

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
May 20, 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  
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal  
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal  
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal  
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Heather Battistoni	Ainsley Burroughs	Josh Howard	Ted Mills
Dan Morrison	Heather Slayton	Diane Solomon		

**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, May 20, 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 5.1 Personnel – Superintendent Search

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.**

**3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

**3.1 Public Comment**

A community member voiced concern regarding personal information shared in the Board packet.

**3.2 Student Voice**

None.

**4. Current Business**

**4.1 FY22 Budget Revisions 2 Approval (Draft 5)**

A document titled ‘FY22 BUUSD Proposed Budget, Draft 5, Revote June 9 – Revisions 05/18/21’ was distributed.

A document titled ‘BUUSD Budget 2021 – 2022 Draft 5 Revote June 9, 2021 – Projected Comparative Tax Rate Calculations 05/18/21’ was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of Draft 5 which was reviewed by the Finance Committee earlier in the week. Draft 5 represents a reduction in expenses of \$425,451 and use of an additional \$100,000 from the tax stabilization fund. The ballot language would ask

that the voters approve an expenditure budget of \$49,947,503 (this amount is the general expense budget, with grants). This draft brings the equalized pupil spending amount to \$15,344, which is 1.95% higher than the per pupil spending for the current academic year. This equates to a general fund increase of \$1,322,535 (an increase of 2.9%). The list of reductions is included in the meeting packet. Mrs. Pregent advised that overall, the draft budget utilizes \$600,000 from the Tax Stabilization Fund, which is concerning to some because the fund balance is currently \$644,000. It should be noted that the projected surplus for FY21 is \$1,400,000, and there will be an option for the Board to transfer some of that money to the Tax Stabilization Fund and or the Capital Improvement Fund. Mrs. Pregent advised that each of the proposed line item cuts were identified by administrators. Mr. Wells advised that reduction #12 (Reduce BC SRO by \$30,000) has been discussed further based on new information, and it has been decided that the SRO position at BCEMS should be retained, but that the \$30,000 reduction will be added to line 14 (Administrators will determine areas for savings (supplies, equipment, or staffing)). It was agreed that the additional reductions will be identified, such as not to negatively impact students or result in staff reductions. Mr. Isabelle wants assurance that the budget does not compromise student safety and security in the schools and wants assurance that the budget allows equity of safety measures amongst the schools. Additionally, Mr. Isabelle wants assurance that the elimination of the Assistant Coaches does not cause student safety issues for athletes, advising that some teams are larger than others and he does not want safety compromised. It was noted that this reduction does not preclude teams from having Assistant Coaches, but they would need to be unpaid volunteers. It was suggested that research be performed regarding labor laws that may prevent school employees from volunteer work within the district. Mr. Isabelle wants assurance that there is adequate supervision of athletes. Additional discussion was held regarding reductions, including; reductions for BTMES field trip transportation. BCEMS fund raises for field trip transportation. This reduction to the BTMES portion of the budget will result in equity for field trip transportation amongst the elementary/middle schools. Mrs. Farrell advised that she wants the community to know that going forward, even with these reductions in place, administrators and the Board will continue to be fiscally responsible and will monitor the budget looking for additional reductions that can be made without negatively impacting students (curriculum, instruction and safety). A community member queried regarding how many more reductions could be identified if administrators spent an additional week looking for cuts. Mrs. Spaulding advised that additional cuts at this point would most likely have a negative impact on students and that in an effort to warn the 06/09/21 vote, and have adequate time for printing of ballots; the budget must be finalized quickly. Mrs. Spaulding invited Mr. Howard to participate in future budget discussions, and join the process at the beginning. Mrs. Spaulding advised that she is not reading the chat section of the meeting and will not respond to those comments. Participants may raise hands to ask questions or make comments. Mrs. Spaulding called the vote.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the FY22 Budget Draft 5 for an expenditure budget of \$ 49,947,503.**

#### **4.2 Approval of FY22 Budget Vote Warning - June 9, 2021 Vote**

Two documents titled 'Barre Unified Union School District Warning For June 9, 2021 Vote' were distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding provided clarification regarding the two different increase percentages (per pupil vs. overall expense budget) and the tax rate implications. Brief discussion was held regarding the two Warnings contained in the packet. It was determined that the Warning with the per-pupil spending amount of \$15,334 will be presented for approval. Board Members were advised that they will need to sign the Warning at the BUUSD Central Office. In response to concerns of limited building access, it was noted that the door to the vestibule has been reprogrammed such that it will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the 'Barre Unified Union School District Warning for the June 9, 2021 Vote', with an expenditure budget of \$ 49,947,503.**

#### **4.3 New Hires**

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Melissa Lindheim (Assistant Director of Special Services), Jayme Ducharme (BCEMS 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher), and Kendra Pillsbury (BCEMS 5/6 Social Studies Teacher) were distributed.

Mr. Wells provided a brief overview of the candidates. Mrs. Farrell voiced concern that given the current lack of an approved budget, she would like additional discussion to take place prior to hiring for the position of Assistant Director of Special Services. Mrs. Farrell clarified that her concerns are not related to the candidate, but rather that she would like to have an approved budget prior to filling administrative positions.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board voted 7 to 1 to approve the hiring of Melissa Lindheim. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, and Ms. Smith voted for the motion. Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion.**

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Jayme Ducharme, and Kendra Pillsbury.**

### **5. Executive Session**

#### **5.1 Personnel – Superintendent Search**

The Superintendent Search was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session at 6:12 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. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 7:12 p.m.**

**6. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:13 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*