

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD  
THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.  
Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School Library**

**PRESENT**

Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Martin LaLonde, Bridget Burkhardt, Steve Wisloski, Alex McHenry, Isaiah Hines

**ADMINISTRATION/STAFF**

David Young, John Aubin, Delina Gilroy, Patrick Burke, Pat Phillips, Lissa McDonald, Karsten Schlenter, Paul Yoon, Mark Trifilio, Holly Rouelle, Brent Coon as well as many teachers and support staff members

**GUESTS**

Approximately 200 guests.

**COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Ms. Fitzgerald thanked all of those who responded and assisted with the recent incident at the Essex Technical Center, including our district resource officers.

There were many members of the public who spoke about the following items:

- Community members, faculty, administrators, and former school board members spoke in support of Superintendent David Young.
- Lack of support for budget and asked many questions.
- Ballot initiative for a vote on the rebel name and said petitions are currently being verified by city hall.
- Scheduling meetings at 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- Loss of trust of the community. Should be impressing the community.
- Keeping the rebel name.
- Wonderful quality of the schools.
- Fear and Unity – Lack of respect for alumni.
- Worry about underclassmen and the quality of education they will receive.
- Too many course offerings at the high school.
- Spending more than schools are receiving.
- Fixed Income – More than a name and an identifier. We are who we are because of who we are not because of what we call ourselves.
- South Burlington has the best schools in the state. Welcoming community.
- Lack of transparency. Come up with a budget that is realistic and sustainable.
- Recognize and support the positive learning culture the schools provide.

**VOTING RESULTS**

Mr. Young presented the voting results for March 6, 2017, April 6, 2017, March 2015, and March 2016. A member of the board asked if we have data going back further than 2015. Mr. Young said he would provide the additional information to the board.

**Feedback from the Board and Community:**

## Sustainability and Financial Trends

- First Budget - 7.6% increase
- Second Budget - 5.9% increase
- Confusion: Community does not understand the property tax rate is being offset by additional revenue
- Spending versus enrollment
- Frustration about the trend in specific line items. Salaries and how much salaries are going up
- Message from the Governor about level funding all school budgets
- 56% increase in expenditures – What is the impact of tuition students on tax rate
- Clarity on estimates in budget
- On the second budget you removed capital reserve – can't rob this money to get the budget through. Need to look to the future. Multi-year trending on deferred maintenance and capital reserves.
- Clarity of staffing requirements. Why increase in staffing requirements. Legal compliance.
- How much of that budget is required vs what is discretionary.
- Clarify when there are additional students that have special needs. Clarity on reimbursement rates for special needs students.
- Charter – Ballot language and split vote

## Labor Negotiations

- What control do voters have in teacher negotiations? Help us understand the impact of our vote. What kinds of things can you tell about what you are trying to do? Link between employment contracts and the budget. Allow voters to hear from the board about what you will attempt/propose in the negotiations process.
- Can the board prioritize the stewardship projects so that if there is savings during negotiations the money saved can be put towards the prioritized stewardship projects?
- Dedicating a school board meeting to discuss negotiations.
- Long-term wages and benefits strategy.
- Misunderstanding of the initial proposal provided by the Association and sticker shock.

## Board District Leadership

- Transparency
- Accounting – audit
- Communication – Do a better job connecting
- Community Outreach
- Executive Sessions – clarify the use of executive sessions
- Communication – Budget Book needs to be looked at from a marketing perspective
- Outcomes of the Budget – More information about what the students in the district are doing with a focus on student outcomes
- Federal Audit – Tracking of Federal Funds – 94 open ledgers

- Emails – No responses
- Getting out on Facebook, Twitter – Communication

#### Rebel Nickname

- Decision-making process
- Transparency of decision process
- Timing of the process
- Respect for alumni
- Budget as vehicle for protest
- Expense associated with the name change
- Rebranding and why the budget was not voted for
- Structural problems with the survey and question about the interpretation of the results
- School board prerogative vs. community input
- Remove from budget
- Should it be a majority vote or should it be a policy?
- How do we go forward from here and achieve healing?
- Full disclosure
- Does a no vote mean the school board will reconsider the rebel name?
- Clarify basis for the decision why the board decided to approve the recommendation of the superintendent not to release the survey.
- Let the community understand: Will the vote on the rebel name be binding?
- Remove the rebel name from the FY 2018 budget and wait to see what the electoral vote is?
- When the board made the decision, was it open for reconsideration?
- More student and community input on items involving the school. More consistency with student input.
- Total cost of rebranding. Not just the need-to-compete items. What will the total cost be?

#### **SCHOOL BOARD EMAIL/COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES**

Ms. Fitzgerald discussed the School Board Email/Communication Procedures as well as several other board policies.

Mr. McHenry said he communicated to the RM Central School parents via email and stated that he did violate school board policy and he apologized to the community for his error and assured them it would not happen again. Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed the policies distributed to board members for review.

#### **FY 2018 BUDGET – NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Young provided the board with the ballots that were provided to him by city hall regarding the rebel name. He said he is working with the district's legal counsel to determine next steps. Mr. Young said he hopes to have additional information to provide to the board from legal counsel at the next board meeting.

Ms. Burkhardt reminded board members that she will not be at the April 19 meeting.

Mr. Young provided a listing of some of the potential reductions. Mr. Wisloski asked what the district's current services budget is. What is the projection to the end of the year for the FY 2017 budget?

What is the consequence for taking certain items out of the budget – list the consequence for each one.

EX: What does it mean to reduce 5 interventionists? What will the new class sizes be?

How many of the island students play on our sports teams?

The regular meeting was adjourned at 8:21 a.m.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board entered executive session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss labor negotiations with teachers and support staff and Employment, Evaluation, and Discipline of a Public Officer or Employee and added that it would be significantly disadvantageous to the district not to do so in executive session. The Board requested that Mr. Young and Mr. Aubin attend executive session. The motion was approved.

### **Discussion Regarding Labor Negotiations with Teachers and Support Staff**

In: 8:25 p.m.

Out: 9:10 p.m.

No Action

### **Employment, Evaluation, and Discipline of a Public Officer or Employee**

In: 9:10 p.m.

Out: 9:15 p.m.

No Action

The executive session was closed at 9:15 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

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Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Chair

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Martin LaLonde, Clerk