



APPROVED BY THE BOARD DECEMBER 13, 2016

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 15, 2016**

Attending Board Members: Brian Cina (Chair), Mark Barlow, Mark Porter, Liz Curry, Kathy Olwell

Administration: Yaw Obeng, Nathan Lavery

Guests: Karen Ruben, Nancy Margolin, Clare Wool, Mike Fisher, Jeff Wick, Laura McConville, Carol Ode, Bronwynn Low

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - A. *Motion (Curry/Barlow) to approve agenda- unanimous*
3. Public Comment:
 - A. Comments and Questions from the Public

Karen Ruben- asked for kindergarten paras, be careful about how the budget is presented, and about pitting groups against each other, investing in proficiency early on will help meet proficiencies later, asked for librarians, offered help with fundraising and advocacy, what challenges does the Board see?

Nancy Margolin- was a librarian at UVM, advocated for restoring librarian positions, talked about impact of library access on learning, asked for more detailed line-item budget

Laura McConville- asked to factor in teacher contract for next year, concern about yearly pattern where there is “back and forth” in the spring.

Carol Ode- asked that the Board get out info as soon as possible about what is being added and what is being removed, make it clear what additions and subtractions are in the budget before it gets on the ballot, talked about collaboration with the Legislature (change weighting of students in education spending formula, construction aid), provide access for all students to have opportunities for AP courses.

Mike Fisher- be more open and honest about what is known and what is unknown before the budget is voted on

Jeff Wick- be optimistic and bold in terms is what is asked from the taxpayers, have enough sections of subjects

Bronwynn Low- concerned about lack of access to mental health and social services, keep it in or increase if we can

4. LEAN Update

Brian has checked in with consultant. She sent links to resources. Brian and Mark will explore resources about how LEAN is used in school systems. They will present at next Finance meeting.

Liz Curry objects to the Board prescribing management styles and systems, but would support the Board setting a goal of efficiency as part of Superintendent goals.

5. Overview of FY18 Budget Pressures

Superintendent Obeng talked about creating a system for budget development that is more consistent from year to year. Talked about improving ability to provide special-ed services within the district versus sending students out to programs.

Senior Director Lavery reviewed list of budget pressures:

- investment in capital infrastructure: aging fleet, deferred maintenance, impact of bonds on future budgets. These costs have been deferred in favor of preserving other services in the past, but the needs must now be addressed.

- negotiations: all contracts must be renegotiated this year, so salaries, benefits and associated legal/professional expenses will not be known during the budget development process. When the rate of growth in compensation for individual (salaries and benefits) exceeds the overall rate of budget growth, it crowds out spending in other areas/new initiatives/new staff.

- expansion of Pre-K services: Act 166 is resulting in increased spending not only due to enrollment increases, but also because there is a high level of need for extra services from the new preschoolers. We might also need more physical space.

- student support services: We are experiencing increasing levels of need related to social, emotional, and academic supports, in addition to regular instructional costs.

- grants: funding streams are unpredictable, need for planning that is more sustainable and not dependent on Federal government. Critical positions are currently grant funded and are therefore vulnerable to declining federal funding streams.

- equalized pupils: concerned about growth being at pre-K level, but high school enrollment is lower, and there is a difference in how students are weighted which create challenges in planning. The result is that BSD's equalized pupil count could decline even with steady overall enrollment.

6. Feedback from Staff Budget Advisory Meeting and Community Input Session

Nathan- Public comment has been received at Board and Finance Committee meetings. Additionally, the administration has held a staff budget advisory meeting, and a community input session. Principals have developed a list of proposals. Student representatives to school

board has surveyed high school students for input and will be presenting the results at the December Board meeting. The next scheduled input opportunity is specifically for the English Learner community (November 29).

7. Audit Update

Auditors finished audit of Federal funds last week. On target to have draft financials by end of the month. Will plan for a presentation to the Board before or by December 20.

8. Business Office Reports (Senior Director Nathan Lavery)

- A. Cash Flow Report - see attached document
- B. Warrant Review - see attached document
- C. FY 16 Variance Report - see attached document. Nathan explained that costs in two areas are trending high: professional services (for direct support to students with special needs, such as Howard Center inclusion, behavioral supports, and visiting nurse services), and purchased services (for tuition to private preschools and private special education schools such as Baird, American School for the Deaf, and New School).
- D. Other Business

8. Adjournment

- A. *Motion (Barlow/Curry) to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted by Brian Cina