

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
January 13, 2022 - 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)
Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC)
Chris Parker (BT)
Sarah Pregent (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Mike Deering, II	Karen Fredericks	Nicole Gallup	Marissa Greene
Carol Hebert	Josh Howard	Prudence Krasofski	Marcy Kreitz	Nancy Leclerc
Sue Paxman	Terry Reil	Diane Solomon	Rachel Van Vliet	Trina Villa

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, January 13, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the Board Norms and procedures for engaging with the Board.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

It was agreed that Agenda Items 5.8 through 5.12 (Policy First Readings) will be postponed until the next Regular Meeting (01/27/22). It was noted that when Policy F26 is presented for a First Reading, additional documentation will be required (as defined by the Policy Committee).

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

3.1 Public Comment

None.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2021 Special Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the December 16, 2021 Special Meeting.

5. Current Business

5.1 New Hires

No candidates were presented for hire. The Superintendent will announce two resignations under the Superintendent's Report.

5.2 Winooski Valley School Choice Approval

A document titled 'Agreement to Join the Winooski Valley & Statewide Choice of Public High School Collaborative for the 2022 – 2023 School Year Under Act 129 (SEC. 34§ 822d 2A)' was distributed.

A copy of 'The Vermont Statutes Online – Title 16: Education - (SEC. 34§ 822d 2A)' was distributed.

This form is presented to the Board (for approval) on an annual basis. Mr. Isabelle reiterated his concern that the 'money' does not follow the students, and that SHS allows 40 students to leave, but only 20 students to transfer in. Mr. Isabelle has never supported this collaborative, and will not be supporting it this year. Clarification was provided that Winooski Valley School Choice applies only to districts that have high schools. Cities/towns without high schools have school choice and pay tuition to the District. Transportation is currently offered to three 'sending school districts' that pay tuition to the District (Washington, Orange, and Chelsea), but is not provided to students attending SHS through the Winooski Valley School Choice Collaborative.

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board voted 7 to 1 to approve signing the Agreement to Join the Winooski Valley & Statewide Choice of Public High School Collaborative for the 2021 – 2022 School Year, and authorized the Board Chair to sign the document.

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

5.3 Ratification of Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement

A document titled 'memorandum of Understanding Between BUUSD Board Negotiating Team and BEA Negotiating Team Following Mediation 12/6/2021' was distributed.

Mrs. Akley advised that after an arduous process, the Negotiations Committee reached a tentative agreement with the BEA Negotiating Team, subject to Board approval. Mrs. Akley provided a brief overview of changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and advised that the Agreement put forth for approval is a two year Agreement. Mrs. Akley answered questions from the Board.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board voted 7 to 1 to ratify the Teachers' Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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

5.4 Announced Tuition Approval

A document titled FY23 Announced Tuition was distributed. The announced tuitions are as follows; Kindergarten – \$15,645, Elementary \$15,645, Secondary \$16,082, and CVCC \$17,361.

Mrs. Perreault provided a brief overview of this process which is performed annually. Mrs. Perreault provided clarification that the 'Elementary' rate applies to grades 1 through 6 and that the 'Secondary' rate applies to grades 7 - 12.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Akley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Annual Tuition Rates as proposed (K – 6 \$15,645 / 7 – 12 \$16,082 / CVCC \$17,361.). Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.

5.5 FY23 BUUSD/CVCC Budget and Warning Approval

Eight documents were distributed;

Two Draft BUUSD Warnings for the March 1, 2022 Vote

A copy of the BUUSD FY23 Proposed Budget, Expense Summary – Draft 2 – 12/28/21

Two BUUSD Budget 2022 – 23, Draft 2, 01/13/22 Comparative Tax Rate Calculations documents

A copy of the CVCC District Budget Expenses – 12/28/21

A document titled FY23 Central Vermont Career Center Projected Tuition Draft

A document titled BUUSD FY23 Budget Information –01/13/22

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the process to approve the budgets (BUUSD and CVCC) prior to approving the Warnings.

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the Warnings, noting that one reflects utilizing \$600,000 in Tax Stabilization Funds, and one using \$700,000 from the fund. The cost per pupil increase percentage goes down if more Tax Stabilization Funds are used (8.22% using \$600k, down to 7.93% if using \$700k). The drop in the equalized pupil count is a reflection of 2 years' experience. It was noted that the drop in equalized pupils (125.28) represents approximately 100 actual students. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the Comparative Tax Rate Calculations documents. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding how the Yield is used in setting the tax rate.

Mrs. Perreault advised that the State Education Fund has \$90,000,000, and if all of those monies are used for tax relief, it will have a very positive impact on tax rates. Lengthy discussion was held, including input from Board and community members. Mrs. Perreault

answered budget related questions from the Board and community members. It was noted that administrators are very involved in budget creation. It was reiterated that statute requires the ballot to contain the change in cost per equalized pupil, not the actual increase/decrease in the expenditure budget. It is anticipated that increases to staff in the SEA Program will result in overall savings, as students are moved from outplacement facilities (with high tuition rates), back to the District (the SEA Program). Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the Projected Comparative Tax Rate Calculations, noting that when the State changes the Yield (often after the budget has been set), it impacts local tax rates. Mrs. Pregent advised that the Finance Committee will hold a working session, to work on how best to educate community members regarding the budget.

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board voted 7 to 1 to approve an Expenditure Budget of \$53,254,319 for the Barre Unified Union School District for FY23.

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

Ms. Emerson provided a brief overview of the budget, noting that some salary amounts are shifting from the Perkins grant to the CVCC budget.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve an Expenditure Budget of \$3,512,050 for the Central Vermont Career Center for FY23.

The Board held discussion on the Warning, including an explanation of Special Articles IV and V, some technical issues (related to the location of the Informational Meeting), a grammatical issue (Article V), and the need to add the virtual option for the Informational Meeting. **The Warning being discussed/approved this evening is the draft that includes the use of \$700,000 from the Tax Stabilization Fund, resulting in per equalized pupil spending of \$16,551, an increase of 7.93%.**

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve, with the amendments as discussed, the Barre Unified Union School District Warning For March 1, 2022 Vote.

5.6 FY23 CVCC Ballot Language Approval

A copy of the BUUSD Warning for the March 1, 2022 Vote (for CVCC) was distributed.

A copy of a document titled 'This March shall the ballot on town meeting day state:'

Ms. Emerson provided an overview of the Warning, including the section pertaining to election of At-Large Board Members.

It was noted that this Warning also needs to be amended to correct the date, time, and location of the Informational Meeting, and must also include the virtual option. The meeting will be held on 02/15/22 at CVCC in Room 136 at 6:00 p.m. and will have a virtual option.

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve, with the discussed amendments, the Barre Unified Union School District Warning For March 1, 2022 Vote.

5.7 FY23 Annual Meeting Warning Approval

A document titled Barre Unified Union School District Annual Meeting Warning For February 28, 2022 was distributed.

Brief discussion was held, including the need to add the virtual attendance option, and discussion on how to confirm that those voting at the meeting are registered voters. It was noted that the City/Town Clerks should have updated checklists by 02/28/22 and should be able to confirm voter registration. The City and Town Clerks will be contacted regarding this matter.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Barre Unified Union School District Annual Meeting Warning For February 28, 2022.

5.8 First Reading Access Control Policy (F25)

Copies of all policies referenced in Agenda Items 5.8 through 5.12 were distributed.

Discussion postponed until the next Regular Board meeting.

5.9 First Reading Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (F20)

Discussion postponed until the next Regular Board meeting.

5.10 First Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)

Discussion postponed until the next Regular Board meeting.

5.11 First Reading Complaints About Personnel Policy (B22)

Discussion postponed until the next Regular Board meeting.

5.12 First Reading Firearms Policy (C5)

Discussion postponed until the next Regular Board meeting.

5.13 Special Board Meeting January 19, 2022

Brief discussion was held and it was agreed to hold the meeting virtually. Mrs. Marold will provide the Board with the list of questions used by the Hiring Committee, and the Board may identify additional questions as well. Mrs. Marold may also provide some alternative questions. Documentation from Mrs. Marold will be provided on 01/14/22, and will also include results from the Community Forum. The Board agreed to discuss 'Board Questions' in the Special Meeting, prior to starting the interview.

6. Old Business

6.1 Enrollment/Home Study Update

A copy of the District Enrollment/Staffing Report for January 2022 was distributed.

A copy of the Home Study Report (AOE provided data) Report was distributed.

It was noted that last year, the District was held harmless regarding student counts, and this year is impacted by the brunt of two years of declining enrollment. The lower pupil count has a negative impact on the budget (per pupil cost increase percent). Mr. Hennessey advised that currently, there are no students outplaced for grades k – 4. It is hoped that the District will be able to move some middle school students from outplacement to the SEA Program. It was noted that the cost for outplacement is much higher than the cost to serve students within the District. The report indicates a decrease of 7 SEA students (from December 2021 to January 2022).

Mr. Hennessey is not aware of this decrease in student counts at SEA and will investigate and report back to the Board (via e-mail). It was suggested that the Board promote the savings associated with moving students from outplacement to the SEA Program.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the next Finance Committee meeting will be a 'working session', with the Committee discussing how best to communicate/inform community members regarding the FY23 Budget.

6.2 COVID Update

Mr. Hennessey advised that schools in Vermont are in the midst of a crisis resulting from the spread of the Omicron variant. The District is in a day-to-day/hour-to-hour struggle to keep the schools open. The past two weeks have been very challenging.

Mr. Hennessey lauded administrators, staff, and parents for their care and understanding during this difficult time. The District did reach a breaking point and had to close the schools this past Tuesday. Tomorrow, 01/14/22 BCEMS will need to close grades 3, 7, and 8 due to staffing shortages. Notifications have gone out to parents. Remote learning will not be an option for these students.

New guidance has been received from the AOE regarding contact tracing. Communication to families is much different under the new protocol and contact tracing is no longer being conducted. The new protocol involves the District notify parents if a child in their child's classroom has tested positive. Schools will begin to be covid test distribution centers, but there is currently a shortage of test kits. The AOE has advised that as of 01/18/22, there will be enough kits distributed to schools to satisfy the need for the next couple of weeks. Families will be notified regarding how to obtain tests (if their child has been exposed). The District has ordered 2000 KN95 masks. These masks will be reserved for faculty and staff. The District hopes to order more so that they can be distributed to older students, but there are currently availability issues. Mr. Hennessey applied to the AOE for a waiver for the recent closure, and hopes that that closed day will be excused. Mr. Hennessey hopes to have an update (regarding next week) tomorrow. Vaccination and absenteeism statistics (for students and staff) will be included in Friday's update.

7. Reports

7.1 Superintendent Report

A copy of the Superintendent's Report, dated January 12, 2022 was distributed.

In addition to the Report, Mr. Hennessey announced the retirement of Jim Willis (SHS Math Interventionist), and resignation of Clifton Long, (CVCC HVAC Instructor) as he has accepted a position in another district.. Both resignations are effective 06/30/22. Mr. Willis and Mr. Long were thanked for their service and wished well in their future endeavor.

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

Copies of the Buildings Reports were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey congratulated Elizabeth Howard for being named the BTMES Student of the Month.

7.3 Communications Committee

Minutes from the January 6, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Due to emergent COVID matters, the meeting was postponed shortly after it was called to order.

The next meeting is Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

7.4 Finance Committee

Minutes from the January 4, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised she had nothing to add to the Minutes, but reported that Mrs. Perreault just advised her that the State has provided an updated pupil count. This change in pupil count will require that the ballot and Warning be modified to reflect a new cost per equalized pupil and new increase percentage. The Warnings will be modified and approved at the 01/19/22 Special Meeting.

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

7.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes from the January 10, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Isabelle advised that Committee discussion included; bus transportation (discussion on this topic will continue), and updates on electric buses, storm water run-off mitigation, and the ESSER grant application.

The next meeting is Monday, February 14, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

7.6 Policy Committee

Minutes from the December 20, 2021 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that the Committee approved five policies for First Readings. Board level discussion will need to be held regarding the Fiscal Management Policy (F20).

Legal Counsel, Pietro Lynn will be in attendance at the January meeting to discuss use of the Implementation Sections of VSBA Model Policies.

The next meeting is Monday, January 17, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

7.7 Curriculum Committee

The December 28, 2021 meeting was cancelled.

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

7.8 Negotiations Committee

Mrs. Akley advised that the most recent negotiations have ended and there is no further update.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle echoed Ms. Parker's sentiment that it is enlightening to see the 'good news' in the Building Reports. Mr. Isabelle welcomed Mr. Cecchinelli back to the Board, and lauded Ms. Emerson and her team for the work they've done at the Career Center. Mr. Isabelle encourages individuals to visit the tech center classes, highlighting Clifton Long for his work at the Career Center, noting that his departure is a great loss to CVCC. Mr. Isabelle also congratulated the sports team on their successes this year, and gave a huge 'shout out' to SHS Athletic Director Natalie Soffen, and BTMES Student of the Month, Elizabeth Howard.

Mrs. Pregent acknowledged and thanked Mrs. Poulin for her assistance keeping the Board 'above board', noting appreciation for her 'wealth of knowledge'. Mrs. Pregent also thanked Dave Delcore for keeping the Board up to date on legislation.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised it's nice to be back on the Board. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that serving on the Board is a 'give and take' situation, noting that this evening he missed his 9th grader's performance at SHS.

Ms. Parker voiced concern regarding the school calendar, noting that next week; some SHS students may only receive 2 academic days. Ms. Parker would like future calendar planning to minimize the 'stacking' of too many days off in a given week.

Ms. Badeau thanked Mr. Hennessey for creation of the videos and e-mail communications.

Mrs. Spaulding thanked Mrs. Perreault and Business Office staff for their efforts in the budget season, which is a lengthy process that begins in August. Mrs. Perreault is a huge asset of the District. Mrs. Spaulding also thanked all the community members who are attending and participating in meetings.

9. Future Agenda Items

The Agenda for the 01/19/22 Special Meeting will include;

- Warnings for BUUSD Votes (Update)
- Superintendent Interview

The Agenda for the 01/27/22 Regular Meeting will include;

- New Hires
- First Readings of Policies F25, F20, F26, B22, and C5
- COVID Update

FY23 Budget Communication – Add to Parking Lot for the February Agenda

Enrollment/Home Study Update – Add to Parking Lot. Move to be a quarterly report – no 'start month' was announced.

It was announced that Consent Forms for Board candidates are due to the City/Town Clerks by 1/31/22. Consent forms can be found on the City/Town Clerk web sites.

10. Next Meeting Date

There is a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

The next Regular Board Meeting is Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

11. Executive Session as Needed

11.1 Superintendent Evaluations

The Superintendent's Evaluation was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. Akley, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, at 8:22 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion.

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:35 p.m.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin