



Approved by the Board on November 14, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES
Hunt Middle School Library
August 8, 2017
6 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

1. Opening Items

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

Commissioners:

Lauren Berrizbeitia X , Liz Curry X , Susanmarie Harrington X ,
Anne Judson , David Kirk , Kat Kleman , Mark Porter (via phone)
 X , Stephanie Seguino X , Jeff Wick , Ryan McLaren , Kathy
Olwell X , Mark Barlow X

Student Representatives:

Isabella Weston X
Jacob Bucci

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
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance X
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director X
Erik Wells, Communications Specialist X
Barry Gruessner, Grants 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

**Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!**

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

- A. Ask Commissioners if anything on the consent agenda needs to be removed.
- B. *Motion to approve agenda (Commissioner Barlow/Commissioner Seguíno)*

Chair Porter moved to amend the agenda to add brief discussion regarding questions from public goals of guidance department prior to public comment.

Commissioner Seguíno moved to amend the agenda to make announcement on negotiations prior to public comment.

Unanimous Approval

Chair Porter stated that there are no guidance department strategic plan goals that currently exist. In September there will be a discussion on the overall district guidance principles and how they fit within the district goals. With regards resignations in the BHS guidance department, the Board is unable to discuss personnel matters in public forum.

Commissioner Seguíno, Chair of Negotiations Committee read the following statement:

I would like to update the public here tonight on teacher contract negotiations.

As many of you know, the factfinder advisory report was issued on July 17. This is part of the process required by the statute governing teacher negotiations. The Board issued a press release on July 27 with comments on the report that can be found on the District's negotiations webpage. To briefly summarize, the report provided a helpful analysis, and some useful recommendations. While there are some deficiencies with the report, it

**Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!**



provides a path forward that the Board has acted on in its negotiations with the BEA.

The Board has and will continue to ask for and make itself available for as many meetings in which parties are willing to make such meaningful proposals and concessions as it takes to reach a settlement.

Before the release of the factfinder's report, the Board's negotiation team reached out to the BEA multiple times to identify dates to continue negotiations after the release of the report. After indicating it was unable to meet on several of dates we proposed, the BEA agreed to a session with the Board on July 21. The BEA indicated at that meeting that they were not prepared to discuss salary or health care, two areas where significant differences remain.

The focus of the meeting was therefore on operational items. After the Board provided the BEA with a set of ideas for consideration, the BEA team then informed us that they were ending the session and would get back to us regarding a follow-up meeting date.

The follow-up session was scheduled for August 8 but the Board was subsequently informed yesterday that the only BEA team member in attendance would be their Vermont NEA representative. As a result, we shared additional proposals with the Vermont NEA representative today but no further progress could be made on reaching an agreement.

The next full team bargaining session is scheduled for August 24 and this session will be pivotal.

In negotiations, the Board remains committed to a contract that first and foremost meets the needs of our students, and that is also fair to teachers while respecting the ability of the community to fund our school budget. And we are committed to achieving this goal before August 31.

There is a good deal of misinformation circulating about negotiations. To address that, we will be posting regularly to the district's negotiations webpage, so please check there for updates. We know that this period of time

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!

is one of tension and anxiety and worry about school disruption. These tensions can and have led to personal attacks and rapid spread of rumors.

It does not need to be this way. While negotiations can be tough, the Board is committed to respectful, honest engagement and public comments, focused on the issues. These are legitimately difficult issues to solve, and our best selves are needed to work out an agreement. We hope all of the community will support all parties in taking the high road in the coming weeks.

3. Public Comment

A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Adam Holt- Came to discuss to Act 166 determination. He is looking for exception to the entrance rule regarding age for his son, who will not be school-age 5 when school begins. Board has authority to decide.

Mike Fisher- Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Clare Wool- Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Patty Wesley- Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Yvette Amblo-Bose- School counselor resigned from BHS discusses guidance department.

Larissa Urban- School guidance counselor resigned from BHS - Discusses guidance department.

Colleen McSweeney- Testimony placed on file with the Burlington School District.

Jim Holway- Coordinates the Support our Burlington Schools (SOBS) Facebook Forum. He suggests that the School Board make the process of public comment more welcoming to folks who would like to submit public comment, particularly with the manner in which Board members inform the public that their time is up. He also suggests that their should be public wifi at Board meetings. Jim reminds the Board of an email that he sent to the Board and administration and received minimal response.

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!

B. Board Reflection

Commissioner Curry reminded the public that comments that are made can be submitted to Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins so the Board can review them. She encouraged the public to submit their comments.

Commissioner Harrington acknowledged the passion and concern expressed regarding the guidance department at Burlington High School and recommended that the Board have a process regarding replying to emails that are sent to the entire board as in the example Jim gave in his testimony.

4. Board Report

A. Student Report

Student Representative Isabella Weston reported that students are getting ready to head back to school; fall sports practices have begun and other students are holding on to as much summer as they can while they still have it here.

B. Burlington City Council Liaison Report

Commissioner Curry stated that there is nothing to report.

C. State Legislative Liaison Report

None

D. PTO Report

None

E. Policy Governance Report

Commissioner Harrington reported that she is working with Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins to ensure that the website page on policy governance is clear and understandable to the public. The Board will be revisiting the Board monitoring calendar at the September Board meeting.

F. Diversity & Equity Report

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!

Commissioner Berrizbeitia informed the Board regarding plans for community forums this fall. The research and planning has started. Commissioner Berrizbeitia also stated that the committee has a great desire to have consistent data from all of the schools regarding discipline and suspension data. The administration has agreed to start this process this fall.

Commissioner Seguino shared that the the approach the committee is taking with the forums to “Inform, consult, and engage.” She also discussed Commissioner Wick’s previous suggestion to do a Board-wide forum with youth agencies.

Commissioner Harrington asked if there are different ways to structure the engagement to ensure it is productive and quality as each forum may have different communities and different needs.

Commissioner Berrizbeitia stated an update will be given soon and the committee will look into Commissioner Wick’s suggestion on a fourth forum. Committee will return to Board with a roadmap.

G. Negotiations Update- Update had been moved to the beginning of the meeting.

5. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Obeng reported that the Sustainability Academy is having their welcome barbeque on August 29th at 11:30 a.m.

A. Website and Logo

Communications Specialist Erik Wells gave a presentation on the Website. Erik thanked Stride Creative for their tremendous work as the developer and to the District’s IT team for their help throughout the process. The administration is getting ready for a “soft launch”, which will likely be the week of 8/21/17. There will be a new site for each school and new site for the District. Early Ed will also have its own site. This was identified given that early childhood has become an identified focus in the City of Burlington and in our school district. Erik walked the Board through the elements of the Sustainability Academy website. Some key objectives were:

- Ease of use
- More robust means of information sharing and calendar access (calendar is tied directly to a google calendar).
- Showcase our schools and learning taking place

**Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!**

- Built into navigation and design features and information asked for from parent survey and meetings with PTOs last spring- for example lunch menu and calendar.
- Accessibility features using national standards / translation

Developer has built into site to ensure these main areas are included:

1. Perceivable (can't be invisible to the senses), for example text alternatives for non-text content (like photos).
2. Operable – make sure all users can operate the interface. For example, make all functionality available by keyboard.
3. Understandable – information and the interface. For example, make text readable and understandable.
4. Robust – make sure content is accessible as technology evolves. Dynamic – news posts/calendar. More static – policy, resources, FAQs

Erik stated that he is happy to give the Board a tour of the website once the site has been launched as the website is still being developed.

Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins gave a presentation on the District's new logo.

- Given our work on building the new website we saw this time as a perfect opportunity to rebrand ourselves and design a new logo. We've had many iterations of a logo that both Erik and Brittany have observed and we felt it was a great time to give the District a fresh look. Having an up-to-date logo is essential in the design process for building a new website.
- Brittany echoes Erik's comments that Stride Creative have been an incredible partner here as well and they have relied on their expertise throughout this process. They have an extensive portfolio and have worked with the District for many years on our Calendar/Handbook, as well as through the Burlington School Food Project Website. They are familiar with our vision and image we want to express to the world.
- Brittany describes main elements that lead to this logo particular logo:
 - Wanting something that stood out.
 - Wanted a recognizable image- Something that folks could see without the words "Burlington School District" and know what the

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!

image meant. The District felt that this symbol is clearly an image of Burlington, VT.

- The Geographical connection here was important and allowed the District to achieve other goals the District had.
- The District wanted to show a message of hope and inspiration, of a place with endless possibilities. We did this through our use of color. Additionally, through the use of color we identified the importance of celebrating diversity, having multiple layers of color and different sizes of the image.
- We wanted to find a way to incorporate our Vision without having it within the logo: Cultivating Caring, Creative, and Courageous People. Join the Journey! Through the fluidity of the shapes we felt that the logo exemplified our continuous movement forward and an invitation to all to join us on this journey.
- Showing this complexity was importance, while also maintaining a sense of simplicity and clarity of who we are.

Commissioner Curry gave feedback on the logo, mentioning that it would have been good to have people, perhaps silhouettes instead of trees, to show that the school District focuses on people.

Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins thanked Commissioner Curry for the comment and agreed that this was an important consideration in this process. The District had a logo with people and many other Districts have as well and we thought it was important to be unique and do something different.

B. Wellness Policy (motion within) -

Grants Director Barry Gruessner presented the Wellness Policy information. Please see boarddocs.com for more information in the information presented.

Commissioner Harrington provided clarity that this is not a policy governance policy. This is a mandated policy that requires Board approval.

Superintendent Obeng shared that the District will have operational procedures and mandatory policies separated and understandable on the new District site. This is a work in progress.

**Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!**

Commissioner Curry reminded the Board that the Board must abide by federal requirements no matter how they fit into the policy governance structure.

Chair Porter asked if there was any financial implications with this policy change. Barry states no.

Commissioner Curry stated that according to state law a policy must be read for first reading 10 days in advance.

Executive Assistant Brittany Nevins asked how a policy can be warned 10 days in advance when board meetings are warned 48 hours in advance of a meeting.

Commissioner Curry stated that this was the reason why the old policy required two readings, so that the process would comply with State law and said she would send Brittany statutory language on the policy warning process.

The policy has been warned on August 4, 2017 via boarddocs.com and will be placed on the agenda for the September Board meeting.

- C. Transportation (motions within)- *Motion/Recommendation: 1.) To award daily South to North Route and Athletic & Field Trip services for FY18 to Mountain Transit (STA). 2.) To authorize administration to award Mountain Transit (STA) the Wednesday early release routes in the event GMT is not able to perform this service.*

Property Services Director Marty Spaulding presented to the Board. Please see boarddocs.com for more information.

The Board engaged in discussion regarding cost and savings of the various options and the nuances of this particular set of recommendations.

Chair Porter is concerned about the language of this motion as it involves a hypothetical situation, or an understood “if” statement.

Superintendent Obeng wanted the Board to know that the District is pursuing this option and wanted the flexibility of this motion due to the time sensitive nature of school starting soon.

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!

Commissioner Curry expressed her comfort with the motion and sees it as an opportunity for collaboration with the City. She says this issue has been brought up before and believes that the City would have expressed concern about it if they were not willing to consider it.

Commissioner Harrington applauded the creativity in cost-savings here and is not concerned with the language of the motion.

*Motion to authorize the District to 1.) To award daily South to North Route and Athletic & Field Trip services for FY18 to Mountain Transit (STA) and 2.) To authorize administration to award Mountain Transit (STA) the Wednesday early release routes in the event GMT is not able to perform this service.
(Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Berrizbietia)*

6 in favor, Commissioner Kirk and Chair Porter voted against the motion

D. Mower Bid (motion within)-

Motion/Recommendation: Based on all factors of cost, availability and service locations, administration recommends that the BDS Board award BSD Commercial Mower Bid to MTE Turf Equipment Solutions for the amount of \$28,500.33. (Chair Porter / Commissioner Barlow)

Unanimous Approval

6. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda (Chair Porter/Commissioner Harrington)

Unanimous Approval

A. Licensed Employment Contracts

B. Routine Financial Reports

Commissioner Seguino called attention to the July 2017 Variance Report and acknowledges how far the Board has come in three years.

**Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!**

7. Executive Session

A. Motion to consider personnel matter (Commissioner Porter/Commissioner Kirk)

Passes Unanimously

Motion to leave executive session (Motion to leave executive session Kirk/Olwell)

B. Motion to consider Executive Session to discuss Contract Negotiations where premature disclosure to the public could put the District at a disadvantage (Olwell/Barlow)

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn __8:58_p.m. (Seguino/Kirk)

Unanimously Approved

Respectfully Submitted by Brittany Nevins

Cultivating caring, creative, and
courageous people. Join the journey!