

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
February 25, 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)
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 – joined at 6:20 p.m.
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	David Cameron	Erika Dolan	Jody Emerson	Jenny Hyslop
Prudence Krasofski	Christine Parker	William Toborg		

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 25, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Remove 9.2 Administrator Evaluations (to be added to a future agenda when more data is available) – Keep as a placeholder
Add 9.3 Personnel Matter – Contract Renewal
Add 6.3 FY22 Budget Discussion

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

3.1 Public Comment

A parent addressed the Board, advising of concerns of the time it takes for students to report incidents of racist remarks/activity, and requested that steps be taken to have the school take responsibility to create a system to prevent incidents of racism in the school. Appreciation was expressed for the current anti-racism work being performed within the District.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – February 11, 2021 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pompei, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2021 Regular Meeting.

5. Current Business

5.1 First Reading Public Complaints About Personnel Policy (B22) – Recommended Policy

A copy of the policy was distributed.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Cecchinelli provided a brief overview of changes made by Mr. Aither relating to the Appeals to the Board section and removal of legal references. Concern was raised regarding changes/rewording made to the policy written by the VSBA, and why the VSBA language is being changed. Concern was raised that the VSBA policies have been vetted by legal counsel prior to publication. In response to a query, it was noted that the BUUSD did not have the policy reviewed by legal counsel after making changes. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the VSBA has advised her that if the BUUSD makes changes to VSBA policies, those changes should be vetted by BUUSD legal counsel. Concern was raised that the policy may not provide an avenue for individuals to pursue complaints in sensitive situations and when retaliation is a concern. It was requested that the Policy Committee also address this concern. A parent addressed the Board advising that the policy appears to indicate a move towards restorative language, and she would like the Committee to also review that aspect during the policy's upcoming review.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to table discussion of the Public Complaints About Personnel Policy (B22), to send the policy back to the Policy Committee for review, and to have a First Reading presented at a future Board meeting.

5.2 Administrative Job Descriptions

5.2.1 Superintendent of Schools

A document titled FY20 Superintendent Job Description was distributed.

A document titled FY21 BUUSD Position Description – Position: Superintendent was distributed.

Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the job descriptions listed under Agenda Items 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, advising that he, Ms. Simmons and Mrs. Marold have been reviewing these job descriptions. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding the lack of documentation (in the job description) relating to the Superintendent's responsibilities for Curriculum development etc. for specific grades. Mrs. Spaulding voiced concern that some of the items previously listed in the job description for Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, were not carried over into the new job description. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding changes made to the Superintendent's job description made on 02/05/21, and asked for details on what was changed. Mrs. Spaulding provided a list of specific information that is missing from the new job descriptions and questioned who is responsible for the items that were omitted. Mrs. Farrell voiced concern regarding including too much detail in the description, and requested that formatting changes be made. It was agreed that the new Board Chair and Vice-Chair be involved in the review and editing of these job descriptions. It was noted that once the job descriptions are finalized, any changes would most likely occur at the time of contract renewal/negotiations. It was agreed that solid job descriptions should be written and changes should be infrequent. It was noted that these new job descriptions are required because of the change in personnel (elimination of the Curriculum Director position, and creation of the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction position).

5.2.2 Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

A document titled FY20 BUUSD Position Description – Position: Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment was distributed.

A document titled FY21 BUUSD Position Description – Position: Assistant Superintendent of Instruction was distributed.

Discussion was held under Agenda Item 5.2.1

6. Old Business

6.1 Modes of Instruction Update per BUUSD Policy D22

Mr. Wells advised that grades K – 6 have in-person instruction 4 ½ days per week, grades 7 and 8 are in hybrid mode (as per restrictions outlined in the Strong and Healthy Guidance provided by the State). Mr. Wells advised that the CDC has recently published revised guidance for modes of instruction, though those guidelines have not been adopted by the State of Vermont. Mr. Wells advised regarding new guidance relating to band/music. Music and performances can now resume under strict guidelines. The BUUSD Music Departments will be reviewing the new guidance and will proceed accordingly. It was noted that new CDC guidance may still include social distancing parameters.

6.2 Vision, Mission, & Strategic Goals

The Design Team met on 02/24/21. The second round of stakeholder forums is complete and the third round will begin the week of 03/01/21. The second survey (to the full community) will be going out soon. There were approximately 450 responses to the first survey. There are some strong themes being identified based on forum and survey feedback. It was noted that Mr. Goodrich is very pleased with the high rate of participation from community members.

6.3 FY22 Budget Discussion

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the upcoming virtual informational session, which will be held on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Allen was thanked for his work on the Annual Report. Mr. Malone advised that approximately 1,500 absentee ballots were mailed to Barre Town residents. Approximately 1,300 have been mailed to Barre City Residents, and approximately half of those have been returned. Mr. Isabelle highlighted the video produced by CVCC students. A link to the video can be found on the BUUSD web site.

7. Other Business/Round Table

Board Members expressed gratitude to the departing Board Members, advising that they will be greatly missed.

Mr. Isabelle previously e-mailed his comments. Those comments are, as requested, included in the minutes (as Attachment A).
Ms. Cambel thanked the Board, advising that she has learned much during her tenure on the Board.
Mr. Cecchinelli thanked the Board, advising that it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve for the past 12 years.
Mrs. Pompei thanked the Board, advising that it has been a pleasure to serve. Mrs. Pompei thanked her two daughters who have attended many in-person meetings over the years, and showed great patience during the meetings.
Mr. Malone advised regarding his tenure on the Board, which has included many complex, and unusual issues, including Act 46 and operating the schools during the pandemic.
Mr. Wells and Ms. Simmons thanked the Board for their work and support and wished them well.
Mrs. Spaulding thanked Ms. Hyslop for attending recent Board meetings and for sharing her perspective.
Mrs. Farrell queried regarding when the Board and Committees will be able to meet in person.

8. Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet

After brief discussion, it was agreed that a 1 ½ hour presentation by legal counsel, Pietro Lynn (regarding school board member responsibilities/protocols) will occur at a future meeting after Board Reorganization. Mr. Wells will contact Mr. Lynn regarding rescheduling the presentation that was planned for 03/11/21. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that the presentation occur at a future meeting, after the conclusion of regular business (to allow members of the public to depart from the meeting).

- Board Reorganization (03/11/21)
- Board Presentation by Pietro Lynn (03/25/21)
- Superintendent Job Description (after Board reorganization – TBD)
- Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Job Description (after Board reorganization – TBD)
- Discussion of Students Opting Not To Participate/Attend School During COVID (future agenda item - TBD)

9. Executive Session

9.1 Superintendent Evaluation

~~9.2 Administrator Evaluations~~

9.3 Personnel Matter – Contract Renewal Matter

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include the Superintendent's Evaluation and a Personnel Matter relating to Contract Renewal.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pompei, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Wells in attendance, at 6:38 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 Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 7:35 p.m.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Cambel, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin

Dear Departing BUUSD School Board Members,

I want to thank you for the time you committed to the kids and families in the BUUSD school district. You all served in some very interesting times and all made positive contributions towards trying to have some sense of normalcy. I have always told people that serving on a school board was fun and rewarding but I would say that this year challenged that notion. It has been an absolute honor to call you a colleague.

Emel: You only were here a year but you served with class and showed great compassion and understanding. I will miss the experience you brought but know you will carry over that experience to your next chapter. Glad we finally were able to meet in person.

Victoria: It broke my heart to hear of your experiences this past year. The Victoria I got to know is bright, pays attention to detail, asks tough questions and really cares about kids. Those are all valuable attributes that will be missed. Thank you.

Giuliano: While we have known of each other for some time, it wasn't until the last two years that I really got to know you. You are one of those rare people who hate to listen to themselves talk but when you do people listen. I will miss the knowledge you brought from the perspective of BCEMS. You are such a valuable part of this community in terms of your work and that will continue. Just think you won't have to talk about bollards. Thank You.

Paul: I thank you for your leadership as our chair. You led us through some difficult times and did so fairly. You always asked our opinions and always made sure we were included. I hate to think where you would be if you had to pay for phone minutes!!!! I am glad we got to know each other as individuals. We were able to work together for the community even though our ideologies might have some differences. I am proud to be able to say that about you. I wish more people got to know the real Paul. You allowed me to experience that. Thank You.

I wish you all well the best and thank you for being a colleague and for serving your community.

Be Well and Be Safe

Guy