

## BARRE TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT - RETREAT MEETING

*June 21, 2016*

---

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brenda Buzzell, Chair, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Brent Tewksbury, Vice-Chair, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Chad Allen, Clerk, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Kristin McCarthy, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School

### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jay Paterson, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School

### **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent	2:00 pm
Scott Griggs, Incoming Middle School Principal	2:00 pm
Jennifer Nye, Elementary School Principal	2:00 pm
Julia Pritchard, Special Education Director	2:00 pm
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal	2:00 pm
Lisa Perrault, BSU Business Manager	3:00 pm
Terrie Murray, BTMES Transportation Coordinator	3:00 pm

### **Attendees: Barre Town School District Board Members**

---

#### **1. Call to Order**

Board Chair, Brenda Buzzell, called the Tuesday June 21, 2016, School Board Meeting to order at 1:15 pm. The meeting was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

#### **2. Additions and Deletions to Agenda**

The Board added "Act 46 Update" after Item #4 - Reflections.  
The Board added "Gymnasium Dedication" after "Members for Re-election".  
The Board added "Contract Negotiations" to Executive Session.

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, and seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to approve the June 1, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes with the minor revision to strike David Delcore from the list of visitors attending the meeting.**

#### **4. Reflections & Vision**

#### 4.1 School Board Goals – How did we do?

The Board achieved progress towards past year's goals, as outlined below;

*Part of the Board's vision for 2015-16 school year is for the Administration to enhance their practice of effective and inclusive communication through collaborative school leadership and the continued belief that all children can succeed.*

*The Board encourages the Administration to continue its commitment to WIN time by looking for ways to improve WIN time with a special focus on the kids "in the middle"; those children who may neither excel nor receive additional support.*

The most notable actions that supported the progress towards these goals included maintaining the established WIN program and the establishment of a "Design Lab" to promote the Arts along with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math concepts in a safe environment where students can experience "hands on learning".

#### 4.2 School Board Goals for 2016-17 School Year

For the 2016-17 school year the Board set goals in three focus areas, Education, Finance and Maintenance, as follows;

**Education:** The Board is requesting that the Administration and Curriculum Committee work together to review the math curriculum for educational opportunities to ensure that the BTMES math curriculum in the elementary and middle schools is meeting the common core expectations. The Board would also like some feedback to the following questions;

- What does the alignment of the current math curriculum with the Spaulding High School's math program look like?
- Are there gaps in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math program?

The Board would like the Administration to consider developing Math Workshops for parents by grade level.

**Finance:** Maintain fiscal responsibility and accountability as has been past practice.

**Maintenance:** The Board would like the BSU Facility Director and BTMES Administration to place an emphasis on maintaining a neat appearance of the school grounds, keeping the lawn length low and the weeds minimized in the flower beds and trees on the front lawn.

#### 5. ACT 46 Update

Mr. Allen gave an update of the ACT 46 Discussion. The Board would like the Committee to consider including the following items in the Articles of Agreement;

- Decision-making; the articles should define a decision-making method to effectively build consensus rather than majority rule.

- Residency should define which elementary school students should attend.

The Board supports the “hybrid” approach and their preference is for a 4:4:1 model. The Board expressed concern with voting in consolidated board members in November before ACT 46 articles were voted on by the Barre City and Barre Town communities.

## **6. Members for Re-election**

Mrs. Buzzell informed the Board that she will not be running for the school board in March; she has accepted a principal position at St. Monica’s/St. Michael’s School, a Catholic parochial school.

## **Attendees: Board Members, Superintendent and Administrators – 2:00pm**

---

## **7 Gymnasium Dedication**

The Administration presented their idea of dedicating the BTMES gymnasium to out-going Middle School Principal Tim Crowley.

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, and seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to dedicate the school gymnasium as the “Crowley Gym”.**

## **8 Review Class Numbers/Ratios**

Mrs. Nye informed the Board that there will be 7 kindergartners retained next year. The Administration advocated for hiring an additional Kindergarten teacher (starting salary is approximately \$37,500) for a total of 5 Kindergarten classrooms. The Board asked the Administration to consider having dedicated support services for the 1st Grade Team. The Administration has brought in consultants to assist staff with implementing strategies and this is a practice that will continue.

Strategies to pay for the additional teacher include carrying forward the FY16 surplus and achieving a savings based on incoming staff salaries in comparison with outgoing staff salaries.

**On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, and seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to hire an additional Kindergarten teacher for 2016-17 school year.**

## **9 Update on Board Goals**

The Board provided an update to the Administration on its reflections and 2016-17 goals. The majority of the discussion centered on a discussion of the math curriculum. Mrs. Pritchard supported the additional emphasis and focus on the math curriculum and commented that such an emphasis is necessary for special education students as well. Mrs. Pritchard raised awareness that the current math curriculum is heavily language based so if there is a language barrier then math becomes that much more difficult for some students.

## **10 BTMES Meal Program – Continuation of Discussion from June 1, 2016 Meeting**

The grand total of school lunch bills that remains unpaid from the 2015-16 school year is \$10,783.20. Moving forward next year the Board considered how to address student meal accounts that are in arrears. The number of accounts in arrears are 36, 39, 28, 37, 30, 31, 28, 48, 37 in grades K-8, respectively. In summary there are 314 accounts representing 42.8% of the BTMES student population in arrears. The average cost is \$34.30 per account.

The Board has requested that the Administration send out a letter to families now that informs the families that owe money that they need to contact the Administration to set up a payment plan.

The Administration will request that the Abbey Group provide a monthly update of student charges so that they can proactively manage the process.

The Board set two thresholds moving forward. There will be \$10 and \$20 thresholds. Once an account has gone in arrears by \$10 the Abbey group will send home a warning to parents.

The Board does not want any child to go hungry and understands that it is not fair to punish the child and let them go hungry due to lack of payment. Children learn better when their needs are being met and the Board strives to meet these needs in the following manner:

Once an account has reached \$20 the child will no longer be able to purchase a hot lunch. If the child has no food or inadequate nutrition then the Board has authorized the Abbey group to provide a cost effective substitute such as a "Sunbutter" sandwich, fruit and milk with the stipulation that the meal being provided has to be a full meal but not necessarily the more expensive hot lunch meal.

## **11 New Hires**

The Board considered the Administration's recommendation to hire Holly Palmer as a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher to replace Kyle Dubois who is going to the Math Lab to replace Sherry Aja who is moving to 5<sup>th</sup> grade to replace departing 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Elizabeth Rees. The difference (breakage) between the two positions is a savings of approximately \$10,350.

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, and seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to hire Ms. Palmer as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher for the 2016-17 school year.**

The Board considered the Administration's recommendation to hire Amy Robertson as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher to replace Emma Thomas, former 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher. The difference (breakage) between the two positions is an increase of approximately \$8,400. The overall savings is approximately \$1,950.

**On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, and seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to hire Ms. Robertson as a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher for the 2016-17 school year.**

The Administration also mentioned that they hired Betsy Pierce as the BTMES Register.

**Attendees: Board Members, Superintendent, Administrators, Transportation Director, Business Manager – 3:00pm**

---

## 12 Budget and Financials

Lisa Perrault provided a status update of the FY16 BTMES budget. There are no anticipated issues with the current budget. The budget is on target with a projected surplus of \$60,689; 0.6% of the total budget of \$11,007,753. Great job by the SU and BTMES Administration managing the as-passed budget!

The current surplus does not include any deficits in the Meal Program. BTMES will be required to reimburse the Abbey Group for any loss from the Meal Program. The Abbey Group's contract stipulates a guaranteed profit of \$10,000; which could be used to pay off the student meal accounts that are in arrears.

The Abbey group has recommended the purchase of a new dishwasher to replace an old and inefficient dishwasher currently in service. The cost for the new dishwasher is expected range between \$10,000 to \$20,000 dollars, not including installation costs. Mrs. Nye will contact Jamie Evans and have him coordinate this possible future purchase with the Abbey Group. Mr. Pandolfo provided a reminder that if a purchase is over \$15,000 then a request for proposal (RFP) would need to be developed.

## 13 Facility – Special Article – Parking Lot Paving

The Board discussed requesting the Town's voters to approve parking lot repairs (\$200,000) in the FY18 budget. The parking lot is scheduled to be repaved during the summer of 2017. The Town has plans to pave their portion (travel way from Websterville Road through the parking lot to the ballfields) in summer 2016. In order to do so, the vote is expected to be brought to the community via a hand counted ballot in November of 2016. This is a good strategy as a hand count ballot will be requested for the ACT 46 vote too and there may be a cost savings by combining the two. Mr. Tewksbury received an e-mail communication from Donna Kelty, Barre Town Clerk, who informed him that the Board would need to warn a hand ballot in middle to late September.

**The Board decided to table this topic for the next school board meeting.**

Lisa mentioned that we could also choose to secure a loan to pay for any additional repairs or upgrades such as HVAC repairs, generator replacement, camera installations, etc. She informed that Board that the school had submitted our last loan payment of \$100,000. She has indicated in the past that carrying a small loan balance makes fiscal sense.

## 14 Transportation Discussion

Terrie Murray received resignations from two bus drivers; one part-time position and one full time position. Mrs. Murray will be advertising for two bus driver positions beginning 6/22/16. Bus driver positions have been very difficult to fill in the past. Mrs. Murray talked to the BSU Human Resources Director and presented a verbal proposal to the Board to upgrade the part-time bus driver to a full time bus driver, part of the justification is that the position will fill in as another Pre-K bus driver. The part-time position would not be year round but would be only throughout the school year!

In total, BTMES has 3 full time bus driver positions currently available, upgrading the part-time position would now require four full time bus driver positions. Two bus driver positions are assigned slightly less than six hours (5 hours and 45 minutes) of driving per day. BTMES offers benefits beginning at 6 hours and there is a prevailing thought that the Board shouldn't be cutting it that close. Last year several bus drivers left for custodian positions at BTMES which had a significant impact on the school's ability to

obtain qualified bus drivers. Thus, Mrs. Murray is advocating that a new custodian be hired with job duties that include a part-time bus driver. If the bus driver positions cannot be filled, then the contingency plan is to suspend bus routes. The Board recommends that the Administration include these facts in a letter home to parents. And if routes are suspended then it should be done in an equitable manner.

Wildcat Busing in Hardwick communicated to Mrs. Murray that they are having issues with maintaining drivers. They also indicated that they are not interested in leasing out a bus to us.

Pre-K students are now limited to a one-hour bus trip per ACT 166. This will require an additional "run" increasing the number of Pre-K bus routes from 3 to 4. There are additional costs for child seats (budgeted for in FY17) and an additional para-educator (not budgeted for in FY17).

The Board would like to recognize Mr. Sanborn for his commitment to the students at Barre Town not only educating the students but also driving a bus at the end of the day.

Over time the Transportation Unit has reduced the number of Barre City stops. The stops currently service day cares in Barre City (not equitable since we don't service day cares in Barre Town) and Barre Town residents who want to place their children on and off the bus in Barre City. Mrs. Murray is proposing to keep a single Barre City stop right in the middle of Barre City at P&S Furniture. The School Board debated this topic but ultimately supported this single stop with the understanding that Barre City stops may be phased out next year.

Bus #10 will not pass inspection; it has a rotted flooring system, if the bus is salvaged BTMES will get \$550 dollars. The Board supports this approach which leaves BTMES with only one spare including Bus #22 which has a lift and can only accommodate 41 students. Mrs. Murray indicated that BTMES may need to rent a bus from STA and that moving forward her goals are 1) to hire two new bus drivers; she will continue to look at consolidating stops and designing efficient bus routes and 2) investigate a method to send out notifications to parents in a timely and efficient manner. One strategy is to investigate making upgrades to the SU's "robo-call" system to include bus cancellations. An alternate strategy may be to send out a message via e-mail or text to all Barre Town parents informing them of bus cancellations or changes.

Mr. Pandolfo shared the Transportation Worksheet that he developed which compared the local bussing company's (STA) proposal to the costs expended to operate the BTMES bussing system. The worksheet preliminarily shows that it costs approximately \$112,000 (20%) more for BTMES to operate its transportation system than if the transportation services were contracted out. The attendees discussed and reviewed the line items generating further discussion. **In the interest of time the Board decided to table the discussion for a future to be determined meeting date.**

## 15 Executive Session

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the item (Contract Negotiations) proposed for discussion would clearly place the Town of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.**

**On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session at 4:45 pm under the provisions of 1 VSA Section 313 to discuss the items proposed for discussion.**

Mr. Pandolfo was invited into Executive Session.

**On a motion by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 4:54 pm.**

## **16 Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mr. Allen, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 4:55 pm for a TriBoard Meeting at 5:00 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Chad A. Allen, Clerk – Barre Town School Board*

**Next Meeting Date is July 6, 2016 at 5:00 pm in the BTMES Library.**