



[Watch on BCAT](#)

RECEIVED

By Town Clerk's Office at 10:55 am, May 10, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, March 28, 2023

TIME: 7:00 pm

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

ATTENDEES

MEMBER(S) PRESENT: Chair, Ms. Katherine Bond, Vice Chair Mr. Carl Foss, Ms. Martha Simon, Ms. Chris Monaco, Ms. Melissa Massardo, Superintendent Dr. Eric Conti, Finance Director, Ms. Nichole Coscia, Director of Operations Mr. Bob Cunha,

MEMBER(S) REMOTE: Burlington Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Lisa Chen

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: None

GUEST(S) PRESENT: Mr. Steve Morin, Ways and Means

GUEST(S) REMOTE: None

PUBLIC PRESENT: Pine Glen parents: Ms. Zi Wang, Ms. Melissa Interest, Ms. Rui Xiao, Ms. Liang Sun and Ms. Karen Brouady

Cafeteria employees: Ms. Shirley Murray, Ms. Chris Stevens, Ms. Jean Huntoon, Ms. Kim Davis, Ms. Kris Libby, Ms. Sarah Francis, and Ms. Marianne Coyne

Robotics Team: Ms. Maria Margarita Prajapati, and Students Shreya Iyer and Sanjith Krishnan

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REMOTE: None

Chair Bond stated, "I would like to apologize if there was any confusion about public participation at the Special Budget Session last week. I realize there was some conflicting information posted."

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bond called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., 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. Chair Bond reminded participants that comments and statements are limited to 3 minutes each. Meeting Access Code: Meeting number (access code): 2332 457 3356 | Password: Tuesday.

EQUITY STATEMENT

Educational equity means **that every child belongs and receives whatever support he/she/they need to develop his/her/their full academic, emotional, and social potential to learn and thrive every day.** This begins with kindness and valuing the humanity of every child or individual.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chair Bond stated that words cannot express the grief the families must be going through after the tragedy that happened in Nashville. Our deepest sympathies for the victims, their families and friends. We will have a moment of silence out of respect and to reflect.

Chair Bond added that if anybody is feeling at risk, or observes somebody who may need help, there are resources at our schools and in our community; please reach out to them.

PUBLIC HEARING

Dr. Conti requested a motion to open the public hearing on the discussion for School Choice.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to open a public hearing on the discussion of school choice; seconded by Mr. Foss.

Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Ms. Massardo - aye, Ms. Bond - aye.

Motion Carried 5:0:0.

School Choice 2023/2024 - Second Reading

Dr. Conti noted that this is a second reading of School Choice for 2023/2024 and requested the need for a public hearing for discussion. Dr. Conti explained that state regulations have changed slightly and they want districts to assume that they have school choice so the public hearing and the vote is actually to deny it. The vote is in the inverse and Dr. Conti asked for the following two votes:

(1) Voting to allow school choice in grades 9-12 in a limited capacity; Principal Sullivan is again recommending that for the 2023/2024 school year we continue to offer limited school choice by admitting non-Burlington resident students for a maximum of ten students in grade 9, five students in grade 10, five students in grade 11, and five students in grade 12. School choice has allowed us to better serve some families and students who have moved out of Burlington giving them the opportunity to finish their education instead of restarting elsewhere.

(2) Voting to deny school choice in grades K-8.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to close the public hearing on the discussion of the school choice; seconded by Ms. Simon.

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye.
Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to deny the State’s School Choice Program in grades K-8; seconded by Ms. Simon.

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Foss - aye.
Motion carried 5:0:0.**

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve School Choice at BHS for ten students in grade 9, five students in grade 10, five students in grade 11, and five students in grade 12; seconded by Mr. Foss.

**Ms. Monaco - aye, Mr. Foss - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Ms. Bond – aye.
Motion carried 5-0-0.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Robotics Club

Ms. Maria Margarita Prajapati, parent and mentor distributed the BHS Robotics proposal to the committee. The team attended the meeting to explain the program and request funding for the Robotics Club aka Devil Bots 2876. The Robotics students, Shreya Iyer and Sanjith Krishnan, shared information about the program. The Robotics Club provides students with opportunities to learn about new technologies and innovations and encourages students to explore areas in STEM with hands-on-experience. This is a mentor based program that is versatile and provides forty (40) students with real world experiences. The program expenses are \$20K, which promotes the future of STEM leaders as well as future robots. The team also demonstrated the 123 lb. robot built totally from scratch and is built to sustain challenges and this year, the challenge is balance.

The committee were all in agreement to support the Robotics Club. Dr. Conti confirmed there are two stipends for this program and it has actually been added in the BHS Program of Studies as a Course.

BEA Union

Mr. Sean Musselman, BEA President and Ms. Sara Visocchi, BEA Vice President, are in attendance to thank the committee for their commitment for a DEI Director. They were also in attendance to advocate for full town funding and a budget increase dedicated to DEI and Equity and Inclusion.

Pine Glen

The parents of the Pine Glen students were at the meeting to advocate for the Pine Glen nurse, whose contract is not being renewed. The parents distributed their petition of people in the community who are in agreement.

Cafeteria – Food Service

Many of the cafeteria employees voiced their concerns about all the daily changes and challenges with the new food service responsibilities. The stated there are too many options that confuses the students, too much waste of throwing out food. They do not have enough employees to keep up with the demands of the new system. People come in two hours early and stay two hours late just to get all the work done in one day. In addition, there is a lot of plastic containers and concern about the safety of the food.

Mr. Cunha assured the staff that there are five (5) new cafeteria positions added and posted for hire.

INFORMATION / REPORTS

Student Report

Dr. Conti reported for Mr. Matt Shannon noting a lot has happened over the past couple of weeks. Recently, Matt had met with BHS Art teacher, Ms. Christina Chang, and she wanted Matt to share a few updates about artists within the school. The Art Club posted in the Art Contest this year and the theme was, “What does it mean to be as responsible member of a diverse community?” Freshman, Afsa Khalifa, won the first place award for her art work. She described her art work, “this piece shows what it means to be a responsible member of a diverse community by accepting all kinds of differences through a diverse friend group, people include people of different sexual orientations, ethnicities, and race. This piece also includes someone with Type 1 Diabetes. The friend group in the art work is eating foods from different parts the world, with different activities and flags on the different foods, activities, identities that are all different, yet similar, people may enjoy and join diversity.” Ms. Chang also asked Matt to discuss some activity of the students from the Cultural Awareness Club. The 10th grade students read the book,

DATE: Tuesday, March 28, 2023

PAGE: 3

When the Emperor was Divine. This book is a historical fiction novel written by an American author, Julie Otsuka, about an American Japanese family sent to an internment camp in the Utah desert during WWII. The students for Asian Cultural Awareness arranged for a guest speaker, David Zacharia, who was an internment as a 6-year old boy. He spoke to all the 10th grade students about his experience. He started his talk by stating to the students, “you all read the book *When the Emperor was Divine*, and that was a fiction story but the story that I’m going to share is my personal story and history and happened to me.” The students wrote letters to David stating, “thank you for your courage and openness to share what can only be a traumatizing event. Your story was very moving and incredibly saddening to look upon our darkest era in the United States. It’s very concerning to think this kind of thing could happen in the land of the free.” In other events, that DECA competed at States and there were many finalists and state championships. At both, the middle and high schools shared their history and science projects and many won medals.

Subcommittee Reports

No reports.

Ways & Means

Mr. Morin reported that the Ways and Means are reviewing the local educational budgets, Burlington and Shawsheen budgets and have meetings scheduled to continue through the process.

Other Announcements

Ms. Simon pointed out that the Burlington Library has digitized all the BHS year books, which may be on-line.

LEARNING, EQUITY, THRIVING

Introduction of Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Conti stated Introduction of Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Lisa Chen, from Louisa County, VA. Dr. Chen has held many prior experiences in education, including Superintendent. She has worked in Massachusetts as well as doing her graduate program at BC. Please welcome Dr. Chen to Burlington.

Dr. Chen stated it is a pleasure to be part of the community. She emphasized that Burlington is a wonderful community with a great diversity of opinion.

MASC Policies Update

Dr. Conti stated he met with Ms. Dorothy Presser of MASC to review the Policies of Sections A & B only. Dr. Conti explained that the committee has all the policies; the ones with red lines are Ms. Presser’s suggested changes versus the originals. These are Sections A & B, only and we should be through with all the policies by the end of the calendar year. Dr. Conti went through the sections and asked the committee to look at them and then we can re-visit. This is a 1st reading of policies sections A & B.

LABBB Agreement and Expansion – 2nd Reading

Dr. Conti noted that this LABBB Collaborative Agreement is the 2nd reading for the committee to include Watertown in the collaborative. Dr. Conti recommends the committee approve and sign. The package will go to 5 communities and then to the Commissioner for approval and will be effective as of July 1, 2023.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve the LABBB Agreement as presented; seconded by Mr. Foss.

Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye.

Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.

Elementary – Planning for Success – 2nd Reading

Dr. Conti stated the student approval plan is a requirement, which is the, which is an approved process by DESE. Dr. Conti recommends the committee approve this 2nd Reading for the Elementary Planning for Success that was presented.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve the Elementary Planning for Success; seconded by Ms. Simon.

Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye.

Motion Carried 5:0:0.

MSMS – Planning for Success – 2nd Reading

Dr. Conti recommends approving the MSMS Planning for Success document, as the 2nd Reading.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve the MSMS Planning for Success; seconded by Ms. Simon. Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.

BHS – Planning for Success – 2nd Reading

Dr. Conti recommends the committee approve the BHS Planning for Success document that was submitted Principal Mark Sullivan, as a 2nd reading.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve the BHS Planning for Success; seconded by Ms. Simon. Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.

Out-of-State Travel

Dr. Conti stated the MSMS has an annual end-of-year trip, which is an out-of-state trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH. Dr. Purchase has this trip scheduled for Monday, 6/12. Dr. Conti recommends the committee approve this trip.

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to approve the Out-of-State travel for the MSMS students; seconded by Ms. Simon. Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0 by Roll Call Vote.

Equity Audit

Dr. Conti stated he attended a kick-off meeting with Dr. Kristan Rodriguez of the Commonwealth Consulting Agency for an equity audit. The consulting firm believes they can have the audit done by end of school year in June. Their goal is to assess student access to high quality programs, high quality teaching, practices and procedures, equitable resources and inequitable opportunity gaps for students that have been historically marginalized. They will provide a lot of background data and information and follow up with focus groups. They will get release if speaking with students during focus groups. Dr. Conti stated he will provide regular updates.

Food Service Update

Dr. Conti updated the committee on food service by providing information from cafeteria workers, which were heard during public participation. There may be some valid criticism, however, this process works in many cafeteria across the country and it can work here, as well. Maybe there are limited food options but we are only in day 10. Maybe the menus need to be fine-tuned, maybe other changes need to happen such as more vegetarian meals, etc. Dr. Conti stated he does not like to see any food wasted although he stressed that the money for this service is not born by the tax payer. Dr. Conti noted that we want to support our cafeteria workers.

Mr. Cunha confirmed it has actually been 14 days since starting the food service and the we are all still learning. As a liaison, Kerry is communicating with staff daily.

Discussion ensued.

Change in Price for Adult Meals

Dr. Conti explained that legislative review by the state found that Burlington's price for adult meals needs to be slightly increased in order to be in compliance with federal regulations. The current price for adult meals is \$4.25, including tax, and needs to be increased to \$4.78, including tax. Dr. Conti noted that it could be increased further in order to use the extra amount to support on-going programs, equipment, etc. Dr. Conti recommends increasing the adult meals to \$5.00.

Motion was made by Ms. Simon to approve increasing the cost for adult meals to \$5.00; seconded by Mr. Foss. Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye. Motion Carried 5:0:0.

Wellness Policy Amendment – 1st Reading

Dr. Conti noted there are two policies that need to be updated due to the three year visit by DESE, which are the Wellness and Civil Rights policies. Dr. Conti read the additional language that needs to be in the Wellness Policy and will incorporate this policy into Section B.

FACILITIES / FINANCE

Fox Hill School Building Committee

Mr. Cunha stated that the next Fox Hill School Building Committee meeting is on 4/13/23 and after that it is scheduled for 5/2/23.

DATE: Tuesday, March 28, 2023

PAGE: 5

BHS Update

Mr. Cunha thanked the Select Board for approving the SOI unanimously. The deadline for submitting the SOI is 4/14/23.

Budget Session

- **Curriculum/In-Service**

Dr. Conti stated line 41 on page 34-36, there is an increase of 40% or \$135,000 due to professional development and the Keys to Literacy, 2 MH programs, Cartwheel Care, and The Interface with Mr. William James, that is a partnership to seek out MH support, which is half the cost because it is split with the town.

- **Educational Supplies Assessment**

Dr. Conti stated this budget item is level funded and is line 48 on page 87 & 88, \$347,304, and is the line that is the payment of the apple lease it's a three-year lease that we continue to roll the lease over.

- **Custodial Supplies**

Dr. Conti explained that this item is on line 61 on page 151 and is level funded at \$155,000.

- **School Committee/Superintendent**

Dr. Conti noted that line 63 on page 157, and there is increase of 6% or \$18,500 for legal costs that have gone up and also to coverage the postage district-wide.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Ms. Monaco to adjourn at 9:54 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Foss.

Ms. Monaco - aye, Ms. Simon - aye, Mr. Foss – aye, Ms. Massardo – aye, Mr. Bond - aye.

SUBMITTED

Respectfully,
Marianne Fabbri
Recording Secretary

Date Submitted: 5/9/23
Date Approved: 5/9/23