

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
September 10, 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)  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alice Farrell (BT)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

David Wells, Superintendent  
Stacy Anderson, Co-Director of Special Services  
Penny Chamberlin, Director Central Vermont Career Center  
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal  
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator  
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director  
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal  
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager  
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	David Laurin	Mary McFaun	Molly McFaun
Topper McFaun	Johnathan Parker		

**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, September 10, 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**

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

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

**3.1 Public Comment**

Molly McFaun addressed the Board regarding her concern that one of her children is on a wait list for the Vermont Virtual Learning Academy. Ms. McFaun has followed the chain of command for reporting issues, including discussion with the Superintendent and believes the issue needs to be elevated to the Board. Ms. McFaun has also contacted the AOE regarding this issue. Thus far, her issue remains unresolved. Ms. McFaun does not agree with the class size limitations for VTVLC, and noted that the AOE did not set the class size limitations. Lengthy discussion was held including discussion of; a BUUSD wait list of 20 students, wait lists throughout the state, how and by whom class size limits are set, the cost and process for joining VTVLC, the cost and work involved with homeschooling, virtual learning surveys and deadlines for sign-up, hiring of teachers for VTVLC (including the need for specialized teachers at the middle school level), a shortage of teachers, class size limits to assure quality programs, the backlog of registrations at VTVLC, possible openings (based on completion of the registration process and those who may withdraw from VTVLC), the possibility of flexible and creative solutions (e.g. have wait list students participate in the on-line portion of hybrid learning and be assigned other work during in-person time), privacy issues with live-streaming classrooms (including filming of behavioral issues and that not all parents' consent to their children being filmed), differences between virtual learning and live streaming of classrooms,

possible assistance from the District for parents who are homeschooling because of the lack of openings at VTVLC, the possible search for other virtual learning providers, and the District's responsibility to provide an education for all students. Discussion ended without resolution of Ms. McFaun's issue.

**The Board directed that administrators find resolutions for the 20 families currently on the wait list for VTVLC.**

Topper McFaun queried regarding the Secretary of Education's knowledge of the short-fall in services, and wait lists for the Vermont Virtual Learning Academy, and strongly recommends that he (Secretary French) be notified immediately. Mr. McFaun advised that legislators were not aware of these issues.

### **3.2 Student Voice**

None.

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

### **4.1 Approval of Minutes – August 27, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 27, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

### **4.2 Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2020 Special Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 2, 2020 Special Meeting.**

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

### **5.1 Central Office**

The Superintendent's Report (dated September 10, 2020) was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; the Superintendent's Office, Communications, the Business Office, Special Education, Technology, Early Education, Human Resources, and Facilities. Mrs. Marold advised that the hiring process for the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum is being performed using a process similar to that which was used for the Superintendent search. There are approximately 15 candidates. Mrs. Marold hopes to present a candidate or candidates to the Board at the second September meeting or the first board meeting in October. The Board would like to see resume information in advance and would like to receive information on more than one candidate. In response to a query regarding assistance for students who don't have access to Wi-Fi, Mr. Wells advised that those families are being made aware of various options. Mr. Wells will report back to the Board regarding the number of students who are struggling with Wi-Fi access. There is a quick turn-around time for broken PCs. A.L.I.C.E. training is currently on-line only, but when restrictions are lifted, in-person training will be performed for all new employees. Ms. Pearson advised that during COVID, the State is only requiring schools to hold fire drills. In response to a query, it was noted that the schools are short 2 or 3 para-educators. There are currently no openings for BI's.

### **5.2 Building Reports**

#### **5.2.1 Spaulding High School**

The Principal's Report for September 10, 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Athletics, Clubs & Activities, and School Community. SHS Newsletters for 08/21/20 and 09/03/2020 and a copy of the Global Education Excellence Award were also distributed. Mrs. Waterhouse reported that the first couple of days of school were great and that building entry and transitions to classrooms have worked very well. Band and Chorus are being held, but look much different than the traditional classes. Chorus is not allowed to sing and there are restrictions on Band as well.

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

The CVCC Director's Report for September 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Prep Work for Student Day, Staff, Student Meals, 2020/2021 Admissions, Virtual Learning, OSHA 10 Certification Training, and Staff Highlights. Nine other documents pertaining to school re-opening were distributed. Two additional reports were distributed; 2020-21 CVCC Student Counts (as of 09/03/20), and the 2020-21 CVCC Student Count of Remote Learners report. Ms. Chamberlin reported that screening and re-opening have been going well, but the process continues to be streamlined. There have been a few 'hang ups' with meals, but those issues are being worked out. The modular homes are for sale and there are a few individuals who have expressed interest in purchasing them. It was noted that though the Human Services Program 'doesn't exist' anymore, second year students are completing their education in a co-op.

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

The Co-Principals' Report dated 09/10/2020 was distributed. The Report included information mainly pertaining to the re-opening of school, and completion of phase I of the bus loop reconfiguration. Mr. Hennessey advised that an enormous amount of effort and energy has been put in to the re-opening of schools, and that things are going very well though some streamlining is underway. Mr. Coon advised that at the beginning, drop off was slow, but improvements are being made and students and families have been very cooperative. Mrs. Akley reported that she has received positive input from families.

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

The BTMES Building Report dated September 10, 2020 was distributed. The Report included information pertaining to; Crops by Kids, Kindergarten Screening, recognition of first grade teacher Ms. Burns, open positions, summer projects, and the re-opening of school, including the Virtual Academy. A copy of a letter to students and families (dated September 2020) was also distributed. Mrs. Nye reported that the BTMES experience is very similar to that of BCEMS, and that administrators are fine tuning the arrival and dismissal process. Next week kindergarten and pre-school will start. Students in grades k – 1 are still in need of devices. There is an opening for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher. There have been compliments on the removal of the canopy, with many advising that they believe it is a cleaner look. Ms. Pearson advised that middle school students are enjoying the smaller class size and seem very happy. In response to a query regarding internet access issues within the school, it was reported that there was both a regional and national issue with internet access, but it seems to have been fixed.

### **5.3 Committee Reports**

#### **5.3.1 Communications Committee**

Minutes from the September 3, 2020 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the meeting which included discussion of; logo/branding, Vision/Mission/Strategic Planning, possible changes to the Communication Department, budget promotion (early voting needs to be factored in to promotion), improved promoting of SHS to out of district sending schools, school re-opening, and the importance of promoting the completion of the Census (\$4,000 is lost for every individual that is not counted in the Census). Mr. Evans lauded Mr. Allen for his exemplary work on promoting the district, advising that he has many great ideas and takes much action to promote the district and keep the community informed.

The next meeting is Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference (Google Meet).

#### **5.3.2 Finance Committee**

Minutes from the September 1, 2020 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Committee discussed; providing meals to the homeless community (through December, and possibly longer – this is generating revenue for the district), solar credits, the SEA Project, COVID funding, the FY21 budget, FY22 budget development, and the possibility that districts may be held harmless with regards to student counts during COVID.

The next meeting is Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference (Google Meet).

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

The Committee met on August 10, 2020. Minutes were previously distributed.

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

#### **5.3.4 Policy Committee**

This Committee did not meet 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**

Minutes from the August 25, 2020 meeting were distributed. The Committee discussed virtual and hybrid learning, and held brief discussion on the Annual Work Plan. The Annual Work Plan will be discussed further at the next meeting.

The next meeting is Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference (Google Meet).

#### **5.3.6 Negotiations Committee**

A planning meeting will be scheduled. There is a meeting with the Association (regarding mediation) on 09/30/2020.

#### **5.3.7 Regional Advisory Board**

Draft Minutes from the February 10, 2020 meeting were distributed.

The next meeting is Monday, October 5, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. via video conference (Google Meet).

### **5.4 Financials**

The BUUSD FY21 Expense Report Summary (dated 09/10/2020) was distributed. There were no questions from the Board.

## **6. Current Business**

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

Mr. Wells reported that he has checked with legal counsel regarding recourse when dealing with resignations. Legal counsel has advised that if an individual resigns and the BUUSD doesn't accept the resignation, there is no genuine recourse to force the individual to stay. Additionally, if an individual resigned and was forced to stay, they would probably not be individual the Board would want with BUUSD students. Any teacher who resigns can't work in Vermont schools for the rest of the year, and their untimely resignation does blemish their reputation. Mr. Wells advised that resignations do not require Board action, and could be listed as part of the Superintendent's Report. **The Board requested that letters of resignation be included in the Board packet even if no action is necessary.**

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Andrea Moore (BTMES Technology Integration Specialist – term of one year), Darren McIntyre (SHS Drivers' Education Teacher – .4 FTE Road Instructor), and Sarah Brownell (SHS Special Education – School Social Worker) were distributed.

Andrea Moore is presented for a one year position to replace Jessica Van Orman who is working in the Virtual Academy for a term of one year.

Mr. Wells provided an overview of the candidates and the positions they are slated for. Mrs. Akley briefly left the meeting and will not be present for voting.

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Andrea Moore for a term of one year.**

**On a motion by Ms. Cambel, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Sarah Brownell.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Darren McIntyre.**

In response to a request from the Board, **Mr. Wells will provide the Board with the 'Breakage Report'.**

There are currently three classroom teacher openings and one Literacy Interventionist opening. At this point, there are no candidates for the position of Literacy Interventionist, and there are a few candidates for the PE position. Interviews are being conducted for the Social Studies position. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade Science position is open due to the teacher moving to the Virtual Academy. Jess Carpenter is obtaining a waiver so that she can be a .6 FTE classroom instructor for Driver's Education.

#### **6.2 SEA General Contractor Recommendation**

Six documents were distributed;

A letter from David Laurin, Architect (dated 09/04/2020)

A document titled 'Project Budget Opinion' (from David Laurin)

A document titled 'SEA Project Expenses to Date' (dated 09/04/2020)

A document titled 'SEA Program Estimated Costs Analysis 9/10/20'

A document titled 'Vermont Bond Bank – Illustrative Debt Service Schedule – Rates as of 9/3/2020'

A document titled 'Spaulding Educational Alternatives (SEA) School Building Project – General Contractor Bid Comparison'

Mr. Derner addressed the Board and provided an overview of the project, advising that the bids came in approximately \$1,000,000 over the forecast. The Building Committee has been looking for ways to mitigate the cost, but cannot identify enough savings to make a significant difference. Administrators believe it is important to continue to move forward with the project, in an effort to serve more needy students, and save money long term. Mr. Laurin advised that not all was planned in January and that the forecast was low. COVID has also had an impact on the cost and availability of construction materials. The bids were all relatively the same and reflect the costs of building at this time. Discussions have been held with counsel and financing options have been defined. There are two financing options; 1. Ask voters to approve borrowing more (this option will push out the start of construction and delay the opening), or 2. Have the Board approve an Expense Note. Option 2 is believed to be the best course of action at this point. Lengthy discussion was held including discussion of; possible areas for savings, an overview of an Expense Note (which is renewable annually), anticipated savings (by placing fewer students out of district), changes to Special Education funding (Act 173), cost increases and the lack of availability at many outplacement facilities, transportation expenses, and awarding of a contract. In response to a query regarding selection of a contractor, Mrs. Perreault advised that she has been in contact with legal counsel. Mrs. Perreault read Vermont State Statute that advises that the BUUSD is obligated to award the contract to the lowest bidder unless the two lowest bids are within 1% of each other. The difference between the two lowest bids is 2.8%. If the bid is to be awarded, it must be awarded to PeakCM, rather than the second lowest bidder, even though they are considered a 'local' business.

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board voted 6 to 2 to award the SEA building contract to PeakCM, and to enter into a renewable one year Expense Note for the purpose of funding the SEA Project. Mrs. Akley, Mr. Boltin, Ms. Cambel, Mr. Cecchinelli, Mr. Malone, and Mrs. Pompei voted for the motion. Mr. Isabelle and Mrs. Spaulding voted against the motion.**

#### **6.3 FY22 Budget Development**

A document titled BUUSD FY22 Budget Development Schedule – September 1, 2020 was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that at the previous board meeting, she asked Board Members to provide input relating to their values, goals, and budget parameters. No input was received from the Board. Mrs. Spaulding stressed that those drafting the budget need input from the Board and need that input early. Mrs. Spaulding notified Board Members prior to the meeting that they would be expected to provide input. Each Board Member was polled, and the input varied between having a 1% - 2% increase, to a 2% - 5% increase. It

was clarified that the percent increase refers to the Expense Budget, not the cost per equalized pupil. It is understood that increases for salaries and benefits are unknown, which makes it very difficult to draft a budget. Given anticipated increases to salaries and benefits, and the lack of reserves, most of the Board doesn't believe a 2% increase is achievable. The Board was thanked for their input. Ideally, the budget should be approved in December, and possibly be approved by the Board at their first meeting in January. It was stressed that due to early/absentee voting, it will be necessary to promote the budget early.

#### **6.4 Enrollment Projections**

A document titled 'Enrollment/Staffing 2020-2021 – September' was distributed. Mr. Wells advised that enrollment numbers are still being finalized. It was noted that some classes in the middle school appear small in size, but at certain grade levels, schools are required to have specialized teachers. Homeschool numbers are fluid, and have increased over last year. Increases above last year's homeschool counts: BTMES 18 more, BCMES 24 more, and SHS 5 more. Enrollment at the schools has been fairly stable. BCEMS student counts are the same, BTMES has 27 fewer students, and CVCC has increased by 35 students. At a recent meeting, it was eluded to that schools will be held harmless for equalized pupil counts (under COVID). No determination has been made thus far regarding the financial impact to the district should an equalized pupil count waiver not be granted. **Mr. Wells will need to research whether or not VTVLC wait list students are included in the pupil counts.** It was noted that the AOE has a backlog of homeschool applications.

### **7. Old Business**

#### **7.1 School Re-opening Update**

Mr. Wells advised there was nothing to add to his report. Mrs. Pompei voiced concern that the Virtual Learning Academy was not starting in a timely fashion, teachers have not yet been assigned to students, and no academic content has been provided. Mrs. Pompei reported that the Virtual Academy came on line at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday (the first day of school), and consisted of a video lasting less than ten minutes. On Wednesday the VA came on line at 10:00 a.m. and consisted of a 9 slide power point presentation. On Thursday, the VA came on line at 11:00 a.m. and consisted of a 6 slide power point presentation. Mrs. Pompei believes that information is being sent out at an unreasonable hour and that no academics have yet to be provided. Mr. Wells advised that the BUUSD coordinators are working diligently to provide updates and information to families, and to keep administrators informed.

#### **7.2 Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals**

No discussion.

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

Mrs. Spaulding advised she received an e-mail from a community member inquiring as to why school is not being held five days a week. Mrs. Spaulding responded to the community member and Mr. Allen has added the question and an answer to the FAQs page. Mrs. Spaulding inquired regarding who is responsible for responding to community members. It was noted that the Superintendent and Board Chair are the designated individuals for providing public feedback/statements. It was noted that members of the public should be directed check the FAQs page for information.

Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding the student matter previously discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Wells advised that the family did not provided the requested information and that no action needs to be taken at this time.

Mr. Isabelle congratulated Ms. Burns and Ms. Chap for their recently received recognitions, and stressed his belief that it is important to publicize the good work being performed throughout the BUUSD.

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

The next meeting is Thursday, September 24, 2020 t 5:30 p.m. via video conference (Google Meet)

The next Agenda will be similar to tonight's agenda, and should include;

- Committee Updates (as appropriate)
- Resignations/Retirements/New Hires (if appropriate)
- SEA Project Update
- FY22 Budget Development
- Enrollment Projections Update
- School Re-opening Update – including the VTVLC
- Vision, Mission & Strategic Goals Update

Board Members were advised to contact Mr. Wells or Mr. Malone with any additional items.

Mrs. Spaulding requested that Student Presentations be added back to the Agendas. After brief discussion, it was agreed that given the slate of business being conducted, and limitations due to COVID, Student Presentations will need to be postponed for a while.

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

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

**11. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:53 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*