

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
May 12, 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
Josh Allen, Communications Specialist
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Rachel Aldrich-Whalen	Jeff Blow	Abby Blum	Mike Boutin
Mike Deering, II	Nora Duane	Brendan Eaton	Michael Emmons	Sarah Helman
Josh Howard	Guy Isabelle	Prudence Krasofski	Patrick Leene	Paul Malone
Ben Matthews	Aidan Munding	Brianna Pace	Nancy Pope	Dean Preston
Bern Rose	Camden Simpson	William Toborg	Kim Whitcomb	

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, May 12, 2022 Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Spaulding read the Board Norms. The Board held a Mindfulness Moment. Mrs. Spaulding thanked community member for their attendance and read the public comment protocols.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 6.7 Central Vermont Career Center School District Update

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, 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

Bern Rose addressed the Board expressing appreciation to students and staff, as well as her concern over negativity from the community at large, including comments she believes are supported by feelings rather than facts. Ms. Rose would like to see more positive input and believes highlighting the District’s positives would assist with attracting and retaining excellent staff.

Josh Howard addressed the Board, advising that he does not see Board meetings as hostile. Mr. Howard voiced concern regarding transparency and a conversation he overheard which he believes poses an ethical issue. Mr. Howard believes the community should support teachers and he does not believe adding administrative positions will help increase student success.

William Toborg addressed the Board and queried regarding a student ‘walk-out’ that occurred in March over a recently passed Florida Law. Mr. Toborg wants information regarding rules pertaining to walk-outs, and wants to know if Vermont passed a similar law (restricting teaching related to gender identity and sexual orientation), would teaching in the District need to change (does K – 3 curriculum include these topics)?

Micheal Boutin thanked the Superintendent for his response to an e-mail and thanked the Board for what he believes is a reconsideration of the public participation protocols (given that Ms. Rose was given more than 2 minutes to speak).

SHS teacher and Student Council Co-advisor, Patrick Leene addressed the board to thank the three students who are in attendance this evening, stressing that their voice means a lot to the community and he is pleased that they are attending the meeting.

Nancy Pope addressed the Board to echo Bern Rose's statements, advising that she believes it's important to look ahead and begin to make progress as outlined in the Strategic Plan. Ms. Pope believes it is not too early to start budgeting for next year.

Guy Isabelle addressed the Board, noting that he believes much has changed over the past few years, and shared his experience (while working for DCF) with student drop-off procedures. Mr. Isabelle acknowledged that many businesses are having difficulty hiring staff, and he believes the District needs to work extra hard on recruiting. He believes the hiring difficulty problem is 'beyond money' and also involves many other factors (e.g. schedules, childcare etc.).

4.2 Student Voice

Isabella Deering queried regarding why students are no longer allowed to wear seatbelts on buses. Mr. Hennessey will address the issue with Ms. Deering early next week.

Camden Simpson (Student Council) addressed the Board to express the overall topic of 'community'. Mr. Simpson believes there are many aspects in the school that would benefit from more community support. Mr. Simpson noted that SHS Sports have been very successful, in part due to great community support. He believes that with more community support, for other activities would allow those activities to rise to the 'next level'.

Aidan Mundinger (Student Council) addressed the Board echoing Mr. Simpson's sentiment that community support is vital to the success of the school and its programs, and noted a decline in student morale.

Brianna Pace (Student Council) addressed the Board advising that school morale has reached an all-time low, citing COVID issues, the return to in-person learning, and the loss of Assistant Principal Jim Ferland (a huge booster of student morale). Brianna hopes that school morale will begin to improve now that a new Co-Principal has been hired.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – April 28, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, Draft 2 of the Minutes of the April 28, 2022 Regular Meeting.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Shannon Planck (BCEMS SLP), Corinn Haker (BTMES 1st grade), Rachel Greenfield (BTMES Kindergarten), Aimee O'Meara (SHS Choral Music Teacher), Angela Garcelon (BCEMS Instrumental Music Teacher), Molly Metevier (BCEMS Librarian PK – 8), Karen Heath (BUUSD PK-8 Instructional Coach), Cori Mendelow (BTMES Elementary Special Educator), Kristina Safford (BTMES Kindergarten teacher), and Carrie Blodgett (BCEMS 2nd grade teacher) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised there are ten candidates presented for hire. Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of the candidates. Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding hiring procedures that allow the Superintendent to hire candidates prior to a Board meeting, as long as the Board has had time to review resumes and no concerns have been expressed. In response to a query from a community member, it was noted that most of the new hires are to replace teachers who are leaving, and that salaries are based on education and years of experience. The financial impact differs (positively or negatively) based on years of experience/education of those who are leaving vs. those who are being hired. It was noted that one of the hire sheets does not include a salary amount and Mrs. Farrell would like to know the 'breakage' (difference in salaries).

On a motion by Ms. Badeau, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Shannon Planck, Corinn Haker, Rachel Greenfield, Aimee O'Meara, Angela Garcelon, Molly Metevier, Karen Heath, Cori Mendelow, Kristina Safford, and Carrie Blodgett.

6.2 Recruiting Strategies Presentation

Carol Marold and Josh Allen were welcomed to the meeting and thanked in advance for their presentation on new recruiting strategies. Mr. Allen shared the presentation on-screen. Mr. Allen and Mrs. Marold proceeded to provide an overview of the presentation, which included 'Core Thoughts #1 - #5. The presentation covered the areas of; effective staff recruitment & retention, the importance of internal communications and engagement, preparation for long-term (years) staff shortages, management of staff

shortages, 'selling a richer benefit package', an upcoming job fair at the Barre Auditorium on 06/01/22 (the first the District has attended), nation-wide and international recruitment, the importance of marketing a positive reputation for delivering a quality experience for students, the importance of marketing SHS to sending districts (tuition is paid by sending towns), importance of recruiting out of district staff members, the importance of everyone playing a role in staff retention and recruitment, 'selling' the district to potential employees, investment in recruitment and employees, the cost of recruitment, improvements to the web site which includes; the addition of open and transparent salary information, information on living in Barre, and some employee testimonials, and the importance of using a multi-faceted strategy in recruitment. Mr. Hennessey advised that the District currently has 30 to 40 open professional positions, and that the District is competing with other districts for these employees. Mrs. Marold noted that 65 professional staff members have left the District this year (some during the year, some leaving at the end of the school year). Lengthy discussion was held including input from community and Board Members. A report (identifying why staff are leaving the District) will be presented to the Board in June.

6.3 Posted Board Procedures and Board Engagement

Copies of five procedures were distributed:

Board and Board Committee Operation – 01/09/20

Complaints Regarding Students, Parents, Employees, School, or District – 01/09/20

Coordination and Communication Procedures and Practices – 11/15/07

Public Comment at Board Meetings – 01/09/20

Response to Community Correspondence – 01/09/20

It was noted that the Board Engagement document isn't in the packet.

After brief discussion, it was agreed to table discussion until the next Board meeting.

6.4 Procedure for Rescinded Policy A32 (Board Goal Setting & Evaluation Policy)

A document titled Board Goal Setting & Evaluation Procedure was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the suggestion to adopt/approve procedures for Board Goal Setting and Evaluation. The policy on this matter (A32), was rescinded by the Board on 04/14/22. Brief discussion was held and small amendments were proposed.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Board Goal-Setting & Evaluation Procedure.

6.5 Summer Programs

Mr. Hennessey provided a brief update, noting that additional details will be presented in the Superintendent's Report at the 05/26/22 meeting. Summer school, which is almost fully staffed, will be held at BCEMS, beginning on 07/05/22 and will run through early August. The program (mainly academic with some Social/Emotional Learning) will serve students in grades k – 7, who have been referred for needing recovery or intervention. The program is a half day program. There is an additional summer services program for Special Education students in grades pre-k through 12. There are currently 106 students registered for the summer program. The SEA Program will also host a summer program. The YMCA will hold a privately run all-day camp at BTMES. Many opportunities will also be available through the Barre City Recreation Department.

6.6 Committee Charge

A document titled 'Committees' (2022 Essential Work of Vermont School Boards Page 87) was distributed.

A document titled Northfield Town School District Governance Process Policies (GP) – GP.09 was distributed.

A document titled Board Standing Committees (C10-L-HU) was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that this agenda item is the result of discussion held at the Board Retreat, and noted that some of the documentation is very old (2007), and she believes some of it is out of date. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated that tonight's discussion is a continuation of discussion held at the Retreat and she expects that discussion will be ongoing. Mrs. Spaulding anticipates that discussion will include; the role, purpose, authority, responsibilities, limitations, and specific tasks of committees. Mr. Malone queried regarding the intent of the Board, specifically if the Board intends to dissolve committees, and advised regarding the importance of committees in the past, including transparency, allowing for community involvement, building trust, and possible recruitment of new board members. Mr. Malone believes elimination of committees, will result in longer board meetings. Mr. Malone voiced concern that community members participated in interviews as well as completing back-ground checks, and reiterated his concern that elimination of committees might be under consideration, and that elimination of committees would lengthen board meetings. Mr. Malone believes that open meeting statutes do not allow for the discussion of community member applicants in Executive Session and queried regarding the reasoning behind selecting candidates, and if all candidates were discussed in Executive Session. Mrs. Spaulding noted that she was advised by legal counsel that the discussion of committee candidates could occur in Executive Session. Mr. Toborg suggested that the Policy Committee hold discussion on 'Committee Charge'. Mr. Howard voiced concern that there might be a push to eliminate committees, and advised that he believes the work of committees saves boards a lot of meeting time. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated that discussion of this topic is to identify the charge of committees and to identify whether or not committees are over-stepping their authority (which hasn't yet been defined). Mrs. Spaulding would like to know that committees

are operating in the most efficient, productive, supportive ways to assist the Board. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding how the Board would like to proceed. Lengthy discussion was held, with Board Members providing input on the matter. Mrs. Spaulding provided a recap of her understanding of the discussion; that the Board believes additional information is necessary, that answers to the first four questions (on the document) need to be answered, that the advice of VSBA and legal counsel may be beneficial, and that it may also be beneficial to research how other boards operate committees. This item will be added to a future agenda.

6.7 Central Vermont Career Center School District Update

Mrs. Farrell reported that at the Central Vermont Career Center School District Organizational Board Meeting on 05/09/22, the Regional Career Center Board (RAB) was disbanded. Some of the Board Members were elected by their communities; some were assigned by member district boards. The CVCCSD hopes to have a full day program beginning in September 2023, and new programs were discussed. There were 350 student applicants for 290 career center openings, indicating that interest in technical/vocational education is increasing. Additionally, Mrs. Farrell advised that the Board, Ms. Emerson, and her team are still working with the Agency of Education for permission to establish a Stone Arts Program, but are having difficulty receiving approval from the AOE. The Regular CVCCSD Board will start meeting next Tuesday, 05/17/22 and will hold meetings every month. Thirty current students are being inducted into the National Technical Center Honor Society. It will be important for the BUUSD Board to following what is happening with the new Career Center, as there will be a loss of (rental) revenue if the Career Center relocates.

7. Old Business

7.1 Second and Final Reading Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (C1)

Copies of policies for Agenda Items 7.1 – 7.4 were distributed. Brief discussion was held.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Readings of the following policies; Fiscal Management and General Financial Accountability Policy (C1) (as amended), Education Records Policy (C1), Student Attendance Policy (C7), and the Pupil Privacy Rights Policy (C8), and agreed to adopt said policies.

7.2 Second and Final Reading Education Records Policy (C1)

Action taken under Agenda Item 7.1.

7.3 Second and Final Reading Student Attendance Policy (C7)

Action taken under Agenda Item 7.1.

7.4 Second and Final Reading Pupil Privacy Rights Policy (C8)

Action taken under Agenda Item 7.1.

7.5 Electric Bus Charge Update

The second bus has been returned to BTMES. That bus was experiencing charging issues (wiring problems). The bus that was on site has a broken window and is now out of service waiting for window replacement. A community member queried regarding why no permit was in place for installation of the charging station, and why the underground charging station shorted out. Mr. Reil advised that the underground short resulted from water in the junction box (due to damage by a plow). No students were in the school when the underground short occurred. The junction box should not have been installed underground and it will be eliminated (replaced by a different mode of wiring/installation). Charging stations do not currently have electrical service. Mr. Reil has no additional information regarding the permit issue. Mr. Hennessey and Mr. Evans will be meeting with STA representatives to resolve outstanding issues. In response to a query, it was reported that there will be no cost to the District.

7.6 Educational Performance Update

Mr. Hennessey reported a very productive Curriculum Committee meeting last week and advised that there is some very good work occurring to improve curriculum. The District is in the midst of SBAC testing. Mr. Hennessey reported on the status of various tests. The District anticipates the data embargo will be lifted on 06/13/22. Mr. Hennessey has reviewed the SBAC result document and advised that it does contain a number of caveats. Data will be impacted by disruptions in learning due to COVID. Community members queried regarding concern that test scores may drop below last years' numbers, encouraged the Board and administrators to think outside the box for improving learning, and queried regarding action plans being written to address deficiencies. Brief discussion was held regarding curriculum plans that align with the Strategic Plan, that the District expects to see that all students have made at least one year's worth of progress, and it was requested that State and National statistics also be presented to the Board when local numbers are shared. Recent data from BTMES indicates that new intervention strategies are working.

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding any financial responsibility of the District for repairs to the recreation road (used for student drop-off and pick-up). Mr. Hennessey will follow up on this. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding a report from Great Schools' Partnership. Mr. Hennessey advised that a report will be available before the end of the school year.

Ms. Badeau shared that she attended a Washington County Restorative Practices Group meeting, and noted that Barre has not been well represented at that group for a number of years. Ms. Badeau advised that she was pleased to see four Barre representatives at the most recent meeting. Ms. Badeau provided a brief overview of the make-up of the group and their mission to bring restorative practices into the schools, supporting constructive conversations to resolve conflicts.

Ms. Parker appreciates the realness of students and staff members in the weekly highlight videos. Ms. Parker queried regarding seeking highlight ideas from students.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the SHS Drama Club is presenting a play; Amélie: Teen Version. (05/19/22 – 05/21/22).

Mr. Hennessey reported that he attended a recent Student Council meeting which included discussion of promoting the school and student activities. Both the play and spring sports will be promoted in next week's highlights video.

9. Future Agenda Items

- Posted Board Procedures and Board Engagement
- Committee Charge (Parking Lot - TBD)
- New Hires
- Educational Performance Update (Parking Lot – TBD)
- Training with Legal Counsel

10. Next Meeting Date

A copy of an email from Beth Bicknell was distributed. This email advises of a conflict for use of SHS facilities on 05/26/22. After brief discussion it was agreed to move the second meeting in May from SHS to BTMES. Board Members are encouraged to stop at SHS prior to the meeting to view the Art Show

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

Regular Board Meeting: Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at BCEMS in the James Taffel Library and via video conference.

11. Executive Session as Needed

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

12. Board Meeting Assessment

A document titled 'Board Meeting Evaluation' (2022 Essential Work of Vermont School Boards Page 81) was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding requested that Board Members complete the evaluation forms within the next few days, and forward the completed documents to her.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin