

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
March 11, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Chair
Alice Farrell (BT) – Vice Chair
Guy Isabelle (At-Large) - Clerk
Gina Akley (BT)
Renee Badeau (BT)
Tim Boltin (BC)
Chris Parker (BT)
Sarah Pregent (BC)
Abigayle Smith (BC)

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
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Annette Rhoades Assistant Director of Special Services
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Shawna Badger	Sandra Cameron	Allison Courtemanche	Erika Dolan
Nora Duane	Jody Emerson	Shannon Huda	Jenny Hyslop	Prudence Krasofski
Nicole Ladd	Patrick Leene	Paul Malone	Bob Manz	Ben Matthews
Jessica Maurais	Ted Mills	Mary Newton	rooksma@netzero.net	Megan Spaulding
Jan Trepanier	Rachael Van Vliet	VT VSBA	1 201-***-***02	

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.

Oath of Allegiance

It was confirmed that all new Board Members have taken the Oath of Allegiance.

1. Call to Order

The Superintendent, Mr. Wells, called the Thursday, March 11, 2020, Regular meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Organize

VSBA Board Re-organization documentation was distributed. Mr. Wells advised regarding Board re-organization, provided an overview of the documentation contained in the packet, and requested nominations for the position of Board Chair.

Mrs. Akley nominated Sonya Spaulding for the position of Board Chair, seconded by Mrs. Pregent. There were no additional nominations. The Board voted 8 to 1 to elect Mrs. Spaulding as Board Chair. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mrs. Farrell,

Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Smith, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion. Mr. Boltin voted against the motion.

Mrs. Spaulding chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Isabelle nominated Alice Farrell for the position of Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr. Boltin. There were no additional nominations. The Board unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Farrell as Vice Chair.

Mrs. Akley nominated J. Guy Isabelle for the position of Clerk, seconded by Ms. Parker. There were no additional nominations. The Board unanimously voted to elect Mr. Isabelle as Clerk.

Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of Committee assignments and it was agreed that Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs will be decided at the first meeting of each Committee

Committee assignments announced and agreed to as follows:

BUUSD Communications Committee: Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Isabelle, and Ms. Smith

BUUSD Curriculum Committee: Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, and Mrs. Farrell

BUUSD Facilities/Transportation Committee: Mrs. Akley, Mr. Isabelle, and Mrs. Pregent

BUUSD Finance Committee: Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent,

BUUSD Negotiations Committee: Mrs. Akley, Mrs. Pregent, and Mrs. Spaulding

BUUSD Policy Committee: Mr. Boltin, Ms. Parker, and Ms. Smith

Regional Advisory Board (meets quarterly): Mrs. Farrell

Enterprise Committee: Mr. Isabelle

Mrs. Spaulding suggested that the Policy Committee discuss creation of a Policy related to Policy Committees, including naming all 'standing' committees and defining the 'charge' of each Committee. Brief discussion was held regarding the number of Board meetings per month, meeting length, the format for agendas and packets, and the possibility of holding some meetings virtually after COVID restrictions are relaxed. Mrs. Spaulding will reach out to Board Members (regarding availability) to identify some perspective dates for the Board Retreat. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of the Code of Ethics (and confirmed that all Board Members have signed a copy of the document) and also advised regarding communication practices. It was noted that the Board works as a 'body', and not as individuals. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of Board development opportunities, including VSBA training for new Board Members and advocacy through interaction with Legislators.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted:

To authorize the Board Chair to sign teacher contracts,

To authorize the Board Chair to sign other contracts,

To designate at a future meeting, two Board Members as primary and secondary individuals to sign warrants,

To schedule a Board Retreat during an upcoming Board meeting,

To hold Regular Board Meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. with a rotating location, as indicated in Policy A1 (meetings will continue to be held remotely until COVID restrictions are lifted),

To post Agendas and Minutes at the BUUSD Central Office, BUUSD District Schools, the Barre City Clerk's Office, the Barre Town Clerk's Office, and on the BUUSD website,

To post Warnings in the Times Argus and on Front Porch Forum,

To use Robert's Rules of Order,

To adopt the Code of Ethics

To name the Times Argus as the designated newspaper for publications,

To designate the Board Chair and the Superintendent as spokespersons for the Board,

To continue the current practices relating to confidentiality of Executive Session and Open Meeting Laws, and

To delegate the Negotiations Committee Chair to be the voting delegate for State-wide HealthCare bargaining Agreement.

The Board agreed to discuss student representation at the Board Retreat.
Mr. Isabelle advised that he has found student presentations to be informative and beneficial.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda with Motion to Approve the Agenda

Delete 7.2 Set Board Retreat Date – this item is part of the organization process.

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

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Paul Malone addressed the Board advising that he will be in attendance at the upcoming Finance Committee meeting and advised that he would like to participate on this Committee. It was noted that information packets for the 03/16/21 Finance Committee meeting will be distributed in the very near future.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.1 Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2021 Regular Meeting

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

6. Reports to the Board

6.1 Superintendent/Central Office Report

A copy of the BUUSD Central Office Newsletter for March 2021 was distributed. Mr. Wells reported that he has been working with Ms. Simmons and Mrs. Anderson to design a grant funded position; an MTSS Coordinator who will align EST and intervention services. This work will tie into the Recovery Plan Work. Mr. Wells advised that the position will be a multi-year ESSER funded position. The position will need to be re-evaluated once grant funding is no longer available.

6.1.1 2021 – 2022 School Calendar

The final copy of the ‘Regional Calendar – Barre Unified Union School District 2021 – 2022 Calendar’ was distributed. The calendar is for informational purposes and does not require Board approval. A regional, coordinated calendar is required for district’s which host a technical center.

6.2 Building Reports

6.2.1 Spaulding High School

The Principal’s Report dated March 3, 2021 was distributed. A copy of the SHS Library Newsletter for Winter 2021 was distributed. A copy of the SHS Newsletter (dated 03/08/21) was also distributed. Mr. Isabelle conveyed his appreciation that students and staff recognize students and staff for their accomplishments throughout the school and in athletics. In response to a query, Mrs. Waterhouse advised regarding additional academic supports that have been put in place to assist students who are struggling. These additional supports, which extend the school day, involve use of the library/library staff and have been coordinated with students and their parents. Students are reporting success utilizing this new system of support. Mrs. Waterhouse was commended for the robust programs at the high school.

6.2.2 Central Vermont Career Center

Three documents were distributed:

A document titled Director CTE Bytes for March 2021

A document providing information on the CVCC Co-op Program

A document titled ‘12th Annual Vermont Student Entrepreneurship Day delivers inspiration & encouragement’

In response to a query, Ms. Chamberlin provided an overview of the Co-op Program which involves both paid and unpaid positions.

6.2.3 Barre City Elementary and Middle School

The Co-Principals’ Report dated March 5, 2021 was distributed. In response to a query, it was noted that more parents are participating in the virtual Parent/Teacher Conferences (than the in-person conferences held in the past). The virtual conferences allow for a greater timeframe in which to hold conferences and allow more flexibility for parents. Ms. Parker lauded the schools for the installation of additional promethium boards.

6.2.4 Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

The BTMES Building Report dated March 11, 2021 was distributed. A copy of the BTMES Newsletter for March 2021 was distributed. Ms. Pearson advised regarding accommodations being made to handle traffic flow (student drop-off/pick-up) while work is being performed to the recreational fields road.

6.3 Committee Reports

6.3.1 Communications

The Committee met on March 4, 2021. Discussion centered mainly on the upcoming budget re-vote and ways to promote the budget. Mr. Allen advised regarding the full page ad in the Times Argus which highlights successes in the District's schools. This ad is provided as a courtesy of the Times Argus and there is no charge to the District.

The next meeting is Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

6.3.2 Finance Committee

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

6.3.3 Facilities & Transportation Committee

The next meeting is Monday, April 12, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

6.3.4 Policy Committee

The next meeting is Monday, March 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

6.3.5 Curriculum Committee

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

6.3.6 Negotiations Committee

The next meeting date is to be determined.

6.3.7 Regional Advisory Board

The next meeting is Monday, May 3, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

6.4 Financials

Two documents were distributed;

BUUSD FY21 Year-end Projection Report (dated 02/16/21)

CVCC FY21 Year-end Projection Report (dated 02/16/21)

The BUUSD has an anticipated surplus of approximately \$600,000. CVCC has an anticipated surplus of approximately \$300,000. It was noted that the BTMES Assistant Principal position will not be filled this year. Additional discussion of this position will be held at the next Finance Committee meeting.

7. Current Business

7.1 Budget Debrief/Revote Schedule

Six documents were distributed;

'BUUSD Draft Budget Revote Schedule, March 3, 2021 – Revote on BUUSD FY22 Proposed Budget, may 11, 2021'

Barre City Official Voting Results (03/02/21 election)

Barre Town Official Voting Results (03/02/21 election)

A document titled 'Comparative Budget Information – March 11, 2021

The District Enrollment/Staffing Report for February 2021

An undated letter to Mr. Wells from Winton Goodrich, documenting emerging themes from the Vision, Mission, Strategic Planning Initiative

Mrs. Spaulding noted that the CVCC budget passed by a wide margin, and expressed appreciation to Ms. Chamberlin for her work on the CVCC budget. Mr. Wells advised regarding the schedule included in the packet and advised that administrators are looking for direction from the Board regarding their priorities for budget revisions. Mr. Wells advised that he believes the budget vote failed due to multiple factors, some of which related to; communication of the budget, financial reasons, and dissatisfaction over learning modes under COVID. Mr. Wells advised regarding emerging themes that have been identified as part of the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning Initiative. Mr. Wells advised that based on the feedback, he suggests that Draft 4 of the budget not reflect large reductions. Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the Comparative Budget Information document, noting that the BUUSD percent increase (5.82%) reflects cuts that were already made and that the BUUSD continues to have the lowest per-pupil spending amount. Though other districts had much lower increases, their cost per-pupil was already significantly higher than the BUUSD cost per-pupil. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the budget process thus far, advising that Draft 3 reflected a reduction of almost \$1,000,000 from Draft 1. Mrs. Perreault cautioned against reducing the budget too much in Draft 4. Ms. Perreault advised regarding the audited fund balance of almost \$644,000 (\$200,000 of which has been allocated to the revenue portion of the budget). Another \$200K to

\$300K of that fund balance could be used to help off-set the tax rate. Mrs. Akley wants to be very up-front with the community regarding what will be lost due to budget cuts. Clarification was provided regarding publication of Warnings and voting dates. The May 11, 2021 vote date was chosen because it coincides with the Barre Town Annual Meeting (Municipal Vote). It will be important to promote voting in Barre City, as they do not have any other voting on that date. Concern was raised that closing BTMES for the May 11th vote (remote learning), may result in lower voter turnout or few positive votes. Mr. Malone expressed concern that putting forth a new budget with a marginal decrease will result in another failed budget vote. Mrs. Spaulding advised that Mr. Wells and Mrs. Perreault are requesting that the Board identify goals and priorities at this meeting, to allow time for administrators to review and modify the draft budget prior to the Finance Committee meeting. The goal is for the Finance Committee to be able to make a budget recommendation to the Board at the March 25, 2021 Board meeting. Board and community members posed questions which Mrs. Perreault will research and answer at the upcoming Finance Committee meeting. Mrs. Spaulding provided a recap of the numerous items identified during the meeting, including; increases for personnel costs, possible duplication of purchases and staff, risks associated personnel cuts (if social distancing guidelines are not loosened), and a request to prioritize academics.

Brief discussion was held regarding the possible Charter change or change to the Articles of Agreement relating to the deadline for - submission of petitions. Carol Dawes had requested a change in the petition submission deadline that was in the Articles of Agreement. The requested change was from 'filed not fewer than 30, nor more than 40 days prior to the date of the vote' to be the 6th Monday prior to the election. There is confusion regarding where the deadline is defined (Articles of Agreement, Charter, or Statute). Mr. Wells advised that the Articles of Agreement on the State's web site (for the BUUSD) differ from the Articles of Agreement on file at the BUUSD Central Office. This issue appears to be very complicated and it is unlikely that it can be resolved prior to the May 11, 2021 vote.

~~7.2 Set Board Retreat Date~~

8. Old Business

8.2 Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

The third round of forums is complete or nearly completed. Trends and themes are being identified. One more survey may go out to the public. The process has worked very smoothly and much good feedback/input has been received.

9. Other Business/Round Table

Members of the previous Board welcomed new Board Members.

New Board Members advised they are pleased to be on the Board and look forward to the work ahead.

It was announced that Penny Chamberlin has accepted the position of Superintendent for the Orleans Central Supervisory Union.

The Board congratulated Ms. Chamberlin and wished her well in her new endeavor.

Ms. Chamberlin thanked the Board for their kind words, and advised that she looks forward to making a smooth transition for the new CVCC Director.

10. Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Google Meet

- FY22 Budget – Draft 4 (03/25/21)
- Board Training Presentation by Pietro Lynn (03/25/21)

- Superintendent Job Description (after Board reorganization – TBD)
- Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Job Description (after Board reorganization – TBD)

- Legal Counsel Review – Policy B20 Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Background Checks(TBD)
- Use of Facilities: Consistent Fee Schedule and Rental Application Form(TBD)
- Discussion of Students Opting Not To Participate/Attend School During COVID/Student Engagement (roll this discussion into the State Required Recovery Plan - future agenda item - TBD)
- Negotiations/Personnel Committee (future agenda item - TBD)
- Student Representation on the Board (discussion to take place at Board Retreat)

11. Executive Session as Needed

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin