

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office – First Floor Conference Area
October 8, 2019 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding (BC) - Chair
Victoria Pompei (BT) – Vice Chair
Gina Akley (BT)
Anthony Folland (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dave LaCroix – BT Community Member

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Lisa Perrault, Business Manager

GUESTS PRESENT:

Pat McAskill

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Tuesday, October 8, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 FY21 Budget

The budget draft is progressing. Mrs. Waterhouse has submitted input for SHS. Mrs. Perreault is starting to populate some of the numbers in the budget draft. Draft #1 will be ready one week before the next Finance Committee meeting on 11/12/19. The Committee will review the draft at that meeting and Mrs. Perreault will answer questions and identify areas that require additional research. Information from the Agency of Education should be available in December 2019. The draft may need to be revised based on tax information. The draft budget is slated for completion in December 2019, with presentation to the full Board (for approval) in January 2020. There may be a separate Article for property for an alternative program. There is also the potential for a separate Article for a bond to finance a major project. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding equity in classroom budgets, noting that some teachers purchase supplies out-of-pocket. Mrs. Perreault advised that the budget is shared with the schools (administrators) and the budget is drafted based on their input. It is believed that overall budgeting has been pretty equitable in terms of ‘specials’ (music, art, band etc.), and administrators are working towards more equitable ‘supplies’ lines in the budget. Mrs. Perreault has factored some proposed increases into the draft (e.g. health insurance). Mrs. Perreault is trying to make up for under budget items, particularly in Special Education lines items.

5.2 Budget Survey

It was noted that only six paper surveys were submitted. Moving forward, there is a need to find a better way to reach out to parents and other community members who need paper copies. Survey results highlighted the need for better communication regarding what we are already doing in the schools, e.g. Financial Literacy, Civics, and Community Service requirements at the high school level. It is important to assure that the BUUSD communicates well around all areas, including how budget decisions are made, especially around budget areas that may not have overwhelming community support. It was noted that perhaps the BUUSD should also consider Financial Literacy courses at lower grade levels. Mrs. Spaulding will review written responses and organize them in categories. Survey responses to the question relating to education spending indicate that responders believe the BUUSD is about where they should be in education spending. It was noted that most responders were parents of students in the BUUSD. It might be beneficial to

filter responses to determine how 'non-parent' responders answered the survey. The issue of transportation needs to be addressed. The Committee would like information relating to how many individuals use Front Porch Forum to obtain information (broken down between City and Town individuals). The Committee agrees that work needs to be done to reach more individuals (both parents of school children and community members who do not have children in the schools). The Committee would like to research sending something out to all City and Town registered voters, but question how this could be done in the most efficient/cost effective manner. The Committee would like to identify ways to better educate voters on the budget and budget process. A copy of the survey results, with an executive summary (with highlights), will be included in Thursday's' BUUSD Board Meeting packet addendum.

5.3 Transportation

Mrs. Spaulding has queried the Board regarding whether or not buses should be replaced more often, and believes that transportation should be examined in bigger context. Mrs. Pompei advised that the Facilities Committee will be speaking with the Board regarding adding transportation to their list of responsibilities and changing the Committee's title to 'Facilities and Transportation Committee'. Mrs. Perreault distributed a transportation overview document (compiled by STA) and advised that STA was the only company that submitted a bid for transportation in the bidding process that was held 5 years ago. STA is going to provide new buses (as required by the contract), but have advised that delivery of the buses (from the manufacturer) was delayed. The new buses have arrived, but Certificates of Origin need to be obtained in order to register the buses. Once the buses are registered, they will have complete inspections, and then be put in service. Overall, delivery of new buses has been delayed, but STA will fulfill the commitment to supply new buses. The BUUSD has, and will continue to pay FY19 rates listed on the contract until the new buses are put in service. Mrs. Spaulding asked if there were BUUSD employees who are qualified to drive buses, and if it was allowable for them to drive STA buses. Mrs. Perreault advised that someone would need to consult with STA regarding whether or not they allow 'outside' individuals to drive their buses. In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised that qualified individuals can utilize BUUSD owned buses (Suburbans) to transport athletes. Mrs. Akley suggested that this might be a good short term solution. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that the BUUSD consider changing policy in an effort to better serve transportation needs of both schools (BCEMS and BTMES). Mrs. Pompei advised that the BUUSD should assure that optimization software is utilized when determining bus routes.

6. Old Business

6.1 Budget Update

A copy of the Summary Expense Report was distributed. Mrs. Perreault advised that projections of potential overages will be provided at the next Finance Committee meeting. Because it is early in the fiscal year, there is not a lot to report on at this time. At the present time, Mrs. Perreault does not see any concerning trends. Mrs. Perreault is hopeful that there will be savings on the Special Education tuition line item. SPED tuition savings may counter other overages. Mrs. Perreault advised that the BUUSD received the McKinney Vento grant for transportation, supplies, and materials for homeless students. Grant monies will cover existing costs. There are currently about 50 students identified as homeless. The grant is for \$20,000 and the BUUSD can apply for this grant on a yearly basis.

6.2 Procedures

Mrs. Perreault distributed copies of the Grant Procedures Manual. Mrs. Pompei requested the use of more forms. Mrs. Perreault advised that the BUUSD is working to increase form usage across the entire district. To allow Committee Members adequate time to review the manual, discussion of the Grant Procedures Manual will be postponed until a future meeting.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

- FY21 Budget Draft #1 Review (Committee Members should review the draft prior to the meeting)
- Survey Follow-up
- Budget Communication Plan
- Grant Procedures Manual Discussion

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 5:30 p.m., at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Folland, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin