

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, June 29, 2020

A virtual meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, June 29, 2020, via ZOOM Video Conferencing. Chairperson Schofield called the meeting to order at approximately at 7:07 p.m.

Present: Erin Schofield, Chairperson; Adam Ramos, Vice-Chairperson; Brian Bradshaw, Treasurer; John P. Saviano, Secretary (arrived at 7:30 p.m.); Carly Reich, John Bento, Marjorie McBride, Sheila Ellsworth, and Victor Cabral; Jonathan T. Brice, Ed.D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent; Tina Fogell, Esq., Chief Operating Officer; Edward Clarke, M.Ed., CAGS, Director of Student Support Services; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; and Kathryn Brown, Recording Secretary

OPEN SESSION

Open session was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairperson Schofield.

OPENING BUSINESS

Chairperson Schofield invited all present to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC FORUM

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve the June 22, 2020, School Committee Virtual Meeting Minutes; seconded by Mr. Bento.

The motion passed unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS & ISSUES

Recommendation #S2020-19: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and supported by the Budget & Facilities subcommittee, approve the assignment of the Fund Balance.

MOTION:

Mr. Bradshaw made a motion to approve the assignment of the fund balance; seconded by Mr. Bento.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Bradshaw stated this recommendation was in accordance with policy DIC. Typically, any remaining fund balance at the end of the year has been moved to capital projects. The total amount of fund balance that we are looking at is about 2.7 million dollars, and if the motion is approved, the specific amount will be determined once all encumbrances are accounted for. This is allowed by policy and we can be more specific at a later date.

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Mr. Ramos asked if the fund balance was not assigned now, what would be the consequences?

Dr. Brice stated that the district is ensuring compliance with the policy. There is going to be a surplus that stems from the movement to distance learning from in person teaching caused by the pandemic, where we saw significant savings in transportation costs, substitute costs, goods, supplies and materials. The current policy indicates that the school committee has to make a decision as to where the fund balance is assigned.

Mr. Ramos stated that the motion is to move into capital projects. There seems to be an expectation that the district will need to spend some of the funds for extraordinary expenses related to opening schools with reopening protocols set by RIDOH and RIDE.

Dr. Brice stated that in addition to weekly meetings with the RI State Superintendents Association, there is a BWRSD reopening group of over 40 staff members working on the district's reopening plan. Before the reopening of schools, we expect to have to purchase additional technology, spend money on transportation, additional staff, cleaning and disinfecting, PPE for staff and students, and plexiglass partitions in some of the classrooms. We will not know the full extent of the costs until we have our reopening plan written that is due to RIDE on 7/17. We expect that we will spend much of the surplus on the safe return of students and staff to school.

Mr. Ramos asked if the fund balance was moved to capital projects, could it be moved into another account to cover expenses at a later date?

Dr. Brice agreed. The line adjustments would be brought to the budget/facilities subcommittee for approval and then would be brought as a recommendation for approval to the full school committee.

Chairperson Schofield asked if there was a preference to move the fund balance into capital projects or a COVID account or just leave it as is?

Mr. Bradshaw stated that he does not believe it can be left as is and needs to be assigned per policy. Mr. Bento made a motion to assign to capital projects as it typically has been moved there in the past.

Mrs. Ellsworth stated that it was discussed at the subcommittee meeting to put it in separate accounts. If there was an issue where the district does not get funding due to state issues, the thought was to keep it as unassigned and move it later as there is more information if necessary.

Chairperson Schofield asked if there was any more discussion. There being no further discussion, Chairperson Schofield asked for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

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Recommendation #S2020-20: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and supported by the Budget & Facilities subcommittee, approve the preliminary FY21 Budget.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that the Budget & Facilities subcommittee did not make a recommendation to approve the preliminary budget and are moving to table the recommendation for approval at a later date.

Attorney Carroll stated that this can be tabled as it is a school committee policy, not state legislation.

Chairperson Schofield stated that the RI General Assembly is not approving state funding until July as well.

MOTION:

Mrs. McBride made a motion to table the recommendation to approve the preliminary FY21 Budget; seconded by Mr. Bradshaw.

The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation #S2020-21: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and supported by the Budget & Facilities subcommittee, approve the FY20 budget adjustments.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that the Budget & Facilities subcommittee did not make a recommendation to approve the FY 20 budget adjustments due to the current proposed budget and proposed line item adjustments did not include previously approved line item adjustments. They moved to table the recommendation for approval at a later date.

MOTION:

Mrs. McBride made a motion to table the recommendation to approve the FY20 budget adjustments; seconded by Mr. Bradshaw.

The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation #S2020-22: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the amended 2020-2021 Calendar based on the 2020-2021 Statewide Calendar approved by the Governor.

MOTION:

Mr. Bradshaw makes a motion to approve the amended 2020-2021 Calendar based on the 2020-2021 Statewide Calendar approved by the Governor; seconded by Mrs. McBride.

DISCUSSION:

Chairperson Schofield invited Dr. Brice to present the amended 2020-2021 calendar.

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Dr. Brice commented that the Rhode Island Department of Education has adopted a uniform school calendar which the Governor signed as an executive order for all public school districts. All districts could modify the calendar if they had specific things in collective bargaining agreements that would require some changes, as long as the integrity of the state issued calendar remains. The state calendar includes PD/distance learning days and the Governor has said there will be no more snow days as students will work from home in distance learning on those days. The state has identified the first and last day of school - August 31, 2020, and June 18th, 2021. School districts also had to work other items into the calendar.

Dr. Brice stated that he is recommending five additional contractual days. We have identified three days in the week prior to opening of school: August 26 for Teacher Orientation Day, August 27 & 28 for Professional Development Days. One of those Professional Development Days would be used to bring all teachers and staff up to date on how to operate in the schools and follow procedures to keep all students & staff safe. The other two additional Professional Development Days recommended are on September 28 and May 13, which are days students were out of school (only teachers/staff would report for professional development). This would allow all of the days in the contract to have been used. The state identified eight (8) professional development days for staff and distance learning days for students are the following (all Mondays): September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14, January 25, March 8, April xx, and May 17. For the winter holiday, the last day of school is December 23 and schools will be closed December 24 through January 4.

Dr. Brice asked for questions from the school committee members.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that the state is too small not to have a statewide calendar and asked if this would be standard practice moving forward?

Dr. Brice stated that he was not aware of those discussions.

Chairperson Schofield asked for clarification about the statewide PD/Distance Learning Days.

Dr. Brice explained the expectation for the statewide PD/Distance Learning days would be that students will learn on those days via distance learning. It is not clear exactly what those days will look like in the district as we are aware that there is a concern about teachers needing to be available online to support students and participate in professional development.

Chairperson Schofield asked if the professional development day topics/training would be the same for teachers in every district?

Dr. Brice answered that there the district has not been notified that there would be a statewide professional development offered to all. As a district, the PD days will provide us with the opportunity to assess student learning and needed supports.

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Mr. Ramos asked about clarity on why May 13 was chosen as a District PD Day and students are not in school.

Dr. Brice stated that the state calendar had religious holidays. As a district, we wanted to be agnostic and did not want to have particular holidays, and it is an opportunity to use a professional development day that is negotiated in the CBA.

Mr. Ramos mentioned there were dates in the grading period boxes at the bottom of the document that need to be corrected before this is made public.

Chairperson asked if there was any more discussion; seeing no further discussion, Chairperson Schofield asked for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Chairperson Schofield acknowledged Justin Pacheco, a recent MHHS graduate who also happened to be our dedicated videographer for school committee meetings. Justin would show up two times per month to tape our meetings and help out wherever it is needed. The School Committee is thankful for his commitment and hopes to celebrate him in person in the fall. We also want to wish him the best at CCRI which he will start this Fall.

Chairperson Schofield also recognized Mrs. Carly Reich for all her hard work she has put into policy and we would like to acknowledge her dedication on this important matter.

ADJOURNMENT - 7:43 p.m.

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Bradshaw made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.; seconded by Mrs. McBride.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Saviano, Secretary
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