

February 17, 2014

Mayor Miro Weinberger
City Hall
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Mayor,

I know that Superintendent Collins notified you of the Board's response to your January 21 letter, but I wanted to give some more background to our resolution. The School Board's Finance Committee discussed the letter in its meeting on January 28, and then the full Board took up the resolution on February 11, on which date it passed.

There are three key aspects to our resolution. The first addresses the five points you asked us to consider in your letter (and here I'll paraphrase): Coordinating a 10-year capital plan between the City & BSD, explore consolidating financial functions, exploring opportunities to work with regional school districts and municipalities, engaging the City's CAO throughout the FY 16 budget process and agreeing not to seek a Charter Change regarding bonding. The Board recognizes the need for coordination on all these points, and in some cases is already working on them directly, i.e. we're already talking with the Winooski School District about possible shared services. So we welcome more cooperation here.

The second point in our resolution was to ask for engaging the City Council as well. While we know this is not something directly under your purview, we do think it would be beneficial for all to have City Council part of these conversations so that all governing parties are part of the process.

And the third point is that we felt like there were some issues that we also would like to make sure are being worked on jointly (PILOT, bonding, City pensions, pooled cash and other various places where the City Charter and State law interact on financial issues, especially via Acts 60/68).

We think that the bonding issue, in particular, is an issue we have both directly noted; and is an issue worthy of a couple additional comments. You are rightly concerned about the School District trying to separate itself completely from the City when it comes to issuing bonds, and

yet the School District has felt constrained by our understanding of the City Charter and the requirements it places on the District's ability to raise capital. This is a place where I think that working together, as opposed to working separately, will allow us to manage a process that achieves the goals of all parties. And, of course, this capital raising concern is tied directly to the long-term capital plan.

So, in closing, we would suggest that if this process is something that works for all of us, we should begin this process as soon as feasible. We understand that it might not happen until after Town Meeting Day, but we look forward to making progress on all fronts.

Best Regards,

Alan Matson

Chairman, Burlington School Board