

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
February 11, 2021 - 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) – joined at 5:40 p.m.
Giuliano Cecchinelli (BC)
Alice Farrell (BT)
Guy Isabelle (At-Large)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

David Wells, Superintendent
Mary Ellen Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology
Josh Allen, Communications Specialist
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Penny Chamberlin, Director Central Vermont Career Center
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator
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	Renee Badeau	Mel Battah	Linda Couture	Erika Dolan
Jody Emerson	Kara Erwin	Karen Fredericks	Jenny Hyslop	Prudence Krasofski
Amber Larrabee	Jake Larrabee	Hope Moulton	Christine Parker	Amy Richard
Abby Smith	Diane Solomon	Megan Spaulding	Michael	802 -***-***88

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, February 11, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

It was noted that this evening's meeting will follow the amended Agenda that was posted on 02/10/21.
Add 10.2 Personnel Matter Relating to Supervision – under Executive Session.

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

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

3.1 Public Comment

A parent addressed the Board advising that her 2 children have consistently faced racist incidents (including in the classroom, cafeteria, sporting events, and social media). The parent also advised that a BUUSD Board Member has recently posted racist memes on social media, including denying that racism exists in the Barre Community. There is much concern regarding the message these

postings are sending to children in the school system, and this Board Member's postings are causing harm to the children they are supposed to be protecting. The Board was asked to use words and actions that demonstrate their support of students and that they are opposed to racism. It was requested that Board Members lead by example by taking active steps to denounce racism and take concrete steps to ensure that racist and divisive ideology is not a part of Board decisions. Mr. Malone thanked the parent for her input and advised that the Board recognizes there are issues, and is currently working on implementing policies on this issue. Ms. Simmons advised regarding current equity work, advising that an equity forum was held on 02/10/21, and that another forum will be held on 02/18/21. From the forums, the BUUSD will be developing a policy and procedures, and will also be conducting professional development relating to this issue.

A parent addressed the Board requesting information on the process for making decisions relating to moving to remote learning (due to COVID issues) and advised regarding the difficulty involved for parents who must work outside the home while students are home working remotely. Mr. Wells provided an overview of the decision making process, which involves a BUUSD team and the Vermont Department of Health, including directives from the Vermont Department of Health regarding individuals who must quarantine.

A parent queried regarding publication of plans for increased in-person instruction, should the Department of Health relax distancing guidelines. Mr. Wells advised that the Re-opening Team is currently working on a Recovery Plan, but that increased in-person instruction plans will be published if/when, the social distancing guidelines are changed.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting.

5. Reports to the Board

5.1 Superintendent/Central Office Report

A copy of the BUUSD Central Office Newsletter for February 2021 was distributed. There were no questions from the Board.

5.2 Building Reports

5.2.1 Spaulding High School

The Principal's Report dated 02/04/21 was distributed. A copy of the SHS Library Newsletter for February 2021 was distributed. Mrs. Waterhouse announced that David Poulin is a finalist for the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Awards, advising that only a small percentage of students across the country qualify for this and that during her tenure at SHS, only a handful of students have been able to reach this level of achievement.

5.2.2 Central Vermont Career Center

A document titled Director CTE Bytes for February 2021 was distributed. A copy of the CVCC 2021 Annual Report was distributed. Ms. Chamberlin announced that she received word from the Twelfth Annual Vermont Student Entrepreneurial Contest, that four CVCC Digital Media Arts students placed in the competition; Finn Cook (1st place for Bumper Stickers), and , LuLu Jennings, Jackson Lever, and Teka Marie-Phillips (2nd place for videos) Cash prizes and certificates will be presented to these students.

5.2.3 Barre City Elementary and Middle School

The Co-Principals' Report dated February 4, 2021 was distributed. Clarification was provided that both BCEMS and BTMES have in-person learning 5 days a week, but Wednesdays are half days at both schools (with remote learning in the afternoon).

5.2.4 Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

The BTMES Building Report dated February 11, 2021 was distributed. A copy of the BTMES February 2021 Newsletter was also distributed. There were no questions from the Board.

5.3 Committee Reports

5.3.1 Communications Committee

The Committee met on February 4, 2021. Discussion centered mainly on communication of the budget, including a review of the Draft Annual Report. In response to a query, Mr. Allen advised that a 'big reveal' of all budget information will occur on 02/12/21, including postings and e-mailing of budget information. Additionally, Mr. Allen advised that the Annual Report has been printed and it is expected that the reports will be mailed the week of 02/15/21.

The next meeting is Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

5.3.2 Finance Committee

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

5.3.3 Facilities & Transportation Committee

The February 8, 2021 and March 8, 2021 meetings are cancelled. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that it was been an honor to participate and Chair this Committee. Much great work has been performed, including; installation of lights on the SHS Athletic fields, the upcoming installation of a generator at BTMES, and upgrades to the BCEMS bus loop. The next meeting date is to be determined. Mr. Cecchinelli was commended for his efforts on this Committee.

5.3.4 Policy Committee

The next meeting is Monday, February 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the next meeting will include discussion of policies B22 – Complaints About Personnel & Instructional Materials and E20 – Community Use of School Facilities.

5.3.5 Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Pompei advised that the last meeting included discussion of interventions and assessments for the current School Year. The next meeting will include an update of the Committee's Annual Work Plan, CVCC remote instruction, and student assessments.

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

5.3.6 Negotiations Committee

The next meeting date is to be determined.

5.3.7 Regional Advisory Board

Minutes from the February 8, 2021 RAB meeting were distributed. Mrs. Farrell advised that the Board received an extensive and enlightening presentation on the Medical/Health Fields Program. Mrs. Farrell encourages anyone who is interested in this field to look into what CVCC has to offer.

5.4 Financials

Three documents were distributed;
BUUSD FY21 Expense Report Summary (dated February 2021)
BUUSD Expense Report (dated 02/04/21)
BUUSD CVCC FY21 Budget (dated 02/04/21)

In response to a query regarding the \$64,000 overage in substitute wages at BTMES, it was noted that the overage is most likely related to having to hire long term substitutes.

6. Current Business

6.1 2021 Series 1 Vermont Municipal Bond Bank Sale

A cover letter and supporting documents from Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC (dated 01/25/21) was distributed. Mr. Wells advised regarding the motion recommended by legal counsel.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve and adopt the terms of the Resolution and Certificate and the Bond Financing documents referred to there-in.

It was noted that a majority of the Board is required to sign the documents.

6.2 CVCC Governance Study Committee – Appoint Board Member

Mrs. Farrell moved to appoint Mr. Isabelle. Mrs. Pompei seconded the motion.
Brief discussion was held. There were no additional nominations.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Mr. Isabelle as the BUUSD Board Representative on the CVCC Governance Study Committee.

6.3 Healthcare Proposal from Vermont Legislature Discussion

A copy of a letter from Superintendent Wells to Members of the General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee (dated 02/02/21) was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the letter which documents how statewide bargaining for health care is impacting the BUUSD budget. Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the substantial increase to the BUUSD budget. It was stressed that recent bargaining is not sustainable. It was noted that the House is looking at 2 different Bills (to amend statewide bargaining) and the BUUSD wants the Committee working on this Bill to understand that much stronger guidelines need to be put in place, that bargaining needs to be proactive and budgets need to be able to sustain the amount being spent on healthcare for staff. Mrs. Spaulding

encourages community and Board Members to reach out to their State Representatives regarding the issue of how health care costs are impacting budgets. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he concerned regarding the portion of the letter that states the increases are causing the BUUSD to defer necessary maintenance and safety upgrades to buildings. Mr. Cecchinelli requested clarification on this statement. Mr. Wells advised that the statement is a generalized statement because healthcare costs are impacting the overall budget. Mr. Cecchinelli takes issue with the wording ‘necessary maintenance’ and safety upgrades. Mr. Cecchinelli provided information regarding necessary maintenance and safety upgrades that have been performed at the schools.

6.4 Administrative Job Descriptions

6.4.1 Superintendent of Schools

A copy of the Position Description for the position of Superintendent was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding the possibility of comparing the new job description to the current job description. Mr. Wells believes the new Superintendent job description is the same as the existing one and that the job description for the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction is the same as the job description for the position of Curriculum Director (with changes pertaining to areas where duties will be shared with the Superintendent).

It was agreed that copies of the existing and new job descriptions will be provided in the next Board meeting packet and that discussions of these job descriptions will be added to the Agenda for the next Board meeting.

6.4.2 Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

A copy of the Position Description for the position of Assistant Superintendent of Instruction was distributed. Discussion was held under Agenda Item 6.4.1. **This item will be added to the next Board meeting agenda.**

7. Old Business

7.1 FY22 Tax Calculation Update

A document titled ‘BUUSD Budget Development 2021 – 2022 – Draft 3, Projected Comparative Tax Rate Calculations – Revised’ (dated 02/05/21) was distributed. It was noted that the draft document went to the printer prior to new information being provided by the State. The revised numbers will be posted on the BUUSD web-site. The Annual Report does have a disclaimer that the numbers are subject to change. The CLA for Barre Town is dependent on the lodging of the reappraisal on 04/01/21. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview, advising that the Yield has changed (because of the position of the Education Fund), and proceeded to advise regarding how these changes will impact the tax rates. Mrs. Spaulding stressed that the change to the Yield has a large impact on the tax rate (the increase is lower). Mr. Allen will update the web site to indicate that information printed in the Annual Report has changed, and will provide an explanation as to why the change occurred.

7.2 Second and Final Reading Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Background Checks Policy (B20) (Recommended policy)

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 7.2 through 7.5 were distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding reached out to the VSBA regarding this policy, but has not heard back yet. Mrs. Spaulding will provide an update at a future meeting.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Background Checks Policy (B20) and agreed to adopt said policy.

7.3 Second and Final Reading Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Policy (C28) (Recommended policy)

A parent voiced concern regarding how the schools will assure the safety of students, especially vulnerable students, if bathrooms are shared by those with ‘opposite’ body parts. Mr. Wells advised that he has spoken with all building principals regarding this matter, and principals have advised that they have dealt with this previously, and that concerns are addressed in the policy, and further advised that accommodations for students are made by offering the use of single stall bathrooms, and schedules. The schools have facilities and options to meet the needs of all students. In response to concerns relating to student safety, it was noted that student safety is addressed throughout the schools, not just bathrooms. The same safety expectations are applied regardless of the setting (bathrooms, locker rooms, hallways, classrooms etc.). Mrs. Akley advised regarding research she has performed and read a quote from The National Center For Transgender Equality; “Policies that allow transgender people to use the correct bathroom, do not legalize harassment, stalking, violence, or sexual assault. Those behaviors are and will continue to be against the law for anyone, anywhere”. Mrs. Akley believes the main point of having this policy is to create an environment that is safe for all students. This policy does not undermine the safety of students. Mr. Boltin’s concern is that adequate safety measures are in place. Administrators reiterated that they do not believe this policy would compromise student safety or prevent administrators from acting upon safety concerns. It was noted that research advises that transgender individuals are not predatory in nature. Concern was raised that there is no comparison between a past violent event that happened at one of the schools and this policy. It was requested that the rhetoric regarding a past incident stop as it is deemed to be inappropriate for public discussion at this meeting, does not relate to this policy, may cause harm to those struggling with gender identity, and is offensive to some who are listening to the meeting.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Reading Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Policy (C28) and agreed to adopt said policy.

7.4 Second and Final Reading Substitute Teachers Policy (B1) (Required policy)

It was noted that the 3rd paragraph should be amended from '30 consecutive calendar days' to '30 consecutive student days'

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Second and Final Reading of the Substitute Teachers Policy (B1) and agreed to adopt said policy.

7.5 Second and Final Reading Electronic Communications Use & Retention Policy (F22) (Recommended policy)

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Electronic Communications Use & Retention Policy (F22) and agreed to adopt said policy.

7.6 Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

Mrs. Spaulding reported that the first round of forums is complete. The second round of forums is starting. Surveys have gone out. Surveys are for everyone (community members, students, staff, Board Members, etc.). All individuals are encouraged to complete the survey and provide feedback. The deadline for survey submission is 02/24/21.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle advised that he sent an e-mail regarding participation in the Racial Equity Meeting, but did not receive a follow-up. Ms. Simmons advised that the next forum is 02/18/21 at 5:30. Ms. Simmons will send an invitation to Mr. Isabelle. Ms. Simmons advised that based on feedback from the forums, a Racial Equity Policy will be drafted and presented to the Policy Committee and will then be presented to the Board. The policy will be followed by procedures which will be followed by professional development for faculty and staff. The current timeline indicates the draft policy will be presented to the Policy Committee in April 2021. Ms. Cambel requested an invitation to the 02/18/21 meeting.

Mr. Isabelle apologized to Ms. Hyslop for the issues her children have had to deal with and advised that he hopes the issues have been reported and that policies are being followed regarding dealing with these issues.

Mrs. Spaulding recognized Ms. Hyslop for sharing difficult information with the Board and advises she is committed to do a better job in dealing with racial issues. Mrs. Spaulding expressed her appreciation to parents who are attending the meetings, asking questions, and providing feedback. Mrs. Spaulding advised that she attended an on-line Racial Equity conference by the National School Board Association. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the key-note speaker was phenomenal, and she encourages other Board Members to attend one of these conferences. Mrs. Spaulding will try to share a link to the recording.

Mr. Malone recognized Ms. Cambel for serving on the Board for the 1 year appointed position. Mr. Malone recognized Mrs. Pompei for her BTMES and BUUSD Board work over the past 4 year, noting that she spent much time performing research and sharing important information and observations with the Board. Mr. Malone also recognized Mr. Cecchinelli for serving the district for over a decade.

9. Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet

- Superintendent's Evaluation
- Administrators' Evaluations
- Superintendent of Schools Job Description
- Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Job Description

10. Executive Session as Needed

10.1 Superintendent Evaluation

10.2 Personnel Matter Relating to Supervision

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include the Superintendent's Evaluation and a Personnel Matter Relating to Supervision of an Employee.

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Wells in attendance, at 7:00 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. Akley, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

11. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin