

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Via Video Conference
April 14, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding (BC) - Chair
Victoria Pompei (BT) – Vice Chair
Gina Akley (BT)
Emel Cambel (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Malone

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Assistant Principal
Stacy Anderson, Co-Director of Special Services
Penny Chamberlin, Director Central Vermont Career Center
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus

1. Call to Order

Mr. Malone, called the Tuesday, April 14, 2020 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference (Zoom).

2. Organize

**The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mrs. Spaulding as Committee Chair.
The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Mrs. Pompei as Vice Chair.**

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

There were no changes to the Agenda.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.1 March 10, 2020 BUUSD Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the Minutes of the March 10, 2020 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Review Monthly Agenda Schedule

A document titled ‘BUUSD Finance Committee Monthly Agenda Items- 8/13/19, Updated 4/7/20’ was distributed. Mrs. Perreault advised that she has updated the next couple of months on the document, and is looking for any feedback from the Committee. Mrs. Spaulding suggested adding Efficiency Studies to the Agendas, perhaps looking at a different area each month. The Efficiency Studies may need to be added to the current monthly Agendas. Efficiency Studies will be discussed further under Agenda Item 6.2.

6.2 Efficiency Studies

A document titled ‘Barre Unified Union School District – Cost Analysis 2018 – 2020 – Ink/Toner’ was distributed. Brief discussion was held regarding planning for the next 6 months, then re-evaluating, though there is concern that under the ‘learning from home’ order, costs are very skewed. Mrs. Perreault advised that efficiency studies are typically performed by

independent contractors, and advised that the Committee should define what areas they want to focus on. Mrs. Spaulding advised that current areas identified for review include; long distance phone calling, printers & toner, and facilities supplies. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding whether all buildings are performing tasks similarly and using the same purchasing process. Mrs. Akley believes it is difficult when items are brought up in specific committees, with folks not being prepared, and feel they are being put on the spot by being asked questions without having had the chance to perform research. This method can cause employees to be defensive. The Committee reviewed the distributed document relating to ink and toner. The report compares usage at the building level. Mr. Pandolfo queried regarding knowing if the numbers are 'true', or perhaps ink and toner is sometimes being charged to different lines in the budget. It will be necessary to assure that the numbers are being compared equally. Mr. Malone advised that there are many different ways to look at efficiencies, and advised of a suggestion he has heard about possibly utilizing one registrar for all buildings. Mrs. Spaulding is unsure the best way to approach efficiency studies. Mrs. Akley believes efficiency studies should utilize a framework of questions, 'standards to follow'. Mr. Pandolfo suggested that perhaps this is not the best time to begin these studies and perhaps the studies should be postponed for a few months. Discussion returned to the subject of ink and toner, with the suggestion that the location of all printers be documented, especially at BTMES. Mrs. Nye advised that BTMES has been looking into a study of printer usage and if there are more effective ways to use the printers. It was suggested that the Director of Information Technology would need to be involved to identify where printers are located, and how they can be used in a more efficient manner. Mrs. Spaulding queried why BCEMS usage went down and advised it would be informative to find out how everyone is doing their work. An update on printer/toner/ink studies will be provided at the next meeting. The next meeting will also include starting discussion on long distance telephone calls, including usage of long distance services and procedures for dialing long distance (PIN required vs no PIN required). Mrs. Waterhouse would like to see detail regarding where long distance calls are being made from. Discussion returned to printers. Mrs. Pompei queried about having printers default to photocopiers, and requiring users to take steps to override the default to print to a printer. Mrs. Pompei would like the default to reset after every print job, such that all print jobs go to photocopiers unless overridden on a document by document basis. It was noted that there are many different factors in calculating cost per page. Mrs. Pompei advised that she has some data from two years ago.

6.3 Solar Management

A document titled 'BUUSD Solar Net Metering Summary – 4/14/20' was distributed. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the documents, advising of the various solar credits and how they are calculated, including management fees. It was noted that the curtailment load rider refers to the generator at BCEMS. Discussion also included how/when power is charged at peak rate vs off-peak rate at BCEMS. Savings for using the generator at BCEMS are buried in the kilowatt hour cost. BTMES is in the middle of an amendment to pay the actual charge per month, rather than a set amount per month, with settle up at the end of the year. BTMES is currently owed a refund of \$7887.44. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to see a year's worth of data for each building, along with a simplified explanation of the various calculations used to determine savings. It may be helpful to see power usage by building, by month, without any solar credits to verify the actual kilowatt usage. It was noted that some of the information in the document pertaining to credits may be listed incorrectly. Mrs. Perreault will need to check previous invoices and will fix the document if necessary. Mrs. Pompei is very concerned that the BTMES costs/usage for January and February are so much higher than usual. This item will be added to the September Agenda.

6.4 Generator Offsets

This item was discussed under Agenda Item 6.4.

7. Old Business

7.1 FY20 Year-end Projection

Four reports were distributed;
BUUSD FY20 Year-end Projection Report – April 14, 2020
CVCC FY20 Year-end Projection Report – April 14, 2020
FY20 Revenue/Year-end Projections (CVCC)
BUUSD Expense Report – April 7, 2020

Mrs. Perreault advised that open purchase order reports have been distributed and staff have been asked to clear any encumbrances that will not be needed due to school closure. Mrs. Perreault advised that the budgets are really cleaned up. A new report that was run on 04/07/20 looks much better than the report run on 03/10/20. Mrs. Perreault advised that between 03/10/20 and 04/07/20, the following savings have been identified; BTMES: \$122k, SHS \$274k, and BCEMS \$125k. Savings in Transportation will be approximately \$100k, though the business office is still negotiating. Though significant savings have been identified, it was noted that SPED revenues will be lower, and there is still a projected deficit of approximately \$789k. In response to a query regarding an update on STA, Mrs. Perreault displayed some screen shots of spreadsheets, advising that the overall balance is approximately \$321,489 with credits. In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised that most other districts are also negotiating credits. It was noted that STA probably doesn't qualify for PPP because they are a large organization with locations all over the United States. Mr. Pandolfo stressed that the relationship piece with our various vendors/contractors is valuable. Mrs. Perreault reminded the Committee that under transportation, the BUUSD receives \$530k from the state. Mrs. Akley suggests that the amount due to STA be revisited if they lay off drivers. In response to a query, it was noted that Sub encumbrances refers to permanent substitutes. Supply and equipment spending is not frozen because some purchases are critical and necessary during this time of on-line learning. Regarding travel and conference budgets; it is believed that employees are trying to get reimbursed for cancelled events. Ms. Chamberlin advised that CVCC lost

\$9,000 for non-refundable plane tickets, though it was noted that all the money for the tickets came from fund raising, not the budget. Ms. Chamberlin will be back in contact with Milne Travel regarding this matter. CVCC still needs a buyer for the house they are constructing. In the future, CVCC will not be constructing anymore houses. Mrs. Pompei queried regarding other contracts, e.g. Great Schools Partnership. Mr. Pandolfo advised that GSP is still assisting. The BUUSD has been advised to keep the contracts that are in place with other vendors such as WCMH (Washington County Mental Health). Concern was raised regarding purchasing practices. Mrs. Perreault advised that there are three main vendors that the BUUSD purchases from; Amazon, WB Mason, and SWISH. The WB Mason site works very well for staff to log into to place orders. SWISH offers a 2% savings if invoices are paid within 10 days. It will be beneficial to put procedures in place to assure all payments to SWISH are made within the ten day window. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding voluntary furloughs. Mr. Pandolfo advised that education employees must stay employed and paid per directive from the Governor. Mrs. Pompei and Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding non-teacher employees. Mr. Pandolfo advised that non-teacher employees have assignments, including following up with student contact, especially if students are missing Zoom classes. Mr. Pandolfo advised that SPED support staff are also being utilized. Mr. Pandolfo feels confident that most employees are contributing and advised that he does have lists (spreadsheets) outlining assignments for para-educators, behavioral interventionists, and other staff. Mrs. Spaulding queried administrators regarding whether or not we are in touch with all of our students. It was noted for the most part, yes, but that there are a few that have not been reachable. Mr. Coon and Mr. Hennessey advised that they are working very hard to try to contact all students, but there is a problem in that some of the student population is very transient. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that if there is a week with no communication with a student, administrators notify the SRO. There are two students who are known to have moved out of state. Ms. Chamberlin advised that contact with CVCC students is good. Mrs. Nye advised that there are only a handful of BTMES students that can't be reached and that administrators may contact the SRO.

7.2 SEA Project Update

Mrs. Perreault advised that Jason Derner (Alternative Education Administrator), and architect David Lauren have been working together with the project team. The project team consists of Mr. Derner, Mr. Lauren, Mr. Evans, Mrs. Perreault, and a general contractor. It is anticipated that the project team will meet once a week. The closing date of 06/01/20 has not been finalized because the property owner is currently using the barn for rental storage. The property owner is not sure if his renters will be able to remove their belongings by that date. A surveyor has been hired, but has not been able to complete the survey, due to the stay at home order. Once the surveyor has completed his work, the permit application process can begin. Mr. Derner, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Lauren have been working on drafting floor plan sketches, and continue to make revisions. It is Mrs. Perreault understands that Mr. Aither would like some input on the project. Mrs. Perreault advised of the timeline. If the permitting process can be completed by late spring or early summer, the RFP could go out in the summer, and ground breaking would occur in September or October 2020. It is anticipated that the building will be ready for occupation in August 2021. Mr. Malone queried regarding additional information that an ad hoc committee could look into regarding expansion of the building. Mrs. Perreault advised that planning for future expansion of the building is very much a part of the current plan. Mrs. Perreault confirmed that the project estimate numbers are still viable and the design continues to be discussed. In response to a query regarding when an ad hoc committee (possibly consisting of Mr. Aither, Mr. Hennessey, Ms. Pearson, and Mrs. Waterhouse) would first meet, Mrs. Perreault advised that there is currently a Project Team, not an ad hoc team, and she does not feel that an additional committee would be productive, and could be counterproductive. The individuals listed as potential ad hoc committee members would not need to be involved in every step of the project, which is being built for high school students, being mindful of having expansion capabilities to house younger students in the future. Mr. Aither is concerned that neither the Facilities nor Finance Committees have 'teeth' in curriculum or student needs, and feels there is a "third leg of the stool" missing. Mr. Pandolfo advised that Alternative Education Administrator, Jason Derner is in charge of the program, and runs the alternative program. Mr. Aither feels that Mr. Derner is only one entity, and he feels the team should be bigger. In response to a query, Mrs. Anderson advised that members of SPED administration had plans to visit other programs, but those visits have been postponed because of COVID-19. Mrs. Anderson advised that those visits will be rescheduled, and confirmed that SPED administrators have seen other programs over the years, and will visit more of them in the future. Mr. Malone does not mind seeing additional input to help assure that the final project is the best that it can be. Mr. Malone believes this project is a good investment, and is steering SPED for the BUUSD in the right direction.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Items for Future Agendas

- Efficiency Studies – Update on Printers & Ink/Toner, and Begin Discussion of Phone Usage
- FY20 Projections
- Summer 2020 Project Updates
- SEA Update
- FY21 Budget – (being mindful that next year will be very difficult)
- SWISH – if data is available

September Agenda: Solar Management for FY20

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference.

11. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin