

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

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
April 1, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alice Farrell, Chair - (BT)
Abigayle Smith, Vice-Chair (BC)
Guy Isabelle – (At-Large)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Josh Allen, Communications Specialist

GUESTS PRESENT:

David Delcore – Times Argus Josh Howard Winton Goodrich Cody Morrison

1. Call to Order

Mr. Allen called the Thursday, April 1, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Organize

Mr. Allen asked for nominations for the position of Committee Chair.

The Committee agreed by consensus to elect Mrs. Farrell as Chair of the Communications Committee.

The Committee agreed by consensus to elect Ms. Smith as Vice Chair of the Communications Committee.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

It was agreed to discuss Agenda Item 7.1 out of order, prior to Agenda Item 6.1 Budget Promotion.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.1 Meeting Minutes for March 4, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee Meeting

Mr. Isabelle advised that at a recent training session, the Board was advised to begin holding official votes to approve meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2021 BUUSD Communications Committee meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Promotion of Budget Re-Vote

Mr. Allen advised that the budget page on the web site will be updated to reflect the changes made, and the importance of supporting students as they enter the recovery phase of the pandemic. The goal is to be as transparent and simplistic as possible. Mr. Allen advised that sometime within the week of 04/05/21, the web page will be totally revamped and promoted throughout the district. An affordable post card mailing is also planned. The post card will include a QR code to access the budget web page. Mr. Allen advised regarding the social media campaign #IAmBarre (started last year by a group of parents). The BUUSD will begin participating in this media campaign. It was requested that the post card include information relating to how to request absentee ballots. Mr. Delcore clarified that Barre City and Barre Town Clerks advised that they will be sending absentee ballots to all voters who requested an absentee ballot for the March 2021 election. Though not directly tied to the revote, Mr. Allen has requested that principals post a lot more video content of the daily happenings in the schools. Mr. Allen advised of a recently posted video to assist with SHS school promotion (locally and to sending districts). Today, a video of the SHS Band was posted on social media. Mr. Allen believes it's important to promote the positive experiences that students are having. In response to a query, Mr. Allen advised that he

can share some of the videos with CVTV for additional promotion. Mr. Isabelle voiced concern regarding some recently published letters to the editor and believes these publications contain incorrect information. Mr. Isabelle would like to see that someone responds to these letters. It was clarified that the Board is trying to be as transparent as possible, but tax calculations are complex and difficult to explain. A community member requested that the post card contain last year's 11% increase, this year's 4% increase, and if possible, the anticipated increase for next year. It was noted that FY23 expenses cannot be estimated at this time. Mr. Allen reiterated that the goal is to be as transparent and simplistic as possible, gain parent support, and to rally around the kids and show how they are benefiting. A request was made that promotion include what is gained (for students) by the 25% of the budget increase that is not related to salaries and benefits.

7. Old Business

7.1 Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning Update

Mr. Goodrich addressed the Committee, advising that he sent a number of files to Committee Members. The files were also sent to Mrs. Gilbert for posting. Mr. Goodrich began the presentation by providing background of the project and advised regarding the Strategic Plan Structure (vision, mission, goals, beliefs, action steps, metrics to measure success, and an implementation timeline). Mr. Goodrich provided an overview of work performed thus far, including; meetings of the Design Team, the holding of public forums (3 rounds), and surveys to gather feedback from many stakeholders. The Design Team has been working to combine public on-line forum feedback and feedback from the surveys. Mr. Goodrich will be meeting with administrators to gather additional feedback, and will be presenting to the Board on 04/08/21. After presenting to the Board, an additional survey will be sent out. A final plan is anticipated to be put forth to the Board on 04/22/21. Mr. Allen advised that he and Mr. Pope will collaborate for creation of a website version of the Mission/Vision Statement. The presentation continued and included a schematic on themes and paths to accomplish long term goals identified in the process of creating vision and mission statements. Mr. Goodrich displayed sample Vision Statements from other districts and organizations and solicited feedback from the Committee. Mr. Goodrich advised regarding Mission Statements, which are generally longer, and shape an organization's structure to accomplish the objectives outlined in the vision statement. Mr. Goodrich advised regarding 5 theme areas that have been identified and once finalized, will be added to a schematic. The Agency of Education is requiring that Recovery Plans address equity, engagement, academic support, and social/emotional support. Brief discussion was held regarding a possible name change for the BUUSD, but it was noted that this project does not encompass changing the name of the District. Mr. Allen advised that proper rebranding will also be necessary. Mr. Goodrich advised that any name change would need to go through the State Board of Education and the Agency of Education. Mr. Goodrich provided an overview of the BUUSD Belief Statements, advising that Belief Statements were drafted based on input from the public forums. Belief Statements from other school districts were also reviewed as part of the process. Brief discussion was held regarding equity and social justice and how these issues will be addressed in strategic planning. Strategic Planning samples from other districts were displayed for review. Mr. Goodrich advised that the next survey will be posted on all district web sites, on various social media platforms, and that all forum participants will be asked to reply. Mr. Goodrich was thanked for his work on this initiative.

8. Other Business

Mr. Allen advised that a Pre-recorded video of 'Scholarship Night' will go live on YouTube on April 27, 2021. Scholarship Night is usually a live event, which due to COVID restrictions, cannot be held in-person this year. The YouTube video will allow everyone to hear the scholarship award announcements at the same time. Mr. Isabelle advised that SHS gives out many scholarships, and has one of the largest endowments in New England. Mr. Isabelle voiced appreciation to Mr. Malone and the Scholarship Trust Committee who worked diligently to expand the scholarship program.

The District is also promoting the start of a free dinner program for students (approved by the Agency of Education). NBC Channel 5 filmed a segment on this new program and it aired this evening.

Mr. Isabelle voiced concern regarding the impact of the reduction to the Facilities Budget (from \$1 per SF to 75¢ per SF), and concern regarding the long term impact this reduction may have. The outcome of deferred maintenance can be more costly long term.

Mr. Allen advised regarding the implementation of Restorative Classrooms at BCEMS and how this mode of instruction has benefited students and the budget. Promotion of the Restorative Classrooms is planned for future promotion.

9. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas

- Budget Revote Promotion
- SHS Promotion to Out of District Schools Update – Spring 2021
- Logo/Branding (TBD)
- Bridging the Community with Teachers and Staff (TBD)
- Promotion of SHS Recognition of Staff, Students, and Athletes (TBD)

Mr. Morrison advised that he works with business recruitment and retention, and that a well-functioning school district attracts new businesses and workforce personnel. A well-funded, efficient school district is good for economic development.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference.

11. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin