

**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School – Library  
August 15, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Alice Farrell - Chair  
Jay Paterson – Vice Chair – arrived at 6:12 p.m.  
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins – Clerk – departed at 8:12 p.m.  
Chris Hull  
Victoria Pompei

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent  
Scott Griggs, Principal  
Jennifer W. Nye, Principal  
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal  
Donald McMahon, Director of Special Services

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Video Vision Tech	Susan Holson	Pat MacAskill	Molly McFaun	Holly Owen
Jo Packer	Heather Slayton	Brandy Surprenant	Meagan Tremblay	

**1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance**

**The Chair, Mrs. Farrell, called the Wednesday, August 15, 2018, Regular meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library. The flag salute followed.**

**2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

5.9 Written Survey Results – The written comments will be distributed for review, with discussion being held at the next Board Meeting.

**3. Visitors and Communications**

Visitors were welcomed to the meeting.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1. Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2018 Summer Retreat Board Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the June 6, 2018 Summer Retreat Board Meeting and the Minutes of the June 22, 2018 Special Meeting.**

**4.2. Approval of Minutes – June 22, 2018 Special Meeting**

Approved under Agenda Item 4.1.

**5. New Business**

**5.1 VSBA Presentation – Susan Holson**

Susan Holson, Director of Education Services (VSBA) introduced herself to the Board, and gave a presentation titled ‘Roles and Responsibilities of Vermont School Boards’. Based on a query from Ms. Holson, it was noted that 3 of the current Board Members have been on the Board for less than one year. The presentation began with an overview of Board Member roles; Insure that all students receive a high quality education, be fiscally responsible to tax payers, and operate efficiently, effectively, ethically, and legally. The Board is responsible for setting a mission and goals, and then monitoring the progress to assure that goals are achieved. Ms. Holson cautioned that it is easy for Board Members to step over the line, and get involved in the day to day operation of the school. Board Members need to work carefully to see that they do not involve themselves in everyday operations. The Board needs to rely on the experts that have been hired by the district. Ms. Holson cautioned that the Board should not dig too deep and ‘dive in’ to the daily operation of the school. Ms. Holson advised regarding a VSBA tool titled ‘The Essential Work of Schoolboards’ (a workshop that takes approximately 3 ½ hours to complete) which is a very beneficial training tool that provides ‘tool kits’ to assist Board Members with understanding their roles and responsibilities. Board Members were encouraged to use this tool. Ms. Holson advised regarding the Board’s relationship with the Superintendent. The Board should share its vision and goals with the Superintendent. It’s the Superintendent’s role to see that the Board’s goals are met. The Board’s relationship is with the Superintendent, not the administrators of the school. Ms. Holson advised that Board Members do not have a full understanding of the workings (the full picture) of the school. Board members do not have the authority to direct day to day operations or the Principals.

The Superintendent is the 'CEO' of the organization, responsible for all areas of operation. The Board's role is governance. The Board defines visions, goals, and policies, evaluates the Superintendent's performance, (annually, providing input to the SU Board) and monitors and assesses results in the district. The Superintendent puts plans, systems, and procedures in place to accomplish the goals of the Board. Principals are accountable to the Superintendent and are responsible for instructional leadership and the day to day operations of the school. "Boards assure that schools are well run, but they don't run them".

The Chain of Command requires that the Board discuss issues with the Superintendent. Board members do not have authority to instruct principals on day to day operations. The chain of command for parental/community complaints is; teacher, principal, Superintendent, Board. If a Board Member is approached by a member of the public who has a complaint, the Board Member should instruct the individual to follow the chain of command; teacher, principal, then Superintendent. If the Superintendent cannot resolve the issue, the issue can be brought to the Board, but must be done so using a formal process. If an item has escalated to the point of being presented to the Board, the Board is acting as a quasi-judicial body, and it is important that Board Members have not had any previous involvement in the issue, as to have done so "crosses the line" and causes a conflict of interest. Board Members should find a diplomatic way to advise community members/friends/relatives, to follow the chain of command, advise them that hearing complaints is not part of the Board's job, and direct them to the correct individual. Board Members work on the higher vision, not the day to day operations.

Ms. Holson advised regarding hiring procedures. Hiring for licensed positions requires Board approval, but the Board's involvement is limited to approving or disapproving candidates presented to them by the Superintendent. The Board is not involved in the hiring of non-licensed staff. The Superintendent has the authority to dismiss employees without the Board's involvement. The Board may serve as a quasi-judicial body to hear employee dismissal or discipline cases. As employees are entitled to a full, fair, and impartial hearing before the Board, it is important that Board Members have not been involved earlier in the process.

It is also important to consider that a real and/or perceived conflict of interest exists when Board Members have children in the school. It's important to note that the majority of tax payers do not have children in the school, and school board members' personal perspective has to be separated from their board perspective. Ms. Holson provided budgeting as an example; a 'parent' board member may support all suggested improvements and programs regardless of cost (to benefit educational efforts in the school), whereas, board members need to create a budget that is fiscally sound and mindful of taxpayers, the majority of which, are not parents of school children.

It's important that when Board Members are speaking (as parents) with teachers, that they make it clear that they are meeting with the teacher as a parent, not as a Board Member. It's appropriate for a school board member to speak with one of their children's teachers as a parent, but not appropriate to be speaking one on one as a board member.

The Board participated in an exercise titled 'Oversight or Overstep?', to assist with their understanding of their role and responsibilities.

Ms. Holson reiterated that 'School Boards Do Not Operate Schools, They assure that schools are run well'.

Ms. Holson stressed the importance of Board Members supporting and recognizing the validity of board decisions, even when the decisions are in conflict with their personal perspective. If there is a Board action or decision that a Board Member does not agree with, they are not to take outside action against the decision, "don't organize some sort of rebellion". This type of action undermines the board as an entity as well as undermining the democratic process. It is important to respect those pieces. Though some Board Members may not agree with the action of the Board, they need to accept and support the action. If questioned by the community, one response could be; "While I voted against it, I now support what the Board has to say". Suggest that community members watch the meeting video to hear the discussion and learn how various members voted.

Ms. Holson advised that individual Board Members have no legal powers outside of the board, must maintain confidentiality of executive session, and should avoid actual or perceived conflict of interest.

The Board works in an oversight capacity and if a Board Member becomes aware of a problem, the Board Member should channel the information through the Board Chair who will contact the Superintendent.

Ms. Holson will e-mail a digital version of her presentation (for dissemination to board members) and will also attach a 5 page document from the AOE that spells out in great detail, the roles of 'all players' (Board, Superintendent, Principals, Teachers and Committees). This additional document provides a good background and is an excellent reference document.

There were no questions from the Board. Ms. Holson distributed copies of her business card and encouraged the Board to contact her with any questions. Additionally, Ms. Holson advised that one of her colleagues, the Director of Legal and Policy Services, is available to answer questions relating to public policy, new legislation, and Vermont Statute. The Director of Legal and Policy Services will answer questions, but won't represent the school board. The Board will be referred to their counsel when necessary.

## **5.2 Resignations/Retires/New Hires**

The resume and BSU Notification of Employment Status Form for Jessie Casavant (Pre-K, Early Childhood Educator) was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo and Mrs. Nye provided an overview of Ms. Casavant's education and experience.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Jessie Casavant.**

In response to a query from a community member, Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Board only approves licensed positions, and all but 2 positions have been filled. The 2 open positions are a Special Educator position and the newly created Elementary Literacy Interventionist Position. Para-educators, Behavioral Interventionists, including outsourced positions, don't come before the board.

## **5.3 Budget Development**

A memorandum from Business Manager Lisa Perreault (dated 08/13/18), and budget development schedule with flow chart were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the document, and advised regarding the new Unified Chart of Accounts and the new accounting system. Mr. Pandolfo requested Board approval of the schedule.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to accept as presented, the FY20 Budget Development Timeline, to be used as a general guideline.**

## **5.4 Annual Designation of Truant Officers**

A document titled 'Title 16 Education, Chapter 25 ATTENDANCE AND DISCIPLINE §1125 Truant officers' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the requirement that the Board appoint a Truant Officer. Mr. Pandolfo recommended that Assistant Principal, Erica Pearson, be appointed to the position of Truant Officer.

**On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Erica Pearson, as Truant Officer for Barre Town Middle and Elementary School.**

## **5.5 Annual Designation of HHB Report Recipients**

A document titled 'APPENDIX A' (from student related Policy F20) was distributed. The document identifies the employees who have been designated by the district to receive complaints of bullying and /or harassment pursuant to the policy and 16 V.S.A. §570a(a)(7) and 16 V.S.A. §570c(7) and under federal anti-discrimination laws. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the document advising of the individuals named in Appendix A (BSU) and Appendix B (BTMES), as the designated individuals to receive complaints of bullying and/or harassment, and advising that this designation is required by Statute.

**On a motion by Mr. Hull, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the designees as listed; John Pandolfo (for the BSU), and Erica Pearson, Bill Waller, and Alice Harding (for BTMES).**

## **5.6 BSU Facilities Committee**

Mr. Pandolfo advised that at the July BSU Board Meeting, it was agreed to form a BSU Facilities Committee. The district Facilities Committees will not be replaced by the BSU Committee. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the goal is the creation of a single long term plan using a single format. Mrs. Farrell advised that this Committee will assist with "seeing the bigger picture" as it relates to buildings throughout the BSU. It is anticipated that the first meeting of the new Committee will occur in mid-September. The meeting date/time/location will be finalized in the near future. Mr. Pandolfo is requesting that the BTMES Board name a designee to the BSU Facilities Committee. **Mr. Hull agreed to serve as the BTMES representative on the BSU Facilities Committee.** The first meeting of the Committee is to be announced.

## **5.7 BSU Communications Committee**

A document titled 'Public Agenda Phone Conference 8/2/2018' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the BSU Board agreed to the formation of a BSU Communications Committee. The new Communications Specialist will assist with the new Committee. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he spoke with Public Agenda to receive clarification on this Committee. Public Agenda recommends that the Committee remain small for now, and that it consist of three Board Members, the Superintendent, the Communications Specialist, and perhaps three building administrators. The Committee could report back advising of the progress of the Coalition (which will be assisting with the formation of a Site-Based Council), follow the development of the new web site, and assist with supporting budget efforts. Mr. Pandolfo highlighted the recommendation that the Coalition not be 'school system heavy', so as to avoid any perception of bias. **Mrs. Farrell agreed to serve as the BTMES representative to the BSU Communications Committee.**

## **5.8 Site Based Councils**

A document titled 'How to Organize Successful Parent Advisory Committees' was distributed. No discussion was held.

## **5.9 Written Survey Results**

An untitled document containing survey questions and written responses was distributed. Mrs. Pompei advised that there were 65 responses to the survey. The survey has been closed (no responses have been submitted in 6 weeks). Mrs. Pompei advised that

overall, responders seem pleased with the building and parking lot. Board Members were advised to review the written comments and be prepared for discussion at the next Board Meeting.

### **5.10 Ratification of Para-Educator Master Contractual Agreement**

A document titled 'Para-Educator Settlement Highlights – August 2018' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the document, which outlines changes to the proposed one-year Agreement. It is anticipated that the Union will hold a vote in the near future. The Agreement will be presented to each of the Boards for approval, with hope that everything will be finalized prior to the start of the school year. The rate increase is for FY19 only. Negotiations for a future contract will begin almost immediately. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the State has finalized the Bill requiring statewide health insurance negotiations effective 07/01/20. Mr. Pandolfo advised that para-educators do not receive 'step' increases, thus it was important to finalize the new Agreement prior to the start of the school year.

**On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Board unanimously voted to ratify the Para-Educator Master Contractual Agreement.**

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Board Communications**

An untitled/undated letter from a parent was distributed. Identifying information had been redacted from the letter. The letter cites concerns regarding the "change at BTMES regarding WCMH services". This letter was previously sent to the Board Chair. Board Members will read the document and discuss as necessary. Mrs. Farrell has discussed this matter with the Superintendent. Mr. Pandolfo advised that this matter involves the transition to a new way of delivering some Special Education services. There are 2 positions that remain open. There is currently a shortage across the state for both professional and support staff members. The unemployment rate is low and there is difficulty across the state, filling positions. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding a change to how WCMH provides supports. The decision was made not to contract for a pod of 8 at BTMES, as there is not a need for 8. At BCEMS, the numbers justified contracting for 2 pods (of 8). WCMH is also short staffed and thus far, has advised that they cannot fill both of the BCEMS pods. Earlier, WCMH advised that a pod could not be used between multiple schools. WCMH advised that contracts for individual supports for students will not be filled until all pod positions are filled. The change in coverage is concerning to some parents, and there is also concern regarding a lack of communication from the school and whether or not enough staff will be hired before the opening day of school. Mr. McMahon has been working with Green Mountain Behavior Consulting regarding setting up contracts for the remaining outstanding support staff, to assure that all students are covered. There appears to be some savings through WCMH if a student qualifies for Medicaid, if not qualifying, the cost is similar. Mr. McMahon advised that he met with Green Mountain Behavior Consulting today and it looks as though all students will be covered. Mr. McMahon advised regarding the costs and associated Medicaid reimbursement for the various vendors. It was noted that WCMH is having difficulty filling all positions, even with the reduction of 10 staff that were previously worked at BCEMS and BTMES. Though there is parental concern regarding the transition to new BIs, it was noted that WCMH has been known to have changes in staff which also causes students to go through transition. Mr. Pandolfo advised that changes to the Special Education model have been ongoing for years, and now that changes are being implemented, some are finding the changes difficult to adjust to. Mr. McMahon stressed that it is the goal to assure that all students have coverage on the first day of school. Community members expressed concern regarding lack of communication regarding changes to staff (staff leaving), not knowing who specific case managers will be, not knowing who to contact with questions, dissatisfaction with the process of change, the loss of therapeutic relationships (with the change in BIs), and requested confirmation of community days, respite, and transportation services by GMBC.

### **6.2 A.L.I.C.E. & School Safety**

A document from the State of Vermont, Department of Public Safety (Advance Notice to Proceed Form (ANP)) was distributed. Approved grant funded projects for BTMES are; external cameras, internal cameras, bullet resistant glass film covering, and replacement of a faulty exterior door. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the planned projects, and advised that each school within the BSU will be receiving grant monies totaling almost \$99,000. Now that the Advance Notice to Proceed has been received, work can begin, with reimbursement being received in the future.

A.L.I.C.E. Training for staff will be held on Wednesday and Thursday of next week. Additional staff have received 'Trainer Training'. The goal for next week is to give the initial exposure of training, with some follow-up in afterschool meetings. Age/Grade appropriate training will be developed. Training of students will occur during routine drills.

### **6.3 Act 46 Update**

Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins thanked Mr. Pandolfo for his assistance during the meeting with the State Board of Education to answer questions relating to the Act 46 Committee's Final Report. Most questions related to the vote date of November 6, 2018. This date allows more time to educate community members of changes to the Articles of Agreement and historically the November elections have resulted in a higher voter turnout. The Final Report has been approved as submitted, but the Board of Education has asked that the Study Committee revisit the vote date. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Secretary of Education does not feel a November vote date is in the best interest of all concerned, and would like a vote date of October 26, 2018, or earlier.

There are various problems and benefits associated with a late vote date, including the 30 day certification period and the State's requirement to have a Final Plan by 11/30/18. The late vote date can also impact other districts in the region that aren't currently merged. The Study committee will meet on Monday, August 20, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library. There remain many unknowns about what can and can't be done given a late vote date.

Additional questions posed to the Act 46 Committee Co-Chairs included an inquiry into why more time was not spent determining how education would improve under consolidation. The Co-Chairs advised that there are many unknowns and a consultant was not available to assist with this Committee.

#### **6.4 Summer Projects Update**

A document (from Facilities Director Jamie Evans) titled Summer Projects Update, was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the work performed over the summer. Work continues regarding the inspection of the concrete columns and entryway. Custodial and maintenance workers were acknowledged for the work they have been performing. Mr. Griggs advised of a video that was created, which shows some of the great work being performed by custodial staff over the summer, Mr. Pandolfo will e-mail the video to Board Members.

#### **6.5 Athletic Land Transfer**

A copy of the Warranty Deed was distributed. Mrs. Farrell advised that the Deed was signed in late June 2018 and that the land transfer has been finalized. Mrs. Farrell advised that the Deed grants BTMES first rights to use the athletic fields and land 'at any given time'.

### **7. Board Reports**

#### **7.1. Superintendent**

A copy of the Superintendent's report dated August 8, 2018 was distributed. The report included information pertaining to; Negotiations, the Legislative Session, Act 46, the BSU Administrative Retreat, the 'New School Year', BSU Developments, and the New Secretary of Education (Dan French). Mr. Pandolfo advised of the Opening Day Assembly for staff on August 21, 2018, in the Spaulding Auditorium, and encouraged Board Members to attend. Additionally, Mr. Pandolfo advised of communication from the Executive Director of Friends of the Winooski River, and provided an overview of a law that will have a future impact relating to surface water retention. The new law will most likely have an impact on BTMES. Grant funding should be available to assist with implementation and structure changes (to hold storm water so that it doesn't run off). Mrs. Farrell advised that Dr. Dan French has been named as the new Secretary of Education. Mrs. Farrell has worked with Dr. French in the past and believes his appointment was a wise choice and that Board Members will enjoy working with him.

#### **7.2 Principals Report**

A copy of the BTMES Administrative Report dated August 15, 2018 was distributed. The report contains information relating to; an After School Program, Professional Development days in August, the Crops by Kids Garden, Enrollment (an enrollment report was distributed), Facilities Projects, Summer Training and Professional Development for staff and administrators, the New Staff and Mentor Reception, New Staff, a Staffing Update, Transportation, and a schedule of upcoming events. Mrs. Nye advised regarding the new staff BSU Tour that will take place on Thursday, provided an overview of the past practice of holding a New Staff & Mentor Reception (the Board agreed to hold the reception prior to the September Board Meeting, beginning at 5:30 p.m.), and highlighted the change to transportation of Pre-kindergarten students (allowing students on all 8 of the B Run buses), as well as the goal of having riders on all of the elementary school bus runs. Mr. Griggs provided an overview of the Enrollment Report, advising that there are a total of 826 students registered.

#### **7.3 Committee Reports**

##### **7.3.1 Finance/Facilities/Transportation Committee –**

The next meeting is Wednesday, September 19, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library.

##### **7.3.2 Verbal Report of BSU Committees –**

No discussion.

#### **7.4 Financials**

Three reports were distributed; BTMES FY18 Expenditures/Year-end Projection Report (dated 08/15/18), and the BTMES General Fund Expenditure report (dated 08/06/18) and the BSU Expenditures-FY18 report (dated 08/06/18). There is an unaudited projected surplus of \$129,964. Mrs. Perreault has completed the SEER Report (Special Education Expenditure Report) and has advised that the numbers look positive.

### **8. Future Agenda Items and Upcoming Committee Meetings**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 5, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library. A 'Meet and Greet' with new staff and their mentors will commence at 5:30 p.m.

Agenda Items:

Meet and Greet

New Teacher Introductions

Resignations/Retirements/New Hires

Mr. Paterson queried regarding planning for upcoming negotiations. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the Side Letter Agreement which expires on 12/31/18, and advised that something needs to be in place for a minimum of 6 months (12/31/18 – 06/30/19), but the Committee may wish to put something in place for a longer time period.

**9. Approval of Warrants**

Though Board Members were reviewing Warrants, it was noted that Approval of Warrants does not need to take place. This Agenda Item will not be listed on future Agendas.

**10. Executive Session**

**10.1 Personnel**

Employment of Personnel was proposed for discussion in Executive Session

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo in attendance, at 8:33 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion.**

The remaining information was provided by the acting Board Clerk.

**On a motion by Mr. Hull, seconded by Mr. Paterson, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:04 p.m.**

**11. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:04 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*