

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

Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
February 4, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Alice Farrell, Chair - (BT)  
Sonya Spaulding, Vice-Chair - (BC)  
Guy Isabelle – (At-Large) – departed the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Josh Allen, Communications Specialist

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mrs. Farrell, called the Thursday, February 4, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference.

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

None.

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1 Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee Meeting**

The Committee agreed by consensus to approve as amended, the Minutes of the January 21, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting.

**5. New Business**

None.

**6. Old Business**

**6.1 Budget Communications Update**

A draft of the 2021 Annual Report to the Community was distributed. Mr. Allen advised that he reviewed the draft with Mr. Wells. The draft is being presented to the Committee for feedback. Mr. Allen would like to make any suggested changes on Friday (02/05) and send the document to the printer on Monday (02/08). Production of the document is 2 weeks ahead of where it was last year. Turn-around time for printing is approximately 9 days. A digital copy of the report will be available for on-line viewing by the week of 02/08/21. The full budget flyer, once completed, will also be available on-line. The document can also be posted on social media. Mrs. Spaulding advised that she will review the document in detail and send her comments to Mr. Allen later this evening. Brief discussion was held regarding how the Yield impacts the tax rate. It was noted that the Yield has not been finalized. Mr. Allen advised regarding changes to the bar graph on page 6 (spending per equalized pupil), when the statewide average number is received on Friday 02/05/21. Mrs. Perreault will provide updated information to Mr. Allen. Brief discussion was held regarding some minor changes, and on how to indicate that alumni pictures are from pre-covid days (no face coverings are being worn in the pictures). Additional discussion included steps to take to provide credit for photos, and assurance that students being photographed are not on the exclusion list (students who are not allowed to have photos published). It was noted that the publication is very positive, and includes highlighting the provision of free meals (over 83,000) to students during the timeframe when schools were closed. Publishing pictures of students participating in in-person learning is a positive aspect of the report. Additional feedback will be provided to Mr. Allen so that he can finalize the document by end of day 2/05/21.

The Committee discussed other ways to promote the budget, including letters to the editor, and positive postings on social media. Mr. Allen advised that he will also use social media for targeted ads (this was done last year). It was suggested that the Superintendent write a piece for the Times Argus (addressing some of the concerns that have been raised). Mr. Allen will approach Mr. Wells regarding this matter. Mrs. Spaulding advised that she, as Chair of the Finance Committee, is willing to write something up

for publication closer to the voting date. Mrs. Spaulding believes that it is more important to advise regarding why certain increases are necessary rather than being vocal about having one of the lowest cost per-pupil amounts in the state.

## **6.2 Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning Update**

In response to a query, Mrs. Spaulding advised that surveys (currently in development) will be going out to ‘everybody’ (community members, parents, staff, students etc.), and responders can choose which category/categories they fall into (e.g., parent of a high school student, who is also a business owner, and is an alumni of SHS). Multiple categories can be checked off. Mrs. Spaulding has reviewed a rough outline of the survey. Mr. Allen will be creating the survey. The first round of feedback group meetings has been completed. Mrs. Spaulding believes much good information is being obtained. Mr. Allen reiterated that he sat in on one of the meetings and heard great feedback and the sharing of many good ideas. The next round of forums will begin the week of 02/08/21. Mrs. Spaulding will advise Mr. Goodrich to share the survey with the Design Team prior to its publication. It will be beneficial to have Design Team members utilize the survey to work out any bugs. Mr. Allen can then remove the ‘test’ data from the response database. It may be necessary to promote the survey on social media. Mrs. Spaulding advised that feedback from the focus groups was used to assist with formulation of questions for the survey. Once survey responses are collected, data will be provided to the Design Team who will craft a Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Plan, that will then be presented to the Board. The goal is to have a press release on 05/14/2021.

## **7. Other Business**

Mr. Allen provided a status of the video being created in partnership with CVCC. All interview shots (of students who have had positive journeys through Barre schools) have been completed. COVID closures prevented finalization of filming at BCEMS and BTMES. It is hoped that filming will take place the week of 02/08/21.

It was reported that WCAX is producing a segment to highlight students who have had a positive experience with remote learning. A 10<sup>th</sup> grade student from Spaulding High School is currently ranked #1 in her class and will be sharing her positive experience/success with remote learning. On Friday, 02/05/21, the student and Ry Hoffman will be meeting virtually with a WCAX reporter.

It is not known if the Art teachers will be doing something in lieu of the annual art show. Mr. Allen believes that some art is being displayed in local stores, but is not aware of any planned event. Mrs. Spaulding will reach out to the BCEMS Art teacher to see if anything is planned. Mr. Allen advised regarding the Art Studio gallery at BTMES. It was suggested that perhaps videos could be shot within the schools and shared on social media and the BUUSD web site.

Mr. Allen advised that the BUUSD had to increase the Mail Chimp Plan because the BUUSD went over the limit. January was a very busy communication month. Part of the increase is due to trying to be completely transparent regarding COVID.

## **8. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas**

- Budget Vote After-action Report (March)
- Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning Update (March)
- Logo/Branding (TBD)
- SHS Promotion to Out of District Schools Update – Spring 2021

## **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference.

## **10. Adjournment**

**The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:24 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*