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

BOARD:       School Committee
DATE:   June 25, 2019
TIME:    7:00 p.m.
PLACE:    School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA

AGENDA*

1. Approval of Warrant
2. Approval of Minutes of 5/28/19 and 6/11/19
3. Public Participation
4. Information/Reports
   a). Subcommittee Reports
   b). Ways/Means
5 Instruction/Technology (7:00 – 7:30 estimated time)
   a). Burlington Education Foundation Grants Awarded
6. Communication (7:30 – 7:45 estimated time)
   a). 2019-20 School Committee Meeting Schedule
   b). Summer Projects Summary
   c). ISAC Committee
7. Old Business (7:45 – 8:15 estimated time)
   a). Elementary School Building Needs
   b). Policy Manual Review - Discussion
8. New Business (8:15 – 9:00 estimated time)
   a). Capital Warrant Article Project Closeout – Approval
   b). Transportation Contract – Approval
   c). FY19 Budget Transfers – Approval (if needed)
   d). Evaluation of Superintendent
9. Public Participation
10. Executive Session
    a). Approval of Executive Minutes of 5/28/19 and 6/11/19
    b). Contract Negotiations
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: Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr., Mrs. Kristin Russo, Mr. Stephen Nelson, and Mrs. Christine Monaco. Superintendent Eric Conti, Asst. Superintendent Patrick Larkin, Business Manager Nichole Coscia and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve minutes of 5/28/19; motion carried 5-0-0. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve minutes of 6/11/19; motion carried 4-0-1. Mrs. Russo abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
None.

INFORMATION/REPORTS
Mr. Murphy stated that the Recreation Commission will be working on the Fox Hill playground and had inquired about replacing/renovating the slide. Mr. Cunha explained he’d toured the site, the slide is slightly hazardous, and is recommending that the slide apparatus be removed.

Chaired Simon commented that she’d attended a statehouse Joint Commission on Education public hearing today.

WAYS/MEANS
John Iler was present.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY
BEF President Paula Boermeester and member Alyson Magrane were in attendance to speak about the $20,000 in grants awarded to teachers this past school year. They highlighted some of the grants including: Fit Step Pedometers to all students in grades 1-5, Where Everyone Belongs professional development training for two middle school staff members, and motivational speaker David Flood was part of the BSmart Program at BHS. They also reviewed annual BEF fundraising events including: the road race in May; which had 400 participants this year, Trivia Night, as well as spring and fall raffles. Ms. Boermeester also thanked the local business community for their generous financial support. In total, over $300,000 in grants have been awarded to Burlington teachers. Dr. Conti thanked the BEF for their dedication and hard work to conduct these community events and stated that the local businesses also invest a great amount to our schools. The School Committee also thanked the BEF for their grants to teachers, their countless hours of volunteering and fundraising, as well as providing a wide range of events for the community to participate in.

COMMUNICATION
The School Committee reviewed the proposed 2019-20 meeting schedule which included the revision of the proposed October 8 meeting being rescheduled to October 15.

2019-20 School Committee Meeting Schedule

Summer Projects Summary
Mr. Cunha thanked custodial, clerical, and cafeteria staff for a wonderful school year. This summer 14 approved warrant article projects will be worked on. Three projects will be on hold including: the BHS HVAC system, the BHS front parking lot, and the Pine Glen room renovation. Mr. Cunha has pricing quotes; purchase orders will be created for July 1, and he is preparing some projects for the request for bid process. He stated that DPW will begin paving from the basketball courts down to Locust Street at the middle school on July 12.

NEW BUSINESS
Transportation Contract - Approval
By consensus agenda item 8b was taken out of order and a very lengthy discussion (over an hour) ensued. Dr. Conti explained that the school district was notified by the Inspector General’s Office that the school district would need to initiate a new bid process for the five-year transportation contract due to non-compliance with a provision of the MGL c. 30B, the Uniform Procurement Act. New bids from A&F Bus and Trombly Motor Coach were opened today. Transportation Consultant Rich Labrie reviewed his recommendation letter stating that: the two companies are responsive bidders, checked references were better for A&F Bus rather than Trombly Motor Coach, and Trombly Motor Coach was the lowest bidder with a bid of $204,516 lower than A&F Bus Co. Mr. Labrie recommended that the

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1 2019-20 School Committee Meeting Schedule
2 6/25/19 Public Management Assoc. Recommendation Letter
School Committee award the bid to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder: Trombly Motor Coach for a total cost not to exceed $2,091,235.00. Mr. Nelson informed the Committee that he had a potential conflict of interest and would abstain from this conversation.

The School Committee discussed the matter at length and some of the comments included: Mr. Murphy inquired does the School district have any latitude in awarding the bid – Mr. Labrie explained that according to MGL c. 30B, the bid is required to be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; he further explained that Trombly Motor Co. met all the bid specifications, they appear to be responsible and capable of doing the work, but there were some negative references on this low bidder and one community chose not to extend their bus contract with them. Mr. Labrie noted that he’d contacted Dracut Schools who indicated that they are providing good service to them, the other was a negative reference from three years ago; in order to reject the lowest bidder there would need to be a good business reason. The Committee discussed: possible repercussions from both bidders, safety issues with Trombly, observed that Trombly did not submit a first bid, Trombly Motor Co. had access to the first bid submitted by A&F Bus, creation of an unfair advantage, a number of other communities have not advertised their bus bids in commbus but were not challenged by the Inspector General’s office, concern expressed about possible level and quality of service if Trombly is awarded the contract, and potential consequences if the bus company awarded the bid does not adhere to the performance bond.

Mrs. Russo commended and thanked Rich Labrie for his work on the bus contract, cited his expertise in specifications, wages, equipment etc. and observed that he’d completed 30 bids in the past 2 years. Mrs. Russo stated that in the community where she works, Trombly Motor Co. has school children sit on the bus with no heat during the early morning drop off for 15 minutes to comply with the no idling regulation, explained that students at the end of the day are waiting for 30 minutes after dismissal for bus pick up, and she expressed concern for the level of service and standards that Burlington might receive. Dr. Conti explained that after consulting with legal counsel, if the lowest bidder is not awarded the contract it would need to be for a business reason (i.e. documented issues). In response to Dr. Conti, Mr. Labrie replied that the School Committee has 60 days to award the contract, advised consulting legal counsel, if both bids are rejected and a re-bid is done again, it would take approximately 4-5 weeks. Mr. Murphy inquired if the Committee elects to hold off on awarding the bid is there a problem with waiting for the vote or with the re-bid process; Dr. Conti cited that summer special education transportation is needed. Mr. Labrie explained that if the Committee decides to do a re-bid, special education transportation would be removed from the re-bid and for special education transportation either an RFP process could be completed or the school district could use a collaborative. He further speculated that prior to conducting a re-bid, the School Committee would need to reject the current two bids. Mrs. Monaco and Mr. Murphy expressed uncertainty about conducting a re-bid after rejecting both bids; they inquired if there is enough basis to reject the Trombly bid and go with A&F Bus. Mr. Murphy suggested having input from school counsel and to have him involved with our next School Committee meeting. Rich Labrie recommended expediting deliberation before the scheduled July 23 meeting and expressed concern about having sufficient buses and drivers for the opening of school in September.

Bob Bent, President of A&F Bus Co. expressed appreciation for the kind words from members regarding drivers and service from A&F. He noted that at least six recent school bus contracts weren’t advertised in commbus, weren’t declared invalid by the Inspector General’s office, and he intends to file a bid protest with the Inspector General’s office tomorrow. He also noted that Trombly provided service to Shawsheen Tech but was not given a follow up contract. Mr. Murphy suggested scheduling a School Committee meeting for either July 9 or July 15 and to include school counsel. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Murphy to table this issue when more information is available at the next meeting to be scheduled for Tuesday, July 9; motion carried 4-0-1. Mr. Nelson abstained.

Chair Simon concluded by noting that it was the recommendation for the School Committee to award the bid to Trombly, the Committee has concerns with this business and doesn’t feel comfortable with voting on this contract award tonight, more information needs to be obtained from school counsel as well as other people consulted, and stated that a School Committee meeting will be scheduled for July 9 at 7 p.m. with School Transportation as the subject of the meeting.
COMMUNICATION
ISAC Committee

Chair Simon explained that Mr. Cunha is on the ISAC Committee and inquired if representation from the School Committee was needed. Mr. Cunha explained the history and current responsibilities of the ISAC Committee also noting that this committee reports to the Board of Selectman. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that a School Committee member representative was not needed and that Mr. Cunha will provide updates to the School Committee.

OLD BUSINESS
Elementary School Building Needs

Dr. Conti reviewed an Elementary Configuration Options document he’d created and noted that Mr. Larkin will create this as a shared google document so that the Committee can add recommendations/options. Mr. Nelson suggested adding a three school configuration as an option and inquired about the master plan; Mr. Cunha will make the master plan available to the School Committee. This item will be a regular agenda item for School Committee meetings.

Policy Manual Review - Discussion

Chair Simon stated it’s a good idea to review school policies and opened the discussion inquiring about the process. Dr. Conti commented that Dorothy Presser is an option, we need to continue looking at policies, and he inquired about what timing the Committee would like to proceed with. School Committee comments included: recommended identifying areas that need to be updated, review policies piecemeal, suggested reviewing the oldest policies first and either replacing or reaffirming them. Chair Simon and Mrs. Monaco suggested that the two of them review one section of policies at a time and then having the Committee either reaffirm or update policies, which the Committee was in agreement with. They requested that Dr. Conti recommend a policy section to review at the August meeting. Mr. Nelson commented that the review of School Committee policies is a lot of work, and the Committee’s and Superintendent’s priorities should be on the BHS renovation and elementary space needs and that school policies are the work of the School Committee and not the Superintendent.

NEW BUSINESS
Capital Warrant Article Project Closeout – Approval

At the May 28 meeting, the Superintendent explained that Mr. Cunha and Ms. Coscia had conferred on capital warrant articles and are requesting the one remaining completed capital warrant article project be closed out and remaining funds turned over to the town. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mr. Nelson to close out the completed Pine Glen walk-in refrigerator/freezer warrant article for $32,793.14; motion carried 5-0-0.

FY19 Budget Transfer - Approval

Dr. Conti stated that no FY19 budget transfers were needed. Ms. Simon inquired that with five days in FY19 remaining what is the assessment of the FY19 budget; Ms. Coscia replied that there are no issues with closing out the FY19 budget year. The Superintendent stated that the school department is converting to an electronic purchase order system, the business office is fully staffed, and the financial analyst is being trained. Ms. Coscia stated that Athletics, special education, and central office staff have been trained on the new electronic p.o. system. Dr. Conti observed that the accounting firm of Powers & Sullivan have two agreed to procedures pending for the school department; Ms. Coscia noted that Powers & Sullivan is in the review stage of the project.

Superintendent Evaluation

Chair Simon explained the yearly summative evaluation process that each School Committee member completes for Dr. Conti. The reviews and associated indicators are then submitted to the Chairman who summarizes and compiles a cumulative evaluation for the Superintendent on behalf of the School Committee. Chair Simon read individual scores contained in the rubric for progress towards goals, performance on four standards, impact on student learning, overall summative performance and scores on his performance goals. She also read the evaluators summarized comments in this Cumulative Evaluation narrative for Dr. Conti. Dr. Conti thanked the Committee and the effort they put into completing his evaluation and stated that a Superintendent’s work is a reflections of others’ work and then went on to thank talented Burlington staff: teachers, principals, administrators, support staff, Mr. Cunha, Ms. Coscia, and Mr. Larkin. He further commented that he will continue striving for improvement.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

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3 Elementary Configuration Options
4 Cumulative Superintendent Evaluation
EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Simon announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to discuss: approval of minutes and contract negotiations. The School Committee will only return to public session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson at 9:25 p.m. to enter executive session. Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mr. Nelson, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Ms. Simon, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 7/23/19
Date approved: 7/23/19