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 and Ms. Martha Simon. Superintendent Eric Conti and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present. Mrs. Christine Monaco, Mr. Stephen Nelson and Assistant Superintendent Patrick Larkin absent.

CONDOLENCES

Chairman Murphy offered condolences to the families of long time retired school employees Kenny Ramsdell and Ann McNamara on their passing.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve the minutes of 1/9/18 motion carried 3-0-0. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve the minutes of 1/23/18 motion carried 3-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative

Subcommittee Report

Ms. Simon is participating in middle school principal search and has been impressed with the talented pool of applicants and she stated that people are looking to come to Burlington to work.

Ways & Means

Nothing to report.

COMMUNICATION

Discussion on Music Revolving Fund Deferred – Per Auditor Powers & Sullivan

PACE Update

Chairman Murphy stated this agenda item has been deferred after receiving a letter from the auditor noting that the review is not completed but expects it to be available for the February 27 meeting.

Dr. Conti explained that PACE is an initiative to make K-12 computer science an integral part of every student's education and is being worked on jointly by MASS and MassCAN organizations (Programming Acceleration of Computing and Equity Overview1). Burlington has been selected as a PACE lab district along with 12 other school districts; to implement district K-12 computer science with PACE support. Dr. Conti will give the School Committee regular updates on progress.

MassCue Grant Award

BHS teacher Leroy Wong submitted a grant application to MassCue and was awarded $2,950 for Soaring with Drones in Education. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to accept the MassCue grant for soaring with drones in education; motion carried 3-0-0.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

YRBS Survey – Spring 2017 Results

PE/Health Coordinator Matt Jackling, who also chairs the Wellness Committee, made a lengthy, comprehensive presentation of the results for 799 BHS students who completed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in the spring of 2017 (included in school committee meeting packet). Data presented included mental health, use of harmful substances, sexual behaviors, unintentional injuries, violence, and nutrition. In addition to current efforts, the YRBS subcommittee recommended: a student wellness/advisory block in the school schedule; creation of supplementary stress reduction programs; additional staffing in school budget; more community outreach programs/roundtable events; adding health education to elementary curriculum; developing educational resources on relevant topics for nurses, guidance and athletics; increase awareness about breakfast offerings at BHS; provide staff with more training regarding student stress, stress management and coping mechanisms; implement new curriculum on prevailing health concerns and continue to implement the YRBS at BHS and at the 7th & 8th grade levels. Lahey Clinic provided funding support for the YRBS. The School Committee thanked the Wellness Committee, staff and Mr. Jackling on analyzing data and disseminating this important information and the accompanying issues.

MSMS Principal Search

Dr. Conti updated the Committee on the middle school principal search: the first round of interviews has been completed, finalists have been identified, and the Superintendent has met a few of the finalists. Dr. Conti and Ms. Simon thanked the search committee for their time and efforts.

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1 PACE Overview
The Superintendent explained the Fox Hill principal search process is just beginning; a large number of people volunteered to be on the search committee, so a random process will be created to finalize the 15 committee members. A parent meeting was held with school administration and Mr. Larkin sent out a survey to parents.

BECC Director Deborah Clark is chairing the Special Education Director search, a committee has been identified and a meeting with PAC, parents, and community members is being held tonight.

Dr. Conti and Mr. Cunha have reached out to MSBA regarding the category to submit for Burlington High School as an accelerated repair or a core program, which have different due dates. Mr. Cunha noted a statement is ready to submit but they are awaiting further direction from the MSBA. The Superintendent commented that it’s anticipated that this year they'll again submit BHS as the first priority. Supporting data for the submission of the statement of interest will depend on which category the school district submits it under (i.e., educational/classroom needs, air quality, hvac systems).

The Superintendent explained that the district has been researching products and vendors for a new website. They are recommending final site, we are negotiating with them for site build out and will be reviewing communications support with the School Committee during the upcoming budget review.

Dr. Conti reviewed the revised NESDEC student enrollment projections included in the Committee’s meeting packet. 10% student increase over 439 new students projected by 2027. Bldg. permits issued 2005-2017, robust real estate sales are expected to continue. Ms. Simon requested that the Superintendent include increased student enrollments in the town’s master plan.

Mr. Cunha reported the two solar installations are complete and credits will be applied to upcoming energy bills. They are waiting for electrical connections to be completed at the high school prior to being operational. He distributed a chart showing possible solar credit generation savings2. Dr. Conti commented that the FY19 budget will show the same projected energy costs for the upcoming school year but all the district to see what the actual energy credits will be for one year and then to budget the following year based off actual energy bills.

By consensus, this item was taken out of order. Mr. Cunha distributed a two-page list of proposed warrant articles3 for discussion for submission to the May town meeting. Mr. Cunha highlighted a three priority projects. Replacement of the Francis Wire Fire alarm system and PA are original to bldg. from 1996, parts are hard to find, the Fire Department has recommended replacement and it's estimated to cost $300K. Pressure washing and rescaling at the high school and Francis Wyman estimated at approximately $3 per square foot. Renovation of the BHS Library including: enlarging the computer lab, adding a wall for meeting space, and replacement of the circulation desk, bookcases and carpet. Mr. Cunha is awaiting pricing estimates. The school administration is looking for School Committee input on the 18 identified projects for submission to May town meeting. In response to Chairman Murphy, the Superintendent replied that the school district should have approximately $1.25 million allocated towards funding of warrant articles.

Dr. Conti explained that the next meeting an overview and discussion of the FY19 budget including formatting, content, printing/digital copies of the budget. The budget guideline is 3.35%.

Dr. Conti deferred this agenda item until the February 23 meeting; administration needs to identify a professional development day in March, which was preferable according to a staff survey conducted and the timing of parent conferences in November.

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to open the public hearing; motion carried 3-0-0. In response to Ms. Simon, Dr. Conti replied that he will supply the current number of school choice students at BHS at an upcoming school committee meeting. Mrs. Russo
commented that she knows two students from other towns taking advantage of school choice and it’s working well for those families. Dr. Conti explained that BHS receives approximately $5,500 per student from the sending town, depending on the non-resident student population count on October 1. He further stated that funding for the Principal Capital account was eliminated at BHS (approximately $35K) to reduce the operating budget and school choice money is used instead for example renovations to the lower library.

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to close the public hearing; motion carried 3-0-0. Ms. Simon commented that she doesn’t favor school choice as a way to fund schools, but it does help students in certain instances to complete their education, she will support it but not pleased with the statute. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Ms. Simon to approve for the 2018-19 school year offering limited school choice by admitting non-Burlington resident students for a maximum of ten students in grade 9, five students in grade 10, five students in grade 11, and five students in grade 12; motion carried 3-0-0.

Out-of-State Travel - Approval

Moved by Ms. Russo and seconded by Simon to approve out-of-state travel for Steve Eastridge to Texas on March 20-23, 2018; motion carried 3-0-0.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Murphy announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to discuss contract negotiations, legal issues, 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 Ms. Simon at 9:15 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations, litigation, and review executive minutes. Mrs. Russo, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye; Ms. Simon, aye. Motion carried 3-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mrs. Monaco at 10:15 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 2/27/18
Date approved: 2/27/18