

DEPT./BOARD: **Ways & Means Local Education Subcommittee Meeting**

DATE: ~~4/12/2023~~ **April 6, 2023**

TIME: **6:00 PM**

PLACE: **Town Hall Main Conference Room & Virtual**

Meeting Minutes

Posted Agenda:

1. Public Participation
2. Burlington School District Budget Review
 - a. FY24 Operating Budget
 - b. Accommodated Account
 - c. Capital Warrant Articles
3. Adjournment

Present:

Steve Morin, Chris Campbell, Ed Parsons

Public Participation

There was a request from a caller on the phone to ask the school department to post a copy of the complete draft budget on the school web site.

Burlington Public Schools Operating Budget

The Local Education subcommittee met with Katherine Bond and Christine Monaco from the School Committee and Dr. Conti, Superintendent and Nicole Coscia, Finance Director of the Burlington Public Schools to review the operating budget.

Over the past few months, the school department has been working on a draft budget at its school committee meetings. The draft budget included all new requests for positions with justification that it received from principals and department heads. The school committee reviews all the requests with principals and department heads in school committee meetings during budget season. Prior to the School Committee Budget Public Hearing, the superintendent prunes the budget to fall within the operating budget guideline as set during the budget summit earlier in the year through various cuts and reorganizations. Once the school committee officially approves this budget, the school department publishes the list of the cuts in an addendum.

At the meeting, a proposed set of reductions to meet the FY24 budget guideline of 3.75% was presented. These will be presented in the public session at the 4/11/2023 School Committee meeting.

The district is proposing to add 8 new FTE positions, and convert 4 positions to 1.0 full-time positions:

- Social Worker / Adjustment Counselor @ Fox Hill
- Social Worker / Adjustment Counselor @ Memorial
- Math Specialist @ Francis Wyman
- Special Education Instruction Aide @ Marshall Simonds
- Special Education Teacher @ Marshall Simonds
- Team Chair @ Marshall Simonds (convert a 0.4 employee to 1.0 FTE)
- Psychologist @ Marshall Simonds (convert a 0.6 employee to 1.0 FTE)

- World Language Teacher @ Marshall Simonds (convert 0.6 to 1.0 FTE)
- Grade 6 Reading Teacher @ Marshall Simonds (convert a 0.5 to 1.0 FTE)
- Strength and Conditioning Coach @ BHS
- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst @ System Wide
- System / Network Analyst @ System Wide

The remainder of the position requests will not be funded this year. The complete list is available with documents provided in the meeting minutes.

The district is seeing an influx of new students who have immigrated to the US and are primarily working to support their families. To address the needs of these students, the district proposes creating the Newcomer Academy program to address the needs of students who have experienced interruptions in their education and to accommodate their unique scheduling needs. The Newcomer Academy includes 2 new FTE positions for a total of \$146,052. The district is also looking to create a combined middle school program with Woburn as part of the Newcomer Academy. Chelsea schools is a model program that Burlington looks to emulate going forward.

Programming and enrollment drive the scheduling and position needs within the district. BHS enrollment has dropped by 200 (from about 1100 to 900), but enrollment in Marshall Simmonds Middle School is increasing. Some positions will move to MSMS to accommodate the changes in enrollment. The district continues to match students to vocational school where it best fits the needs of the individual students. Some enrollment reduction is due to students who attended private schools (such as Catholic schools not as impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions) continued there after the pandemic started to recede.

All contracts at the school are currently settled through the end of FY24. The budgeted legal costs for the district are up significantly to cover the need to negotiate new contracts for FY25 and beyond. Comparisons to Lexington and Woburn contracts were discussed.

There was discussion on how to fill the Director of Equity and Inclusion position that is currently vacant. The position will report to the new Assistant Superintendent who will lead the effort to identify the structure of the program. It's important to create a program that has a presence across all schools and not just at the high school.

Burlington Public Schools Accommodated Account

The budget wasn't available at the time of review but there was discussion about some drivers in the budget that are driving increases in the budget. Specifically, out-of-district tuition costs are rising 14% in the upcoming fiscal year.

Capital Warrant Articles

Capital Warrant articles were not discussed at this meeting.