

# DRAFT

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
November 8, 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:

### ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Hayden Coon, BCEMS Principal  
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director

### OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding

### GUESTS PRESENT:

Josh Howard

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mr. Isabelle, called the Monday, November 12, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation 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**

An update on electric buses will be provided under Old Business.

#### **3. Public Comment**

None.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 13, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee Meeting**

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the September 13, 2021 BUUSD Facilities and Transportation Committee meeting.

#### **5. New Business**

##### **5.1 SHS Track Update**

It is not known if Mr. Rousse will be joining the meeting. Mr. Isabelle will follow up with Mr. Rousse. Mr. Evans reported that he and Mr. Hennessey met with Mr. Rousse in late summer. In the near future, Mrs. Pregent will be attending a Spaulding Foundation meeting, and she believes discussion will include the possibility of starting a Capital Campaign for the SHS Track.

##### **5.2 Surplus Funds**

The application for the ESSER Grant has been submitted for SHS and includes upgrades to the ventilation system, including the completion of the sprinkler system. Mr. Isabelle has received some input from community members, questioning if the SEA Note could/should be paid off, and are questioning that the cost was more than what voters approved for the project. Mrs. Pregent noted that the Board approved using surplus funds to pay off the Current Expense Note. Mrs. Spaulding provided some historical information regarding why the Current Expense Note had to be secured, when it was deemed that the project was going to cost significantly more than what was approved by the voters. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated that the Board approved the overage, noting that it was deemed that the benefits far outweighed the fact that the project was going to go over budget. It was noted that the SEA Program has far exceeded its original anticipated enrollment numbers. Mrs. Akley reiterated that the Board was shocked by the projected increase in the cost of the project, did not attempt to hide information from the community, and did express their displeasure regarding the overage. Mrs. Akley suggested that financials be pulled to help determine the return on the investment. It was noted that some reductions were made to the project, to help mitigate the overage. Mr. Hennessey advised that a ribbon cutting ceremony is planned

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for next Tuesday. Details will be forthcoming. Discussion was held regarding who from the school community, should be invited. It was suggested that an email be sent out to the previous Board's Board Members, especially Paul Malone and Giuliano Cecchinelli, who were very involved with the project. EF Wall and Bob Lord should also be acknowledged for providing the space that previously housed the alternative programs. It was clarified that the Board can approve moving surplus funds to various funds (Capital Improvements, Tax Stabilization etc.), but don't generally allocate surplus funds to specific projects. Mrs. Akley suggested that the Board explore mechanisms for taking public input relating to facilities projects. Mrs. Akley noted that the Board has been accused of mismanagement, of not caring about the District and not having the best interest of the community and students in mind, when making decisions. Mrs. Akley believes it would be in the best interest of the Board, to give community members a chance to provide feedback on potential projects, should the Board allocate surplus funds to Facilities. It was noted that at the last Board meeting, the Board agreed to wait until after the audit was completed to take action on surplus funds. A community member commented that the community has spoken and wants to vote on use of surplus funds and believes it is dishonest for the Board to allocate funds to facilities, knowing that, it is his belief that the funds would be used for a sprinkler project. Mr. Hennessey clarified that at the listening session held with the community members, very few individuals spoke, and it must be clarified that there were only a few community members who accused the Board of ill intent / mismanagement. Those few, in no way, speak for the entire community. It is misleading to make such statements. Mr. Hennessey is very concerned that these statements are becoming a frequent narrative in meetings. This narrative is unfair, without merit, and does not accurately represent the entire community. Mrs. Spaulding clarified that it is not allowable for the Board to hold a vote where community members rank projects (similar to a survey). The Board can solicit feedback, but voters can only vote to allocate monies to specific funds (e.g. Tax Stabilization, Capital Improvements). Lengthy discussion was being held regarding public input and the Board's process/procedures for the allocation of funds. The Board Scribe called "Point of Order", and advised that this discussion is not on the Agenda, was not warned, should be a Board level discussion, not a Facilities Committee discussion, and advised that the Committee, in adherence to Robert's Rules should return to the meeting Agenda.

## 5.3 Sprinkler System Update

The District is waiting to hear back on the ESSER Grant application, to know if the sprinkler system will be covered by the grant.

## 6. Old Business

Electric Buses – Mr. Evans advised that he attends weekly meetings regarding this project. The latest information received is that the buses are expected to be delivered by mid-November. Work on the electrical service for charging stations has begun. Buses will be delivered to STA, who will need to perform additional work (inspect the buses, get them registered, train drivers etc.). Mr. Evans is hopeful that the buses will be in service in late November or early December. In response to a query, Mr. Evans advised that he believes these two buses will replace two of the existing buses, but Mr. Hennessey will need to confirm this. Mrs. Akley would like this item rolled into the Bus/Transportation item in the Parking Lot, and requests that this Parking Lot item be added to the December or January Agenda. Mr. Evans provided clarification that charging stations that were initially installed are being changed, so that STA is on a separate dedicated electrical service. The separate service will allow for STA to obtain power at a much lower rate. STA is paying to have the dedicated service installed. The new chargers are being installed near a grassy island near the front of the building.

Mrs. Pregent queried regarding the amount allocated for facilities in Budget Draft #1. Mr. Evans believes the budgeted amount is 75¢ SF, rather than the Industry Standard of \$1.00 SF.

Storm Water Run-off – Mr. Evans provided an update on this topic, advising that there are several permits that need to be applied for. The permitting process is slow. There is a new funding source through Vermont Green Partners Initiative (a Federal Funding Source) that will pay for the design and construction of storm water run-off systems. Mr. Evans advised that the District has advised that they want to be registered to participate in both Phase I (design), and Phase II (construction). The VGPI is in the process of going out to bid to solicit/select vendors (engineers) for design. If the District's current vendor qualifies as a vendor under the initiative, the District plans to continue using its current vendor. Vendors will decide the feasibility of projects for each property. If it is not feasible to install a system, a one-time 'waiver fee' will need to be paid. Much more information will be provided in the future.

In response to a query regarding upcoming grant funding, Mrs. Spaulding reported that at the recent VSBA meeting, discussion was held regarding the need to upgrade buildings across the state and that it is not known if the District will be receiving grant monies, or how much funding may be allocated to the District (knowing that the District's buildings are in much better shape than some other school buildings around the state). Mr. Evans believes there is still much to do in the Buildings and wants the District to advocate for receiving as much money as possible.

PCB Issue – Mr. Evans recently received a survey (for each school) regarding PCBs. Mr. Evans has completed the survey for each school. BCEMS is new enough that it does not have any issues. SHS and BTMES, are older, but all testing to date, indicates there is not a problem. The State may become more stringent and ask that additional testing be performed. Mr. Evans does not anticipate that any additional required testing will uncover any issues.

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## **7. Other Business**

None.

## **8. Items to be Placed on Future Agendas**

- Bus/Transportation Review
- Electric Bus Update
- Track Update
- Storm Water Run-off

Mrs. Poulin advised that it has become the norm to discuss multiple items under Old Business and Other Business, but the items being discussed are not listed on the Agenda. These items should be identified/ listed as separate Agenda Items under the 'category' of Old Business. Other Business is reserved for minor items that may have recently cropped up. Using this protocol complies with Robert's Rules and assures that topics for discussion are adequately warned to the public and committee members.

It was noted that a request for an ROI (Return on Investment) study for the SEA Project, will be forwarded to the Finance Committee.

## **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Monday, December 13, 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 Mrs. Akley, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:32 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*