



NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
Hunt Middle School Library
January 10, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

1. Opening Items

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

Commissioners:

Mark Barlow X, Lauren Berrizbeitia X, Brian Cina X,
Liz Curry X, Susanmarie Harrington X, Anne Judson X, David Kirk X,
Kat Kleman X, Kathy Olwell X Mark Porter X, Stephanie Seguino X,
Miriam Stoll X

Student Representatives:

Jacob Bucci X
Isabella Weston X

Administration:

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent X
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning X
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs ___
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology ___
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance X
Elizabeth Atkins, Accounting Manager ___
Henri Sparks, Director of Equity ___
Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, Director of EL ___
Doug Davis, Director of Food Service ___
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director X

The Board wishes to recognize, welcome and thank those that are providing language interpretation of the Board proceedings. The Board's commitment that all children receive equitable academic services must ensure that New American parents are welcome and can attend meetings, understand the process and be actively engaged. Interpretation of proceedings honors, respects and values our New American parents and students. The Board asks the public and media to respect and understand the importance of this interpretation.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion (Harrington /Judson) to approve agenda

Commissioner Seguino Proposed Amendment to add 5.1 to the agenda for a presentation by District Counsel on negotiations. Seconded by Commissioner Berrizbeitia.

Amended agenda approved unanimously

*Amended Change for adding portion for district before budget presentation-
(Seguino/Berrizbeitia)*

3. Public Comments/Questions

A. Public Comment

- 1.) Claire Wool, PTO Representative, discusses budget
Describes budget reductions over time and difficult climate. They are happy that this year does not include many cuts like previous years. Feels there is not enough money in the budget for staff raises. PTO leaders are ready to advocate for the budget to the community
- 2.) Mike Fisher discusses budget
Spoke about budget and need for salary increase. Don't accept the message that we can't add money to the budget b/c it will reduce programming for kids. Thanked the board for a much better budget process this year.
- 3.) Karen Ruben - stated PTO's commitment to budget support and providing leadership in community to get budget passed.
- 4.) Susan Comerford

Thanked each board meeting for hard work, integrity, transparency
Community is much more aware of District issues
Speaking for kids with special needs - needs are all very different
Need budgetary support - these students contribute a tremendous amount to their peers and the whole community
Educating our hearts is as important as educating our minds

B. Board Reflections

None

4. Board Report

A. Student Report

Student council working with administration to provide free condoms through nurses office
Boys basketball won BHS-Rice game

Commissioner questions:

how did BHS found out about condom idea -

A. Hanover high school and Planned Parenthood

Update at some point about student government progression and if students gaining more of a voice?

A. Is a learning process - first year bringing back student council - want to honor student body diversity and learning how to create platform that reflects all voices

Commissioner asked about report on other school buildings - still working on it

5. Superintendent's Report

Amended 5.1 for District Council. This will be moved to when Counsel arrives

A. Summary Presentation of Budget

Chair Porter recommends that the board wait on the bond presentation before asking questions/having discussion. Board agrees.

One change from Sunday's meeting: received information from State that dollar yield will generate lower revenue than had hoped due to CLA being lower than expected.

B. Summary Presentation of Bond

One change from Sunday's meeting: in facility areas - established a priority to invest in BHS, particularly accessibility, while planning is underway

Bond Questions:

- Commissioner Cina asks if the school district should be able to come into compliance within maximum 10 years? Marty says that it will take at least 5 years, excluding Burlington High School

- Commissioner Stoll asks if over the 10 year period if we are eligible to engage in partnership with the state around cost sharing. Marty believes we would be eligible.

Budget Questions

- Commissioner Curry asks if Director Lavery could talk about the CLA and describe it? Statewide is this a trend? Nathan does not know if it was a trend and described how the gap between fair market value of property and the value municipality attributes as an assessed value to the grand list
- Commissioner Barlow asked why Contingency was included in budget. Director Lavery and Superintendent Obeng explained that the auditor has recommended contingency 3 years in a row. The District frequently experiences unforeseen costs when kids with high needs move into District mid-year, and it's too late to get special ed reimbursement. In the past the property services budget was cut annually to address that lack of contingency.
- Commissioner Cina asks how we are planning in this budget for contract negotiations? Nathan described the line in the budget summary around this piece. Added \$750k to budget to address contract negotiation settlements. This would provide wage increases across the Board at 1.5% which reflects recent COLA indicators. Absent any proposals from bargaining units, don't have a better target. If one of the larger bargaining units had put a proposal forward, it would have provided clearer parameter.
- Commissioner Seguino asks what school property tax increases have been over the last few years. Nate believes it was about 4% last year. Nate will research this question.
- Commissioner Olwell asks what it would cost to invest in Kindergarten para or teacher supports for this budget. Superintendent Obeng says that the department will need to propose what is needed, but at this time he does not know off of the top of his head.
- Commissioner Judson describes possible costs for kindergarten para-educators. Question to Superintendent Obeng- Will you please let the board know what the needs for kindergarten supports are based on your analysis?
- Commissioner Stoll asked if we wanted to reduce the budget, can we look at items that don't directly impact kids as a threshold for identifying how budget can be reduced - noticed there are non-student support costs such as website and other costs. Superintendent offered to show an alternative budget with numerous items removed.
- Commissioner asked about Commissioner Harrington describes the communication from paras and parents regarding the need for paraeducators. They would like to have a better process around giving voice those who do not have as much of a voice right now. Commissioner Harrington appreciates the process that has occurred up to this time.
- Commissioner Barlow asked about CLA adjustment last year and what other sorts of adjustments might be made between now and town meeting day by the State that could affect the tax rate? Director Lavery indicated that the CLA could change again. Last year the Tax dept provided updated number - City disputed some of calculations that tax dept made but as late as May or June, 2016 the final figure was set. Also, dollar yield figure

could be adjusted by Legislature, by making more or less money available to the Ed Fund from other sources - could have upward or downward pressure on tax rate. Board really only controls the ed spending figure, which is function of budget.

- Commissioner Cina asked if federal grants fall within general fund. Nathan says no - the non-general fund revenue is from roughly \$11M in other grants. Commissioner Cina raises the concern about changes in federal funding having an impact on the climate, particularly if there are significant cuts at the federal level.
- Commissioner Stoll asked if we lose federal grants midyear, compared to previous years, we are in a position because of the contingency plan to have options rather than cut a program.
- Commissioner Barlow asks if the contingency came out of audit recommendations. Superintendent Obeng says yes.
- Commissioner Kirk raises the goal of accessibility and is concerned with the bus line item being cut after discussing the bus schedule in ITC committee and fact that it is always late and hurting kids with special needs.

Commissioner Obeng presented an alternative budget proposal that removes the sustainable finance & facilities items

Reduces equitable climate and culture line items

Reduces items in Inclusive Teaching & Learning - \$338k

Reduces preschool expansion, mid school teaching, achievement gap projects, supplies

Lowers total new investments to \$1.26M and cut salary increases to \$650k

Brings tax rate down to 4.7% (\$3.29M)

Est tax impact is \$170 v. \$234 (\$5.40 less per month)

Every 0.7% of tax revenue = roughly \$500k

Commissioner asked about why the contingency would be removed when the auditor strongly recommended including it

Superintendent agreed, but if we are trying to minimize impact on students it's a question of priorities

Commissioner asked about why school bus would be removed if there's an extreme need for a school bus - the existing bus breaks down regularly, run behind schedule, taking this out goes against equity goals and hurts students with special needs

Cina moved to accept the FY18 budget without the cuts

Barlow seconded

Cina & Barlow spoke to the motion

Motion (Cina/Barlow) to approve an FY18 Education Spending budget of \$61,484,183, which equates to \$15,066.96 of Education Spending per equalized pupil. And further, to place approval of this item before the voters in a manner prescribed by law and substantially similar to the following: Shall the voters of the school district approve the School Board to expend \$85,544,586, which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary to operate the District for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,066.96 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 6.61% higher than spending for the current year. Spending at this level could produce a property tax rate increase of 5.25%.

Board discusses Motion.

Commissioner Seguino moved to amend the motion proposed by Commissioner Cina that we accept the initially proposed budget with the caveat that reductions brings the tax rate increase down to 5.25% Seconded by Commissioner Stoll

Board discussed whether the the Board had to vote to accept the amendment before discussing the amended motion. The discussion was inconclusive. The Board continued to discuss the amended motion.

Commissioner Harrington moved to close the debate on amendment and Chair Porter seconded. $\frac{2}{3}$ voted to close of debate

Voting to accept the amendment: 9 voted in favor, 3 opposed

Vote on the amended motion: 8-4 in favor of the Motion in question (Done by hand count). Opposed included Commissioners Olwell, Berrizbeitia, Kirk and Curry.

Commissioner Seguino makes a motion to pass bond proposal. Chair Porter seconds a motion.

Worked on language for ballot. Commissioner Seguino made an amendment with new language:

*Shall Burlington's voters authorize the City Council to issue general obligation bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed \$19 million **to create a capital reserve to be expended over 10 years** for the purpose of accomplishing capital improvements at each of the school district's buildings in order to eliminate or substantially reduce the deferred maintenance of such buildings in order to preserve their value for future educational use?*

Commissioner Harrington seconds amendment.

All Commissioners were in favor of making the amendment to the original motion.

All Commissioners were in favor of bond proposal (done by hand count).

6. Approval of Consent Agenda Items

- A. *Motion (Harrington / Judson) to approve Consent Agenda.*
- B. Curriculum Committee Minutes of December 13, 2016
- C. Board Minutes of December 13, 2016
- D. Infrastructure and Technology Committee Minutes of December 20, 2016
- E. Special Board Minutes of December 20, 2016
- F. Finance Committee Minutes of December 20, 2016
- G. Diversity and Equity Committee Minutes of January 3, 2017
- H. Planning Committee Minutes of January 3, 2017

No presentation from district attorney. Motion to table 5.1 (Curry/Porter)
Motion passed

7. Executive Session

- A. No Executive Session

8. Adjournment

- A. *Motion (Judson/ Harrington) to adjourn at 9:48 p.m.*