

BTMES SCHOOL BOARD MEETING – SUMMER RETREAT
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School – 2nd Floor Conference Room
June 6, 2018 – 8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alice Farrell - Chair
Jay Paterson – Vice Chair
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins – Clerk
Chris Hull
Victoria Pompei

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent – arrived at 10:47 a.m.
Scott Griggs, Principal - arrived at 10:47 a.m.
Jennifer W. Nye, Principal - arrived at 10:47 a.m.
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal - arrived at 10:47 a.m.
Donald McMahon, Director of Special Services - arrived at 10:47 a.m. and departed at 12:14 p.m.

GUESTS PRESENT:

Gina Akley
Terri Murray – Transportation Coordinator (arrived at 1: 03 p.m.)

1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair, Mrs. Farrell, called the Wednesday, June 6, 2018, BTMES Board Retreat meeting to order at 8:41 a.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School in the 2nd Floor Conference Room.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Parking Update – will be discussed as part of the Facilities Update
Add 10f – Superintendent’s Report

3. Visitors and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Approval of Minutes – May 16, 2018 Special Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the May 16, 2018 Special Meeting, the Minutes of the May 2, 2018 Regular Meeting, and the Minutes of the May 17, 2018 Tri-Board Meeting.

4.2. Approval of Minutes – May 2, 2018 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins was not present at the May 2, 2018 meeting, but would like the record of today’s meeting to reflect that she disagrees with the policy relating to Warrants. Minutes of the May 2, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved under Agenda Item 4.1.

4.3. Approval of Minutes – May 17, 2018 Tri-Board Meeting

Minutes of the May 17, 2018 Tri-Board Meeting were approved under Agenda Item 4.1.

5. Reflections

Board Members were asked to review the Minutes from the June 2017 Retreat, the Strategic Plan from the Agency of Education, and the Governor’s State of the State 2018 document. All documents were distributed to Board Members prior to the meeting.

Mrs. Farrell provided some background information, advised that a strategic plan is in effect until 2019 and advised that discussions continue in the areas of Education Funding, Act 46, and equity in education for schools of all sizes throughout the state.

5.1 Discussion of Issues Currently Facing the BTMES School:

5.1.a. Act 46: Report of the Co-chair of the 706 Committee (Gina Akley)

Mrs. Akley addressed the Board providing an overview of the Committee’s work. Seven meetings have been held, and much has been accomplished including a review of the previous Study Committee’s Final Report, receipt of updated financial information and student performance data, a review of the pros and cons, discussions with Board Chairs from recently merged districts, discussion of Board structure, and review/revisions to the previous Articles of Agreement. Revisions to the Articles of Agreement focused mainly on items that were of concern to Barre Town voters, including restructuring of schools, school choice, redistricting, school closure, and board structure. Recurring questions include how consolidation would improve the quality of education, and actual savings

amounts. The Committee agreed that these two items cannot be fully predefined, as improvements in education and financial efficiencies will be ongoing in a merged district. Ongoing improvements would be implemented under a new board and education improvements/changes are not defined in the Articles of Agreement, but rather would be discovered and implemented under the direction of a new board. It is agreed that a collective responsibility for students in Pre-K through 12th grade would be beneficial. Mrs. Akley advised regarding some of the sensitive Articles of Agreement and advised that the Superintendent has drafted revised Articles of Agreement in accordance with the Committee's wishes. The Superintendent also crafted a new Warning for the Articles of Agreement. Wording of the Warning is critical to assure that Articles cannot be changed by the board without voter approval. It was noted that the Draft Statewide Plan didn't include Barre. If a merger is forced, there is the possibility that Barre could be merged with Twinfield. A merger with Twinfield may not be beneficial depending on existing deficits, and transportation costs (if students were to relocate). Mr. Hull queried regarding holding a public forum to answer questions from the community. Mrs. Pompei suggested that an on-line forum for questions might also be beneficial. Next steps include continued review of the Warning and Articles of Agreement, a Committee decision regarding whether or not to hold a vote, a possible marketing campaign (if a vote is to be held), and discussion of a vote date (if a vote is to be held). It was noted that a November vote, which would most likely show a larger voter turnout, may not be preferred by the State, given Act 46 deadlines (the Final Statewide Plan is due by 11/30/18). Brief discussion has been held regarding the time commitment for members of a consolidated board, and misinformation to voters regarding school restructuring, which would be nearly impossible to do given statute regarding building placement (1st floor) of younger students. Assurances in the Articles of Agreement should alleviate community member concerns. Some believe that a third vote may be offensive to voters, and difficult to pass. A good marketing campaign would be necessary. There is concern regarding negative information being conveyed via social media, and by parents and teachers. Mrs. Akely feels that a new vote should be held and that voters should be well informed of the facts before voting. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding what argument could be made to the State, to convince them that BTMES should not be merged. Mrs. Pompei advised that even with local control, things don't always turn out well. Mrs. Pompei conveyed concern regarding a recent event at BTMES that she feels should have been handled differently.

5.1.b. Teacher Retention, Staffing, Programming, Professional Development

Mrs. Farrell expressed concern regarding staff that are leaving, and suggested that an anonymous survey (of teachers) be conducted. Mrs. Farrell believes some staff may be reluctant to share concerns as they fear they may be treated poorly for speaking out. Mrs. Pompei read a letter from a SPED staff member who is leaving. The staff member advised that the past year has been difficult/trying, and there are concerns regarding poor communication, and lack of support. Mr. Hull advised that some individuals were not given an opportunity to receive an extension on their contract. Mrs. Pompei clarified that, per the teacher contract, any teacher who wanted an extension, received one. Extensions, in addition to the first, contractually guaranteed extension, are optional. Mr. Hull read a prepared statement advising of information he received regarding a staff member who advised that he did not receive a requested extension on his/her contract renewal. This matter will be discussed with the Superintendent in Executive Session. Mrs. Farrell advised that the State is compiling a 'Climate Survey', and suggested that the Board develop a similar survey and have it distributed before the end of the current school year. Mrs. Pompei will create a survey. Board Members should send an e-mail to Mrs. Pompei regarding any specific questions they would like included in the survey. The 'Board Survey' will be distributed no later than Wednesday, June 13, 2018.

5.1c. Define Goals for this Coming Year:

5.1.c.1. Educational

The Board reviewed the defined goals as documented in the June 2017 Retreat Meeting. A document titled 'Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): What You Need To Know' was distributed. A document from the AOE titled 'Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports for Students Who Struggle' was also distributed.

Goals for the coming year include:

- See that all students receive opportunities to succeed
- See that all students have access to the appropriate supplies and materials
- Re-explore outdoor time for upper grades
- Re-explore creation of an after-school program
- Examination of the restructuring of Special Education
- Expand the Mentoring Program
- Assure equitable learning opportunities for all students (general education and special education), including supports and staffing
- Foster more inclusiveness of SPED students
- Address the fear that Tier II kindergarten students may 'lose ground'

5.1.c.2. Financial

An untitled six page document containing purchasing information was distributed. Mrs. Pompei provided an overview of the document which details past purchases and a comparison of costs using various vendors. Mrs. Pompei voiced concern regarding use of personal printers, and the costs associated with those printers.

Goals for the upcoming year include:

- Assure that finances are handled properly
- Increase electronic communication

Review credit card late fees
Review/improve purchasing practices

5.1.c.3. Social/Community

No discussion was held.

5.1.c.4. Communication to Include Discussion of the Pending Community Engagement Technical Assistance Grant

No discussion was held.

5.1.c.5. Policy Review: Policies Which Need Review, Movement, or Input by BSU Policy Committee (Review list of BTMES Policies)

Four documents were distributed; 'Possible Policies to Rescind', 'Possible Policies to Consider for SU', 'Policies that could be moved to handbooks', and 'BT Policies to Keep as District Policy'. No discussion was held.

6. Is There Anything Do We Want to Continue or Have Done Differently?

Agenda Items 6 and 6a through 6e were tabled.

6a. What do we want our school to be?

6b. What do we expect and want for our students?

6c. What do we expect from and want for our teachers?

6d. What do we expect from and want for our support personnel?

6e. What do we expect from and want for our administrators?

7. Board Member Concerns, Ideas, Items of Importance

No discussion was held.

8. Update on Board Reflection & Direction: including questions and concerns about school operations, community engagement, communication and reports to the Board etc.

The Board advised administrators regarding discussion held earlier in the meeting, including; Act 46, teacher retention, staffing, school climate, a perceived large number of resignations, educational goals, and financial goals.

The Board queried regarding the underlying reason for turnover. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the rate of turnover is typical, and is actually less than last year. Last year there were 11 resignations, this year there have been 8. In response to concern by the Board that 3 Special Education staff members are leaving, it was noted that more left last year (4). The Board believes that there is a/specific problem(s) that are increasing the number of resignations. It was noted that some of the known reasons for resignation include individuals who are moving out of state, some are changing careers, and some leave to work closer to where they reside. Mr. Hull advised he had a letter from a teacher who was displeased that they were not given an extension to sign their contract.

The Board expressed concern regarding purchasing practices and contracts. Mrs. Pompei provided an overview of the document she created based on an 'audit' of past purchases. Administrators will look into purchases of toner and ink and the late fee associated with a credit card (BSU). Mr. Pandolfo advised that most grants require checking prices with 3 vendors. Mrs. Nye advised that consideration has to be given to the time involved by staff if they are required to seek multiple prices for every purchase. Mrs. Nye will discuss purchasing concerns with staff. The Board would like the school's tax exempt number given to all employees who may be making purchases. Mrs. Farrell would like a review of preferred vendors, purchase practices, and use of the tax exempt number. Should the grant purchasing procedures be used for all purchases? That process would probably be too cumbersome and time consuming.

9. Review Class Numbers/Ratios/Staffing

Three documents were distributed; the BTMES Monthly Enrollment Report (for June 1, 2018), the BTMES 2018-2019 Anticipated Staffing Report, and an e-mail from Mr. McMahon, dated May 29, 2018 regarding student/SPED Teacher Ratios. It was noted that the list does not include information regarding the four alternative classrooms. Alternative classroom information will be provided. Mrs. Nye advised that staffing plans are determined using a combination of ideal size class ratios, class size limits, policy and enrollment numbers. There is a possibility that up to 11 kindergarten students may be retained, thus the kindergarten numbers will most likely flex. The current proposed staffing chart reflects no additional teachers. Mr. McMahon advised that SPED staffing plans are determined by factors which include a review of caseload size (caseloads sizes ranged from 8 to 14), case manager ratios (6 case managers, with 14 students each), and a review of 'straight averages' for each school. BCEMS averages 13.5, SHS averages 12.4, and BTMES averages 9.8. The 9.8 would increase to 11.1 (still lower than the other schools) using 2 less special educators. There is concern regarding how Special Education information is being spread to the public, and 'fake news' that is being circulated. Mr. McMahon advised that staffing needs are based on the service plans put in place for students, and that we need to be more cognizant regarding how services are delivered. Mr. Pandolfo stressed that change is difficult for people. Though it is not a fact, information is being circulated that changes to the delivery of special education means educators are being spread thin, and that students are not getting required services. The BSU is trying to implement 'best practices' and has to take into consideration

information from the State regarding cost and staff ratios that are considered too high. Mr. McMahon advised that the list of case managers and assignments has been reviewed, and assignments have been altered to produce the best fit possible for students and staff. Para-educators are assigned both to individual students and to groups of students. Representation from all sides was present when para-educator planning occurred. Mrs. Nye reiterated that all factors are given consideration in an effort to see that all needs are being met. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding the elimination of a Tier II para-educator in Pre-k. Mr. Pandolfo advised that there may not be one less individual, or a decrease in overall staff, but rather a shift in employees may be the case. Mr. Pandolfo will research and report back on this matter. There were no additional questions from the Board relating to Special Education staffing and services.

The Board advised that they would like a teacher survey distributed by June 13, 2018. Mr. Pandolfo suggested the Board utilize one of the administrative assistants to help with distribution.

Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins is not comfortable that Warrants are not brought to Board Meetings, for all Board Members to review prior to approval. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins believes that due diligence is not performed prior to signing Warrants. Mr. Pandolfo advised that there is a conflict with Board Meeting weeks and AP Warrant/Payroll weeks. The current procedure allows for Warrants to be reviewed at the Central Office prior to approval by the BTMES designees. Mr. Pandolfo will check with the Business Manager regarding the availability of Warrant copies (recently signed or pending).

10. Personnel

10a. Potential Teacher Retention Survey

No discussion was held.

10b. Formal New Hire Procedures

There were no questions or discussion regarding the procedures used to approve new hires.

10c. Negotiations Update

A negotiation session was held with para-educators on May 30, 2018. Ground rules were not established. Two additional sessions have been scheduled; 06/14/18 and 07/12/18. It may be beneficial to create a one year Agreement in an effort to have a contract in place before the start of the new school year. If the school year starts without a contract, teachers still receive raises, but para-educators do not. Teacher negotiations will begin in the fall.

10d. Ratification of AFSCME Agreement

Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview, including discussion of steps taken to lessen the inequity in custodial pay (there is a big discrepancy between BTMES and other schools in the district) and requested that the Board approve ratification of the '2 year term' AFSCME Agreement. It is anticipated that the union will ratify the Agreement on Friday, June 8, 2018.

On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to ratify the AFSCME Agreement.

10e. Resign/Retire/New Hire

Letters of resignation from Phil Joyal and Jessica Basmadjian Moos were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the letters of resignation. Mr. Joyal is taking a position as a high school Athletic Director, a position he has been working towards for many years. Ms. Moos has accepted a position much closer to her home.

On a motion by Mr. Hull, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of Phil Joyal.

On a motion by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of Jessica Basmanjian Moos.

The resumes and BSU Notification of Employment Status Forms for Emily Jones (7th grade Science), Sherri Allen (4th grade ELA/Social Studies), and Ashley McIntyre (7th grade ELA) were distributed.

Mr. Griggs provided an overview of Ms. Jones' education and experience.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Emily Jones.

Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of Ms. Allen's education and experience, noting that Ms. Allen has been very active at BTMES.

On a motion by Mr. Hull, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Sherri Allen.

Mr. Pandolfo and Mr. Griggs advised regarding Ms. McIntyre's education and experience. In response to a query regarding the salary, it was noted that the listed salary is where Ms. McIntyre falls on the pay scale. Many times new hires result in savings, other times an increase occurs.

On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Ashley McIntyre.

10e. Superintendent's Report

A copy of the Superintendent's Report dated May 31, 2018 was distributed. The report included information pertaining to; Negotiations, the Legislative Session, Act 46, School Safety, and Employment Contracts. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the BSU did receive the Community Engagement Grant.

11. Budget Update – FY18 Financial Status

Four reports were distributed; BTMES Revenue Summary Report (dated 06/03/18), the BTMES FY18 Expenditure/Year-end Projection Report (dated 06/06/18), the BTMES Expenditures Report (dated 06/03/18), and the BSU Budget FY18 Report (dated 06/03/18). BTMES has an unaudited projected deficit of \$102,856. Mr. Pandolfo believes the year-end projection is fairly accurate and will not vary much by the closing of FY18.

11a. BT F/F/T Committee Structure & Content

Mr. Paterson advised that no Committee structure change has been requested. There has been brief discussion regarding hiring an architect or consultant to assist with planning of long term maintenance. Ms. Pearson advised regarding a company that has offered to perform a free consultation. It is believed that efforts to create a '5 year plan' are continuing. It is felt that discussion of facility related items took a 'back seat' to budget development. It may be beneficial to pre-schedule some meetings to assure that facility needs are addressed.

11b. FY19 Revenue Anticipation Note Comparison

A document titled 'FY19 Revenue Anticipation Note Comparison 5/14/18' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the comparison document and advised why a RAN is necessary. It is the Superintendent's recommendation to utilize Community Bank for the Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN).

On a motion by Mr. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation and agreed to contract with Community Bank for the Revenue Anticipation Note for FY2019.

Three documents were distributed for signatures.

11c. Year End Projection

This Agenda Item was discussed under Agenda Item 11.

12. Transportation Update

Transportation has run more smoothly this year than last year. Versatrans software is being used to assist with route planning. BTMES would like to plan some consolidated stops in the 2018 – 2019 school year. Mr. Pandolfo advised that in the fall, elementary school teachers were staying with students until the A run buses returned to the school for the B run. A teacher filed a grievance, which is currently in arbitration. It was announced that all but one bus driver is returning for the 18/19 school year. It is hoped that there will be adult riders on all buses in the 2018/2019 school year. Bus run A currently has 6 buses; it will have 7 next year. It is anticipated that the additional bus will help alleviate the issue of the one bus that is consistently late. Pre-k will need an additional bus at additional cost (minimum 2 hours a day for 180 school days).

12a. Second and Final Reading BSU Transportation Policy (F9)

A copy of the policy was distributed. There were no comments or questions from the Board.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Paterson, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the BSU Transportation Policy (F9), and agreed to ratify said policy.

13. Facility Updates:

13 a. Immediate Summer Work: Parking Lot Layout and Paint, Flooring, and Roofing

A document titled 'BTMES 2018 Summer Projects' was distributed. Mrs. Nye advised that the document provides additional detail of upcoming projects. Areas of major concern include visitor parking during high traffic times and parents parking in 'no parking' zones. Much discussion has been held regarding these issues, though a resolution has not been identified. It was noted that visitor parking spaces may be moved to a different location in the parking lot.

13b. Long Term Maintenance/Improvements: Maintenance Survey, Safety Survey, Roofing, Ventilation, Lighting, Wall Structure, and Storage

Long term maintenance projects will be discussed at the next Facilities Committee meeting. Discussion should include a review of the results from the canopy inspection performed by architect David Lauren.

13c. Athletic Field Land Transfer

The deed was scheduled to be signed on May 29, 2018. It was noticed that the deed allowed for Town use of the parking lot for athletic field related activities, but the deed doesn't indicate that the school can use the athletic fields.

13d. A.L.I.C.E. & School Security

The BSU has purchased the on-line training program. Individuals needing training, can use the 1 ½ hour on-line training program, then attend a 1 ½ hour of scenario training. A.L.I.C.E. representatives would like to use the school for training next year. For allowing the use of the school, the BSU will receive 4 Trainer spots worth \$2000. On June 1, 2018 the State Safety Grant information was released. The grant allows for a maximum of \$25,000 per school. Mr. Evans is starting to work on the grant application, and is identifying items the schools should purchase/install. The grant requires a 1 to 4 match. If each school receives \$25,000, the schools will each need to spend \$6,250.

14. Continuous Improvement Plan

A copy of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) (dated March 2018) for BTMES was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the document and advised that Board approval is being requested. It was noted that the document being presented today is not the entire Plan. Mrs. Nye advised regarding academic goals and goals relating to 'safe and healthy schools'. It was noted that the plan is updated based on data analysis. Data is also reviewed to assist with Professional Development planning.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to approved the March 2018 Continuous Improvement Plan as presented.

15. Questions, Concerns, Ideas Applicable to the Above Areas Including Next Board Meeting Date an Potential Topics

Upcoming meetings are:

Regular Board Meeting -Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library

Regular Board Meeting - Wednesday, September 5, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library

Finance/Facility/Transportation Meeting – Wednesday, September 19, 2018 in the BTMES Library

The Board advised administrators that they would like to see improved communication, implementation of a mentoring program, opportunities for upper grades to spend more time outdoors, and assurance that equitable opportunities are available to all students.

Ms. Pearson advised that the COPS Grant is due June 7, 2018. It is hoped that the grant can be used to hire a School Resource Officer. Only law enforcement personnel can fill the Resource Officer position.

16. Executive Session

16.1 Employment of Employees

Employment of Employees was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo in attendance, at 1:58 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion.

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

On a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 2:57 p.m.

17. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, seconded by Mr. Hull, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 2:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin