

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference - Zoom  
May 28, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Paul Malone (BT) - Chair  
Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Vice-Chair  
Victoria Pompei (BT) – Clerk  
Tim Boltin (BC)  
Emel Cambel (BC)  
Giuliano Cecchinelli (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT) – arrived at 5:37 p.m.  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Gina Akley (BT)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

John Pandolfo, Superintendent  
Stacy Anderson, Co-Director of Special Services  
Penny Chamberlin, Director Central Vermont Career Center  
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal  
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus      David Wells, Incoming Superintendent      James Carpenter      Jesse Carpenter

**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, May 28, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held via video conference.

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

Add two items for Executive Session:

10.2 Discussion or Consideration of Records or Documents That Are Exempt From the Public Records Laws

10.3 Employment of Employees

5.1.4 – Policy Committee Report – The next meeting should be listed as September 21, 2020

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

**3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1 Approval of Minutes – May 14, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the May 14, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

**5. Reports to the Board**

**5.1 Committee Reports**

**5.1.1 Communications Committee**

The next meeting is Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

### **5.1.2 Finance Committee**

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

### **5.1.3 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

The next meeting is Monday, June 8, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

### **5.1.4 Policy Committee**

Minutes from the May 18, 2020 meeting were distributed.

The next meeting is Monday, September 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

### **5.1.5 Curriculum Committee**

The Committee met on May 26, 2020. Discussion included social/emotional supports and student assessments for the start of the next academic year.

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 23, 2020 via video conference.

### **5.1.6 Negotiations Committee**

There was a negotiation session on 05/26/20. The session lasted four hours and did not result in a joint statement.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

### **5.1.7 Regional Advisory Board**

The next meeting date is to be determined.

## **5.2 Financials**

There is nothing new to report since last meeting. For future meetings, this item should not be added to the Agenda for the second Board meeting of the month.

## **6. Current Business**

### **6.1 School Closure Update**

Mr. Pandolfo provided clarification relating to waivers for the end of school year. Original information was not clearly defined by the State. It was announced that schools could not have less than 175 school days. Some districts will have less than 175 student days because they have received waivers and don't have to make up snow days. This waiver does not impact the BUUSD. The BUUSD is not making up snow days, but still has 177 student days. The original calendar was for 180 student days.

Board Members should have received the most recent Legislative update. Nothing has been decided yet, but at this time it does not appear that there will be a significant change to the Yield Rate. It is not known where school funding will be gotten. The State may use a 'claw back' method to take back COVID Relief funds from districts. There are currently many different ideas being considered. The Education Fund deficit is currently approximately \$155,000,000 and will probably not change significantly.

Mr. Pandolfo provided an update on the status of contracted service agreements, advising that the BUUSD has been in contact with all of the organizations that it contracts with. Most organizations have been agreeable to charges based on services provided. It was noted that because of the COVID emergency, contracts are invalidated. There is one service provider that is not willing to negotiate. Mr. Pandolfo has been working with all districts that have been impacted by this situation, and has brought in legal counsel to assist with resolution. This matter is now a Superintendent contractual level issue. Mr. Pandolfo advised that we are stewards of the public's funds and we cannot spend funds that do not benefit public school students. We need documentation that services were provided to students before spending the funds. We do believe that we should be receiving reimbursement for funds that were spent for services. The worst case scenario is that we pay for services we don't receive, and we don't get reimbursement for it. Best case scenario is that we pay for services that we receive and that we receive all of the reimbursement we are due for those services. In response to a query regarding the service provider, Mr. Pandolfo advised that the information would be shared in Executive Session (possible legal action). In response to a query regarding COVID funding for service providers, Mr. Pandolfo advised that he is unsure how COVID Relief applies to those entities. Mr. Pandolfo advised that everyone is currently in a difficult fiscal situation, and that everyone needs to share in the burden. In response to a query, Mr. Pandolfo advised that 'provision of service(s)' has been defined.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Emel Cambel, the Board unanimously voted that this matter should be added to the Agenda for discussion in Executive Session, under Agenda Item 10.4 Contracts.**

Mr. Pandolfo advised that we continue to receive guidance from the State on a daily basis. Some of the guidance received this week pertains to end of year graduation activities. There will be a virtual prom collaborative through VPR. This information has been shared with all families of seniors. There are very specific guidelines on how students may participate. It needs to be recognized, that this is a very different year for students. There was a request to consider holding graduation at Thunder Road for SHS or possibly a tri-school event. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding his response, that though he appreciates being contacted regarding this, the school is not able to hold a public event such as that. The district has plans being formulated based on State guidelines, and the plans include staying on school grounds (as in tradition). The BUUSD does not control what individuals plan outside of the BUUSD. Mr. Pandolfo

believes some individuals are moving forward with the plan and are making sure that it is not advertised as a school sanctioned event and are being very clear that the guidelines and social distancing restrictions are very important. Mr. Pandolfo has communicated that each time this event is communicated it should be announced that it is not a school or district event. The communication that went out today, includes a short paragraph, describing the event, clarifying that it is not a school event, and advising of contact information for those involved (in an effort to avoid high school staff being contacted). Mr. Pandolfo reiterated that he felt it was best to put out information, making it clear that this is not a school or BUUSD event. The BUUSD is not sanctioning or criticizing the event, but rather is informing the public of the events planned at SHS and of the event planned by others.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised regarding the two separate graduation events planned for SHS. The first option is an in-person graduation at SHS, which allows for an individual student and one car of family members. Family members are not allowed to step out of their vehicle. The 'ceremony' will take place in front of the SHS auditorium, at ten minute intervals, and will occur over a three day span. The second option is for Mrs. Waterhouse to personally deliver the diploma and gift to each student at their home.

The virtual graduation is something the school is currently in the process of creating, with a vendor. Aspirations is paying for this 'event'. The virtual graduation will include all of the speeches, the class song, as well as the senior picture of each graduate. The virtual graduation link will go live on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 11:00, which is the time that graduation would have been held. Community members, students and families are encouraged to log in at that time so they can experience the graduation. The link will remain available thereafter for viewing, but folks are encouraged to watch the link at 11:00 so there is a shared experience.

For 8<sup>th</sup> grade Step-up, BCEMS and BTMES are holding something similar. At BTMES, cars can pull up in front of the building and the students' TAs will be in attendance. Families will stay in their cars. Only the student will get out to pick up their certificate. If students are not able to come to the school, administrators will go to the students' homes. BTMES at school ceremonies will occur on 06/04/20 and 06/05/20. BCEMS ceremonies will occur on 06/11/20 and 06/12/20. Mr. Hennessey advised that the BCEMS event is almost identical to the one planned for BTMES. Mr. Hennessey advised that much effort has gone into making sure the event is special and honors the students. Mr. Hennessey advised that he and Ms. Pearson have worked closely to plan these events.

CVCC will livestream their graduation on 06/09/20 at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Chamberlin and Mr. Griggs will be following a similar script that has been used in the past. Various videos, pictures, statements, and expressions of thanks will be included. Scholarships and awards will also be presented. Links can be found on the CVCC website and have been sent to all of the families. On June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. students will be received at the CVCC entrance, where they can come in and receive their graduation packet and scholarship checks and awards.

Mr. Pandolfo advised that Mr. Wells has begun forming a COVID Team to begin planning for the start of the next school year. Guidelines are being reviewed. The BUUSD received more information today and expects to receive additional information regarding what specifically needs to be done to begin the school year. At the present time, it is not known what the start of the year will look like.

Mr. Wells has spoken with the Administrative Teams and the Association, regarding forming a committee of key stakeholders. Mr. Wells anticipates that the committee will take two directions, 1) Logistics and Safety, and 2) Academics. The first meeting will take place on Wednesday, 06/03/20 and Mr. Wells will present a report to the Board at the next meeting.

## **6.2 Resignations/Retires/New Hires**

Letters of resignation from Kacey Abbriano (BCEMS PE teacher and Athletic Director) and Sherry Singer (BCEMS Math Lab Interventionist - retirement) were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the resignations, noting that Sherry Singer is retiring.

### **On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignations of Kacey Abbriano and Sherry Singer (retirement).**

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Margaret Lippo-Dippen (BCEMS Social Studies), Larkin Brown (BCEMS ELL), Leah Greenberg (BTMES grade 2), Kamila Bohacova-Henne (BTMES grade 3 - 4 loop ELA) and Nicholas Capozzi (JROTC Instructor) were distributed. Mr. Pandolfo advised that Margaret Lippo-Dippen has rescinded her acceptance. Mr. Pandolfo provided a brief overview of the remaining candidates and answered questions from the Board. It was noted that Don Singer will stay on in the ROTC Program on a per diem basis until Nicholas Capozzi arrives, and will remain for a little longer to assist with the transition.

### **On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Larkin Brown, Leah Greenberg, Kamila Bohacova-Henne, and Nicholas Capozzi.**

## **6.3 Intra-District Transfers**

Mr. Pandolfo advised that there were a total of 9 requests for transfers (not nine families). Mr. Pandolfo can approve six of the requests, but cannot approve the other three at this point in time. This item will be discussed further in Executive Session under

Agenda Item 10.2, as discussion includes student records/details of families.

## **7. Old Business**

### **7.1 SEA Update**

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the closing on the property was held on 05/22/20, and the District is now the owner of the property. We are moving forward, with architect Dave Laurin working on the design and permitting. Hole boring has started. The design team is continuing discussion, planning for the initial construction of the 'primary' building which is focused on serving high school students, but being designed appropriately, so that an addition can be easily accommodated. The shed on the property may be moved or sold. VSBIT is being consulted regarding use of the barn structure. Brief discussion was held regarding surveys of the property and acreage, and of an easement on the property and how that has impacted changes to the design. Mr. Derner has reached out to Mr. Allen to meet early next week regarding sharing information with the public. Mrs. Anderson will review the communication piece to make sure it contains language that is legal and adheres to confidentiality laws. Mrs. Anderson advised that the building is being planned for specific programs, planning for the students we currently serve (at the high school level), and simultaneously looking at how we can include some middle school students, either immediately or soon after we open the building.

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

Mrs. Spaulding advised that she has heard from Susan Holson regarding the Mission/Vision/Strategic Goals contract, and that the expense for the contract will be deferred until FY21.

Mr. Pandolfo provided an update to the information relating to Letters of Intent that had not been returned. At the last meeting, there were many that were not returned. Presently almost all of the letters have been returned (approximately 94). The BUUSD is not obligated to fill the open positions that resulted from non-responses, but the BUUSD does need to continue to provide required services.

Mrs. Anderson advised that extended school-year services for IEPs that qualify will be provided remotely this summer.

Some individuals may meet COVID related qualifications, due to health reasons, that would exempt them from returning to work. The health exemptions may cause a staff shortage (teachers and para-educators). The BUUSD will need to determine the best way to provide education and services in the fall. There is much to be figured out over the summer, including risk management relating to falling short of employees vs over staffing in anticipation of employees who may not return. There are also risks that some students will not return in the fall due to COVID concerns. It's important for the Board to understand the difficult situation that is being presented. Mr. Pandolfo advised that Mr. Wells is aware of the situation and is putting thought into how it should be resolved.

The Board held brief discussion regarding the Retreat scheduled for 06/11/20. It was agreed that the Retreat will be broken into two 2 ½ hour segments; 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. After brief discussion it was agreed that Mr. Pandolfo and Mr. Wells will be in attendance for the entire Retreat. An Administrative meeting will need to be rescheduled. Mrs. Gilbert will send out an agenda. Administrators are not expected to attend the Retreat.

Mr. Malone thanked Mr. Pandolfo for his services, noting that he started as Superintendent during Act 46, and is departing during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Both of these items are monumental undertakings.

Mrs. Anderson thanked Mr. Pandolfo for his years of service and, speaking for Administrators, echoes Paul's sentiment. Mr. Pandolfo has been through much during his years as Superintendent and has gone above and beyond to support and provide to guidance to administrators and the District.

Mr. Isabelle thanked the Kiwanis Club for Pro Merito Society Awards to seniors.

Mr. Isabelle advised that he recently read an editorial that claimed SHS was not a competitive school. Mr. Isabelle disagrees with what is stated in the editorial and believes the writer needs to pay attention to facts.

Ms. Chamberlin is looking forward to presenting an update on the CVCC re-visioning project.

Mrs. Marold is pleased to be down to a handful of open positions.

## **9. Future Agenda Items**

The next meeting is a Board Retreat on Thursday, June 11, 2020. The Retreat will be broken into 2 segments with a one hour break; 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom Conference.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom Conference.

June 25, 2020 meeting agenda items:

- Central Office Report
- Building Reports
- Committee Reports
- Resignations/Retirements/New Hires (action item)
- School Closure Update
- Re-visioning of CVCC
- Revenue Anticipation Note (action item)
- RFP Approvals (summer projects) (action item)

**10. Executive Session as Needed**

**10.1 Labor Relations Agreements**

**10.2 Discussion or Consideration of Records or Documents That Are Exempt From the Public Records Laws**

**10.3 Employment of Employees**

**10.4 Contracts**

Four items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session:

Labor Relations Agreements, Records or Documents That Are Exempt From the Public Records Laws, Employment of Employees, and Contracts.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the items proposed for discussion (10.1 Labor Relations Agreements and 10.4 Contracts) would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Pandolfo (10.1 – 10.4), Mr. Wells (10.1 – 10.4), and Mrs. Marold (10.1 only) in attendance, at 6:50 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 Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:21 p.m.**

**11. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:21 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*