

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Spaulding High School – Library  
January 7, 2020 - 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 Specialist  
Stacy Anderson, Co-Director of Special Services  
Scott Griggs, CVCC Assistant Director  
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal  
Donald McMahon, Co-Special Services Director  
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal  
Lisa Perrault, Business Manager  
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

**PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore, Times Argus	Wendy Clark	Lori Hébert	Lori LaCroix
Kristine McSheffrey	Alec Nadeau		

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Tuesday, January 7, 2020 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:33p.m., which was held at Spaulding High School in the Library.**

**2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes –**

**4.1 December 10, 2019 - BUUSD Finance Committee Meeting**

Mr. Pandolfo polled Committee members regarding their recollection of discussions relating to the CVCC budget. Mrs. Akley, Mrs. Spaulding, and Mrs. Pompei advised that though the CVCC budget was discussed again later in the meeting, it was their expectation to see the requested scenarios presented at this evening's meeting.

**The Committee agreed by consensus to approve, as amended the Minutes of the December 10, 2019 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.**

**5. New Business**

None.

**6. Old Business**

**6.1 FY21 Budget**

Twelve documents were distributed;

A document titled 'FY21 BUUSD Draft 3 Summary – January 7, 2020'

A document titled 'FY21 BUUSD Budget Development Highlights – January 2020 – Draft 3'

A copy of the BUUSD FY21 Budget, Draft 3 (dated 01/07/20)

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

A copy 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 and Statewide Health Settlement)  
A copy of the BUUSD FY21 Proposed Budget, Expense Summary Report (dated 01/07/20)  
A copy of the BUUSD FY21 Proposed Budget, Revenue Summary Report  
A copy of the BUUSD Central Vermont Career Center FY21 Budget Draft 3 - 01/07/20  
A document titled CVCC FY2018 – FY2021 Budget Expense Summary  
A document titled CVCC FY2021 Budget Revenue Summary  
A document titled FY21 Central Vermont Career Center Project Tuition  
A document titled ‘Impact of Budget Increase Contributors on Tax Rates – BUUSD FY21 Budget DRAFT #3’

Mrs. Spaulding advised of the documents included in the packet, advising that the Comparative Tax Rate Calculations have been modified to reflect the change to the CLA and the change in Pupil Count. Both of these numbers are provided by the State and result in tax increases (the tax rate increases when the CLA percentage is lowered). The document labeled version 2.5 includes Universal Meals, and increases as proposed. The document labeled version 3 does not include Universal Meals, has a decrease due to a reduction in anticipated wage increases, and also includes a few other adjustments (including a reduction for In-Service Day meals). The BUUSD was recently advised that there is a delay in the announcement of health plan rates for FY2021. The increase may be even larger than anticipated. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the ‘Impact’ document which shows that the majority of the tax increase (13.1 ¢ BC and 16.3¢BT) is attributed to health insurance, wages, and the CLA and Equalized Pupil counts. Only 0.7¢ BC and 0.4¢ BT, is attributed to other aspects of the budget. To lower the tax rate, will require further reductions in the budget, not related to health insurance or wages. The CLA and EQP numbers cannot be changed. Mrs. Spaulding believes the Committee needs to make some hard decisions and that budget promotion be as transparent as possible. Though the BUUSD has some control over negotiated salaries, there is nothing else to cut other than cuts to the ‘regular budget’. Mrs. Spaulding believes the Board must present a palatable budget to the voters. Mrs. Pompei is concerned that any cuts at this point, will have a negative impact on education. It was noted that the impact of increasing the facilities line item (to the industry standard) was only \$76,700. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding Committee Members’ goals for reductions. Mrs. Pompei suggested compiling a list of possible cuts, and that two drafts be presented, one with the current draft 3, and a 4<sup>th</sup> draft (including possible cuts). Mr. Pandolfo cautioned that not too much can be cut, and still run the district. Mr. Pandolfo suggested that the Committee set a comfortable level to be in (what is a realistic amount), but not have the Committee make the decisions on how to reach that amount. The Committee was cautioned that there will be a negative impact from Act 173 (which is still in the implementation phase), and that there will be another round of health insurance increases. Mr. Malone is concerned that cuts would need to be made that would impact programs, personnel, and class size. Mrs. Akley believes the Committee should decide what increase is acceptable and ask administrators to look for ways to reach that amount. Mrs. Akley believes that the current budget is what it takes to run the schools. It was noted that the budget must be finalized by 01/23/20. Administrators provided input regarding their thoughts on the budget. Mr. Griggs believes it’s time to hear from the public. Wendy Clark read a prepared statement, asking for reconsideration of the decision to cut the Baking Arts Program. Kristine McSheffrey addressed the Board and advised of her concerns relating to the impact to students, logistics for relocating the Baking Arts Program, including meeting State requirements, e.g. square footage requirements. Lori Hébert distributed three documents; “Human Services is a vital program to help grow the economy”, “T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® VERMONT”, and “Former Human Services Students and Current Employment:”. Ms. Hébert provided an overview of the documents, advising of a grant to assist with educational opportunities, and advised of her belief that closing the Human Services Program is a big mistake, further advising that another tech center did so, and is now in the process of restarting the program. Mr. Griggs advised that he would prefer that the Committee give administrators a number and let them determine the cuts. Mr. Griggs advised that Ms. Chamberlin is working on an alternative plan. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding how health insurance increases impacted the CVCC budget and requested information pertaining to justification of the RAB Board’s recommendation. Mrs. Pompei advised that she would like to see the alternative scenarios that were requested at the December meeting, and queried regarding why two years of enrollment data, rather than 3, was used in determining the programs with the lowest enrollment. Mrs. Akley would like to respect Ms. Chamberlin’s recommendation. Mr. Folland and Mrs. Spaulding respect Ms. Chamberlin’s recommendation, but do not like the recommendation. The Board will be advised that the Committee did not reach a consensus on the CVCC budget, with three in support, one opposed, and several members of the public in attendance that are opposed to cutting the Baking Arts and Humans Services programs. Discussion with administrators continued. Mrs. Nye requested clarity from the Board regarding guiding principles and direction. Mrs. Nye advised that administrators are willing to work collaboratively using the Board’s guiding principles. Mr. Hennessey agrees with Mrs. Nye’s opinion. Mrs. Waterhouse appreciates the Committee’s trust in administrators for prioritizing the schools’ needs. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that there is no ‘fluff’ in the budgets and she does not want to make short term cuts. Mrs. Spaulding believes administrators should choose cuts, advising that the Committee is not prepared to provide guiding principles. In response to a query on the Expense Summary Report, it was noted that some differences are due to grant funding. Mr. Malone and Mrs. Spaulding advised that parity amongst the schools is important. Mrs. Perreault advised that the per-pupil cost is almost the same between BCEMS and BTMES and she feels that spending is equitable. Mrs. Perreault advised that the cost per pupil is approximately \$2,000 less than the state average and given that consideration, is asking why the budget should be reduced. Mrs. Anderson advised that the needs of students have compounded significantly, and the special education budget reflects students’ needs. Discussion was held regarding the increase in intensive needs in special education, including discussion that most outplacement facilities are at capacity, and have advised the BUUSD that they cannot accept any more students. Mr. Malone asked if purchase of property is the most practical thing to do to help control special education costs. Mrs. Anderson advised that purchase of the property is the most advantageous way to proceed, reiterating that current programs are now full and students can’t be placed in other programs.

Mr. Hennessey reiterated that systems are now overwhelmed by the number of intensive needs students. Budget discussion continued, including discussion of possible ways to move forward and possible ways to determine a budget goal, including discussion regarding the amount of reductions necessary to achieve specific increase limits. It was agreed that the Committee would not be able to make budget cut decisions at this meeting. Mrs. Spaulding queried the Committee regarding what they would like to present to the Board. Mrs. Pompei would like to present the current draft #3. Mrs. Akley recommends budget draft 3 also, as she feels it is the budget that is necessary to run the schools effectively. Mr. Folland agrees with Mrs. Akley's recommendation. Mrs. Spaulding doesn't feel that budget draft 3 should be presented, but acknowledged that the Committee isn't prepared to present a lesser number. Mrs. Spaulding believes that the Committee should determine what voters can live with. Mrs. Akley suggests presenting budget draft 3 to the full Board, and asking administrators to start looking at where to make significant cuts. The outcome of lengthy discussion is that 3 Committee Members (Mrs. Akley, Mr. Folland, and Mrs. Pompei) want to present budget draft 3 to the Board. One Committee Member, Mrs. Spaulding, is opposed to presenting budget draft 3 to the Board. Budget Draft 3 will be presented to the full BUUSD Board at the 01/09/2020 Board Meeting. Mr. Pandolfo wants community members to recognize that if multiple budgets were being drafted (one for each of the individual schools), the increases would be the same, and that with budget draft #3, per pupil spending remains about \$2,000 less than the projected state average. Mr. Pandolfo feels that the budget discussions have gone well.

### **6.2 Communication Plan**

Mrs. Pompei queried regarding any planning that Mr. Allen has performed relating to an exit poll. It is felt that there should be something in place to obtain information from the voters. Mr. Allen advised regarding creation of videos to inform community members of the budget. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Communications Committee has been holding detailed discussions related to communication of the budget and voting.

### **6.3 Update on SEA Property**

The BUUSD continues to move forward and will be prepared to present an Article to voters. It was noted that capacity issues exist now; and that most, if not all of the outplacement facilities have advised that they cannot take on any additional students. In response to a query, it was noted that there are capacity issues with both the facilities and staffing. Purchase of property for the SEA Program will be added to the BUUSD Board Meeting Agenda.

### **7. Other Business**

None.

### **8. Items for Future Agendas**

- FY21 Budget
- Communication Plan
- Update on SEA (possible purchase of property)
- FY20 Year-end Projection

### **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., at the BUUSD Central Office in the First Floor Conference Area.

### **10. Adjournment**

**The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*