

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office – First Floor Conference Area
January 13, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, Chair - (BC)
Tim Boltin, Vice Chair - (BC)
Guy Isabelle – (At-Large)
Andrew McMichael – (BC Community Member)
Victoria Pompei – (BT)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Assistant Principal
Jamie Evans – Facilities Director
Nancy LeBlanc – BCEMS Busing Coordinator
Terrie Murray, BTMES Transportation Coordinator
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Kirstin Reilly – SHS Social Worker

GUESTS PRESENT:

Stacy Emerson – STA Representative Pat McAskill

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Cecchinelli, called the Monday, January 13, 2020 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation 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

Add 5.5 Facilities Finance Discussion

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes –

4.1 Approval of Minutes – December 9, 2019 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2019 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Electric Bus Pilot Program

A document titled ‘Electric School and Transit Bus Pilot Program Proposal – Barre Unified Union School District – October 2, 2019’ was distributed. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the BUUSD’s proposal to participate in the pilot program was accepted. An RFP has gone out to bus companies, and responses are pending. The buses are all electric other than a possible add-on (propane or diesel) engine heater. Ms. Emerson advised that the propane and diesel engine heaters are not always reliable, so STA usually prefers to use electric engine heaters. The electric buses are capable of traveling 60 miles per day and need to be fully charged every day. Charging takes 8 to 9 hours. Ms. Emerson advised that STA will most likely want to first try the buses on the mid-day pre-school run. Optimally, the buses should be garaged in the winter, but there is no garage available. Ms. Emerson advised that as part of the pilot program, STA needs to eliminate 2 buses from their fleet. They are eliminating 2 older buses, not any of the newer BTMES or BCEMS buses. In response to a query regarding whether or not RFPs were sent to all vendors, Ms. Emerson advised that they have had issues with BlueBird in the past. There is concern that not all vendors are local and that it is often hard to get parts quickly from vendors not local to Vermont. Regular buses cost approximately \$75,000; the electric buses cost approximately \$300,000. Buses do not have back up (spare) batteries. Ms. Emerson advised that drivers are looking forward to trying the electric buses. Mechanics will need some training because of the level of electronics on the buses. The buses do not come with cameras installed. The buses will need to be wired for cameras and then have cameras installed. A new power pole with two charging stations will be installed at BTMES. The pole will also have a light, to enhance security. In response to a query, Mr. Evans advised that there is a camera in the area where the new buses will be parked. Unfortunately, the chargers are not Wi-Fi capable and are unable to communicate

information (mileage, etc...) to the company (Vermont Energy Investment Corporation). A schedule for pulling information (possibly monthly) will need to be implemented.

5.2 Review Policy C3 Transportation

A copy of the policy was distributed. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that if members would like to request any changes to the policy, they should advise him, and he will pass the requests on to the Policy Committee which is slated to meet next Monday (01/20/2020). The Committee agreed that the policy looks good for now, but it may need to be revisited after discussion of Agenda Items 5.3 and 5.4 (Transportation for SHS Students and Transportation for Extra-Curricular Activities/Sports)

5.3 Transportation for SHS Students

A document titled 'Barre Unified Union School District Transportation Overview' was distributed. The document was provided by Student Transportation of Vermont. Ms. Emerson advised that BCEMS routes a determined using very congregated spots. BTMES routes are a bit more unique, with more door to door pick-ups. Both schools have elementary and middle school bus runs, which are almost at capacity for some routes. If additional buses are needed, the cost is \$62,518 per bus. Ms. Emerson provided an overview of an implementation in Essex Junction that was very costly, chaotic, and had issues with school hours. Ms. Emerson suggested that if the BUUSD wanted to move forward with busing for SHS students, it would be best to create an a single elementary school in Barre Town, and a single middle school in Barre City. Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding making routes more efficient, such as picking up all students on Richardson Road (City and Town Students) using one bus. Ms. Emerson advised that she feels it would be too chaotic. She believes this type of pick up would work better in the morning than in the afternoon, as in the afternoon, she does not believe there is enough time to complete the route and return to start the next run. The route currently takes about one hour. Ms. Emerson noted that SHS does not have a bus lane. It was noted that First Student, not Student Transportation of Vermont, provides transportation for CVCC students. Ms. Emerson advised the Committee regarding a few different options they may wish to consider; Ms. Emerson suggested that the BUUSD consider the option of only transporting students who live over one mile away from SHS. Ms. Emerson also suggested that the BUUSD consider busing only 9th and 10th grade students, though that would still require school start time changes. The BUUSD could also consider running a late bus for SHS students, rather than have all students leave when school gets out. Mr. Aither advised that SHS has a high truancy rate, and he believes providing transportation would help reduce truancy. Mr. Aither also advised that some students are motivated to come to school because the school has heat and food. Mr. Aither queried regarding the process to begin a study on transportation needs of SHS families. It was suggested that a survey to families would be the best starting point. Mr. Aither will draft a survey for review at the next Committee meeting. Brief discussion was held regarding running a pilot program, but that option was deemed not viable, as BTMES does not have space on their buses. In response to a query regarding mixing riders of various ages, Ms. Emerson advised that she does not recommend mixing high school students with elementary school students. Bus capacity for high school students was noted as 48 to 51 per bus. If there were to be an evacuation of the school, there would need to be enough bus seats to transport all students.

5.4 Transportation for Extra-Curricular Activities/Sports

SHS has transportation for some extra-curricular activities and for sports. BCEMS and BTMES do not have transportation for sports. Transportation is provided for some events (band events etc). Mr. Isabelle queried regarding parental liability when transporting students to events. Mrs. Pompei advised that some cost estimates were obtained in the past. Ms. Emerson advised that she believes transportation for SHS sports is approximately \$6,000 to \$8,000 for each sports season. Ms. Emerson advised that it can sometimes be challenging to find bus drivers who are available at the times required for sporting events. When queried about other schools' transportation for sports activities, she advised that it is a mix (some provide transportation, others do not). Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding reporting of, and consequences for, behavior issues that occur at away games. It was noted that sometimes administrators are notified and sometimes the athletic director is notified. The protocol and consequences vary depending on whether the behavior is exhibited by an athlete, or by a student who is a spectator. Sometimes athletes are sanctioned by game officials. After discussion, it was agreed that BCEMS and BTMES administrators will send their athletic schedules to Ms. Emerson so that she can provide a cost estimate. It was noted that only school sponsored sports should be part of the estimate (e.g., no BYSA sponsored sports).

Each school will provide data documenting transportation costs associated with extra-curricular activities and sports. This information will be presented at the next Facilities and Transportation Committee Meeting.

5.5 Facilities Finance Discussion

Mrs. Pompei distributed a copy of a spreadsheet, and advised that she has reviewed a number of different supplies purchased by the district schools. She noted that the individual schools are being charged different prices for the same items. Mrs. Pompei believes that if these supplies were purchased in bulk, the BUUSD would benefit by receiving the lowest price for all of the like items. Mrs. Pompei has identified a number of ways in which she believes supplies can be ordered more cost effectively, or that use of different products would be more cost effective. Mrs. Pompei provided an overview of some of the items identified, and advised that she believes that by making suggested changes, the BUUSD could save approximately 16%. Mr. Evans cautioned that some purchases are more complex than others, and that some products need to be 'green'. It was noted that a large amount of big items are purchased in bulk. Additional discussion will occur at a later date.

6. Old Business

6.1 Generator Update

Mr. Evans met with Mr. Mitchell a few weeks ago to discuss the size and type of generator. Mr. Evans advised Mr. Mitchell that the school (BTMES) can't pay for any of the costs associated with purchasing the generator. As the Town of Barre needs to use the school for an emergency shelter, the Town should pay the costs associated with purchase and installation. Mr. Mitchell will meet with the Town Manager (Carl Rogers), and then hold a meeting with Town representatives for the purpose of holding a 'frank discussion'. Mr. Evans, Mr. Pandolfo, and Mrs. Perreault will attend that meeting. It is the position of the BUUSD that the Barre Town municipality needs a Red Cross shelter, the school does not. Mr. Evans noted that there are annual costs associated with having a generator on site, approximately \$4,000 to \$6,000 per year. The BUUSD may consider if it wishes to finance the annual maintenance costs. A determination will also need to be made regarding future expenses relating to who is responsible for costs associated with repairs and/or replacement of the generator. It was noted that BCEMS has an agreement with Green Mountain Power, and uses a Tier IV generator. Barre Town would need a Tier II generator to run an emergency shelter. The cost of a Tier II generator is approximately \$150,000 (\$200,000+ with installation expenses). Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding controlling the generator via a smart phone. Mr. Evans advised that human intervention is necessary due to the size and complexity of switching over the electrical supply. Running the generator does require human oversight.

6.2 Lead Testing Update

Mr. Evans advised that BCEMS and BTMES performed mitigation and have submitted new test samples. Mr. Evans is waiting for the test results. Mr. Evans is hoping that all the test results are good. If so, he will then contact the State regarding reimbursement for the mitigation expenses.

6.3 Project Update

The new Simplex fire alarm panel was installed at SHS over the winter break. BCEMS and BTMES have not had any large projects recently. Mr. Evans advised that the SHS domestic hot water tank may need to be replaced sometime in the near future, possibly over February break. The cost for replacement of the tank is well over the \$15,000 threshold. Mr. Evans will try to obtain some quotes. The vacant SHS maintenance/custodial position has been filled by William Pratt.

6.4 SHS Sidewalk on Auditorium Hill Discussion

In response to a query from Mrs. Pompei, Mr. Aither advised that SHS could live without a sidewalk (on Auditorium Hill) at this time. Mr. Aither advised that he still wants two exit lanes at the Auditorium Hill exit. Mr. Evans advised that a past traffic study did not advise using two exit lanes. Mr. Evans provided a brief overview of his recollection and advised that he is in the process of locating the report from Dubois and King. It was noted that Dubois and King, the City Engineer, and the SRO at that time, all agreed that there should not be two exit lanes. Mr. Evans advised that unless there is someone directing traffic at the top of Auditorium Hill, it is very dangerous to have two lanes of cars pulling out. Visibility would be extremely difficult. Another traffic study could be done in the future at a cost of approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000. Minutes from the 10/15/19 Facilities Committee Meeting, document the discussion regarding the decision to keep one exit lane at this time. It was noted that Mr. Malone had inquired about instituting two-way traffic on Auditorium Hill. Removal of the speed bump at the bottom of the hill might assist with speeding up after school egress. Mr. Evans is currently waiting to order chains for the bollards. At this time, Mr. Evans will move forward with the purchase of chains for the bollards, and will also move forward with removal of the speed bump at the bottom of Auditorium Hill.

7. Other Business

Mr. Aither advised that SHS is having issues with vaping cartridges being flushed down urinals and clogging the plumbing. In addition to clogged plumbing, there has been some water damage. Mr. Aither queried regarding installation of some type of filter to prevent the cartridges from being flushed. It was noted that BCEMS is also having a similar issue. Mr. Evans will look into this matter.

In response to a query regarding any environmental impact from the fire at LaCross Memorials, Mr. Evans advised that though he is sure there was much in the air (asbestos, lead, etc.) during and immediately after the fire, school was not in session at that time and he believes contaminants have been dispersed.

Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding the BCEMS cafeteria scoreboard; if it was in working order and if the control panel was available. Mr. Evans will look into this matter. Additionally, Mr. Cecchinelli asked if some sort of marking (dots) could be put on the BCEMS cafeteria floor, to mark where tables should be set back up after sporting practices/events. Mr. Evans will check with maintenance staff to determine what method would work best to assist volunteers with 're-setting' the cafeteria.

8. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas

- Electric Bus Update
- Generator Update
- Lead Testing Update
- Review Sports Transportation Costs for Each School
- Review Draft Survey (with Map) for Parental Interest in Busing High School Students
- Project Update

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Monday, February 10, 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 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin