

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
November 5, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alice Farrell, Chair - (BT)
Sonya Spaulding, Vice-Chair - (BC)
Guy Isabelle – (At-Large)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

David Wells, Superintendent
Josh Allen, Communications Specialist

GUESTS PRESENT:

Ben Matthews

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Farrell, called the Thursday, November 5, 2020 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Review of BUUSD letterhead will be discussed under Agenda Item 5.2 Communications Tools Update

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting Minutes for October 15, 2020 BUUSD Communications Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve the Minutes of the October 15, 2020 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Meeting Changes: December/January

The Committee will meet on:

December 10, 2020 – the main item for discussion will be Promotion of the Budget.

January 21, 2021 – the main item for discussion will be Promotion of the Budget.

5.2 Communications Tools Update

Mr. Allen reported that since the Committee last met, the BUUSD has acquired the MailChimp application. This app was first used on 10/23/20, and was used for today's update. The app allows the BUUSD to easily send mass e-mails, and e-mails to specific individuals, and allows messages to be sent via phone. The app also has reporting features which provide data relating to how many individuals receive, open, and click on links within e-mails, etc. Important e-mails that have not been opened by recipients can be resent to just those individuals. Some of the e-mail content can also be posted on Facebook. Mr. Allen would like to expand the use of MailChimp out to the schools, and suggested that it be used to send principals' newsletters, a seasonal Athletic Department newsletter, etc. Brief discussion was held regarding differences in the various schools' newsletters, and it was suggested that there be some consistency within newsletters, though it is recognized that some pieces of newsletters are unique to the individual schools and that should not be discouraged. In response to a query regarding distribution of newsletters, it was noted that SHS does not send paper copies, though some paper copies do go out to families at BCEMS and BTMES (parents who don't have e-mail addresses, and possibly to parents of younger students). Mr. Allen anticipates receiving assistance from Mr. Emmons and Mr. Smith if their stipend increases for an expanded workload are approved. Additional assistance provided by these individuals will allow Mr. Allen to focus more time on the most critical tasks, while allowing other work to also be completed.

Revised Letterhead: There have been comments that the new letterhead is too crowded, and lacks design. It was noted that the letterhead was recently revised to reflect additional personnel. Mr. Allen has not been involved in the letterhead design, but

volunteered to take on that work. Mr. Allen will work with Mrs. Gilbert on this re-design project. Brief discussion was held regarding how much information should be included on the letterhead.

6. Old Business

6.1 Budget Promotion

Mr. Allen has been working with Business Manager, Lisa Perreault and the Special Education Team regarding next week's budget presentation (to the Finance Committee and the Board). Mr. Allen has met with the CVCC Digital Media Arts II instructor and class regarding creation of promotional videos. Mr. Allen will be meeting with BCEMS and BTMES administrators regarding filming work and associated safety protocols to be followed while filming. The current plan is to film at BCEMS and BTMES on 11/23/20 and 11/24/20, though it has not been determined which school will be filmed on which day. Mr. Allen plans to limit filming to 2 hours at each building. Next week, Mr. Allen will prepare the film agenda. In response to a query, Mr. Allen advised that planned budget promotion does include sending post cards (as was done last year). Mr. Allen is working with Jet Service to obtain a rough quote. Mr. Allen has also been in contact with Video Vision (Tony Campos), and Mr. Campos has agreed to post the promotional videos before and after Board meetings. Mr. Wells reported that he has reviewed the budget with Mrs. Perreault and it has been suggested that the PowerPoint budget presentation show how the BUUSD is being responsible and providing for students, rather than providing extensive detail regarding changes to budget line items. Mr. Isabelle advised that he received an e-mail from a select board member with concerns regarding the cost of building a new facility for CVCC (an option which is currently being studied). It was reiterated that discussion thus far only relate to financing studies, not funding for a new career center.

6.2 SHS Promotion to Out of District Schools

Mr. Allen advised regarding the recent full feature ad in the Times Argus which contained information on all four schools, and highlighted some of the unique offerings at SHS (the Robotics Program, Forensic Sciences, and the partnership with the Generator Maker Space in Burlington). Ry Hoffman has been giving virtual presentations at other schools, and sending promotional information to schools. Mr. Allen and Mrs. Waterhouse have been researching the school's 'on-line reputation'. SHS is taking ownership of the Spaulding High School 'Niche' page and will be updating it. In response to a query, Mr. Allen noted that it appears other local schools have been updating their Niche pages. The SHS Niche page appears to only have comments posted from individuals who are unhappy about something. SHS should make an effort to correct/update information on the Niche page and encourage individuals to provide some positive feedback on the site. Mr. Allen advised that much positive information will be provided in the Annual Report. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding promoting SHS merchandise in downtown businesses (especially during the holiday season). Mrs. Farrell would like Main Street to reflect the SHS spirit. Mr. Allen advised that he has not had time to be working on the merchandising initiative, but hopes that anticipated expansion of Mr. Emmons and Mr. Smith's roles within the Communication Department will enable him to put more time into this initiative. Mr. Allen advised that the goal is to have Main Street actively reflect the positive spirit of the BUUSD (similar to the June 2020 graduation promotion). Mr. Isabelle suggested asking Thygesen Sports to expand their promotion of Crimson Tide merchandise.

6.3 Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning Update

Mrs. Farrell has been working with Winton Goodrich on planning for creation of podcasts. On Tuesday, 11/10/20, Mrs. Farrell will be working with Tony Campos to record a one hour Zoom meeting. Mr. Campos will edit the one hour session into 4 fifteen minute podcasts and will forward them to Mr. Allen. In response to a query, Mr. Allen advised that he will research using the free application "Anchor", for posting the podcasts. Additionally, Mr. Allen advised that video versions of the podcasts can be posted on the District's YouTube channel.

7. Other Business

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding the status of surveys for students/families in grades 5 – 8, and 9 – 12. Mr. Allen advised that a survey was conducted at the high school level. Mr. Wells advised that the high school survey was quite extensive and that Mrs. Waterhouse will be providing survey results data in her Principal's Report (which will be distributed at the 11/12/20 Board meeting). Surveys have not been conducted for grades 5 – 8. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated her concern regarding the amount of instruction being provided to students, and she would like to receive input from students and parents on this matter. Mrs. Spaulding advised that parents continue to voice much frustration with the hybrid model, and would like to identify what is working well, and what could be improved upon (while continuing to follow social distancing guidelines from the State). In response to a query, Mr. Allen advised that the BUUSD website contains many links to resources (regional and local), and that the FAQs page has extensive information. It was suggested that informational/resource links be posted to Facebook, and that an e-mail be sent to parents advising of the various resources available to them. Mr. Isabelle queried regarding whether or not a reply was sent to a parent who e-mailed the Board with concerns. It was noted that Mr. Malone has advised that he often responds to e-mails via telephone. Mr. Allen advised that he does not see e-mails sent to Board Members, and queried regarding the possibility of those e-mails being shared with him. Brief discussion was held regarding the sharing of e-mails and the availability of information through the Freedom of Information Act (though confidential information would have to be redacted).

8. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas

- Budget Promotion
- SHS Promotion to Out of District Schools
- Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning Update

- Logo/Branding

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference.

10. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin