



APPROVED BY THE BOARD NOVEMBER 10, 2016

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 18, 2016**

Attending Board Members: Brian Cina (Chair), Liz Curry, Mark Barlow, Susanmarie Harrington, Kathy Olwell, David Kirk, Ann Judson, Mark Porter
Administration: Yaw Obeng, Nathan Lavery
Guests: Elizabeth Connolly, Kathy Connolly, Laura McConville, Jeff Wick, Michelle Clark, Michelle Anderson, Signe Daly, Karen Ruben, Mike Fisher, Benson Hodson

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - A. *Motion (Kirk /Barlow) to approve agenda*
3. Public Comment:
 - A. Comments and Questions from the Public

Karen Ruben- concerns about last year's budget process, wants to know more about cuts ahead of time.

Laura McConville- hopes that there will not be big cuts next year

Mike Fisher- encourage Finance Committee to be as transparent as possible, give more information to the public as we develop the budget

Elizabeth Connolly- what do we want in our schools, and how much will that cost? Instead of how much do we have and where does it go?

Signe Daly- keep the mission and the vision of the district in mind during budget development, keep students at the center of the conversation

Kathy Connolly- former Board member (6 years on Finance), doesn't understand exactly where we are now. Concerned about grandchildren not getting the same quality education as her children received.

Jeff Wick- shared some templates with the Board for building budgets. Asked that Board consider building budgets school by school, and that Board display it that way. Asked for an "org chart." Asked for "notes" for the budget to help the public to understand the budget line-by-line.

Benson Hodson- be realistic about what can be produced, let public know reasons for decisions and give them a chance to weigh in on decisions

4. Efficiency: Discussion about last month's LEAN Presentation

- Board discussed pros versus cons of using LEAN in school system. Talked about role of the Board: should the Board be recommending specific processes to Administration? Talked about how there could be more strategies to find efficiencies and to empower students, staff, and school communities. LEAN might be just one tool amongst many other options.
- Superintendent will consider LEAN as he explores ways to improve efficiency and increase participatory decision making.
- Barlow and Cina will follow-up with consultant for examples of how LEAN has been used in schools.

5. FY 18 Budget: Discussion about Documentation

- Superintendent talked about challenges that he faced upon arrival. We have a powerful software system that the District has slowly been using to improve accounting and financial management. Talked about needs versus wants.
- Strategic planning on November 17: opportunity to talk about what we need and what we want.
- Yaw reviewed timeline for budget development for FY 18. Building administrators are currently considering not only their building's budgets but also the budget for the whole system. Considering formulas that can be applied across the whole system. There will be community and student input sessions between now and next Board meeting.

Discussion including Board and other guests, focusing on documentation of budget:

IMMEDIATE IDEAS

- A document in "laymen's terms," explanations of acronyms and abbreviations, with explanatory notes or narratives for items above a certain threshold, "plain-speaking budget labels"
- notation about what is guided by mandates, grants, requirements, etc.
- direct service staff (teachers, paras, counselors, etc) included in the budget advisory process
- some direct connection to the strategic planning process and the meetings that have happened
- improve use of information technology
- consider ways that surrounding communities share financial information
- clarify the visual format of the budget
- 2 or 3 different ways, so that you can view categories differently (by building, by personnel, by kind of expenses, etc)
- projected versus actual
- options for depth of detail

- some way to separate individual schools from central office
- an evening with the Finance Director
- educating community that the Budget is actually several budgets (food services, Tech center, etc)
- synchronize variance reports with the new budget format- making actuals available, ways to look at actuals over time from year to year

LONG TERM IDEAS

- Talked about use of “open data tools” so that the District will eventually be able to provide interactive internet based ways for financial information to be shared.
- organizational chart connected to the budget
- improve community education about the budget

PARKING LOT (ideas not directly related to documentation)

- opportunities for New Americans to participate in the budget development process, specifically to talk about needs and how they are or are not being met
- improvements in use of information technology by District
- concerns about the future funding of Pre-K services
- will student input meeting be open to ALL BHS students? Prefer that it is not “invitation-only format”
- more time at community input session for discussion of ideas, not just for collection of ideas
- less focused questions at community input sessions to start, then get more focused
- make an organizational chart easily accessible to the public ASAP, with departments/staff organized together, not just an alphabetical list
- look at enrollment data and the big picture
- annual reports for FY 14 and FY 15 showed increase in enrollment

6. 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
- D. Other Business- none

7. Adjournment

- A. *Motion (Olwell /Barlow) to adjourn at 9:11 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted by Brian Cina