

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Justin Phaiah, Secretary
Isaias Sostre

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Kayla Burgess
Rick Ives

Mission: The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held their monthly meeting in the Central Office Community Room and virtually on August 24, 2022 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, Mr. Ives, and Mr. Sostre (arrived at 7:03 p.m.). Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, was also present.

To support public participation the documents will be posted on the Town of Brooklyn Website as well as the Brooklyn Public Schools Website. You are encouraged to send questions or comments to buell@brooklynschools.org prior to the meeting.

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons stated that five Board members were present: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, Rick Ives and herself, Mae Lyons.

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment

a. No Public Comment

Mr. Sostre arrived at 7:03 p.m.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. June 22, 2022 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 22, 2022.
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. RFQ vs. RFP Discussion Presentation by Jimmy Graef and Grodsky

Mrs. Buell stated that Mr. Graef, Director of Facilities, wanted to bring forward information for the Board as they prepare/consider applying for the HVAC construction project.

Mr. Graef stated that he asked Joe Conti and Rob Boissonnault from Grodsky and Company, the company that is completing the boiler project, if they would give an estimate on a district wide air conditioning project they would like to have installed using State funding. Mr. Graef felt that they would need more than a Request for Proposal (RFP), which is the basic right to bid on any one project. Mr. Graef stated he felt we needed a Team approach. Mr. Graef asked Mr. Conti and Mr. Boissonnault if they would provide information on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. The following is the presentation they provided for the Board:

State Grant and Town - Requirements: State Grant - up to 78% reimbursement for Brooklyn

- Improving indoor air quality
- Cost savings
- Minimal environmental impact
- 3-bidder requirement
- Maximize scope of work to fully utilize the grant

Typically there are two paths.

Path #1 - Plan and Spec delivery method:

- Engineering firm to design/specify...might take 9-12 months
- Contractors bid the package - lowest price wins

Path #2 - Request for Proposal (RFP) delivery method:

- Design/bid directly with contractors
- Hundreds of engineering hours to properly design/price
- Bigger risk-higher margins-higher pricing-uncertainty
- Lowest bid wins? Doesn't make sense in this case
- Difficult to levelize the bids (apples to oranges?)

Sensible Approach - Best Qualified

Path #3 - Request for Qualification (RFQ)

- Go out to bid (minimum 3-bidders)
- Bidders give not to exceed **qualified** budget
- Bidders show their best design thoughts and approach
- Bidders show resume of team members
- Bidders show their qualifications and ability to perform
- Choose the best design and most qualified
- Discuss life cycle cost, not the lowest upfront cost
- Customer becomes part of the final design team

Customer-Contractor (Team approach)

Design/Build: with a team collaboration

- Gross maximum price approach
- Open book/fixed margin approach

- Savings is returned to owner

There are several focused approaches that can be used for a successful project implementation, with customer confidence of a fixed budget not to exceed the number.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) - Process:

- Each contractor provides company history, background, qualification of the team members and ability to perform.
- Discuss previous experience using a collaborative team approach
- Provide overall project design
- Identify your proposed method of project approach
- Examples: (design/build, fixed labor rates, fixed margins, open book, customer choice for major design decisions, gross maximum price, monthly reporting on budget and schedule, etc.)

Benefits of team Approach - **Brooklyn gets a customized project:**

- Get creative with Energy Conservation Measures (energy savings).
- Design for **Employee Productivity** enhancements.
- Discuss a means to reduce carbon footprint
- Properly design for indoor Air Quality (UVC germicidal lights, high efficiency filtration, fresh air sequencing during pandemic, etc)
- Ease of use (simplified controls for energy conservation)
- Overall benefits - reduced absenteeism, higher level of alertness, better test scores, etc.

Summary - Request for Qualifications (RFQ):

- These projects require many hours of upfront engineering, customization to Brooklyn's needs, significant coordination of trades and multiple options that need to be vetted along the way
- We don't want the cheapest up-front price. That only motivates the Contractor to cut corners. We all want the best performance and the best life cycle cost.
- It only makes sense to use an RFQ process to choose your partner first. Collaborate together from the initial design to the final commissioning.

Mrs. Buell thanked Mr. Conti and Mr. Boissonnault for the presentation and also thanked Mr. Graef for having them come in. She stated that they are still waiting for the State to open up the application. She has also had conversations with the Town ARP/ESSER Committee and received information that ARP/ESSER funds may not be allowed to use as the "local portion," which Mrs. Buell believed that they were. Mrs. Buell has asked for clarification and she stated it does meet the qualifications of the grant.

There was discussion amongst the Board. Other towns are asking for clarification as well. Mrs. Buell has not received clarification as of yet and will continue to ask for the clarification.

Mrs. Buell stated that there is no vote needed. She would like the Board to know that Mr. Graef believes that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process would

be better than using the Request for Proposal (RFP) process when we apply for the grant.

5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn Enrollment Projection

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment projection report. As of August 19, 2022, Brooklyn Elementary school enrollment is at 534 students; Brooklyn Middle school enrollment is 354 students; High school enrollment is 395 students. The total of enrollment is 1,302, which includes registrations that are not entered into the system as of yet. Mrs. Buell stated that enrollment has not been this high since prior to the pandemic.

b. FY22 End of Year Budget Transfer Request

Mrs. Buell discussed the FY22 end of year budget transfer request to transfer line items totaling \$665,104.20.

Motion to transfer \$665,104.20 as outlined on the FY22 End of Year Budget Transfer Request to balance out negative budget lines.

(Ives/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

c. FY22 End of Year Budget Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the FY22 end of year budget report. We have unexpended \$44,654.62.

Mrs. Buell will notify the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance that the school will NOT be expending \$44,654.62 from fiscal year 2022.

d. Brooklyn's Best

BES

- New Hires - We have had multiple members of our hiring committee this summer to interview potential new staff. Our committee is confident that these new staff members will be a positive addition to our team!
- Professional Development- Our new teaching staff attended professional development with our consultant from Eastconn to provide them an overview of our ELA units. It was well attended and there was a lot of learning that took place!
- Custodial Work- We want to give a huge shout out to our custodial staff for their hard work making our school ready for the first day of school!
- New Registrations - Jill Hardacker has enrolled almost 90 new students this summer! This has been a huge undertaking as we have also shifted to a new student database program.

BMS

- Thank you to all of the staff members that participated in hiring committees after school hours
- We are excited to have the following new staff members added to our school community:
 - Adam Bender- Assistant Principal
 - Ashley Paille- Art Teacher
 - Ryne Rewers- Health/PE Teacher
- Our Math teachers participated in 2 days of Professional Development for the implementation of our new program (Illustrative Math). We also enjoyed having an Eastford teacher collaborating with the training.
- We appreciate that many teachers have been in over the summer preparing their classrooms for the start of the school year.
- Thank you to the custodial staff and the secretarial staff for all of the hard work during the summer getting our school ready for an amazing start to the year
- We are excited that Baribeau Lawn and Tree and A Block Away Construction have been donating their time and equipment to install our first stations for the Community Fitness Course. We will be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 28th to thank our families for their support of our fundraising efforts and local groups that funded specific stations.

Mrs. Buell wanted to also thank Brooklyn staff who have engaged in many hours of hiring, planning, and welcoming our new students and staff. This includes her own secretary, HR, Payroll, Finance Office, administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Mrs. Buell thanked the bus company who has completed the bus routes, they are posted to the website. There is a slight change this year as high school students will be picked up a little later and transfer to the bus they need to get to the correct high school. Transfers will be supervised by bus company employees at BMS and the bus garage.

Mrs. Buell would like to thank Gabe Bryant, IT Director, who worked with a part-time summer employee to get us ready for the new school year. There have been a few wrinkles thrown into the summer plans when we have had lightning strikes take out our phone and other equipment.

Furnace Project: the work has begun at BMS. We have the new water heater installed with final hookups and testing to be completed soon/scheduled soon. The old furnace has been removed and the new furnace is on sight.

Mrs. Buell shared pictures of the furnace project, water heater replacement. Mrs. Buell stated that she has coordinated with the First Selectman Tanner to allow Trooper Ambrose to work in a satellite office at BMS. BMS administration has set up an office for him there. Mrs. Buell would like to thank Trooper Ambrose for his diligence in ensuring our schools are safe by attending the Safety

Seminar and for coordinating a visit by Trooper First Class Craig Brezniak of the Emergency Services - Tactical Unit First Selectman, Fire Marshall, Fire Chief, Administration, and Director of Facilities for conducting a safety assessment and providing guidance to us.

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

None

7. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that Woodstock Academy is asking Woodstock athletes to pay to play. Everyone is dealing with budgetary issues.

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation Commission interviewed a number of highly qualified candidates for the Director position. Interviews were completed last week and three final candidates were to the First Selectman, Austin Tanner, to review. Mr. Tanner will make the final decision.

Mr. Phaiah stated that EASTCONN has hired a new Director, Eric Protulis and he had started in his new position July 16, 2022.

8. Old Business

a. Update ARP/ESSER Town Projects

Mrs. Buell gave an update on the phones. The funding was approved for the replacement of the phone system. We are currently working with our liability carrier regarding a claim for the damage caused by the lightning strike. This includes the phones, multiple lines, damage to some servers and hardware. It will also include service calls and overtime for staff who have had to respond, including “firewatch” hourly.

Mrs. Buell gave an update on HVAC. She stated that the school’s request is still in the packet for consideration. The Department of Administrative Services has not yet released the grant for these funds and Mrs. Buell is seeking clarification of if the Town ESSER funds can be used to cover the “local portion” of the project.

9. New Business

a. CT School Security Survey Summary

Mrs. Buell stated that the State surveyed schools to see about SRO’s and about 55% responded to the survey:

- 66% had SRO’s
- 56% had them at all levels, 38% had them at High School, 1% Middle School, 3% Elementary School
- 89% do NOT have armed security, 11% do
- 41% armed at all levels, 41% High School, 0% Middle School, 16% Elementary School

b. Brooklyn's Local School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment & Scorecard

Mrs. Buell discussed the findings of Brooklyn's local school wellness policy triennial assessment and scorecard. She stated that we do have a wellness policy, not advertising or pushing the wellness policy as much as the State would like us to do. There are areas of improvement, having a wellness committee and promoting wellness for the school, students, staff and community. There are wellness activities with the fitness course, fitness initiatives in the district and have more advertising.

c. Substitute Pay

Mrs. Buell stated that there were some challenges last year with getting substitutes, not horrible. There were still more illnesses. There were many substitutes that would come in, but just not enough. Mrs. Buell stated that she does not know if pay would have made a difference. Mrs. Buell is not sure if the substitute rates need to be changed, start the year and see how it is. It is something they can look at in the future.

Mrs. Buell stated that the minimum wage increased from \$13.00/hour to \$14.00/hour on July 1, 2022. We are currently paying substitute teachers:

- \$115.00/day (\$16.42/hour for 7 hour day certified)
- \$100.00/day (14.29/hour for 7 hour day non-certified)

(motion proposed and approved on 05/26/2021; effective 08/01/2021)

Regarding other schools in the area, Lori gathered the following information:

Killingly - approved rate for 22-23 school year:

- \$150/day (with bachelor's)
- \$175/day certification (disclaimer included in the posting states "standard rates are \$100 per day for BA degree & \$115 per day for Certified teachers")

Plainfield: website posting - substitute teachers \$150-\$175/day

Putnam: daily/per diem substitute teachers; \$100/day

Thompson: \$90/day

Woodstock: \$120/day (retired teachers); \$110/day certified & non-certified

d. Climate Survey

Mrs. Buell discussed some of the challenges and the results of the climate survey for the Board to review and they will discuss next month. She will be posting the results on the schools' website in the next day or two. Mrs. Buell stated that building the school climate and increasing communication will be a focus as part of the school advancement plan and school culture.

e. SBAC Data

Mrs. Buell stated the data has been slowly released. This will be shared once it is available to the public. Preliminary data is not great.

- | | <u>2019</u> | <u>2021</u> | <u>2022</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| ● Overall ELA scores went from | 63.6% | 49.8% | 49.0% level 3-4 |
| ● Overall MA scores went from | 47.9% | 31.5% | 36.8% |
| ● Overall Sci scores went from | 70.0% | X | 57.0% |
- We know the following were factors that impacted our ability to make progress: Attendance (6-13% students were absent monthly; 80-250 staff absences in a month or 6-18% of ur staff absent monthly), Math curriculum, ELA we are working on the Science of Reading work present by the state.

f. New Staff Members

- Adam Bender - BMS Vice Principal
- Sara Howley - Para Clerk
- Christine Blake - Financial Assistant
- Adrew Nichols - Custodian
- Janet Johnson - BES Special Education Teacher
- Heather Garosshen - BES 1st Grade Teacher
- Emily Rainville - BES 4th Grade Teacher
- Samantha Felice - BES 1st Grade Teacher
- Cecilia Stallone - BES 2nd Grade Teacher
- Valerie Minarik - BES 4th Grade Teacher
- Kathy Shekleton - BES 3rd Grade Teacher
- Rachel Cardaci - Speech Pathologist
- Jillian Galipeau - Speech Pathologist
- Ashley Paille - BMS Art Teacher
- Ryne Rewers - BMS PE Teacher
- Sheena Martin - BES 3rd Grade

g. Advancement Plan

Mrs. Buell stated that there is an initial draft that will require further editing. She stated that we are focused on what data can be collected to track student growth. Mrs. Buell will bring the advancement plan to the September Board of Education meeting.

h. Parental Request to Pay Tuition

Mrs. Buell stated that at this time she would like to review a privileged communication from our attorney regarding this matter and would ask that the Board makes a decision on this matter once you have more information. There is an executive session and would like to add it to executive session

Motion to add reviewing the privileged communication from the Board's attorney to the executive session and table discussion of the request to pay tuition until the Board exits the executive session.

(Burgess/Phaiah)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

i. Policies: 1st Reading

Mrs. Buell stated that the following policies are a first reading for the Board to review for the next meeting with any comments/suggestions.

- i. P6111(a): School Calendar
- ii. 9321.2 (a): Bylaws of the Board
- iii. P5145.511(a): Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program
- iv. P5141.4(a): Reporting of Child Abuse Neglect and Sexual Assault
- v. P5141.213(a): Opioid Overdose Prevention
- vi. P6140(a): Curriculum
- vii. P6172.6(a): Distance Education
- viii. P7230.2(a): Indoor Air Quality
- ix. P4113.12: Minimum Duty-Free Lunch Periods for Teachers
- x. P5144.4(a): Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students
- xi. P5113.2 (a): Truancy

j. Continuity of Services Plan/COVID Guidance

Mrs. Buell stated that the Continuity of Services Plan/COVID Guidance is on the District Website: Announcements/COVID Resources.

- Students and staff should stay home if they feel sick.
- Face coverings are encouraged and permitted by anyone who wishes to wear one but is not required. Staff are not expected to enforce mask wearing.
- Masks are required after isolation: days 6-10 when returning to school.
- Students and staff are required to follow good hand hygiene by washing or disinfecting hands frequently.
- Anyone with symptoms will contact the school nurse. They will be sent home if they have COVID symptoms as determined by the school nurse.
- Daily notifications will no longer be made by the school and we will follow the CDC guidelines for case rates.
- Students who wear masks all day long may request or be offered a mask break
- If COVID positive, individuals must quarantine 5 days and may return once fever free 24 hours, symptoms are substantially better, and must wear a mask through day 10.
- We will maximize airflow by opening windows to increase circulation.
- Staff and students will be permitted to have increased social distancing or other mitigation strategies as necessary.

10. Public Comment

Amy Landis, Fairway Drive: She knows there is an executive session. She would like to know if they will be coming out to discuss after the executive session. She has been a resident of Brooklyn for over 17 years. Rick Ives is now a Board of Education member

and he has repeatedly stated that one of the great things about Brooklyn is our ability to have school choice, semi-private Woodstock Academy, semi-private NFA, Ellis Tech, Killingly High School. She believes it should include Marinapolis and the Pomfret Schools, local private schools. She stated how Mrs. Buell stated how high school numbers keep fluctuating, families are moving into town and get to choose their high school. We have families that have lived here for 17 years and they do not have the ability to choose where their children get to go for high school and pay taxes for 17 years. A year ago, it was \$14,000.00 plus to go to Woodstock Academy, but cannot use that money to pay for where our children want to go because we do not have our own public high school.

Diane Wimmer, Wauregan drive: Mrs. Wimmer keeps hearing about Woodstock being semi-private and NFA being semi-private. She stated that if you look on the State of CT website, there are statutes for the school districts that do not have high schools. She stated that Woodstock Academy is one, NFA is another, and there is another one that she could not remember the name of. She stated that there are certain towns that are allocated to those schools by statute, not by tradition, and specifically states they are public schools for our town by statute. She also stated that the statute goes further by stating that public monies cannot be used for private schools. Mrs. Wimmer stated that there is a lot of information and anyone can go onto the State of CT website and read the statutes. She stated the language is that they are public schools for those towns that do not have their own high school. She knows the Board will be talking about it in executive session as well as having the Board attorneys looking at it. Parents need to look at the State statutes to see it for themselves and Mrs. Wimmer stated that there is misinformation being spread through the Town.

11. Executive Session

- a. Superintendent Goals/Evaluation
- b. Discussion of attorney-client privileged communication

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to enter into executive session at 8:37 p.m. to discuss the superintendent's goals as well as to discuss an attorney-client privileged communication. We would invite the superintendent.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Mr. Ives made a motion to come out of executive session at 9:14 p.m.

(Ives/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Ms. Burgess made a motion based on the current State statute which prohibits public funds to be used to pay private high school tuition, I make a motion to deny any request for the Board of Education to pay private school tuitions.

(Burgess/Phaiah)

No discussion
Vote Count: 6, 0
Unanimous vote to approve

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)
No Discussion
Vote Count: 6, 0
Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto
Board Clerk

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date