

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

BCEMS – James Taffel Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
June 24, 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)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Abigayle Smith (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mary Ellen Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Josh Allen, Communications Specialist
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal
Chris Hennessey, BCEMS Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Jody Emerson	Jaime Fewer	Alice Flanders	Winton Goodrich
Michael Greig	Jean Haeger	Martha Hafner	Carol Hebert	Josh Howard
Colleen Kresco	Shannon Lessley	Paul Malone	Joelen Mulvaney	Sue Paxman
Michael Pope	Terry Reil	Sharon Toborg	William Toborg	Peter Zakrewski

As the meeting was held via a mix of in-person and 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, June 24, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:34 p.m., which was held at the Barre City Elementary and Middle School in the James Taffel Library and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Agenda Items 6.1 and 6.2 will be discussed out of order (after Agenda Item 4.1)
Add 5.10 Board Retreat
Add 10.1 Negotiations Update – Para-Educators

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, 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

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding a modification for public comment. It was noted that though this meeting is public, it is not a meeting of the public. Mrs. Spaulding advised that in an effort to ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion and that the business at hand is completed in a timely manner, she is enacting rules as allowed under Policy A21 – Public Participation at Board Meetings. Mrs. Spaulding requested that community members wishing to speak enter their name, town of residence, and Agenda Items they wish to speak on in the Chat Box for the meeting. Each speaker will be allotted two minutes to speak under each agenda item they have signed up for. Discussion under agenda item 3.1 Public Comment is reserved for items not on the Agenda. Input for items on the Agenda will be received at the start of the discussion of that agenda item. Community members, who have questions, comments or concerns, regarding these new procedures, should contact Mrs. Spaulding via e-mail.

A community member requesting information regarding para-educator negotiations and the negotiation process was advised to submit his questions to Mrs. Spaulding (via e-mail).

A community member requested that Spaulding High School no longer be referred to as The Crimson Tide, as he believes this 'nickname', used by the University of Alabama has negative connotations and is racist. Mrs. Spaulding acknowledged the request, and advised that this topic may be added to a future agenda for discussion by the Board. The community member was encouraged to phone or e-mail Mrs. Spaulding regarding his concerns.

Mr. Hennessey introduced William and Sharon Toborg, who are attending the meeting in person at BCEMS.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – June 10, 2021 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the June 10, 2021 Regular Meeting.

In response to a query that not all comments are included in the Minutes, it was noted that Minutes are not transcripts, but rather a legal record of action taken by the Board. Minutes are supposed to include what is done (action/votes), not what is said (discussion).

5. Current Business

5.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Marissa Hebert (BCEMS Pre-K), and Sara Ford (History and Financial Literacy), were distributed. Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates. Mr. Hennessey answered questions from the Board and a community member. Mr. Hennessey will contact Mrs. Waterhouse and request that she send information to the Board regarding how a single teacher can fill 2 teaching vacancies for different subjects.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Marissa Hebert, and Sara Ford.

5.2 Resignations/Retirements

Letters of resignation from Stefanie Seng, and Heather Douglas were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of the resignations. Ms. Seng and Ms. Douglas were thanked for their service and wished well in their new ventures. No Board action is required.

5.3 Annual Recommendation of HHB Report Recipients

A copy of the Policy on The Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying of Students (C10) was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of the policy, confirmed that the policy was included in the Board packet, and advised that these are not new positions, but rather name existing employees to fill roles required by law.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as listed, the HHB designated employees (BUUSD - Interim Superintendent Chris Hennessey, SHS – Luke Aither and Brenda Waterhouse, CVCC – Scott Griggs and an individual to be named in the future, BCEMS – Pierre Laflamme and Kristin Morrison, and BTMES – Theodore Mills, Jacqueline Bora, and Alice Harding).

5.4 Open Meeting – In Person Meetings

Mrs. Spaulding advised that with the possibility of holding hybrid (in-person and virtual options) meetings, she would like to have a 'test run', and would like to meet with the Technology Director and the Superintendent, to assure that hybrid meetings run smoothly, and that it is possible for all individuals (Board and community members) to provide input during meetings. Mrs. Spaulding took comments from the community and the Board. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated her desire to hold a 'test run', possibly at a Committee meeting.

5.5 Interim Positions

Discussion was held regarding the process/protocol for how interim positions are handled. It was noted that a letter from legal counsel, had been shared with Board Members. Mr. Hennessey advised that hiring performed outside of the normal hiring 'season' is normally held in this fashion, as late in the hiring season, the candidate pool is smaller. The Board heard questions/comments from the community. Mrs. Spaulding recapped the discussion advising that it is her understanding that it is fairly standard (within school districts) to post positions as interim positions, if the hiring is performed outside of the normal hiring season, and that candidates for interim positions are aware that they are applying for interim positions.

5.6 Staff Transfers

A document titled BUUSD Transferring Staff for FY22 School Year, was distributed.

Mrs. Marold provided an overview of the report, advising that there were 21 transfers within the District. Seventeen of those openings have been filled. There are four open transfer positions. The Board took comments from the community. Mrs. Spaulding provided

clarification that the report documents personnel who are transferring to existing positions within the district. Mrs. Marold advised that she believes the number of transfers this year is in line with the number of transfers in prior years.

5.7 BCEMS Principal Position/Process Update

Mrs. Marold reported that the Search Committee conducted the first round of interviews and brought 2 candidates to a community wide forum. Staff, students, parents and community members were invited to participate in this question/answer session. The session was followed by submission of Google feedback forms for candidates. The Search Committee will review feedback forms on 06/25/21, and it is hoped that they can submit a candidate to the Superintendent this week. The Board received input from the community. There were no questions from the Board.

5.8 CVCC Recovery Plan

A document titled Vermont Career Technical Education Recovery Plan (for CVCC) was distributed. Jody Emerson, incoming Director of CVCC, addressed the Board and provided an overview of the Recovery Plan which requires RAB approval. The RAB Board was not able to pull a quorum together, and Ms. Emerson has received 5 of the 7 necessary approvals from that group. Ms. Emerson believes the AOE would be willing to accept approval from the BUUSD Board. Ms. Emerson requested Board approval, noting that once the Plan is approved, it will be submitted to the AOE. The AOE will then provide feedback. The Recovery Plan is a 'living' document that can and will be amended over time. Ruth Durkee from the AOE has reviewed the Plan and given preliminary approval. The CVCC Recovery Plan has the same categories as the BUUSD Recovery Plan. Ms. Emerson provided more detailed information on the plan and requested Board approval. The Board advised that they are encouraged to see the additional opportunities for middle school students and are pleased to see that the plan includes restorative practices.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the CVCC Recovery Plan as presented.

5.9 FY21 Financials

A copy of the BUUSD FY21 Year-end Projection Report (dated 06/15/21) was distributed. There is currently an unaudited projected surplus of \$1.8 million dollars. The surplus is mainly the result of the receipt of COVID Grant funds, as well as expenses that were lower due to students working remotely. The Board took comments from the community, including a request that the surplus be refunded to tax payers. Mrs. Pregent reported that the subject of refunds to tax payers is being researched based on a request made to the Finance Committee, which tabled discussion until additional information can be received. It was noted that the tax stabilization fund is used to lower the tax impact to tax payers. Putting money into a Tax Stabilization Fund is basically a refund to tax payers, and is a standard practice. Money can also be moved to a Capital Improvement Fund to help deal with unanticipated facilities issues that arise. It was noted that education funding is very complicated.

5.10 Board Retreat

The Board Retreat is scheduled for Thursday, July 29, 2021. Mrs. Spaulding would like to discuss the agenda, participation (in person and/or virtual) and a timeframe for the meeting. Board Retreats are usually lengthy, lasting as long as six hours. Mrs. Spaulding will work with the Superintendent on the Agenda. The agenda will include Vision, Mission, & Strategic Goals. Mrs. Spaulding requested input from the Board, advising that input can also be submitted to her via e-mail. Mrs. Spaulding received input from the Board, and advised that she will send out an e-mail once details are firmed up.

6. Old Business

6.1 Second and Final Reading Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) And Pregnancy Prevention Education Policy (C43)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Lengthy discussion was held, which included comments and concerns from community members. It was noted that this is an existing policy that was amended due to a change in law, which goes into effect on 07/01/21. A link to the law was posted in the chat section (Title 16 Chapter 001, Subchapter 007 – 16 V.S.A. § 132). The proposed version of the policy makes the policy in compliance with the law. If it is deemed that the change in law was misinterpreted, this policy can be revisited.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board voted 5 to 2 to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) And Pregnancy Prevention Education Policy (C43), and agreed to adopt said policy. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent voted for the motion. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion.

6.2 Second and Final Reading District Equity Policy (C29)

Lengthy discussion was held regarding this VSBA policy, including input from community members (both in support and against adoption of this policy), a brief review of the policy adoption process, district practices to implement the policy, and a request that the Board send this policy back to the Policy Committee for additional discussion. After the close of public comment, community members were encouraged to submit additional comments and questions to the Board.

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the District Equity Policy (C29).

6.3 Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals

Three documents were distributed:

A document titled BUUSD Vision, Mission, and Beliefs

Two documents titled BUUSD Strategic Plan Goal Matrix

Winton Goodrich addressed the Board and provided an overview of the process involved in this initiative, providing an update on work that has been performed this year. The project involved creation of a Design Team, and also included many public forums which included students, teachers, staff, administrators, students, parents, alumni, non-profits, business owners, and citizens. There were a total of 15 – 17 meetings (including the forums). The Design Team gathered feedback via public forums and surveys. This initiative is intended to help form a 5 year plan for the District. There were 5 main goals and 4 stakeholder groups. Mr. Goodrich provided an overview of the stakeholder groups and the responsibilities of each group. A presentation was displayed on screen and Michael Pope provided an overview of the Vision Statement. Jaime Fewer provided an overview of the Mission Statement. Chris Hennessey provided an overview of the Belief Statements. Josh Allen provided an overview of the Strategic Plan Goal Matrix, which includes (for each of the 5 goals) Strategic Objectives, Action Steps, Benchmarks, an Implementation Timeline, positions Responsible for Monitoring Progress, and Funding Sources. The five identified goal categories are: Equitable Access, Communications & Relationships, Curriculum & Career Pathways, Student Wellness, and Student Engagement. Mr. Pope provided an overview of the Timeline based ‘visual’ document that provides an ‘at a glance’ overview of the process. This document should serve as a useful tool for the Board and administrators. Mr. Goodrich advised regarding the individuals who served/participated on the Design Team. Mr. Goodrich advised that he has received feedback from one Board Member (via e-mail), and requested feedback from the remainder of the Board so that this project can be finalized and be formally handed off to the Board. There was no feedback from the Board. The Board expressed its appreciation to all of the participants who have put much time and effort into this initiative. Mrs. Spaulding announced that this initiative has officially been handed over to the Board.

7. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Pregent congratulated all for finishing out this difficult year, and also congratulated SHS graduates.

Mrs. Farrell advised that on the subject of equity, there are many different lenses to look through (e.g. poverty levels, racial issues, social/emotional etc.), and she suggests that the Board look into a way to help explain to the public, the general purview of what equity means for the District.

Mr. Isabelle thanked the Design Team, congratulated the SHS graduates, and welcomed Mr. Hennessey to his role of Interim Superintendent, and his participation in this evening’s meeting.

Mrs. Akley thanked administrators and staff who are leaving the district, and welcomed those who are new to the District.

Mr. Coon reported that there was a ‘great end of the year’, and advised of some of the end of school year activities, including staff recognitions. Mr. Coon and a group of BCEMS teachers attended the BEST MTSS Institute (through the State of Vermont). The session was most informative and will be beneficial to expanding/improving the school’s PBIS work.

Mr. Hennessey reiterated the importance of the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning Initiative and reminded all that we are on the tail end of the pandemic and that soon, schools will be able to return to normal.

Mrs. Spaulding echoed the sentiments of Mrs. Akley, and advised that she was able to attend a portion of the BCEMS 8th grade step-up ceremony. The ceremony was very personalized and Mrs. Spaulding was pleased to be able to attend.

Mrs. Spaulding and Mr. Isabelle attended the more formal 8th grade step-up ceremony at BTMES.

SHS Graduation will be held on Saturday, June 26, 2021, and will be reported on at an upcoming meeting.

8. Future Agenda Items

- RAN – Revenue Anticipation Note
- New Hires
- Surplus Funds Discussion

Administrative Job Descriptions will be removed from the Parking Lot.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction position job title will change to the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment effective 07/01/21. There is already a job description for this position.

9. Next Meeting Date: Regular BUUSD Board Meeting;

The Thursday, July 8, 2021 Regular Board Meeting has been cancelled.

The next Regular Board Meeting is Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The location will be announced at a later date. The meeting will also include a virtual attendance component via Google Meet

The Board Retreat will be Thursday, July 29, 2021 at a time and location to be announced.

10. Executive Session as Needed

10.1 Negotiations Update – Para-educators

A Negotiations Update for Para-educators was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the item proposed for discussion, Para-Educator Negotiations, would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. Mrs. Farrell was not available for the vote.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey and Mrs. Marold in attendance, at 8:10 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item 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 8:53 p.m.

11. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin