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## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 12, 2022

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**LOCATION:** 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA 01803  
Administrative Offices, School Committee Room

### ATTENDEES

**MEMBER(S) PRESENT:** Mrs. Katherine Bond, Mr. Carl Foss, Mrs. Christine Monaco, Ms. Martha Simon, Mrs. Melissa Massardo, Superintendent Dr. Eric Conti, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Patrick Larkin, Director of Operations Mr. Bob Cunha, Business Manager Ms. Nichole Coscia

**GUEST(S) PRESENT:** Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Mr. Ray Porch, BECC Director Ms. Deb Clark, Interim Director of Special Education Mrs. Christina Cicolini

**GUEST(S) REMOTE:** Ways & Means Member Mr. Roger Riggs, Nurse Leader Mrs. Barbara Conley

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Select Board Member Mr. Mike Espejo

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REMOTE:** Parent and SEPAC Member Ms. Grace Janusis

### CALL TO ORDER

Superintendent Dr. Conti called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and read the following statement: The public can also access this meeting via WebEx Technology. The Burlington School Committee will hear public comment in person and virtually. Meetings are also broadcast live on Burlington Cable Access TV (BCAT) as usual. WebEx Meeting Number: 2335 895 4579 | Password: Tuesday

A moment of silence was observed honoring longtime Burlington resident and former school committee chair and member, [Ruthann Covino](#). In addition, Dr. Conti thanked those who ran for public office and offered congratulations to those who won.

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION & SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Dr. Conti called for nominations for a new School Committee Chair; and after nomination, turned the meeting over to the new Chair, Mrs. Bond.

#### School Committee Chair

Motion was made by Mr. Foss to nominate Mrs. Bond as School Committee Chair; seconded by Mrs. Monaco. Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Mrs. Bond thanked Mr. Tom Murphy for his years of service and welcomed Mrs. Massardo.

#### School Committee Vice Chair

Motion was made by Mrs. Monaco to nominate Mr. Foss as School Committee Vice Chair; seconded by Ms. Simon. Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

The School Committee discussed and voted the first subcommittee assignment (Recreation Commission) separately and then voted on the remaining subcommittee assignments (items 2-17) in tonight's meeting packet<sup>1</sup> for the upcoming year.

#### Recreation Commission

Motion was made by Mrs. Monaco to nominate Mr. Foss as member of Recreation Commission; seconded by Ms. Simon. Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

#### Assignments 2-17

2. Two members to serve on the Academic Review Board (M. Simon, M. Massardo alt.)
3. Two members to serve on the Sick Leave Bank Committee of the Burlington Educators' Association. It has been the practice that the Superintendent and one member of the School Committee serve on this committee, but this is at the discretion of the members (Superintendent, C. Monaco)
4. One member to serve on the Sick Leave Bank Committee of the Burlington Educators' Association (M. Simon)
5. Legislative contact person to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (C. Foss, K. Bond)
6. Special Education Parent Advisory Committee Liaison (C. Monaco, K. Bond)
7. Subcommittee to the Select Board (C. Monaco, K. Bond)
8. Subcommittee to the Ways & Means (C. Monaco, M. Simon)
9. Subcommittee to the Board of Health (C. Foss, M. Simon)

<sup>1</sup> 2021/2022 School Committee Reorganization & Subcommittee Assignments



### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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None.

### INFORMATION / REPORTS

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#### A. Subcommittee

Mr. Foss reported that the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee presented an update to the Town Mission Statement at the Select Board meeting on 4/11/22 and it was approved. The next DEI meeting is April 27th (remote) - all are welcome to attend.

#### B. Ways & Means

Mr. Riggs reported the next few in person Ways and Means meetings. All meeting agendas have been posted online.

- Ways and Means School Subcommittee, April 14th and April 28th @ 5:30 pm at the Burlington High School Admin Wing, Small conference room
- Full Ways and Means Committee Meeting (reviewing all school items), May 4th @ 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Main Conference Room & via WebEx

Ms. Simon requested that Special Session School Committee meetings with Ways and Means be posted for the above mentioned dates. It was noted that the April 14th meeting could only have one school committee member attend due to late notification and agenda could not be posted in accordance with open meeting laws for that meeting date.

### LEARNING

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#### A. Draft School Calendar 2022/2023 - Second Reading

Dr. Conti noted the calendar changes to the current school year (January 3 and April 15 - no school, June 22 - last day of school) and presented a second reading of a religiously neutral calendar for the 2022/2023 school year.

Mrs. Monaco commented about Good Friday as a holiday; while understanding a religiously neutral calendar, we may run into calling school off on Good Friday for staff to observe. In response to discussion about professional development days, Dr. Conti will discuss the committee's suggestions/concerns with joint labor management and a google form will be sent to [staff and families for feedback](#). While other adjustments can be made to the calendar, Dr. Conti explained that he would like to publish the start dates for families to be able to plan. All were in agreement that the first day of school for grades 1-12 would be Monday, August 29th and the first day of pre-K and kindergarten would be Tuesday, September 6th. The return date for staff would be Thursday, August 25th.

Motion was made by Ms. Simon to approve the start dates as submitted on the Draft School Calendar 2022/2023<sup>6</sup> with the option to modify other dates as needed; seconded by Mr. Foss. Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### EQUITY

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#### A. Let's Talk About It

Mr. Porch explained that the last session for the school year will be held on [May 18th](#). Representatives from our Student DEI Advisory as well as our Advocacy Room will share what their learnings have been this year and field questions.

#### B. Equity Audit Update

Dr. Conti explained that [BlackPrint](#) has completed four training sessions with central office staff and has been focusing on qualitative work. During the next phase, they will be spending time with Mrs. Miliano and the Student Information Office for quantitative data. Feedback from staff has been positive. Mr. Larkin shared that there was a communication issue at the middle school. An additional form was supposed to be sent home to the student group where the sessions are audio recorded (no names) for BlackPrint purposes only. The error on our part has been communicated to families. Dr. Conti confirmed that, as a result, BlackPrint has agreed to destroy the recordings and then if they need to, redo the sessions a second time. Mr. Porch added that it is best practice to audio record for audit purposes and this was just a communication error on our part. Mr. Porch explained that the data collection process will take some time for them to collect and sort and includes staff and student data, discipline data, program data, assessment data and outcome data and the next audit update will be in a couple of months. In response to Ms. Simon's question about data collection,

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<sup>6</sup> Draft School Calendar 2022/2023

Mr. Porch summarized that any information that creates outcomes for students that can be identified and quantified numerically are going to be collected.

### C. Community Health Project Update

Dr. Conti opened the conversation by thanking Mr. Larkin and his team for their work with the Community Health Project in conjunction with Woburn Public Schools. As a reminder, this is a result of the support we received from Senator Friedman and the state's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds (\$300,000). Mr. Larkin thanked Mrs. DeSousa and Mrs. Lamprey for helping with the efforts to support low income and immigrant families to be able to access health care needs to complete registration for school (physicals and immunizations). Mr. Larkin has learned, from speaking with some of the new families, that healthcare is different in other countries (ie - the only time people go to the doctor in Guatemala is when they are seriously ill; no resources are available to do annual physicals). When they arrive in the US, they need health insurance, a doctor, and a physical/immunizations. Mr. Larkin explained that we are trying to help families with these initial steps to get the children in school as soon as possible; a new English Learner assistant at the high school is working with new families when they arrive to see if they need MassHealth so they can get access to primary care. Even with this effort, it can take over a month to get those services in place. He further explained that the goal is to hold once a month physicals, as the DPH likes to have a physical completed within 30 days when a student registers for school. Dividers and beds/benches were donated and Dr. Wayne Altman (Arlington doctor/Woburn resident) and a team of Tufts medical students recently conducted physicals for 22 families during evening hours at Marshall Simonds Middle School. Mr. Larkin noted that Ms. Adriana Mendes-Sheldon (Family & Community Engagement Liaison in Woburn), Ms. Olga Lopez (Family Engagement Specialist at DESE) and their offices played a huge role in these efforts as well. It was a wonderful and rewarding experience for all. We are planning for the next health care evening to be held on Monday, May 23rd from 7-9 pm at MSMS. As part of the grant, Mr. Larkin explained that we have ordered a vaccine refrigerator/freezer which will allow us to have vaccines on hand to administer, if needed, as part of their health record. Ms. Coscia continues to be an excellent resource as we continue to figure out what we can do with these funds. Our Board of Health and Public Health Nurse, Ms. Chris Paulik, has been helpful in arranging schedules that meet families' needs. Mr. Larkin concluded that it has been a great community effort and one of the highlights of the year. Committee members agreed and thanked Mr. Larkin for all the amazing efforts.

## CULTURE + RELATIONSHIPS / THRIVING

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### A. COVID Update

Dr. Conti provided a brief update. He explained that we are going to carry on as we have been and if we receive any information from Mass DPH or Board of Health, we will share and communicate the information with families. We have seen a relatively steady number of cases and will continue to track and report weekly. We're continuing to distribute tests to staff and students who have requested. In response to Dr. Conti's question, Mr. Larkin does not think the state is accepting new family sign ups, but we may have some excess when other families have decided to come off the distribution; he will look at the numbers to see what may be available. In response to Ms. Simon's comment about being prepared to be flexible and responsive with changing public health and safety needs, Dr. Conti will look at some policy language which allows that flexibility.

## FACILITIES / FINANCE

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At Dr. Conti's request, the agenda was adjusted to accommodate in-person presenters.

### A. FY23 Draft Special Education Accommodated Budget

Dr. Conti welcomed Ms. Clark and Mrs. Cicolini. The accommodated account is a town budget where some of our special education programming is funded out of. It is presented separately from the operating budget and includes the following programs: LABBB Collaborative, BECC (Burlington Early Childhood Center), Development Skills at Pine Glen and the Expanding Developmental Skills Classroom as well as our out-of-district tuition and out-of-district transportation. Ms. Coscia explained that the total overall budget increase for the accommodated budget presented<sup>7</sup> is a 4.4% increase; there is a lot of shifting between line items due to the nature of the programs (out-of-district tuitions are down ~\$500,000; LABBB tuitions are up ~\$200,000 with additional enrollments). Ms. Coscia also noted that transportation in- and out-of-town has decreased by ~\$150,000 as we've been bidding with other LABBB member districts to share buses and save costs. Mrs. Cicolini continued by explaining the new programming. There are students in the DSC program at Pine Glen who are aging out and plans are being made to keep them in the district and seamlessly transition them to the middle school along with their regular cohort of other fifth grade students. Plans are also being made for students in our Labbb medically fragile program at Francis Wyman to seamlessly transition them with their classmates. We need to plan

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<sup>7</sup> FY23 Draft Special Education Accommodated Budget

appropriately for space, teachers, instructional staff, and any other program needs. Ms. Clark is requesting a school psychologist dedicated to the BECC. She explained that in the past they have used school psychologists from other buildings to help with evaluations or observations, but they are just overrun in their own buildings and are not always familiar with their students. In addition, the school psychologist would also help with social emotional lessons and work collaboratively with the social worker who is in two mornings a week. Dr. Conti noted that Ms. Purchase has identified the space at the middle school and two bathrooms will need to be modified to accommodate needs. He thanked Mrs. Cicolini for her creative solution in partnering with the New England Center for Children to provide the teacher and the clinical supervisor for the DSC program at the middle school so that the students can transition with their classmates until we are able to find a teacher to take over that classroom. In response to Dr. Conti's question about circuit breaker funds, Ms. Coscia explained that we would be fully funded; when we receive circuit breaker reimbursement funds, the state allows two years to spend them. We will be working off of what we've received in this year that we're anticipating to spend for next year. Dr. Conti summarized that there is not a guideline to the accommodated budget, but a 4.4% increase is reasonable based on the information we have at this time. This budget is built student by student and may require adjustments for new move-ins this summer or other program adjustments that need to be made. Dr. Conti also noted that as part of the Student Opportunity Act, transportation is also going to be eligible for circuit breaker funding moving forward. In closing, Dr. Conti thanked Ms. Clark and Mrs. Cicolini and their staff for their hard work in serving the children in our district who need our support the most. Ms. Simon also thanked Ms. Clark and Mrs. Cicolini for their work in planning to make sure the students can stay in Burlington. She, like Mrs. Cicolini, also thanked the town for the accommodated budget as not all towns have a separate account to meet the needs. In response to Ms. Simon's question, Ms. Coscia explained that the circuit breaker funds are held in a separate account and can only be used for tuition; they will be phasing in reimbursement for transportation as Dr. Conti noted. In response to Mrs. Monaco's questions, Ms. Coscia explained that (1) transportation is paid for by the accommodated budget for both in-district and out-of-district special education and (2) LABBB tuition does trigger circuit breaker by ~\$15,000, but she will have to double check. Ms. Coscia also explained to Mrs. Monaco that she met with Town Administrator Mr. Sagarino and Town Accountant Mr. Danizio and they were open to the program costs being covered by the accommodated budget for both the new Marshall Simonds program and the existing program at Pine Glen. From a cost benefit perspective, building the programs in-house saves money vs. out-of-district tuition and transportation. In response to Mrs. Monaco's questions, Mrs. Cicolini explained there would be 3 DSC students moving up to middle school for the 22-23 school year and 7 DSC students the following school year (LABBB is a separate program). She has been meeting and working with the current 5th grade parents of those students (all of whom are from Burlington) who are moving up to middle school to talk about programming. The parents have chosen to keep their children in Burlington because we are collaborating and proactively planning with the New England Center for Children to build this program at the middle school. Ms. Coscia confirmed that the salaries for the staff needs are built into the accommodated budget in the MSMS DSC Program line items.

### **Additional Budget Discussion - Nursing:**

Dr. Conti thanked Mrs. Conley and the nursing staff for the last two years. Ms. Coscia noted that her budget is level funded and there are no additional position requests at this time. Mrs. Conley thanked the school committee for their support and working together to create a safe environment for the whole school community.

Dr. Conti added that there will be a budget hearing at the next school committee meeting on April 26th.

### **B. Fox Hill School Building Committee - Standing Agenda Item**

Mr. Cunha has been in communications with MSBA, but not a lot of new information to report. We are not scheduled for the MSBA April board meeting, but potentially for May. The MSBA Board will need to approve our project to move into the Feasibility Study phase. Another discussion to have at a later date will be the chair position for the SBC (School Building Committee). Currently, Mr. Tom Murphy is the chair.

### **C. BHS Update - Standing Agenda Item**

Mr. Cunha will be sharing a draft document of the Feasibility Study Summary Report from the four vendors and it will be posted on the website. The report is 121 pages and includes estimates on what it would cost for repairing or replacing the HVAC system at the high school. We know that repairing or replacing the HVAC system will trigger the 30/30 compliance rule according to Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Regulations (521 CMR Section 3.3.1(b)) which means that we are going to have to meet accommodations to bring the building up to current code (~\$70 - \$85 million). This estimate does not include any cosmetic or instructional space updates to classrooms or science labs. In response to Ms. Simon's eagerness to keep the project moving, Dr. Conti explained that nothing would preclude the committee from forming a building committee for the high school project even without MSBA support. Dr. Conti requested some time to put some thoughts together; it may be that we have two building committees operating concurrently (one for Fox Hill and one for the High School) and we could get some shared expertise.

### D. Safe Routes to School Update

Mr. Cunha reported that we became a [Safe Routes to School](#) member in June 2021. One of the requirements to be able to request funding is to be an active member for 6 months. Ms. Judy Crocker recently completed an arrival and dismissal observation at Fox Hill and will be meeting with Memorial and Marshall Simonds principals on Thursday to discuss their arrival and dismissal; we will continue to schedule the remaining schools. Mr. Cunha explained a couple of things that they also ask of us (1) School Committee to adopt a Wellness Policy amendment specific to active transportation and (2) Safe Routes Parent surveys (anonymous). Mr. Cunha will forward the survey template from Safe Routes and feels we should schedule to send it out before the end of the school year. Once Safe Routes has the survey results and arrival and dismissal observations complete, they can provide recommendations and future projects. Safe Routes also recommends pedestrian/bicycle safety training (min. 2 hour requirement) which could then be adopted into our K-8 curriculum (recommended for Health/Wellness or PE Teachers). Mrs. Bond is in agreement that we can send the survey out as long as committee members are on board. Mrs. Massardo added that [National Walk, Bike & Roll](#) day is May 4th and Safe Routes will provide stickers and bookmarks; she has been working with Mr. Rosenblatt at Fox Hill and they will be participating.

### E. Summer BEST (Burlington Educational Summer Theatre) Program - Discussion

Dr. Conti explained that the [Summer BEST Program](#)<sup>8</sup> is a program for kids in grades 4-8. Since 2009, BEST has been educating Burlington elementary and middle school students in the art of theatre so they can grow as performers. The Workshop portion of the program is for students in grades 1-5 and focuses on basic performance skills, culminating in a showcase at the end of the week. This year the BEST Program is scheduled for July 11-30, and the cost of the program is \$650 per student. This program is for students in grades 4-8. The Summer Workshop is a one or two-week program for kids in grades 1-5 and is scheduled for July 11-22. The cost of this program is \$200 per week. Financial aid is available upon request. Dr. Conti explained that the discussion tonight is to determine if BEST is a School Committee sponsored program or whether it is an independent program; we are not eliminating the program, but making sure it is categorized correctly in terms of bookkeeping and contracts. Dr. Conti is recommending that it become a district program as it would benefit from best practices, policies, and procedures as other district run programs. After some discussion, it was determined that there is no disadvantage to adding it as a district run program. In response to Ms. Simon's question, Dr. Conti noted that he will look into the equitable use of facilities for all district programs.

Parent and SEPAC Member Ms. Grace Janusis participated remotely to ensure all children who want to participate in the BEST Program are able to access it and support is provided for them as needed. There have been challenges in the past with students with disabilities.

Motion was made by Mrs. Monaco to adopt The Summer BEST Program as a district program with the support of the School Committee; seconded by Mr. Foss. Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### F. Monthly Financial Update

Ms. Coscia explained that the revolving fund summary accounts<sup>9</sup> are all in good standing.

### G. Debt Planning Presentation

Dr. Conti thanked the town financial team for putting together a long-term debt planning presentation<sup>10</sup> at the request of the School Committee. Dr. Conti participated remotely and feels Burlington is well positioned to fund some of our expensive building needs that are upcoming. He added that timing will be important; some parts are in our control and some parts (ie - Fox Hill) might be state controlled. The debt schedule will impact our ability to do projects. In response to Ms. Simon's request, Dr. Conti responded that the town financial team and/or Ms. Coscia would be happy to answer additional questions; the more information we have, better decisions can be made. Dr. Conti concluded that while capital projects are important, we need to be mindful of their connection with the operating budget as well.

### OLD BUSINESS

- Mrs. Monaco reminded everyone that April is both Autism Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Dr. Conti acknowledged Mrs. Monaco's request for a list of all the required trainings that are done at the beginning of each school year as well as who is trained.
- Ms. Simon requested details for the capital warrant article placeholders that were voted on 3/22/22.

<sup>8</sup> BEST (Burlington Educational Summer Theatre) flyer

<sup>9</sup> FY22 Revolving Fund Summary (ending balance 3/31/2022)

<sup>10</sup> Debt Planning Presentation (4/4/2022)

DATE: Tuesday, April 12, 2022

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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Motion was made by Mrs. Monaco to enter into Executive Session at 9:00 pm; seconded by Mrs. Foss. Motion Carried 5-0-0 by Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye.

Executive Session - MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection (3) - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School District and the Chair so declares - BEA-Teachers Union; Subsection (4) - To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto - Proposed Cybersecurity Policy.

Approval of Executive Session Minutes of February 8, 2022 and March 8, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT**

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Motion was made by Mrs. Monaco to adjourn at 9:50 pm; seconded by Ms. Simon. Motion Carried 5-0-0 by Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Mrs. Massardo - aye, Mrs. Bond - aye.

**SUBMITTED**

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Respectfully,



Kristen Downie  
Recording Secretary

Date Submitted: 5/10/22  
Date Approved: 5/10/22