

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**
Via Video Conference – Google Meet
May 18, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sarah Pregent (BC) - Chair
Renee Badeau (BT) – Vice Chair
Gina Akley (BT)
Chris Parker (BT)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

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
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

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore – Times Argus	Josh Howard	Joe Kill	Paul Malone	Alex Maurice
Margaret Mehuron	Diane Solomon	Rachael Van Vliet		

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pregent, called the Tuesday, May 18, 2021 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. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2021 Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 6, 2021 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Budget Re-vote Outcome

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.

A document titled ‘May 11, 2021 – Re-vote Exit Survey’ was distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the exit poll survey results are included in the packet, and requested that Mrs. Perreault provide an overview of Draft 5. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the highlights from the Proposed Budget, Draft 5 document, advising that this draft reflects expense reductions of \$425,451 (resulting in an overall increase of 2.9%). The ballot language indicates an expenditure budget (including grants) of \$49,947,503 with per pupil spending of \$15,334 (a 1.95% increase over the FY21 cost per pupil). Draft 5 includes utilizing another \$100,000 from the Tax Stabilization Fund. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding individual items proposed for

reduction by administrators. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the tax calculation sheet. Discussion was held regarding the possible elimination of the position of SRO at BCEMS. Mr. Hennessey advised that it is unlikely that Corporal Fleury will be able to return next year, and BCEMS administrators are looking into creative ways in which to forgo the position, while also having some of the roles of that position still happen. In response to a query regarding the tax impact for Barre Town residents, Mrs. Perreault advised that she believes the tax impact will most likely be level. Mrs. Pregent noted that the Board has no control over the Town's municipal budget, or property assessments, but is working to draft a fiscally responsible school budget. In response to a query, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that SHS has not been able to fill one of its full time substitute positions, so it has been eliminated in Draft 5. It was also noted that the District has had much difficulty filling para-educator positions (there are currently 10 open positions), and administrators believed some of those positions could be eliminated from the budget. It was noted that the BTMES Field Trip reduction (for busing) aligns BTMES with BCEMS, in that field trip transportation costs are raised through various fund raisers, and the PTO. In response to a query regarding reduction of the BTMES Duplicating Clerk, Mrs. Nye provided a historical overview of the position, and reminded the Committee that an audit resulted in the elimination of smaller laser printers, and acquisition of larger machines. The position slated for elimination is responsible for photocopying of curriculum for BCEMS and BTMES, and in the event the position is reduced, we will have warrants for printing that is sent out to local printers, and will also have to work on a contract to bring back the smaller machines. Mrs. Nye noted that the "function" of the position is slated for elimination, but does not result in the loss of a job for the individual in the position because the individual is covered under the AFSCME contract and will be moved to an open position under the AFSCME contract. Ms. Pearson advised that elimination of this position will most likely result in an increase to the BTMES substitute line because the duplicating clerk position 'wears multiple hats' and helps cover duties and supports students within the building. Mr. Wells advised that the BUUSD is currently in the regular cycle of reviewing copier contracts, including assessing needs in the buildings and adjusting the machines accordingly. Ms. Pearson advised that the Finance Committee should also take into consideration that with the reduction of printers/copiers, BTMES has been able to purchase other large machines (laminator, carbon copy machines, etc). These functions are now taken care of 'in-house', and without someone to run them, BTMES will need to find other ways to 'fill those holes' and it is expected that it will result in increases to other budget lines. In response to a query regarding the actual savings (if the position is cut, but results in increases to other line items), Mrs. Perreault advised that, as is common with reductions, the responsibilities would need to be absorbed by other individuals. Mrs. Perreault provided an example of a similar restructure within the Business Office, and advised that BCEMS does not have the equivalent of a duplicating clerk. It was noted that this is an area of inequity that has 'stood out'. Regarding savings for Security, it was noted that each building has a security update line item, and it was found that BCEMS has \$5,000 budgeted, but BTMES and SHS have \$10,000. The BTMES and SHS security lines items were reduced by \$5,000 each, resulting in all buildings having an equal amount budgeted for this item. It was noted that the District security is in good shape and that the District has maximized its use of VSBIT security grants. Board Audit Services are reduced as the result of efficiencies gained with consolidation of the District. Additional discussion included; reductions to health insurance and HRA line items, the amounts remaining in reserve funds after utilizing reserve funds to reduce expenses, questions relating to how the BUUSD has reached an FY21 surplus in excess of \$1,000,000 (this is COVID funding related, not the result of over budgeting), decisions relating to moving surplus funds to reserve funds (funds can be moved under the direction of the Board, if funds are moved prior to the audit – once funds are audited, voter approval is required), survey results/comments (which vary widely), and a query regarding whether or not more reductions could be made if administrators worked on the budget for an additional week. It was confirmed that administrators did not create any additional budget draft scenarios. Mr. Allen advised that he has been in touch with Cody Morrison (Barre Area Development), to discuss partnering on budget promotion, noting that it is in BAD's interest also, to see that a budget passes. Mr. Allen stressed that it is important to highlight student activities/achievements, and that if this budget fails, additional cuts will have a significant negative impact on students. The next budget vote is slated for 06/09/21. Mr. Allen will have more to report at the next Communications Committee meeting. In response to a query, it was noted that re-votes will need to continue until a budget is passed. If a budget is not passed prior to the start of FY22, statute requires that the District run the school at 87% of the FY21 budget (until a budget is passed).

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the Board approve FY22 Budget Draft 5, which is an expenditure budget of \$49,947,503, a per pupil cost of \$15,334, an increase of 1.95% in per pupil spending over FY21.

6. Old Business

6.1 ESSER Funding Update

A document titled 'COVID-19 Funding- May 18, 2021' was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the distributed document is updated and helps to provide information on how COVID funding was used, resulting in such a large surplus. Mrs. Perreault provided a brief overview of the document, which includes use of ESSER funds for future programs as well. Mr. Wells advised that the Recovery Team is reviewing this funding as well, and will be utilizing ESSER funds for items and strategies based on data/student need, as well as recommendations from the Design Team and administrators. Mr. Wells provided an overview of the broad plans and advised that the Recovery Plan is due to the State by 06/01/2021.

6.2 Facilities Projects/RFP Updates

A document titled 'BUUSD FY22 Schedule, Facility Projects, etc...Spring/Summer 2021, May, 2021' was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the BUUSD is in the process of negotiating some contracts. Last year, the Board approved the bid for improvements to the SHS Auditorium. The work was delayed due to COVID. The Business Office sought a new proposal from the vendor. The new proposal is very similar to last year's proposal. This project will be brought back to the Board for re-approval. It is

anticipated that the bid for the BCEMS roof project, will also be presented at the next regular meeting. These are the two most pressing items requiring Board approval. In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised that in FY21, the facilities budget was set at the industry standard of \$1 per square foot. Budget draft 2 (for FY22) reduced the facilities line from \$1 per square foot, to 75¢ a square foot. The BCEMS roof does require work, as well as the SHS Auditorium which currently has no sound system. The SHS Auditorium has been subject to deferred maintenance, and much needs to be done to renovate the Auditorium which has basically not been improved upon since it was built. Auditorium work has been deferred for too many years. Mrs. Pregent advised that the Board has been cautioned that facilities budgets need to be adequate to assure that deferred maintenance does not result in more costly repairs or safety issues.

6.3 FY21 Year-end-Projections

Four documents were distributed;

The BUUSD FY21 Year End Projection Report – May 18, 2021

The BUUSD Expense Report (dated 05/06/21)

The CVCC FY21 Year-end Projections Report (dated 05/18/21)

The CVCC FY21 Budget (dated 05/06/21)

Mrs. Pregent advised that there is an anticipated/projected surplus of approximately \$1.7 million dollars, less \$300K (CRF repurposed funds – reimbursement to the Statewide Education Fund), which results in an anticipated surplus of approximately 1.4 million dollars. Prior to the audit, the Board could vote to move these funds to reserve funds. The majority of the surplus is due to COVID. It was noted that the SEA Project is going very well, with Mr. Evans and the architect remaining very involved.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

- Finance Procedures
- RAN - Revenue Anticipation Note (can't be voted on until after a budget is approved by voters)
- RFPs/Summer Projects
- FY21 Budget Projections
- FY22 Budget (if necessary)
- Review Grant Funding

9. Next Meeting Date

The June 1, 2021 5:30 p.m. meeting is cancelled.

The next meeting will be held after the budget re-vote, on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via video conference.

Mrs. Pregent thanked Mrs. Perreault and administrators for their work on Budget Draft 5.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin