

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office – First Floor Conference Area
December 10, 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:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Malone

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Josh Allen, Communications Director
Stacy Anderson, Co-Director of Special Services
Penny Chamberlin, Director Central Vermont Career Center
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal
Donald McMahon, Co-Special Services Director
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Lisa Perrault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore, Times Argus Lori Hébert

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Tuesday, December 10, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Agenda Item 5.1 Communication Plan, will be discussed after Agenda Item 6.1.

3. Public Comment

Lori Hébert, Human Services Instructor at CVCC is present and will address the Committee under Agenda Item 6.1 FY21 Budget.

4. Approval of Minutes – November 12, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve as amended, the Minutes of the November 12, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Communication Plan

Mr. Allen believes the BUUSD can do a much better job of informing community members, and suggested that the budget be promoted in the Annual Report, at the schools, in local restaurants/coffee shops, and at school events, including sporting events. Mr. Allen would like to improve utilization of the Annual Report, and take steps to assure that it gets into every mailbox in the City and Town. The Annual Report should be in all mailboxes two to three weeks before the vote date. Mr. Allen provided an overview of how he is designing the Annual Report. Mr. Allen stressed the need to start getting out in the public now, and also stressed the need to get more active on social media starting immediately. Mr. Folland suggests doing voter registration at largely attended venues.

5.2 SEA Property

Mrs. Perreault advised that the BUUSD initiated a contract with realtor Michelle Gosselin. The BUUSD has consulted with legal counsel, who helped draft the contract with contingencies related to property inspection and voter approval. An offer has been made, a counter offer was made, a new offer was made, and the BUUSD is waiting to hear back. A site inspection was held today involving architect David Lauren, who will be speaking with an engineer from Dewolfe Engineering. Mr. Evans advised that the property has a

lot going for it, including; three phase power, water, sewer, and close proximity to a fire hydrant. It is not known if the barn would be used or if a structure should be built next to it. Mr. Pandolfo advised that details regarding negotiations for the property should occur in Executive Session at Thursday night's Board Meeting.

5.3 Separate Articles

Mrs. Perreault advised that in addition to the regular BUUSD and CVCC budgets, Special Articles will be presented for the Revenue Anticipation Note, and possibly for the purchase of property.

6. Old Business

6.1 FY21 Budget

Eleven documents were distributed;

A document titled 'FY21 BUUSD Draft 2 Summary – December 10, 2019'

A document titled 'FY21 BUUSD Budget Development Highlights – December 10, 2019 – Revision #2'

A copy of the BUUSD FY21 Budget, Draft 2 (dated 12/10/19)

A copy of the BUUSD Projected Comparative Tax Rate Calculations for Barre City and Barre Town (for Budget Year 2020 – 2021

A revised version of the BUUSD Projected Comparative Tax Rate Calculations for Barre City and Barre Town (for Budget Year 2020 – 2021 With Universal Meals/Provision II \$750,000)

A document titled 'BUUSD FY20 Expense Report Summary (dated 12/10/19)

A copy of the BUUSD Expense Report (dated 12/04/19)

A copy of the BUUSD Central Vermont Career Center FY20 Budget (dated 12/04/19)

A document titled 'School Employee Health Insurance – Employee Commissioners' Proposal'

A document from Lori Hébert regarding the Human Services Program at CVCC, including 'Attachment A: Specifications of Work to be Performed, Evaluation, Reporting – for Program Name: Supporting Tech Centers in Building the Early Childhood Education (CTE) Workforce'

Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the insurance proposal document received from VSBIT earlier in the day. The document outlines health insurance benefits that will become effective July 2020. There are significant changes in Tiers of Coverage and Employer Out-of-Pocket Contributions. The new insurance benefits have a significant impact on the BUUSD budget causing an anticipated tax increase of 5¢ for the City and the Town, an increase of \$500 for each student (per pupil cost). Mrs. Spaulding is concerned about the amount of budget increases. In response to a query, it was noted that increases that are not under the BUUSD's control include Special Education, health care, and wages and salaries. The total of health care and wage/salary increases total approximately 3.3 million dollars. Mrs. Perreault advised that the property yield is likely to increase due to health care costs, which would be beneficial to Barre tax payers. Mrs. Perreault advised that there is no known date for when the State will provide updated information. Information may not be announced until after the legislature is in session. Additionally, Mrs. Perreault advised that the BUUSD is still waiting for the State to provide equalized pupil counts and the CLA. Mr. Pandolfo advised that high school seniors who enroll in college full time (a benefit under Act 77), can't be included in the BUUSD pupil count. It was noted that both the City and the Town are slated to perform reappraisals next year.

Ms. Chamberlin provided an overview of Draft 2 of the CVCC FY21 Budget, advising that based on the Regional Advisory Board's recommendation, she has reduced the budget to reflect a 7.1 % increase, which results in a tuition increase of 10.8%. Draft 2 of the FY21 Budget was ratified by the RAB Board. The majority of the reductions are achieved by combining the Baking Arts Program with the Culinary Arts Program, and eliminating the Human Service Program. If the Baking Arts Program leaves the site it occupies in Barre City, there is approximately \$100,000 worth of equipment that will be sold. Other reductions relate to a reduction for the literacy coordinator, and reduction of two lab assistant positions. In response to a query, it was noted that the RAB Board's recommendation does not have to be accepted. If the Board opts not to accept the RAB Board's recommendation, a letter must be submitted to the Agency of Education. Lori Hébert, Human Services Instructor, addressed the Committee requesting that the Human Services Program not be eliminated. Ms. Hébert advised that jobs in Early Childhood Education and ElderCare are in high demand. Though enrollment has been low for the last two years, efforts are underway to improve recruitment techniques and increase enrollment. Grant money will be available soon to assist with recruitment of students into the program. The grant money will be available for recruitment of students for the 2021 – 2022 academic year, and involves changes to the program to enable students to attain the Council for Professional Recognition's Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. It was reiterated that workers in the fields of child care and elder care are in high demand. The Human Services Program is comprised of 7 components. It was noted that enrollment declined when the on-site child care program was eliminated. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether or not this program should be eliminated. Ms. Chamberlin advised that the sending districts asked that tuition not increase by more than 10%. The RAB Board requested that Ms. Chamberlin eliminate the two programs that had the lowest enrollment. The majority of the Committee wants to keep the Human Services Program. Ms. Chamberlin was asked to look at other options, and bring draft 3 to the next meeting. Ms. Chamberlin will provide two scenarios; the first of which is to keep both programs 'as is' (Baking Arts and Human Services), the second is to keep Human Services, but combine Baking Arts with the Culinary Arts Program. Draft 3 should present a budget with an increase of no more than 10%. Later in the meeting, and after much discussion on all aspects of the budget, the Committee revisited its request for a second scenario and further discussed the RAB Board's recommendation on the CVCC budget as presented earlier in the meeting, which includes combining the Baking Arts Program with the Culinary Arts Program, and eliminating the Human Services Program, as well as elimination of the Literacy Coordinator and the lab assistants for Culinary and Baking Arts.

Discussion began on the BTMES draft budget. In response to a query regarding equity between BTMES and BCEMS, it was noted that some differences can be attributed to grant funding that is available to BCEMS. The Committee was advised that creation of an itemized list of grant expenditures would be an extremely large undertaking. BCEMS administrators have been comparing BCEMS and BTMES budgets and have worked on some equity related items. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated her concern regarding the size of the budget, and her belief that it will not pass. Mr. Malone advised that most of the increase is due to non-educational related items, and he doesn't want to see the budget cut at the expense of the children. Mrs. Pompei reiterated the same concern, advising that it is not right or fair to cut educational programs because of budget increases that are not controlled by the Board. Lengthy discussion was held relating to adding Universal Meals to the budget. All BCEMS students currently receive free meals. Due to recent changes to regulations, 75 to 100 BTMES students no longer qualify for free/reduced meals. At SHS many students are concerned with the stigma associated with free/reduced meals, and therefore do not turn in the necessary paperwork. Many students at SHS are going without meals. Lengthy discussion was held regarding implementation of Universal Meals, including benefits to students, and the impact to tax payers. The Committee did not reach a consensus regarding adding Universal Meals to the budget. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the Projected Tax Rate Calculations, advising that with Universal Meals in the budget, the cost per equalized pupil for FY21 is estimated at \$15,733. The state-wide average cost per equalized pupil, (\$17,133) was projected without increases for health insurance. Mr. Pandolfo advised that once additional information is provided by the State, it may assist with determining the final budget. Mrs. Akley requested that Board/Committee Members be provided with a breakdown of increases (Board controlled vs not Board controlled).

6.2 Survey Results

No discussion.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

- FY21 Budget
- Communication Plan
- Update on SEA (possible purchase of property)

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. (first Tuesday in January). The venue is to be announced.

The standing meeting date for the Finance Committee is changed to the first Tuesday of each month.

10. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin