

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
February 10, 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
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Brenda Waterhouse, SHS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Charlotte Brault	Mike Deering, II	Karen Fredericks	Josh Howard
Prudence Krasofski	Nancy Leclerc	Patrick Leene	John Lynch	Marine Marineau
Sue Paxman	Victoria Pompei	Terry Reil	Bern Rose	Sharon Toborg
Rachel 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, February 10, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., which was held via video conference.

Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of Meeting Norms and procedures for communicating with the Board, advising that Agenda items for Public and Student Comments are for items not on the Agenda. Additionally, Mrs. Spaulding advised that though community members may ask questions, the Board does not respond (it's not a back and forth session) and that the Board may not provide answers to questions.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 4.2 Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 7, 2022 Emergency Meeting

Add 5.4 Shift in Leadership Team

Take Agenda Items 5.3 and 5.4 out of order

7.4 The Finance Committee's next meeting date should read March 15, 2022

7.5 The Facilities Committee meeting on February 14, 2022 has been cancelled

7.5 The Curriculum Committee meeting for February 22, 2022 is cancelled. The next meeting date should read March 22, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

3.1 Public Comment

Mrs. Pompei addressed the Board and expressed her disappointment that the PSTL Program (Problem Solving Through Literacy) at BTMES has been eliminated, advising that the PSTL Program is one of the few programs available for students who excel. Though the program wasn't held for two years, presumably because of COVID restrictions, the program has now been silently cut from the budget. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Board would try to get information relating to this matter. Mrs. Pregent will send an email to Mrs. Pompei.

Mr. Howard asked community members to start attending Board meetings, to try to make a difference and get their opinions heard, and that he hopes in March 2022 there will be a new Board that listens and responds to community questions and concerns. Mr. Howard expressed concern regarding recently released literacy assessment data which indicates only approximately 30% of students are proficient in literacy. Mr. Howard believes that the Superintendent, staff, and students need the community's support, and reiterated his wish for there to be a change in board make-up.

Mr. Lynch (recently hired to teach Driver's Education at SHS), advised that he is very impressed with Spaulding High School, noting that the school seems to be in control, students appear to be happy, the building is very clean, administrators are very supportive, and overall, he is very impressed by Spaulding. Additionally, Mr. Lynch lauded Jess Carpenter for her work with the Driver's Education Program.

Ms. Rose addressed the Board, thanking Mr. Lynch for his comments, and advised that she has reviewed the proposed budget and is pleased that school taxes are going down (that is her understanding) and that the Board has leveraged funding that increases support for students. Ms. Rose noted that the school has a very low equalized pupil spending amount. Ms. Rose expressed her appreciation for the promotional videos. Ms. Rose understands that the past few years (during COVID) have been very stressful for everyone, and she hopes that the community can work together to make things more positive and less stressful in the schools. Ms. Rose supports the budget and expressed her appreciation of the work performed by staff, administrators, and the Board.

3.2 Student Voice

None.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2022 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Poulin advised that though the Minutes of the January 27, 2022 meeting are accurate, she believes there may have been a misstatement regarding Policy F20 (Agenda Item 5.3). It was stated that 'local policy F30' should be rescinded once Policy F20 is adopted. Policy F30 is a VSBA policy (not local, which are coded in the 40's range) and pertains to the budget development process. Policy F20 was referred back to the Policy Committee, and this matter will be revisited as part of that discussion. Additionally, Mrs. Poulin advised regarding protocols for open meeting approval of matters discussed in Executive Sessions, which does not involve disclosing any detailed information.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the January 27, 2022 Regular Meeting, and the Minutes of the February 7, 2022 Emergency Meeting .

4.2 Approval of Minutes – February 7, 2022 Emergency Meeting

Approved under Agenda Item 4.1

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 5.3

5. Current Business

5.1 Annual Assessment Data

A document titled 'Mid-year Literacy and Math Assessment Data – February 7, 2022' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided a recap of the most recent Curriculum Committee meeting and introduced Karen Fredericks, MTSS Coordinator (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support). The Assessment presentation was displayed and Ms. Fredericks proceeded to provide an overview of the data, which was derived from mid-year assessments. The data presented is benchmark assessment data for students in grades 3 through 9. These benchmark assessments are conducted three times per year (fall, winter, and spring). Reading proficiency data was displayed (33% met proficiency or above / 67% were below proficiency). Math proficiency data was displayed (37% met proficiency or above / 63% were below proficiency). A growth reflection for Math was also provided. Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of the "Big Takeaways" that were identified, and the actions that are necessary to address weaknesses. Mr. Hennessey and Ms. Fredericks received feedback and answered questions from the Board and community members.

5.2 FY23 Budget Communication

Budget promotion is in full swing. The latest Finance Committee meeting centered mainly on feedback and revisions to the Annual Report. The Report is currently at the printers and it is anticipated that it will be mailed by this weekend. The Annual Report is on the

District's web site, as well as a one page 'take-away' from the Report. The 'take-away' page will be printed so that it is available for distribution to the public. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding how the budget site can be accessed and advised regarding information contained on that site. A more detailed budget flyer was created by Mrs. Gilbert and Mrs. Perreault and is also available on the web site. Mr. Hennessey was interviewed by JD Green for an "Aired Out" podcast. A link to that interview can also be found on the web site.

5.3 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Rebecca Henry (BTMES Grade 2), Kimberlynn Gilbert (BTMES Grade 4), and Hannah Leland (CVCC Assistant Director) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the BTMES candidates' education and experience.

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Rebecca Henry and Kimberlynn Gilbert.

Ms. Emerson provided an overview of Hannah Leland's education and experience

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board voted 7 to 0 to approve the hiring of Hannah Leland.

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

5.4 Shift in Leadership Team

Mr. Hennessey read from a prepared statement, advising that Mr. Coon (BCEMS Elementary School Principal) has resigned effective 06/30/22 and Mrs. Waterhouse (current SHS Principal) will be the new BCEMS Elementary School Principal effective 07/01/22. Mr. Coon addressed the Board, advising that he remains committed to BCEMS for the remainder of his tenure, and that his resignation was a difficult decision. Mrs. Waterhouse addressed the Board, advising regarding her various roles at SHS over the past 19 years. Mrs. Waterhouse is committed to, and wholly supportive of the Barre community, and believes this change will have a positive, strengthening impact on the District. The SHS Principal position will be posted next week. The Board thanked Mr. Coon for his years of service and wished him well in his new position as Principal of Woodsville (NH) High School.

Discussion moved back to the regular order of the Agenda, beginning with Agenda Item 5.1

6. Old Business

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.1 through 6.3 were distributed.

6.1 Second and Final Reading Access Control Policy (F25)

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Access Control Policy (F25), and agreed to adopt said Policy. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.

6.2 Second and Final Reading Complaints About Personnel Policy (B22)

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Complaints About Personnel Policy (B22), and agreed to adopt said Policy. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.

6.3 Second and Final Reading Firearms Policy (C5)

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Firearms Policy (C5), and agreed to adopt said Policy. Mrs. Akley was not present for the vote.

6.4 COVID Update

Mr. Hennessey advised that (this afternoon) he shared the most recent update with community members. In the past two weeks, there has been a remarkable turnaround, with the number of new positive COVID cases dropping significantly. Mr. Hennessey advised that the District will continue to follow State Guidelines, and noted that the AOE 'How To' Flow Chart was shared with families today. Schools will continue the indoor mask mandate for the time being. Guidance may change by the end of February Break. Starting on 02/11/22, the schools will no longer perform screenings at morning drop-off. All schools have a supply of in-home antigen test kits that are provided to families upon request.

7. Reports

7.1 Superintendent Report

A copy of the Superintendent's Report (dated 02/09/22) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey highlighted two items; BTMES Math Teacher, Glenda Allen has been awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, and the Spaulding High School winter sports teams have been having an incredible season. Athletic Directors were lauded for their efforts with sports programs. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey advised that the electric buses are not currently in service (due to charging issues).

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

Copies of the building reports were distributed.

Mrs. Akley 'flagged' a date correction that she believes needs to be made to the BTMES Building Report.

It was highlighted that all CVCC staff are engaged in "Beyond Bias" training (offered by the Center for Creative Leadership and the Vermont Principals' Association). Staff members are currently in week three of this training.

7.3 Communications Committee

The February 3, 2022 meeting was cancelled.

Mrs. Farrell advised that members of this Committee met in coordination with the Finance Committee and held in-depth discussion regarding budget communications.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

7.4 Finance Committee

Minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent reported that the last meeting centered mainly on revisions to the Annual Report and a brief overview of FY22 expenses.

Mrs. Pregent advised that discussion also included Mrs. Spaulding's testimony before the Senate Finance Committee regarding pupil weighting, which ties into how education is funded in Vermont. The current formula is not equitable.

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting were distributed.

The February 14, 2022 meeting is cancelled.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

7.6 Policy Committee

Minutes of the January 17, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that Mr. Cecchinelli (new co-chair) will facilitate the February meeting, and the main topic for discussion is the implementation section of VSBA policies and how they should or should not be taken out or amended, and how they relate to procedures. There are a couple of policies that have been referred back to Committee. Those policies will be addressed at the March meeting (after Board reorganization).

The next meeting is Monday, February 21, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.7 Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Badeau advised that the meeting was summarized under Agenda Item 5.1 (Annual Assessment Data). Ms. Badeau suggested that re-organization consider changing the 'regular' meeting day for the Curriculum Committee (as the meeting dates frequently fall on school vacation days/holidays). Mrs. Akley noted a name correction that needs to be made to the Minutes, and questioned why the State is embargoing SBAC Assessment results. Mr. Hennessey believes that the State feels the data is too flawed to be shared.

The February 22, 2022 meeting is cancelled.

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

7.8 Negotiations Committee

Mrs. Akley advised that she does not believe any Committee work will occur until after Board reorganization, at which point, the Committee will begin negotiations with AFSCME.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Isabelle advised that he is very pleased with the Showcase videos, extended congratulations to Glenda Allen, and advised that he has experienced the drop-off line at BTMES.

Mrs. Pregent understands that many students have had a lifetime of struggle, even before they show up at school.

Mrs. Akley queried regarding whether or not parents will be advised if their child is a close contact with a COVID positive individual. Mr. Hennessey advised that notifications will only go out weekly. Mrs. Akley asks that this decision be reconsidered, noting that not all students can be vaccinated (e.g. her preschool child and infant). Given the make-up of her family, her considerations regarding exposure are different than those of other families. Mrs. Akley believes it is very problematic to delay notification to parents. Mr. Hennessey has taken note of Mrs. Akley's concern.

Ms. Parker suggested the schools do what they can to mitigate risks; even if it is doing more than what is recommended by the State (e.g. continue to wear masks indoors, even if that recommendation is rescinded by the State). Ms. Parker congratulated Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Waterhouse.

Mrs. Farrell reiterated her concern that the lights on the buses need to be cleaned off. The buildup of salt/dirt is a safety hazard.

Mr. Boltin noted that even though the District has the lowest per pupil spending, it has turned out some very high achieving students, and he is not sure if the District can necessarily link low student spending to low achievement, but he does believe that curriculum improvements being implemented over the past 5 years are not working.

Mrs. Poulin (who does not live in the District) advised that her sons' primary education occurred at parochial school, not in the Barre system, but that when it was time to choose a high school, her family researched several different high schools, including those with much higher tuitions, and her family chose Spaulding High School 'hands down', noting that they felt SHS had much more to offer. Her family was very pleased with Spaulding High School.

Mrs. Spaulding echoes Mrs. Akley concern regarding the demographic of younger students (who are not eligible for vaccination) and would support having different procedures in place for students in that demographic. Mrs. Spaulding advised that absentee ballots are available and encourages community members to vote, and vote early if possible. Mrs. Spaulding reminded the community that budget information is available on the District web site and that community members should contact Board Members with questions.

Mr. Hennessey will contact Lauren May (Early Education Coordinator) regarding concerns related to delayed notification of COVID exposure (for younger students).

9. Future Agenda Items

- Curriculum Director Search Update
- Administrator Search Update (BCEMS Elementary Principal and SHS Principal)
- New Hires
- FY23 Budget Communication
- COVID Update

ADD TO PARKING LOT

- Interviews of Community Members Applying for Committee Seats (2nd meeting in March)
- Consideration of Combining BCEMS and BTMES Athletic Programs - (2nd meeting in March)

10. Next Meeting Date

The next Regular Meeting is Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.
Board Members who are not able to attend the February meeting should notify Mrs. Spaulding
The Reorganizational Meeting of the Board is Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

11. Executive Session as Needed

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Isabelle, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin