

February 17, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The South Burlington Business Association Board of Directors endorses the fiscal year 2024 South Burlington School budget as well as the related capital needs bond, both of which will be subject to community vote on March 7, 2023.

The 2024 budget is projected to yield an increase in residential property tax rates of 3.93%. The budget includes an increase in expenses of 7.17%, which is consistent with inflationary pressures and increased student needs. The teachers' contract has been settled for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2025 and the budget has eliminated over 23 positions supporting current programming, most of which had been funded through Federal COVID relief funding, which has come to an end, as well as closing certain open requisitions. We applaud School management and the School Board for making these difficult decisions. Increases in state aid for per pupil funding for the 2024 Budget have also helped to keep the tax rate increase extraordinarily low compared to inflation.

The 2024 Budget, and related Bond, address urgent preventative maintenance items that have been deferred for years, while student enrollment, especially at the elementary school levels, continue to increase. The acquisition of the modular classrooms (ZEMs), to be paid for primarily through new residential development impact fees, seem to be a reasonable short-term solution to a larger problem.

We recognize that our schools need substantial renovation and/or replacement, and appropriate restructuring and sizing to successfully move into the coming decades. Attacking these issues will require clarity and bravery from our school leaders, and financial support from taxpayers.

The South Burlington Business Association is composed of approximately one hundred businesses of all types and sizes. We ask you to join us in support of the School Budget and Bond on March 7th.