

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
August 13, 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:**

David Wells, Superintendent  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Anastasia Douglas	Nora Duane	Tara Grenier	Joshua Rudder
Heather Slayton	Megan Spaulding	Jennifer Usle		

**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, August 13, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held via video conference – Google Meet.

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

Add 6.5 Crowd Funding/Crowd Sourcing

Accommodations/Leave requests will be discussed under Agenda Item 5.1 – Central Office Report as part of the HR report.  
Substitute Rates will be added to the next meeting agenda.

It was noted that the Chat session function will not be utilized for questions and will not be monitored during the meeting. All questions should be verbally addressed to the Board Chair. This change will be noted in the chat session.

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

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

**3.1 Public Comment**

Megan Spaulding addressed the Board expressing concerns that many Barre elementary school students will not have access to child care for early release days and virtual learning days. Mr. Wells advised that he has spoken with the YMCA and the Barre Recreation Department regarding the possibility of opening a child care program. BTMES administrators have advised that the school won't be utilized for day care as State guidelines advise that groups of students should not be mixed. Transportation will continue to pick up and drop off students at their usual daycare facilities (on the bus route), and may be able to transport students to a YMCA program, but can't do so without offering transportation to other daycares. Nothing has been finalized at this point. Ms. Spaulding believes it is safer to keep students 'in-person' at school. In response to a query regarding the process to move to Phase III, Mr. Wells advised that Phase III re-opening discussion will occur under Agenda Item 7.1 School Reopening Update.

**3.2 Student Voice**

None.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **4.1 Approval of Minutes – July 9, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the July 9, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

##### **4.2 Approval of Minutes – July 23, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the July 23, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

It was noted for the record that some of the 07/23/20 meeting guests are not listed. Those not listed joined the meeting by phone and did not identify themselves.

#### **5. Reports to the Board**

##### **5.1 Central Office**

The Superintendent's Report (dated 08/13/20) 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. A letter from administrators to the Board (dated 08/13/20) was distributed. Mr. Wells provided an update on Virtual Learning, advising that survey results indicate that 19% of respondents (approximately 240 students) K-8 and some high school students are requesting to participate in 100% virtual learning. Based on that information, Mr. Wells sought out two BUUSD teachers (Lorraine Morris and Jess Van Orman) to take the lead in creating a rigorous experience. After research, including discussion with other area schools, it was proposed to Mr. Wells, that the BUUSD partner with VTVLC (Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative) on the District's virtual learning initiative. VTVLC has initiated a program for students in grades K – 8. Mr. Wells provided an overview of the structure of the program, which differs between groups of students in grades K – 5 and those in grades 6-8. Approximately 35 schools in the state are utilizing the highly regarded platform. In grades K – 5 students will be paired with teachers from BCEMS and BTMES. For students in grades 6 – 8, course content is individualized by the teachers. The BUUSD will supply 3 teachers to work at the middle school level, and our three teachers will be combined with additional content specialized teachers from across Vermont so that all of the middle school content areas can be provided. The number of students was matched with the number of teachers who expressed interest in virtual teaching (for various reasons). The BUUSD has submitted a contract. Mr. Wells advised regarding the cost structure (\$3,600 per teacher), which includes teachers receiving training and a 9 credit certification in on-line instruction. Teachers are being asked to first use any remaining course reimbursement funds that are available to them, and then the BUUSD will pay the amount above and beyond that amount. Teachers will be paid the \$25/hr rate for training. It is expected that these COVID related expenses will be reimbursed. In response to a query, Mr. Wells advised that on-line instruction in the new school year (under the hybrid model), is required to be a much higher caliber and rigorous experience than it was under the emergency distance learning put in place in the spring. Clear expectations for both in-person and on-line instruction is being conveyed to all staff. Teachers will receive 8 days of training prior to the start of school. Ms. Cambel expressed concern for teachers who will be involved in hybrid learning. Mr. Wells advised that hybrid learning embraces the traditional curriculum from our schools. Mr. Wells acknowledges that hybrid teaching will be a difficult task, but stressed that Curriculum Coaches, IT staff and Administrators will all be very involved in supporting teaching staff, and the BUUSD is committed to supporting the effort involved with hybrid learning. Mrs. Marold provided a staffing overview relating to the number of requests for leave or accommodations (there were originally 80 requests), advising that there are currently 6 open professional staff issues (2 may require long term leave) and 10 para-educators needing accommodations (medical, childcare, etc.). The virtual academy assisted with the accommodating needs. There are currently 9 employees out on non-COVID leaves and 8 more expected. In a typical year, there are 50 to 80 FMLA leaves. HR is trying to fill permanent substitute positions and has been able to find a few permanent substitutes that hold licenses. There are some para educators who hold licenses. The substitute picture does not look good this year. Normally there are approximately 100 substitutes, and currently we have approximately 25. Given that there may be many student absences, some para educators may be used to fill substitute positions. In response to a query regarding the number of students who will be home schooled, or are transferring to other schools, Mr. Wells has not seen any requests for transfers and it is too early to have received homeschooling information from the State. Mr. Wells advised that homeschool information is usually received in the fall (but not before school starts). Mrs. Pompei advised that during the Finance Committee meeting, discussion was held regarding the pay scale for substitutes and how the BUUSD doesn't pay for longevity, and inquired regarding whether these matters have been revisited (increases to base pay, payment for longevity, or any improvements to attract and retain substitutes). Mrs. Marold advised that she believes the BUUSD is competitive with the pay scale, and believes the last survey was done around 2 years ago. Mrs. Marold is concerned that raising the rates, excluding longevity, will cause the BUUSD to lose para educators, who will choose substitute positions instead. Mrs. Pompei advised that para educators receive stellar health benefits, and that substitutes are paid an hourly rate, therefore the shortened day will reduce their pay, and make the BUUSD less competitive. Mr. Isabelle queried regarding COVID funds possibly covering an increase in substitute pay. Mrs. Marold advised that a COVID 'premium' might be covered, but advised that the BUUSD has been actively posting substitute positions, but has been unable to fill the jobs. Some individuals who recently graduated, but didn't get a teaching position, are taking some of the permanent substitute positions. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding changes to the Curriculum Director job description and when the changes will be presented to the Board. Mrs. Spaulding also queried regarding how grant management will be held in the absence of a Curriculum Director. Mr. Wells advised that the job will be posted shortly, and that a transition is planned. Grant management has also been reviewed and the grants are all in or will be in, and approved shortly. Mr. Wells does not believe the alignment of curriculum will be a major undertaking, and he hopes to post the job

soon. Mr. Wells will be able to share his ideas at the next Board meeting. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned that a good candidate will be difficult to find this late in the hiring season. Though a resignation at the end of April would have been preferred, the BUUSD will be able to hire an individual working in another district if taking this position would be career advancement. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding hiring an interim Curriculum Director. Mrs. Pompei is concerned that there is not enough time to prepare remote learning without a Curriculum Director and suggested that the BUUSD may wish to consider hiring a consultant to assist with this endeavor. Mr. Wells believes that many individuals have been involved with planning for remote learning and he believes the BUUSD is in a good position relative to remote learning. Mr. Isabelle is concerned with the starting of sports. Mr. Isabelle queried regarding starting a massive intramural recruitment for all of our schools to satisfy the hunger for sports and after-school activities. Mr. Wells understands the sentiment of the importance of sports and after school activities. Mr. Wells advised that the Athletic Director wants sports to continue, and it is agreed that all after school sports/activities need to adhere to COVID guidance. Mr. Wells will discuss intramural sports with the Athletic Director.

## **5.2 Building Reports**

### **5.2.1 Spaulding High School**

The Principal's Report dated 08/13/20 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Athletics, and Students and Community. SHS Newsletters for 07/27/20 and 08/05/20 were distributed.

### **5.2.2 Central Vermont Career Center**

The CVCC Director's Report for August 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Summer Preparations, the Administrative Team relocation, Staff Meetings, 2020/2021 Admissions, Student Highlights, Creation of a Middle School Career Awareness Webinar Series, Mentors, Development of Resources for Virtual Instruction, and Staff and Student Highlights. A document celebrating student skills, experience, and achievements, was also distributed. There were no questions from the Board.

### **5.2.3 Barre City Elementary and Middle School**

The Co-Principals' Report dated August 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Outstanding work by the custodial crew (in preparation for re-opening), the filling of all professional positions, and leadership teams' work to prepare for a COVID-19 Phase II re-opening. There were no questions from the Board.

### **5.2.4 Barre Town Middle and Elementary School**

The BTMES Building Report dated August 13, 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Summer maintenance and projects, preparations for the COVID-19 Phase II re-opening, the Crops by Kids Garden, Ms. Pearson's attendance at the Vermont Principals' Association Leadership Academy, and a link to a short video with highlights of two summer projects (removal of the canopy and painting of the Tim Crowley Gym). There were no questions from the Board.

## **5.3 Committee Reports**

### **5.3.1 Communications Committee**

Minutes from the August 6 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Farrell provided a recap of the meeting, advising that the Committee had a fruitful discussion regarding communication of the re-opening plan. Additionally, the Committee had a very good conversation with a parent who is concerned that we are not doing a good enough job of recruiting out of district students to attend our high school. Discussion included how teachers, administrators, and the Communications department can work together to put together a viable, and approachable program to get students with high school choice, to think about attending Spaulding High School. The Committee also had a very good discussion with Mr. Allen regarding his work to meet all of the needs throughout the district. The Committee concluded that the work that needs to be performed is more than a one person job. It was eye opening to see all that needs to be accomplished. In the future, discussion should be held regarding the various pieces of work to be performed, who is performing specified tasks, and the possibility of adding to staff. The Committee spoke briefly on the Vision/Mission/Strategic Goals Project, but acknowledged that at the present time, most individuals are dedicating their time to planning for the re-opening of school. Mr. Isabelle believes the school re-opening FAQs pages are of the utmost importance in assisting with informing families. Mr. Wells advised that work has started and that though not completed, the BUUSD will post what has been completed and will update the page with additional information. Staff and community members can write to Mr. Wells with their questions, and if the question is something that might be of interest to others, Mr. Wells will forward the question/answer to Mr. Allen for posting. Mr. Isabelle believes that many community members do not know that guidelines for re-opening are constantly changing and that the BUUSD is continually making changes to plans based on new guidance.

The next meeting is Thursday, September 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

### **5.3.2 Finance Committee**

Minutes from the August 4, 2020 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the meeting which included COVID reimbursement, FY22 budget development, coordinated supply purchases, custodial purchasing, substitutes, staff appreciation alignment, summer project updates, FY20 projections, and the FY21 budget.

The next meeting is Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

### **5.3.3 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

Minutes from the August 10, 2020 meeting were distributed to Board Members via e-mail (08/12/20). Mr. Cecchinelli advised regarding building preparations, including PPE, sanitizers, specialized PPE, the ventilation systems, use of HEPA filters, isolation rooms, daily cleaning/sanitizing routines, additional custodial hires, pre-entry screening of individuals, and an expanded filter replacement schedule. Ventilation systems will be run 24/7, Monday through Friday. It was noted that the BTMES 'open' classroom configuration cannot be modified because of the current heating/ventilation system that was configured based on the current layout. In response to a query regarding receipt of necessary supplies, it was noted that much PPE is already on site and that Mr. Evans is fairly confident that supplies will be delivered prior to the opening of school. Brief discussion was held regarding the second round survey used to identify students who will require transportation (including out of district students). Mr. Cecchinelli also advised regarding discussion held pertaining to surveys to parents regarding possible future transportation of high school students. Mr. Wells advised that Phase III guidelines pertaining to busing will be implemented for the reopening of schools. Phase III guidelines for transportation allow for more students to be present on each bus. Buses will be full but not crowded. Seats will be assigned and students will be seated with cohorts.

The next meeting is Monday, September 14, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

### **5.3.4 Policy Committee**

The Committee has not met over the summer.

The next meeting is Monday, September 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

### **5.3.5 Curriculum Committee**

Mrs. Pompei advised that it is not known if Ms. Barewicz will be available, thus the meeting date may change.

The next meeting is Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

### **5.3.6 Negotiations Committee**

Mr. Wells reported that counsel has advised there is nothing new to report. The next meeting date is to be determined.

### **5.3.7 Regional Advisory Board**

Proposed meeting dates are as follows: 10/05/20, 12/07/20, 02/08/21, and 05/03/2021. There were no questions from the Board.

## **5.4 Financials**

Three documents were distributed;

BUUSD COVID-19 Expenses FY21 Report (dated 07/29/20)

BUUSD FY20 Year End Projection Report (dated 08/04/20)

CVCC FY20 Year-end Projections Report (dated 08/04/20)

There were no questions from the Board.

## **6. Current Business**

### **6.1 Resignations/Retires/New Hires**

Letters of resignation from Jess Barewicz (Director of Curriculum), Lyman Castle (SHS History and Social Sciences), and Kirstin Reilly (SHS School Social Worker) were distributed. Mr. Wells advised regarding the letters of resignation. Mrs. Spaulding voiced concern relating to a section of the resignation from Mr. Castle, as a portion of the letter advises that the VT-NEA suggests that resignations be submitted closer to the start of the school year. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned that some teachers may be following that advice and that the BUUSD may receive a number of resignations just prior to the opening of school. Mrs. Marold advised that she is not overly concerned that this will become an issue for the BUUSD. Mr. Isabelle is pleased that one of the resignation letters contains an offer to repay the BUUSD for any monies that have been paid towards the upcoming year's service.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board voted 8 to 1 to accept the resignations of Jess Barewicz, Lyman Castle, and Kirstin Reilly. Mrs. Pompei voted against the motion.**

Mrs. Pompei advised that she voted against the motion because she believes it is very irresponsible for the Curriculum Director to resign this close to the start of school.

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Katie Swick (BTMES Kindergarten), Veronica McMorrow (BTMES Grade 3 / 4 ELA teacher), and Sherry Lewton (BCEMS Social Worker) were distributed.

Mr. Wells provided an overview of the candidates and answered questions from the Board.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Katie Swick, Veronica McMorrow, and Sherry Lewton.**

## **6.2 Draft Budget Development Schedule**

A document titled BUUSD FY22 Budget Development Schedule (dated 08/04/2020) was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of the document and advised that the Finance Committee held discussion at their 08/04/20 meeting. Mrs. Spaulding read a section of the meeting minutes and requested that Board Members share their input on budget development (as requested by administrators). Administrators have requested that the Board provide guidance and goals early in the budget development process. There was no input from the Board.

## **6.3 BTMES Roof Replacement Bid Recommendation**

A document titled BTMES Partial Roof Replacement – Summer 2020 was distributed. Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the document and advised that it is his recommendation to contract with Dayco Roofing Company for this project.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation, and approved contracting with Dayco Roofing Company for the BTMES Roof Replacement Project.**

## **6.4 School Board Norms**

Mr. Malone advised regarding complaints registered by the Teacher's Association and others regarding some Board members' conduct and statements they have made. Mr. Malone reminded Board Members that they have each signed an ethics contract that needs to be adhered to. Board Member conduct should not be such that it places the Board at a disadvantage. Board Members need to be respectful of each other, staff, community members etc. Mr. Wells advised this also ties into School Board Meeting Norms that are included on all agendas. Mr. Wells advised that the recent complaint was regarding a comment that was made with regard to a group of educators.

## **6.5 Crowd Funding/Crowd Sourcing**

Mrs. Spaulding was copied on an e-mail from a BCEMS teacher, who had been using a crowd funding website to assist with obtaining supplies for the classroom and is also working with other teachers with their quest for funding for supplies. Staff members were asked to stop using crowd fundraising. Mrs. Spaulding would like to know why crowd funding was stopped across the board and if it has been reinstated. Mr. Wells provided a historical overview, and advised that administrators noticed the sites and advised that the supplies were going to be provided by the district and that PPE would be covered under the COVID relief grants. There is no plan to stop crowd sourcing, but rather, ask that a crowd sourcing form be used and that prior to any crowd sourcing, administrators first check to see if crowd sourcing is necessary (are the requested supplies expected to be provided by the District). Crowd sourcing will be allowed, but should only be used for expenses that are not covered by the District.

## **7. Old Business**

### **7.1 School Reopening Update (including guidance from the AOE)**

A copy of the Regional Calendar for the BUUSD (2020- 2021) academic year (dated 07/22/20) was distributed. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the BUUSD will proceed as planned with hybrid learning, and have instituted a virtual learning option. Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the changes to guidance, and steps taken by the COVID re-opening planning committee and building administrators. It was noted that data shows that older children (ages 10 and up) have a higher rate of transmitting the COVID virus. The schools will be re-opening under Phase II, with the hope that later in the fall, the schools can change to Phase III, with a higher capacity of students in each school. It was noted that recent guidance changes, parents, not schools, will be responsible for answering the 'survey' portion of screening and the schools will only be responsible for taking temperatures. The BUUSD will most likely create a form for parents to use for the purpose of reporting health survey information. Mr. Wells acknowledges that this may cause difficulty for some parents, but noted that safety concerns and space constraints have played an important role in the decision making process. Mr. Wells advised that currently, all effort is being spent on Phase II re-opening and that work for Phase III will be performed shortly. Planning is an ongoing process. In response to a query, Mr. Wells advised that details of hybrid learning will be forthcoming, noting that it will require a high degree of student contact and follow-up. The State does require that students receive 27.5 hours of instruction/assignments each week. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned regarding the high amount of self-directed learning during the emergency remote learning and does not want that to be repeated. Mrs. Akley queried regarding the plans/procedures being put in place in the event that a positive COVID case occurs in one of the schools. Mr. Wells advised that that information is being added to the FAQs page, and that plans/procedures were written under Strong and Healthy Start guidelines. Mr. Wells advised that if a positive case is identified, Mr. Wells will contact the Vermont Department of Health, which will in-turn, provide action guidelines to the Superintendent. Mr. Wells advised regarding various scenarios resulting from a positive test, and reported that the Department of Health has advised that it is unlikely that entire schools or districts will need to be closed. Mr. Allen is preparing protocols for informing parents and community members. The BUUSD will provide as much information as possible, but will do so without sharing any personal information.

### **7.2 Summer Project Update (Facilities section of 5.1 Report)**

Mrs. Pompei queried regarding a warrant. Mrs. Pompei advised that the charges exceed the \$15,000 limit (Labor \$14,273 and Piping \$5,704.76 for a Total of: \$19,977.76). Mrs. Pompei would like to know if the BUUSD is in compliance with bidding requirements. Mr. Wells will confer with Mr. Evans and Mrs. Perreault regarding this warrant.

### **7.3 SEA Update**

A document titled 'Spaulding Educational Alternatives – Prequalification and Bid Award Timeline – 8/7/20' was distributed. Bids are due on 08/26/2020.

### **7.4 Vision, Mission & Strategic Goals**

A document titled 'Design Team Suggestions' was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the spreadsheet document in the packet is not complete yet. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding whether or not the project is moving forward or if it has been put on hold. Mr. Isabelle believes that the Communications Committee put discussion on hold (for that meeting) because Mrs. Spaulding was not in attendance to provide an update. Mrs. Farrell believes that with all that is going on, the project needs to be handled in small pieces. It is Ms. Cambel's belief that the project was to continue in its entirety, and that the focus would not be narrowed. Ms. Cambel believes that a narrowed focus will be detrimental to the initiative. Brief discussion was held. Given mixed messages from the Board, the Board agreed to invite Winton to a Board meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of August or 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in September) to solicit his advice and determine his flexibility to meet the needs of the Board.

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

Ms. Cambel thanked all who have been working so hard to plan the re-opening of school in an ever-changing environment.

Mr. Cecchinelli asked how parents will be notified if their requests for waivers (changing their students to different groups) have been granted. Mr. Wells advised that principals are working on schedules and he will advise them regarding instituting procedures to see that waivers are submitted and reviewed, and notifications given. The BUUSD wants to be as accommodating as possible while keeping students safe. Mr. Wells confirmed that A and B groups will have different 'first days of school'.

In response to a query from Mrs. Spaulding, Mr. Wells advised regarding why the cohort groups at SHS have a different schedule than BCEMS and BTMES. Mr. Wells advised that Mrs. Waterhouse can provide more information, and he will ask her to be in contact with Mrs. Spaulding. Mr. Wells advised that communications are going out to parents of students in alternative programs. Students at the Wall Street Complex, because of space and staffing ratios, will attend school in-person on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Other Special Education program leaders are reaching out to families regarding plans for their children.

Mr. Isabelle has a great appreciation for the work of administrators and staff, and the frustration of parents, noting that there are no easy answers.

Mrs. Akley thanked Mr. Wells and other administrators for the tremendous task they are undertaking under difficult circumstances.

Mr. Malone thanked Mr. Wells, administrators and Central Office staff for their work during COVID planning.

### **9. Future Agenda Items**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Video Conference – Google Meet Discussion was held regarding the possibility of holding a parental informational section at the next meeting. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that Mr. Coon is planning to produce a 'student's day' video. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for all schools to produce one of these videos. Information regarding the re-opening, including videos or video links will be communicated to families via e-mails and the schools' web sites.

- Vision/Mission/Strategic Goals
- Substitute Rates

### **10. Executive Session as Needed**

There were no items presented for discussion in Executive Session.

### **11. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:51 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*