

**BARRE TOWN MIDDLE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library  
November 18, 2015 – 5:00p.m.

**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, SU Business Manager  
Julia Pritchard, Director of Special Services

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Bridgett Apfel                      Pat MacAskill

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mr. Allen, called the Wednesday, November 18, 2015, Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:18 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 October 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes and document revisions.**

**On a motion by Mrs. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the October 21, 2015 Finance Committee meeting.**

**3.2 Future Agenda Items**

Budget related ‘letter’ for publication in the Washington World.

**4. FY’17 SU Budget Discussion**

**4.1 SU Budget Update: discussion of any integration issues between BTMES’ and SU Budget Development Schedule**

Two drafts were distributed at the November SU meeting. Version #1 was a draft budget ‘as is’. Version #2 included Transportation and Special Education costs. It was determined that using Equalized Pupil was the best way to assess costs. Ms. Perreault advised that the SU budget is usually approved in December. This year they hope to receive budget approval at the December 10, 2015 meeting. The next BTMES meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2015. Board members expressed concern regarding the return of surplus monies and the risk of absorbing expenses for potential deficits from BCEMS. Mrs. Buzzell would like the process for reimbursement to be given additional thought. Mrs. Perreault advised that the districts need to come up with a fair way to assure surpluses and deficits get assessed back equitably.

**4.2 Act 153 & SU Role in merging various pieces (Special Education, Transportation, Para-educators etc.) of the BTMES FY17 budget.**

The focusing question of this agenda topic is..”How will Transportation and Special Ed services be documented and transferred between the SU and BTMES budgets?”

Mr. Pandolfo advised that he submitted a progress report to VT Education Secretary Rebecca Holcomb on November 6, 2015. Per Act 153, transportation finances must now be managed at the SU level even though the transportation systems for BTMES and BCEMS can remain as disparate schemes for the next year. A thorough and more detailed study of transportation schemes must be performed, with results being reported to the State. To continue with disparate schemes, it must be proven that separate schemes will result in significant savings. If the district is not in compliance with Act 153, a 5% penalty may be assessed. Mrs. Buzzell provided historical information pertaining to the BTMES bus system, which used to be run by the Town and expressed concern that a Town

Charter change may be necessary. This aspect will require additional research. In response to a query from Mr. Allen, it was noted that transportation invoices/warrants would be part of the SU budget and would no longer be processed as BTMES expenses. Due to contractual issues, bus drivers will be paid by BTMES and the SU will reimburse BTMES. Ms. Perreault provided an overview of the BSU FY17 Budget Highlights document. Clarification was provided regarding the consolidation of supplies etc....These various line items are being consolidated within each school district budget. The expenses are not being consolidated for the SU as a whole. Discussion was held regarding the possibility of Technology and technology integrations services becoming a shared service, managed at the SU level. It was discussed that it may be beneficial to have technology at the SU level, which would allow a technician to work in multiple schools. Mr. Crowley advised that there have not been any issues thus far with shared staff.

**The Board agreed to budget Technology Services at the SU level.**

#### **4.3 ACT 46 School Board Consolidation Impacts on SU & BTMES FY'17 Budget**

It was noted that there are no known special considerations that would impact the FY 17 BTMES budget. The initial grant provides financing for legal and consultant fees. The SU Act 46 Study Committee is moving towards utilizing the \$20,000 grant for more in-depth study of consolidation. If consolidation is agreed upon, there is a transition grant, up to a maximum award of \$150,000 that may be available. Mrs. McCarthy queried regarding one school's surplus covering another school's deficit. It was noted that a Pre-K – 12 budget, would work similar to how things currently work at Spaulding, even though students are in 2 separate buildings. It is important for the public to know that the draft BTMES FY17 Budget (version 1), was built with input from BTMES Administration and staff. Mrs. McCarthy queried regarding the impact if the proposed numbers are 'way off'. It was noted that there are too many variables that cannot be predicted/projected (for example, Special Education costs). Ms. Perreault advised that it will be very important for BTMES to manage and review the budget throughout the year.

### **5. FY'16 Budget Management**

**5.1 Current budget tracking & monitoring: How are we doing? Identify items that are trending significantly higher or lower than expected.**

Items with significant overages include:

315 Facilities – Solar Mgmt. Services (credits should be forthcoming to offset this amount), 336 – Transportation – Bus Clean & Main., 358 – Transportation – Equip Trans. Stud, 485 – Special Ed Teacher Salaries, and 502 – Special Ed Tuition. Additional reimbursement for extraordinary Special Educations costs is anticipated. The overall budget does not show a deficit at this time.

**5.2 Identify Risks or Unintended Impacts to the Budget that we need to be aware of. If so, how will these risks be managed?**  
Given that certain variable, such as Special Education, cannot be predicted with certainty, it will be critical for the Board to review the budget status throughout the year.

#### **5.3 School Bus Grant Receipts – received yet?**

This item was not discussed. It is anticipated to be discussed at the next Finance Committee Meeting.

### **6. FY 17 BTMES Budget Development**

#### **6.1 Provide Comments Based on Review of First Draft of FY 17 BTMES Budget**

Ms. Perrault advised that the draft budget was the result of many meetings and much thoughtful discussion. The budget was drafted consolidating line items where feasible, in an attempt to simplify the document and minimize coding errors. Ms. Perreault provided an overview of the highlights. This draft includes items that will be removed and added to the SU budget (Transportation and Special Education).

Line 1- Regular Ed Teacher Salaries - Includes the addition of one elementary school teacher and one math specialist. Regarding the Math Specialist position, Mrs. McCarthy advised that this position is very much needed to provide education and supervision of students not being served in the Math lab.

Lines 26 and 27 – Supplies and Grade Supplies - were consolidated under line 26 (supplies).

Line 97 – Preschool Para-Salaries - Includes an increase for 1.5 FTE Para-educators (a result of the Universal Preschool Act)

Line 109 – Preschool Student Tuition - Includes the addition of \$30,000 for tuition of pre-school students to partner centers (a result of the Universal Preschool Act)

Line 149 – Special Ed Student Tuition - Has increased by \$75,000 in anticipation of outside placement of Special Education Students

Line 212 – Sped Health – Contracted OT/PT - Has increased by \$60,875 due to increased OT needs.

Line 314 – School Board Contingency Service – it is believed this was a 'place holder' for salary increases, and will not be necessary in this budget.

Line 425 – Transportation – Equip Trans, Student - \$90,000 for the purchase of a bus. This was a ‘place holder’ item. It has been decided not to purchase any new buses this year.

Line 447 - Fund Transfer to Capital Fund - Highlighted for discussion. This line is a fund transfer to the Capital Fund. Mrs. Buzzell advised that this line item is for the ‘roof fund’. Each year, money is approved by a Special Article. The monies in the Capital fund may only be used for roof repairs/replacement. As this item is voted by Special Article, it is not known why it is written into the budget. The Capital Fund currently has a balance of \$305,000.

Line 449 - Fund Transfer Out – Kitchen – Highlighted for discussion. No money needs to be allocated to this line.

Additionally, questions were raised regarding:

Line 377 – Facilities – Summer Help – Though the notation indicates summer help, this line item pays for additional staff in the summer. Mr. Tewksbury queried regarding the possibility that this was a duplication of money budgeted elsewhere.

Lines 406 & 407 – ‘Bus Clean & Main’ & ‘Summer Help Wag’ – Notation indicates ‘Previously Summer Help Wages, Drivers full-time in summer to clean/maintain buses. Line 406 - \$40,529.31(is this for cleaning and maintenance of buses, or cleaning maintenance of the building/grounds by bus drivers being paid the bus driver wage?). Further clarification is required at the next Finance Committee Meeting. Line 407 - \$13,000 (cleaning/maintenance of buses?). Some increase is due to anticipated pre-school supervision if the current program is expanded.

Discussion was held regarding the increase for para-educators (3.38%, 4.38% with extra days). Mrs. Buzzell was concerned that the increase was larger than in past years.

Ms. Perreault stressed the need for the Board to review the budget and forward their questions and comments as soon as possible. Questions should be forwarded to Mrs. Nye by Tuesday, November 24, 2015. Additionally, Ms. Perreault advised that 1.57% of the overall increase was due to increased Special Education costs, and 1.14% was due to expansion of pre-school services. Mr. Pandolfo advised that some of the additional expenses (Special Education and Pre-school) will be reimbursed by the State. It was noted that the younger students (K, 1, and 2) need a better teacher/student ratio.

A Special Article regarding maintenance to the parking lot is being discussed with Jeff Blow (Barre Town Select Board).

Mr. Allen advised that given the Cost Containment Threshold, the per-pupil cost needs to be \$12,019. The current draft budget calculates to \$12,241 per pupil.

#### **6.2 Identify Significant Budget Pressures and/or Concerns**

No specific concerns were announced.

#### **6.3 Identify Remaining FY 17 BTMES Budget Development Schedule**

Minimal discussion. Administration will continue to review/revise the budget. The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2015. Questions and comments should be forwarded to Mrs. Nye by Tuesday, November 24, 2015.

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

The next meeting will be held on December 9, 2015, immediately following the Regular BTMES Board Meeting.

#### **8. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Tewksbury, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*