

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 23, 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
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	Kristie Bandolon	Allison Courtemanche	Tara Day	Venus Dean
Marissa Greene	Carol Hebert	Josh Howard	Joseph Kill	Prudence Krasofski
Marcy Kreitz	Jennifer Lyon	Ben Matthews	Terry Reil	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, September 23, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office, and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 10.3 Negotiations Update

Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of Meeting Norms and Public Comment protocols.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, 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 queried regarding the status of a question relating to seatbelt usage on buses. Mr. Hennessey will respond this evening, after the meeting has ended.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 9, 2021 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2021 Regular Meeting.

5. Current Business

5.1 New Hires

The resume and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Form for Kristie Bandolon (BTMES 5th Grade Teacher) was distributed. Ms. Bandolon is presented for hire for a one year position.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidate's experience, and answered questions from the Board, advising that a provisional license is being obtained.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Kristie Bandolon.

5.2 Resignations/Retirements

No letters of resignation or retirement were presented.

5.3 MOU Regarding Payroll 2021-2022

A document titled 'Memorandum of Understanding Between Barre Unified Union School District and Barre Educators Association Regarding Payroll for 2021 – 2022' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey and Mrs. Perreault provided a brief overview of the reasons the Memorandum of Understanding is necessary. It was noted that no MOA is necessary for hourly employees (para-educators, custodians, etc.).

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Memorandum of Understanding Between Barre Unified Union School District and Barre Educators Association Regarding Payroll for 2021 – 2022, and authorized the Superintendent to sign said document.

5.4 Recommendation on Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (F20)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that the Policy Committee discussed this policy at the 08/16/21 meeting, and provided an overview of the discussion regarding an increase in the bid threshold (to \$40,000), and the Committee's recommendation to keep the Board approval threshold at \$15,000. A community member expressed support of the recommendation, and queried regarding a separate issue relating to the departure of the previous Superintendent. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding the bid threshold increase (for projects/purchases that require 3 qualified bids) that was presented to the Finance Committee, and advised that she does not think it is necessary, or a good use of time for the Board to approve projects at the current threshold \$15,000. Mr. Evans would like to take part in discussion of this policy, but was not present at the Policy Committee meeting, and is not present at this evening's meeting. Mrs. Perreault was not present at the Policy Committee meeting when this was discussed. Mrs. Perreault would like Board action tabled until Mr. Evans can be present for discussion. Board Members provided input, and some would like additional information on this matter.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board voted 5 to 4 to table discussion until the next Board meeting. Mrs. Akley, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Isabelle, Mrs. Pregent, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion. Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Ms. Parker, and Ms. Smith voted against the motion.

5.5 First Reading Student Attendance Policy (C7)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

It was recommended that this policy be sent back to the Policy Committee for further review and discussion. No action will be taken this evening.

5.6 Committee Structure

Community members provided input, including interest in serving on committees, and a request for the Board to develop a process and procedures for appointing community members to committees or remove existing community members from committees. Brief discussion was held, including 'voting' by committee members, a reminder that committees can only make recommendations (only the Board can make official decisions), benefits to involving community members, a suggestion that the number of community members be limited and community representation be equal (between the City and Town), a query regarding whether or not community members should be allowed to vote (at the committee level), advertising for open committee seats, concern that some community committee members do not have a full understanding of District business (because their level of attendance at other meetings is not sufficient to allow them to be fully informed on matters), and the need for defined policies and procedures relating to applying for committee openings, and appointment of committee members. It was noted that Committee assignments are appointed as part of Board Reorganization, and current community committee members may have been voted on to committees.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board voted 7 to 1 to appoint up to two community members for each committee, one from Barre City and one from Barre Town, to grant voting privileges to community committee members, that open committee seats be advertised, that applicants be required to submit letters of interest, that applicants be discussed

by the Board, that the Board appoint community committee members, and that the term of community committee members, shall end on the date of the annual Board Reorganization in March.

Mrs. Akley, Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, and Ms. Smith voted for the motion. Ms. Badeau voted against the motion.

Research will be performed regarding how the current community committee members were appointed. Details relating to guidelines on how/when community members will be recruited (for the remainder of the current year) will be discussed and defined, with a goal of finalizing details by the end of October.

5.7 COVID Update

Community members advised regarding their concerns relating to the negative impact (to students and parents) that occurs as a result of contact tracing quarantine requirements. It is felt that these absences from school are disruptive to education, cause financial hardship, are detrimental to students' social/emotional/mental health, and may cause long term damage. Mr. Hennessey introduced Jenn Lyon (SHS School Nurse and COVID Team Coordinator), and provided an update on the current status. The overview included five areas; Current state of COVID in the BUUSD Community, Surveillance Testing Plans, At Home Learning Expectations, Status of Mandatory Vaccinations for Staff, and Possible Options the State is Discussing with Districts (related to replacing/revising contact tracing guidelines). The District is very aware of the negative impact to students and families and takes these matters very seriously. As of 09/23/21, there have been 24 cases in the BUUSD school community (the majority of which have been at BTMES). These cases have required extensive line lists and contact tracing. There is no confirmation of the source of the cases. There is a statewide portal for information regarding cases in schools, but the site does not appear to be accurate at this time. Contact tracing guidelines have been provided by the Vermont Department of Health, and are followed by all districts in the state. Contact tracing is being conducted as a team effort, and duties are shifted based on staffing availability. Delays in receipt of test results have caused students to miss additional days. The District is working with the State to assure that surveillance testing is available to all staff and students (there have been staffing and capacity issues). It is anticipated that testing for students and staff can begin by the first week in October and is voluntary. The District has contracted with an out of state laboratory, which is dedicated to performing only COVID surveillance testing for schools. The District is contracting with Green Mountain Courier Service to assure that tests are delivered to the lab in a timely manner. It is anticipated that testing will be performed in all of the schools. Details are being refined. Regarding at home learning expectations, the District is working to assure that work is available for students confined to home, but it was noted that the State will not recognize remote learning days. There is a capacity issue in play, and it is clear that long term synchronous learning cannot be attained. Staffing and substitute shortages are having a negative impact on the District. It is hoped that increased testing capacity will allow students to return to in-person learning at a faster rate. There is a large initiative towards moving away from the more complex contact tracing process. In response to a query, it was noted that students are given packets of work to take home, but these assignments are not considered a substitute for in-person learning. Google Classroom is also available for students. Vermont school districts are covered by the OSHA Emergency Standard (for organizations with over 100 employees). A State mandate for mandatory vaccinations for staff is coming. The Superintendent recommends that the District not wait for official word from the State, but rather proceed sooner and believes the Association supports this mandate. Many details still need to be worked out.

6. Old Business

6.1 Finalize Board Engagement Document

A document titled 'How to Engage with the BUUSD Board' – DRAFT, was distributed.

A community member expressed concern regarding community participation, his perception that it is being stifled by use of the existing policy, and concern that this document will further hamper input. Concern was also expressed regarding untimely responses to inquiries (turn around should be 2 days and he has been waiting 7 days for a response). Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview, noting that this document serves as a guideline to assist community members with knowing how to engage with the Board, noting that this document is not intended to be 'rules'. Brief discussion was held and a 'typo' was identified.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board voted 6 to 1 to approve/adopt the BUUSD Board Engagement document as amended. Mrs. Akley, Ms. Badeau, Mr. Isabelle, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, and Ms. Smith voted for the motion. Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion. Mr. Boltin was not present for the vote.

6.2 Superintendent Timeline Search Update

6.2.1 AOE Request to Open Search Request

A letter to Secretary French, from Sonya Spaulding (dated 09/24/21) was distributed.

The Secretary of Education must approve all requests for districts to open searches for the position of Superintendent. Submitting this letter, seeking approval, is the first step in the Superintendent Search process. Brief discussion was held and the Board agreed to amend the letter.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the letter as amended and authorized the Board Chair to sign said letter.

6.2.2 Review and Approval of Superintendent Job Description

A document titled BUUSD Position Description for the position of Superintendent was distributed. Brief discussion was held, and it was noted that some revisions are necessary.

Mrs. Farrell moved to approve the BUUSD Position Description for the position of Superintendent. Mrs. Akley seconded the motion.

Additional discussion was held and it was agreed that additional editing should be performed.

Mrs. Farrell withdrew her motion.

Mrs. Spaulding will review the document and determine the best way to make revisions. Additional comments can be submitted to Mrs. Spaulding. This item will be added to a future agenda for Board review and approval.

Mrs. Marold reported that the Official Charge will be ready for Board review (not approval) next week. The document will contain dates for the search process. Mrs. Marold would like finalist candidates identified by 12/09/21, though it is acknowledged that this presents a tight timeframe. Mrs. Marold would also like Board discussion regarding the process for selecting Search Committee Members.

7. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle reported that he has been receiving community input regarding budget development, noting that community members are questioning budget increases (given that the District has millions in surplus money). Additionally, Mr. Isabelle reported that he has received input regarding the lack of signage, and sidewalks for the new SEA building. Mr. Isabelle expressed gratitude to the community for their input.

8. Future Agenda Items

8.1 Listening Session Regarding Surplus Funds (October 14, 2021)

- CVCC Lease (10/14/21)
- Committee Structure (TBD)
- Review and Approve Superintendent's Job Description (TBD)
- Review of Official Charge (TBD)
- Articles of Agreement (TBD – in Parking Lot, but may need to be discussed sooner rather than later. Mrs. Spaulding will discuss this matter with Mr. Hennessey, so that he can begin researching)
- CVCC Governance Structure (TBD)
- Recommendation on Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (F20) – (TBD)

9. Next Meeting Date

The next Regular Board meeting is Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office, and via video conference.

10. Executive Session as Needed

10.1 Employee Compensation

10.2 Employee Contract Issue

10.3 Negotiations Update

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include Employee Compensation, an Employee Contract Issue, and an Update on Negotiations.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of an item proposed for discussion, specifically the Negotiations Update, 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 Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey (Agenda Items 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3) and Mrs. Marold (for Agenda Items 10.2 and 10.3) in attendance, at 8:00 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 Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:40 p.m. Mr. Isabelle was not present for the vote.

11. Adjournment

**On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:41 p.m.
Mr. Isabelle was not present for the vote.**

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin