

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
April 28, 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)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sarah Pregent (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Rachel Aldrich-Whalen	Jeff Blow	Michael Boutin	Sarah Halman
Josh Howard	Tyler Watkins			

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, April 28, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and Via Video Conference .

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Mindfulness Moment

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Spaulding read the Board Norms. The Board held a Mindfulness Moment.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 6.10 BTMES Roof, Summer 2022 RFP Approval

Agenda Item 6.9 will be taken out of order.

Add 12.3 MOU Update (Executive Session)

It was noted that the next Finance Committee Meeting will be May 24, 2022.

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

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding Public Comment, and read the information printed at the top of the Agenda.

Mr. Boutin addressed the Board regarding Public Comment, noting that City Council meetings are held weekly, which helps to keep meetings at a more reasonable length. Mr. Boutin advised that he was not allowed to make that comment at the previous Board meeting, and not being allowed to speak made him uncomfortable, sad, and angry. Mr. Boutin understands that public speaking rules are in place to prevent meetings from getting out of control, but he believes that when there are a limited number of individuals, speaking protocols should be more flexible, as the current process feels very dictatorial and uncomfortable. Mr. Boutin highly recommends that the Board reconsider the current policy. Mr. Boutin reiterated that the current policy makes him feel very uncomfortable.

Mr. Blow advised that he agrees with Mr. Boutin. Mr. Blow believes that given the size of the budget, that to limit public comment to two minutes is, in his opinion, disrespectful. Mr. Blow believes that if a resident comes before the Board to speak, they should be

allowed a more reasonable amount of time to speak. Mr. Blow is concerned that there is no discussion or interaction regarding public comments and concerns, and he feels this practice is very dismissive, and as a tax payer, he does not appreciate this approach.

Mr. Howard reiterated the sentiments of Mr. Boutin and Mr. Blow, advising that he has also heard from other community members who are concerned that comments from the public are dismissed and that questions posed to the Board do not get answered. Mr. Howard believes that if community members have the courage and take the initiative to voice concerns to the Board, whether or not the Board agrees with perspectives being shared, it is respectful to reply.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – April 14, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 14, 2022 Regular Meeting and the Legal Opinions for Quorum and Executive Session Issues.

5.2 Legal Opinions for Quorum and Executive Session Issues

A document containing an e-mail thread of correspondence was distributed.

Regarding the legal opinion for ‘Quorums’, Mr. Reil believes there is confusion regarding the line between participation as a Board Member vs. participation as a community member. Mr. Reil queried regarding having legal counsel review a few of the committee meetings and give an opinion on whether or not participation by Board Members (as community members) could cause an issue. It is Mrs. Spaulding’s understanding that legal counsel did not believe Board Members were considered ‘community members’ at committee meetings, but rather Board Members are ‘carved out’ and are not participating as part of the committee. Mr. Hennessey advised that on 05/26/22, Pietro Lynn will be joining the Board providing training on the difference between public meetings and meetings of the public, and legal ramifications of blurring the lines between the two. Mr. Reil reiterated that he is uncomfortable that lines may be being crossed, and he wants to assure that his participation at committee meetings does not constitute a violation. It was agreed that some clarification is necessary regarding the “carve out” provision. Mr. Reil understands that there is a carve out provision, but he does not believe the line is clear. Discussion ensued which included various opinions regarding beliefs on what the carve out provision allows.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Patrick Peters (BUS – PK-8 Instructional Coach), and Shauna Huth-Teece (BTMES Elementary Special Educator) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates, advised that the Instructional Coach position is replacing an Interventionist position, and answered questions from the Board. It was noted that Ms. Huth-Teece’s hiring sheet indicates a 7 hour work day, and it is believed it should read 7.5 hours per day. Mr. Hennessey clarified that the Instructional Coach position (replacing an interventionist position) normally works with teaching staff (improving Tier 1 instruction), but could also work with students. It is hoped that by providing coaching to teachers, fewer students will require interventions. Concern was raised that by replacing an interventionist with a coach, students will be receiving fewer services. Mr. Hennessey hopes that this new philosophy of adding coaches will result in fewer students needing interventions. Mrs. Spaulding voiced concern that both resumes seem ‘light’ and queried regarding whether School Spring is up to date. Mr. Hennessey noted the national shortage of Special Educators and advised that the AOE is looking for alternative ways to license individuals as Special Educators. It was noted that all staff are on a probationary period during their first year.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Patrick Peters and Shauna Huth-Teece.

6.2 Para Educator Hiring Update

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding three applications. Two individuals have been hired and the third will be interviewed shortly. There have been no new resignations submitted. Mr. Watkins queried regarding whether Board Members have shadowed para-educators, and recommends that those who haven’t, do so. Mr. Watkins queried regarding support for new para-educators. Mr. Watkins would like to receive updated information regarding open/filled para-educator positions. Mr. Watkins suggested that each school have a parent advocate. Mr. Watkins queried regarding how much closer the District is to being in compliance with IEPs and suggested that the District look in to some hiring incentives. Mr. Boutin also believes that Board Members shadowing para-educators would be beneficial. The Board held discussion regarding various ways to improve recruitment practices and marketing the District to attract new employees.

6.3 Committee Meeting Protocols

It is agreed that in the future, larger discussion should be held regarding committee meetings as a whole. The Board discussed the process of cancelling or postponing committee meetings. It was suggested that all committee members be consulted prior to

committee meetings being cancelled. Concern was voiced that if meetings are cancelled and information is shared with Committee Members only, members of the public have lost their ability to attend and participate in these meetings. Mrs. Spaulding advised that for the time being, all committee members will be consulted prior to meetings being cancelled. It was noted that procedures are in place and that those procedures should be reviewed and amended if applicable.

6.4 Procedures for Resignations

Mr. Hennessey noted that the number of resignations and retirements being received this year is extraordinary. Mr. Hennessey advised that exit interviews are being conducted, but employees may opt not to participate in these interviews. Mr. Hennessey is concerned regarding the current directive of resignation letters being included in Board packets, as he worries that personnel or personal issues may be shared. Exit interviews occur via a Google form, and can also be conducted via telephone or in-person. Exit interviews can be submitted anonymously. Mrs. Marold has several years-worth of exit interviews and could provide a general overview of the reasons employees are leaving. The Board held lengthy discussion including; concern that a Board directive has not been being followed, the benefit/value of seeing resignation letters, concern over exposing personnel/personal matters, the importance of the Board interpreting for themselves, the reasons employees are resigning, a suggestion that names be redacted from resignation letters, concern that employees may provide more or less information (knowing that the Board will see their letters), giving employees an avenue to anonymously 'speak' openly, and various suggestions on how resignation information can be provided to the Board. Mrs. Marold advised that she will add a section to the exit interview form that advises employees that they may anonymously provide feedback to the Board.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted that effective immediately; resignation letters will no longer be submitted to the Board, that a list of names of professional staff who are leaving shall be provided in Board packets as part of the Superintendent's Report (as they occur), and that beginning in June 2022, the Board will be provided with a Quarterly Trend Report that shall include information on all staff resignations (not just licensed positions), including any written comments submitted by employees.

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

Policies for Agenda Items 6.5 through 6.9 were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the Policy Committee's discussion, noting that the Committee could not reach consensus regarding the threshold amount (indicated in the policy as \$XXXX.XX), and have recommended that the Board set that amount as part of the First Reading. Clarification was provided that the threshold amount (to be determined by the Board) refers to items that are appropriated in the budget. The policy requires that budgeted expenditures over the threshold, or items greater than \$15,000 that are not planned for in the budget, must be approved by the Board. After lengthy discussion, including input from the Facilities Director and community members, the policy was amended by replacing \$XXXX.XX with \$40,000 (as the threshold amount to be utilized for the First Reading).

On a motion by Mrs. Leclerc, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board voted 6 to 1 to approve the First Reading of the Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (F20) as amended.

Ms. Badeau, Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Leclerc, and Ms. Parker voted for the motion. Mr. Reil voted against the motion.

6.6 First Reading Education Records Policy (C1)

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the policy that was amended to align with the VSBA Model Policy.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Education Records Policy (C1).

6.7 First Reading Student Attendance Policy (C7)

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the policy that was amended to align with the VSBA Model Policy. It was noted that there will be building specific procedures for this policy. Brief discussion was held regarding student attendance issues that have occurred over the past two years, including outreach and other steps being taken to assure compliance with the policy and the law.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Student Attendance Policy (C7).

6.8 First Reading Pupil Privacy Rights Policy (C8)

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the policy advising that this version of the policy aligns with recent amendments to the VSBA Model Policy. Mrs. Farrell advised that the VSBA is not a regulatory agency, but rather is an organization that has the staff to write and vet policies to assist school boards. School boards may modify policies if necessary to meet their particular needs. Mrs. Farrell expressed her appreciation to the VSBA for the policy work they perform.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Pupil Privacy Rights Policy (C8).

6.9 Rescind Video Surveillance Policy (F41)

This agenda item was discussed after Agenda Item 7.1.

It was noted that this policy can be rescinded because Policy F26 has been adopted.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to rescind the Video Surveillance Policy (F41).

6.10 BTMES Roof, Summer 2022 RFP Approval

A document titled 'BTMES Roof, Summer 2022' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey and Mr. Evans provided a brief overview of the bids received, and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Evans advised that once this work is completed, all of the BTMES roofing will be completed (with the exception of the three 'penthouses' that house air conditioning handlers). Improvements to the penthouse roofs and walls can be performed through the annual operating budget. The SHS roof is in good shape and the District is almost half way through completing roof replacement at BCEMS. Roof work at BCEMS cannot be performed this summer because of supply chain issues. In response to a query, Mr. Evans advised that BTMES roofing work is being funded through surplus money. When surplus monies are not available, these types of projects are usually funded with budgeted 'construction' money. If surplus monies were not available this year, a lesser amount of roof work would have been performed. In response to a query, it was noted that there are no local contractors certified to perform the roofing work.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to contract with DAYCO, Inc. for BTMES Summer 2022 roofing work in the amount of \$349,000.

7. Old Business

7.1 Second and Final Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)

A copy of the policy was distributed. Ms. Parker noted that this policy is significantly different than the VSBA Model Policy, mainly due to the District's use of SROs (School Resource Officers). This version of the policy has been legally vetted.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Reading of the Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26), and agreed to adopt said policy.

8. Reports

8.1 Superintendent Report

A copy of the Superintendent's Report dated 04/22/22 was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey thanked community members who responded to the District's plea for housing options.

Mr. Hennessey advised that the SHS Scholarship Trust awarded over \$700,000 worth of scholarships, and more awards may still be given. This scholarship fund recognizes the generosity of the Barre community.

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

Building reports were distributed.

Mrs. Farrell reported that the legislature approved the new governance structure for CVCC and the organizational meeting of the Regional Board will be 05/09/22. Additional information will be provided after that date. Ms. Emerson has been keeping new Board Members very well informed. In response to a query, it was noted that the SEA Building has not submitted reports in the past, but will begin to do so in the future. In response to a query, it was confirmed that both BCEMS and BTMES hold Scholastic Book Fairs, and that Scholastic Books is a for-profit company. Not all students are in a position to purchase books, but donations are made to assist those students in obtaining books at the book fair.

8.3 Finance Committee

The Committee met on April 26, 2022.

Mrs. Leclerc reported that the Committee discussed Act 173, pupil weighting, reviewed grant procedures, reviewed summer projects, discussed year-end projections, and discussed reviewing processes for efficiencies, cost savings and effectiveness.

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.4 Facilities & Transportation Committee

The next meeting is Monday, May 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference..

8.5 Policy Committee

Minutes from the April 18, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker reported that new community committee members were welcomed. The Committee has been working on cleaning up the 'Parking Lot', administrators are working on developing procedures, and work will be performed to see that procedures have consistent formatting, and align with policies. .
The next meeting is Monday, May 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.6 Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the April 7, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Badeau reported that the Committee discussed the PSTL Program, and educational performance, including how to best monitor student progress.

The next meeting is Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.7 Negotiations Committee

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library.

9. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding the electric bus charging stations. Mr. Hennessey advised that charging issues are being worked on and that STA has been made aware of the Board's concern relating to the installation of chargers at BTMES.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the vote to appoint community members to committees occurred in open session.

Ms. Parker queried regarding a community that lives in one area and has after-school care in another. The community member is experiencing issues with children not being able to take a different bus after school (to transport them to after-school care).

Mr. Hennessey advised this is an ongoing issue for a number of families. Mr. Hennessey advised that Ms. Parker should have the community member contact him regarding this matter. Mr. Hennessey advised that this issue is caused by capacity limitations.

10. Future Agenda Items

- New Hires
- Recruiting Strategies Update
- Amendments to Committee Procedures
- Committee Meetings
- Policy Second Readings and Adoption
- Educational Performance Update
- Procedure for Rescinded Policy A32
- Electric Bus Charging Station Update

Ms. Parker queried regarding the possibility of merging the Response to Community Correspondence Procedure with the How to Engage with the Board document.

Parking Lot:

- Annual Special Education Report (TBD)

11. Next Meeting Dates

Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

12. Executive Session as Needed

12.1 Administrator Evaluations

12.2 Administrator Contracts

12.3 MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include; Administrator Evaluations, Administrator Contracts, and the Memorandum of Understanding.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the items proposed for discussion, specifically Administrator Contracts and the MOU, would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey in attendance, at 9:08 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the items proposed for discussion.

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Ms. Badeau, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 10:12 p.m.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin