

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Via Video Conference – Google Meet
March 22, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sarah Pregent (BC) - Chair
Gina Akley (BT)
Chris Parker (BT)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Renee Badeau (BC) – Vice Chair

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alice Farrell
Sonya Spaulding

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
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal
Lauren May, Director of Early Education
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore – Times Argus Josh Howard Paul Malone Ted Mills Michael Pope

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pregent, called the Monday, March 22, 2021 Special BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. New Business

4.1 FY22 Budget

A document titled “FY22 BUUSD Budget Considerations - Draft 4, Revote May 11’ was distributed. Mrs. Pregent advised that Draft 4 has not changed since last week, but the documentation contains two additional options. Mrs. Perreault advised that Options labeled as Options 2 and 3 reduce Draft 4 by \$60,000 and \$120,000 respectively. Option 2 removes field trip transportation and part-time tech staff. Option 3 includes the reductions identified in Option 2, as well as reductions for a duplicating clerk, and business office contracted services. Option 2 reduces the increase from 3.8% to 3.75%. Option 3 reduces the increase from 3.8% to 3.62%. These options are presented as a contingency in the event that the Board wants Draft 4 reduced further. Per pupil spending is as follows under the options: Option 2: \$15,529 (a 3.24% increase in per-pupil spending), and Option 3: \$15,504 (a 3.09% increase in per-pupil spending). Draft 3, without the options reflects a 3.41% increase in per-pupil spending. Mrs. Akley reiterated that the goal for this evening was to agree on a contingency plan, for use in case the Board wanted Draft 4 reduced further. It was noted that the City and Town Clerks would like the finalized information no later than 03/30/21. A community member voiced concern that he believes the per-pupil spending is still too high for this area, that there was a significant budget increase last year, and he would like to see a budget increase no larger than 3%. It was noted that with the proposed Draft 4, the tax rate in Barre Town would decrease by approximately 24¢. Brief discussion was held regarding the impact of

reappraisals, and it was noted that regardless of reappraisals and changes to the CLA, the same amount of money still needs to be raised in taxes. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the BUUSD has different negotiation agreements and was very negatively impacted by the required State Health Care Negotiations. The Board has no control over the costs for health care. It is important for community members to be aware of the negative impact that State mandated negotiations for health insurance have had on the BUUSD. It was noted that salaries and benefits account for 3% of the budget increase. A community member queried regarding why budget discussions do not include reducing administrator positions, and questioned if all of the positions are necessary. Additionally, a question was raised concerning a drop in student population and how that may impact future budgets. It was noted that it is standard to have 2 principals in the middle/elementary schools, due to the number of students. The budget reflects Staff-to-student ratios that are in line with policy. It was noted that the Administrative line items include salaries, benefits, and the reclassification of some positions (shifting of monies within the budget). It was noted that the Committee is not looking to cut teacher or administrator positions. In response to a query, it was confirmed that Options 2 and 3 (for budget Draft 4) were created as a contingency in the event the Board wishes to have Draft 4 reduced further. It is not known what steps will be taken should the budget vote on 05/11/21 fail. No additional budget reduction discussions are planned, but will be scheduled if the Board rejects Draft 4.

The Committee agreed by consensus that they are comfortable presenting Draft 4 to the Board on 03/25/21, with Options 2 and 3 as back-up options should the Board not approve moving forward with Draft 4.

Mrs. Pregent confirmed that multiple Warnings should be included in the Board packet, to accommodate which ever budget draft the Board approves.

5. Old Business

None.

6. Other Business

In response to a query regarding why the BUUSD maintains separate budgets for the district buildings (for departments that exist in each building), it was noted that utilizing the Uniform Chart of Accounts (required by the State), each building needs to be identified as a separate location. It was noted that during budget development, there has been much coordination between the building's 'like' departments, with a goal of attaining equity as much as possible.

7. Items for Future Agendas

- Coordinated Supply Purchases/Procedures (non-custodial) Follow-up (April)
- Staff Appreciation (under Efficiency Studies)
- FY21 Year-end Projections

8. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference, Google Meet.

9. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin