

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office – First Floor Conference Area
August 15, 2019 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Folland, Chair - (BC)
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins, Vice-Chair - (BT)
Sonya Spaulding - (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Guy Isabelle – (At-Large)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent

GUESTS PRESENT:

Paul Malone

1. Call to Order

Paul Malone called the Thursday, August 15, 2019 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting to order at 5:40 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

2. Organization of Committee

Mrs. Spaulding nominated Mr. Folland for the position of Committee Chair. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins seconded the motion. There were no additional nominations.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Committee unanimously voted to elect Mr. Folland as Chair of the BUUSD Communications Committee.

Mrs. Spaulding nominated Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins for the position of Committee Vice-Chair. Mr. Folland seconded the motion. There were no additional nominations.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Folland, the Committee unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins as Vice-Chair of the BUUSD Communications Committee.

The Committee agreed that starting in October the Communications Committee will meet on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Results from the Public Agenda meetings with middle school students – to be discussed under an existing agenda item.
Updates on the Barre Education Coalition and Site Based Councils – to be discussed under an existing agenda item.
Update on the hiring process for a new Communications Specialist – to be discussed under an existing agenda item.

It was noted that the agenda should be amended to reflect that Agenda Items 6.3 and 6.4 (relating to policies A21 and A23) are for discussion purposes, not First Readings. First Readings will occur at the BUUSD Board Meeting.

4. Community Engagement

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Finance Committee is working on a budget related survey. A draft survey will be presented to the BUUSD Board next Thursday (08/22/19).

In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that Ben Merrill has been the liaison to whom each of the building IT Specialists has communicated with regarding on-line postings. Mr. Merrill is currently staying in communication with the IT Specialists and is performing limited work on an hourly basis. In the future (including after the hiring of a new communications specialist), Mr. Merrill may continue to perform some project based work.

Work is still being performed regarding how best to get information to the public, and recruitment of community members.

5. Approval of Minutes – May 8, 2019 BUUSD Communications Committee Meeting

The Committee reviewed the Minutes of the May 8, 2019 BUUSD Communications Committee Meeting, and accepted them as written.

6. Committee Business

6.1 Committee Goals and Objectives

Communications Specialist – Mr. Pandolfo advised that there are close to a dozen applicants, representing a very diverse skill set. There are some individuals who have expressed an interest in the position, but have not submitted an application as of this time. It was noted that the original budget was low (more in line with an entry level position). Because FY19 was the first year for the position, it was budgeted at .5 FTE. Mr. Merrill was hired as .5 FTE. It may be possible to adjust the position to .75 or 1 FTE based on the candidate's experience, but Mr. Pandolfo cautioned against going over budget. In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that he does not believe the position requires the use of an administrative assistant. Mrs. Spaulding would like a candidate with experience, noting that the job is not overly defined and she would like an employee that will lead the BUUSD in the right direction. It was noted that Mr. Merrill had many innovative ideas. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Search Team/Committee for this position will be small and that there will not be teacher representatives on the Committee. The timeline should allow for presenting a candidate to the BUUSD Board by September or October. One option is to have the Communications Committee interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Board. Applicant information could be forwarded to Board Members in the same manner it is done for the hiring of teaching staff. The Committee agreed that they do not wish to review resumes this evening, but expressed their wish to interview the top two candidates. Mr. Pandolfo is cautious about setting a precedent.

Mr. Malone expressed concern that information be conveyed to the public, noting that information previously discussed in Board meetings, and on video, is no longer going to be discussed or captured on video. In response to a query, it was noted that staff attendance at Communication Committee meetings has yet to be decided.

Public Agenda – Mr. Pandolfo has the report, and will review it and hold discussion at the September Board meeting. The grant is no longer available, but we may be able to contract with Public Agenda for some work.

Site Base Councils – Mrs. Spaulding believes there are many different ways to communicate with the public and would like there to be more two-way communication. Mrs. Spaulding believes it would be beneficial to have a Site Based Council that includes students, parents, and staff. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins believes that the community does not know 'what we do', and believes a FAQs sheet would be very beneficial. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that a FAQs sheet include Board Member contact information. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins suggested that the topic of Site-Based Councils be added to the survey. Mrs. Spaulding believes that Site-Based Councils might warrant a survey of its own. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins suggested that it would be advantageous to have a larger Board presence, and suggested that there be a 'Board Table' at sports events, open houses, musical events, etc. It was noted that at the Board Retreat, the importance of "going to the people" and "meeting them where they go", was stressed. Holding a community dinner was suggested as a way to encourage community members to attend a meeting on Site-Based Councils. Mr. Folland advised that much good PR resulted from the change in the hiring practices for coaches.

A request was made to have Mr. Merrill enhance the BUUSD letterhead to make it clearer. The current font is difficult to read and appears fuzzy.

Barre Education Coalition – Mrs. Spaulding was under the understanding that the Barre Education Coalition would dissolve after the creation of Site Based Councils. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the dissolution of the Coalition may not necessarily be imminent. The Barre Education Coalition could remain in existence as a sort of parent/teacher/staff/board member organization. This topic will be discussed additionally at a future meeting.

6.2 Budget Support Update

At this point, there is not much new to report other than that a community survey is being drafted and will be presented to the BUUSD Board. Last year three documents were produced; Budget Flyer, Annual Report, and the Thank You publication. The Committee agreed that they would like to continue publishing those documents. The Committee queried regarding the availability of grant funds for the creation of those documents and whether or not Mr. Merrill could continue to produce them. It was agreed that communication with the public should include regular updates on Facebook and other social media venues, including short overviews of Board and Committee work. It was suggested that '16 second' videos be produced. It will be important to actively pursue community input, involvement, and engagement for Committee work. It was noted that 29 individuals viewed the video of last month's Board Meeting. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins believes that it will be beneficial to start tracking the number of individuals who attend meetings and speak to board members at various venues. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for Board Members to have more of a presence at various events (school related and non-school related).

6.3 First Reading Public Participation at Board Meetings Policy (A21)

A copy of the policy was distributed. This policy is nearly the same as the Model policy. It will be presented to the Policy Committee on Monday, 08/19/19, and is slated for a First Reading by the BUUSD Board at their 09/12/19 Board Meeting. Once approved, the Board may wish to have a laminated placard of the policy available at meetings so that members of the public may review it prior to addressing the Board. Mr. Malone queried 'Persons Who May Address the Board, #5 (Others at the discretion of the board). It was noted that there are circumstances where someone from 'outside' the district may wish to speak. Those types of requests should be approved by the Board. In response to a query, it was noted that there is currently no Board Policy on complaints (page 2, item #3). Mr. Pandolfo will amend the draft policy by adding the words "when adopted".

6.4 First Reading Community Engagement and Vision Policy (A23)

A copy of the policy was distributed. This policy is nearly the same as the Model policy. It will be presented to the Policy Committee on Monday, 08/19/19, and is slated for a First Reading by the BUUSD Board at their 09/12/19 Board Meeting. In response to a query, it was noted that there is currently no documented "clearly articulated vision for the school district" (second paragraph). Mr. Pandolfo will amend the draft policy to accommodate this issue.

Mr. Pandolfo will make the changes discussed under Agenda Items 6.3 and 6.4. It was noted that the Board can approve the policies with the stipulation that policy and vision (referenced policies A21 and A23) will be written.

7. Other Business

BUUSD Office Space –

There are currently two open workspaces on the second floor.

It was noted that the Regional Act 166 Coordinator will continue to be housed in the BUUSD building, most likely in Mr. Merrill's office. The new Communications Specialist will most likely use one of the two free spaces on the second floor.

8. Items For Future Agendas

- **Ways to Communicate and Engage the Community** (Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins will create a document of her ideas)
- **Communications Specialist Position** (possible interview(s))
- **Barre Education Coalition – Vision**
- **Committee Organization**

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m., in the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin