

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Location: Via Video Conference
April 9, 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)
Emel Cambel (BC)
Giuliano Cecchinelli (BC)
Alice Farrell (BT)
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus Alice Harding

As the meeting was held via video conferencing, a roll-call vote was taken for each action item. Each Board Member was individually polled and voted to approve all motions that are listed as unanimously approved.

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Malone, called the Thursday, April 9, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:31p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – March 26, 2020 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Minutes of the March 26, 2020 Regular Meeting.

4.2 Approval of Minutes – April 7, 2020 Special Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2020 Special Meeting.

5. Reports to the Board

5.1 Central Office

The Superintendent's Report (dated April 9, 2020) was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; the Superintendent's Office, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Communications, the Business Office, Special Education, Technology, Early Education, Human Resources, and Facilities. Mr. Pandolfo advised that Board Members should have received an e-mail notice from VSBA regarding changes to open meeting laws (given the current situation). The notice advises that there does not need to be a physical meeting location posted on agendas, though it is encouraged to have a phone number on the agenda, for use by individuals who cannot access Zoom. In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that he has recently notified VSBA to add Mrs. Farrell and Ms. Cambel to their e-mail list. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the BUUSD is now using added Zoom safety features, and he feels confident that meetings are secure.

5.2 Building Reports

5.2.1 Spaulding High School

A copy of a letter to students and parents, dated 03/30/20 (regarding AP testing) was distributed. A copy of the SHS Newsletter, dated April 1, 2020 was distributed. A copy of the SHS Newsletter, dated April 3, 2020 was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding voiced concern regarding AP exams for students who have internet access issues. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that there are approximately 50 students without consistent internet service, and that staff are working with those students to identify Wi-Fi hotspots and other internet service options. Mr. Pandolfo advised that staff members are also working with younger students to assure access to devices and internet. It was noted that the BUUSD needs to start creating e-mail accounts for younger students. It was reported that e-mail accounts for younger students, is on the list of issues to deal with.

5.2.2 Barre City Elementary and Middle School

The Co-Principals' Report dated 04/09/20 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Chromebook distribution, delivery of meals, the Day Care program for essential workers (now closed), teaching staff efforts for remote learning, and closure of the building for non-essential business. There were no questions from the Board.

5.2.3 Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

The BTMES Building Report dated April 9, 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Remote Learning; Connections, Continuity of Learning Plan, Facebook Pictures, and the Remote Learning Site. There were no questions from the Board. Mrs. Farrell advised that the Board needs to continue to applaud those who are working very hard during this at-home learning time (teachers/staff/food service workers).

5.2.4 Central Vermont Career Center

The CVCC Industry Education Newsletter for March 2020 was distributed. The newsletter included information pertaining to; Director CTE Bytes, Program Highlights, and Staff Highlights. There were no questions from the Board.

5.3 Committee Reports

Mr. Malone advised that the committees will be re-organizing, appointing committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

5.3.1 Facilities/Transportation Committee

The next meeting is Monday, April 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mr. Pandolfo believes summer projects can proceed as planned, but that, is subject to change.

5.3.2 Finance Committee

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he and a number of other individuals participated in a webinar today. Participants were advised that the current pandemic issue will not likely have a large impact on FY20, but it is anticipated that there will be a significant financial impact on FY21. More information will be shared under Agenda Item 6.1 School Closure Update.

5.3.3 Policy Committee

The next meeting is Monday April 20, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. The Committee will be using the March agenda (as that meeting was cancelled).

5.3.4 Curriculum Committee

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mr. Pandolfo will be in contact with Jessica Barewicz, (Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment) regarding this meeting.

5.3.5 Communications Committee

The next meeting is Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

5.3.6 Negotiations Committee

A negotiations session is scheduled for 04/15/20. Mr. Pandolfo will send out the invitation. This will be a closed meeting.

5.3.7 Regional Advisory Board

The May 4, 2020 meeting will not take place. Ms. Chamberlin will send out information at a later date. The Board will need to discuss the continuation of the re-visioning process.

5.4 Financials

A report titled 'BUUSD FY20 Expense Report Summary (dated 04/09/20) was distributed. In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that given the present situation, there are many complicated issues relating to SPED outside placements, and transportation. Active discussions are being held with various contractors and updates will be provided. In response to a query regarding cost savings relating to school closure, it was noted that some savings may be seen in heating and electricity costs, but employees continue to be paid.

6. Current Business

6.1 School Closure Update

Mr. Pandolfo advised that a Learning Plan was submitted to the AOE on 04/08/20. The AOE provides daily updates. There is a new requirement that attendance must be taken every day, with some issues relating to collecting attendance for younger students. Mr. Pandolfo provided some examples of ways to meet the attendance requirement. There should not be the expectation that students will learn as much remotely, as they do in person. Students should have 1 to 3 hours of interaction and work per day. Students should not be on the computer 6 hours per day. Communication is provided by the Superintendent on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Building leads provide communication updates on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As the BUUSD settles into remote learning, communication may lessen. Mr. Pandolfo and administrators have heard concerns ranging from student expectations being too high, to student expectations being too low. Parents would like to have a schedule of when their students are expected to be on-line. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding a recent article in VTDigger regarding meeting the needs of students with disabilities. In response to a query regarding whether or not students will return to school in the fall, Mr. Pandolfo advised that more information is needed before this can be determined. It is the goal in quarter 4, to try to meet the most critical standards, and it is believed that those standards can be taught remotely. There are many uncertainties at this time. Directives can change based on medical data. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding finances. The Joint Fiscal Office hosted a webinar, during which they provided state-level finance information on expenses and revenue for FY19, the projection for FY20 before COVID-19, and at the present time. Since COVID-19, there has been a significant change. Much tax revenue has been lost (consumption tax, rooms and meals tax) and the Education Stabilization fund is projected to have a \$39.5 million dollar deficit. If the \$53.5 million dollars in deferred taxes are not paid, the deficit will be approximately \$90 million dollars. The education fund is very vulnerable to the economy. The last payment from the State is due to the district on 04/30/2020. The State and local districts may need to borrow money, or stay "in the red". It was noted that municipalities collect and pass on education taxes, and can only 'forgive' local taxes, not the education tax. Mr. Isabelle would like to see a sample of some of the remote learning plans. Mrs. Akley is concerned that students on IEPs may be losing social/emotional supports during this time of at-home learning. In response to a query regarding keeping all employees on the payroll to the end of the year, Mr. Pandolfo advised that all employees are continuing to be paid, as it is his belief that the Governor's Directive includes a provision that all school employees continue to get paid. Mr. Pandolfo advised that assignments for non-teaching staff vary. Staff reductions in FY21 (due to financial issues) are unlikely as contracts have already been signed.

6.2 Resignations/Retires/New Hires

Letters of resignation from Lindy Johnson (Literacy Curriculum Coordinator), Cathy Blake (BCEMS Literacy Interventionist), and Ken Fritjofson (retirement - SHS Science Department) were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the letters of resignation/retirement.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignations of Lindy Johnson, Cathy Blake, and Ken Fritjofson.

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Jeneve Joslin (CVCC Medical Professions Instructor), Ashley Kellett (SHS School Counselor), and Ally Tarwater (BTMES Music/Band Teacher) were distributed.

Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the candidates, whose information was provided to Board Members in the board packet.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Jeneve Joslin, Ashley Kellett, and Ally Tarwater.

It was noted that the revised Employment Status Forms do not show the salary of the person being replaced. Mr. Pandolfo will have the form amended to include a section for this information.

6.3 Approval to Apply for CFP Grant

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the grant requires Board approval prior to being submitted.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to authorize administrators to apply for the CFP Grant.

6.4 Bond Anticipation Note

A document titled 'Community Bank, N.A. – BUUSD Anticipation Note – Line of Credit – 6180000062' was distributed. A copy of IRS Form 8038-G (Information Return for Tax-Exempt Governmental Obligations) was also distributed. Mr. Malone advised that he has the signatures of five Board Members. Mr. Pandolfo advised that a vote of affirmation from the Board is required.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve applying for the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of two million dollars.

6.5 Field Trips

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the BUUSD has reached the point where it is important for the Board to begin to understand some of the issues, situations, and problems relating to gender identity and sexual preference (for students in all grades, elementary through high school). Though some issues are easier to resolve (creation of gender-neutral bathrooms), some areas of concern are much more challenging and complicated. Currently, the State does not have a model policy relating to this issue. The issue is of great concern and has been reported by students, parents, staff, and administrators. The issue of room assignments for overnight field trips is very complex and raises a number of issues. Though legal counsel has advised that the simplest solution is to ban overnight field trips, other options need to be identified. Mr. Pandolfo provided a few scenarios for rooming options, and advised regarding their possible drawbacks. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that students can't be required to identify their gender identity or sexual preference, and that complicates matters. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that a draft proposal is being worked on with assistance from various groups, including outside professionals. It was noted that no action will be taken without consultation with legal counsel. Mr. Pandolfo advised the Board they should begin thinking about this matter, as it will be a topic of discussion on future agendas.

6.6 Ratify AFSCME Agreement

A document titled 'Highlights of Tentative Negotiated Agreement – Barre UUSD AFSCME Agreement – April 2020' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the highlights and requested that the Board approve ratification of the AFSCME Agreement.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to ratify the AFSCME Agreement.

7. Old Business

7.1 Personnel Committee

No discussion.

7.2 Superintendent Search Update

Mr. Malone advised that a new Superintendent has been hired. David Wells has accepted the position of BUUSD Superintendent effective 07/01/2020. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he has provided Mr. Wells with his contact information and has offered to do his best to help him settle in.

7.3 Vision, Mission & Strategic Goals

7.3.1 Portrait of a Graduate

The funding that Mr. Isabelle was researching did not pan out. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Board will need to decide if funding can be found, or if other options need to be looked into. Mrs. Spaulding is willing to pursue funding, and would like to receive any direction/ideas that others have. It was suggested that Mrs. Spaulding contact the VSBA. Mrs. Spaulding agreed to reach out to VSBA, and that she anticipates this item to be on hold until July unless funding is found earlier. Mr. Malone will add this item to the 06/11/20 Board Retreat Agenda.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle thanked the Superintendent Search Committee Members for their work, and congratulated Beth Poirier and Gavin Glosser for their selection as Class Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Mrs. Farrell suggested that the new Superintendent may want a book titled "Superintendent's Rule Book". Mr. Pandolfo advised that it may be beneficial for Mr. Wells to attend the VSBA Leadership Academy, which meets one day per month through the academic year. It will also be beneficial to assign a mentor.

Mrs. Spaulding lauded the food service program for providing meals seven days a week for students, and expressed her thanks to all who are involved in that effort. Mr. Pandolfo advised that meals will continue to be provided over April Break. Mr. Pandolfo would like to give the volunteers a break and queried regarding others who might wish to volunteer their time.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that SHS is in the process of finalizing the first End-of-Season Student Athlete Newsletter.

Mr. Pandolfo applauded the Superintendent Search Committee, noting that much work was involved. It was noted that much effort by Josh Allen helped to make the process a success.

Mr. Malone, based on discussion at the Facilities Committee meeting, is optimistic that the new generator can be installed at BTMES over the summer. Purchase of the generator is contingent on voter approval of the Barre Town budget.

9. Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

Mr. Pandolfo appreciates everyone's willingness to try this new meeting platform. Mrs. Akley feels the new meeting platform is working very well.

Future Agenda Items:

- School Closure Update
- Resignations/Retirements/New Hires
- Personnel Committee
- Summer Projects Update

10. Executive Session as Needed

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

11. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin