

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
August 26, 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:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Jody Emerson, Director Central Vermont Career Center  
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager  
Mary Ellen Simmons, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Venus Dean	Josh Howard	Prudence Krasofski	Mary Mason
Ben Matthews	Terry Reil	William Toborg	Rachael Van Vliet	

**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, August 26, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held at Spaulding High School in the Library and via video conference.

**2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of ‘Meeting Norms’.  
6.4 Reopening/COVID Update – it was noted that this Agenda item will include an action item.  
Add 10.2 Negotiations Relating to AFSCME

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.**

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

**3.1 Public Comment**

None.

**3.2 Student Voice**

None.

**4. Consent Agenda**

**4.1 Approval of Minutes – August 12, 2021 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 12, 2021 Regular Meeting. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.**

## **5. Current Business**

### **5.1 New Hires**

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Dianne Bouchard (SHS Licensed Mental Health Counselor), Danielle Berg (SHS Art Teacher), James Kline (BTMES Special Educator), and Charles (Chad) Olivieri (BTMES 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates, and answered questions from the Board. It was noted that teachers hired after August 1<sup>st</sup> are hired for the current academic year, and will need to reapply next year, should they wish to continue working within the District.

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Diane Bouchard, Danielle Berg, James Kline, and Charles (Chad) Olivieri.**

### **5.2 Resignations/Retirements**

A letter of resignation from Ethan Cody was distributed. Brief discussion was held. Mr. Cody was wished well in his future endeavors.

### **5.3 Form 267 Perkins (CVCC)**

A document titled 'FY 22 VACTED CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT' was distributed.

Ms. Emerson provided an overview of the document, and requested Board approval to authorize the CTE Director and Superintendent to sign the Agreement.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to approve the FY 22 VACTED Consortium Agreement and authorized the CVCC Director and the BUUSD Superintendent to sign the document.**

### **5.4 VEHI/VSBIT Annual Meeting**

Eight documents were distributed;

A Memo (dated 07/01/21) from Jonathan Steiner, President (VSBIT), regarding the VSBIT Annual Meeting Notice

A copy of the BSVIT Annual Meeting (11/05/21) Agenda

A Memo (dated 07/01/21) from Jonathan Steiner, President (VSBIT), regarding VSBIT Board of Directors

A document titled 'Exhibit A – Notice of Meeting'

A document titled 'Instructions for Exhibit B – VSBIT Proxy or Certificate of Authority'

A document titled 'Exhibit B – VSBIT Proxy or Certificate of Authority' (for unemployment insurance)

A document titled 'Exhibit B – VSBIT Proxy or Certificate of Authority' (for multi-line insurance)

A copy of the Minutes from the VSBIT Annual Meeting on 10/22/2020

Brief discussion was held.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to authorize Superintendent Chris Hennessey to appear and vote on behalf of the BUUSD for the VSBIT Unemployment Program, and the VSBIT Multi-line Program.**

### **5.5 FY23 Budget Development Schedule**

A copy of the BUUSD FY23 Budget Development Schedule (dated 08/03/21) was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the schedule, which is used to assist with budgeting, was shared with the Finance Committee. A Budget Development Schedule is generated annually, and satisfies requirements of Policy F30. Brief discussion was held including; a request for Board feedback (relating to any budget parameters – percentage limits which would need to be clearly defined, e.g. expense increase, cost per pupil increase, or tax rate increase), concern relating to the impact of surplus funds, use of the Tax Stabilization Fund, and how ESSER Funds impact the budget. The Board is not ready to provide parameters at this time, but will provide input in the future.

### **5.6 ESSER Community Forum Recap**

Mr. Hennessey thanked Board Members who attended the Forum, and advised that approximately 75 community members responded to a recent survey. The Community Forum included a presentation on grant funding (ESSER as well as others). The evening was very informative. Mr. Hennessey advised that there is a link in this evening's meeting agenda, to a 24 page document that includes detailed notes. Mr. Hennessey strongly recommends that individuals review this document. Mr. Hennessey noted that there were two distinct themes of note; Capital Improvement Goals (including ventilation systems), and Before-School and After-School Care. The Forum was a success and Mr. Hennessey would like to hold additional forums.

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Community Input**

This topic was discussed at the Board Retreat. Retreat discussion included how to increase opportunities for community input and feedback. Mrs. Spaulding polled community and Board members. Discussion included; suggestions to host listening sessions (for specific topics, the Board, and committees), a suggestion to change the format of monthly Board meetings (one meeting for 'business', and one 'listening' meeting, to receive more extensive community input), concern that too many meetings will be scheduled, a suggestion to have 'drop boxes' (physical, e-mail, and voicemail) to receive input, holding 'student' and or 'student/parent' forums, and holding formatted and productive meetings.

### **6.2 Surplus Funds**

A document titled 'Superintendent's Recommendation for Use of Surplus Funds – Revised 08/26/21' was distributed. The Superintendent is recommending that \$2,400,000 be assigned to the Capital Improvement Fund (for capital improvements and SEA building expenses not covered by the bond), and that \$600,000 be assigned to FY22 Revenue. Capital improvement priorities are listed as SHS Sprinkler System, Roofing, and Parking Lot Pavement. Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of his recommendations. Lengthy discussion ensued, which included; community input, rules relevant to assignment to various funds, assignments to funds (not specific projects), the sprinkler system at SHS (including the waiver), improvements to ventilation systems/roofs/parking lots, equity amongst the District's schools, funding for assistant coaching positions, supplanting of funds vs. supplementing funds, requesting additional community input(a possible survey), finalization of the surplus amount (will be solidified more by the next meeting), possible deadlines for the allocation of funds, and possible restrictions to funds post-audit (unassigned funds go to the General Fund).

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board voted 6 to 2 to table discussion until the next Regular Board Meeting (09/09/21). Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Isabelle, and Ms. Smith, voted for the motion. Ms. Parker and Mrs. Pregent voted against the motion.**

This topic will not be added to the Finance Committee meeting agenda.

### **6.3 Projected Student Enrollment**

A copy of the District Enrollment/Staffing Report (August 2021) was distributed.

A copy of the Home Study Report (with AOE provided data) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised that the numbers are expected to change fairly significantly due to ongoing registration of students. It was noted that CVCC, which has a high enrollment, is also registering additional students at this time. In response to a query, it was noted that student population is lower than in pre-COVID times. In response to a query regarding student/staff ratios (BTMES 9.7 students per class in 7<sup>th</sup> grade – policy minimum is 15), it was noted that in the middle school, licensure is required for the various disciplines. Student enrollment will be added to next month's agenda.

### **6.4 Reopening/COVID Update**

Mr. Hennessey hopes that parents and students are pleased with the information being provided and advised that it is the District's goal to provide timely and clear information. Mr. Hennessey commended the community for the respectful tenor of their responses. The District's schools are scheduled to open for full-time in-person learning on Monday, August 30, 2021. Face coverings will be required for all individuals entering the BUUSD's buildings. The mask requirement will be in effect until at least 09/13/21. After that date, the District may be able to offer a 'mask optional' option, if the District's vaccination rate is at least 80% of eligible students. Reaching that threshold may be difficult, as there are many students in grades 7 and below who are not eligible for the vaccine. Until further notice, masking will be required in all buildings. Mr. Hennessey is proud of the work being performed and decisions being made to see that the schools are opened in the best interest of the safety of students and staff. A community member queried regarding a back-up plan. A community member requested that every policy clearly state the reason for the policy, and include a provision to measure the effectiveness of the policy. It was clarified that the masking requirement is not considered a 'policy', but rather is an administrative procedure that is being implemented.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to delegate authority to the Superintendent, to establish reasonable, evidence based, safety rules for COVID.**

## **7. Other Business/Round Table**

Mr. Boltin queried regarding the earliest date that the District can open a Superintendent search. Mrs. Spaulding will add "Rough Time-table for Superintendent Search" to the next agenda.

Mrs. Pregent wishes everyone a good start to the school year, and advised that those wishing to provide budget increase parameters, send their input to her for presentation at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Ms. Smith expressed her gratitude to staff for their efforts in preparing for the school year.

Mrs. Farrell would like to add an item to the Agenda 'Parking Lot': "Intense Evaluation of Staffing/Student Enrollment/Facilities" (even if this initiative involves contracting with a consultant).

Mrs. Akley advised that she brought her 3 ½ year old child to a BTMES Pres-School Meet and Greet earlier this evening, and she appreciates all the work that staff and administrators have done in their efforts to open the schools in the safest manner possible.

Mrs. Spaulding requested that a Breakage Report be presented at the next Board meeting. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of the definition of a 'Breakage Report'.

Mr. Hennessey has had the SHS Class of 2020 on his mind, and has been thinking about their losses (graduation, prom, etc.), and he hopes that these students and their families are beginning to enjoy some normalcy.

## 8. Future Agenda Items

- Surplus Funds
- Student Enrollment and Building Capacity
- Breakage Report
- Rough Time-table for Superintendent Search

Mrs. Poulin believes that Policy C5 will need to be added to a future agenda, as she believes the current policy is not in compliance with the law. It is believed that non-compliance resulted from removal of the 'Implementation' section of the policy. It was noted that original discussions by the Committee/Board, (when the BUUSD started using VSBA policies) resulted in a decision to leave the Implementation sections in policies, as they differ from day to day procedures. Procedures are written by administrators, and are instructions for how to complete the tasks outlined in the policy (no Board involvement/oversight). Policies, and their Implementation sections define what the Board mandates be done. Administrators use the policy to identify the procedures that need to be written. Policy C5 – the Firearms Policy was recently amended (removal of its Implementation section), which advised that "The superintendent shall refer to the appropriate law enforcement agency any student who brings a firearm to a school under the control and supervision of the school district...". The law mandates that the "Board shall adopt and implement policies regarding a student who brings a firearm to or possess a firearm at school, which at a minimum shall include...a provision that any student who brings a firearm to or possess a firearm at school shall be referred to a law enforcement agency...". Mrs. Poulin believes there was some confusion regarding the use of Implementation sections, because these sections, that the Board had directed remain in policies, started being removed. In addition to policy C5, there are a number of policies that had Implementation sections removed, and it was suggested that the Board/Committee, take a step back and review those policies that have been changed/adopted without Implementation sections. The removal of Implementation sections has caused the Board to lose control over specific issues/items that were previously defined / documented within policies. Mrs. Spaulding recommends that this issue be referred to the Policy Committee, and asked that it be added to the Policy Committee's 'radar'.

## 9. Next Meeting Date

The next Regular meeting is Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

## 10. Executive Session

### 10.1 Compensation for Personnel

### 10.2 Negotiations Relating to AFSCME

Compensation for Personnel and Negotiations Relating to AFSCME were 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 an item proposed for discussion (Negotiations for AFSCME) would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey, Mrs. Perreault, and Mrs. Marold in attendance, at 7:52 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. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:07 p.m.**

## 12. Adjournment

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:08 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*