

**BARRE TOWN MIDDLE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library

December 9, 2015

Immediately following the BTMES Board Meeting

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chad Allen – Chair  
Brenda Buzzell  
Kristin McCarthy  
Krista Metivier  
Brent Tewksbury

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Timothy P. Crowley, Principal  
Jennifer W. Nye, Principal  
John Pandolfo, Superintendent  
Erica Pearson, Assistant Principal  
Lisa Perrault, Business Manager  
Julia Pritchard, Director of Special Services

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Donna Kelty

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Bridgett Apfel

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mr. Allen, called the Wednesday, December 9, 2015, Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:18 p.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library.

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

None.

**3. Administration**

**3.1 Review November 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes and document revisions.**

On a motion by Mrs. Buzzell, seconded by Mrs. Metivier, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the November 18, 2015 Finance Committee meeting.

**4. FY 17 SU Budget Discussion/Update/Accept**

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

**5. FY 16 Budget Management/Current Status/Monitoring/Risks/Bus Grant Receipt**

This item was tabled until the next meeting

**6. FY 17 BTMES Budget Development**

Mr. Crowley distributed a document titled 'Budget, 2016-2017'. The document provides information pertaining to the areas of Labor, Enrollment, Revenue, Investments (Preschool and Tech Ed), Facilities, and Preservation (of Math Lab services and Literacy Supports for grades K-5), for the current draft budget which has an increase of 2.04%. Mr. Crowley provided an overview of the document including; honoring recent labor agreements, reductions in staff, elimination of unfilled positions, student/teacher ratios (most are at the 'below ideal' level), a stable equalized pupil count, a reduction in revenue, expansion of the pre-school program (including transportation), investment in the Tech Ed program, and facility upgrades (to be prioritized by the Facilities Director). Two supporting documents were also distributed; 'BARRE TOWN MIDDLE/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT December 1, 2015' and 'BARRE TOWN MIDDLE & ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2016 – 2017 Anticipated Staffing'.

Ms. Perreault addressed the Board and proceeded to give a Power Point presentation. The presentation is a draft of what may be shown to the community at a budget forum. The proposed increase of \$215,934 (1.96%) results in an expense budget of \$11,223,687. The presentation outlines the impact of utilizing \$100,000 from the FY15 surplus, resulting in a cost of \$11,966.36 per Equalized Pupil. This amount is below the threshold amount (Cost Containment Maximum) of \$12,019.71. Ms. Perreault provided additional information pertaining to the Tax Stabilization and Capital Roof funds. Ms. Perreault recommends using Special Articles to;

#1 -Rename and assign the Capital Roof Fund as the 'Capital Improvement Fund', #2 – Transfer funds (to be determined) to the Tax Stabilization Fund, and #3 – Transfer \$25,000 to the Capital Improvement Fund. Ms. Perreault reported that the draft audit finds that the financial statements present fairly and there are no findings. The new ballot language, as mandated by Sec.33.16 V.S.A. 563 was briefly discussed and an example was exhibited. The presentation included slides displaying the Mission Statement, Investments, Budget Development Considerations, and information pertaining to Act 46 FY Cost Containment. Ms. Perreault advised regarding the BSU FY17 Assessment Descriptions. Equalized Pupil is used for: Superintendent, Curriculum, Support Services, Technology, Business Office, Board, and Facility. Actual Expenses are used for assessment of: Transportation, Special Education (Direct Instruction, Support Services, Administration, and Transportation), and Essential Early Education (EEE). The presentation to the public will also include a simplified overview of how 'Equalized Pupils' are determined. The presentation continued with itemizing the 5 contributing factors affecting the Tax Rate: Expenses, Revenues, Equalized Students, State Base Amounts-Base Education/Base Tax Rate, and the CLA (Common Level of Appraisal). Historical information (2013 – 2017) relating to the five factors was presented. Budget goals were then presented, and included: fiscal responsibility, targeted investments, development of systems to support staff and students, and safety in the learning environment.

Some Committee members expressed concern regarding passing the budget using the new ballot. The Committee briefly discussed ways to inform the community, including a public forum, the Power Point presentation, printed informational 'flyers', the school website, and a webinar. Mrs. Metivier suggested that Committee members continue to work on ideas for reaching the community, even though the budget is not finalized. Some of the reasons for the increase include additional Pre-K classes and increases in salary and benefit costs. Mr. Pandolfo queried regarding the impact of losing a large number of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, though this may help boost the numbers at Spaulding (which recently had a significant decline in enrollment numbers).

A document titled 'FY17 Budget Questions from the BTMES Board' was distributed. This document lists all questions and answers in order by line #. These are the questions Committee members forwarded to Mrs. Nye. Mrs. Nye and Mr. Crowley were thanked for compiling this documents and providing thoughtful responses to the questions posed. Mrs. McCarthy queried regarding the possibility of not expanding the Pre-K program. It was noted that tuition would still have to be paid to pre-qualified centers, and that the survey results indicated that parents prefer to have their children attend a Pre-K program located at BTMES. Mr. Crowley and Mrs. Nye advised that they are not aware of any other potential areas that could withstand further cuts. There may be the possibility of savings with the consolidation of Transportation. Transportation schemes still require extensive analysis before this would be known.

The Committee agreed that the proposed budget is as lean as it can be without negatively impacting students. It was felt that it might be best to explain the budget increase in a 'dollar per year, increase in taxes' format, as many voters are most interested in knowing the financial impact on their personal budgets. Mr. Pandolfo cautioned that grant funding is currently unknown. Ms. Perreault advised against approving the budget until more information becomes available. Additional budget information will be available on December 15, 2015. The Committee agreed that they were supportive of the budget as drafted, but would postpone their approval until after more information (including the SU Budget) is available.

#### **7. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held on January 6, 2016 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

#### **8. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:23 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*