

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

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
April 14, 2022 - 6:00 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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Mel Battah	Jeff Blow	Michael Boutin	Jude Brister
Erin Carter	Elisha Coleman	Mike Deering, II	Nora Duane	Josh Howard
Guy Isabelle	Prudence Krasofski	Patrick Leene	Michael Whalen	William Toborg

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, April 14, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., which was held in the BTMES Library and via video conference.

2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance and participated in a ‘mindful moment’.
Mrs. Spaulding read the Meeting Norms, and advised regarding guidance for public comment.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 6.8 Community Members on Committees (will be taken out of order – after Executive Session)
Add 11.2 Contracts (Executive Session)

Committee Meeting Protocols – Add to Future Agenda Items

Legal Opinions for Quorum and Executive Session Issues – Add to Future Agenda Items

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, 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. Approval of Minutes

5.1 Approval of Minutes – March 24, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the March 24, 2022 Regular Meeting (as presented), the Minutes of the March 31, 2022 Special Meeting (as presented), and the April 5, 2022 Board Retreat (as amended).

5.2 Approval of Minutes – March 31, 2022 Special Meeting

Approved under Agenda Item 5.1

5.3 Approval of Minutes – April 5, 2022 Board Retreat

Approved under Agenda Item 5.1

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Margrette Weiss (BTMES SLP), Kassidy Kane (CEMS Grade 2 teacher), Stacie Jacques (CEMS Grade 2 teacher), Suzanne Abbott (CEMS School Nurse), Julia Woodworth (CEMS School Nurse), Sarah Capron (CEMS Grade 2 teacher), Randi Collins (BTMES Grade 2 teacher), Sarah Attig (BTMES Grade 1 teacher), Christopher Wood (BTMES Grade 3 teacher), Eric Spencer (SHS History teacher), and Colleen LeFebvre (BTMES SLP) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Hennessey read a prepared statement which will be released to the community in the near future. The statement advises regarding housing shortages and encourages community members to contact the District if they have or are aware of available rental properties, or homes for sale. In response to query, Mr. Hennessey advised that job descriptions are available from Mrs. Marold, and cautioned that some job descriptions are still in the process of being written. In response to a request for a list of why employees are resigning, Mr. Hennessey advised that he does not have all of the resignations with him this evening. A large list of resignations will be presented at the next meeting. Mr. Hennessey noted that throughout the state, there are many job openings, both for teachers, as well as administrators. Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, staff members who make a request are provided with a 15 day extension (for signing contracts). Many staff members have requested the extension. The District is working on conducting exit interviews, but is finding this challenging given the work involved in the hiring process (given the number of new hires). In response to a query, it was noted that the salary scale is available on-line (in the Collective Bargaining Agreement). It was noted that the salary schedule is based on education and years of experience. At the end of the hiring season, a 'breakage' report will be provided to the Board. In the past, the Board also received a report that indicates internal transfers. It was requested that the internal transfer report be provided again this year. Brief discussion was held regarding presentation of resignations. The past practice involved presenting the Board with resignation letters. It was confirmed that there is currently a Board requirement that letters of resignation be included in the Board packet. Mr. Hennessey noted that some letters of resignation include personal or personnel issues. This item will be added to a future agenda for discussion and a decision regarding whether or not to change the directive. It was suggested that some sort of report and perhaps a survey, be drafted.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of the slate of candidates presented; Margrette Weiss, Kassidy Kane, Stacie Jacques (contingent upon receiving a provisional license), Suzanne Abbott, Julia Woodworth, Sarah Capron, Randi Collins, Sarah Attig, Christopher Wood, Eric Spencer, and Colleen LeFebvre.

6.2 Educational Performance Discussion

A document titled 'Outline for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey displayed an updated version of the document, and provided a brief summary of the document which provides an overview of the proposed framework and structuring/processes sections. This is a fluid document that is continually updated. Mr. Reil reiterated that he would like to have a standing agenda item (monthly) for Educational Performance to allow the Board to keep its 'finger on the pulse' of student progress, and keep academic performance as a high priority of the Board. The coaching culture which is in place in the k-8 schools is being introduced at the high school. Lengthy discussion was held, including; concerns over lack of progress in the past, ways in which to measure success in an ongoing fashion, the importance of having the document align with the Strategic Plan, a suggestion that teachers attend Board meetings to share what is working, meeting efficiencies as outlined in the Act 46 Articles of Agreement, the need to provide services in an effort to avoid needing to provide as many interventions, the need to see outcomes more often (to help measure success – student impact), concern that assessments provided three times a year is not sufficient to help assure successful outcomes, concern that the Board needs to be cautious not to micromanage curriculum, concern that the proficiency rate was too low prior to COVID, the need to identify the root causes for low proficiency rates, the importance of data, action plans, and consistent reports that show outcomes, a suggestion to have teachers attend Board meetings to share what is working in their classrooms, submission of a report regarding professional development and how it has impacted the classroom, a suggestion that staff complete an anonymous survey to provide input, and identification of additional metrics to measure success. It was noted that the District has been prevented (by the State) from sharing SBAC data. Educational Performance will be added to the May agenda, and may include a list of items that could be provided to the Board. It was noted that test scores alone, do not provide a good overview of the total picture.

6.3 Review Board Meeting Start Time

A community member would like to see meetings start later (6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.) to accommodate public participation. It was suggested that the meeting start time revert back to 5:30 p.m., citing the length of meetings (including Executive Sessions), which also impacts employees who are sometimes required to attend Executive Session, as well as Board Members who also have

jobs which start early the next day. It was noted that BUUSD meetings run 3 to 4 times longer than other Boards' meetings. Lengthy discussion ensued which included; concern that the Board is less effective and may not make the best decisions later in the evening, concern that the Board Norm to 'Honor the Board's Decisions' is not being followed (this item was recently voted on), concern that meetings are not run efficiently and that perhaps the Board is discussing matters that should not be overseen by the Board, a suggestion that meetings or agenda items have 'set' start and end times, a suggestion that the Board review its roles and responsibilities, that facilitation occur as outlined under Robert's Rules (which the Board operates under), a suggestion that there be a set rotation for speaking, and a suggestion that agendas have fewer items. It was agreed to keep the start time at 6:00 p.m. and that this matter will be revisited at a future meeting.

6.4 Recommendation to Rescind Board Goal Setting and Evaluation Policy (A32)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of discussion held at the Committee level; including the recommendation that this policy be rescinded (VSBA deleted this policy in October 2021), and that procedures be written to cover the items listed in the policy. Mrs. Spaulding will write procedures and present them at a future meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to rescind the Board Goal Setting and Evaluation Policy (A32).

6.5 First Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Ms. Parker provided an overview of discussion at the Committee level, including amendments made to address the use of SROs in the District's schools. The amended policy has been legally vetted. It was noted that administrators will need to write building specific procedures. If this policy is adopted, local policy F41 can be rescinded. One formatting issue was identified. It was noted that the normal editing protocols were not followed because this policy is very different from the VSBA Model Policy.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26).

6.6 FY23 School Calendar

A copy of the 'Regional Calendar: BUUSD 2022 – 2023' was distributed. (Final 03/22/22)

Mr. Hennessey advised that the BUUSD was actively involved in creating this calendar in collaboration with Winooski Valley colleagues, as well as schools in Chittenden County.

6.7 Electric Bus Update

Mr. Hennessey advised that there have been some issues, with one bus being out of commission (a charging issue), and that there were some concerns regarding construction of the charging stations. The District is working with STA and the Fire Marshall to remedy issues. Mr. Reil shared concerns regarding construction of the charging stations, and queried whether or not the District was aware that there was no electrical permit in place for construction of the charging stations, placement of an underground junction box, short circuiting of the underground 3 phase power source, possible issues with charging stations being so close to the building, and concern that these issues did not get caught by the District. Mr. Hennessey advised that STA is taking responsibility for these issues. A community member voiced concern regarding the lack of permits, underground electrical shortages, and safety issues related to the dangers of 3 phase power shorting-out.

6.8 Community Members on Committees

This item will be taken out of order, with discussion taking place after Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to appoint committee members as follows:

Curriculum Committee: Rachel Aldrich-Whalen (BC) and Melissa Battah (BT)

Facilities/Transportation Committee: Andy McMichael (BC) and Mary Jane Ainsworth (BT)

Finance Committee: John Lyons (BC) and Paul Malone (BT)

Policy Committee: Thomas Kelly (BC) and Jon Valsangiacomo (BT)

7. Old Business

7.1 Enrollment/Home Study Update

Copies of the April 2022 District Enrollment/Staffing Report, and the Home Study Report (AOE Provided Data – 04/05/22) were distributed. Mr. Hennessey noted that enrollment has been relatively steady at BTMES and SHS, but BCEMS has had an increase of 22 students. Brief discussion was held regarding class sizes vs. the class size limits defined in policy.

7.2 COVID Update

Mr. Hennessey noted that COVID is still ‘very much with us’, and is having an impact on staffing and student attendance. Since the February break, there has been a significant increase in other types of illness (colds, flu, etc). Due to staffing shortages, the SEA Program was shut down on 04/13/22 and 04/14/22. It is anticipated that the SEA Program will reopen 04/15/22. COVID tests are still available for pick up at the district schools and at Central Office.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mr. Boltin would like to consider adding an agenda item to discuss the possibility of having an anonymous survey of staff, in hopes that it would be a proactive step that would provide an opportunity to address staff concerns prior to them leaving the District. Mrs. Spaulding will contact HR regarding generation of a ‘climate’ survey.

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding the Annual SPED Report (student counts, outplacements, costs etc…) and requested that it be presented to the Board prior to the end of the academic year.

Mrs. Farrell advised that she has received a few calls regarding fund raising activities at BTMES. There is concern that fund raising is falling on students’ families and the most recent fund raiser has a letter advising that the fund raiser is for essential costs for classroom tools. Mrs. Farrell raised concern that with the recently passed budget (over \$50,000,000), why is the school asking for funds for essential classroom tools. Mr. Hennessey is not aware of this fund raiser.

Ms. Parker welcomed the new hires.

Mrs. Spaulding is pleased to be back to in-person meetings and appreciates the suggestions for being more efficient in meetings.

9. Future Agenda Items

- Committee Meeting Protocols
- Legal Opinions for Quorum and Executive Session Issues (as part of the Consent Agenda)
- Procedures for Resignations / Reporting of Exit Survey Information
- Second and Final Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)
- Rescind Video Surveillance Policy (F41)
- Combining BCEMS and BTMES Athletic Programs
- Administrator Evaluations (Executive Session)
- Contracts (Executive Session)
- Update on Para-Educator Hiring (under New Hires)

- Educational Performance (May)
- Procedures for Board Goal Setting and Evaluation (Parking Lot)
- Retreat Items (Parking Lot) – Self Evaluation etc.

The Board agreed to remove Agenda Item 11.2 (Contracts) from this evening’s agenda.

Adding the SEA Building for Board Meetings will be discussed at the Policy Committee. Mr. Hennessey believes Board meetings can be held in this building without compromising student confidentiality.

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding presentation of hiring sheets for the SHS Co-Principals.

Ms. Badeau requested that the hiring sheet for the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment position also be provided. These items will be presented at the next meeting.

In response to a query, it was noted that Board packets will continue to be available at the Central Office.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Thursday, April 28, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the BTMES Library and via video conference.

11. Executive Session as Needed

11.1 Community Members on Committees

~~11.2 Contracts~~

Community Members on Committees was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, at

8:38 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the item proposed for discussion.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:02 p.m.

The Board held discussion on Agenda Item 6.8.

12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin