



APPROVED BY BOARD 05/01/2018

**Burlington Board of School Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

**Hunt Middle School Library  
March 13, 2018, 6:00 PM**

**Meeting called to order at 6:07 PM**

**1. Opening Items**

A. Welcome

**2. Agenda**

*Motion to consider executive session to discuss contract negotiations.  
Commissioner Barlow/Commissioner*

*Motion to include negotiations update under agenda item Board Report.  
Commissioner Kleman/Commissioner Harrington*

A. Approval of the Agenda

*Motion to approve agenda as amended  
Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Judson  
Passes unanimously*

**3. Public Comment**

A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Veronica Salberg: Unclear affiliation to the District. Spoke against the raising of the Black Lives Matter flag. Called upon the schools to make a flag of unity.

Andrew Styles: 5th Grade teacher at Edmunds Elementary. Thanked the community for approving the budget. Spoke on behalf of paraeducators in schools. Introduces Mark Van Buren who is a para at Hunt. Urged the public and board the develop strategies to retain and attract excellent paras with handsome salaries and benefits.

Mark Van Buren: Para at Hunt. Spoke about the healthcare changes which defaulted paraeducators into a healthcare plan. *(Due to an unsigned contract)*

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

Cy Chapman: Para at Hunt. Shared with the Board his health conditions and challenges. He shared that his medication is usually \$10 a month, and it has increased to over \$800 a month. The medication was not classified under the wellness plan and he wonders who makes that choice.

Bailey Osborne: Para at SA. 6 and ½ years. Prescription from \$2 to \$272. Her flexible spending account card took 6 weeks. Spoke about the implications of healthcare on her and her illness.

Keith Pillsbury: Homeowner in Ward 8. Inquired about the plans for two new preschool centers that were mentioned in the annual report. He wonders what the projected school aged population in Burlington will be over the next five years. He suggests the need for more classrooms need to be explained to the Burlington community.

*Keith is also an incoming Board member.*

Patty Cassell: Teacher at BSD for the last 30 years. Thanks para educators for making her the teacher she is today. She shared concerns that CP Smith might lose it's amenities if it is a site of new construction.

Karen Ruben: CP Smith Para. Spoke against Stephanie Phillips presentation on the job functions on interventionists. Believes that teachers are left out of the decision making process. She encouraged the Board to collaborate when it comes to closing the achievement gap.

Monika Ivancic: Parent of 4th grader at IAA. Voiced her concern about parent/teacher conference days that have been allegedly cut.

*Monika is an incoming Board member.*

Kate Lasko: Parent of two at IAA. Speaking on behalf of paraeducators. Explained that Paras have allegedly been cut every year since her third grader was in pre school. Of the 22 kids in the class, some cannot recognize the alphabet while others are reading Harry Potter. She pointed out the disparity in the classroom.

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

Michelle Clark: paraeducator in Burlington. 8th year in the preschool. Her salary on paper is \$21,994.00 a year. After healthcare comes out, she brings home \$233 twice a month. Her healthcare is 65% of her pay.

Public Comment closes at 6:37 PM.

## B. Board Reflection

Liz Curry thanked everyone for coming out and presenting their questions. She recognized this isn't the best forum for a interactive dialogue, but there are opportunities to answer questions through a call or message.

Susanmarie Harrington appreciates the personal stories and narratives.

Commissioner Porter wanted to clarify that the new buildings are equipped for pre-k, not childcare.

Commissioner Wick saddened and concerned about the healthcare and insurance anecdotes that were shared tonight. He called the situations unacceptable. Wick took responsibility on behalf of the board for this tragedy, and said that we cannot be one of those businesses that let their employees go under like this because of healthcare.

Commissioner Kleman added her dismay to the healthcare tragedy. She believes there should not be any situation where someone cannot get their medication. She explained this is a result of the VEHI plans imposed on the District across the state of Vermont. This is not a Burlington problem.

Superintendent Obeng explained that Future Planning Associates (*the healthcare management providers*) have withdrew from all of Vermont. He is not sure what the liability will be in these situations, but FPA has walked away from millions of dollars of business.

Commissioner Curry asked for clarification: during negotiations of with the BEA about paras, because an agreement was not made regarding healthcare, the state statute went into effect which forced people without a settled agreement into a plan. Then the administration of that plan went badly.

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

Superintendent Obeng explained more about the deadlines and how individuals were defaulted into a plan.

Chair Seguíno explained the decision to continue in this discourse when a point of order was called into question.

Commissioner Olwell asked who was maintaining the administration of healthcare and benefits services before.

Director Lavery explained more.

Commissioner McLaren appreciated the public comments and thanked the community for passing the budget that will allow us to confront challenges in our District.

Board reflections close at 6:53 PM

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Harrington asked for B. February 13, 2018 Full Board Meeting minutes, C. February 20, 2018 Special Board Meeting minutes, D. February 26, 2018 Special Board Meeting minutes be removed from the consent agenda because the minutes were not compatible with Mac computers.

*In the future, Minutes will be attached differently.*

Commissioner Wick asked that item A. Routine Financial Reports be moved to Superintendent's Report.

#### **5. Board Report**

A. Burlington City Council Liaison Report

Commissioner McLaren has nothing to report as of now.

Commissioner Curry asked to return to conversations about PILOT funds.

B. State Legislature Liaison Report

Commissioner Barlow reported on matters in State Legislature.

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

### C. PTO Report

Commissioner Curry reported on PTO discussion, including budget, lobbying, and communications.

### D. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Report

Commissioner Harrington reported that the committee has not met since the last regular Board meeting. The next meeting is March 20, from 6-8PM. This will be the third in a sequence of meetings discussing School Resource Officers.

Chair Seguíno read a statement on BAA negotiations.

*“The paraeducator negotiations remain at impasse. The Board and union have scheduled factfinding for later this month (actual date to be finalized shortly).*

*However, at the request of the union, we have agreed to a mediated factfinding. This means that we will begin the day in a mediation and only proceed to factfinding if the mediator determines that the mediation does not produce a settlement. This is a positive sign that suggests the union leaders are prepared to make a substantive change to their bargaining position in order to reach a settlement.*

*The Board is optimistic about this request from the union and looks forward to a productive mediation.”*

## **6. Student Commissioners Report**

Representative Weston reported on the Nation School Walkout which some students will be participating in.

Representative Jenemann reported that following the demonstration a group of students will travel to Montpelier to meet with State representatives.

## **7. Superintendent's Report**

### A. [Superintendent's Performance Goals](#)

This is a presentation of the two performance goals the Board outlined in the December 2017 Board meeting.

Chair Seguíno asked for an opportunity for Commissioners to ask questions and comments about goal 1.

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

Commissioner Curry asked if, based on this timeline, there would be results for the fall of 2018.

Superintendent Obeng included the timeline for conversations with the Board.

Commissioner Olwell asked about the monitoring for these paid performance goals.

Chair Seguíno explained the two monitorings outlined by these goals. The first is, has a plan been developed? The second would be a report on the success of the plans.

Commissioner Porter asked the Superintendent to consider how we can compete with other big city, or big suburban towns that aren't Burlington, VT.

Chair Seguíno commented that this plan (*Superintendent's Goals*) might be the first opportunity to make real progress. She urged new Board members, and returning members, to hold their feet to the fire. She also asked if these goals would affect this year's round of hiring.

Superintendent Obeng explained that this is a Central Office staff project. He is hesitant to add more responsibilities to his Central staff because numbers in Central Office are diminishing.

Commissioner Harrington echoed the chair that diversity hiring also supports the success of our students.

The Superintendent moved on to Goal 2: Positive Culture and Climate.

Commissioner McLaren started the question segment by thanking the Superintendent for the robust plan. He supported the appreciative inquiry, or celebrations of success, as a good strategy to address climate.

Commissioner Olwell wondered if the Burlington community should be added as a stakeholder in the climate evaluation.

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

*The goals do not outline the need to evaluate community climate, states specifically in schools, students, and school buildings i.e. Central Office.*

Commissioner Curry reflected on the CEO and COO positions that formally existed in Central Office which allowed the Superintendent to be out of the office and in the field at all times. Commissioner Curry would like clarification about decision making processes to debunk presumptions that there is a lack of transparency. Commissioner Curry inquired about communication plans and strategies for engagement.

B. Prequalified List of Contractors: [Edmunds Cafeteria](#) and [Preschool Projects](#)

*Motion to accept the recommendation by Director Spaulding to accept the identified qualified bidders including Bredloaf, DEW, KR Adams, Neagley & Chase, Stewart and Wright & Morrissey as eligible prospective bidders for Edmunds project.*

*Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Porter*

Passes unanimously

Commissioner Judson asked if there were state regulations on bidding for architects. Director Spaulding explained that architects do not fall under the same bidding category.

Commissioner McLaren suggested another opportunity to talk about these contracts.

Commissioner Wick would be inclined to accept Director Spaulding's recommendation to re-include one of the eliminated bidders.

Commissioner Judson and Commissioner Porter are not concerned with change orders.

Chair Seguíno believes the Board is deeply involved in finance, and that is what requires them to be so heavily involved in the question asking of this type of process. The Chair suggested that clarification of criteria should be apparent in these bid processes.

*Motion to accept the recommendation by Director Spaulding to accept the identified qualified bidders including Bredloaf, DEW, KR Adams, Neagley &*

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

*Chase, Stewart and Wright & Morrissey as eligible prospective bidders for pre-school and satellite project.*

Commissioner Curry asked how this plan was communicated to teachers, specifically related to the building and displacing amenities at the building level.

At this point, Director Spaulding explained that there has only been a conceptual presentation on these plans. There is not enough information from various tests, evaluations, etc. to present the full plan to the entire community. Teachers and staff have seen what the Board has seen back in November.

Superintendent Obeng explained that it is not appropriate to engage grade 2 teachers at this point in the process. They need to start with the group that is impacted first.

Commissioner Barlow disagreed that it was inappropriate timing to engage the Smith community.

Chair Seguíno called Point of Order. Robert's Rules identify that conversation needs to be spoken to the motion.

Commissioner Curry asked why we are being asked to approve pre-qualified contractors. Director Spaulding explained it is about timelines; specifically the 90 day timeline to place the ad, and 60 days to accept the bid thereafter.

Commissioner Curry moved to postpone this decision until the Board feels more confident to vote on the prequalified bidders.

The Superintendent explained that we cannot continue to put this plan off. There is a domino effect that will challenge many cohorts in our district.

*If we accept the prequalified list, it will not bind us to any contract or plan. It will allow Director Spaulding to move forward.*

Commissioner Judson agreed that this contract is critical, and the belief that this will ruin school amenities is only a myth.

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



Director Spaulding explained we will not be taking away any amenities whatsoever. Whatever we need to replace we will propose in the project itself to do so.

Commissioner Olwell had asked if the Superintendent called and asked for advice from community centers.

*This has happened in a number of ways. Conversations in the community have continued through our directors and between the directors throughout the community.*

*Motion to accept the recommendation by Director Spaulding to accept the identified qualified bidders including Bredloaf, DEW, KR Adams, Neagley & Chase, Stewart and Wright & Morrissey as eligible prospective bidders for Edmunds project.*

*Passed unanimously.*

Superintendent Obeng wondered if the Board would find a timeline helpful in a future project like this. Chair Seguin thought that would be a helpful piece in answering questions.

Consent agenda item A:

Financial Reports:

Commissioner Wick was looking at the cash balance, which seems to him higher than the last two years.

Director Lavery explained that in essence, we had more of the money ahead of time. The reality is other factors have changed that give us more cash to manage earlier in the cycle.

*Motion to accept financial reports*

*Commissioner Judson/Commissioner Olwell*

*Approved unanimously.*

C. Good News

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

Our very own Doug Davis is the 2018 National School Nutrition Association President-Elect.

*Motion to the Chair to communicate our gratitude to our food services providers throughout the District that keep our students fed.*

*Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Barlow*

Passes unanimously.

## **8. Board Monitoring of Superintendent-Prepared Reports**

### A. [Compensation & Benefits \(2.7\)](#)

*Motion to postpone item 8. A to April full Board meeting.*

*Commissioner Seguino/Commissioner McLaren*

Passes unanimously.

## **9. Board Monitoring on its Own Policies**

### A. Governance Style (4.1)

B. Board Training (4.7) *Motion that the board is mostly in compliance with Board Monitoring Policy 4.7*

*Commissioner Judson/Commissioner Porter*

Passes 8-1.

### C. Board Officers (4.4)

*Motion to postpone 4.4 monitoring until April.*

*Commissioner Judson/Commissioner Porter*

*Motion to amend the motion to postpone 4.4 to a future meeting and the chair will determine an appropriate date in conjunction with the Superintendent*

Passes unanimously.

Board reflections on Policy Monitoring.

The ongoing challenge of the board is to continue to recognize its role and the role of the Superintendent. Public comment tonight lead commissioners to feel anxiety and to rush in and fix things. There is always more information than what's available. Our distinct role is not to run the district operationally. There is a ways to go in order to fulfill the guidelines in governance style.

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

*Motion to find the Board mostly in compliance with monitoring policy 4.1.  
Commissioner Curry/Commissioner Porter.*

## **10. Meeting Evaluation and Follow Up**

### **A. Future Agenda Item Suggestions**

Commissioner Curry returns to procurement discussion because the Board lacks clarity on role and procurement responsibilities.

Commissioner Harrington suggested three BHS students that are presidential scholars return for honoring.

Commissioner Judson suggests Doug Davis and food services team be commended in front of the board.

## **11. Executive Session**

*A. Motion to enter executive session under 1VSA 313 to consider the employment, appointment and/or evaluation of a public officer or employee.*  
approved unanimously

*Motion to leave Executive Session:*

Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Kleman  
unanimously approved

*Motion to ratify the Agreement between BA & District*

Commissioner Curry /Commissioner Harrington  
unanimously approved

*Motion to award performance plan pay contingent upon Board acceptance of additional details for mechanisms proposed by Superintendent for measuring progress*

Commissioner Harrington/Commissioner Judson  
Unanimously approved

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



**12. Adjournment**

A. Motion to Adjourn

Commissioner Ryan/Commission Porter

Unanimously approved

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