



**APPROVED BY BOARD ON JUNE 12, 2018**  
**Burlington Board of School Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, May 8, 2018**  
**Board of School Commissioners Meeting**  
**Hunt Middle School Library, 1364 North Avenue**  
**6PM**

**Commissioners in Attendance:** Martine Gulick, Stephen Carey, Monika Ivancic, Jeff Wick, Clare Wool, Kathy Olwell, Mark Barlow, Liz Curry, Eric Gorman

**1. Opening Items**

A. Welcome

**2. Agenda**

A. Approval of the Agenda

Carey/Ivancic

No discussion

All in favor

passes

**3. Student Commissioners Report**

A. Senga Felekeni, Burlington Boys and Girls Club "Youth of the Year"

Senga introduced by first teacher from IAA. Senga awarded "Youth of the Year" by Boys and Girls Club of America. First read the speech to teacher, teacher said read this to IAA. Teacher helped arrange speech to school board.

Senga Felekeni gave her speech.

Wool gave thank yous to the teachers involved in Senga's life. Also thanked the District for the efforts around Teacher Appreciation.

**4. Public Comment**

A. Comments/Questions from the Public

Fran Brock: Andrew Stiles to take over. Fran has learned a lot and has tried to remain professional. Learned that teachers and paras need to do a better job tell the community what they do. Hope she's done a good job. She will stay involved advocating for students and educators. We have slipped off the track the last few years but there is hope that we can be the jewel.

Mark Van Buren: Paraeducators. I want to officially thank the board and superintendent on the contract. Hope it marks the beginning of a new relationship. We are ready to work with you.



Carol Livingston: Paraeducator at Flynn and parent of senior at BHS. As a para, appreciate the work everyone has done. There feels like a different tone and tenor and felt like a relationship and mutual respect. Hopes the board has intentional conversations and structures in place to build relationship with each other and community. Please use the structures in place and be intentional.

Helen Hossley: Doug congrats. Ward 7. Last board meeting talked about the capital plan and CP Smith. Requested data. Knows Superintendent posted info, but 22 waitlist doesn't justify the buildings. How about Alliance Church. The school board has inherited a trust issue. The district is not engaging in the community. The comment that there is not enough staff to communicate should never be said again. How does he communicate, what venues, how often? Is there a landscape architect on staff. Is this true? We could have used that money for direct services for children. Request to put capital projects on hold.

Kate Lasko: Thank board for making public comment less stressful and more welcoming. 28 of 30 preschool kids walk to IAA preschool. It is subtle thing, but this time walking helps build the relationships. Access to walking preschools is an equity issues. Take away the walk and you favor families with cars. Parents are a part of the process. Preschool decision making should be based around low income and those who need it most.

Chris Hymer: Communication is essential. There is a significant attack on free speech in our education system. We can't effectively communicate with each other if we cannot listen. Sometimes this can be uncomfortable. After last month, some people commented negatively. A social justice union student said he exhibited white fragility. I know black people who support my views. What we call that if they spoke? I don't think it is just tic if I am being attacked. This student also accused me of having a racist rant. Also this student accused the appaulers of being a hypocrite. But if we don't start championing free speech we will not improve the climate in our schools. Free speech is a messy thing but it is protected. My son was pressured into wearing a Black Lives Matter shirt before a basketball game. That is not inclusion and equity. We have to create a an environment where all speech is equal. We have to listen.

Tyler Doggett: 4th Grader at IAA, 6th grader at Edmunds. Thanks the district for sending out the capital plan updates.

Question about 2 items: the recent FAQ explains what needs the roads meet.

It would be great if there was a section in the FAQ where it shows why this is the best plan. Show your work.

Early Education: The legal question is answered but is it immoral to build them with taxpayers money to spend the money if they didn't know? You should engage and argue.

Christine McConnell: Apologize for comments last week and not engaging. Live in ward 7, support all wards. Wants to talk about Pre-K. It seems to be driving the concerns because it is changing campuses. I have no problem with pre-k. Tell the story about prek. In the report it said in 2015 there is an estimated 1,000 kids under 3. In 2010, there were 1700 under 5. Of those 1,000 kids there were 371 spots. That's it. Be specific for exact enrollment numbers in the district and through our providers. Original plan was 3.5 million. The new plan looks like \$8million. Do you know what \$million would do for those kids? I am here if we are going to serve more kids. Tell me how we are going to be able to do that. Narrative driven by need to serve pre k, so show us.



Martha Lang: Dr. Lang from ward 1. The school district hasn't made a presentation to their NPA. The only end game for ward one is that Ira would sell it. The representative stated that a year ago taxpayers approved \$39 million. Two years you have been at this and you hid it from the taxpayers, it is a bait and switch. It looks like Burlington Telecom. The worst part is that the end game is that Ira Allen for sale. You need to go to ward 1 about this and tell the truth.

Mia Hockett: South end. Public comment about the capital plan. Thank you to the board and officials for hearing and trying to communicate, and going to all the meetings. I've gone to them, it feels like the concerns are being deflected. They are not being listened to, we are receiving justification for why the plan is right. There needs to be work on this and better forms of engagement. Seemed like BHS went really well. Wants the board to be bold and agree to put the plan on hold. There are too many stakeholders who haven't had a chance to have their voice heard. The other preschools and parents. South End space will destroy a wildlife corridor. The idea is if there is going to be new buildings there should be a new bond. Wants to get it right. Wants the Superintendent's legacy to include the voice of the community. It would be bold good leadership to stop the project. Show good faith. Concerned that we will burn through community capital.

#### B. Board Reflection

Wick: Personally thank everyone who took the time. Public comment time is helpful to get the pulse. Wick said he'd go out on a political limb and say thank you to Mia. Finds himself aligned with her statements. Thanks the paras and teachers especially.

Ivancic: Thank you everyone. Gotten a lot of emails about capital plan. Hope to say something during superintendent report about difference maintenance.

Olwell: Thank for comments and Fran Brock's service.

Carey: I'm new. I find it interesting to listen to concerns and thank you for your patience and for addressing the board. Taking notes and don't know how to respond to everyone, but wants to dream things that never were and say why not. We have potentially the most fabulous school system imaginable. Lives across from IAA, saw master teacher at work with kids 100% engaged.

Really enjoying going to PTO meetings. Never been involved like this. IAA meeting last week and the SA meeting were fantastic and looking forward to opening up communication.

Totally psyched to be working with everyone on the board. Thrilled to be a part of it.

Happy to learn that policy governance that is a basic structure not cast in stone and can be flexible and efficient. Psyched to be a part of that.

### **5. Chair's Report**

#### A. Para Contract Ratification

Tonight in executive session we will address the ratification of the para contract. We are engaging as a board twice a month. We will do the same in June because there is so much to address.

#### B. Community Engagement Capital Plans, CP Smith, Champlain, Edmunds



We want to build on cultural community capital. What are those avenues? We worked with superintendent Obeng immediately and we will improve

The board's ultimate decision whether this moves forward or not. He has given us the confidence to talk to people. We implore Marty and Superintendent Obeng to act on the concerns. We will engage and it is our job. We have talked about community engagement community similar to what we have for Diversity. And we are committed to communication.

## **6. Focus on Learning**

### **A. Strategic Plan - Climate Survey (1)**

Bobby Riley and Henri Sparks (Sparks)

Obeng explained culture and climate and introduced the team.

Bobby: Directly related to restorative practices and equitable climate and school environment. We need benchmarks to get there.

Gave the presentation.

Questions:

Carey: Clarified that the school leadership level will be measured by the survey, but not district. Bobby said that the focus groups will address those. District leadership is board and all leaders.

Wick: Will the focus group results be integrated? Bobby said we'll bring them together and talk about how they relate. Will the national group help with focus group work? Yes. They will help with all of the work as will UVM.

Olwell: The results of this will be kept at UVM but will this become part of the strategic plan? Bobby said this will inform the strategic plan and support the people putting the plan into place. We have to look at climate yearly and work with UVM going forward with the benchmark data.

Bobby: Please don't get caught up on the district piece, we think we have found a good solution and this will be very good for us.

Obeng: Thank the team, they have really worked through significant issues. And this can really help us measure our performance and track our strategies and be intentional. Please take the opportunity we need your input. Thank Sparks, Bobby, Christy

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

### **A. 2018-2019 Capital Plan Update (2.4)**

We have no personal gain from this. This about you. And we hope that people can add suggestions and not just critique.

Marty gave the presentation.

Each year can have \$2 million that we can bond without asking voters.

Contracted with White and Burke in 2015.

Questions:

Gulick: How did you inform the voters about slide 7? Marty: this slide came from the presentation I gave at every NPA meeting and school board meetings.



Barlow: There is a discontinuity, so that people know, this was also presented to the ICT committee. This was presented and gone over extensively.

Presentation Continued:

Obeng commented on Act 166, we have to provide care for high needs children that cannot have their needs met otherwise.

Ivancic: For projects at Champlain etc., how do schools usually do these repairs? Marty: Buildings are not usually let go this long. Ivancic: How do we get around this? Marty: We can go 30 years, we can try to have students in the buildings, or use swing space.

Obeng: This is the first step and the other programs are contingent. Or we can park the kids in portables which we fit up with electrical and water, which is a tremendous waste of money.

Ivancic: Is IAA indefinitely postponed? Marty: No, the first step is swing space.

Jeff: Been thinking about central space. How do we handle the special events and how children can engage. Obeng: There are different strategies. Rotate cohort.

Marty: You cannot use a portable structure for more than 180 days. It is probable that we will get a waiver? Probably. But is it realistic to have these moving around for 10 years and fit them up?

Marty explained how the modules work and that we need 8 dual modules for a total of 16.

Obeng: Finding locations for portables also a problem at some of our other schools.

Curry: They are some of the most unhealthy environments. They are toxic.

Obeng: Also do not include heating and cooling. Every time we have hold off on the projects means that that prolongs the entire capital plan.

Gulick: There is a ton of community pushback. We can not assume that presenting at an NPA or school board meeting is good communication. I applaud you for making the attempt to communicate these things, but clearly these things weren't communicated effectively.

Gorman: Asked about the preschoolers who cannot walk to the schools. Will those preschools remain intact? If 28 of the 30 kids walk, are we going to maintain these programs in these schools. Obeng: It is on the table if it is invested in. We need dollars and space.

Gorman: Temporary buildings used to not have water, can we do that? Marty: If it is close enough to the school you can get around that.

Wick: ONE Walkable preschools. Convinced that the need is there. Is it realistic? There is a large aspect of the city who this doesn't help, I think we should consider what a walkable central preschool in the old north end. Not suggesting new builds, but that we have space now.

Obeng: We have space constraints.

Marty: We are not really putting preschool classes where there is need. We are putting it where we have space. The programs are already being moved around across the city where we have the space. Said Smith used to be at Flynn.

Obeng: Eventually these elementary schools are going to need their space and if prek is there, then they can't have the space.

Ivancic: Appreciate going to history. The actual language of the bond measure was not included. Read the language of the bond. This bond measure talks about existing buildings, not new buildings. Nothing on this list says central office. Essentially, the public hasn't heard of these. To the public thinks you are taking the money and running with it. We are counting on these people to vote on the high school bond. The community has a right and I think you ask them. The board approved the current plan with almost no communication to facilities. We should reevaluate. The New American families will have to bus to these places? We need to take the community seriously.



Barlow: The administration has shown that this information was disseminated. We did have numerous meetings and deliberations. The \$19 million is for different needs. We have \$2 million in addition per year. We can make the argument that the \$2 million per year goes to the new buildings.

As we learn more, the administration is learning more and trying to be good stewards. The plan that is being brought to us now is a better option because it saves taxpayers money.

Obeng: I hear that you are getting feedback. I agree that we can do a better job. We only brought it to this board recently because we wanted to make sure everyone was aware. People are frustrated because they didn't get a chance to provide feedback. At the end of the day, these are the buildings that are for our students. We have had a legal opinion. Across the districts in Vermont, many do capital bonds. I wouldn't stop the project on legalistic claims. I would be supportive if the board wanted to stop the project if it was wrong.

Gulick: For the record, I don't think placing blame is helpful. I think there is learning happening now. That NPA and board presentation is not good communication.

Curry: Categorizing prek needs since 2014. There is a much broader context in history. I cannot remember when some portion of the community is not mad at us. Remember how many people you have heard from vs how many you have not. Silence voices are still voices. Curb cuts seem to be the thing that is the biggest place of disagreement. The biggest things seem to be change and no one likes change. Our larger contexts for making decisions have been informed by policies for years. You can trace this back to fiscal responsibility and about never wanting to go through 2014 again. Ira Allen is no longer accessible for employees or kids. Some of these problems we have been hearing about for years and years. We have to change.

Ivancic: Question on CP Smith and how it is attached.

Obeng: You can look at the website. We will be back every month. We are moving forward with the preschool centers. Not the driveway. But we are moving forward with the other aspects of the plan. Please look at updates. Please provide feedback. These are for our users. Obeng invited community to take a tour of Ira Allen on May 10 or 14.

## B. 2018-2019 School Year Calendar (2.8)

(Presented after good news)

Stephanie: Context about the calendar. Regional superintendents meet in November and are charged to have 175 days on the calendar. Superintendents meet to discuss regional issues like start of day, school vacations. Then the calendar goes to districts to set the rest of the days. We bring this out to the board each year to the board.

Obeng: One of the challenges each year is the identification of holy days. It is not inclusive. We only include Christmas and that is really during winter break. One thing districts do is create a master list and work with buildings to not penalize students who miss certain days, and to avoid big events/assignments for those days.

Wick: Point of clarification. Which holy days have we already included? Obeng: None except in Christmas in the winter break. Wick: Tends to agree with excused absences.

Barlow: In the calendar you presented were there 175? How far do we want to extend the calendar?

Obeng: If you have to extend the calendar you would have to do pick them all. Or I would send an administrative memo to Andrew and the staff saying these days are excused absences.

Curry: I like the idea and would ask that teachers make themselves available for callback.



Phillips: We would also ask them not to include big parent events.

Gulick: Good plan, thank you.

Ivancic: We used to have an October? And Yom Kippur and Columbus Day. I don't see any October days. Why are there these random release days?

**Gorman: Motion to adopt a model that during the school year calendar we make religious holidays excused absences for students and staff.**

Gorman/Wick

All in Favor.

Ivancic: why early release day? Philips: They allow the entire prek-12 to be released for professional development.

#### C. Tractor and Hunt Locker Bid (2.5)

(We did this last.)

This would normally be in consent agenda, but we thought this would be a good learning experience for everyone.

Marty explained the process.

Curry: Asked about the number. Marty: Anything over \$15,000 needs to be approved by the board.

Barlow: What is this for? Marty: Clearing Snow.

Wick/Gulick

Motion to accept Renee Fournier Farm Equipment's bid for \$41,200 for the tractor.

All in favor, motion carries.

Marty 50,450 for lockers.

Curry/Olwell

Motion to approve Marty's recommendation.

Gulick: Do kids still use lockers? Marty: I know they use them here because they are in constant repair.

Barlow: Are the new lockers bigger? Marty: Yes. They are bigger.

All in Favor.

#### D. Good News (1) (presented second).

Teacher appreciation cups.

Doug Davis

Olwell: BHS when he came, there were three lines for kids. We're not doing that anymore he said. Aside from the fact that the lunches have become culinary experiences. I can't say enough and I hope that everyone understands.

Access is our number one priority. There is so many children that have all of their meals in our buildings. Recognize that we are involved in in the planning process with money.

### **8. Consent Agenda**

#### A. Routine Financial Reports (2.3)



# BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

B. Licensed Employment Contracts

C. May 1 Minutes

Curry: Remove May 1 Minutes

Wick: Remove item B.

Motion to approve consent agenda as modified to 8A.

Olwell/Curry

Item C: pull them.

Item B: Open for questions.

Wick: Director Fuller is there any overview you care to give? Obeng: at this time of year, all teachers are to return their contracts. They were due May 3rd. This is a list of everyone who wants a contract again.

Olwell: Thank you for putting the schools on there.

Wick: How many rows? Fuller: There are 348 rows. They are now open for the public to see.

Wick: How are we with retirements? Fuller: Looks like we are lower than projected. Obeng: we have a new report that you can compare in the Fall.

Wick: What does request to be released mean? Fuller: You cannot go to another district until you are released. So some people are requesting to be released. Wick: How many people have asked for extensions? Fuller: We have had more requested than granted. Superintendent grants them. Wick: On what grounds do we deny request for release? Fuller explained the process. Wick: do we have additions at the high school (net additions?) Fuller: Not prepared to answer that question. Obeng: In the budget there is room for additional staffing.

Wool: What is a leave of absence? Fuller explained what they are. Wool: Clarified that this is usually a one year ask.

Wool: Looks at 8 retirements and 20 requests to be released? What about exit interviews? Fuller: We have an exit form. We do some interviews with those that have been here for a long time or if we know there are issues.

Curry: Have we done retention interviews? Fuller: we do not. Curry suggested we consider it.

Wool: Is it corny as a board to write these individuals to say thank you? Fuller: we do send retirees thank yous. It would be no more corny than when we do it.

Carey: There is no sabbatical?

Fuller: There is no paid sabbatical language at all in our contracts. Administrators will be mostly on the next one.

Wool: Callbacks for RIFS? Fuller: The deadline for RIF recall was today. We recalled all but 2 people. We don't announce that at public meetings. They stay on recall for 2 years. Very often those two can be recalled before summer even. We usually recall almost everyone.

Olwell/Barlow

Motion to approve License Contrats.

All in Favor.

## **9. Board Report**

A. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee





Hasn't been a new meeting. Curry and the committee rescheduled to Monday, May 21st. District will book Champlain for 6 PM.

B. Discussion and Possible Resolution for Community Engagement Committee

Open discussion now, and we can talk more about it at June meeting. We are off to a good start. Thank you Gulick for taking the lead.

Wick: Is someone crafting a purpose for the committee? Wool: Gulick is.

Barlow: What other vehicles can we use? And would that be the purview of this committee?

Curry: Offered to share notes on this from policy governance work and DE&I Meetings.

Obeng: Supportive of a conversation. We should start by identifying needs. Gave suggestion for other board work that they communicate out three key pieces after each meeting?

Barlow: Asked what the committee would do, Obeng suggested identifying the needs first.

Gulick: Needs will morph. I would envision a community engagement committee that would meet monthly to communicate out to members and get feedback.

Barlow: Would this replace what I do?

Gulick: In addition to. Gives a more substantial way engage.

Curry: Public comment is not a public forum because you can't engage in the conversation and it takes time away from doing the work.

Obeng: The concept and framework around board is to get you to be able to do the work, so that you can then do the outreach and linkages.

Wick: Directionally it sounds like a good idea that would extend effectiveness.

Wool: This provides listening opportunities.

Olwell: I find the conversations in committees valuable.

Barlow: I just want us to be intentional. I'm in support of community engagement but want it to be intentional.

Wick: I'm envisioning that we will all have input so that by the time we get the charge, we will have seen it before vote.

## **10. Superintendent Monitoring Report**

A. Health Update - Non Compliance Report Resolved (2.8)

Follow up to what we brought to the board a few months ago.

Director Lavery presented the update.

We don't know to what degree they still have outstanding claims and how much more money they might need. We'd hoped to have a better idea of how much this benefit is going to cost us to administer. We don't have that information and we won't have that information for a long time. They warned that it could take 70/90 days so we won't have complete reconciliation from them. New provider might be able to give us a little data.

VEHI has decided to grant free pharmaceuticals for this month.

Obeng: We are bring this communication through the policy structure that keeps the superintendent from spending more money than approved.

Curry: Will new report show us a good estimate? Lavery: We don't know.

Curry: Will the state require an audit? Lavery: We don't know, but we should be able to see what we have sent them and what they paid and reconcile the two accounts. Curry: Can a district or board



request that an audit be done? Obeng: VEHI has been taking the lead, but haven't responded to the pressuring from BSD/other districts.

Barlow: Other organizations? Obeng: Yes, everyone is talking.

Wick: asked about start dates. Last day for Future Planning is April 30 and first day for new provider was May 1, but they will start processing claims later this month. They can administer our plan completely. There are a few changes.

Wick: Health care providers are saying they haven't been paid. Teachers are having issues to? Are we in a blackout period? Lavery confirmed all of these and explained technicalities.

Wool: It's important that you explain to the board that there wasn't many options. Everyone is in the same boat.

Lavery explained about why district's chose future planning.

Curry: Thank you for your work and apologized that district was blamed for something that was out of our control.

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

Discussion on why we have our lawyer have us explain our policy governance and what it means to be in compliance.

A. City Charter and Board Governance

Tabled until lawyer arrived.

B. Delegation to Superintendent (3.3)

Did this first. Wool gave this item to Wick. Wick read policy 3.3.

**Gulick/Curry**

**Motion to table B and C until more board members are present.**

**All in Favor.**

**Wick/Gorman**

**Motion to table 11A.**

**All approved.**

C. Board Job Description (4.2)

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

**Wick/Carey**

**Motion to table item 12.**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

### **13. Executive Session**

A. Motion to consider Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. 313 (a) (1) (A), (B), (C), (E) and (F) because premature general public knowledge would put the District at a substantial disadvantage to discuss the following with legal counsel: Pending unfair labor practice, grievance matter and continuing personnel inquiry matter.

Wick/Gulick

All in Favor.



**BURLINGTON**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

**14. Adjournment**

A. Motion to Adjourn

Submitted by Russ Elek