



APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON JULY 11, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
MINUTES  
Hunt Middle School Library  
May 9, 2017  
7 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Mark Barlow \_X\_, Lauren Berrizbeitia \_X\_,  
Liz Curry \_X\_, Susanmarie Harrington \_X\_, Anne Judson \_X\_, David  
Kirk \_X\_, Kat Kleman \_X\_, Mark Porter X\_\_, Stephanie Seguinto \_X\_,  
Jeff Wick \_X\_, Ryan McLaren \_X\_, Kathy Olwell \_X\_

**Student Representatives:**

Isabella Weston \_\_  
Jacob Bucci \_X\_

**Administration:**

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent \_X\_  
Brittany Nevins, Minute Recorder, Executive Assistant \_X\_  
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning \_\_  
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs \_X\_  
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology \_\_  
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance \_X\_  
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director \_X\_  
Erik Wells, Communications Specialist \_\_

*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 (Commissioner Berrizbeitia/ Commissioner Marlow) to approve agenda*

*Chair Porter asks to table the Ends Policy (4C) until June Retreat and replace with Discussion regarding publicizing Board meetings; accepted by motion mover and seconder.*

*Motion Passes, 11 in favor; Commissioner Wick opposed*

## **3. Public Comment**

### **A. Comments/Questions from the Public**

Olivia Young Ah Maher

Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District

Fran Brock

Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District

Commissioner Wick Speaks on Behalf of Rob Foley

Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District

Carolyn Hanson

Parent, shares concerns regarding Edmunds Elementary and Edmunds Middle Schools. Would like to have an opportunity for parents to meet the principals. Would like there to be more teacher and student input as well. Need plan for retaining good teachers.

Olivia Wolf

Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District

Gracie Harvey

Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District

### **B. Board Reflection**

Commissioner Barlow thanks Olivia for coming and speaking with the group, recognizing that it isn't easy and that he believes Olivia.

Commissioner Harrington thanks particularly Olivia and the two UVM students for coming and sharing and for the ways in which we are thinking about these issues.

Commissioner Wick recognizes Carolyn's remarks and shares the importance of the Board to be aware of issues she raised. Additionally he appreciates Fran Brock's comments regarding NEASC recommendations.

Commissioner Olwell asks if the Board could have a document of sorts or an organizational chart to help understand who is in each building and their roles, and requested that this issue be a discussion item.

Chair Porter and Commissioner Curry responded that this item is informational only, to assure the Board that the Superintendent is fulfilling his responsibility to fill positions.

Commissioner Judson mentions that staff directories can be found on each school's website.

### **3. Board Report**

#### **A. Student Report**

- Student representative to the Board Jacob Bucci gives a student update.
- BHS Register won All New England Award.
- Prom is this weekend.
- Mentions that this will be his last School Board Meeting and that Issac Jennerman will be a new representative to the Board.

#### **B. Discuss Moving the Start Time to 6 PM for Board Meetings**

Commissioner Kleman asks if there is history to show that this might impact community turn out.

Chair Porter shares that South Burlington has their meetings at 5 PM and there have not been identified issues there.

Commissioner Curry recommends that there be a trial run.

Chair Porter suggests a 6 month trial run.

The Board will start this practice at the June Regular Board Meeting.

C. Discussion regarding publicizing Board meetings

Commissioner Barlow mentions that the Board's upcoming agenda and meeting warning aren't always posted on the City Calendar and that this should be reviewed. Also, if notices of meetings for the week are published with methods like Tweets, FB, push notifications, FPF - does this risk any changes being publicized in one form of media and not others?

Discussion:

Using the web page as the sole source of meeting notices would mean that all traffic is driven to the web. Communications manager will be surveying Board members about methods that will include this question.

Concern coming from some constituents about meeting changes not being consistently publicized. Board calendar will be opportunity to confirm regular meeting day/time

Chair Porter asks the Board to please respond to Erik when he sends survey..

Commissioner Wick mentions that the 48 Hour Board meeting warning is not enough time for the community to plan.

Board members share that this is according to open meeting law and generally the Board's regular Board meetings occur on the second Tuesday of every month.

D. Motion to Adopt Travel Policy as Proposed

*(Chair Porter, Commissioner Kirk)*

Commissioner Curry asks that there be a report back when the procedures are done.

*Unanimously Passes*

**BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT** Travel Reimbursement Policy It is the policy of the Burlington School District to reimburse the reasonable expenses for travel for school business on a mileage basis for miles traveled and an actual cost basis for other travel expenses incurred by its employees and school board members, to the extent that budgeted funds permit. Reimbursement will be only for

those expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the activities of the Burlington School District. The method of reimbursement will be consistent whether expenses are incurred in furtherance of federally funded or non-federally funded activities. Prior approval from the superintendent or his or her designee will be required. Pursuant to this policy and consistent with relevant collective bargaining agreements, the superintendent or his or her designee will establish written procedures to govern the reimbursement and method of prior approval for the following: air/rail travel, meals, lodging, and mileage.

#### **4. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Obeng moves item B in front of item A (see [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com) for original agenda).

##### **A. Presentation on Burlington High School Capital Planning**

Presentation by Director of Property Services Marty Spaulding and Black River Design Architects (see presentation in [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com)).

Community Planning Committee meeting tentatively schedule for May 24, 7 PM in the BHS Cafeteria. Property Services director Marty Spaulding reminded the Board of the 2013 RFP to redesign BTC & BHS - awarded to Black River Design. There has been extensive community process that generated planning objectives for design process Superintendent Obeng shares that this is a meeting to develop a Committee with community members to help drive the process moving forward. Will start with "coalition of the willing" who expressed interest in being on the committee.

Commissioner Judson asked what the plan is for involving staff in the planning process.

Marty Spaulding shares that there is still much work to be done and there will be input moving forward.

Superintendent Obeng shares that the intent of this presentation today is to update the Board that the work is starting. There will continue to be updates brought forward.

Commissioner Curry commented that programming is current - how do you design a school that is not just responsive to today's programmatic needs but anticipates that these change from decade to decade What are best practices to assure that we don't recreate a similar problem?

Architect John shares that there is flexibility in design and there will be a plan to have variety in space to allow for changing practices over time.

M Spaulding added that there will be additional architectural services through existing contract or new RFP

Commissioner Curry asked about creating revenue stream with things like: net zero building science; Move admin and lease Colchester Ave  
Asked if project could use VOC free materials so that IAQ is not creating poor health

Kirk - Will other District property uses be considered within the high school property plans?

Wick - Is there a contingency plan that at least takes care of things like accessibility?

Superintendent Obeng shares that there is some money to start to address accessibility needs in the coming year.

Barlow - impressed with architect's ability to manage all of the programmatic goals and with staff's ability to think through financial implications. Glad we are thinking about the project in a way that will be supported by community. Recommend extensive community process, including NPA's as well as community meetings and community committee. Who will decide membership of community committee?

Superintendent Obeng shares that there is a list that has been generated at a variety of public events where folks have signed up if they are interested. The administration will be reaching out to those individuals to invite them to the meeting. It is a public meeting where others can join if they are interested in being a part of the committee.

## B. Annual School Board Work Calendar Discussion

Superintendent Obeng shares a sample annual School Board Work Calendar with the Board. The document includes potential monitoring dates and presentations that would be given during those future meetings. Also included is a column on Board learning topics and opportunities.

Calendar categorizes the policies under column headings:

Admin Monitoring: Ends & Exec Limitations

Board Monitoring: Board Management Delegation & Governance Process  
Other Board Work: Board Learning & Preparation for Monitoring Reports = regular reports the Board wants to see more often

Commissioner Curry addresses that perhaps column titles could be altered to provide more clarity for the Board.

Commissioner Olwell mentions that there isn't a column around community outreach.

Superintendent Obeng mentions that this is not a final tool, but will be worked on at the June retreat. This addresses some of Commissioner Wick's previous concerns around giving the Community more notice around Board meetings.

Superintendent Obeng also states that this tool will help staff better prepare for their work.

Commissioner Curry asks that the sample calendar be posted on the Website under the Board/Policy Governance section as "draft for consideration and discussion."

### C. Good News

Senior Director of Finance shares that the District auditor has been retrained under contract for a one-year extension at no additional cost. The administration wanted to share that continuity is a plus given the newness of District having an audit that is only recently done independently from City, and having an auditor who has just gotten up to speed on the District's financial picture.

## 6. Consent Agenda

### *Motion to Approve Consent Agenda*

*(Commissioner Judson/Commissioner Curry)*

Chair Porter allowed questions about how the consent agenda is crafted  
Commissioner Curry described the Board's role reviewing the consent agenda as a representation that the Superintendent is filling positions but the details of people on the agenda are not the Board's business or concern

*Unanimously Passed*

**7. Executive Session**

*A. Motion to consider Executive Session to discuss Contract Negotiations where premature disclosure to the public could put the District at a disadvantage*

*(Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner Harrington )*

*Motion to leave exec session*

*(Commissioner/Commissioner Olwell)*

*All in favor*

The Board reconvened the open public meeting. Attorney McNeil addressed the Board about the rules of executive sessions, and the importance and sensitivity of executive sessions.

VT Law limits exec sessions to certain defined categories:

Collective bargaining, civil actions, lawsuits, real estate, appointment, employment of employees, discipline or discharge of personnel, student records, imminent peril to the District, - in all of these situations must make determination that we are talking about something where premature public disclosure could place the public body at a substantial disadvantage

Real estate discussions require that binding actions be taken in public session

Except for real estate and disciplinary actions, disclosure of executive session content could place District at real disadvantage.

Last year events that led to the controversial action resolved by contract imposition - one accusation was that the Board was acting on misinformation and putting out misinformation.

Both parties were making accusations that the other was not making accurate representations - Individual references to Board members were made to Attorney McNeil



that were understood by Attorney not to be true, but the information got circulated in public.

Anyone asked to come into exec session is asked to pledge that they will keep matters covered by exec session appropriately confidential. “Appropriately” refers to all times except when permitted to be disclosed, such as in a court of law.

- Those participating in exec session make commitment to refrain from sharing info with those not authorized to receive exec session content.
- Statute is not specific on explicitly stating what can and can’t be discussed about the nature of an executive session.
- Precision of statute is in relation to topics discussed and who can and cannot participate in exec session.
- Statute is silent on consequences of exec session being compromised

Board training planning underway for Board to understand

Attorney asked Board members to sign pledge to keep exec session content in vault

This practice is also used on hiring committees

Applies to student records, student discipline as well

If there is a question about “sentiment of Board” - speaking even in general terms about whether proposals were well-received or not well-received - sharing this would violate the spirit of the intent of exec session - whole idea is that premature disclosure is jeopardizing the District’s success with bargaining

Motion to re-enter exec session *to consider pending or probable civil litigation*

Commissioner Berrizbeitia/Wick

Motion to leave exec session

Commissioner Barlow/Curry

## **9. Adjournment**

A. *Motion to adjourn*

*(Commissioner Kirk / Commissioner Berrizbeitia)*

*All in favor*

Respectfully Submitted by Brittany Nevins