

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
January 4, 2022 - 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:**

Alice Farrell  
Sonya Spaulding

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Jody Emerson, Director Central Vermont Career Center  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

**PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:**

David Delcore, Times Argus      Carol Hebert      Josh Howard      Nancy Leclerc      Paul Malone  
Sue Paxman

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mrs. Pregent, called the Tuesday, January 4, 2022 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:33 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 community member requested an explanation regarding the \$100,000 difference between the budgeted amount and the ‘actual’ amount (for 2021) for the ‘BUUSD Superintendent’ line in the BUUSD FY23 Proposed Budget, Expense Summary Report.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1 Meeting Minutes From December 7, 2021**

**On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the December 7, 2021 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.**

**5. New Business**

**5.1 Surplus Funds Article**

A document titled ‘BUUSD FY23 Budget Information – 12/28/21’ was distributed. This document is listed for Agenda item 5.2, but is also being used for discussion of this agenda item.

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the two draft Special Articles included in the packet, requesting that the Committee consider making a recommendation to the Board that these Articles be presented to voters. The first proposed Article relates to the FY21 audited surplus and asks voters to approve approximately \$600k to both the Capital Improvement Fund and the Tax Stabilization Fund. The second proposed Article relates to any potential FY22 surplus, and asks voters to approve allowing the Board to determine how surplus funds will be spent. The document also includes a draft of the annual Article that seeks voter approval of the Expenditure Budget. Mrs. Perreault advised that the intent of discussion this evening is to bring a recommendation to the Board at their 01/13/22 meeting. Mr. Hennessey advised that he was just notified that the BUUSD website is down, preventing additional individuals from viewing the Agenda/Packet, and from joining the meeting via the website. Individuals can still join the meeting on-line via Face Book or Front Porch Forum. Lengthy discussion was held regarding the proposed Special Articles, and included discussion of questions from Committee and community members.

**On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the Board that they present voters with a Special Article asking voters to authorize the Board to transfer FY21 surplus funds as follows; \$600,000 to the Tax Stabilization Fund, and \$614,807 to the Capital Improvement Fund.**

The Committee agreed that they do not wish to send a recommendation to the Board that it present voters with a Special Article related to use of a potential future surplus (FY22).

The FY23 Draft budget Article will be discussed as part of Agenda Item 5.2

### **5.2 FY23 Budget**

Twelve documents were distributed.

A document titled 'BUUSD FY23 Budget Information – 12/28/21'

An untitled document containing various budget information.

The BUUSD FY23 Proposed Budget, Expense Summary Report for Draft 2 – dated 12/28/21

A document titled CVCC Budget Expenses – 12/28/21

A second document titled CVCC Budget Expenses – 12/28/21 (received in the packet addendum)

A document titled FY23 CVCC Projected Tuition Draft 12/28/21

A second document titled FY23 CVCC Projected Tuition Draft 12/28/21(received in the packet addendum)

A document titled BUUSD Budget 2022-23 – Draft 2, 12-28-21 – Comparative Tax Rate Calculations

A document titled BUUSD Budget 2022-23 – Draft 2, 12-28-21 – Comparative Tax Rate Calculations With \$700,000 Revenue Letters to Barre City and Barre Town Clerks regarding the 2021 Equalization Study Results (CLA information)

An untitled document listing CLAs and Tax Rates for cities/towns throughout Vermont

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the documents included in the packet, noting that Draft #2 equates to a per-pupil spending amount of \$16,595, an increase of 8.22%. It was noted that the equalized pupil count received from the State indicates the loss of approximately 125 equalized pupils (approximately 100 actual students). The decrease in the equalized pupil count has a negative impact on the budget. This number reflects a 2 year decline in enrollment. It is believed that the loss of students is related to COVID, as more students are being home schooled or sent to private schools. The Yield was announced as being much higher than last year, which helps the tax rate (a 4¢ decrease in Barre City and a 1¢ increase in Barre Town). These amounts are calculated with a draft budget that uses \$600k of the surplus towards revenue. There is concern that the increase in per-pupil spending, which is higher than the actual budget increase, will be negatively received by voters. It was noted that the wording of the budget article is specifically defined by statute and cannot be altered. It was stressed that budget information provided to voters must clearly explain the difference, as well as document specific items that caused the budget to increase. It was noted that even with the proposed increase, the BUUSD remains a district with one of the lowest per-pupil spending amounts in the State. Concern was raised that having one of the lowest cost per-pupil amounts in the state is not something to be 'proud of', and may contribute to difficulty in hiring/retaining highly qualified staff and may deter families from moving to the District. Lengthy discussion ensued and included comments and questions from Committee and community members. It was noted that the option to use \$700k of surplus funds would keep the Barre City Tax Rate the same (a 4¢ decrease), but change the Barre Town Tax Rate from a 1¢ increase to zero increase. Both of these options (using \$600k and using \$700k) will be presented to the Board. The option to use an additional \$100k of surplus funds changes the per-pupil increase to 7.93%.

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the Board approve Budget Draft #2 with an Expenditure amount of \$53,254,319 (using \$600k in surplus funds) for the Barre Unified Union School District for FY23, and to also present information pertaining to using \$700k of surplus funds and that two draft Articles will be presented to the Board. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.**

Brief discussion was held regarding the CVCC FY23 draft budget. Ms. Emerson answered questions from meeting participants and advised that the RAB Board has approved this budget and recommends that the District approve the budget as presented. It was noted that regardless of the outcome of the governance vote, Barre voters need to approve an FY23 budget.

**On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend that the Board approve an Expenditure Budget of \$3,512,050 for CVCC for FY23.**

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1FY22 Expenses**

A document titled BUUSD FY22 Expense Report – December 28, 2021 was distributed

In response to a query, it was noted that the balance listed on the report (\$237,503) is not an anticipated surplus. Mrs. Perreault has been reviewing expenses only, not revenues. Mrs. Perreault is not making surplus/deficit projections at this point. It was noted that most of the balance is the result of open staff positions. There were no questions from the Committee.

## **6.2 ESSER Update**

Three documents were distributed;

'BUUSD Public Plan for ARP ESSER Spending

A letter to the Superintendent regarding Conceptual Approval for the BCEMS HVAC Project

A letter to the Superintendent regarding Conceptual Approval for the BTMES HVAC Project

Mrs. Perreault advised regarding ESSER funding, including the requirement to show evidence that the District has held meaningful consultation with the various stakeholders. Mrs. Perreault advised that the document is quite lengthy and includes links to additional information. Mrs. Perreault encourages individuals to review the document, including the links. Mrs. Perreault advised of the different categories which are required to be included in the document, and provided an overview of some of the improvements that have been completed utilizing ESSER funds. Thus far Conceptual Approval has been received for BCEMS and BTMES, and the District anticipates receiving Conceptual Approval for the SHS Plan, which includes completion of the sprinkler system as part of HVAC upgrades. Mrs. Perreault is currently waiting to receive a letter from one of the State Fire Marshalls. That letter is the final piece of required documentation. Ms. Parker queried regarding sign-on bonuses to attract bus drivers. It was noted that the District has been aggressively helping STA recruit bus drivers, but no one has expressed interest in filling these positions. It was noted that public input included requests for After-School Care Programs, but there are currently issues with attracting staffing. Brief discussion was held regarding the request (from BCEMS) for installation of a Ropes Course. Mrs. Perreault advised that currently, requested items are being prioritized and staffing needs have taken priority. It was noted that the SHS Athletic Fields and auditorium are in need of much repair, and that use of those areas is very beneficial to students.

## **7. Other Business**

None.

## **8. Items for Future Agendas**

- FY23 Budget Communication (working session)
- Update on FY22 Expenses

Mrs. Perreault advised that she will not be in attendance at the next Finance Committee meeting. It is anticipated that Josh Allen, will attend to assist with FY23 Budget Communication planning.

## **9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 5:30 p.m., at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

## **10. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*