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# BURLINGTON

■■■■■■■■■■ PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**LOCATION:** 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA 01803  
Administrative Offices, School Committee Room

### ATTENDEES

**MEMBER(S) PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Martha Simon, Vice Chair Ms. Melissa Massardo, Mr. Jeremy Brooks, Ms. Chris Monaco, Ms. Katherine Bond, Superintendent Dr. Eric Conti, Finance Director Ms. Nichole Coscia, Director of Operations Mr. Bob Cunha

**MEMBER(S) REMOTE:** None

**MEMBER(S) ABSENT:** None

**GUEST(S) PRESENT:** Ways & Means Mr. John Iler and Mr. Steve Morin, BHS Teacher Ms. Krista Anderson, BHS DECA Students

**GUEST(S) REMOTE:** Teacher Ms. Danielle Trouve

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Resident Mr. David Woodilla, Resident Mr. Adam Senesi

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REMOTE:** None

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Simon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and read the following statement: The public can also access this meeting via WebEx Technology. The Burlington School Committee will hear public comment in person and virtually. Meetings are also broadcast live on Burlington Cable Access TV (BCAT) as usual. Chair Simon reminded participants that comments and statements are limited to 3 minutes each. Meeting Access Code: Meeting number (access code): 2342 460 1353 | Password: Tuesday.

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### EQUITY STATEMENT

Educational equity means **that every child belongs and receives whatever support he/she/they need to develop his/her/their full academic, emotional, and social potential to learn and thrive every day.** This begins with kindness and valuing the humanity of every child or individual.

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### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Ms. Bond made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 4/25/23; seconded by Ms. Massardo.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks - aye, Ms. Massardo - aye, Ms. Bond - aye, Ms. Simon - aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.**

**Ms. Bond made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 5/9/23; seconded by Ms. Massardo.**

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks - aye, Ms. Massardo - aye, Ms. Bond - aye, Ms. Simon - aye.**

**Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.**

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### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

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### INFORMATION / REPORTS

#### Student Reports

None.

#### Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Brooks stated that he and Ms. Simon attended the Board of Health Subcommittee meeting and reported that he assisted the Board of Health Subcommittee develop a Public Participation policy based on the BPS Public Participation policy. Once the minutes are approved, they will be available.

Mr. Cunha stated he will schedule a Transportation Subcommittee meeting.

#### Ways & Means

Mr. Iler distributed a spreadsheet to the committee relative to a complete financial breakdown after attending the Fox Hill School Building Project Community Forum last week. Mr. Iler explained that these financials are some options that include data regarding the sizing and renovations of the school and/or schools. Not all the options are listed on the table, just the ones that the Ways and Means Committee worked on. Mr. Iler stated this was done between the Vice Chair, Mr. Doug Davison and Mr. Frank Monaco. This hasn't been voted on by the Ways and Means but they wanted to get the information out there. He noted there is a URL at the bottom of the spreadsheet if anybody wants to copy it. Mr. Iler stated that bonding is currently at 4%, which is a typical interest rate with bonding of a building cost and has a trend line at 7% increase per year. Mr. Iler reviewed various residential tax costs depending upon the project dollar amounts and proceeded explaining his financial analysis.

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Discussion ensued.

### Other Announcements

Ms. Simon stated she was finally able to see a BHS Volleyball game in which Matt Shannon was playing. Ms. Simon noted that the Volleyball team is doing great, as are all the BHS sports teams.

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### LEARNING, EQUITY, THRIVING

#### DECA Students – Discussion

Dr. Conti invited the BHS DECA students and teachers, Ms. Krista Anderson and Ms. Danielle Trouve to the meeting to discuss their trip to the DECA International Career Development Conference in Orlando, FL. Dr. Conti stated that twenty DECA students went to the national competition in Orlando, Florida, and they have done an outstanding job.

Ms. Anderson stated that the students come in from the elementary schools, learn other skills and when they get to the high school they demonstrate the skills they've learned by project-based learning. These students take all the skills they learned, apply it to real world scenarios and compete. BHS Senior Ali Restivo, Sophomore Daksh Shah, and Junior Andrew Perl, all explained their positive experience with DECA and described their projects that were presented in the competition. Ms. Trouve thanked all the all students as they worked hard and dedicated a lot of time and commitment.

#### Tenacity Challenge Students

Dr. Conti stated that the Tenacity Challenge is an annual academic competition for teams of Latinx and African-American students from urban and suburban high schools across Massachusetts. Ms. Christina Chang and Ms. Judy Crossman are the two advisors who prepare students for the competition. Dr. Conti stated that scheduling is challenging so the students couldn't make it to the meeting, but we want to celebrate their success.

#### National Defense Industrial Association

Dr. Conti reported on the National Defense Industrial Association conference explaining that there were a group of students that went with Mr. LeRoy Wong and Ms. Shereen Tyrrell to the NDIA Cyber Conference. The students first met the originator of the NEIA when the NEIA was at the Northeastern campus in Burlington and students were invited to the Spring Conference at Gillette Stadium. Dr. Conti shared some pictures of the Cyber Conference and stated that the NDIA donated \$2,000 toward the Burlington Computer Science students.

#### June School Events Calendar

Dr. Conti stated the June events this year includes the Senior Athletic Banquet on May 30<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium and he and Ms. Simon will cover that event. The Scholarship Award Night is on June 1<sup>st</sup> and Ms. Simon will cover that event. The Junior Books Awards will be held in the Cafeteria on June 6<sup>th</sup> and Ms. Simon will attend that event. Dr. Conti noted this is the last School Committee meeting prior to Graduation on June 4<sup>th</sup> and reminded the committee to please RSVP to the graduation.

#### MASC Policies Sections C – 2nd Reading

Dr. Conti stated this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of Section C and explained that this section was separated out because there is no Section C in the Burlington manual; these are all MASC policies. Dr. Conti recommends adopting Section C, General School Administrative, as a second reading.

**Ms. Massardo made a motion to approve the MASC Policies Sections C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, as presented; seconded by Ms. Bond. Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.**

#### MASC Policies Section D – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Dr. Conti stated Section D was discussed at the last meeting, as a first reading, but since then he received some feedback that the language should be customized for Burlington. The changes include:

- DA – Fiscal Management Goals. The MASC recommended a School Committee choice and Dr. Conti suggested that if there are no real difference, he recommends staying with the Burlington version.
- DB – Annual Budget. The MASC recommended a School Committee choice and Dr. Conti recommends keeping the Burlington policy.
- The other policies noted that were outdated and unnecessary will be taken out.
- DFC – The second #3 does not align with the custodial contract. Proposed change is, “cancelation must be 24 hours prior to the event or full amount of the custodial fee scheduled must be charged.” Dr. Conti recommends approving, with that change.

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- DGA - The MASC recommends this should reflect Burlington's practices so it is amended to reflect language changes as, "The review and approval of all warrants as correct and approved for payment will be by vote of the committee during public meeting. The Committee also has the option to designate by roll call vote a single member responsible for the review and approval of all warrants as correct and approved for payment. A record of such approval to be made available on the next regular Committee agenda. Such designation, if elected, does not limited the responsibility of each member. The municipal treasurer; who also serves as the school department treasurer, signs all checks drawn against school department funds. No other signature is valid."
- DBC – Change wording, Selectmen to Select Board.
- DBD – Change wording, Selectmen to Select Board.
- DI - Fiscal Accounting and Reporting – It is recommended to insert the first paragraph of the MASC policy into the Burlington policy and change the first sentence of the third paragraph so it should be changed to "reporting from *October* through June", from the previous "reporting from *September* through June."
- DJE – Procurement Requirements – It is recommended to change the language to "dollar amounts in compliance with the thresholds set by the OIG."
- DKC – It is suggested to keep the Burlington policy but eliminate #1, "Travel by School Committee Members must have prior approval by the School Committee."
- DN – Disposal of Furniture and Textbooks – It is recommended to keep the Burlington policy with one addition, which is to add "attempt to recycle when possible." Also to change Selectmen to Select Board. MGL Chapter 30B, Uniform Procurement Act, governs how school districts dispose of surplus supplies. The rules apply to all tangible surplus supplies with a resale or salvage value including motor vehicles, machinery, computer equipment, furniture, and other materials and supplies. Disposal of real property is governed separately. All purchases made through the general operating budget, grants, revolving funds or other public funds, must abide by the district's procedures on the disposition of surplus property. For any goods that are determined, through the district procedure process to be of no value, the district will attempt to recycle when possible.

**Ms. Massardo made a motion to approve the MASC Policies Sections D, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, as presented; seconded by Ms. Bond. Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon – aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.**

### Equity Audit Update

Dr. Conti updated the committee on the Equity Audit noting that Dr. Kristan Rodriguez from Commonwealth Consulting Agency is still working toward a completion by the end of June. The survey response rate has been positive from approximately 500 student responses. The auditors will be in the high school and middle school this Thursday having student conversations. Then they will meet with the Administration on June 6, 2023. They have also reviewed the quantitative data and responses. The auditors have been responsive to the District.

Ms. Monaco read a notice entitled, Join SEPAC virtually on May 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ms. Monaco stated that SEPAC is seeking 8-10 caregivers to join their conversation with the firm conducting the Burlington's Equity Audit. Contact email is: Burlingtonsepac@gmail.com.

### Superintendent Evaluation Forms

Ms. Simon stated that all members get these forms to complete, which are standardized by the DESE. There are four sections, learning, equity, facilities, and management. Each member will be evaluating them individually. After receiving the evaluations back from the committee, Ms. Simon will create a summary of the evaluations and that will be Dr. Conti's formal evaluation this year.

Dr. Conti stated he puts out a community survey every May for students, staff, and the community. Anyone can comment on any aspects of leadership, direction, etc. Once they are submitted they are given to the School Committee to review. Dr. Conti stated that he tries to respond to all the constructive feedback that is sent to him.

Ms. Simon requested the School Committee send their evaluations back to her by June 13<sup>th</sup>.

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## FACILITIES / FINANCE

### Food Service Management RFP

Dr. Conti stated Ms. Coscia will explain the changes that the Department of Education made changes to Food Service Procurements.

Ms. Coscia reported that since the time we conducted the mid-year requests for proposals for the food service management company, DESE issued new guidelines that they are requiring districts to use, which is basically a universal RFP. This now requires us to go out to bid and re-advertise for a food service management company. DESE is only approving our current contract through June 30, 2023, with no renewals and this is the same standard to another district that went out mid-year, or any district that has contracts that ended this year.

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This new template is a 70-page locked pdf and it only permits access to certain form fields, i.e., boxes to check to indicate if our guarantee return is going to be a break even or a surplus, or if we are willing to take on a deficit, etc. Their goal in requiring everyone to use this form is in order to develop a streamline process and to level the playing field for districts given that a lot of contracts that come through their office are those in which the districts do not always have an upper hand. Thus, this is an attempt to help with some oversight. If there are other things that the committee wants to see with the program, such as food waste and/or plastic requirement, the committee should develop policies for the food service management company to follow.

Ms. Coscia stated the committee can create a policy whenever they see fit. Either before or after the RFP goes out. The advertising will be for a 4-week period then we'll need to send it to DESE for approval.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Simon requested that Dr. Conti ask the MASC rep if there is a template plastic policy.

Ms. Monaco requested more detail on participation in both percentage form and graph form, i.e., how many students bought lunch at each school before Whitsons started and since they started. Whitsons claimed they would get many more students to buy lunch, did they? Ms. Monaco also requested all the financial detail since Whitsons started noting there was a lot of money in the revolving account for the cafeterias before they started and wants to know the following: 1. If it is still there? 2. Was it spent and if so, how? 3. How much has Whitsons brought in by reimbursements and by regular sales? 4. How much has it cost? 5. What are the bills we have paid under Whitsons?

### **RFT – MSMS Air Conditioning Repair**

Dr. Conti stated this has been solved internally and there is no longer a need to request a RFT.

Mr. Cunha explained that the air conditioning system is shut down when it is cold and it gets a startup before it gets warm. The startup is when a company comes in to service all the machines, clean coils, etc. In addition, there is a requirement for a 3-year test on the chiller and the chiller has many tubes that run through it for cooling and a lot of the tubes were found to have been thin, damaged or with a lot of holes, etc. This chiller is the chilling tower for the entire middle school. The resolution is to purchase a 382 compressor unit for inside the chiller itself, treat the water and it will correct the issue without the need to request any additional funds.

### **Fox Hill School Building Committee**

Mr. Cunha stated there were 2 meetings last week. The first one was 5/16/23, which was a SBC meeting, and the other was on 5/18/23, which was a Community Forum meeting. Both meetings will be on the FHSBC website and BCAT. May 30<sup>th</sup> is the next FHSBC meeting.

### **BHS Update - Forming a School Building Committee**

Dr. Conti thanked the Ways and Means for approving the feasibility study for the high school. Dr. Conti stated he wanted to start a discussion to form a BHS School Building committee to oversee the feasibility study, hire an OPM, and use the MSBA template for a school building committee. Town meeting has generously supported a feasibility study and we want to start moving forward. Dr. Conti stated that Ms. Coscia, Mr. Sullivan, teachers and parents need to be on the committee and at least one School Committee member, although if all five School Committee members want to be on the committee, that's fine too.

All five School Committee members are interested in being on the BHS Building Committee. A Chair will need to be determined, however, Dr. Conti suggested putting the rest of the committee together first, then finalizing a Chair. At the next meeting, there will be further discussion and suggestions for a BHS Building Committee.

### **Pine Glen – Standing Agenda Item**

Ms. Simon suggested that as discussed at the Fox Hill School Building Project meeting, it's a Burlington-school project and it involves Pine Glen. Ms. Simon asked the committee if we need a separate Pine Glen discussion.

Ms. Bond just wants to talk about Pine Glen, in general, in order to plan ahead.

Ms. Massardo suggested keeping it as a separate agenda item.

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**Community Athletic Field Advisory Committee – Discussion**

Dr. Conti explained that he wanted to have a discussion with the School Committee and the Ways and Means because there seems to be a lot of perspective about the field projects from some parents and community members. Dr. Conti stated that Mr. Cunha suggested sharing the athletic field study report, which is a 500-page field report, so it makes sense to have a committee for the fields. The thought was to put a committee together with parents, community presentation, park and recreations represented, and elected officials, as well.

Mr. Brooks suggested tying in the Recreation Commission to this Community Athletic Field Advisory Committee to help prioritize it more.

There was consensus that a Community Athletic Field Advisory Committee is a good idea.

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Dr. Conti announced that the evening academy graduation is Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup> and it is in the lower library. In addition, the robotics team will meet tomorrow evening, May 24<sup>th</sup>, and that is also in the lower library.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made by Ms. Massardo to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Bond.  
Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Brooks – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond – aye, Ms. Simon - aye.  
Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.**

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**SUBMITTED**

Respectfully,  
Marianne Fabbri  
Recording Secretary

Date Submitted: 6/13/23  
Date Approved: