

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
October 22, 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) – joined at 6:11 p.m.  
Tim Boltin (BC)  
Emel Cambel (BC)  
Giuliano Cecchinelli (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT)  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

David Wells, Superintendent  
Stacy Anderson, 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  
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal  
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Heather Battistoni	Martha Blaisdell	Jude Brister	Erin Carter
Amber Cheney	Tamara Cooley	Christina Currier	Erika Dolan	Nora Duane
Brendan Eaton	Neil Kelly	Philip Kolling	Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco
Laura Lagerstedt	Amber Larrabee	Kelly Littlefield	Clifton Long	Jennifer Luck-Hill
Tara Martin	Carl Matteson	Ben Matthews	Peg Mehuron	Ted Mills
Stephanie Olsen	Heather Slayton	Megan Spaulding	Ally Tarwater	Elysha Thurston
Rachiel Van Vliet	Paul Vescio	Sonja Walbridge	Lance Whitehead	

**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, October 22, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference.

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

Add 9.1 Labor Relations Agreement for Educational Support Staff  
Add 9.2 Personnel Matter – Discussion of Candidate Presented for Hire

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended. Mrs. Akley was not present during the vote.**

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

**3.1 Public Comment**

Erin Carter addressed the Board, speaking as the President of the Barre Educators Association. Ms. Carter read from a prepared statement, sharing educators' perspective of the current learning environment (under COVID restrictions), advising of the larger picture involved in providing education, uncertainties for the future, shared frustrations, goals, and acknowledgment of the unique challenges facing teachers, students, and parents. Ms. Carter thanked students, parents, and staff for their support and understanding during this difficult time.

### **3.2 Student Voice**

None.

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

#### **4.1 Approval of Minutes – October 8, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the October 8, 2020 Regular Meeting. Mrs. Akley was not present during the vote.**

### **5. Current Business**

#### **5.1 Resignations/Retires/New Hires**

The resume and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Form for Debra Hathaway (BTMES – 7<sup>th</sup> grade Science) was distributed. This candidate is presented as a one academic year replacement for Emily Merrill who is teaching at the virtual academy for the remainder of the year.

**It was agreed that discussion of this candidate will occur in Executive Session. See Agenda Item 9 for action.**

#### **5.2 Presentation: Re-Envisioning Phase II by Lance Whitehead, Lavallee and Brensinger**

A printed copy of the presentation from LaVallee/Brensinger Architects was distributed. Ms. Chamberlin thanked the Board for entertaining the presentation and introduced Mr. Whitehead who provided an overview of the document. Mr. Whitehead advised regarding the process to-date, the pre-feasibility analysis and findings (including inadequate space), defining possible expansion, lab prototypes, service area data and analysis, possible community in-put, educational visioning, Labor and Industry analysis (including projected ten-year job market growth), tuition comparisons, and support of the regional economy (by providing education and training). It was noted that no programs have been identified as programs that should be eliminated. Mr. Whitehead advised regarding identified priorities (educational, architectural, and community) which include; up to date labs, classroom space, improved technology, sustainability, flexible, student centered spaces, gathering and eating places, safety, and access (from the outside) to programs that serve the public (cosmetology, culinary arts). Priorities also include tying programs to the various local industries as well as colleges. Mr. Whitehead provided a brief overview of the CVCC Portrait of a Graduate, and then proceeded to provide design patterns that would best serve students. The presentation also included an overview of each of the programs currently offered. Options for moving forward include renovation to the existing space, renovating a different structure, and building a new center. The estimated cost associated with renovations projects is \$22,000,000 - \$30,000,000, plus soft costs of approximately 30% of the construction cost. The estimated cost associated with acquiring new property and constructing a new building is \$26,000,000 - \$34,000,000, plus soft costs of approximately 30% of the construction cost. It is estimated that the cost increases \$1,500,000 for each year the project is delayed. Lengthy discussion ensued, including discussion of; responsibility of the BUUSD and that of sending school boards, governance structures (current and future), involvement of the RAB Board (with representatives from each sending school), estimated changes to tuition rates, the financial loss to SHS (estimated to be \$500,000 to \$600,000 per year), the timeframe for the proposed RFP (site selection process), the cost for the site selection process (estimated cost could reach as high as \$125,000), possible postponement of moving forward with an RFP, and addition of a Special Article on the ballot (in March). It was clarified that this evening's request is to approve moving forward with the solicitation of bids for a site selection process. Ms. Chamberlin advised that though she has enough money in surplus funds, she prefers to use \$100,000 of surplus funds to lower tuition rates. Ms. Chamberlin has completed the first budget draft (FY22), which includes the first payment on a loan of \$125,000, which will result in a tuition increase of 1.5% (roughly \$250 per student). Ms. Chamberlin advised that the draft FY22 budget for CVCC currently has an overall increase of 7.5% (which includes the use of surplus funds). Brief discussion was also held regarding how the current CVCC space would be utilized if CVCC were to move out. It is not known if any State aid or grant monies are available to assist with renovation of building(s) or construction of a new technical structure.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve allowing CVCC to solicit bids for a site selection process.**

#### **5.3 Request to Transfer from Barre Virtual Academy to In-Person Instruction Procedure**

A document titled 'Request to Transfer from BVA to In-Person Instruction – DRAFT – 10/07/20' was distributed.

Mr. Wells provided an overview of the document as well as student counts for the virtual academy (started with 260 students and now has 235+/-). Mr. Wells noted the difficulties involved for students changing learning platforms, and advised that following the outlined procedures will assist with any necessary transitions.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the procedures as defined in the Draft Document 'Request to Transfer from BVA to In-Person Instruction' dated 10/07/20.**

#### **5.4 Community Service – Waiving Graduation Requirement**

A document titled 'Principal's Report October 22, 2020' was distributed. Mrs. Waterhouse provided a brief summary of graduation requirements, advising that in the present COVID-19 atmosphere, it is a difficult struggle for students to meet community service graduation requirements. Additionally, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that SHS will support those students who wish to perform

community service, and noted that the National Honor Society is still requiring community service. Mrs. Waterhouse recommends the Board approve a moratorium on community service graduation requirements for the class of 2021.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously agreed to accept the recommendation of the Principal, and agreed to waive community service graduation requirements for the class of 2021.**

### **5.5 Special Education Report: Progress of Students on IEP Plans**

A document titled 'Board Report 10/22/2020 – Special Services' was distributed. Mrs. Anderson provided a brief overview of the submitted report which explains how students are being supported, including those with special needs, and addressing parental concerns. In response to a query, Mrs. Anderson advised that contracted agencies (including The New School and Maple Hill), are continuing to provide services in both hybrid and in-person modes. Most students placed with these contractors are receiving in-person instruction.

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Second and Final Reading Delegation of Authority During State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Policy (A25)**

A copy of the policy was distributed. Brief discussion was held. Mr. Wells advised that this policy would prove beneficial should decisions need to be made expeditiously in emergency situations.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Delegation of Authority During State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Policy (A25) and agreed to ratify said policy.**

### **6.2 Second and Final Reading Modes of Instruction During State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Policy (D22)**

A copy of the policy was distributed. Brief discussion was held. Mr. Wells advised that this policy would prove beneficial should decisions need to be made expeditiously in emergency situations.. It was noted that information on the implementation of synchronous learning will be presented at the next meeting.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Modes of Instruction During State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Policy (D22) and agreed to ratify said policy.**

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

A document titled 'FY22 BUUSD Budget Development Considerations – October 22, 2020' was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding reported that not much has changed since the sheet was last presented to the Board. The Finance Committee will review the first draft at their next meeting. Mr. Wells reported that Mrs. Perreault is on track and he believes that the Board's guidelines and expectations will be met. Mrs. Pompei questioned the student count at BTMES (752), and whether or not pre-school students were included in the count. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Finance Committee will discuss this discrepancy.

### **6.4 School Re-Opening Update**

Ms. Chamberlin reported that beginning on 11/02/20, CVCC will hold in-person classes 5 days a week. All sending schools approve of this change. Mr. Wells noted that Mrs. Waterhouse has advised regarding steps to increase access for students, including increased access for IEP and EST students (who can stay on premises later in the day), and increased library hours (by appointment) to assist students who have Wi-Fi issues. It was noted that SHS is working on other scheduling modifications, and school counselors are also meeting with students who are struggling. Mr. Wells advised that the Re-Opening Committee has met twice since the last Board meeting. The recent closure of BCEMS was done in an abundance of caution. The Vermont Department of Health was provided with contact tracing information and does not believe there is any risk at the school. Mr. Allen sent out communication to all parents (of all schools) relating to this closure. The State is in the process of revising the Safe and Healthy Start document. Additional clarification will be provided when the written changes are shared (10/23/20). Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of some of the expected modifications to the document. Once the revised document is shared, it will be reviewed and changes will be utilized for planning purposes. The BUUSD is waiting for STA to provide information relating to transportation logistics. Mr. Wells advised regarding COVID-19 cases present at Union Elementary School (in Montpelier), and cases related to hockey teams, stressing that these outbreaks reinforce the need to continue with social distancing guidelines. Two parents have joined the Re-opening Committee and there is a sub-group to allow Board Members (Mrs. Pompei and Mrs. Spaulding) to ask questions and provide input. The BUUSD is currently considering changes beginning with the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding changes being considered as a result of parent reported concerns for struggling students (especially with remote learning). Mr. Wells advised that the focus of the November in-service day will be remote instruction. The Curriculum department will support this training. Other discussion has included increased services for Special Education students. Also being considered is additional in-person instruction for homeless students. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated that parents are becoming very frustrated and have reported that they are not receiving responses from teachers. Mr. Wells stressed that the Committee needs to work on increasing in-person learning as well as improving remote instruction. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned that only parents of students in grades k – 4 have been surveyed and provided feedback. The Committee has not yet heard from the other grades regarding their concerns. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned that there remain many outstanding issues almost 2 months into the school year.

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

There is nothing new to report.

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

Mr. Malone queried regarding the invoice from Cooper Mechanical (\$177,000). Mrs. Pompei will research the matter and respond. Mrs. Farrell would like to receive regular updates from administrators regarding the status of students in grades 5 – 8 (relating to school re-opening issues).

Mr. Isabelle congratulated the sports teams who have faced many challenges competing under COVID-19 restrictions.

Mr. Isabelle also congratulated Ms. Chamberlin and CVCC staff for continuing to endure under these difficult times.

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding surveys for students in grades 5 – 12.

Mr. Wells reported that a high school survey was designed and the high school is in the process of collecting survey results. Results will be reported out at the next meeting.

## **8. Future Agenda Items**

The Board discussed changes to upcoming meeting dates (due to conflicts with holidays).

The Board will plan to meet on 11/12/20, 12/03/20 and 12/17/20. No second meeting will be held in November.

A special meeting for budget approval will be held on 01/07/21.

The Communications Committee meeting for 11/12/20 will be rescheduled. Mrs. Spaulding will confirm the dates and send them to Mrs. Gilbert.

In addition to the regular Agenda Items, it was requested that the following items be added to a future agenda.

- SEA Project Update
- School Re-opening Update (including a synchronous learning update)

## **9. Executive Session as Needed**

### **9.1 Labor Relations Agreement for Educational Support Staff**

### **9.2 Personnel Matter – Discussion of Candidate Presented for Hire**

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include Labor Relations Agreements with Educational Support Staff, and Discussion of a Candidate Presented for Hire.

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of an item proposed for discussion, specifically Labor Relations Agreements for Educational Support Staff, 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 Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Ms. Pearson (for Agenda Item 9.2 only) and Mr. Wells (for Agenda Items 9.1 and 9.2) in attendance, at 8:21 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 Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:37 p.m.**

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Debra Hathaway for the position of BTMES 7<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, for the remainder of the current academic year.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board voted 8 to 1 to ratify the Master Para-educator Agreement. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Cambel, Mr. Cecchinelli, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Isabelle, Mr. Malone, Mrs. Pompei, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion. Mr. Boltin voted against the motion.**

## **10. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:39 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*