

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT (Participating via Zoom)

Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Bridget Burkhardt, Martin LaLonde, Alex McHenry, Brian Minier

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF (Participating via Zoom)

David Young, Delina Gilroy, Gary Marckres, Mark Trifilio, Karsten Schlenter, Patrick Burke, Holly Rouelle, Mark Trifilio, Kathleen Kilbourne

GUESTS

Approximately 29 guests via Zoom including many staff members.

SPECIAL SESSION

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

Bridget Burkhardt reviewed the Zoom guidelines for the meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were none.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

David Young amended the agenda to remove item number 4. This items will be added to the special school board meeting on Monday, July 20 at 8:00 a.m.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR LINE OF CREDIT FOR THE SOUTH
BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT**

This item will be added to the agenda for the special school board meeting on Monday, July 20 at 8:00 a.m.

CONSIDER FY2021 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

David Young noted that the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee has provided some great suggestions but there are many budget expenditures that the district does not have control over including, but not limited to, health care expenditures and special education services.

David Young provided an overview of the reduction sheet. Board members asked several questions about the coaching and literacy positions. The board asked for a list of all of the items included in each reduction line that would be cut if the district is at a level-funded budget.

Martin LaLonde asked what amount of contingency funds the administration has budgeted for the Covid-19 opening in the fall. Gary Marckres said \$100,000. Martin LaLonde does not feel that is enough and would like to remove all contingency funds included in the budget for negotiations for the teachers and support staff union except the step increases. He would like those funds moved to a contingency fund to deal with reopening the schools during this pandemic.

Brian Minier asked what would happen if this vote does not pass. David Young said the district would operate at level-funded budget until a district budget could be voted on and passed. The district might hold another vote in November.

David Young discussed the budget development worksheet.

Bridget Burkhardt spoke about the income sensitivity worksheet and how it would work for people in South Burlington.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald supports Martin's suggestion to fund the Covid-19 contingency for the reopening and some of the classroom teaching restrictions which may need to be addressed. She also said that any unspent funds would roll forward to a future budget.

Bridget Burkhardt is concerned that we are cutting so many programs and people from the budget that we won't have adequate staffing to begin the school year during this pandemic. She is concerned about the dialogue in the community including spreading false information. The city has passed a 3% increase in their tax rate so if the district passes an additional 2% that is a total of a 5% increase in the city and school budget and that is just not correct. Because the school budget is a bigger portion of the city and school budget, the total combined tax increase would be would be 2.18% for FY 2021. She added that voting no on the budget does not help the negotiations process. She urges the community to be respectful of the teachers in the district.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald spoke about the impressive engagement of those on the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee. It is fair game in the future to look at areas such as transportation, collective bargaining, and professional development. She hopes the group continues to be engaged in the budget planning process.

Gary Marckres asked the board to make the suggested contingency a more general contingency instead of a Covid-19 contingency in the event that funds are needed for additional classroom sections or other items unrelated to the pandemic.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald said that the time the district took in delaying the budget vote to August 11 and the work of the Citizens Budget Advisory group and administration was beneficial in helping to create this proposed budget which she feels does meet the needs of the community and students. This is a budget that does diminish the programs that the students are currently enrolled in but does reflect the current economic environment. What the board and administration are really asking for is can community members, on a non-income sensitized basis, find \$2.55 (per \$100,000 home value) extra per month to support this budget? This is the reason I will support the budget and will continue to work for the school system that we have in South Burlington.

Martin LaLonde moved that the board approve the FY2021 school district budget in the amount of \$52,532,247.00 and requested that the administration take the contingency funds that are in the proposed budget for negotiations of the remaining contracts, which are the equivalent of what the step increases would be, and that any additional contingency funds that are freed up would be used at the discretion of the superintendent. Elizabeth Fitzgerald seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes unanimously.

CONSIDER SPECIAL MEETING WARNING FOR AUGUST 11 BUDGET VOTE

David Young provided the board with the special meeting warning for the August 11 budget vote. Bridget Burkhardt read the special meeting warning.

Martin LaLonde moved that the board approve the special meeting warning for August 11 with a budget amount of \$52,532.247.00, an education spending of \$16,155.76 per equalized pupil, this projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.47% more than spending for the current year. Alex McHenry seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

BUDGET COMMUNICATION PLAN

David Young is looking to establish a communications committee. He said Corey Burdick is available to take on some additional assignments and he will be assigning her additional budget communication tasks as well as Covid-19 communication tasks.

David Young said the district is waiting for a directive from the Secretary of State to the South Burlington City Clerk which will allow Donna Kinville to provide anyone that asks for an absentee ballot for the primary with an absentee ballot for the school district budget.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald spoke about the tear-off cards mailed to all active registered voters in Vermont. She said there is some confusion around the tear off cards and why the district budget ballot item was not included on the cards. Elizabeth Fitzgerald explained the process and timing of the printing and mailing of the cards.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald suggested the district provide an information card, mailed to all registered voters, with details about the date and purpose of the August 11th school district budget vote.

The board discussed the directive from the last meeting which was provided to Donna Kinville and reviewed by Attorney Joe McNeil.

The board would like the following items completed.

- A direct mailing postcard to all South Burlington registered voters explaining the budget vote date.
- Appoint a person from the district to be in charge of the budget communications committee.
- Set up of community meetings regarding the budget—mini meetings.
- Short bullet point budget ads placed in the next three issues of the Other Paper.
- A budget communication timeline which includes the mini meetings, budget ads, budget timelines, venues of communication, who will generate the messaging, who will send out the messages. Intense communication for the next two-three weeks.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald will respond to the media requests and Bridget Burkhardt will be the secondary communications person if Elizabeth Fitzgerald is not available.

The required Public Information Session on the budget is set for August 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Board members and community members asked several questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Martin LaLonde motioned to adjourn the special meeting. Elizabeth Fitzgerald seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passes.

The special meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Chair

Bridget Burkhardt, Clerk