

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Via Video Conference - Zoom
June 18, 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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus David Wells, Incoming Superintendent Mary Gaudreau Molly McFaun

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, June 18, 2020, Special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference (Zoom).

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

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

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4. Current Business

4.1 Public Statement

Mr. Malone advised that two documents were distributed (an untitled Draft Public Statement and a document titled “Draft Board Statement 6-15-20”. Mrs. Pompei shared on screen, the first draft of the Public Statement that was previously shared with the Board. Distribution of a third statement was also discussed.

Mrs. Pompei moved to accept/approve the original draft of the Public Statement as presented.

Ms. Cambel seconded the motion.

Lengthy discussion was held, including the reasons why the Board is discussing a public statement (the Board agreed to post a public statement after lengthy discussion at the Board Retreat), the impact of recent activities at the school level, the state level, and at the national level, concern relating to making possible political statements, educating students to participate in society and the world as a whole, belief that racism is prevalent in the United States, moral and ethical concerns, the responsibility of the schools to teach students to be responsible citizens, possible revisions to the statement, issuing a positive statement, concerns regarding possible negative wording in the statement, input received by Board Members (from community members), accountability, equity issues, existing policies and procedures, community perception of a public statement, and whether to make a statement with a singular focus or a broad focus.

Mr. Wells believes it is important to publish a statement, and advised that various curriculum related questions need to be addressed, and advised that he is committed to making changes to curriculum, but is concerned regarding making promises to the community relating to dates for implementation of curriculum changes. Mrs. Pompei advised that she has been in contact with Mrs. Barewicz regarding curriculum, and read part of a statement (e-mail) from Mrs. Barewicz. Community member Molly McFaun read a prepared statement advising of statistical information that supports a movement to campaign against social ills. Brief discussion was held regarding a third public statement that was shared with Board Members.

After significant discussion was held, Mrs. Pompei displayed the original draft statement a second time. Additional discussion was held.

Mrs. Spaulding called the question.

During voting, multiple members commented regarding removing the section of the Statement that referred to Policy. Voting was halted to discuss a possible friendly amendment.

A friendly amendment was introduced, and approved by both the ‘mover’ Mrs. Pompei and the ‘seconded’, Ms. Cambel, to amend the original motion by removing the paragraph, which refers to Policy. The Board voted on the amended motion. The Superintendent, Mr. Pandolfo, polled each Board Member regarding their vote.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board voted 6 to 3 to approve the amended version of the Public Statement.

Mrs. Akley, Ms. Cambel, Mr. Cecchinelli, Mr. Isabelle, Mrs. Pompei, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the amended motion. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, and Mr. Malone voted against the amended motion.

The approved Public Statement is entered into the record as follows:

“The Barre Unified Union School District Board is fully committed to antiracism. We are sensitive to the racial disparities that exist within our community as well as the rest of the world. As an educational entity we understand the responsibility of educating our students to be the citizens and policy makers of tomorrow. We do not take this lightly. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and so many others have sent shockwaves throughout the world and have resulted in many communities, including our own, taking a stance on the Black Lives Matter movement.

Our curriculum committee will be looking at updating anti-racist curriculums within all of our schools as well as updating our libraries to include a more diverse selection of literature.

To many this is not enough. We look forward to a day when all people are treated equally by all others, including the law. Until that day comes we must provide a safe and supportive educational environment that offers students, staff, and community members the opportunity to confront racism and to promote equity. We hope that you as a community will help by supporting this initiative for a better Barre.”

Discussion was held regarding publication of the Public Statement and it was noted that it would be appropriate for the Public Statement to be published in part, by Members of the Board

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Mrs. Spaulding will post the approved Public Statement on Front Porch Forum for Barre City.

Mrs. Pompei will post the approved Public Statement on Front Porch Forum for Barre Town.

Utilizing Infinite Campus Messenger, Mr. Pandolfo and Mr. Wells (or Communications Specialist Josh Allen), will distribute the Public Statement from the Board, to all individuals who have an e-mail on file (staff, parents, and students).

The Superintendent or the Communications Specialist will post the Public Statement on the BUUSD and District Schools’ web sites.

The Communications Specialist will post the Public Statement on Facebook in the same manner in which COVID-19 updates have been published.

Mrs. Pompei will send (to all Board Members, Mr. Pandolfo, and Mr. Wells) via e-mail, a copy of the public statement that was amended and approved by the Board.

Mr. Pandolfo will forward to Dave Delcore, a copy of the three public statements discussed during the meeting.

5. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin