

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Barre City Elementary and Middle School – James Taffel Library  
March 12, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Paul Malone (BT) - Chair  
Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Vice-Chair  
Victoria Pompei (BT) – Clerk  
Gina Akley (BT)  
Tim Boltin (BC)  
Giuliano Cecchinelli (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT)  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Vacant Position (BC)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent  
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal  
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Video Vision Tech      Dave Delcore – Times Argus      Emel Cambel      William Toborg

**1. Oath of Allegiance**

Mr. Pandolfo advised that Donna Kelly is not able to attend this evening to administer the Oath of Allegiance. Mr. Boltin advised that he has taken the Oath in the past, but has not taken it this year (since the March election). All other Board Members present, advised that they have taken the Oath of Allegiance.

**2. Call to Order**

**The Superintendent, Mr. Pandolfo, called the Thursday, March 12, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., which was held at Barre City Elementary and Middle School in the James Taffel Library.**

**3. Board Seat Interviews**

Letters of Interest from Emel Cambel, Travis Garand, and William Toborg were distributed. The Board interviewed Mr. Toborg and Ms. Cambel regarding their interest in serving on the Board, their knowledge of the Board's work, and their experience and why they feel qualified to serve on the Board. Mr. Garand was not in attendance and could not be interviewed. Mr. Pandolfo thanked the candidates for their interest and attendance at the meeting, and advised that the Board would meet in Executive Session and make their decision after discussion in Executive Session. The candidates were invited to stay and watch the remainder of the meeting.

**4. Organize**

VSBA Board Re-organization documentation was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding Board re-organization, provided an overview of the documentation contained in the packet, and requested nominations for the position of Board Chair.

**Mr. Isabelle nominated Paul Malone for the position of Board Chair, seconded by Mrs. Farrell.** There were no additional nominations. **The Board voted 7 to 0 to elect Mr. Malone as Board Chair. Mr. Malone abstained.**

Mr. Malone chaired the remainder of the meeting.

**Mr. Isabelle nominated Sonya Spaulding for the position of Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli.** There were no additional nominations. **The Board unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Spaulding as Vice Chair.**

**Mrs. Spaulding nominated Victoria Pompei for the position of Clerk, seconded by Mr. Isabelle.** There were no additional nominations. **The Board unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Pompei as Clerk.**

After brief discussion, it was agreed that there would be three Board Members on some of the committees. Last year there were four Board Members on each of the committees. This approach will help lessen the work load for Board Members.

**Committee assignments were discussed and agreed to as follows:**

BUUSD Communications Committee: Alice Farrell, Guy Isabelle, and Sonya Spaulding  
BUUSD Curriculum Committee: Tim Boltin, Emel Cambel, Alice Farrell, and Victoria Pompei  
BUUSD Facilities/Transportation Committee: Tim Boltin, Giuliano Cecchinelli, and Guy Isabelle  
BUUSD Finance Committee: Gina Akley, Emel Cambel, Victoria Pompei, and Sonya Spaulding  
BUUSD Negotiations Committee: Gina Akley, Paul Malone and Sonya Spaulding  
BUUSD Policy Committee: Emel Cambel , Giuliano Cecchinelli, and Guy Isabelle  
Regional Advisory Board (meets quarterly): Alice Farrell  
Enterprise Committee (has not met recently): Guy Isabelle

Note: discussion of committee assignments included assignment of the “newly appointed Board Member” to several committees. The newly appointed Board Member’s name was not known during discussion, but the assignments above reflect the name of the Board Member (Emel Cambel) who was appointed after the conclusion of Executive Session.

The Board agreed that Committee Chairs will be decided by each committee, and were not decided at this meeting.

Mr. Cecchinelli suggested that the Board consider formation of a Personnel Committee.

The Board agreed that Mrs. Farrell will perform research on Personnel Committees, and that this item will be added to a future agenda.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted:**

**To authorize the Board Chair to sign teacher contracts,**

**To authorize the Board Chair to sign other contracts,**

**To designate Mrs. Pompei as the primary Board Member to sign warrants,**

**To designate Mrs. Spaulding as the secondary Board Member to sign warrants,**

**To schedule a Board Retreat on Thursday, 06/11/2020 from 2:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (with dinner to be served) at a location that is to be announced, and that the Retreat will include the outgoing Superintendent, and the incoming Superintendent,**

**To hold Regular Board Meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. with a rotating location, as indicated in Policy A1,**

**To post Agendas and Minutes at the BUUSD Central Office, BUUSD District Schools, the Barre City Clerk’s Office, the Barre Town Clerk’s Office, and on the BUUSD website,**

**To post Warnings in the Times Argus and on Front Porch Forum,**

**To use Robert’s Rules of Order,**

**To adopt the Code of Ethics**

**To name the Times Argus as the designated newspaper for publications,**

**To continue the current practices relating to confidentiality of Executive Session and Open Meeting Laws, and**

**To delegate the Negotiations Committee Chair to be the voting delegate for Statewide HealthCare bargaining.**

Each of the Board Members present signed a Code of Ethics document.

Brief discussion was held regarding communication practices, Board development opportunities, and Board advocacy.

The Board agreed to discuss student representation at the Board Retreat.

The Board agreed that it would be helpful to advise (on the Agenda) what student presentation is planned for the meeting.

**5. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda with Motion to Approval the Agenda**

Add 8.4 Coronavirus

Add 12.2 Student Matter under Executive Session

Add 12.3 Coronavirus under Executive Session (emergency response measures, the disclosure of which could jeopardize public safety)

Add 12.4 Discussion of Appointment of New Board Member

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.**

#### **6. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

None.

#### **7. Approval of Minutes**

##### **7.1 Approval of Minutes – February 20, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the February 20, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

##### **7.2 Approval of Minutes – March 2, 2020 District Annual Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the March 2, 2020 District Annual Meeting.**

#### **8. Current Business**

##### **8.1 Resign/Retire/New Hire**

Letters of resignation from Jamie Blondin and Wendy Lazarz (BCEMS School Nurse) were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the letter of resignation submitted by Jamie Blondin.

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Dimitri Kolomeitsev (CVCC Building Trades Instructor), Naomi Montgomery (BTMES Special Education Interventionist), and Cooper Bushey (BTMES PE for APE, Pre-k, and grades 3 – 5) were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the candidates' education and experience.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to accept the slate of resignations and approve the slate of new hires presented for approval; resignations: Jaimie Blondin and Wendy Lazarz, and new hires: Cooper Bushey, Dimitri Kolomeitsev and Naomi Montgomery.**

##### **8.2 Field Trip Approval**

There were no field trips presented for approval. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Field Trip Policy is slated for review at the next Policy Committee meeting.

##### **8.3 Budget Debrief**

Certification of Election documents from Barre City and Barre Town were distributed. Mr. Malone lauded the Finance Committee for their work on the budget and advised that he was very pleased with voter support in passing the FY21 budget. Mrs. Spaulding also expressed that she was pleased that the budget was passed by the voters. Mrs. Spaulding cautioned that she does not believe the FY22 budget should be as high as the FY21 budget, advising that there may be issues relating to a decline in the student population, increases in health insurance, and changes to the Barre Town CLA. Mrs. Spaulding thanked everyone for their time and effort in creating and promoting the budget. Mr. Malone acknowledged that the vote was close, and that the Board will need to scrutinize the FY22 budget. Mr. Malone advised that the Board did voice its frustration (over budget increases outside of the Board's control) to Barre City and Barre Town leaders. Mr. Pandolfo recognized the work put in by the committee, staff, and students.

##### **8.4 Coronavirus**

Two documents from the Vermont Agency of Education Department of Health were distributed; 'School Closure and Dismissal During A Novel Coronavirus Outbreak' (Technical Guidance for Local Schools – revised March 10, 2020), and 'Early Childhood Care and Education Programs Closure and Dismissal During a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak' (Technical Guidance for Child Care, Head Start and public and private Prekindergarten Education Programs – Updated March 10, 2020). Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the two sets of documents that pertain to school closure versus school dismissal. Mr. Pandolfo was advised today that he should expect to receive additional guidance within 24 hours. A Special Assembly was called in Montpelier for discussion of COVID-19. There will be a meeting with regional superintendents on Friday. The situation is very dynamic, and the BUUSD is currently at status quo, but things could change rapidly. Mr. Pandolfo believes that coordinated decisions make sense. The VPA has cancelled all remaining winter sports events. City officials met earlier today to discuss COVID-19. Though remote access to education makes sense for older students, there is still the issue of students who do not have internet access. It is known that on-line education does not provide the same level of instruction as classroom instruction. Continuing the education for younger students is more complicated. At this point, there are many different questions to be answered. The BUUSD will continue to receive guidance from the State and coordinated decisions will be made. The Communications Specialist has created a COVID-19 web page, and it will continue to be updated as decisions are made and more information becomes available. At this time, the 03/13/20 field trip to the North Branch Nature Center is still on, but that may be changed. It is anticipated that foreign trips (Quebec and Costa Rica) will be cancelled. The CVCC Building Trades trip has been postponed until at least June. There has been some disruption to Work Based Learning. There are many implications related to COVID-19, and the Superintendent and Administrators are working to make informed decisions and are working on building a FAQs page. Cleaning protocols are in place and most supplies are ample at this time. The availability of

some supplies will be disrupted. Mr. Hennessey advised that school is an integral part of students' lives, and he is concerned for the younger children if schools are closed. Mr. Coon advised that stress levels are elevated for students and staff, and he advised that students who were struggling before COVID-19 are having a difficult time dealing with the elevated level of stress. Administrators are spending much time answering questions from parents, and are trying to keep a calm, safe atmosphere at the school. One area of great concern is the ability to continue to feed hunger challenged students in the event of school closure.

## **9. Old Business**

### **9.1 Superintendent Search Update**

Mr. Malone advised that the Search Committee has reviewed quite a number of applicants, and have selected about 3 candidates for interviews by the Committee on 03/23/20. The finalists will be presented to the Board on 04/07/20.

## **10. Other Business/Round Table**

Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief update from the Superintendent's Office, advising that the BUUSD will be receiving approximately \$63,000 from the Workers' Comp fund that the BSU contributed to many years ago. Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the new session of the aftercare program. Jennifer Bisson has been working to get the aftercare program licensed. There is a tentative agreement on the AFSCME Master Agreement contract. The Crisis Response Team was in a meeting at the time that a partial lockdown was necessary at SHS.

Mr. Coon advised that the SHS State Champion Girls' Hockey Team is slated to visit BCEMS and BTMES on Friday, 03/13/20.

Mrs. Akley thanked administrators for working so diligently under a lot of pressure.

Mr. Malone and Mr. Isabelle welcomed Mrs. Farrell to the Board.

Mr. Isabelle congratulated the SHS Girls' Hockey Team, and lauded Josh Allen for all he has done to promote the BUUSD and the FY21 budget.

In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that a SPED Assistant Director position has been posted. The position title may be flexible depending on the applicants. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the current configuration for SPED leadership.

Mr. Malone advised that Mr. Allen has done a remarkable job informing the public, and is an excellent resource to disseminate emergency information.

## **11. Future Agenda Items**

- Field Trips (second meeting in March)
- Resignations/Retirements/New Hires
- Mission/Vision/Strategic Planning
- Board Reports (on Agenda for second March meeting, though usually on the Agenda for the first meeting of the month)
- Personnel Committee

## **12. Executive Session as Needed**

### **12.1 Personnel**

### **12.2 Student Matter**

### **12.3 Coronavirus (emergency response measures, the disclosure of which could jeopardize public safety)**

### **12.4 Discussion of Appointment of New Board Member**

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include a Personnel Matters (the evaluation of an employee and contracts for non-unionized staff), deliberation of appointment of a Board Member, a Student Matter (disciplinary matter), and the Coronavirus outbreak (emergency response measures, the disclosure of which could jeopardize public safety).

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo in attendance, at 7:36 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the items proposed for discussion.**

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:02 p.m.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board voted 7 to 1 to appoint Emel Cambel to the open 'Barre City' seat, for a term ending at the next March election. Mr. Boltin voted against the motion.**

**13. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:04 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*