

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School – Library
February 15, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brenda Buzzell - Chair
Brent Tewksbury – Vice Chair
Chad Allen - Clerk
Kristin McCarthy
Jay Paterson – arrived at 6:12 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Video Vision Tech Pat MacAskill

1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair, Mrs. Buzzell, called the Wednesday, February 15, 2017, Regular meeting to order at 6:06 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

Add 5.4 Resignation

Add 10.1 Personnel (for Executive Session)

Discuss 6.1 out of order. Discussion will be held after Agenda Item 4.1

3. Visitors and Communications

Mrs. Buzzell advised that the Success by Six, Dabble Day event, held at the Aldrich Library, was a success. 184 children and approximately 90 parents attended this event.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Approval of Minutes – February 1, 2017 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2017 Regular Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Board Member Recognitions

Retiring Board Members Brenda Buzzell (14 years of service) and Brent Tewksbury were thanked for their years of service to BTMES. Mrs. McCarthy, Ms. Pritchard, and Ms. Pearson, presented gifts from the Board, the Leadership team, and Tim Crowley. Mrs. Buzzell and Mr. Tewksbury advised that the work performed over the years has been very rewarding. The last meeting that these Board Members will attend, is the meeting to be held the night before elections, Monday, March 6, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library.

5.2 Transition of Transportation

A draft version of the Transition of Transportation letter to BTMES parents was distributed. It was noted that a communication plan should be added to the letter. Additionally, the letter should include clarification for families regarding how decisions for bus route cancellations are made. Mr. Tewksbury advised that he has received phone calls lately regarding transportation, and noted that he has been seeing misinformation being posted on social media. Mrs. Buzzell reiterated that BTMES has been having difficulty hiring and retaining bus drivers, and added that a State mandate also contributed to the decision to transition transportation to an outside vendor. In response to a query regarding the possibility of adding an after-school ‘Y’ program, it was noted that at the current time that does not appear to be an option, as programs run by the ‘Y’, need consistent attendance of a specified number of children, and cannot accommodate a ‘drop-in’ type of program. It was also noted that many parents pay for outside after-school care, and the additional fee

to send their children to a program run at the school could pose a financial burden. Mrs. Nye advised that administrators only cancel bus routes as a last resort, after every possible option has been explored.

5.3 Letter to Board / Process for Communication of Concerns

Mrs. Buzzell wishes to educate the community regarding the proper avenue for addressing concerns. The submission of anonymous letters (as happened recently) is not advisable. Mrs. Buzzell advised that the most effective way to resolve issues is to speak directly with those that can address and fix the issues. The proper chain should be followed (e.g., teacher, administrator, superintendent, and then the Board). Issues should not be brought to the Board until all channels have been explored. Mrs. Buzzell advised that she did not wish to take action or hold discussion regarding the letter recently received by an anonymous sender.

5.4 Resignation

A letter of resignation from Leah E. Rackliff was distributed. Ms. Rackliff advised that her last day of employment will be June 14, 2017. Ms. Rackliff will be moving to China to teach English as a Foreign Language. Mr. Pandolfo advised that, as Ms. Rackliff is a Special Educator, the formal acceptance of Ms. Rackliff's resignation will take place at the SU Board Meeting. The Board expressed appreciation that Ms. Rackliff tendered her resignation in a timely fashion that will allow ample time for hiring of a replacement. **On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board, with regrets and well wishes, recommends that the SU Board accept the resignation of Ms. Rackliff.**

6. Old Business

6.1 FY '18 Budget Presentation

Printed copies of screen prints from the Budget Power Point presentation were distributed. Mr. Allen introduced himself and advised that he would be presenting the budget as prepared by Administrators and the Board. Mrs. Perreault was credited with developing the Power Point Presentation. Mr. Allen provided an overview of the \$11,994,429 budget using the Power Point Presentation. The comprehensive overview included information in the areas of; Budget Goals, Development Considerations, Risks, Budget Breakdown, Breakdown between General and Special Education, Definition of Equalized Pupils, Calculations for Determination of Spending Per Equalized Pupil and Tax Rates, Historical Budget Information (including overall budget, equalized pupil counts/costs, and Tax Rates), Comparisons to Neighboring/Comparable Schools' Budgets as well as historical information comparing BTMES cost per pupil to the average State Educational Spending Per Pupil. The ballot language was presented, noting that the proposed budget equates to \$12,054 per equalized pupil, resulting in a 1.6% increase in education spending. Community members with questions, were encouraged to contact Board Members, Administrators, or the Superintendent. Mr. Allen, Administrators, and the Finance Committee were thanked for their efforts in the development of this fiscally responsibly budget.

6.2 Act 46 Update

Mr. Pandolfo advised that 'next steps' will be discussed at the SU Board Meeting on 02/16/17. There are many possibilities regarding how to proceed. Some options are; to take no action, formation of a new 706 Study Committee (which may include inclusion of other schools, or creation of Articles of Agreement that alleviate known concerns). Consolidation with other schools presents complications, including the issue of school choice. Mr. Pandolfo advised that legislators have sent a clear signal that they do not intend to make any significant changes to Act 46. Major changes at this point are perceived to be unfair to those districts that have consolidated. The legislature is considering changes that will preserve school choice. The BCEMS Board has conveyed that they are not interested in participating in a new 706 Study Committee until some time has passed, and other consolidation proposals have been voted on. The current schedule regarding compliance with Act 46 mandates that Regional Educational Districts (REDs) be completed by 06/30/17, conventional mergers must be operational by 07/01/19. The Secretary of Education must provide a plan for non-merged districts by 06/01/18. If BTMES does not approve a merger, the Secretary of Education will make a recommendation regarding BTMES in their Plan that is to be submitted by 06/01/18. Board Members advised that they believe a merger will be a 'hard sell' and that areas of concern are combining of assets and student placement (structural changes). Mr. Paterson advised that he prefers to postpone action until a later date, after other merger proposals have been voted on.

6.3 Labor Relations Agreements

Three documents were distributed; updated Proposal Status Forms for Teachers and Para-educators, and the Wage and Insurance Proposals for BSU Teachers and Paras (dated 02/08/17). Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Negotiation Committee has gone to 'Impasse' with the teachers and are looking to schedule a mediator and fact finder. Areas of greatest division are; salaries, benefits, and length of school day. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Negotiations Committee will be meeting with para-educators on 02/22/17.

6.4 Second and Final Reading Class Size Policy (G14)

Copies of the policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.4 and 6.5 were distributed. Brief discussion was held. Though there are current BTMES related policies to be rescinded, they will need to be warned prior to taking action. These policies will be added to the Agenda for the next meeting. In the future, the Board may wish to add rescinding of existing policies to the same agenda on which new policies are slated for ratification. Policies slated for deletion will need to be placed on the agenda as items for discussion following agenda items slated for ratification.

On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Readings, of the policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.4 and 6.5, and agreed to ratify said policies (G14 and F28).

6.5 Second and Final Reading Child Nutrition Act Wellness Policy (F28)

Approved under Agenda Item 6.4.

7. Board Reports

7.1. Superintendent

A document titled 'Residential Property for sale Websterville Road' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo briefly advised regarding Jaime Evans' contact with the Holbrook family and referred Board Members to the distributed document for specific information that has been obtained.

7.2 Principals Report

A copy of the BTMES Administration Report for February 15, 2017 was distributed. The report contained information pertaining to; Enrollment, Vermont Writes Day (02/10/17), Second Grade Community Service and Dance Unit, Kindergarten Dance Shows, the BSU Art Show (beginning on 02/21/17 at the Aldrich Library), February/March Vacation (02/27/17 – 03/07/17), and Transportation. The BTMES Monthly Enrollment Report and a copy of the BTMES News Letter were also distributed. Mrs. Nye advised that student enrollment is 884 (as of 02/02/17). The student count represents a loss of 2 students. There are no known reasons for the recent changes in student population, though it was noted that the new pre-k programs do account for some of the increases in counts this year. Mr. Griggs reported on the 'Vermont Writes' day, and invited Board Members to view some of the students' work that is posted near the lobby. Mr. Griggs reminded the community of the upcoming school break. Ms. Pearson advised that the Y is looking to see if there is interest in various camps. One camp will be held at BTMES during each of the winter vacations (February and April). The Theme for the February camp is 'North Pole'. Other options are available at other sites. Scholarship money is available.

7.3 Committee Reports

7.3.1 Finance – There is nothing new to report. The next meeting will be scheduled after the Board reorganization.

7.3.2 Facility and Transportation – There is nothing new to report.

7.3.3 Curriculum – The Committee met last week. Discussion centered mainly on Proficiency Based Grading and Reporting. The goal is to make it easy for parents to understand how their children are performing within the standards, and to ease the transition to Spaulding's Proficiency Based Grading Reporting System. Mrs. McCarthy advised that high school students had a difficult time understanding the new process/system. Mrs. Nye advised that the Committee is being mindful of language and that they understand that communication will be a critical factor in implementation of this new grading system. The next meeting date is to be announced.

7.3.4 Policy – Mr. Paterson reported that the Committee met on 02/10/17 and focused mainly on identifying policies that need to be rescinded. Some policies were referred to the Finance Committee for review. Mr. Paterson advised that going forward, the Committee wants to try to stay current regarding the identification of policies to be deleted. The Committee would like to reorganize the policy manual. This reorganization of sorting alphabetically by policy name, rather than policy code number should make it easier for community members to locate specific policies.

7.3.5 SHAC – The Committee met in February and are working on an action plan to increase family involvement and physical activity. Brief discussion was held regarding whether this was a 'Board' committee, or a committee that had a board representative. It was noted that all Board committees legally require the posting of Warnings, Agendas, and Minutes.

7.3.6 Barre Town Recreation – There is nothing new to report regarding the transfer of school property. Pickleball seems to be going well. Mr. Tewksbury will forward Barre Town Recreation Committee information to Board Members until a new representative is chosen.

7.4 Financials

The BTMES Expense Budget Status Report (dated 02/09/17) was distributed. Brief discussion was held regarding the overage in transportation (line 2711). It was determined that more information is necessary to identify the reason for the deficit. Mrs. McCarthy requested a breakdown of the cause of the deficit. Mr. Pandolfo hopes to begin using a new, more narrative report.

8. Future Agenda Items and Upcoming Committee Meetings

Committee meeting dates will be announced after Board re-organization.

SU Board Meeting – Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the Barre Supervisory Union First Floor Conference Room.

BTMES Board – Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library. (There will not be a meeting on 03/01/17)

Tri-Board – Tentatively scheduled for March 23, 2017. Additional information will be announced.

9. Approval of Warrants

On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Warrants.

10. Executive Session

10.1 Personnel

A Personnel Issue was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Allen, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo, Mr. Griggs, Mrs. Nye, Ms. Pritchard, and Ms. Pearson at 7:38 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the items proposed for discussion.

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. Buzzell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:01 p.m.

11. Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the BTMES Library

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Buzzell, seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin