all staff for their incredible efforts during the closure to learn new skills. He further commented that remote learning is not perfect and there were mixed reviews,

and that the online teacher and student survey is still open to submit feedback. Governor Baker is working with Commissioner Riley and there will be some limited local school district decisions to be made. Ms. Simon thanked school staff for their efforts in completing the school year and further commented that she knows how much effort went into making it work.

Chairman Monaco recognized parent Bill McCarthy as his microphone was not working earlier: he had two students who'd attended BHS and wanted to provide perspective on remote education since March 10 and appreciated that everyone tried hard. For the first three weeks, his senior son did nothing and then all he received was homework of 10-45 minutes a day; he was disappointed that remote classes were not offered when other organizations offered it. In response to Mr. McCarthy, Dr. Conti replied that teachers were obligated to work and provide education to students. Chairman Monaco commented that her four high school grandchildren participated in remote learning and that in the first few weeks there was no new material. Mr. McCarthy inquired why weren't students taught via video. Dr. Conti explained he couldn't respond to individual situations, there were some good student experiences and some bad, and Burlington was very careful to follow the state guidelines and noted that remote learning is different than online learning. The Superintendent commented he was sorry his student did not have the best learning experience further explaining that BHS did not run a 7 period day, but a schedule was put out, and not all students could be reached. Chairman Monaco suggested that if Mr. McCarthy wanted to continue this discussion that would be fine in a different venue, his comments were beyond the three minutes of public participation, appreciated his input, and if there is remote learning in the fall, the schools will take into consideration his input tonight.

Burlington SEPAC Awards

Beth Colburn, Membership Chair of SEPAC explained that SEPAC created a way to recognize special education staff and parents nominated teachers: the five recognized teachers were Ms. Murphy, Ms. Huckstepp, Ms. Torchio, Mrs. Johnson-Hiltz, Ms. O'Donnell and the award winner is BHS teacher Kara Kerwin. Chairman Monaco expressed gratitude to the SEPAC organization for doing this and recognizing special education teachers. Teacher Kara Kerwin thanked SEPAC for the award and explained that she enjoys working with students. The School Committee commended and appreciates the special education teachers who went above and beyond their duties.

Equity Committee Update

Mr. Larkin introduced Sara Shaikh a senior at BHS and she'll also be the new student representative to the school committee for the upcoming school year. Sara stated she has advocated for and participated in a number of events regarding racial equity, there are a lot of things that should be changed, people are angry and BHS is not an exception. She is a member of the Equity Committee and a presentation was given last year to the school committee. The Equity Committee is currently working on an action plan, faculty members need to have training, there needs to be a better interview/hiring process for multicultural employees, and safe spaces need to be created for students. Mr. Larkin stated that students and educators of the Equity Committee have met three times to work on the action plan and they are also working on an interview question rubric to utilize during the interview process. He will be asking the School Committee for input, will email a draft to the Committee and they will be hiring a consultant to help with creating the action plan including deadlines. Mr. Larkin commented that immediate work includes: talking about race and racism as people are not comfortable speaking about it, teachers don't have the training to do this, and teachers need to be provided with the tools on how to intervene or help with hurtful situations. Sara noted that creating safe spaces for students as well as creating subgroups is important to complete over the summer. Mr. Larkin further commented that families of color will be contacted to ask what they need for support, especially this summer when connections with students are lost. Ms. Simon stated she'd attended a number of Equity Committee meetings over the past two years, they have discussed how to engage more teachers and the community and during recent meetings members expressed urgency for the need of concrete next steps even though some things will take a long time. Dr. Conti stated that the Equity Committee has also discussed incorporating equity/diversity into the existing curriculum as well as adding courses on equity and racial justice. Mrs. Bond noted that students will need to be taught and be provided with help to internalize what they will be learning on these subjects. The School Committee: welcomed Sara and commended her on her presentation and actions to help with this effort, were pleased that the process is underway in the Burlington Public Schools, as well as commenting that one of the largest things is to create awareness as some people don't perceive there is a problem. Mr. Larkin explained that Sara will be providing an Equity Committee update at each School Committee meeting. In response to Chairman Monaco, Mr. Larkin replied that as well as racial discrimination the Equity Committee also supports special needs and LGBTQ students. Sara

Shaikh thanked teachers on the Equity Committee Ms. Janowitz, Ms. Chang, and Ms. Crossman as well as other BHS teachers for checking in with students. Parent Schiffon Wong expressed support for the Equity Committee, its members and for establishing an equity update at each School Committee meeting, as well as looking at equity in the school’s curriculum, and she understands there is a way to go. Mr. Larkin commented that a Cultural Competence Committee was formed and then an Equity Committee that includes high school staff and high school students. He explained part of the action plan is to add parent representation and welcomes a side conversation with Ms. Wong.

Moved by Ms. Simon and seconded by Mrs. Bond to establish a diversity/equity subcommittee of two school committee members to work with the Equity Committee; Ms. Simon, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye, Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Mr. Foss, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

School Committee Summer Meeting Schedule

Summer school committee meetings will be held on July 21 and August 18 (business meetings); Dr. Conti anticipates more meetings may be needed after a plan is put together on what school will look like in the fall.

ELL Coordinator

Dr. Conti explained that the School Committee began this conversation last year as English Language Learners are one of the fastest growing student populations. State regulations indicate when a district has 200 ELL students, a director is required. Burlington has 182 students and an ELL Coordinator position is being requested (job posting included in meeting packet). This new position is not a full-time director position but an intermediate step, will be a stipended position and will be bargained with the BEA union. Moved by Ms. Simon and seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve adding an ELL Coordinator. Ms. Simon, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Mr. Foss, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0. Mr. Larkin observed that there are multiple ELL team members capable of performing the job duties.

Preliminary 2020-21 School Year Guiding Principles

Dr. Conti reviewed with the Committee a 12 point Draft of Guiding Principles for Opening School¹ to begin the discussion and it will be further discussed at the July 21 meeting. One guiding principal that was made for the March closure was that on March 13 the School Committee approved paying employees during the closure. Currently we don’t charge for bus service and provide a seat for every student; in the fall every student won’t have a seat on the bus (due to seating spacing requirements), parents will need to surveyed to see how many students will utilize bus service, and students may need to be encouraged to walk to school. These conversations will take place over a couple School Committee meetings in July and August. The School Department will follow state recommendations on health and safety. Student and staff social/emotional, safety and health are of utmost importance. He further explained that with no state budget in place, staff reductions may need to be made.

Chairman Monaco explained there will be a more detailed conversation at the next meeting, when the DESE guidelines are available and requested that more thought be given to the draft guiding principles. Mr. Foss inquired how will Burlington mesh with the state guidelines; Dr. Conti responded that there are 350 school districts who are resourced differently and Commissioner Riley is tasked with meeting urban, suburban and farm community educational needs. He further stated that the Department of Public Health will also be driving a lot of the school reopening plans. The School Committee commented that Dr. Conti has compiled a well thought out set of draft guiding principles for opening schools. Chairman Monaco asked if these changes are implemented, will school go back to normal. Dr. Conti, replied yes in a sense, but we are trying to make it more equitable, our task is to create a local plan to implement state guidelines, there are a lot of variables, and tough decisions will need to be made. He also explained that the School Committee has a firm commitment to small class sizes so Burlington is in a good position, if the guidelines are released with reduced class sizes because other communities may have 25-30 or more students per classroom.

In response to parent Jen Scanlon, Chairman Monaco replied that it is too early to consider establishing a reopening subcommittee as the state guidelines are needed first but the School Committee will consider creating a subcommittee when the state guidelines are released. Mr. Murphy stated that with subcommittees, things move more slowly, it’s a process; it would be a problematic issue given the timeline of school starting in August, and the need for a plan in 8 weeks. He expressed caution regarding creating a subcommittee with these time limitations.

¹ Draft Guiding Principles for Opening School

Dr. Conti stated that there will be time for input to a plan but Burlington is not putting together a plan from scratch, there will be some leeway in a small amount of areas, and there will be some opportunities for parental input but parents cannot overrule the Department of Public Health. He also explained that there will be some areas that the school department will be locked into and will have to be implemented. If teacher working conditions are changing, the School Committee will also need to have conversations with the union. Financial resources for putting the guidelines into place will also have to be evaluated. Dr. Conti concluded by noting that in all the meetings he's been involved in with the state, they are prioritizing getting younger students back into the schools as quickly as possible to restart the economy.

COMMUNICATION

School Building/Facilities
Update & BHS Maintenance
System Failures

Mr. Cunha congratulated secretary Pat Eons on her retirement after 35 years of service. He thanked custodial, maintenance and clerical staff for their flexibility during the upcoming summer. He reported that he's working out the details contractually for the BHS floor installation and is working with a designer/engineer as well. He reported that over \$100K has been spent over the past three years to the BHS HVAC system and reviewed a list of repairs.²; which is not a complete list. The Superintendent commented that the BHS facility needs to be looked at as a whole building envelope rather than replacing one system at a time and the school department has tried to keep the building as up to date and in good repair as possible.

Subcommittee Assignments

Chairman Monaco noted that she'd spoken with Committee members individually regarding subcommittee assignments interests and she then reviewed proposed subcommittee assignments/reassignments:

School Committee Assignments 2020-21

1. Recreation Commission (T. Murphy)
2. Two members to serve on the Academic Review Board (M. Simon, T. Murphy)
3. Two members to serve on the Sick Leave Bank Committee of the Burlington Educators Association. It has been the practice that the Superintendent and one member of the School Committee serve on this committee, but this is at the discretion of the members (Superintendent, C. Monaco)
4. One member to serve on the Sick Leave Bank Committee of the Burlington School Administrators Association (M. Simon)
5. Legislative contact person to the Mass. Association of School Committees (C. Foss, K. Bond)
6. Chapter 766 Parent Advisory Committee (C. Monaco, K. Bond)
7. B-Line Advisory (not needed)
8. Subcommittee to the Board of Selectmen (C. Monaco, T. Murphy)
9. Subcommittee to the Ways & Means (C. Monaco, T. Murphy)
10. Subcommittee to the Board of Health (C. Foss, M. Simon)
11. Subcommittee to the Recreation Committee (K. Bond, T. Murphy)
12. Subcommittee to the Planning Board (C. Foss, T. Murphy)
13. Subcommittee for Wellness (M. Simon, C. Monaco, alternate, E. Conti)
14. Subcommittee for Transportation (K. Bond, C. Monaco, E. Conti)
15. Audit Subcommittee (T. Murphy)
16. PTO Representatives:
 - Fox Hill (K. Bond, C. Monaco alt.)
 - Memorial (C. Foss, M. Simon alt.)
 - Pine Glen (T. Murphy, C. Monaco alt.)
 - Francis Wyman (C. Monaco, T. Murphy alt.)
 - MSMS (M. Simon, K. Bond alt.)
 - BHS (C. Foss, C. Monaco alt.)
 - BECC (C. Monaco)
17. Burlington Youth & Family Services (M. Simon)
18. Master Plan Steering Committee (M. Simon)
19. Disability Access Commission (M. Simon, C. Monaco)
20. Equity Committee (M. Simon, C. Foss)

² BHS HVAC Repairs

Moved by Mrs. Bond and seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve all changes to subcommittee assignments including the two appointments to the Equity subcommittee. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Foss, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Remote Learning Policy – First Reading

Mr. Murphy explained this is a first reading of a proposed remote learning policy and addendum from the Mass. Association of School Committees. The Committee will take this under advisement and vote on it at the next meeting.

FY20 transfer of funds

In response to Ms. Coscia’s request, it was moved by Ms. Simon and seconded by Mr. Murphy to fund the cafeteria account deficit of \$287,768.00 from the FY20 school operating budget. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Foss, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

In response to Mr. Iler’s inquiry that the cafeteria account deficit is \$50K more than last month, Ms. Coscia replied there were no surprises and there were refunds to BHS seniors who had a positive balance on their accounts. In response to Ms. Sickler, Ms. Coscia that historically, lunch deficits were funded from either the school choice or international student fund. Dr. Conti further explained that if a revolving account has a deficit; it is funded at the end of the school year using year end dollars.

Chairman Monaco recognized Parent Adam Sensesi and inquired if he had a question regarding the financials being reviewed and Mr. Senesi made comments of concern about Chairman Monaco being a representative to the Fox Hill School; Chairman Monaco answered there is no conflict at Fox Hill. Mr. Senesi stated he was not comfortable with Mrs. Monaco as a representative at Fox Hill and her whole family is there. Chairman Monaco advised Mr. Senesi that his comments were out of order and to turn off his microphone. As Mr. Senesi did not comply, Chairman Monaco directed Mr. Cunha to turn off his microphone. Ms. Simon observed that the only change on the subcommittee assigned to Fox Hill was the addition of Mrs. Bond and that Chairman Monaco has been the assigned alternate for a number of years. Mr. Murphy explained that it’s optional for the chat option to be available during School Committee virtual meetings and the Committee has the option to turn off that feature. Chairman Monaco explained that she’d asked Town Clerk Amy Warfield what to do in a situation of this nature and she advised that Mr. Cunha should turn off the microphone of the out or order person or to expel him from the meeting, but the School Committee could also choose to turn off the chat function.

CHNA 15 Grant Fund

Dr. Conti explained this is a mental health grant for BHS student athletes and to establish a book club and was requesting that the School Committee accept the CHNA 15 grant award funds of \$7,500. Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Bond to accept the grant as presented. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Foss, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Year end purchasing

The Superintendent informed the Committee that only certain items can be prepurchased with FY20 year end dollars to prepare for the fall. FY21 salaries cannot be prepaid with FY20 funds. Anticipated equipment to be purchased:

- 300 iPads, cables, chargers \$165K
- 12 weeks of PPE equipment \$360K
- Elementary student supply kits \$ 30K
- Curriculum consumables \$ 85K

Dr. Conti anticipates that 3,500 iPads and accessories will go home with every student in the fall. In response to Chairman Monaco, Ms. Coscia replied that there is no need to transfer FY20 money from salary to non-salary.

Superintendent Evaluation

Chairman Monaco explained that Dr. Conti’s annual evaluation is based on the input of the five School Committee members prior to the town election on June 6 and that the two new members were not part of this assessment. She explained that she’d compiled the input of the five members with results of:

- Assess Progress towards goals: all were proficient or exemplary
- Assess Performance on Standards:
 - Standard I: Instructional Leadership: all were proficient or exemplary
 - Standard II: Management & Operations: all were proficient or exemplary

- Standard III: Family & Community Engagement: all were proficient or exemplary
- Standard IV: Professional Culture: all were proficient or exemplary

Dr. Conti received an overall End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation rating of exemplary. Chairman Monaco read a narrative³ that was a compilation of the five School Committee members' individual evaluations. Some of the overall comments were: outstanding, knowledgeable, innovative; excellent job during unprecedented pandemic & school closing; worked tirelessly to keep students engaged and learning while working with Commissioner of Education and superintendents around the state; commended for work with staff in general and personnel issues in particular, has updated district's financial controls and recent audits have been positive, his values and priorities support the mission & values of BPS, recognized for being a state and national leader and Burlington is lucky to have him as Superintendent.

Ms. Simon thanked Dr. Conti for all he does for our students. Mrs. Bond commented she's new to the Committee, however, her child went through the school system, Dr. Conti has done a great job over the years, and his peers think the same. Dr. Conti thanked the School Committee, saying it's an honor to work in Burlington, and explained the acknowledgement he receives is a result of others also working behind the scenes.

Moved by Ms. Simon and seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the same as the unions of a 2.5% cola increase effective 7/1/20 to Dr. Conti and to extend his contract for an additional year. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Foss, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

The Superintendent and Mr. Larkin anticipate receiving DESE guidelines on Thursday, they are planning to disconnect from their computers for a few days as well as observe the July 4 holiday and they will then provide a plan to the School Committee. Parents and staff will need to be surveyed again and families will need to be informed of student health and PPE requirements prior to the beginning of a new school year.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

ADJOURN

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Foss to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Foss, aye; Mrs. Bond, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 7/21/20
Date approved: 7/21/20

³ Narrative: Dr. Conti