

BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION #61 SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School - Library
October 19, 2017 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

J. Guy Isabelle (SHS) - Chair
Chad Allen (BT)
Anthony Folland (SHS)
Paul Malone (SHS)
Tyler Smith (BC)
Sonya Spaulding (BC) – arrived at 6:25 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC) – Vice Chair
Alice Farrell (BT) - Clerk
Jennifer Hutchinson (BT)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent

GUESTS PRESENT:

Video Vision Tech Dave Delcore-Times Argus

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Isabelle, called the Thursday, October 19, 2017, meeting to order at 6:08 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda
Add 5.4 Resignations/Retirements/New Hires

3. Public Comment
None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 21, 2017 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 21, 2017 Regular Meeting.

4.2 Approval of Minutes – October 12, 2017 Tri-Board Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the October 12, 2017 Tri-Board Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 First Reading of the BSU Travel Reimbursement Policy (E11)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Mr. Isabelle provided a brief overview of this required policy.

On a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Allen, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the BSU Travel Reimbursement Policy (E11).

5.2 Debrief Legislative Discussion

Discussion was held to allow Board Members to provide feedback regarding the recent meeting with legislators. Commentary included; satisfaction in having the time to voice concerns and questions to legislators, ideas conveyed to legislators (regarding possible new legislation relating to unfunded mandates), possible inaccuracy of information provided by legislators (information which conflicts with information provided by Donna Russo-Savage), the outstanding question of whether or not the schools can be forced to consolidate (and tax incentives that will be lost as the result of a forced merge), completion of the merger previously discussed/voted on (to preserve tax incentives), and advising voters regarding the tax implications of a forced vs voluntary merger. The Board expressed its gratitude to legislators for attending the meeting. Mr. Pandolfo will be sending formal thank you notes to legislators.

5.3 ALICE Training

A copy of a letter from Guy D. Norwood, a document titled 'ALICE and Active Shooter Response Training', and information from the ALICE (Alert/Lockdown/Inform/Counter/Evacuate) website were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that this item is on the agenda as an initial informative session, and proceeded to provide an overview of the letter from Mr. Norwood (a parent and Agency of Human Services employee). It was noted that there are different options available for the Safety and Crisis Response Team to review. Mr. Pandolfo has been in contact with other SUs regarding their procedures. It was noted that ALICE training and last year's Active Shooter Response Training, are different types of training, with the latter being for law enforcement personnel. It was also noted that the SU's current response plans are being reviewed with the goal of identifying possible improvements and that the plans have been shared (for review and input) with the Vermont State School Safety Office and Homeland Security. There has been much discussion lately regarding various crisis situations (e.g. shooters, weather issues). Three staff members have attended ALICE training and strongly recommend that all staff be trained. The BCEMS SRO agrees with the recommendation. The Board was in agreement that the SU should continue moving forward with improving its crisis response policies and procedures. Discussion will be held at all district Board meetings.

5.4 Resignations/Retirements/New Hires

A letter of resignation from Patricia Petraro was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the resignation, noting that Ms. Petraro is leaving the teaching profession to pursue a new career (counselor). The resignation of this employee leaves SHS without a licensed case manager to work with a specified group of students. It is very challenging to recruit special educators during the hiring season, and is even more difficult during this time of the year. Though Mr. Pandolfo is reluctant to ask the Board to approve the employee's request for release from contract, the reality is that the employee has been hired elsewhere and will leave regardless of the Board's decision. **On a motion by Mr. Folland, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of Patricia Petraro.**

6. Old Business

6.1 Budget Development

6.1.1 Board Self-Assessment (from SU perspective)

A copy of the Budgeting and Financial Management Self-Assessment form was distributed. Mr. Isabelle polled the Board regarding their assessment, as it pertains to the SU budget process. Mr. Pandolfo recorded the responses. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he has received information regarding changing auditors on a 'fixed' timeframe. This change of auditors is to assist with integrity of audits. Though the BSU has been very satisfied with its current auditing firm, it may be time to begin looking into hiring a new auditor, as part of operating the BSU under 'best practices'.

6.1.2 State-Level Budget Implications

A student/teacher ratio report was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he has informed each district Board regarding the projected \$47 million dollar shortfall in the FY19 State Education Fund, and the implications of the shortfall (a 7 to 9 cent tax increase). Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the impact to the SU and statewide, including the impact on the BSU's standing as having one of the lowest cost per pupil amounts in the state. The anticipated increase will have a significant impact on the FY19 budget. It was noted that the FY 18 Teacher Contract is still not settled, and that negotiations for FY19 have not begun. These factors will make FY19 budget development very difficult. It was noted that the State may begin to impose student/staff ratios. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the student/teacher ratio report. There are many outstanding questions regarding the student/staff ratio calculations including which staff members are 'counted', whether or not student needs are factored in, recourse to challenge the numbers, and possible formulation of a new calculation for the SU.

6.1.3 Budget Goals – Salary Line Increases; Positions and Programs

Mr. Pandolfo queried the Board regarding their budget input so that he could relay any requests to the Business Manager. An example of a possible new position would be the hiring of a Communications Specialist. It was noted that there are still many 'unknowns', relating to salaries and benefits. The Special Education Service Plans have been submitted to the State.

6.2 Act 46

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the BCEMS Board hopes to make a decision (regarding 'next steps') at their November 13, 2017 Regular Board Meeting.

6.3 Board Communications

Mr. Pandolfo advised he has obtained information regarding the position of 'Communications Specialist' and distributed copies of job descriptions (with salaries) from other districts. Mr. Malone feels strongly that the district should hire a Communications Specialist and queried regarding 'pooling' unused funds from various line items, to cover the cost of hiring a PR individual. Mrs. Spaulding feels the Board should discuss what could be done this year, before discussing addition of a Communications Specialist in the FY 19 budget. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding the possibility of outsourcing some PR work this year. Both short and long term solutions should be discussed. It was noted that messages being conveyed to the public will need to be adjusted based on the intended audience (students, staff, parents, city council, tax payers, etc.). Mr. Isabelle queried regarding contracting with CVCC for PR work.

7. Other Business as Needed

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously agreed to ratify the Para-Educator Master Agreement.

8. Reports to the Board

8.1 Superintendent

A copy of the Superintendent's report dated October 19, 2017 was distributed for review and discussion. The report included information pertaining to the Superintendent's Office, the Business Office, Curriculum, Special Services, Technology, Early Education, Human Resources, and Facilities. Four additional documents were distributed; 'Original Timeline for 2018 VEHI Health Insurance Plans' (undated), 'Timeline for 2018 VEHI Health Insurance Plans Roll Out' (revised 10/01/17), Vermont Press Releases 'Barre Supervisory Union receives grant for Act 166 implementation', and a document titled 'What's new and what stays the same?', an informational document pertaining to the new health insurance programs (distributed by VEHI and BCBSVT). Mr. Pandolfo advised that all employees, except para-educators and teachers have received their health insurance enrollment packets. It was noted that the BSU Wellness policy meets the requirements of the new Federal Food Service Guidelines. There were no questions from the Board.

8.2 Committee Reports

8.2.1 Policy Committee

Minutes from the September 18, 2017 and October 16, 2017 meetings were distributed. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the BSU Upstairs Conference Room.

8.2.2 Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the September 25, 2017 meeting were distributed. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 23, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library.

8.2.3 Finance Committee

Minutes from the September 14, 2017 meeting were distributed. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 2017 in the SHS Library.

8.2.4 Negotiations Committee

Minutes from the September 25, 2017 meeting were distributed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, 2017. This will be a Teacher Fact-Finding Hearing.

8.3 Financials

The BSU FY17 Expenditures/Year-end Projection Report (dated 10/19/17) was distributed. There is an unaudited projected deficit of \$17,355. A copy of the BSU FY18 Budget was also distributed.

9. Executive Session as Needed

9.1 Labor Relations Agreements – Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation Strategies for Labor Relations Agreements was the only item proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mr. Folland, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the item proposed for discussion would clearly place the Barre Supervisory Union at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Folland, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo in attendance, at 8:28 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion.

The remaining information was provided by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Folland, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:47 p.m.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin