

# BTMES FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2015

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## **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chad Allen, Chair, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Krista Metivier, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Kristin McCarthy, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Brenda Buzzell, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School  
Brent Tewksbury, Barre Town Middle & Elementary School

## **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent  
Tim Crowley, Middle School Principal  
Jennifer Nye, Elementary School Principal  
Julia Pritchard, Special Services Director  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

## **VISITORS:**

None

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order on Wednesday October 21, 2015, Finance Committee at 8:30 pm. The meeting was held in the Library at BTMES following the regularly scheduled School Board Meeting.

### **2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda**

Discussed the implications and feasibility of expanding Pre-K by at least 1 classroom. There are currently 17 potential students on the wait list. The budget for this scenario was not discussed in explicit detail although it is highly likely to include (1) Pre-K teacher, (1) Para-educator [0.5 FTE Special Ed. & 0.5 FTE Tier II Support] as well as a 0.5 FTE Special Educator. The staffing levels are deemed appropriate to manage the increasing needs of the current student population and the potential need of the incoming Pre-K students.

The Pre-K discussion stimulated a discussion of Act 153 costs related to moving transportation, para-educators and special education costs to the SU Budget. This topic resurfaced Board questions regarding equity concerns expressed at the recent Tri-Board Meeting on October 8, 2015.

The need for additional paraeducators at the Pre-K level stimulated conversation regarding some of the challenges currently being experienced at the Kindergarten level and the need for two (2) additional paraeducators for this grade level to help manage the needs of the Kindergarten students. The needs are significant due to the number and variety of serious behaviors. The administration expressed the need to extend the service of the school's Kindergarten Helpers to assist the educational staff in the management of these behaviors to ensure a safe learning environment for all children.

This conversation connected to the Pre-K discussion as it was commented that nobody predicted the volume and intensity of the needs of this year's Kindergarten class and what is this year's Pre-K class going to need next year? And should additional monies be budgeted for additional staff and services? It was reported that the Pre-K teachers have indicated that they believe that this year's Pre-K students will not need the same level of assistance as this year's Kindergarten class.

Other strategies being employed to manage the current student needs include providing staff with trauma training and strengthening the partnership with Washington County Mental Health (WCMH). WCMH will be providing additional training to staff to help build specific skill sets which will result in long term efficiencies and a safer working and learning environment.

There were concerns about paying for the extended stay of the Kindergarten Helpers and additional paraeducators but those concerns were allayed based on having additional monies in the current budget for a fifth Kindergarten teacher that was not hired resulting in a monetary savings to cover the additional expenses.

Representatives of the Board thanked the administration for sharing their challenges and expressed their commitment to providing the administration with the tools and resources that they need to ensure a safe and educational learning environment for all children.

### **3. Administration**

The May 20, 2015 and September 2, 2015 Finance Committee meeting minutes were accepted without comment.

### **4. FY 17 SU Budget Discussion**

Act 153, which requires moving BTMES' transportation, paraeducators and special education expenses to the SU, was developed into law 5 years ago. Since then the SU has been successfully obtaining waivers from the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE). The waivers have now run out and are no longer being granted; now these expenses must be transferred to the SU to maintain compliance with the current legislation.

The administration is requesting some answers to some specific questions related to Act 153 before moving forward with documentation of these expenses in the SU budget.

The Board expressed an interest in having the actual dollars budgeted for BTMES students documented in the SU budget and having only those numbers reciprocated in the BTMES School Budget. The Business Manager indicated that she is building the budget in a similar manner as the past to ease the transition and allow an "apples to apples" comparison.

The SU Budget Development schedule was reviewed and the question of community involvement was raised. The feeling was that the recently publicized Tri-Board Meeting held on October 8, 2015 served to fulfill a portion of the community involvement expectation but that additional community involvement would be necessary once answers have been received from AOE and digested by the Board and the Administration.

## 5. FY 17 BTMES Budget Development

The Budget Development schedule remains on-target to deliver the initial draft of the FY17 budget to the School Board in November. The Administration received the initial draft to review today. They will review and provide comments back to the Business Manager to incorporate into the initial submittal.

The Business Manager reiterated that the budget is being built the same way that it has been in previous years.

## 6. FY 16 (Current Year) Budget Discussion

The budget cycle is still relatively young and so there are not a lot of conclusions to be drawn at this time of the year. However, there are a few items that the Committee discussed that should continue to be tracked and investigated to limit any future surprises. The items were identified as follows;

### 306 - Facilities – Substitutes

This line item has nearly expended the budgeted amount within the first quarter.

### 304 - Salaries –Custodians

Running under and not 100% staffed likely leading to the increase in facility substitutes.

### 318 - Snow Removal

There is no budget for this item. The question was is this an oversight. The response was no and that the Facilities Manager had authorized the purchase of a truck with plow (\$8,000?) to perform the snow removal services ourselves – rather than contract it out.

### 335 – Transportation – Bus Driver’s Wages

This line item is projected to overspend and is due, in part, to the need to contract with a local bussing company to provide a bus and driver due to issues associated with hiring qualified personnel to drive BTMES’ busses.

### 336 – Transportation – Bus Clean & Maintain

This line item appears to have an error; the Business Manager will review this line item.

### 315 – Facilities – Solar Management Services

This line has no expected budget but is expending monies; will need to ensure next year’s budget has an expected budget. It is anticipated that the overruns will be negated by the underruns in 327 Facilities – Electricity.

327 – Facilities – Electricity

This line item has a \$120,000 budget with no expenses and a limited encumbrance. It is anticipated to offset costs associated with 315 – Facilities – Solar Management Services.

**7. Future Agenda Items**

None solicited nor provided.

**8. Other Business**

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be November 18, 2015 at 5:30 pm in the Library. This meeting will replace the regularly scheduled School Board Meeting and utilized the time to delve into the initial draft of the FY17 Budget.

**9. Adjournment**

The Board adjourned at 9:50 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,** *Chad A. Allen, Chair – Finance Committee, Barre Town School Board*