



**NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD**

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Ira Allen Board Room  
January 8, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at p.m.

**1. Opening Items**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

**Commissioners:**

Mark Barlow , Lauren Berrizbeitia , Brian Cina ,  
Liz Curry , Susanmarie Harrington , Anne Judson , David Kirk \_\_,  
Kat Kleman \_\_, Kathy Olwell , Mark Porter , Stephanie Seguino ,  
Miriam Stoll

**Student Representatives:**

Jacob Bucci \_\_  
Isabella Weston \_\_

**Administration:**

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent   
Stephanie Phillips, Senior Director Teaching & Learning \_\_  
Nikki Fuller, Senior Director Human Resources & Equity Affairs \_\_  
Paul Irish, Senior Director Infrastructure & Technology \_\_  
Nathan Lavery, Senior Director of Finance   
Elizabeth Atkins, Accounting Manager \_\_  
Henri Sparks, Director of Equity \_\_\_\_  
Miriam Ehtesham-Cating, Director of EL \_\_  
Doug Davis, Director of Food Service \_\_  
Marty Spaulding, Property Services Director

*The Board wishes to recognize, welcome and thank those that are providing language interpretation of the Board proceedings. The Board's commitment that all children receive equitable academic services must ensure that New American parents are welcome and can attend meetings, understand the process and be actively engaged. Interpretation of proceedings honors, respects and values our New American parents and students. The Board asks the public and media to respect and understand the importance of this interpretation.*

## 2. Approval of Agenda

*Motion (Commissioner Olwell/ Commissioner Judson) to approve agenda.*

*Motion approved unanimously*

## 3. Public Comments/Questions

### A. Public Comment

Karen Ruben – PTO leaders will be meeting Wednesday to discuss how to support the budget. Crucial part of passing budget would be contentiousness. PTO leaders will also talk with BEA

Kate Lasko – co-pres of IAA PTO

Concerned about fair teacher salary increases being incorporated into budget. Worried if it's not factored in now, brings down morale before negotiations gets underway.

Important for District to show unity and avoid nasty negotiations. Now is the time to think about planning fair teacher salary increase

Would like to see kindergarten paras in budget

Cara Clopton – IAA librarian. Encouraged to hear about teacher-librarian positions.

Curious about break down between school by school budgeting – would like to see which positions grant funded; which funded through general fund.

### B. Board Reflections - post-poned due to time concerns

## 4. Budget Discussion

Superintendent Obeng gave an updated budget presentation that reflected how the budget relates to the strategic goals and priorities. He explained that he auditor was satisfied with this year's strong budget performance and so FY18 represents a good baseline for multi-year program thinking that allows us to consider the scaffolding effect of budgets and budget growth.

Going forward, the District will make data-informed decisions. Superintendent Obeng has asked staff use data and intentionality to justify budget spending areas that tie back to the strategic plan. Building administrators are starting to think about resources differently, so their budget requests for increases have slowed. Instead they are understanding how to align resources with strategic priorities coupled data like enrollment figures.

Budget summary includes all 8 bargaining units that will require contract negotiations in FY18. The administration went to all bargaining units last spring to request that negotiations begin so that budget planning could be further along. The Administration was hoping that BEA would understand that what ever number they want to get to, would

have a better chance of getting into the budget if they put proposal on the table sooner rather than later, but they were not able to get BEA to respond to requests to begin negotiations.

Nathan Lavery discussed the tax impact of budget proposal. He explained that if the number of equalized pupils decreases, it creates a higher spending level per pupil, with a resulting higher tax rate.

Lavery also covered the State's post-Act 46 approach of using the dollar yield rather than the old methodology of the base tax rate. He informed the Board that a dollar tax rate yielded less money to the tax fund last year than is anticipated this fiscal year (FY18). If the grand list goes up (statewide), the \$1 yields a higher amount to the education tax fund (because more tax revenue is generated from the higher grand list).

Lavery covered the District's budget surplus - there was \$560k remaining from FY17, which is a figure that was not available until the audit was complete. This is added to the FY16 surplus of \$570k, which was the residual amount from the City's over-charges at BED that was returned to the District (originally about \$700k). The cumulative balance of \$1.3M is looked at by the State as revenue unless the Board makes a request to the community to use it for something else.

The District had roughly this same amount available for the FY16 budget - as a surplus it's a one-time chunk of funds, so if it's absorbed by the general fund budget to support a recurring expense it would have to go into the basis for any future tax increase.

Lavery presented a table to the Board showing the dollar and % increase of salary increases. As a starting point, with no salary increases taken into account, the general fund budget increases 5%, which translates to a 3.89% tax increase if none of the surplus funds are used/applied to reduce the tax impact. If 100% of surplus funds are used, the tax increase is 2%.

Every 0.7% increase in the general fund budget represents \$500,000 in cost.

Commissioners questions:

Q: Why putting librarian expense back? Is it a response to lobbying?

A: Staff working committee and strategic plan are behind the decision - Building administrators did not bring up K paras as an intervention that was requested when choosing between resource allocation priorities

Speaks to shift in how we use resources. Paras are a nationwide challenge in terms of an intervention. BSD is going through process looking at how we support students and the library interventionist role rose to the top as a position to allocate resources – administrators are talking about instructional and psycho-social

supports. Superintendent Obeng asked the staff committees whether interventionists are being used in line with the District's strategic plan in terms of interaction with students? Found that it is not consistent across the district. Working on a plan to integrate intervention strategies into library services.

Data showing higher student to teacher ratio at high school than lower grades; need to shift this ratio the other way, and the librarian interventionists funding in the budget is intended to help this kind of system alignment

Q: Health care for 2017 is half of FY18 – do we have any idea of health care plan impacts?

A: New plan through VEHI offer more variety and affordability of plans - Premiums and contributions are the variables

Q: What part of the budget is non-discretionary funding?

A: \$1.53M or 2.2% of the budget increase are costs that we don't have much discretion over (see Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> presentation): e.g. universal pre-k enrollment; state recalculates a rate for the amount we have to pay providers in community; higher worker's comp (see budget presentation slide).

Q: How are we working at the K level to achieve the literacy levels we need by a certain time in a student's life?

A: Created staff committee for pre-K, K and elementary instructional leaders to work together on a longer term plan and identify the indicators and metrics that will demonstrate proficiency. Resource requests must be based on a comprehensive plan that shows how the resource will be tied to the indicators chosen. Since the metrics have not been established yet, the resource request has not been formulated sufficiently.

Q: What are the other items that building administrators are requesting over kindergarten paras? See slide on inclusive teaching & learning

Q: Contingency fund – is this to cover new budget items during the year that the Administration decides it wants to spend the money on, which were not included with intentionality during the public budgeting process? Does this provides superintendent with total discretion about how the funds can be used? Does this backtrack on tight financial management Board has been engaged on? Do other districts have contingencies?

A: No, the auditor recommended the contingency and said to strive for 1%. In the past, the District had no ability to meet unforeseen needs and had annual deficit or constantly cut a budget area like property services. Contingency is not money sitting around to be used for some new operational idea. Contingency is for

unforeseen expense that does not introduce a new idea or program. Example would be a student entering district with high cost needs that may not be diagnosed as a special ed student when they enroll, but must be met mid-year or after the budget is set.

Questions from board members that were submitted before the board meeting:  
pre-k formula – 46% of an elementary student (half day) – don't get full value but pupil count increases

Line item budget – draft two will be available in February

Admin support for pre-K - budget adds \$35k for administrative increases to make director and admin assistant full time (from 75%-80%) – pre-school is a 5-day a week program but there are no admin staff available on Fridays

Pre-school program has grown beyond elementary school classroom sizes (450-470 kids)

Budgeted 50 additional pre-k enrollments for next year

How much are we reimbursed from the state per pre-k kid –

Don't get reimbursed per student - State gives us the per pupil amount we say we are spending – state formula is used to determine tax rate

What is the achievement gap project –

Identified as a priority area – looking at curriculum support

Limited enrichment opportunities – staff looking at resources and materials to support students lagging in the achievement gap

## 5. **Bond Discussion**

\$19M bond will address K-8 school list of 10 year projects

Will take broader approach for high school

Does not mean that we can't use the funds at the high school if there are specific needs there in FY18

BHS future: \$27M of needs

Reestablish building committee to focus on how needs will be met with a shared community vision

Year 1 priorities for 2017: see slide

Tax impact of \$19M bond fully implemented would be \$91 per year or \$8/yr

Won't go out to bond for full \$19M but want voter approval

Will phase in over four years

Commissioners discussed:

- the physical accessibility at BHS
- Message needs to be a bit simpler and crisper
- Make it explicit that it will include a capital reserve

- Is the dollar amount enough to include funds to address critical needs at BHS while we're still in the planning process?

**6. Motion to enter executive session to consider contract negotiations, the disclosure of which would put the District at a disadvantage**

Stoll/Seguino - approved unanimously

Motion to leave executive session: ( Seguino/Barlow) - approved unanimously

**7. Adjournment**

Commissioner Judson announced Jan. 31 board meeting to discuss policy governance with facilitator – confirmed 6:30 p.m.

A. *Motion ( Commissioner Seguino / Commissioner Olwell ) to adjourn at 5:23 p.m.*