

January 5, 2023

A meeting of the Berlin Board of Education was held in the Berlin Middle High School library beginning at 6:00 pm. Present were Ann Nolin, Nathan Morin, Jeanne Charest, Matthew Buteau, Julie King, Marion Moore, Sandy Pouliot, Sonya L'Heureux, Jason Hook, Tammy Fauteux, Martha Miller, Danielle Demers Aric Huter, Dominick Couture, Debora Payeur, Autie Hamilton, Karen Moore, Jamie Welch, and Michael Kelley. Attending virtually were Sue Styles, Eamon Kelley, Elaine Connary, Christine Boulanger, and Lisa Connell.

### **MINUTES**

On a motion by Nathan Morin, seconded by Matthew Buteau, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2022, public and nonpublic sessions. All members voted in the affirmative.

### **WARRANT**

On a motion by Jeanne Charest, seconded by Matthew Buteau, the Board voted to approve the warrant dated January 9, 2023 the amount of \$300,746.80. On a roll call vote, all members voted in the affirmative.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Marion Moore updated the Board on revenues and expenditures to date. The Board reviewed and approved the Financial report as presented.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

### **BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Julie King gave the Board a brief overview of the 2023-2024 budget. This budget lists the district's needs within reason. It includes requests for positions that are needed to support students and staff. The Superintendent also informed the Board of current staff being in the position to retire soon and how difficult it will be to replace them. She spoke of what she calls "grow your own", which includes training and helping current staff become qualified for these positions. She stated the current request is \$22,748,296 an increase of \$1.71 million. This increase comes mainly from salaries and benefits along with the lack of grant funding for the Social Worker position. Matthew Buteau stated how important this position is for students and families.

Martha Miller first stated how she understands the burden on taxpayers and appreciates the support she receives. She explained that Special Education costs are not figured just by the number of students but also the frequency and intensity of services provided. The three cost factors in Special Education are Tuition, Paraprofessionals, Contracted Services along with unfunded mandates.

Michael Kelley commented that the biggest expense for the BMHS are the Gym Crash Pads.

Tammy Fauteux gave her rationale for an additional assistant principal position at Berlin Elementary School and for some of the additional expenses in her request.

Autie Hamilton stated that there was no overall increase in this year's budget and that he had an \$84,000 decrease due to receiving a federal grant for Chromebooks this year. He mentioned one notable project for the upcoming school year was new wiring for WiFi at BES- West. Nathan Morin inquired if our cyber security was done internally, he was told that it was with some contracted support.

Danielle Demers commented that the CTE Department had no major increases.

Ann Nolin thanked the administrators for all their hard work and for staying on course with this budget request. Julie King mentioned the City Manager has requested all departments submit budgets that are level funded and that the district is still working on the FY 23 Budget comparing each year to see if there will be a surplus.

### **ADMINISTRATOR AND STUDENT REPORT**

Michael Kelley reviewed the results of the Student Petition Survey completed by the BMHS staff members. The results show that the majority of middle school staff do not want to allow hats, hoodies and additional cell phone usage during the school day. The majority of staff members at the high school level do not want to allow hats and hoodies and are split on changing the current cell phone usage policy. Student representatives Aric Huter and Dominick Couture expressed their support for all three. Discussion ensued. It was decided that the issue will be on the agenda of the next school board meeting to determine the route the district takes. Matthew Buteau was happy the conversation was had.

### **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

The Superintendent informed the Board of a new software program called Apptegy. This program would streamline all communications, be a boost to public relations, and a tool for communication between teacher and parents. Its biggest benefit is how it allows a staff member to post a school event on social media after going through an approval process.

The Superintendent reminded the Board that Election of Officers would take place at the January 19, 2023 meeting.

### **NURSE LONG TERM SUB RATE**

On a motion by Matthew Buteau, seconded by Jeanne Charest, the Board voted to allow an exception to create a long term sub rate for a substitute nurse using the formula set by the district for a long term teacher rate. This formula will be used on Step 1 of the Nurse's salary schedule and will be retroactive. On a roll call vote, all members voted in the affirmative.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Jamie Welch spoke on behalf of the teachers at BMHS regarding their concern on changing the cell phone use policy at the school. He agrees that cell phones are a great tool, and may be a good thing for great students and great kids. At this time the student Chromebooks can be monitored and all students have the same opportunities. Cell phones cannot be monitored, and not all students have that tool. He is also concerned about the liability if we normalize phones, it takes no effort to film or capture a video and in a matter of seconds send it out on social media. These students are not adults and this powerful tool can make life Ok or miserable. A teacher expressed concern to him about being filmed without knowing it and then the next thing they

know they are on social media. They feel Chromebooks should be used more. He wanted the Board to know the concerns some of his teachers have on this issue

#### **NEW BUSINESS/MEMBER COMMENTS**

Eamon Kelley inquired on the request to increase postage at the Elementary School that was in the budget. Tammy Fauteux explained it would be more efficient with all the mailings they send out.

Matthew Buteau shared his thoughts on the budget and the outstanding quality of education kids are receiving from Berlin Public Schools. They are safe and taken care of. We must all support our staff and students.

Dominick Couture stated that his teachers are always there for him.

Nathan Morin inquired about Teacher morale and if the district collected data internally on this. Julie King informed him that it has not been done since we lost Project Aware, but that she was open to any suggestions he had. He also inquired how evaluations were conducted and when the district would be getting the feedback on the exit interviews that were filled out by former staff members. The Superintendent will be presenting this information during a meeting in February. Nathan asked if we tracked our turn over rate, the answer was no, but the exit surveys would help with this.

Matthew Buteau also inquired about staff evaluations and hoped that they are more of a how can we make things better together, not this is right or wrong. Sandy Pouliot explained the evaluation and observation time frame.

#### **NONPUBLIC**

On a motion by Matthew Buteau, seconded by Nathan Morin, the Board voted to go into a nonpublic session at 7:45 pm in accordance with RSA 91-A3II, (a), (b), & (c). On a roll call vote all members voted in the affirmative.

On a motion by Nathan Morin, seconded by Matthew Buteau, the Board voted to come out of a nonpublic session at 8:25 pm. The motion passed unanimously. No additional votes were taken in the nonpublic session.

#### **STAFFING:**

On a motion by Nathan Morin, seconded by Matthew Buteau, the Board voted to approve the following staffing changes :

#### **Resignations:**

Lindsey Secinore - Educational Assistant - BES

#### **Nominations:**

Eric Crawford - BES Afterschool Program- Assistant Group Leader

#### ***NOMINATIONS/ RENOMINATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL***

Karyn Sharp - BES Spirit Coach - Grades 3-6

Rhonda Edwards - BES Girls Travel Basketball Coach - Grades 3-4

On a roll call vote, all members voted in the affirmative

All nominations are contingent upon the applicant completing a successful background check, physical and NH Certification or Statement of Eligibility.

**ADJOURN**

On a motion by Jeanne Charest, seconded by Matthew Buteau, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Secretary, Berlin Board of Education

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BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
NONPUBLIC SESSION  
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