

BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION #61 SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School - Library
October 18, 2018 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

J. Guy Isabelle (SHS) – Chair
Victoria Pompei (BT) – Clerk
Alice Farrell (BT)
Anthony Folland (SHS)
Paul Malone (SHS)
Sonya Spaulding (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC) – Vice Chair
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins (BT)
Vacant Position (BC)

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 18, 2018, meeting to order at 6:06 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 9.1 Employment of Employees (under Executive Session)

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 20, 2018 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 20, 2018 Regular Meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Resignations/Retires/New Hires

The resume and BSU Notification of Employment Status Form for Dorothy Unkles was distributed.

Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the candidate's education and experience.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Dorothy Unkles.

5.2 November 15, 2018 Tri-Board Meeting

Mr. Pandolfo advised that he would like to hold a Tri-Board Meeting on November 15, 2018. This meeting will be in addition to the BSU Board Meeting. The meetings may be combined. A BSU Finance Committee Meeting precedes the Tri-Board Meeting (at 4:30 p.m.). The BSU portion of the meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. The Tri-Board Meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. The BCEMS Board meets on 11/12/18, at which time, an SU Board Representative will be appointed. The potential Agenda, which will be solidified after the Act 46 vote includes; SU Board; Superintendent's Report, Approval of the Financial Management Questionnaire, and Other Reports to the Board (if necessary), Tri-Board; Act 46, FY20 Budget Development, New Accountability (Annual Snapshot and Integrated Field Reviews), and possibly SBAC Reporting (if information is released).

6. Old Business

6.1 Act 46

A document titled 'Decision Points – Sec. 9 Proposals and Secretary's Proposed Statewide Plan Overview' was distributed.

A document providing tax rate changes (present and estimated under merger situations) was distributed. It was noted that the 'current' amount is based on FY2018 data, and that the estimated rate under merger situations does not include potential operational efficiencies or tax incentive savings.

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Act 46 Study Committee last met on 10/02/18. The Committee has lost 2 members (BC Representatives) due to members moving out of the district. There have been issues having a quorum at the meetings (There was not a quorum at the last 2 meetings). Two more meetings are scheduled; 10/25/18 and 11/13/18 (before and after the merger vote on 11/06/18). The ongoing work and meetings will use up the allocated budget.

Two State Board of Education Meetings were held in October. Two more are scheduled for November. The State Board of Education has hired their own legal counsel to assist with guidelines and criteria. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the Decision Points document noting that on page 2, districts labeled Decision Points 1 through 5, all have a common structure (Traditional Union High School Districts). On 4 of those 5 decision points (1, 2, 3, and 5), the SBOE made the decision to merge the districts. The decisions are considered 'provisional decisions' and will be finalized in the Final Plan. Due to the impending vote, the SBOE took no action on the Barre district (Decision Point #4). Mr. Pandolfo advised that after brief discussion, the SBOE decided against asking the Legislature to grant an extension on the deadline for final decisions on the remaining districts. Twinfield was listed on the Agenda, but was not discussed. Other discussion included whether or not community input should be considered. It was noted that financial incentives are not available for those districts that are forced to merge. If Barre voters vote to merge, they will receive tax incentives and will use the Articles of Agreement that were voted on. If Barre is forced to merge, they will not receive tax incentives and will have to operate under the Default Articles of Agreement defined by the SBOE. It was noted that much Act 46 information is available on the BSU web site, including a FAQs page that has been recently updated.

Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the tax rate changes document, advising that the information provided is an estimate only and that the totals do not include operational savings or tax incentives. It was noted that the Barre City debt goes down every year, as they are in year 3 of a 10 year loan. Comparing the data, all other towns (except Mt. Mansfield and Huntington) have a much bigger change in tax rate. The estimated tax rate changes are as follows: Barre City will go down 1.01%, and Barre Town will go up 1.12%. It was reiterated that these are estimates only and do not include operational efficiencies or tax incentives. Mr. Pandolfo has asked Mrs. Perreault to look at the budget data and fund balances to ascertain how they might impact the tax rates. Mr. Malone is concerned that a no vote will leave tax incentives 'on the table' and that a forced merger would create a very unbalanced board. Under a forced merger, the board will be made up of 2 representatives from each district. If Twinfield were merged with Barre, the Barre population (18,000) would be represented by 4 individuals. The Twinfield population (with a population of only 3,000 to 4,000) would also have 4 representatives. If Barre were forced to merge with only Barre City and Barre Town, the Board will be comprised of only 4 individuals (to run all 3 schools). Under a voluntary merger, the board will be comprised of 9 individuals. Mr. Isabelle reiterated the finding that there is much duplication in the Agendas for the district board meetings.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that community members have expressed that they are confused by some of the information on the informational pamphlet, specifically, the 'bubble' that advises on what results from a 'YES' vote. It was clarified that a 'yes' vote approves the consolidation of governance only and does not merge or close the schools. Merging and closing of schools would require voter approval. Mr. Pandolfo will pass Mrs. Spaulding's concerns on to Gina Akley. Mr. Isabelle cited his concern that some community members plan to vote against the merger because they don't believe the State will force a merger.

6.2 Budget Development

Mr. Pandolfo advised that Budget Draft #1 will be reviewed at the BSU Finance Committee Meeting and the BSU Board Meeting (both are being held on 11/15/18). Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding fund balances, SPED Assessments, Child Counts and Equalized Pupil Counts, as well as the cost per Equalized Pupil at each school. It was noted that the combined/averaged cost per pupil is approximately \$13,000, which is lower than the state average of approximately \$14,500. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of Budget highlights (no documentation was distributed). Highlights included; the impact of a consolidated budget/board under Act 46, salary and benefit increases (health insurance is expected to increase by 11.8%), moving all para-educators (regular and special education) to the BSU budget, moving technology (excluding equipment) to the BSU budget, and adding Technology Integrationists to the BSU budget. Other items being moved to the BSU budget include; copier leases, Curriculum Instruction/Assessment, In-Service Professional Development, Curriculum Specialists, and Human Resources. The lease or purchase of vehicles (for SPED and WBL transportation) will also be added to the BSU budget. The lease or purchase of vehicles for SPED and WBL transportation is much more financially effective than utilizing STA for these transports. It was noted that Federal laws for homeless students obligate the BSU to provide transportation. The leased or purchased vehicles would also be used for transportation of homeless students. Additional budget considerations include the VSTRS assessment, the Early Childhood Pre-school Collaboration (being increased by a half day), a decrease in reliance on outside vendors for behavioral support, adjustments to Special Education staffing (including equitable child counts for case managers), and the sharing of an occupational therapist (by BCEMS and BTMES). Budget considerations relating to each district will be discussed by the district Boards. Mrs. Perreault is working on developing five separate budgets, but dependent on the outcome of Act 46, may need to merge the budgets. It was also noted that the cost per pupil could change under a merged structure.

Mrs. Spaulding expressed concern that many items are being added to the BSU budget which is not voted on by citizens.

7. Other Business as Needed

A document titled 'Financial Management Questionnaire – Barre Supervisory Union 10/11/18' was distributed. This document requires the BSU Board Chair's signature. Board Members were asked to review the document and send any questions to both Mr. Pandolfo and Mrs. Perreault. Approval of this form and the Chair's signature will be added to the November Agenda. Brief discussion was held regarding the Health Department's requirement that water be tested for lead. The State paid for last year's testing at BCEMS, though the school had to pay the associated labor costs (for employees who were gathering the water samples). BTMES water has not been tested yet. Discussion was held regarding cell phone usage by students, including conflicts between what is in a teacher's syllabus and what actually occurs in the classroom, disciplinary issues related to cell phones, use of cell phones for educational purposes, possible issues of equity as not all students own cell phones, an earlier Board's decision that teachers cannot physically take cell phones away from students, and teaching students responsible usage of cell phones.

8. Reports to the Board

8.1 Superintendent

A copy of the Superintendent's report dated October 18, 2018 was distributed for review and discussion. The report included information pertaining to the Superintendent's Office, Curriculum, Professional Development and Assessment, Communications, the Business Office, Special Services, Technology, Early Education, Human Resources, and Facilities. Two additional documents were distributed; 'Substitute Committee Report October 9, 2018' and 'BSU Substitute Committee Final List of Recommendations 9/26/2018'. Mr. Pandolfo highlighted the Substitute Committee document and advised that the Communications Specialist's office is in the process of being corrected. Mr. Pandolfo responded to queries regarding the Superintendent's Report, providing additional information on the Unified Chart of Accounts, the Statewide Longitudinal Data Reporting System, and Grant Management System. It appears that the State is mandating the implementation of too many systems at once, which is causing issues for both the State and for school districts around the state. Special Education meetings are being held with SPED staff at both schools. It was noted that only teachers (not para-educators) attend these meetings. There were 64 responses to the para-educator survey (approximately half of the para-educator staff). Mrs. Spaulding raised concern that the request to send mass e-mails to parents has been a topic of discussion for years, and still has not been accomplished. This item will be added to the December BSU Board Meeting Agenda. It was noted that there remain some para-educator openings. It is the intent to continue to work to fill these positions. Discussion was held regarding labor laws relating to providing benefits for individuals who work over a certain number of hours. Discussion was also held regarding the pay scale for para-educators and substitutes. Brief discussion was held regarding the need to hire individuals with higher education to teach students with greater needs (licensed special educators vs para-educators). Discussion was held regarding the new 'Tide Pod' model implemented at SHS. There are currently 2 permanent substitutes, though 4 or 5 are wanted. Parental concerns were raised regarding student safety (many students/classes under the supervision of 2 individuals), and academic impact to students (due to delayed access to sub plans and distractions in the Pod setting).

8.2 Committee Reports

All BSU Committee Meeting Minutes were previously sent to all of the Districts' Board Members.

8.2.1 BSU Policy Committee

Minutes from the September 17, 2018 meeting were distributed. The October 15, 2018 meeting was cancelled. No discussion was held.

- The next meeting is Monday, November 19, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the BSU Upstairs Conference Room.

8.2.2 BSU Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the October 1, 2018 meeting were distributed. Discussion included Technology (current/future) and a review of the draft of the Elementary and Middle School Report Card Guide.

- The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 29, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library.

8.2.3 BSU Finance Committee

Minutes from the September 20, 2018 meeting were distributed. There is an unaudited anticipated surplus of approximately \$28,000. Budget development work will be performed in November.

- The next meeting is Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 4:30 in the SHS Library.

8.2.4 BSU Facilities Committee

Minutes from the October 10, 2018 meeting were distributed. The meeting included a tour of the BSU Central Office and SHS.

- The next meeting is Tuesday, November 20, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. at Barre City Elementary and Middle School.

8.2.5 BSU Communications Committee

Minutes from the October 11, 2018 meeting were distributed. Discussion included progress of the web site development project, ways to educate the community on budgets, and membership on the Barre Education Coalition. The first meeting of the Coalition is Thursday, October 25, 2018 at the Central Vermont Career Center, Room #136. There are 15 to 20 confirmed participants including students, staff, administrators and community members.

- The next meeting is Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the BSU Office

8.2.6 BSU Negotiations Committee

There has been no response from the Association regarding dates to meet for discussion of ground rules and negotiation sessions.

8.3 Financials

The BSU Expenditures –FY19 Report (dated 10/10/18) was distributed. No discussion was held.

9. Executive Session as Needed

9.1 Employment of Employees

Employment of Employees was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo in attendance, at 8:32 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 Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:54 p.m.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin