

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020  
Executive Session at 5:30 P.M.  
Special Session at 6:00 P.M.  
Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School Library  
500 Dorset Street**

**PRESENT**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald (via Zoom), Bridget Burkhardt, Martin LaLonde (via Zoom), Alex McHenry (via phone), Brian Minier (via Zoom)

**AMINISTRATION/STAFF**

David Young, Gary Marckres (via Zoom)

**GUESTS**

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The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

There were no comments or questions.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Bridget Burkhardt made a motion to enter executive session at 5:30 p.m. to discuss labor negotiations with teachers and added that it would be significantly disadvantageous to the district not to do so in executive session. Martin LaLonde seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes. Bridget Burkhardt requested that David Young and Gary Marckres attend executive session.

**Labor Negotiations with Teachers**

In: 5:31 p.m.

Out: 5:55 p.m.

No Action

The executive session was closed at 5:55 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald (via Zoom), Bridget Burkhardt, Martin LaLonde (via Zoom), Alex McHenry (via phone), Brian Minier (via Zoom)

**AMINISTRATION/STAFF**

David Young, Delina Gilroy, Gary Marckres (via Zoom), Amadee Denton (via Zoom), Steve Walker

**GUESTS**

Approximately 29 guests via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Bridget Burkhardt said the board has community members connected via Zoom.

### **COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

There were none.

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

David Young provided an update on the services being provided by the district including continuance of learning (classroom teachers are working hard to provide services outside of school) food delivery for PreK-12, and childcare provided by the district to South Burlington parents and guardians designated as essential workers.

The academic packet delivery component began this week. On Mondays our staff drops off food and academic packets.

The superintendent has been holding regularly scheduled Zoom meetings with administrators, Champlain Valley Superintendent's Association, and Agency of Education staff.

Board members and community members asked several questions.

Some of the questions/comments are listed below.

- How many children are we providing childcare for and who is providing it?
  - Only two now and Schools Out employees are providing the childcare at Rick Marcotte Central School. We expect we may get more requests.
- Why are we using full size school buses instead of other vehicles?
  - The students and parents are familiar with the big yellow buses and the district does not have enough vans to cover all of the routes.
- What is the status of the Rick Marcotte principal search?
  - We had to reschedule last week's meeting because that was the start date for delivery of educational materials. We have rescheduled for Monday, March 30.

Martin LaLonde said that at around 5:00 p.m. the house passed a couple of bills. One of which is H.681 flexibility for elections, in consideration of health concerns, and changes to the Open Meeting law for public meetings.

### **SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

David Young provided an overview of the district academic calendar. The administration reduced the number of late starts and early releases at the high school and middle school.

Based on our last PreK-12 administrative team calendar discussion, this new calendar has only one late start/early release day per month for all schools and none in August or June. David Young said that many of our families are under pressure and juggling a lot at home. The hope is to reduce the number of late starts and early releases to help families. Administrators also want to maximize instructional time in the coming school

year due to the school closure this year. Administrators still have a lot of work ahead in the areas of personalized and proficiency-based education, however, they are confident that they can meet the educational mission without the extra late TLC sessions next year.

Bridget Burkhard said she appreciates this thoughtfulness on behalf of the administration. Elizabeth Fitzgerald said she appreciates the work that the team has done to address these concerns. Elizabeth Fitzgerald added that she would fully expect that these days would be revisited on a yearly basis.

Bridget Burkhardt called for a motion. Elizabeth Fitzgerald moved and Brian Minier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

### **CONSIDER FY 2021 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET**

David Young provided an overview of the FY 2021 budget which was available for review on Zoom. The budget is not warned for action, it is for discussion purposes only. The budget presentation will be posted to the district web page.

David Young provided the following thoughts about suggestions from the community on the budget: "I would like to address areas that some community members have inquired about specific to reductions for the FY 2021 budget. Many of the areas suggested for reduction have rates set by the Agency of Education or other Districts or providers that are out of the control of the South Burlington School District. Where possible, we reduced expenses from areas that would not directly impact student services in all aspects of the budget." Items that were referenced are:

#### **Purchased and Technical Services**

- This area covers contracts with service providers for Special Education IEP requirements. If we reduce these expenses, student needs would not be met as required by law.
- Expenses for negotiations, retirement actuary fees, HRA administration are contractual obligations that need to be met.
- Private PreK provider expense increased \$89/student and student numbers have also increased.
- Abatement and service agreements related to facilities and stewardship projects. With all flooring replacements and roofing projects that are in the stewardship plan, the district is required to test and mitigate hazardous materials.

#### **Tuition**

- State required passthrough to technical centers is required. Technical centers set their annual tuition rates (as outlined by State guidelines) and student attendance by SBSD students has increased.
- Tuition for special education outplaced students is an IEP requirement and is required by law.

#### **Special Revenue Funds**

- These numbers are based on current FY20 Federal Funds awarded. The grants are applied for in late May for the FY 2021 school year. The expenses are directly offset by the revenue received.

**Contingency**

- Three bargaining agreements are currently being negotiated.
- Health insurance assessment for junior teachers increases and with staff turnover due to retirement.

**Administration**

- Our three elementary schools have one administrator per building with a high number of students.
- At the middle school there are two administrators and there are about 100 more students than any other middle school in the state.
- At the high school there are three administrators, an Activities Director and a Dean of Students. This is consistent with what other high schools have and in some cases is less than similar sized high schools, like CVU.

**Elementary Teacher Additions**

- Reducing this by 1 FTE will increase the class size and push up against Policy G6, Minimum and Optimal Average Class Size.

**Salaries and Wages**

- This is part of collective bargaining where steps in pay are given, and in some cases horizontal movement is also given for additional education credits. While the target would be to have minimal increases, the negotiations are ongoing and we must be conservative; however, with no fund balance to fall back on, it would be fiscally irresponsible not to budget any funds.

**Substitutes**

- The Federal and State FMLA/VPFLA laws require us to provide employees with leave like all other businesses of our size and when those employees are out on leave we need to hire substitutes to fill the positions. This is budgeted based on historical spending.

**Lunchroom/Recess**

- In the budget book, the line for lunch/recess was incorrect for the FY 2021 budget, the amount for FY 2021 is for the Office Aide/Substitute budget and the Office Aide/Substitute line amount belongs to the Lunchroom/Recess line.

**Transportation**

- We will continue to look at possible areas to be more efficient as an area for possible reduction, however, also need to balance student safety specific to walking in certain areas and where crossing certain roads is not suggested and would be unsafe.

David Young said that he and the administration discussed some proposed additional budget reductions. Board members made several comments and suggestions about the proposed budget.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald noted that this does not seem like a very big haircut from what was presented at the last board meeting and she is not a fan of arbitrary cuts to budgets. She also noted that when you look at the suggestions made by various community

members, it needs to be understood that the levers you can pull from in the corporate setting are fundamentally very different than you can pull from in a school setting where 80 percent of the spending are wages and benefits. You need to look at headcount for reductions.

Martin LaLonde said the administration needs to cut a little further into FTEs. He does not want to eliminate transportation. He added, we could consider how far out students would need to walk to school but did not like the concept of eliminating transportation. He noted there is a serious need to look at FTE cuts that would do the least damage to student programming.

Bridget Burkhardt said the administration needs to take a deeper look at budget cuts because we are going to have a hole as to where students are going to be after the school closure. The district needs to balance student needs both academically and socially.

Alex McHenry said the proposed cuts are not enough to get this budget passed. He noted that further reductions were needed.

Many community members asked questions and provided budget suggestions.

## **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW**

### **Second Reading Policy B1 Board Member Conflict of Interest**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald made a motion to approve Policy B1 Board Member Conflict of Interest. Martin LaLonde seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

### **Second Reading Policy B2 Board Member Code of Conduct**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald made a motion to approve Policy B2 Board Member Code of Conduct. Martin LaLonde seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

### **Second Reading Guidelines on Social Media Communication**

This procedure will be brought back to the next meeting for further review.

## **NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald reported that none of the groups have met since the last board meeting.

## **ALLOWABLE TUITION RATE RECONCILIATION FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2019**

The board discussed the allowable tuition rate reconciliation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

The board would like the answers to the following questions and this item will be brought back to the next meeting for consideration.

- Review statute and determine if the district can bill the entire allowable tuition amount, including the 3 percent.
- What are other area districts that are receiving towns doing?

**CONSIDER QUALIFICATION PACKAGE FOR AMENDED AND RESTATED 403(b) PLAN AND RESTATED RETIREMENT INCOME PLAN DOCUMENTS WITH FUTURE PLANNING ASSOCIATES**

The board discussed the Future Planning Associates documents.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald asked for clarification as to who these plans pertain to. Amadee Denton said the 403(b) plan is for all staff. The Defined Benefit Plan is for employees who have worked with the district full time prior to September 11, 2013.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald asked if there has been any review of the firm that offers the defined benefit plan. Amadee Denton said no.

Martin LaLonde made a motion that the Qualification Package for Amended and Restated 403(b) Plan and the Restated Retirement Income Plan Documents with Future Planning Associates be approved. Elizabeth Fitzgerald delegated Bridget Burkhardt to be authorized and directed to sign these documents on behalf of the school board. Brian Minier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

**OTHER PAPER ARTICLES**

The board discussed topics for Other Paper articles.

**SET AGENDAS FOR THE APRIL 1 AND APRIL 6 MEETINGS**

The board discussed the agendas for the April 1 and April 6, 2020 school board meetings.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Future agenda items will be discussed at the next meeting.

**CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF MARCH 2, MARCH 4, MARCH 9, MARCH 11, AND MARCH 16, 2020**

Bridget Burkhardt announced general consensus of the board to approve the minutes of March 2, March 9, March 11, and March 16, 2020 as amended. There were no objections.

**CONSENT AGENDA****Retirement**

Barb Gill, 1.0 World Languages Teacher at Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School

Bridget Burkhardt announced general consensus of the board to accept Barb Gill's retirement. The Board thanked Barb Gill for her many years of service to the district.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE ORDERS #32, #33, and #34**

The board reviewed accounts payable orders #32, #33, and #34.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE ORDER CHECKS TO HOWARD CENTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$196,467.84 AND ESSEX WESTFORD ECUUSD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$75,729.75**

Martin LaLonde moved that the board approve accounts payable order checks to Howard Center in the amount of \$196,467.84 and Essex Westford Community Educational Center in the amount of \$75,729.75. Brian Minier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald moved that the board authorize Bridget Burkhardt to sign the accounts payable order checks on behalf of the board, Brian Minier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Martin LaLonde motioned to adjourn the regular meeting and Brian Minier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Chair

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Bridget Burkhardt, Clerk