



Town of Burlington  
29 Center Street  
Burlington, MA 01803

## AGENDA

For Town Clerks Use:  
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TOWN CLERK  
BURLINGTON, MA

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

DEPT./BOARD: School Committee

DATE: October 26, 2010

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA

1. Approval of 10/12/10 minutes
2. Approval of warrant
3. Public Participation
4. Information/Reports
  - a). Student Representative
  - b). Subcommittee Reports
  - b). Ways/Means
5. Technology
6. Instruction – District Improvement Plan
7. Communication
  - a). Redistricting
  - b). Anti-Bullying Plan
8. Old Business
  - a). Varsity Field Scoreboard Donation
  - b). Burlington Health Care Proposal
9. New Business
  - a). Out-of-Country Travel
  - b). Step 5 Cafeteria Union Grievance
10. Public Participation
11. Executive Session
  - a). Approval of executive minutes 10/12/10
  - b). Contract Negotiations
12. Adjournment

## BURLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF OCTOBER 26, 2010

Chairman Christine M. Monaco called this meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Administration Offices, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts. Present: Mr. Thomas F. Murphy Jr, Mr. Nelson arrived at 7:50 p.m. Mr. John L. Vanella, and student representative Walter Kikuchi. Superintendent Eric Conti, and Director of Finance and Operations Craig Robinson also in attendance.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Vanella and seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve minutes of 10/12/10; motion carried 3-0-1 (Mr. DeSimone abstained).

#### APPROVAL OF WARRANT

Moved by Mr. Vanella and seconded by Mr. DeSimone to approve the warrant; motion carried 3-0-1 (Mr. Murphy abstained).

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Greg Smith, College Road informed the Committee of a seminar to be offered in Lexington on bullying for school bus drivers and inquired about vandalism on Burlington school buses. The Committee was not aware of any vandalism on buses. Bus equipment and requirements are listed in existing specifications and currently cameras are not on Burlington buses. Chairman Monaco noted she'd received complaints of buses speeding on Mill Street and Westwood Street. Mr. Robinson requested that anyone witnessing speeding call him directly with specific bus numbers so that he can request the bus company to retrain involved drivers.

Peter and Monique Maureemootoo, 5 Marvel Avenue, spoke of their concern with a neighbor cutting trees on school property and also encroaching close to their property. Mr. Robinson stated there are surveyors' permanent markings on all three properties. Five trees were cut down on school property on the far side of Fox Hill school. The School Committee was not in favor of the tree cutting and Mr. Nelson will draft and forward cease and desist language to Mr. Robinson who will send a cease and desist letter to the private property owner who cut the trees.

#### INFORMATION/REPORTS

##### Student Representative

Walter Kikuchi spoke about BHS student comments regarding class rank: not needed, discouraging to students. Other students commented it mad them; try hard and get reward and it creates competition. The most common comment from students: should weigh A.P. classes more than honors classes, they're currently weighted the same, and it discourages students from taking A.P. classes. BHS Principal Larkin and Mr. Attubato have had ongoing discussions over the past year regarding class rank and class profiles; most high schools each have their own criteria. In the coming months, a proposal will be submitted to the School Committee for a distribution graph which would show groupings of students in each grade quadrant (i.e. A – F) rather than individual students. The Superintendent noted that currently BHS A.P. students aren't required to take the AP test, so this doesn't affect their class ranking; but if they do take the exam and pass, they receive college credit. The School Committee made

comments on students selecting courses dependent on how it would affect class rank and how much credit is assigned to honors and AP classes.

Subcommittee Reports

The Recreation Commission has inquired about further determination of what will happen to the fields at the middle school during renovation; Dr. Conti commented that no decisions have been made, they're still discussing staging plans.

Ways & Means

No one in attendance.

Instruction – District Improvement Plan – First Reading

Superintendent Conti presented and reviewed specifics of the draft 2010-11 District Improvement Plan<sup>1</sup> with four major goals and sub-goals: improve the capacity of Burlington Public Schools, provide a clear direction for technology, improve communication (and customer service) at all levels and throughout the community, and continue to improve facilities and business management operations. He noted that the School Committee may want to consider re-establishing a student enrichment committee, create a charge for it, as well as an end goal; the Superintendent is looking for direction from the Committee as parents are requesting curriculum changes and specifically the middle school curriculum – Principal Connors and Mrs. Abati have met with parents (who feel middle school students are not being challenged as well as having concern about the actual middle school structure). The highest growth scores are at the middle school. The School Committee emphasized there are not problems at the middle schools just differences of opinion. The Superintendent and school administrators, who have been accessible to parents, are looking for a productive discussion. Mr. DeSimone was on an enrichment subcommittee with past Superintendent Spinosa, parents, and school staff, where they discussed differentiation, learning and challenging students, and they found if students are separated by ability grouping, it creates levels, and it does not satisfy everybody. If a subcommittee is re-established, the charter needs to have a narrow and purposeful charter (so as not to create a new middle school charter). The School Committee: suggested the parents come to the next School Committee meeting for a conversation as well as Principal Connors, expressed concern on teachers developing numerous lesson plans for the same subject, the Committee believes that students are getting a successful, challenging middle school education as well as a physical/social experience and a subcommittee is not needed. In order to implement additional differentiated instruction, more support and professional development would be needed. The District Improvement Plan will have a second reading and be voted on at the next School Committee meeting.

Technology

For upcoming School Committee meetings, the technology agenda topic will be merged into the instruction agenda item. Regular combined meetings are being held with town/school technology staff, combined job descriptions have been created and both sides

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<sup>1</sup> District Improvement Plan 2010-11

are collaborating. The networks need to be upgraded. In the spring, a warrant article should be submitted for classroom technology equity to have all classrooms across the district offering the same technology. A new staff position being considered is someone to coordinate all classroom technology. Grant money has been received for school security cameras as a joint grant with the police department; research needs to be completed on policy for exterior school cameras.

Communication - Redistricting

Dr. Conti has met with Pine Glen and Fox Hill parents, will meet with other schools in the coming weeks to present the process, guidelines, and timeline. Out-of-zone school requests are considered based on class size at the requested school and with parents providing transportation. Mr. Robinson has received updated district data, by student address and should have the fully updated database from Planware next week. At the November meeting, he should have some possible scenarios of new districts for the Committee to review. There are currently 1800 students to divide between four elementary schools. The School Committee commented on: some parents will not be happy with redistricting school assignments, the process will be transparent, the bus company will be involved, and staffing and budget issues will need to be addressed.

OLD BUSINESS  
Anti-Bullying Plan

The Superintendent reported that Burlington is using the state Anti-Bullying recommended plan as a template. Each district will need to submit a plan by 12/30. A Student Empowerment Committee has been established with two school psychologists, staff, and parents. A first reading of the Anti-Bullying plan will be held at the November meeting and a public hearing and second reading at the December meeting.

Varsity Field Scoreboard Donation

An offer has been received and was announced at the October 12 School Committee meeting for a Varsity field scoreboard donation. There is a total of four weeks of opportunity for others interested in making a donation from the date of announcement. At the November 16 meeting, all offers received will be discussed and it's anticipated one offer will be accepted. The current donor is requesting first right of refusal to continue advertisement on the scoreboard after the 25 year term – the School Committee will need to consider this request and is currently not comfortable changing the policy. Mr. Robinson reported that two additional entities have shown an interest in making the Varsity Field scoreboard donation.

Burlington Health Care Proposal

Dr. Conti announced the Town of Burlington has received healthcare increases of approximately 20% from Harvard Pilgrim and Blue Cross beginning January 1 and employees will be offered options for high deductible plans, which will save employees money. A first meeting with staff was held at the high school, a meeting at middle school will be after school tomorrow and will be at the four elementary schools next week. Open enrollment will be in November rather than January.

NEW BUSINESS  
Out-of-Country Travel

Moved to approve out-of-country travel to India for Betty Kerr in July 2011; motion carried 5-0-0.

Step 5 Cafeteria Union Grievance

AFSCME representative James Breslin stated that a cafeteria union contract violation was submitted to the School Committee and requested that it be discussed in executive session. Mr. Nelson noted that town counsel has advised that grievances be held in public session but due to this grievance being about an individual it was moved and seconded by Mr. Vanella to hear this grievance in executive session: motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Monaco announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to approve minutes, and discuss contract negotiations and a grievance 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 Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Vanella at 9:25 p.m. to go into executive session - Mr. Murphy, aye; Mr. Vanella, aye; Mrs. Monaco, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Vanella and seconded by Mr. Murphy at 11:00 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon D. Gilbert  
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 11/16/10  
Date approved: 11/16/10