

**BTMES SUMMER RETREAT MEETING**  
Central Vermont Career Center - Room #136  
June 8, 2017 – 2:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chad Allen - Chair  
Alice Farrell - Clerk  
Jennifer Hutchinson  
Kristin McCarthy

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jay Paterson – Vice Chair

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent - arrived at 4:00 p.m.  
Scott Griggs, Principal – arrived at 4:00 p.m.  
Jennifer W. Nye, Principal - arrived at 4:00 p.m.  
Jaime Evans, Facilities Director – arrived at 4:53 p.m.  
Terrie Murray, Transportation Coordinator – arrived at 5:00 p.m.  
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal - arrived at 4:00 p.m.  
Julia Pritchard, Director of Special Services - arrived at 4:00 p.m., departed at 5:00 p.m.  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager – arrived at 4:52 p.m.

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

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

The Chair, Mr. Allen, called the Wednesday, June 8, 2017, Summer Retreat meeting to order at 2:12 p.m., which was held at the Central Vermont Career Center in Room 136.

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

None.

**3. Approval of Minutes – May 3, 2017 Regular Meeting**

On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mrs. Hutchinson, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the May 3, 2017 Regular Meeting.

**4. Reflections – How are we doing?**

Mr. Allen advised that the VSBA is encouraging boards to have a ‘vision’, and set goals. In response to the question regarding how the school is performing this year, Mrs. McCarthy advised that she believes BTMES provides a strong education, and would like administrators and staff to continue to strive to provide the best education for students. Mrs. McCarthy expressed concern regarding communication, which she believes is sometimes lacking or incomplete (this includes communication with students and parents). It would be beneficial to devise an improved way to inform students regarding decisions that are made. A few examples of communication gaps or misunderstandings that have occurred were provided. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding methods for administrators to ‘stop rumors’ from spreading. It was noted that at times, students are misinformed regarding various issues, and are quickly spreading information that is incorrect. Mr. Allen advised that the Board should not dictate strategies to administrators, but rather, should advise administrators of the issues. Mrs. McCarthy commended the 6<sup>th</sup> grade leadership team, which she feels is very strong, but noted that she believes homework is lacking in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Mrs. McCarthy queried regarding readiness for implementation of Proficiency Based Learning/Grading, including the use of consistent language, use of common standards, and coordination with BCEMS and SHS.

**Define Goals for this coming year:**

• **Educational**

Consider giving recess to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Ask teaching staff to suggest ideas to assist students with better focus and learning skills.

Assist families by providing a list of expectations and ways to assist their students.

Provide a more robust after school program which perhaps includes a meal. Increase participation in after school program(s).

- **Financial**

Concern was voiced regarding the current policy for dealing with negative food service balances / 'food shaming'. Mr. Allen provided an overview of the changes implemented to the food lunch program relating to those with negative balances, and the history relating to why the changes were implemented (increases in negative balances). Can BTMES/Abbey Group develop new strategies to hold parents accountable for payment of negative accounts? Does the school qualify for the Universal Food Service Program? It is doubtful that the school qualifies for this program. Mrs. Hutchinson will research this matter.

Concern was voiced regarding increasing costs for Special Education and Transportation of Special Education students.

- **Social / Community**

Consider having 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade students volunteer at the Food Bank a few times a month.

- **Communication**

In response to concerns raised under Agenda Item #4 (Reflections), the Board discussed having an annual anonymous 'school improvement survey' or 'morale survey', engaging the community to submit input using paper and electronic surveys (Survey Monkey).

## **5. Directions**

- **What do we want to do differently?**

Improve communication

Revisit the school lunch program issue

Revisit 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade recess

Revisit the issue of lack of homework for 7<sup>th</sup> graders

Look at ways to improve school safety (It was noted that overall, the community feels comfortable with safety at the school).

Query the community regarding Act 46 (Act 46 action will be discussed at the Tri-Board Meeting).

- **What do we want our school to be?**

Keep BTMES a safe environment that provides a quality education.

- **How do we want our school to feel?**

Continue to keep the community comfortable that students are safe when they are at the school.

- **What do we expect and want for our students?**

Continue to keep BTMES a warm and inviting place for students and families.

- **What do we expect and want for our teachers?**

Have a 'morale' check-in with teachers – impact of negotiations (survey?).

Fear of one Board Member that public actions of some teachers (attendance at protests) may negatively impact students.

Assure that teachers are knowledgeable of the subject matter they are teaching.

Assure teachers are unified and knowledgeable regarding the implementation (with consistency) of Proficiency Based Grading.

- **What do we expect and want for our support personnel?**

Substitute teachers - more extensive training (including taking a more extensive on-line class – for subs who want to be certified)

Behavioral Interventionists – teach protocols

Maintenance Personnel – No discussion

Clerical Staff – No discussion

- **What do we expect and want for our administrators?**

Have administrators spend additional time in the classrooms.

Review how administrators delegate tasks.

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

Mrs. McCarthy advised that her term expires in March 2018 and that she will not be running for re-election.

Mr. Allen's term also expires in March 2018. Mr. Allen is undecided regarding whether or not he will run for re-election.

Mr. Paterson and Mrs. Hutchinson's terms expire in March 2019. It is not known whether or not they will run for re-election.

Mrs. Farrell's term expires in March 2020.

**The following portion of the meeting commenced at 4:05 p.m. and included the Superintendent and Administrators**

**7. Update on Board Reflection & Direction**

It was announced that Jacob Allen received the VAMLE award. Jacob was honored by the Vermont Association for Middle Level Education in conjunction with the New England League of Middle Schools. Chad Allen began the meeting by noting his appreciation to all administrators and staff for the long hours and tremendous effort they put forth to benefit the students. Mr. Allen advised he was sorry to see Julia Pritchard leave BTMES. Discussion was held regarding improved communication, including the possibility of PSAs, letters to parents, phone calls, e-mails, staff meetings, creation of an SOP (Standard Operating Procedures), assigning specific tasks to specific staff members, and creation of a CRT (Crisis Response Team). Mr. Griggs advised that administrators have been working with staff regarding communication protocols. Regarding safety improvements, Ms. Pritchard stressed that being predictable, dependable, and consistent, helps to create a safe environment. Ms. Pritchard also stressed the importance of listening to students (“hear their voice”). Administrators were asked to reflect on the school lunch policy (concern of “lunch shaming”), and to meet with Abbey Group to discuss additional options to deal with negative balances. Administrators advised that Free/Reduced lunch forms are sent out several times a year and that they do directly communicate with parents regarding outstanding balances, and the assistance options that are available. It was noted that bagged lunches were only distributed 2 or 3 times in the past school year, and that most outstanding balances were from families that could afford to pay for lunches, but were being remiss in making payments. Parents were contacted and advised in advance regarding the distribution of bagged lunches if balances were not paid. Parents had the option to pay balances or send lunch in with their students. It was noted that the new practice has resulted in a significant drop in outstanding accounts (from approximately \$12,000, down to \$2000). Mrs. Hutchinson advised that she completed research regarding the school’s eligibility for Universal Food Service, and BTMES is not eligible. The Board also shared the idea of seeking feedback regarding ‘morale’/‘climate’/ and satisfaction levels with the school. It would be beneficial to seek feedback from the community (students and parents), as well as staff. Feedback may be gathered by use of an annual survey. Administrators were asked to consider reinstating recess for 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and were asked to provide information regarding preparedness for the implementation of proficiency based grading. It was noted that implementation should include use of consistent language (with BCMES and SHS), and grading on an aligned set of standards. It was noted that standards are being coordinated with BCEMS. It was noted that consistency in PBG also applies to ‘Habits of Learning’ categories. Mr. Griggs advised that BTMES is as ready as possible for the implementation of PBG, but, as with any new implementation, there will be a few issues to work out once the system has gone live. Mrs. McCarthy voiced concerns that ‘evidences’ are not “built in” yet, and requested assurance that procedures are in place to assure that all students are able to receive the extra help they need in order to qualify and pass reassessments. Staff should be advised that providing additional instruction to students may result in their having to put in extra time. It was noted that staff seem to be receptive to the new grading system. Communication, information, and support are all critical to assure a smooth transition to the new grading system. Staff members are pleased with the additional safety measures that have been implemented. Mr. Allen advised that he would represent the Board at the staff recognition luncheon on the last day of school (Friday, June 16, 2017 at 12:30 p.m.).

**8. Review Class Numbers/Ratios**

Two documents were distributed; the BTMES 2017 – 2018 Anticipated Staffing document and the BTMES Monthly Enrollment report for May 31, 2017. Mrs. Nye provided an overview of the documents, noting that pre-school currently has 106 students registered and there are 6 openings remaining. It was noted that Sandra Cameron will provide an updated pre-school report for the next meeting.

**9. Resign/Retire/New Hires**

A letter of resignation from School Nurse, Tanya Crawford-Stempel, RN,MSN was distributed. Resumes and BSU Notification of Employment Status Forms from Katie Jarvis, Lorna Corbett, Elizabeth (Libby) Lane, and Kristina Zapora were distributed.

Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding Tanya Crawford-Stempel’s letter of resignation requesting a release from her signed Letter of Intent.

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mrs. Hutchinson, the Board unanimously voted to accept, with regrets and best wishes, the resignation of Tanya Crawford-Stempel, and agreed to release her from her obligation under her signed Letter of Intent.**

Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the candidates’ education and experience, and Mrs. Nye advised that the candidates were able to spend time in the classrooms.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Board unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation and approved the hiring of Katie Jarvis, Lorna Corbett, RN, BSN, CLC, Elizabeth (Libby) Lane, and Kristina Zapora.**

**This following portion of the meeting commenced at 5:12 p.m**

**10. Budget Update – FY17 Financial Status**

The BTMES FY17 Expenditures/Year-end Projection report dated June 8, 2017, was distributed. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview advising of an anticipated (unaudited) surplus of \$66,506, resulting from larger than expected revenue. Mrs. Perreault provided some insight into the IDEA grant (for transportation of Special Education Students), and advised that revenue from the sale of buses will occur in FY18 and that the amount of revenue is not known at this time.

### **11. Transportation Update**

Two documents were distributed; a draft letter to Barre Town Families, and a copy of a letter to Wendy Thacker (AFSCME Council 93), dated 05/30/17 pertaining to the layoff of bus drivers resulting from the change to contracted busing services. Mr. Allen recognized Mrs. Murray and Administrators for their effort and perseverance in dealing with the numerous busing issues. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding a letter sent to STA thanking them for their efforts assisting with the busing issues, and noted their extra effort, including collaboration with other school districts (Williamstown and Washington) in an effort to provide services to BTMES. Mrs. Murray reported that the busing situation is stabilizing, with STA doing 2 more runs per day though there are new issues that arise daily. There is concern that some buses are experiencing mechanical issues. The mechanical issues may impact whether or not STA will be willing to purchase them or may impact how much STA will be willing to pay. Mrs. Nye reported on the weekly letters that go out to parents and referred the Board to the letter that was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the very informative meeting held on June 7, 2017.

### **12. Facilities Update**

Two Documents were distributed; BTMES Facility Projects Summer 2017 and 'BTMES Facility Projects, Etc...Summer 2017, 6/8/17'. Mr. Evans advised regarding the rooms slated for flooring replacement (Rooms 162, 163, 203, and 221). Administrators will decide whether to replace the existing floors with carpet or floor tile. Prior to floor installation, asbestos testing will be performed. Bids for flooring installation are pending. Mr. Evans advised regarding roof replacement in the multipurpose gym (in Wing A). This major repair involves installation of new rubber material along all existing seams and the perimeter. The penthouse requires installation of wall insulation and re-roofing. The low bid for roofing work is \$76,000. Two different bids were requested for paving. The first bid includes paving the main parking lot, and driveways leading up to and around the woodchip building. These areas are in the most need of repair/replacement. The second bid includes paving the area surrounding the back of the building. The low bid for all work is \$261,850. Mr. Evans advised that the air conditioning unit that serves the A Wing has failed. Additional air conditioner work, to be performed in the near future, includes replacement of coils. The low bid for air conditioning work is \$43,950. Mr. Evans advised regarding the installation of new digital cameras (completed), as well as discussion relating to the installation of additional cameras and additional card readers. It was noted that the installation of window film has increased the safety of students and staff. Ms. Pearson advised that she met with Buzz Dodge regarding bringing an SRO (Student Resource Officer) to BTMES. The COPS grant may be used to fund this endeavor. In response to a query from Mrs. Nye, Mr. Evans advised that he needs to obtain fencing quotes. Mr. Evans advised that there are no State or grant monies available for the purchase/installation of a generator. Mr. Evans believes that costs relating to the purchase and installation of a generator should be the Town's obligation, as it is the Town that wants to use the facility as an emergency shelter. It was noted that Mr. Pandolfo will be presenting bid recommendations at the June 14, 2017 Board Meeting.

### **13. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 5:54 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*