

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School – Library
November 15, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chad Allen - Chair
Jay Paterson – Vice Chair
Alice Farrell - Clerk
Kristin McCarthy

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vacant Position

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Scott Griggs, Principal
Jennifer W. Nye, Principal
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal – arrived at 5:39 p.m.
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager – departed at 7:26 p.m.

GUESTS PRESENT:

Video Vision Tech Pat MacAskill

1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair, Mr. Allen, called the Wednesday, November 15, 2017, Regular meeting to order at 5:36 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 5.2 – Process for Board Member Interviews

3. Visitors and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

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

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

5. New Business

5.1 Report Card Discussion

Two documents were distributed; ‘November 15, 2017 – BTMES Board Meeting – Proficiency-Based Grading: Concerns & Questions’, and ‘November 15, 2017 – Barre Town Middle Elementary School Board Meeting – Proficiency-Based Grading - Concerns, Questions and Action Steps’. Mrs. Nye advised that she has discussed areas of concern with Mrs. Tolman and proceeded to provide an overview of the Concerns & Questions document. Mrs. Nye plans to send a FAQs letter with Quarter 2 report cards. Mrs. McCarthy queried regarding whether or not students are where they should be (academically) at the time report cards are printed. It was noted that some standards take more than one quarter to meet, thus there may be some standards where students can’t be recorded as proficient at the time of the quarterly report card. Mrs. McCarthy voiced concern that teachers are not consistent regarding additional work that needs to be done (assessments vs. ‘practice’) for students needing to improve their grades. Mr. Griggs provided an overview of the Concerns, Questions and Actions Steps document noting that Proficiency Based Grading has been fully implemented this year for Middle School students. Many good questions have been received. Mr. Griggs noted that Habits of Learning should be proficient in each marking quarter, but reiterated that not all standards can be completed in each quarter, which results in some grades being reported as less than proficient. There is a link on the BTMES website that parents can use to access additional information on Proficiency Based Learning/Grading. Parents are encouraged to contact administrators and/or staff with any questions. Mrs. McCarthy stressed that it is important for students (and parents) to check Infinite Campus regularly, and take the necessary steps to improve grades. Mrs. McCarthy advised that staff have been very responsive responding to questions. Ms. Pearson advised that the ‘teacher comments’ did not print on the Q1 report cards, but steps are being taken to resolve this issue and teacher comments will be printed on the Q2 report cards. In response to a query regarding what is done for students who have met the standards, it was noted that under pre-proficiency based learning/grading, accommodations continue for high achievers. Mr. Paterson

voiced concern that an overwhelming amount of resources may need to be devoted to assist students with improving their work (to reach proficiency).

5.2 Process for Board Member Interviews

Mr. Allen advised that two letters of interest have been received thus far. Mr. Pandolfo advised that potential board member interviews are usually put on the board meeting agenda. Interested candidates attend the board meeting to meet and speak with Board Members. After 'interviews', the Board votes to appoint a new board member. The appointee then needs to be sworn in by the Town Clerk, prior to conducting Board Member activities. It was agreed that Board Members would compose a list of questions for candidates. Lists of questions should be forwarded to Mr. Allen. The December 6, 2017 Board Meeting will commence at 5:30 p.m. The Board will meet candidates at that time and present questions to each candidate.

6. Old Business

6.1 Budget Development

6.1.1 Budget Draft #1 Presentation

A copy of screen shots from a Power Point Presentation titled 'Barre Town Middle & Elementary School Proposed FY19 Budget DRAFT #1' (dated 11/15/17) was distributed. The BTMES 2018 – 2019 Anticipated Staffing document was also distributed. Mrs. Perreault advised that this year's budget presentation was put together by her and administrators and would differ from those in the past, as it highlights the positive attributes of the school, rather than focusing solely on numbers. Mrs. Perreault began the presentation with the 'BTEMS Way' (expectations), followed by a brief overview of some of the school's attributes, including; Walk to School Day, pride in the facility and grounds, Physical Education, ECO (Educating Children Outdoors), Interventions and Extensions, the Crops by Kids garden, Race to Read (the summer reading program), Bridge Building (a very popular enrichment program), and Band/Chorus team building. Mrs. Perreault continued the presentation with an overview of the Budget Considerations, including Revenue Pressures (the State Education Fund deficit, the health insurance 'recapture', previous use of reserve funds, and changes to grant funding), and Expenditure Pressures; contractual obligations (unknown increases for salary/wages and health insurance), unfunded mandates, and the overall rising costs of additional items. It was noted that the deficit in the State Education Fund is projected to result in a 7 to 9 cent tax increase. This increase does not reflect increases that will result from budget increases. With this draft of the budget, combined with the Education Fund deficit, the projected tax increase is 15 cents. Mr. Pandolfo advised that just today, he received a letter advising that the deficit is now predicted to be \$80,000,000 (the budget presentation was based on a projected \$47,000,000 deficit). Mrs. Perreault advised regarding changes in assessments for Special Education. SPED funds will go directly to the BSU. The district SPED budgets will look lower. The SPED district assessment (net special education costs) will be based on child count. The local assessment from the BSU totals \$5,340,316, of which \$1,548,692 will be assessed to BTMES. The draft budget results in Education Spending of \$10,229,419, which is a cost of \$12,967 per equalized pupil. This represents a 7.6% increase in the cost per equalized pupil. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the 5 contributing factors affecting the tax rate, and advised that the Yield-Base Education/Base Tax Rate will be received in early December. It was noted that when the yield gets lower, the tax rate increases.

Mrs. Perreault advised regarding budget additions; salaries/benefits, increases to health insurance premiums, the VSTRS assessment (retirement program), Curriculum Specialists' salary and benefits, the BSU Communications Specialist and the new Financial Management System, field trips (the only addition under the control of the Board), and the Prekindergarten Substitute. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding reductions; use of Medicaid to offset the cost of a behavior interventionist, outside student placement, textbooks, Technology Education supplies/equipment, and Preschool tuition. The presentation continued with documentation of a comparison with neighboring/comparable schools, which shows that BTMES has one of the lowest cost per equalized pupil rates. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding mandated ballot language, which requires that the increase in cost per equalized pupil be published. Additionally, Mrs. Perreault summarized the budget goals and advised regarding the proposed Special Article seeking voter approval to transfer \$25,000 to the Capital Improvement Fund.

Mrs. Perreault requested direction from the Board regarding changes they may want for the budget. It was noted that the draft presented this evening has health insurance rates equal to the 2017/2018 rate though premiums will most likely increase. Mr. Paterson advised that he would like to see some proposed budget cuts. The goal presented by the Board was for a target of a 3% increase in areas that the Board controls. Mrs. Nye provided an overview of the 2018/2019 Anticipated Staff Report. Mr. Paterson requested that administrators report back with various scenarios (based on possible elimination of positions). The scenarios should reflect cuts of approximately \$300,000 and be presented at the 12/20/17 Board meeting. Mrs. Nye will share this information with staff for possible input. Mrs. Pearson advised that she assisted with the Positive Pie Pizza Card fundraiser (for field trips), and is hopeful that \$20,000 will be raised. Mrs. Nye is preparing a document regarding field trips requested by staff. The document includes where and when staff wish to take field trips.

6.1.2 Special Education Assessment

No additional discussion was held.

6.2 Act 46

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the BCEMS Board voted to enter into another 706 Study Committee with BTMES. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the process, which includes establishing a budget (\$5000 is recommended) and fixing the number of committee members. The budgeted amount is shared by the Boards based on equalized pupils. The Committee make-up must include a minimum of 1 member from each Board. Mr. Pandolfo stressed that the 706 Study Committee, rather than the Boards, has the responsibility/authority to decide whether or not to bring a merger proposal to the State. Mr. Allen asked community members to contact him if they were interested. Mr. Pandolfo will review the ad previously posted and will post a new ad.

7. Board Reports

7.1. Superintendent Report

A copy of a letter (dated 11/06/17) from David Van Deusen, Staff Representative – AFSCME Council 93, was distributed. A copy of a memo (dated 11/07/17) from Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, was distributed. The memo is regarding the 'Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Update Fall 2017'. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the new data reporting requirements and advised that the BSU would like to be the Infinite Campus pilot school. A copy of the BSU Newsletter was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the newsletter is sent to staff electronically. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the letter from Mr. Van Deusen, advising that AFSCME representatives are ready to begin negotiations for FY19. The negotiating team will meet on November 30, 2017 to discuss the Fact Finding report. Mr. Pandolfo encouraged Board Members to review Governor Scott's 11/15/17 memo. Mr. Pandolfo met with Ben Merrill regarding communications specialist work. Mr. Merrill has provided examples of effective budget PR documents.

7.2 Principals Report

The annual David Stefaniak Memorial Holiday Food and Gift Drive has started. 374 items have been collected thus far. The Harvest Luncheon, with grade 1 and 2 students (and parents) will be held on Thursday, November 16, 2017, from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

7.3 Committee Reports

7.3.1 Finance/Facilities/Transportation Committee – No discussion.

7.3.4 Verbal Report of BSU Committees – No discussion.

7.4 Financials

This item is tabled until the next Board meeting.

8. Future Agenda Items and Upcoming Committee Meetings

Facility/Transportation items that need to be discussed will be added to the next agenda.

BSU Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, November 16, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library

BSU Policy Committee – Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the BSU 2nd Floor Conference Room

BSU Curriculum Committee – Monday, November 27, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library

BTMES Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library

BTMES Finance/Facilities/Transportation Comm. – Wednesday, December 20, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the BTMES Library (THIS MEETING WILL BE WARNED AS A REGULAR BTMES BOARD MEETING)

9. Approval of Warrants

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

Administrators will look into the October roof repair charges.

10. Executive Session

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

11. Next Meeting Date

BTMES Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library

BTMES Finance/Facilities/Transportation Comm. – Wednesday, December 20, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the BTMES Library (THIS MEETING WILL BE WARNED AS A REGULAR BTMES BOARD MEETING)

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Paterson, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin