

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**
BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 13, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Guy Isabelle, Chair – (At-Large)
Gina Akley, Vice Chair - (BT)
Sarah Pregent - (BC)
Andrew McMichael

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus Josh Howard Robert Howarth Terry Reil Maurice Van Demark

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Isabelle, called the Monday, September 13, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee 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

Agenda Item 5.3 will be discussed out of order – as the first item discussed under New Business.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes – August 11, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Committee unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Minutes of the August 11, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 COVID Related Health Requirements for Reopening of Schools

Mr. Hennessey advised there is a lack of guidance (from the State) regarding mitigation factors and strategies. It has become clear that because of contact tracing requirements, the District will have to quickly revisit some of the mitigation factors, particularly those around transportation and the cafeteria. This will be very important for the K – 8 schools who have a large population of students who are not eligible for vaccination. Mr. Evans advised that Facilities still provides hand sanitizer and alcohol wipes, though it is not mandated. The only mandate at this point, is wearing masks, though Mr. Evans believes additional mandates may be announced soon. Mrs. Pregent reported that she received input from a parent who was told that their child is not allowed to ride two different buses (one to school, and a different one to daycare after school). Mr. Hennessey is not aware of any sort of decision of that nature, and advised that he will look into this matter. Mr. Hennessey noted that BTMES is trying to tighten up protocols due to a recent COVID outbreak and the extensive contact tracing it required. A community member queried regarding students not being allowed to wear seatbelts on buses. Mr. Hennessey is aware of this question, and is working with administrators and the transportation provider regarding busing overall, and this issue will be part of that discussion. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding a shortage of bus drivers, which is causing issues within the District. In response to a query regarding vaccination mandates, it was noted that the AOE has not provided guidance on this issue. Mr. Hennessey does not believe there will be a mandate from the State, but did question whether or not the District would fall under a mask mandate for companies with over 100 employees. Mr. Hennessey advised that close contacts to positive COVID individuals, can return to school (without quarantining), if they have proof of vaccination. Given the student population at BTMES, many students are not eligible for vaccines and need to quarantine.

5.2 SEA Open House

Mr. Evans advised that an open house is slated for late September, though no date has been set. Mr. Hennessey advised of the need to minimize the number of individuals coming into the building. Mr. Isabelle queried regarding whether or not the Barre Partnership has been contacted regarding a possible open house. Mrs. Spaulding questioned whether or not anyone from the public should be allowed to enter the building, and suggested that a video tour be posted on the BUUSD web site.

5.3 Prioritization of Projects/Utilizing Surplus Funds

Mr. Evans has contacted State and Barre City Fire Marshalls to provide clarification regarding what triggers the need to sprinkle the remainder of SHS, including the definition of 'major modification'. Mr. Van Demark, from the State Fire Marshalls Office introduced himself to the Committee, and advised that the file for SHS indicates that any major modification or renovation to SHS would 'void/make inactive', the existing variance/waiver. Major modifications would require that the remainder of SHS be sprinkled. Mr. Van Demark advised that the scope of work being performed determines whether or not a project is considered a 'major' modification or renovation. In response to a query, Mr. Van Demark advised that SHS, in its current state, is not unsafe. It was noted that the existing waiver was granted after SHS had an architect review Code from when the last renovation was completed. A number of fire doors were installed as part of the issuance of the waiver. In response to a query, Mr. Van Demark advised that if seats in the SHS auditorium were replaced, regardless of whether or not the layout was changed, it would be considered a major modification. It was noted that part of the auditorium is sprinkled. The current coverage would need to be reviewed, and that might trigger a review and require that the entire school be sprinkled. In response to a query, Mr. Van Demark advised that he believes changes to the ventilation system would require new holes to be cut in walls and ceilings and would also be considered a major modification. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding why changing the seats in the auditorium would require that the building be sprinkled (as the building is already deemed safe in its current state). Mr. Van Demark advised that the more protections that are in place, the better, and that whenever changes are made to buildings, the projects must adhere to the latest code. Mr. Van Demark advised that the recent library renovations would have triggered installation of sprinklers throughout the building, but his department was not aware of the project. A community member, noted that there seems to be some discretion in determining what constitutes a major modification, and queried regarding how decisions are made. Mr. Van Demark advised that he believes Code defines a major modification based on a certain percentage of the building that is being changed. Mr. Van Demark will check Code and forward that information to Mr. Evans. In response to a query, regarding consequences if a ventilation system were installed without sprinkling the entire building, Mr. Van Demark advised that he would need to consult with Deputy Director, Robert Sponable. Mr. Isabelle noted that the Fire Safety Office was accommodating when the waiver was issued, but noted that SHS did spend a considerable amount of money installing fire doors as part of that process. A community member queried regarding whether or not any major change would also require that all other current Codes also be followed (electrical, plumbing...). Mr. Evans advised that any plumbing or electrical work being performed, needs to follow current code. It was noted that only the area being worked on needs to be brought up to code, not the entire building. It was noted that installation of sprinkler systems does not usually trigger a reduction in insurance premiums. Mr. Van Demark advised that there are some 'Down Town' grants available (for sprinkler systems), but he is not sure if the school would qualify for the grant. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding whether or not the schools will receive any monies from the Infrastructure Grant, and whether or not sprinkler systems would be allowed under that grant. There is no current estimate for installation of a sprinkler system. The estimate in 2016 was roughly \$800,000. Mr. Evans believes there might be some savings if the ventilation system and sprinkler system were installed at the same time. In response to a query, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that safety training is prescribed by the State. SHS follows ALICE training for emergency responses as well as normal egress expectations. There are different expectations dependent on the situation. Evacuation drills are prescribed by the State and it is believed that evacuation drills are required every other month. It was noted that sometimes lesser able bodied individuals from the public are present in the building. Mr. Van Demark and Mr. Howarth were thanked for their attendance at the meeting. Mrs. Akley requested that additional discussion be held regarding funding for a sprinkler system. Mr. Isabelle believes that discussion of finances will be held at a future point, but that this evening's discussion is more of a 'fact finding' mission. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Facilities Committee could make a recommendation, and it would be discussed by the entire Board. The full Board will ultimately make the decision. As far as surplus monies, it is more important to allocate money to specific funds rather than to try to determine specific projects. Installation of sprinkler systems and allocation of surplus funds are two separate issues. Mr. Evans advised that it will take significant time to prepare large jobs for bidding. Mrs. Spaulding read the list of priority projects from the Superintendent's recommendation. It was reiterated that decisions related to moving surplus monies to funds within the District, is different than assigning monies to projects. Mrs. Perreault advised that auditors will be in the District starting on 09/14/21, and that once we move through the audit process, the Board can decide where they want to allocate funds, e.g. how much to Capital Improvements. Mrs. Perreault reiterated the Superintendent's recommendation to move \$2.4 million dollars to the Capital Improvement Fund. Mr. Evans provided a brief overview of some project estimates. A community member suggested that project estimates be refined/updated. In addition to the projects listed on the Superintendent's recommendation, Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding other projects that need to be completed, including the keying system at BTMES. Mr. Evans advised that the keying system at BTMES may run into tens of thousands of dollars, and is something that could be accomplished with the annual Capital Improvement fund line item, so wasn't included in his recommendations for use of surplus funds. Brief discussion was held regarding roofing repairs/replacement. Mr. Evans advised that ESSER funds must be utilized to prepare, prevent, or respond to COVID. Mr. Evans is not sure how installation of a sprinkler system can be tied to COVID. It was noted that if installation of a new ventilation system requires installation of sprinklers, it could be argued that ESSER funds should be able to be used for a project that involves sprinkler and ventilation systems. Mrs. Perreault advised that the construction/renovation projects slated for ESSER funds, need to go through several approval phases, the first of which is a conceptual approval through the AOE, and it is viable for the District to

include a sprinkler system with the HVAC Improvement Conceptual Application, although she believes the AOE thinks it's kind of a stretch to connect a sprinkler system to COVID, though it would be worth asking. Mr. Evans provided a brief overview of paving projects that are included in the recommendation. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding updates to the SHS athletic fields, noting that the track is in bad shape, and ball fields need work, and asked if those projects were considered for surplus funds. Mr. Evans did not consider the athletic fields because he believes they don't pose a safety issue. After discussion, it was determined that it would make sense for the Committee to make a broad recommendation to move surplus funds to the Capital Improvement Fund, but not to recommend any specific projects. Mrs. Pregent noted that the recommendation has already been presented to the Board (per the Finance Committee) several times, and no action has been taken. The Committee agreed not to make a formal recommendation to the Board.

6. Old Business

None.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas

- Track Update (with Ed Rousse in attendance)

- Bus/Transportation Review (TBD) – add to Parking Lot
- Surplus Funds – (TBD) – add to Parking Lot

Committee Members were asked to contact Mr. Isabelle with any additional items.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Monday, October 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin