

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

Via Video Conference – Google Meet
March 10, 2022 - 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Chair
Alice Farrell (BT) – Vice Chair
Chris Parker (BT) - Clerk
Renee Badeau (BT)
Tim Boltin (BC)
Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC)
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Terry Reil (BT)
Sarah Pregent (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Jody Emerson, CVCC Director
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Mel Battah	Richard Cooke	Mike Deering, II	Nora Duane
Karen Fredericks	Josh Howard	Guy Isabelle	Prudence Krasofski	Paul Malone
Donald McMahan	Diane Solomon	William Toborg		

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 Superintendent, Mr. Hennessey, called the Thursday, March 10, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 5:33 p.m., which was held via video conference.

2. Organize

VSBA Board Re-organization documentation was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey welcomed new Board Members Nancy Leclerc and Terry Reil.

Oath of Allegiance

It was confirmed that all new or newly re-elected Board Members have taken the Oath of Allegiance and reviewed the ‘Essential Work of School Boards’ documentation on the VSBA web site.

Prior to seeking nominations for the position of Board Chair, Mr. Hennessey advised that Board Chairs should promote development of a strong Board team, establish a strong connection with administration, organize and conduct productive meetings, and promote lawful and ethical operations. Mr. Hennessey asked for nominations for the position of Board Chair.

Mr. Reil nominated Alice Farrell for the position of Board Chair. Ms. Leclerc seconded the nomination.

Mr. Hennessey queried regarding any additional nominations.

Mrs. Pregent nominated Mrs. Spaulding for the position of Board Chair. Ms. Parker seconded the nomination.

Mr. Hennessey queried regarding any additional nominations. There were no additional nominations.

Mr. Hennessey called for votes for Mrs. Farrell. Mr. Boltin, Mr. Reil, Ms. Leclerc, and Mrs. Farrell voted for Mrs. Farrell.

Mr. Hennessey called for votes for Mrs. Spaulding. Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Parker, Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Badeau, and

Mrs. Spaulding voted for Mrs. Spaulding

On a vote of 5 to 4, Mrs. Spaulding was elected to the position of Board Chair.

Mrs. Spaulding chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Mrs. Spaulding requested nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Mr. Reil nominated Alice Farrell for the position of Vice Chair. Mrs. Pregent seconded the nomination.

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding any additional nominations. There were no additional nominations.

The Board unanimously voted to elect Mrs. Farrell as Vice Chair. Mr. Boltin was not present for the vote.

Mrs. Spaulding requested nominations for the position of Board Clerk.

Ms. Parker nominated herself for the position of Board Clerk. Mrs. Pregent seconded the nomination.

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding any additional nominations. There were no additional nominations.

The Board unanimously voted to elect Ms. Parker as Board Clerk.

Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of Committee assignments she has drafted, noting that after this review, the Board can hold discussion and modify committee assignments at that time. Mr. Hennessey recommends disbanding the Communications Committee, and having the Communications Director participate in more committees (as necessary). After lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to eliminate the Communications Committee. Mr. Delcore cautioned that if five members of the Board are in attendance at a Committee meeting, there is a quorum of the Board in attendance, which requires that the Committee meeting be warned as a Board meeting.

Mrs. Spaulding will perform research regarding the legality of having a quorum of the Board at a committee meeting without warning that meeting as a Board meeting.

Committee assignments were agreed to as follows:

BUUSD Curriculum Committee: Ms. Badeau, Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Leclerc, and Ms. Parker

BUUSD Facilities/Transportation Committee: Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, and Mr. Reil

BUUSD Finance Committee: Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Leclerc, and Mr. Reil

BUUSD Negotiations Committee: Ms. Badeau, Mrs. Pregent, and Mr. Reil

BUUSD Policy Committee: Mr. Boltin, Ms. Parker, Mr. Cecchinelli, and Mrs. Farrell

Regional Advisory Board: Mrs. Farrell

CVCC Board: Mrs. Farrell

With the exception of the Negotiations Committee, all Committee meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m.

Committee meetings will be held on the following schedule:

Facilities – 2nd Monday of each month

Policy – 3rd Monday of each month

Curriculum – 1st Thursday of each month

Finance – 3rd Thursday of each month

This schedule may be changed in the future.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to authorize the Board Chair to sign employee contracts.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to authorize the Board Chair to sign other contracts,

The Board will schedule a Board Retreat date at a future Board meeting,

The Board will hold Regular Board Meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

Agendas and Minutes will be posted at the BUUSD Central Office, BUUSD District Schools, the Barre City Clerk's Office, the Barre Town Clerk's Office, Front Porch Forum, Facebook, and on the BUUSD website,

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to use Robert's Rules of Order.

Mrs. Spaulding read from the Code of Ethics document and confirmed that all Board Members have signed a copy of the Code of Ethics. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Times Argus will be the designated newspaper for publications and that Agenda Packets will be provided in paper and electronic format. It was reiterated that Board Members must conduct themselves within the scope of their official role (there is no individual authority, and no Board Member may give directives to any school administrator or employee (publicly or privately)). Mrs. Farrell advised that any correspondence/statements provided to the media should also be conveyed to Board Members so that they are aware of what is going to be published. Mr. Reil appreciates the manner in which communication has been held this evening and would like this type of format continued, with the Communications Policy only being used when necessary. Mrs. Spaulding will take this request under advisement.

Mrs. Spaulding requested that requests for information from community members or the media be forwarded to her (Board Chair) or Mr. Hennessey (Superintendent).

Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of Board development opportunities available through the VSBA. An orientation meeting (for new Board Members, with the Superintendent and Board Chair) will be scheduled.

Mrs. Farrell suggested that Board Member training be provided to all Board Members.

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding local and statewide education advocacy responsibilities, referring Board Members to the last page of the VSBA packet, which includes a section titled "Stay Informed", that advises that a "Board Reporter" be designated, and references VSBA Education Legislative Reports, and VSBA Legislative Alerts. Mrs. Spaulding is not clear on what the Board Reporter position is and does not believe the Board has appointed this position in the past. Mrs. Farrell advised regarding her understanding of this position. Mrs. Farrell volunteered to be the Board Reporter.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Ms. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Mrs. Farrell as the Board's intergovernmental liaison (Board Reporter).

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to appoint the Negotiations Committee Chair to be the voting delegate for State-wide HealthCare bargaining Agreement.

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding VSBA Resolutions and the importance of the Board being involved in those resolutions.

Discussion of March Committee meetings will be held under Agenda Item 6.2.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 6.5 Discussion of a Standing Agenda Item Labeled Education Update/Performance

Add 6.6 Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at Board Meetings.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

None.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the February 24, 2022 Regular Meeting. Ms. Leclerc and Mr. Reil did not vote.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

Resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms were distributed for the following individuals;

Harry Marek – SHS/SEA Special Educator

Kristin Porrazzo – SHS Special Education Psychologist

Danielle Berg – SHS Art Teacher

Angelique Fairbrother – SHS Technology Integrationist

Karen Harker – SHS .25 ELL Teacher and .75 Literacy Interventionist (currently ESSER funded)

Gabriel Aguilar – BTMES Special Educator

Sara Klosterboer – SHS/SEA Special Educator

Brian Brandsmeier – SHS/SEA Special Educator

Ariel Lattanzi – CVCC Natural Resources Instructor

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates and answered questions from the Board.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Harry Marek, Kristin Porrazzo, Danielle Berg, Angelique Fairbrother, and Karen Harker.

It was noted that not all salary information is present on the documentation. Mr. Hennessey will see that the salary information is included in the future.

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Gabriel Aguilar, Sara Klosterboer, Brian Brandsmeier, and Ariel Lattanzi.

6.2 Community Members on Committees

A document titled Guidelines for Community Members on BUUSD School Board Committees (approved 12/02/21) was distributed. A copy of an advertisement titled ‘Attention Barre City and Barre Town Voters Needed – BUUSD Community Seats on Committees’ was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the documents included in the packet. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Communications Committee has been dissolved, and that legal counsel has advised that it would be best for the District if community members were not on the Negotiations Committee. The Board will be receiving letters of interest for a period of two weeks. Interviews will be conducted at the next Board meeting. Mr. Reil queried regarding why the advertisement requires that candidates be registered voters. That requirement was not part of previous discussions and is not part of the approved ‘Community Members’ document. Mr. Reil would advocate for not requiring applicants to be registered voters. Mrs. Pregent and Ms. Parker advocate for requiring that voter registration be required. Mr. Malone addressed the Board regarding questions and concerns he has relating to community member participation on Committees, including requirements for finger printing and background checks, committee member eligibility to serve as Committee Chairs, and term limits. Mrs. Spaulding believes the Board needs to address three issues; should voter registration be required?, can community members serve as committee chairs?, and can the committees meet prior to community members being appointed?. Ms. Leclerc advocates for requiring residency but not voter registration, and also advocates for paying a stipend to community members. Clarification was provided that the approved guideline requires residency not voter registration. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding their preference to require voter registration for community members wishing to serve on committees (for the current year); Mr. Cecchinelli, and Mr. Boltin prefer that community members be registered voters. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Farrell, Ms. Leclerc, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent prefer that no voter registration requirement be in place (which is in compliance with the currently adopted guideline). Ms. Badeau did not vote. Mrs. Spaulding will contact Mrs. Gilbert regarding a correction to the advertisement, and will also contact Mr. Allen regarding changing the Front Porch Forum ad.

Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding whether or not they wished to have community members serve as committee chairs. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the majority of the Board did not wish to have community members serve as committee chairs and the Board will proceed accordingly.

Mrs. Spaulding queried the Board regarding who was in favor of reorganizing committees prior to community members being appointed. Mr. Reil, Ms. Badeau, Mrs. Pregent, Ms. Leclerc, Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Farrell were all in favor of holding committee meetings, including organization of committees, prior to the appointment of community members. Mr. Hennessey will have Mrs. Gilbert schedule the meetings. Brief discussion was held regarding the interview process for community members.

6.3 FY23 Budget Vote

The budget passed. Voters were thanked for their support.

6.4 Administrator Interviews and Date

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the open administrator positions. Brief discussion was held. Mr. Reil expressed concern that there are not enough community members on administrator hiring committees. Mrs. Farrell believes that the Board should be interviewing candidates for administrative positions, regardless of whether they are in-house or outside candidates. The majority of the Board does not wish to interview the candidate for the position of BCEMS Middle School Principal. The majority of the Board wishes to interview the candidates for the positions of; Director of Early Childhood Education, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and the SHS Principal. After brief discussion it was agreed to hold administrator interviews at a Special Meeting. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the interview process, which includes a review of questions to ask candidates. The Board will review questions from 5:30 – 6:00, with interviews starting at 6:00 p.m. The Special Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and virtually via Google Meet. Interviews for the SHS Principal position will be held at a Special Meeting on Thursday, March 31, 2022.

6.5 Discussion of a Standing Agenda Item Labeled Education Update/Performance

Mr. Reil requested that there be a ‘standing’ agenda item for discussion of improving education. Mr. Reil believes discussion should probably occur at one of the two monthly meetings, noting that improved educational performance needs to be a priority of the Board. Mrs. Spaulding noted that local assessments only occur 3 times per year, so new data would not be available each month. Mr. Reil believes limited testing is part of the problem, and believes there should be other information and insight from the building administrators regarding progress. Mr. Reil believes the issue of low test scores is of great concern in the community and believes that general discussion and monitoring of progress is important to ‘keeping a pulse’ on what progress is being made and seeing that this issue remains a priority of the Board. Mr. Reil believes that students who receive very low test scores have not been receiving the attention they need. Mr. Hennessey believes the hiring of a curriculum director will be beneficial and that discussion of what performance indicators need to be shared with the Board can be discussed at the next Curriculum Committee meeting. Mrs. Spaulding

cautioned the Board against micro-managing the schools. Mrs. Farrell stressed that it is the Board's responsibility to be reviewing information to assure that students are receiving a high quality of education, and that the Board needs to be well informed regarding what is happening in the schools. Mrs. Pregent believes that detailed work needs to be performed at the Curriculum Committee level. Ms. Leclerc believes the Board needs to work with the Superintendent, to go down to the principal level, and hear from the teachers to learn more about the students' education. Ms. Leclerc noted that what she has seen while substituting is alarming, and there is much stress. Ms. Leclerc is questioning the amount of education that students are receiving. Ms. Leclerc reiterated that it is the Board's responsibility to see that students are receiving a high quality education that prepares them for the future. Ms. Parker does not wish to focus on numbers, but would prefer to know what is working, what is not working, absentee rates, homeless rates, etc. Ms. Parker would like the Board to be informed regarding staff needs and see the reinstatement of programs/events that support staff and students. Mr. Reil clarified that the intent of his request is to assure that the Board prioritizes this issue. Mr. Reil is unhappy that some Board members have "can't and won't" in their vocabulary, reiterating that current test scores indicate there is a problem, and though test scores are not the only thing to be looked at, the Board is not assuring that students' needs are met. Thus far, the Board has not treated this issue as a priority. Ms. Badeau noted that current assessment tools allow teachers to identify and address the needs of students who need help, as well as those who exceed. Mrs. Spaulding charged the Curriculum Committee with determining the best way to provide the Board with the information necessary to determine what needs to be done to improve curriculum and to see that progress is being made.

6.6 Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at Board Meetings

In her review of past documentation, Mrs. Farrell noted that the Board used to cite the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of each Board meeting, and she would like to see this practice reinstated. This item will be added to the next Agenda. Ms. Badeau queried regarding whether or not the Pledge of Allegiance is being recited in the schools. Mr. Hennessey reported that the Pledge of Allegiance is not recited consistently throughout the schools.

7. Old Business

7.1 COVID Update

Mr. Hennessey reported that effective 03/07/22; all mask requirements have been lifted throughout the District. The community was notified of this change. Some students and staff are continuing to wear masks. Take-home antigen tests are still available for families.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Ms. Badeau welcomed new Board Members and advised that she believes everyone on the Board has the best interest at heart and she is a bit concerned regarding becoming divisive, and reminded everyone that the Board is 'here for the kids' and needs to do what is best for them.

Mr. Cecchinelli welcomed the new Board Members.

Ms. Parker welcomed new Board Members and congratulated Mrs. Spaulding and Mr. Cecchinelli for their re-election to the Board. Ms. Parker queried regarding the addition of the PSTL Program to a future agenda (as noted under the Public Comment section of the 02/24/22 minutes). Ms. Parker requested that this item be added to the Parking Lot or assigned to a Committee. Mrs. Parker reported that the SHS Drama Club will be performing a Spring Musical this year.

Mrs. Farrell advised that she spoke with a group of 5th graders who expressed their appreciation for the lifting of the mask mandate.

Mrs. Spaulding welcomed new Board Members and advised of her recommendation that the PSTL Program be added to a future Curriculum Committee meeting. Mrs. Spaulding congratulated members of all SHS sports teams for an outstanding year.

Mr. Hennessey also gave a 'shout out' to all the SHS sports teams and advised that Mr. Deering, II spoke with him regarding the wonderful sportsmanship exhibited by players, students and parents.

9. Future Agenda Items

In addition to the regular standing items:

- Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at Board Meetings
- Community Member Interviews
- Meeting Venues (In-person/virtual/hybrid)
- Combining of BCEMS and BTMES Athletic Programs

Parking Lot:

- Educational Update/Performance

10. Next Meeting Date

A Special Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the SHS Library and via Video Conference. The next meeting is Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 6:00 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 Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin