

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
March 31, 2021 - 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) – left the meeting during Agenda Item 3.1
Terry Reil (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sarah Pregent (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jessica Carpenter	Josh Howard	Yoko Kishishita	Avery Morse	Madison Pembroke
Nealee Thibault	William Toborg	Jonathan Strong		

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, March 31, 2022, Special meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., which was held in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Mr. Reil requested that Agenda Items 4.3 and 6 be postponed until all Board Members are present. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that the Board have the conversation for these agenda items, but delay the vote. Mrs. Spaulding is concerned that this approach will delay appointment of committee members who want to get started participating. Mr. Reil agrees that a delay is not the best approach, but noted that there are new Board Members and the selection of committee members sets the tone for the year, and he believe all Board Members should be present for the discussion and appointment. Ms. Badeau does not disagree with the importance of having all Board Members present, but advised that she believes there are community members who are anxious to get started participating on committees. Ms. Parker advised that given that only one Board Member is absent, she would like to move forward with selection of committee members. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding who wishes to delay the appointment of committee members. The result was 4 in favor of delay, 1 opposed, and 2 who are fine with either decision. It was noted that Ms. Leclerc is currently traveling and will need to depart from the meeting momentarily.

Delete Agenda Item 4.3

Delete Agenda Item 6

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board voted 6 to 0 to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Boltin was not present for the vote.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

3.1 Public Comment

Mr. Toborg reminded the Board that they did not recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Howard queried regarding the change in meeting time which is different than what the Board voted on. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the change in meeting time was her decision and that she chose the time based on the timeline used at a previous meeting where multiple interviews needed to take place. Mrs. Spaulding advised that future Regular Board meetings will start at 6:00 p.m. unless a different time is agreed upon. Mr. Howard voiced concern that a single Board Member overrode a decision made by the Board.

3.2 Student Voice

Two students (Avery Morse and Maddison Pembroke) requested to be invited into Executive Session. Brief discussion was held regarding the attendance of students who were on the hiring committee, attending a portion of Executive Session. It was noted that if their comments are general in nature, they should be expressed in the open portion of the meeting. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding their thoughts on allowing students to attend a short part of Executive Session. Mr. Reil noted that his understanding of Robert's Rules is that when someone other than a Board Member is invited into Executive Session, they can only attend in the capacity of answering questions, and cannot make statements, can't advocate for a particular position, and can't participate in the discussion. Mrs. Spaulding believes they can attend because they were on the hiring committee, and can provide input. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding documentation of the results from the hiring committee, and the availability of the documentation for Board review. Mrs. Spaulding is not aware of any documentation. Mrs. Marold confirmed that hiring committees don't usually document discussion or results. It is unclear what the students want to convey in Executive Session. It was noted that it is unusual for members of hiring committees, other than Mrs. Marold, to attend Executive Session. The Board is not clear on how to proceed with the request, and needs to assure that it is in compliance with statutes pertaining to Open Meetings and Executive Session. Ms. Badeau queried whether or not non-student community members would be allowed in Executive Session or if they would need to provide their comments in the open portion of the meeting. It was noted that when confidential (e.g. student matters) need to be discussed, students and parents are invited into Executive Session, as the discussion must remain private. Mr. Reil reiterated his understanding that individuals who are not on the Board, are not allowed to advocate or participate in Executive Session discussion, and that they are in attendance to provide answers to questions. Mr. Reil cautioned that it would not be appropriate for students to advocate for a candidate (in Executive Session). Mrs. Spaulding advised that when a parent is invited into Executive Session, they are usually there to advocate for their child. Mr. Reil believes parents advocating for students differs from individuals advocating for the hiring of employees. Mrs. Spaulding believes that students from the hiring committee have a different perspective than other community members who might want to advocate for an individual hire. To help provide clarity, a portion of the statute was read; "Attendance in Executive Session is limited to members of the public body, and, in their discretion, its staff, clerical assistants, legal counsel, and persons who are subject of the discussion or whose information is needed". In response to a query, it was noted that the work of the hiring committee is a personnel matter and their discussions are not open to the public. The decision was made to invite students into Executive Session for the first few minutes, where they can answer questions from the Board including confirmation that they are not present to advocate for any particular candidate. After students exit Executive Session, the Board will discuss interview questions, then proceed with interviews.

4. Executive Session

4.1 Spaulding High School Principal Interview (Candidate 1)

4.2 Spaulding High School Principal Interview (Candidate 2)

~~4.3 Community Members on Committee Discussion~~

Spaulding High School Principal interviews were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board voted 6 to 1 to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey, Mrs. Marold, Avery Morse, Madison Pembroke (student members of the hiring committee), and the candidates (separately) in attendance, at 5:54 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion. Mr. Reil voted against the motion. Ms. Leclerc had departed the meeting and was not present for the vote.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:08 p.m.

5. New Hires

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board voted 4 to 2 to accept the Superintendent's recommendation and agreed to hire Marlon Maylor and Luke Aither for the positions of SHS Co-Principals. Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, and Ms. Parker voted for the motion. Mrs. Farrell and Mr. Reil voted against the motion. Ms. Leclerc was not present for the vote.

~~6. Appoint Committee Members to Committees~~

7. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin