

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
October 28, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Chair  
Guy Isabelle (At-Large) – Clerk – joined the meeting at 5:51 p.m.  
Gina Akley (BT)  
Renee Badeau (BT)  
Chris Parker (BT)  
Sarah Pregent (BC)  
Abigayle Smith (BC)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Tim Boltin (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT) – Vice Chair

**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

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Venus Dean	Jamie Frey	Chelsea Haberek	Josh Howard
Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Ben Matthews	Ed Rousse	Diane Solomon
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, October 28, 2021, Regular meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the Board Norms and protocols for Board Engagement.

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

Add 5.10 November and December Board Meeting Dates  
Add 11.1.1 Status of Employment (under Executive Session)  
Add 11.1.2 Personnel Records (under Executive Session)

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, and Mr. Isabelle were not present for the vote.**

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

**3.1 Public Comment**

A community member requested a status update relating to the previous Superintendent's resignation.

**3.2 Student Voice**

None.

**4. Consent Agenda**

**4.1 Approval of Minutes – October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, and Mr. Isabelle were not present for the vote.**

**5. Current Business**

**5.1 New Hires**

No candidates were presented for approval, though there are some pending candidates that will be interviewed next week.

## **5.2 Resignations/Retirements**

A letter of resignation from Kamila Bohacova-Henne (BTMES grade 3 - 4 loop ELA) was distributed. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the letter of resignation (effective 10/14/21) submitted by Kamila Bohacova-Henne.

## **5.3 CVCC/BUUSD Lease Agreement**

A document titled 'Facilities Use and Related Services Agreement' was distributed. A document titled 'Facilities Use and Related Services Agreement' Updated 10/27/21 was distributed. It was noted that BUUSD legal counsel was expected to be present this evening to provide an overview of the Agreement. No action has to be taken this evening. Ms. Emerson advised that the most significant modifications to the Agreement are in Sections 10 A, B, and C (relating to CVCC monies that have been invested in the physical space they currently lease). The Agreement now reads that items donated to CVCC in the past 5 years will remain the property of CVCC. As legal counsel is not present, a vote will postponed until a future meeting. This item will be revisited this evening if legal counsel joins the meeting.

## **5.4 CVCC Governance Presentation**

A copy of a presentation titled 'CVCC Updates – School Board Presentation' was distributed. Ms. Emerson gave a presentation on CVCC updates and displayed the presentation that was included in the packet. The presentation included an overview of; programs, the Governance Committee (members and work accomplished), highlights of the proposed governance structure, next steps (formal proposal to the AOE and community voting (if the proposal is approved by the AOE), future action should all voting towns approve the new governance structure, and implications for the BUUSD (if the governance structure is approved). It was noted that enrollment in current CVCC programs is at its highest level and technical center programs are valuable and necessary. Ms. Emerson answered questions from community members and Board Members, and advised regarding tuition and the possibility of relocation and/or expansion of programs.

## **5.5 SHS Foundation Board**

A copy of an email from Ed Rousse (Spaulding High School Foundation), to Sonya Spaulding (dated 10/22/21) was distributed. A document titled 'Bylaws of Spaulding High School Foundation, LTD' was distributed. A document titled 'Spaulding High School Foundation Conflict of Interest Policy' was distributed. Mr. Rousse was introduced, and provided a brief overview of his involvement with the Foundations (since 2013). Mr. Rousse advised that the Foundation has not been involved in many projects since the installation of lights at Pendo Field. As part of that initiative, blueprints were drawn relating to improvements that could be made to the athletic fields (within its current footprint), but no action has been taken since then. Mr. Rousse advised that the Foundation's only function is to raise funds for school projects, (projects that might not be able to be funded by the budget), and that the school makes the decisions regarding what projects to move forward with. Mr. Rousse advised that in addition to improvements to athletic fields, the Foundation is also interested in Visual & Performing Arts (SHS auditorium enhancements), academic enhancements, and construction of a safety bridge (to cross the river to the student parking lot). The Foundation is anxious to begin a Capital Campaign so that some of these projects can move forward. In order to begin a Capital Campaign, the Foundation needs to have a named project and an estimate of the cost of the project. Mr. Rousse advised regarding the Foundation's Board make-up, which includes having one BUUSD Board Member on its Board. Mr. Rousse advised regarding the Foundation's By-Laws, and Conflict of Interest Policy. It was noted that the SHS Foundation is a totally separate entity from the SHS Scholarship Fund.

**On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Sarah Pregent to the SHS Foundation Board. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

## **5.6 Appointment of Two Board Members to the Screening Committee**

This Agenda Item was discussed after Agenda Item 5.7., to assure that potential committee members are well informed regarding the expectations.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Mrs. Akley, Mrs. Pregent, and Mrs. Spaulding to serve on the Screening Committee. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

## **5.7 Official Adoption of Screening Committee Charge**

A document titled 'Superintendent Candidate Screening Committee Charge' was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that the Board appoint up to 3 Board Members and that the document be amended to advise that up to 3 Central Office Directors will be appointed (and that the bullet that specifically names the 'Business Manager' position, be removed). Mrs. Spaulding would also like to amend the document to reflect conditions under which a committee member will be removed and a new individual appointed (failing to live up to commitments). It was agreed that there needs to be a definition of what constitutes cause for a committee member to be removed. The Board agreed to the changes requested by Mrs. Spaulding and further defined the conditions under which a committee member would be removed from the Committee. "Committee Members will be expected to fully participate in all aspects of the Screening Committee's activities. If they fail to participate, by missing two meetings, or fail to follow the Committee rules and/or charges, their appointment will be revoked and a new member will be appointed."

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the Superintendent Candidate Screening Committee Charge as discussed/amended. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

### **5.8 VSBA Elect Voting Delegate & Alternative**

After brief discussion, it was agreed that for this year, the Board will not appoint an alternate delegate for voting purposes at the VSBA Annual Meeting. It was noted that the meeting has been changed from an in-person meeting at Lake Morey, to a virtual meeting.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Sonya Spaulding as the primary voting delegate for voting purposes at the VSBA Annual Meeting. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

### **5.9 Budget Development**

A document titled 'FY23 BUUSD/CVCC Budget Development Considerations – October 28, 2021' was distributed. Mrs. Perreault provided a brief update, advising that budget development is on target with the schedule, that meetings have been being held with administrators and directors, and that she anticipates Draft 1 will be presented to the Board on 11/11/21. It was reported that the funding estimate resulting from Act 173 (SPED funding) has been received and it appears that funding will be similar to that received for FY22. Regarding health care premium increases; VEHI has advised that it would be 'safe' to project an increase of 10%. This increase will be in effect for the first 6 months of FY23. Additional budget discussion will be held at the Finance Committee meeting.

### **5.10 November and December Board Meeting Dates**

After brief discussion, the Board agreed to the following:  
Thursday, November 11, 2021 – Regular Board Meeting  
Thursday, November 25, 2021 – CANCELLED – will not be rescheduled  
Thursday, December 2, 2021 – (Special Meeting)  
Thursday, December 9, 2021 – CANCELLED  
Thursday, December 16, 2021 – (Special Meeting)  
Thursday, December 23, 2021 – CANCELLED

Mr. Hennessey will notify Mrs. Gilbert of these changes.

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Surplus Funds**

A document titled 'BUUSD FY21 Amended Budget – 10/28/21' was distributed. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding an option that allows amending the FY21 budget, to include a \$1,000,000 transfer into the Capital SEA Project Fund (which would reduce the surplus). If this method is not used, \$120,000 will need to be added to the FY23 budget. This method allows the District to not incur debt (interest payments), which will reduce future budgets (by avoiding future principle and interest payments). Why take out a loan, when the District has the money to pay off debt? Community members provided input including a request for a community vote, a query regarding any exploration related to hiring a financial planning consultant, a query regarding if/how public input is being considered, and possible other funding sources, including ESSER funds for items requested by a community member. Mr. Hennessey advised that significant ESSER funds will be used for recovery, and that public input has been considered. Mrs. Perreault advised that if a decision can be made this evening, regarding the SEA Project debt, it will allow for her to move forward with the FY23 budget, knowing whether or not she needs to include an additional loan.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to amend the FY21 budget by transferring one million dollars into the SEA Capital Fund. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

This action will allow the Current Expense Note to expire. With the transfer of funds to the FY21 budget, the surplus is now approximately \$1.8 million dollars. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding their thoughts on how to assign the remainder of the surplus, noting that though a final decision does not need to be made this evening, the Board should start moving towards making a decision. Discussion included; whether or not to hold a public vote (what to put out to vote, and what would happen if there was no voter approval), reinstatement of \$1 SF for facilities, staff positions (that could not be filled last year), past community support of large facilities expenses (e.g. roof repairs), tax payer concerns, sprinkler work, reinstatement of positions cut in the current budget, moving all of the surplus to the Tax Stabilization fund, adding large facilities projects into future budgets, or having them voted on individually by the community, whether or not ESSER funds can be used for sprinkler installation (if it is required by installation of a new ventilation system), approving moving surplus money to funds, rather than projects, keeping some of the surplus in the general fund, the ESSER application (the sprinkler system has been added to the application – it is not known if it will be approved), the current balance of the Tax Stabilization fund (\$900,000), a suggestion to wait to see what the audited fund balance is, and determine whether or not to ask voters (via Special Articles) what to do with the audited fund balance, and reinstatement of the PSTL Program and Assistant Coach positions (equitably for all schools). The Board agreed to hold additional discussion after the audit has been completed.

## **6.2 Approval of Superintendent Job Description Edits**

A document titled BUUSD Position Description (Position – Superintendent), DRAFT 10/19/21, was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of minor changes to the document.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve as presented, the BUUSD Position Description for the position of Superintendent. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Farrell were not present for the vote.**

## **6.3 Recommendation on Policy (F20) Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

A document titled ‘As Passed By House and Senate H.426 2021 VT LEG #356767 v.1 H.426’ was distributed.

A copy of the BUUSD Purchasing Procedure was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of discussion to date and action taken by the Policy Committee. It was noted that the Policy F20 does not need to be changed to comply with the new bidding threshold, but would need to be amended if the Board wishes to increase the dollar threshold for expenses requiring Board approval. The Policy Committee voted to recommend that the threshold amount requiring Board approval remain at \$15,000. If the Board approval threshold remains at \$15,000 the policy does not need to be amended, and the \$40,000 threshold for requiring bids would still be followed. The bidding and Board approval thresholds are mutually exclusive. Ms. Parker advised that the Policy Committee felt that in an attempt to be fiscally responsible and have oversight at an appropriate level, the approval threshold should remain at \$15,000 and that is the recommendation given to the Board. Mr. Evans advised regarding legislation to increase the bidding threshold, increases to costs, and inefficiency of time creating RFPS for projects over \$15,000. It was clarified that when costs exceed \$40,000, three qualified bids must be obtained, and that the policy, as written, supports the change to bidding threshold requirements, and only those projects that exceed \$15,000 require Board approval, approval of warrants (the Board has oversight/access of expenses via review of invoices, though after the money has been spent/committed), concern of raising the Board approval limit given the current scrutiny of finances, a query regarding whether or not the Board wishes to review expenditures over \$15,000, and the number of RFPs that the Board has approved that were over \$15,000 (the same number as the Board has been seeing – woodchips, propane, snow plowing – all over \$40,000), does it break the law if the Board approval amount is different than the bid threshold (no), has the policy been being followed (the policy does not seem to be specific to facilities, and perhaps many expenses over \$15,000 have been being paid without prior authorization from the Board), the possibility that either the policy or procedures need to be amended/clarified regarding this matter, the number of discussions that have been held regarding this policy (at Finance Committee, at Policy Committee, and at Board meetings), clarification that not all items need to go out to bid (books, instructional supplies etc), concern that the current policy does not appear to be being followed, as non-facilities related expenses in excess of \$15,000 have not been being brought to the Board, clarification was provided that the law does not dictate the threshold for what Boards need to approve, but rather only pertains to what needs to go out to bid. It was noted that the law pertains to bid requirements for “1. the construction, purchase, lease, or improvement of any school building, 2. the purchase or lease of any item or items required for supply, equipment, maintenance, repair, or transportation of students; or 3. a contract for transportation, maintenance, or repair services”. Additionally, the law states that “the law does not require the board approve the goods or services, it only requires that the bidding process take place under management”. Mrs. Spaulding would like this policy reviewed by the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee Chair advised that the Committee has already reviewed the policy and made a recommendation to the Board. If the policy is to be returned to Committee, Ms. Parker would like clarification on what is expected of the Committee, noting that if the current policy is not being followed, that is a matter that is not appropriate for the Committee. Mrs. Spaulding believes there is a disconnect between the policy and what is being presented to the Board for approval and that different individuals are interpreting the law differently. Mrs. Perreault advised that she will contact VSBA and BUUSD legal counsel for clarification. Mrs. Spaulding advised that this matter will be added to a future Board meeting, rather than being returned to the Policy Committee. Mrs. Smith would like to move to adopt the VSBA model policy as written. It was noted that the VSBA model policy does contain ‘blanks’ that need to be completed by Boards, thus adoption of the VSBA policy, (which also, was not warned), cannot be adopted/acted upon this evening. This item will be added to the next Board agenda. In response to a query regarding who should be invited to Policy Committee meetings, Mr. Hennessey advised that he and Mr. Aither will review each policy agenda and invite the appropriate individuals. It was noted that previously, Superintendent John Pandolfo was the point person for policy.

## **6.4 Enrollment/Home Study Update**

Three documents were distributed;

‘October 2021 District Enrollment/Staffing’

‘Updated October 2021 District Enrollment/Staffing’

‘Home Study Report (AOE provided data:’

Mr. Hennessey advised that the updated version has been amended to include the correct staff numbers (teaching staff, not TAs).

In response to a query regarding the number of students in the SEA Program, Mr. Hennessey believes the number is approximately 50, which is higher than originally anticipated.

## **6.5 COVID Update**

Mr. Hennessey provided an update on the current state of cases in the community, advising that new positive cases are occurring, but the number of new cases is going down. Updates have gone out weekly, and include live numbers for the week. Some families have requested daily updates, but many asked for fewer updates. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding discussions with Secretary French, individuals who have volunteered to assist, the Test to Stay Program (which cannot be implemented at this time due to manpower

issues and a possible shortage of test kits), and advised regarding the recent approval of vaccines for students ages 5 - 12. In-District vaccination sites are being planned (hopefully operational by the second week in November). There are many logistics to work out. A community member queried regarding having a back-up plan in place and a support system for parents who cannot miss work because their children need to quarantine. A Board Member queried regarding guidelines for sports teams. Mr. Hennessey reported that there are many concerns related to winter sports and not much guidance has been forthcoming. Superintendents and Athletic Directors around the state are very concerned regarding lack of guidance.

## **7. Reports**

### **7.1 Superintendent Report**

The Superintendent's Report (dated 10/28/21) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised that of the three major bullets in his report, staffing issues are of the greatest concern at all schools. Schools are at a breaking point, and the staffing holes are taking a toll on everyone, operationally and instructionally.

### **7.2 Building Reports: SHS, CVCC, BCEMS, and BTMES**

The Building Reports for SHS, CVCC, BCEMS, and BTMES were distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding lauded SHS for recognizing an 'Artist of the Week', as well as students in the Electrical Technology Program, who converted a regular bike to an Ebike.

### **7.3 Communications Committee**

Minutes from the 09/02/21 meeting were distributed. The October meeting was cancelled.

Board Members were asked to contact Mrs. Farrell or Mr. Allen with any questions.

The next meeting is Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.4 Finance Committee**

Minutes from the 10/05/21 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent reported that the Committee reviewed the budget development guidelines, discussed the FY22 Financials, received an audit update, and were advised that the efinance system is not meeting expectations and the District will not need to convert to this system.

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

Minutes from the 09/13/21 meeting were distributed. The October Meeting was cancelled.

The Committee discussed the SHS sprinkler system (including discussion with the City and State Fire Marshals)

The next meeting is Monday, November 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.6 Policy Committee**

Minutes from the 10/18/21 meeting were distributed.

The Committee discussed some policies that will be added to an upcoming Board meeting. It was noted that the Firearms policy is still not compliant with the law and will need to return to the Policy Committee. A few policies are being referred to legal counsel for vetting. The VSBA has a new required policy (D7 Special Education), which needs to be adopted by 01/15/22.

The next meeting is Monday, November 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.7 Curriculum Committee**

Minutes from the 09/28/21 meeting were distributed. The October Meeting was cancelled.

It was noted that the November meeting coincides with the first day of the Thanksgiving break, and may need to be rescheduled.

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

### **7.8 Negotiations Committee**

The first mediation session has been held. Some progress is being made. The next mediation session will be scheduled for early December. It is hoped that more progress can be made at that meeting.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

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

Mrs. Pregent advised of recent comments received from a member of the community, who expressed thanks to the Board for all they have been doing.

Mr. Isabelle expressed concern regarding recent social media postings, especially posts relating to the Veteran's Day piece, advising that the District is very proud of its participation in Veteran's Day ceremonies, including participation by the schools' bands and the JROTC Program.

## **9. Future Agenda Items**

- Policy (F20) Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability
- Committee Structure
- Community Involvement
- CVCC/BUUSD Lease Agreement (Action Item)
- COVID Update
- Superintendent Search Update
- Budget Development

Parking Lot Items:

- Surplus Funds

## **10. Next Meeting Date**

The next Regular Meeting is Thursday, November 11, 2021 at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

The Thursday, November 25, 2021 Regular Meeting is cancelled and will not be rescheduled

A Special Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 2, 2021

The Thursday, December 9, 2021 Regular Meeting is cancelled

A Special Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16, 2021

The Thursday, December 23, 2021 Regular Meeting is cancelled.

## **11. Executive Session as Needed**

### **11.1 Personnel**

#### **11.1.1 Status of Employment**

#### **11.1.2 Personnel Records**

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include a Status of Employment issue and a Personnel Records issue.

**On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey in attendance, at 8:47 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. Akley, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:55 p.m.**

## **12. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:56 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*