

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 7, 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:

Sonya Spaulding

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Jody Emerson, Director Central Vermont Career Center
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore – Times Argus Venus Dean Josh Howard Nancy Leclerc Terry Reil

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Pregent, called the Tuesday, September 7, 2021 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

A member of the public requested that it be the goal of the Committee/Board, to create a budget with a 0% increase. It was noted that there are expenses outside of the Board's control, (e.g. health insurance - premiums increased 12% last year). In response to a query regarding clarification (a 0% increase in the budget, in taxes, or in per-pupil spending), it was requested that there be a flat budget or a budget reduction. Mrs. Pregent advised that additional feedback is welcome and she encourages community members to contact her with their feedback.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting Minutes From August 3, 2021

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 3, 2021 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 ESSER Fund Update – Survey and Forum Results

A document titled 'ESSER Update' dated 09/07/21 was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the information provided in the meeting packet is similar to what was discussed at the recent Community Forum. Mrs. Perreault advised that it is important to convey to the community, what the funds are being used for. The District will continue to share information, including information that is posted on the BUUSD web site. Mrs. Perreault advised that the key words that are reverted back to are; prepare, prevent, and respond (to COVID-19). All grants require a grant summary, outlining how all of the initiatives and investments are in response to COVID (preparing, preventing, and responding). Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of planning and spending under ESSER I and ESSER II, as well as planning, priorities, and possible projects for ARP ESSERIII, ARP IDEA-Basic, ARP Homeless I. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of common themes that were derived from the survey, and advised regarding the BUUSD website link to the ESSER Community Forum Recap. Mrs. Perreault answered questions from the Committee.

5.2 FY21 Year-end Projections

The BUUSD FY21 Year-End Projection Report (dated 09/07/21) was distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the unaudited projected surplus is approximately \$3.2 million dollars. There have been no significant changes since the Committee last reviewed the projected surplus. Auditors will be at the Central Office next week and the week of 10/04/21.

5.3 FY22 Financials

A document titled 'BUUSD Budget 2021 – 2022 – Voter Approved June 9, 2021 Comparative Tax Rate Calculations' was distributed. An untitled document containing Vermont towns' tax rates was distributed. The Barre Town CLA is now 110% and there was a 41¢ reduction in the tax rate. Barre Town (ranked 20th out of 259) has a fairly low tax rate compared with other towns in Vermont. Barre City ranks 58th out of 259. The District's per-pupil spending continues to be one of the lowest in the state.

5.4 eFinance Update

A copy of an e-mail titled 'Vermont Association of School Business Official – Report from Act 66 Committee' (dated 09/31/21) This e-mail was sent from the VASBO Act 66 Committee to members of the House Education Committee.

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the State's requirement that school districts move to a new accounting software system. The State went out to bid for the accounting software, and chose a vendor (PowerSchool e-Finance) that no district has ever used or is familiar with. Districts who have converted to the new software have reported that the system is failing in several areas and does not have the necessary functionality. The software is causing districts to spend more time on accounting, and if implanted at the BUUSD, will require that the District hire an additional position. The Legislature has heard much testimony on this matter and has sent auditors to review records. The Legislature has advised the software firm that they have 6 months to work on improvements to the bank reconciliation feature. VASBO would like the Legislature to support districts that have converted to PowerSchool e-Finance, but allow other Districts, that have reliable systems, to continue working with their current systems. If there is no Legislative intervention, the District will be forced to convert to PowerSchool e-Finance. The conversion would begin on 07/01/22, and would go live on 07/01/23.

6. Old Business

None.

7. Other Business

It was noted that Policy F20 Fiscal Management and General Accountability has already been reviewed by the Policy Committee, and the Policy Committee has recommended that the policy not be changed. The policy has separate sections for the threshold requiring Board approval (Guideline #1), and the threshold for requiring bids (Guideline #6). The bid law increased the bid threshold from \$15,000, to \$40,000. Given the current climate related to spending, the Policy Committee agrees that the bid law must be followed, but they believe the Board should continue to approve spending in excess \$15,000. Policy F20 will be on a future Board Agenda.

A community member expressed interest in joining the Finance Committee. Brief discussion was held. Appointment of community members to Committees will be added to a future Board Agenda (possibly late September).

8. Items for Future Agendas

- FY23 Budget Development
- FY21 Audit (TBD)
- FY22 Financials (TBD)

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin