

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
April 29, 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
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Erin Carter	Erika Dolan	Brendan Eaton	Jody Emerson
Josh Howard	Douglas Korb	Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Ben Matthews
Ted Mills	Rebekah Mortensen	Morgan Osinaga	Michael Pope	Heather Slayton
Diane Solomon	Megan Spaulding	Winton Goodrich	Rachael Van Vliet	Sara Young

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, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, April 29, 2021, Special meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 11.1 Personnel – Superintendent Search

Add 11.2 Personnel – Negotiations Regarding Total Compensation

Corrections to ‘Next Meeting Dates’ for Committees were noted.

It was noted that letters of resignation, required by the Board, are not included in the packet. Mrs. Gilbert will send copies to Board Members and will have them posted as an Addendum.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, 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 member of the public advised that the meeting date for tonight’s meeting was listed incorrectly on a Face Book posting.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of Minutes

4.1.1 Regular Meeting – April 8, 2021

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 8, 2021 Regular Meeting.

4.1.2 Special Meeting – April 15, 2021

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 15, 2021 Special Meeting.

4.1.3 Special Meeting – April 22, 2021

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 22, 2021 Special Meeting.

5. Current Business

5.1 Presentation/Discussion: The Coalition for Vermont Student Equity: Pupil Weighting Study

A copy of an email from Mrs. Spaulding to the Board, dated 04/26/21 was distributed. Douglas Korb addressed the Board and gave a presentation titled ‘Coalition for Vermont Student Equity’. The presentation included; the make-up of the Coalition, advised regarding recently introduced legislation to review the weighting formula, and the proposal to adjust the weighting formula based on the realization that the current formula does not accurately weight students, and has resulted in a disservice to school districts. Mr. Korb advised that both underweighted and over weighted districts have joined the Coalition. Mr. Korb answered questions from the Board, and requested that the BUUSD join the Coalition. Mr. Korb invited Board Members to attend Coalition meetings that occur each Thursday, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and to sign up to receive action alert e-mails.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to resolve that the Barre Unified Union School District hereby join with other Vermont school boards to advocate to the Vermont legislature for the adoption of the recommendations of the Vermont Pupil Weighting Factors Report (Act 173 of 2018, Sec.11).

5.2 New Hires/Resign/Retirements

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Jason Thomas (SHS Business Teacher), Taylor Gauthier (BTMES Grade 2), Kimberly Hirschberg (BCEMS Special Educator), Miri Mahar (SEA Special Educator), Peter Maurice (BTMES Special Educator), Kaitlyn Lafaille (BTMES PE), and Theodore Mills (BTMES Assistant Principal) were distributed.

A document titled ‘Board Meeting: 04/29/2021’ (containing a list of names of new hires and resignations) was distributed.

A letter of resignation from David Wells was distributed.

A letter from Sonya Spaulding to Secretary Daniel French (dated 04/29/21) was distributed.

Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the candidates being presented for hire.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Jason Thomas, Taylor Gauthier, Kimberly Hirschberg, Miri Mahar, Peter Maurice, and Kaitlyn Lafaille.

Mr. Wells advised regarding the recommendation to hire Ted Mills for the position of BTMES Assistant Principal. This is an in-house transfer to a new position. Mr. Mills is currently a Special Educator. Additionally, Mr. Wells advised that Annette Rhoades and Jon Strazza, both Assistant Directors of Special Services, are resigning. Brief discussion was held regarding the position of Assistant Principal at BTMES, including; the job posting, recently voiced concerns regarding the BUUSD being ‘top heavy’ with administrators, the history of this open position (which has remained unfilled for 2 years due to a lack of qualified candidates), the anticipation that the job would be posted and filled (for 2021 / 2022), the need for this position, the strain on the school resulting from the lack of this position being filled, and Standards relating to student populations and the number of administrators ‘required’.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board voted 8 to 1 to approve the transfer of Theodore Mills, from the position of Special Educator, to the position of Assistant Principal at Barre Town Middle and Elementary School. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Smith, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion. Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion.

The following individuals have submitted letters of resignation/retirement. These letters will be forwarded to Board Members and will be included in an addendum to the meeting packet; Ben Ark, Beth Nishball-Williams, David Ball, Cal Hopwood, Kathleen Fuller, Stephanie Custer, Emily Merrill, Susan Pratt, Sophia Chamberlain, Annie Brown, Dale Burnash, Kellie Mead, Leanne Triano, and Margaret “Lizzy” Fanning.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation of David Wells.

Brief discussion was held regarding the draft letter to the Agency of Education requesting permission to begin a Superintendent search.

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the letter and authorized the Board Chair to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

5.3 Human Resources: Open Positions

A document titled 'Human Resources Staffing Update – April 22, 2021' was distributed.

A document titled 'Assistant Directors of Special Services Hiring Process and Timeline' was distributed.

Mrs. Marold provided some updates, including; an MTSS candidate has been forwarded to the Superintendent, interviews for the Assistant Director of Special Education started today (a candidate is expected to be presented to the Superintendent), and there is one additional Assistant Director of Special Education position requiring interviews. The total number of resignations is 17 and there are 5 retirements.

HR is waiting to hear back from 20 individuals who requested contract extensions (BCEMS 14, BTMES 4, SHS 1, and CVCC 1). Two individuals have asked for further extensions. Open positions are being added and removed frequently. Mrs. Marold advised that there is an excellent candidate who has advised that they are having a difficult time finding housing, and requested that Board Members advise of any relatives that may be able to assist or any other ideas/housing options they are aware of. In response to a query, Mrs. Marold advised that she believes the number of resignations is in line with past years, though retirements may be a bit higher (possibly related to COVID). In response to a query regarding exit interviews, Mrs. Marold advised that there is an electronic exit survey (anonymous), and also an option for an in-person exit interview. Not all individuals are willing to participate in exit interviews. In response to a query, Mrs. Marold advised that she can provide a list of reasons that individuals are resigning (broad themes). Mrs. Farrell would also like to know if teachers who are resigning are leaving the teaching profession or moving to other schools.

5.4 Board Retreat Date

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Board Retreat will be held on Thursday, July 29, 2021. Details will be forthcoming. Mrs. Spaulding may send another poll regarding the Board Retreat (meeting times, agenda items)

6. Old Business

6.1 Budget Revote Update

A draft Letter to the Editor was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding displayed a copy of the post card that is being mailed. Mr. Allen advised that a digital version of the post card is on the web page and contains a link to the web page that contains more detailed budget information. On 05/07/21, another full page ad will be posted in the Times Argus. Mr. Allen will use a portion of the ad to promote the budget vote. Mr. Allen reported that he has been spending much time creating video content to assist with promoting the district schools on social media. The Budget Informational Session will be held on Monday, 05/10/21 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mrs. Spaulding drafted a Letter to the Editor/Guest Editorial, and requested input from the Board. It was clarified that the bulk of the budget increases for the past 2 years is caused by State negotiated health care for teachers/para-educators, increases in health care and salaries. All Board Members agreed to sign off on the letter. Of the current 3.4% increase, 3% is due to labor and health insurance.

6.2 Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

6.2.1 Design Team

Eight documents were distributed; 'Belief Statements', 'Sample Vision Statements – (4/14 Draft)', 'BUUSD Mission Statement – (4/14 Draft)', 'Dejargonizing Education Terms', an untitled document with copies of presentation slides, 'BUUSD Belief Statements' (updated), 'School District Vision', and 'BUUSD Strategic Plan Goal Matrix'. Mr. Goodrich advised that the purpose of this presentation is to receive final feedback from the Board prior to revisiting and finalizing the May presentation to the Board. Mr. Goodrich provided a brief overview of work performed to-date, and expressed appreciation for the work performed by the Design Team. Mrs. Nye presented the Vision Statement. Sara Young presented the Mission Statement. Ms. Chamberlin stressed that the majority of CVCC graduates (92%) go on to post-secondary training. Mr. Hennessey presented the Belief Statements and lauded Mr. Pope for his work on this initiative. Mr. Pope presented the Goal Matrix, providing an overview of the themes included in the Matrix. The Design Team was thanked for their efforts on this initiative.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Communications Committee

Minutes from the April 1, 2021 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Farrell advised that the last meeting focused on promoting the upcoming budget vote, and working to see that the public has a full picture of what students and staff are accomplishing. The next meeting is Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.2 Finance Committee

Minutes from the April 6, 2021 meeting were distributed.

The May 4, 2021 meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference. Mrs. Pregent advised that the last meeting focused on the upcoming budget vote, a review of purchasing procedures, a review of the summer projects list, possible procedures related to recognition/retirement awards, and a review of the FY21 year-end-projections.

7.3 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes from the April 12, 2021 meeting were distributed. Mr. Isabelle reported that the last meeting focused on projects to-date, and a review of summer projects, which may hinge on the outcome of the upcoming budget vote. The next meeting is Monday, May 24, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.4 Policy Committee

Minutes from the March 15, 2021 meeting were distributed. The Committee also met on April 26, 2021. Ms. Parker thanked Mr. Aither for his work on policies, and advised that the Committee discussed policies relating to student clubs and activities, electronic and video surveillance, and complaints against personnel. Discussion also included comparisons of BUUSD policies and VSBA policies. It was noted that administrators have completed a survey regarding their prioritization of policies to be reviewed and the results of the survey have been compiled into a working document. Mrs. Spaulding thanked the Committee for undertaking an initiative to institute a link between policies and their associated procedures. The next meeting is Monday, May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.5 Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the March 30, 2021 meeting were distributed. The Committee also met on April 27, 2021. Ms. Badeau advised that the last meeting included a presentation on math and literacy curriculum at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The presentation included information on interventions and differentiated instruction. The Committee was also advised regarding equity, racial justice, and inclusion training, which has generated much positive feedback. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.6 Negotiations Committee

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

7.7 Regional Advisory Board

Minutes from the February 8, 2021 meeting were distributed. The next meeting is Monday, May 3, 2021 via video conference.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle advised regarding his attendance at the CVCC Governance meeting and gave a huge 'shout out' to the students who won financial awards and to Mrs. Waterhouse for leading the Scholarship Committee, and also to the others who work on that Committee, that works on investments that enable the Scholarship Fund to award over a half million dollars to Spaulding High School students each year.

Mr. Coon recognized the dedicated career of Leanne Gaylord-Triano, who is retiring this year after serving the district for over 35 years.

Mrs. Pregent congratulated the scholarship awards winners and those responsible for the Scholarship Fund and the presentation to students. Mrs. Pregent thanked all teachers and administrators who are retiring this year.

Mrs. Farrell highlighted a summer camp for 7 to 12 years old children, advising that the camp is being held in Standish, Maine, is called Camp Sebago and is sponsored by the Salvation Army. The camp runs from 06/28/21 – 07/02/21. Anyone interested in this camp should contact Lt. West at the Salvation Army in Barre, Vermont.

Ms. Smith expressed her thanks and well wishes to retiring staff, and welcomed new staff members to the District.

Ms. Parker thanked administrators and teachers in grades 7 – 12 for welcoming the students back into school full time.

Mr. Hennessey thanked Ms. Parker for her comments, and advised that staff and administrators are very pleased to have middle school students back to full-time in-person learning. It has been a very positive week for all.

Mrs. Waterhouse advised that there has been much positive feedback on the Scholarship Awards video. Mrs. Waterhouse thanked Mr. Allen for all the effort and man-hours he put in to create this video. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that after-school transportation for high school students started this week, advising that all is working smoothly. Bus ridership is very low, and Mrs. Waterhouse encourages families to reach out to school counselors or her if they are interested in transportation.

Ms. Pearson echoed Mr. Hennessey's sentiments, advising that BTMES has also experienced a very positive week.

Mrs. Poulin expressed her gratitude to the Scholarship Committee and the community members that contribute to the Scholarship Fund, advising that her son's award will have a tremendous impact on his education.

Mrs. Nye appreciates everyone's assistance in moving to more in-person learning and announced that next week is Staff Appreciation Week across the district.

Mrs. Spaulding reminded Committee Members of the importance of attending their committee meetings, noting that following Robert's Rules of Order, meetings may need to be cancelled due to lack of a quorum. Mrs. Spaulding will seek clarification from legal counsel regarding this matter. Board Members were asked to contact the committee chair when they know they will be unable to attend a meeting.

9. Future Agenda Items

- Summer Camp Update
- Update on Graduation Dates and Plans (and participation)
- Statewide Recovery Plan Update (including an update on Student Engagement)

Mr. Wells reported that the first draft of the Recovery Plan will be submitted to the State on 04/30/21

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference – Google Meet.

11. Executive Session as Needed

11.1 Personnel – Superintendent Search

11.2 Personnel – Negotiations Regarding Total Compensation

A letter from Lisa Perreault to the Superintendent (dated 04/20/21) was distributed. A copy of an e-mail from the Superintendent to the Board (dated 04/29/21) was also distributed.

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include two Personnel matters; the Search for a Superintendent and Negotiations Regarding Total Compensation.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mrs. Marold in attendance for the Superintendent Search and Negotiations Regarding Total Compensation, and Mr. Wells in attendance for Negotiations Regarding Total Compensation at 7:36 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. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:26 p.m.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin