

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and via Video Conference – Google Meet  
August 25, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology  
Josh Allen, Communications Director  
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services  
Elizabeth Brown, Director of Early Education  
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator  
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
Kristin Morrison, BCEMS Assistant Principal  
Melissa Lindhiem, Assistant Director of Special Services  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal  
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal  
Rebekah Mortensen, Assistant Director of Special Services  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Amelia Abraham	Rachel Aldrich-Whalen	Glenda Allen	Todd Allen
Leslie Babic	Paula Beaudet	Kim Benson	Martha Blaisdell	Abby Blum
Michael Boutin	Sarah Capron	James Carpenter	Nora Duane	Jody Emerson
Michael Emmons	Jamie Frey	Alice Harding	Sarah Helman	Alfred Hill
Josh Howard	Shannon Huda	Mariah Jacobs	Sharon Jacobs	Katie Jarvis
Kayla-Rose Kirkland	Colleen Kresco	Kerri Lamb	Courtne Lange	Baylee Lawrence
Jeff Maher	Kristen Martin	Ben Matthews	Jessica Maurais	Laurel Maurer
Roberta Melnick	Raylene Meunier	Allison Moyes	Matt Mulligan	Abby Smith
Jan Trepanier	Rachel Van Vliet			

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, August 25, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 6:01 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. The Board held a Mindfulness Moment. Mrs. Spaulding read the Meeting Norms. Mrs. Spaulding thanked community members for their attendance and read the public comment guidelines, noting that the Board will no longer entertain public comment on two agenda items; Additions and Deletions to the Agenda, and Future Agenda Items.

**3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**

**On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board voted 5 to 3 to add 6.11 Salary Metric to the Agenda and to move Item 7.4 Board Development Work Shop to the Parking Lot. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, and Mr. Reil voted for the motion. Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Parker and Mrs. Pregent voted against the motion.**

Add 6.12 Clarification of Salary Metric

Add 12.1 Personnel Matter

Mrs. Spaulding advised that she was going to take a few items out of order.

**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**

A mix of administrators, staff, and community members (Josh Allen, Jeff Maher, Roberta Melnick, Elizabeth Brown, Jody Emerson, Karen Fredericks, Stacy Anderson, Paula Beaudett, Carol Marold, Katie Jarvis and Jamie Evans -via an email read by Mr. Hennessey) addressed the Board, thanked them for their service and expressed concerns pertaining to; board meeting decorum, the need to adhere to Robert's Rules of Order & Board Norms, board dynamics, the need for Board training, the negative impact to staff and students (resulting from meetings), negative PR resulting from meetings, low employee morale, the amount of blaming, mistrust, unprofessionalism and division, the need to work collaboratively & create a feeling of belonging, the need to set clear goals, and the need for trust.

Mrs. Spaulding read an email from Prudence Krasofski who questioned the Board's decision on the appointment of a Board Member, and expressed support for a different candidate.

Josh Howard addressed the Board requesting that the Board hold discussion on homogenous and heterogeneous classrooms, and queried regarding receiving a paper copy of the student/parent handbook. Mr. Howard was advised regarding how to obtain a paper copy.

Mrs. Leclerc welcomed Paul Malone back to the Board, noting his expertise and experience will be beneficial.

##### **4.2 Student Voice**

None.

#### **5. Consent Agenda**

##### **5.1 Approval of Minutes – August 11, 2022 Regular Meeting**

Mrs. Spaulding clarified that the statement referred to under Agenda Item 6.4, was a prepared statement from the Board that Mrs. Farrell worked on with District Counsel to prepare. In the meeting it was stated that the statement was from Pietro Lynn.

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Minutes of the August 11, 2022 Regular Meeting.**

Brief discussion was held regarding taking Agenda Items out of order in an effort to allow administrators to depart the meeting.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to take Agenda Items out of order at the discretion of the Chair.**

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 8.1 Superintendent's Report.

#### **6. Current Business**

##### **6.1 New Hires**

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Raymond Kramer (BTMES 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA), Christopher Toborg (SHS Math), Amanda Monti (BCEMS Grades 3 – 5 Restorative Classroom Teacher), and Candy Daniels (BCEMS 5/6 Grade English) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates and answered questions from the Board relating to proration for Mr. Kramer who will not start until October, the positions being filled by Mr. Toborg, questions pertaining to emergency licenses, and salary determination based on years of experience within and outside of school employment. Mr. Malone requested a copy of the Master Agreement.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Raymond Kramer, Christopher Toborg, Amanda Monti, and Candy Daniels.**

##### **6.2 Special Education Summative Report FY22**

A document titled 'End of year report 21 – 22 updated August 19, 2022' was distributed.

Mrs. Anderson provided a brief overview of the Summative Report, providing an overview of the highlights including; new rules that became effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, grant information, and hiring challenges, which have existed for some time. There are currently 5 open

Special Educator positions. The Summer Program was very positive and served 105 students on IEPs. Mrs. Anderson answered questions from the Board. Brief discussion was held regarding expansion of the SEA Program which has been put on hold due to a staffing shortage. Mr. Derner provided additional information including shortages of other personnel. It is anticipated that the Program will serve 50 students this year. It was noted that the per-student cost at the SEA Program is significantly less than other out-placements. The SEA Program will be providing a monthly Building Report. The October Board meetings will be held at the SEA building. A tour of the SEA building will occur prior to the first October meeting. Mr. Derner provided a brief overview of SEA academics noting that the Program follows the same proficiencies (including Essential Elements) as Spaulding High School. Mr. Reil suggested it would be beneficial to see some statistics from the SEA Program. In response to a query, Mr. Derner advised that he does support expanding the SEA Building in an effort to expand capacity. Mr. Derner noted that Mr. Reil is the lone Board Member who has visited the program and thanked him for his support of the Program. Mr. Derner encourages all Board Members to visit the facility. Mrs. Farrell requested data relating to the number of students who qualify for Special Education services, how the District's SPED student count (percentage-wise) compares to the state average, and the over-all cost of Special Education Programs in the District. In response to a query, it was noted that community members could visit the facility, but not while students are on site. Mr. Derner recognized Mr. Malone's support in constructing the new building, and reiterated that he wants to know that the Program can be staffed, prior to expanding the building

Discussion moved to 8.2.

### **6.3 Budget Development Schedule**

A copy of the BUUSD FY24 Budget Development Schedule (dated 08/09/22) was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault provided a brief overview of the Schedule, which is provided annually to the Board. Meetings with administrators will begin in the third week of September and will continue through October. The Board will receive the first draft in November. After information is received from the State in December, an estimated tax calculation can be performed. Mr. Malone queried regarding when the Board will be sharing its goals and in-put. Board in-put will be provided in September. Board Members should be prepared to provide their input at the first meeting in September. Ms. Parker queried regarding the need for the Finance Committee to meet outside of the Budget Development timeline. Mr. Malone believes that the Finance Committee deals with financial issues throughout the year, and this process assists with budget development. It was noted that the Finance Committee's meeting schedule is not part of this agenda item. In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised regarding the use of the budget development template and agreed to share a copy of the document with the Finance Committee. Mr. Reil suggested that given the size of the anticipated surplus, the Board begin discussion on the use of surplus funds as soon as possible. Mr. Reil advised that he shared (with the Finance Committee) a copy of the Washington Central Annual Report, and he has suggested using that report as a template for the District's Annual Report. Mr. Reil noted that though Washington Central's annual report is significantly larger than what the District usually sends out, it contains much information and provides answers to many questions. Mrs. Perreault advised that in the past, the District has produced a more detailed report in addition to the Annual Report. Mrs. Spaulding advised that in the past, she believes a larger report was written, but she believes not many copies were requested by community members. Mrs. Perreault advised of the Budget link that is posted on the website. Mrs. Spaulding requested that the Schedule be amended to include budget presentations to City and Town councils, and also include budget promotion in February. Special Articles will be discussed in November. Additional discussion was held regarding various ideas for publication of budget related data.

### **6.4 Community Seat Finance Committee**

A document titled 'Guidelines for Community Members of BUUSD School Board Committees' was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding an opening for a (Barre Town) Community Member seat on the Finance Committee, resulting from Mr. Malone's appointment to the Board. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the Guidelines document. It was agreed that Mrs. Gilbert will advertise the opening. The Board will interview candidates at the 09/22/22 meeting. Mr. Malone announced his resignation as a Barre Town Community Member on the Finance Committee. After brief discussion it was agreed that Mr. Malone will serve (as a Board Member) on the Finance, Curriculum, and Negotiations Committees.

### **6.5 Heating/Plowing/Wood Chip/Fuel Bid Recommendation**

A document providing various fuel prices was distributed.

Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the ongoing process of monitoring prices, and advised regarding the recommendation to lock in with a vendor, but continue to monitor the market. Brief discussion was held regarding various options and it was noted that Irving has the State contract, and if the price dips, the District could lock in at that lower price. One option would be for the Board to grant Mrs. Perreault authority to monitor prices and lock in on a price when she deems appropriate. It was noted that given the amount of fuel utilized by the District, fluctuations in prices have a significant financial impact. Mrs. Leclerc requested data on the actual usage and cost for fuel for the previous year. Mrs. Perreault advised that due to heating system issues last year, the amount of propane used was higher than normal for FY22. Mr. Reil queried regarding how the current cost of fuel compares with what was budgeted. Mrs. Perreault advised that additional monies were budgeted for FY22. It was noted that Limlaw is not able to fulfill the second year of their two year contract. **Mrs. Leclerc moved that the Board not take any action this evening. The motion was not seconded.** It was noted that Irving is on the State contract and the District does not have to go out to bid if they utilize someone on the State contract. Additional discussion was held.

**Mr. Malone moved to allow the Superintendent, on the recommendation of the Business Manager, to enter into a contract with a fuel vendor when the fuel price drops to \$3.60 or below. Mrs. Pregent seconded the motion.** Brief discussion was held. **Mr. Malone withdrew the motion.**

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc the Board unanimously voted to accept the recommendation of the Business Manager and authorized the Business Manager to enter into a contract for propane, oil and wood chips at the best possible price at any given time for FY23. Mr. Reil was not present for the vote.**

#### **6.6 First Reading Substitute Teachers Policy (B1)**

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.6 through 6.9 were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy, advising of the edited version included in the packet. Mr. Malone is concerned that the policy may be in conflict with statute pertaining to salaries, but noted that if the policy is adopted as presented, it does provide Board authorization for the Superintendent to set substitute wages. It was noted that there would need to be minor revisions to have the policy match the VSBA Model policy. Brief discussion was held and the Board agreed to make minor amendments to the policy prior to the second reading.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board voted 7 to 0 to approve as amended, the First Reading of the Substitute Teachers Policy (B1) and to have additional information pertaining to salaries presented at the Second and Final Reading. Mr. Reil abstained.**

#### **6.7 First Reading Role and Adoption of School Board Policies Policy (A30)**

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy that was recently amended by the VSBA. Mr. Reil queried regarding whether or not the VSBA Model Policy advises that procedures can be brought to the Board for approval. Mr. Reil believes that District counsel advised that the Board should be reviewing and approving procedures, and he does not believe the Board does that. In response to a query, Mrs. Poulin advised that she believes Mr. Lynn may have mentioned that some Boards do approve procedures, and he stressed that the Board needs to read and know all of the procedures and the Board is responsible for knowing that procedures are being carried out. The VSBA website (webinar) also suggests that it is wise for Boards to approve procedures, though the BUUSD Board has never approved them in the past. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding whether there was confusion with the policy pertaining to ADA grievances, and that the VSBA version seemed to contain procedures and the Committee was debating whether or not those should be included in the policy. Mr. Reil advised that much discussion was held at the February Policy Committee meeting, and he supports the Board reviewing procedures because the District is behind on procedures and it would be nice to know what the procedures are. Ms. Parker advised that Mr. Aither provides regular updates regarding procedure updates and development. Mr. Hennessey advised that representatives from each of the schools are working on procedural manuals and are updating everything, though that group has been dormant since late May or early June. Mrs. Spaulding queried whether or not Mr. Reil is suggesting that the policy be updated to include that procedures should come before the Board to be approved. Mr. Reil advised that at the very least the procedures should be reviewed by the Board. Mr. Reil noted that based on input from counsel at the February meeting, he believes the Board should hold a broader discussion (on procedures) based on concerns raised by counsel and suggested the policy be sent back to the Policy Committee. Mrs. Parker raised concern regarding changing the District's policy to be different from the VSBA policy. Mrs. Spaulding noted that tonight's presentation is for a First Reading and additional information can be provided at the second reading. Mr. Reil is agreeable to that approach, but reiterated that procedures are important and have been 'a gap for us' and deserves more attention. It was noted that this policy also needs a minor change to align with the Model Policy. It was suggested that these issues could be avoided if the Policy Committee reviewed the VSBA Model Policies, rather than trying to change existing policies to match VSBA policies. Mr. Malone believes the Board should review procedures and keep 'eyes on' (whether or not they are approving them), to see that procedures have been implemented and see how effective they are. Ms. Parker noted that there is a section on the web site for procedures, and that there has been discussion on adding more as procedures are written. In response to a query from Mrs. Leclerc regarding the existence of procedures for all policies, Mr. Hennessey advised that some policies are 'cut and dry' and don't require procedures. In response to a query from Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Hennessey advised that all policies are available on-line for viewing (by staff etc.), and advised that there are personnel who work on procedures year round to see that they are up to date and accurate. Ms. Parker noted an additional minor change that needs to be added to the policy (for alignment with the VSBA Model Policy). Mrs. Spaulding provided a summary of the proposed amendments. Mrs. Pregent, reading from the February Policy Committee Meeting minutes noted that Mr. Lynn advised that the Board needs to see procedures, know what they are, and know that they are being complied with, and cautioned that the Board not make changes from the VSBA version and that if substantial changes are made, the policies need to be legally vetted. Ms. Parker noted that the policy being presented pertains to adoption of policies not procedures. Mr. Reil queried whether the District is drastically behind in written procedures for many policies. Mr. Hennessey does not believe the District is very behind with written procedures, noting that some procedures need to be updated and advised that procedures are continuously evolving. Mr. Reil reiterated that the District can't effectively apply a policy if written procedures are not in place. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey advised that though some procedures need updates, he believes all procedures are in place. Mrs. Poulin reiterated that legal counsel stressed the importance of procedures, and that years ago (pre-COVID) the Board had asked that all procedures be put in writing and as soon as written be added to the web site. Mrs. Poulin is concerned that no procedures have been added to the web site since Superintendent Pandolfo left the District. Mrs. Poulin voiced concern that the Board directive was not followed, that the Board did not follow up on its directive, legal counsel has stressed the importance of written

procedures and she feels the District is lacking if the procedures are not available on line for everyone to see (as was the Board's directive). It was suggested that Procedures be added as a future agenda item.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board voted 7 to 1 to approve the First Reading of the Role and Adoption of School Board Policies Policy (A30). Mr. Reil voted against the motion.**

#### **6.8 First Reading Board Member Education Policy (A31)**

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy changes. Mr. Reil voiced concern that there are conflicting statements within the policy (encouraged vs will). This is a 'to be considered' policy (not required) and the District does have a version of this policy in place. Brief discussion was held and it was noted that this is only the First Reading of the policy. Mr. Reil suggested that the policy be sent back to Committee so that they can touch base with VSBA for clarification. **Mrs. Pregent called the question.**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board voted 7 to 1 to approve the First Reading of the Board Member Education Policy (A31). Mr. Reil voted against the motion.**

#### **6.9 First Reading Policy Section 504 and ADA Grievance Protocol for Students and Staff Policy (C14)**

Ms. Parker advised that the District does not currently have this legally required policy and noted that the Grievance form and list of contact information still need to be added (prior to the Second and Final Reading). Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding the inclusion of the words 'his and her' in the policy. Mrs. Spaulding advised that the verbiage may be required under the law. Before the second reading, the District will inquire regarding this matter. Mrs. Poulin queried regarding the VSBA policy which refers to both Building and District level Coordinators and whether or not the policy meets legal requirements if it does not contain both of those individuals. Ms. Parker noted that there were some concerns regarding adding specific names to policies, as the policy would need to be changed when personnel change. Mrs. Spaulding requested that VSBA be contacted for clarification regarding the inclusion of various coordinators and whether there is a requirement to provide names of coordinators. It was noted that name changes are not substantive changes and do not require that policies be re-adopted.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Policy Section 504 and ADA Grievance Protocol for Students and Staff Policy (C14).**

#### **6.10 Meeting Format - Documentation**

Mrs. Spaulding advised that this agenda item is the result of a request from Mrs. Leclerc. Mrs. Spaulding would like to balance the need to provide information, while not being wasteful by having too many copies. Mrs. Poulin advised that the past practice was to bring a limited number of copies to the meeting and make additional copies as necessary. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding displaying packet information on a screen during the meeting. It was noted that the Board does have a policy that paper copies will be provided to those who request it. Mrs. Spaulding would like to be accommodating, but not wasteful. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that 'requested' copies and a couple extra copies be brought to the meeting, and that additional copies be made as necessary (all meeting rooms have copiers in them). The Board agreed to this method. Mrs. Leclerc suggested that in an effort to save time, the Board Norms not be read at the start of each meeting. Board Members expressed differing preferences on this matter. Discussion of Meeting Norms will be added to a future agenda. Regarding the general agenda item, Mrs. Poulin cautioned that links in the packet that lead to documents that can change, pose an issue (data integrity). If information in a linked document is changed any time after a meeting, the District has not preserved the legal documentation of information as it was presented at the meeting. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding any policy and procedures/protocols relating to questions posed by community members and how all Board Members are advised regarding responses. Mrs. Leclerc wants assurance that all community questions are answered by the appropriate personnel. Mrs. Spaulding advised that there are many different scenarios and noted that when individuals do not provide contact information, she has no way to respond to them. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding the existence of procedures and that the procedures assure that all Board Members are apprised of responses to the public. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding how decisions on public requests for agenda items are handled. It was noted that there is a document that outlines the timeframe in which responses are to be given and that documentation indicates that all responses to the public (via email) are copied to all Board Members. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding whether or not a response was sent to Pete Fournier. Mrs. Spaulding advised that there was no return address in the letter and she did not receive the envelope, thus she did not have information regarding where to send a response.

#### **6.11 Clarification of Salary Metric**

Mr. Reil advised that at the last meeting, it was asked that this item be added to tonight's agenda and it was not. Mr. Reil believes that given the discussion at the Finance Committee, this item needs to be discussed by the full Board. Mr. Reil requested that the Salary Metric and all supporting documentation be provided to all Board Members. Mrs. Spaulding agrees that this item can most likely be added to the next Agenda. Mrs. Farrell advised that Board Members are receiving questions that they cannot answer, that the new Salary Metric will impact the FY23 budget, and requested that all information be provided to Board Members within 3 days, advising that Board Members have been asking for additional information since May. Mr. Hennessey advised that he believes all Board Members have or have access to the information and that this matter was discussed at length at the Finance Committee meeting. Mrs. Farrell advised that the Board needs more information regarding how the new metric was developed. Mr. Hennessey believes the best course of action would be for him provide the Board with the same presentation he made to the Finance Committee.

Mrs. Pregent advised that she does not believe the Board has ever reviewed salaries for non-contracted personnel. It is Mrs. Pregent's understanding that the Board sets the budget and the metric falls within the budget and queried if it is the Board's purview to micromanage everybody's salaries. Mrs. Farrell advised that the request does not equate to micromanaging, but is informational and she is frustrated that the Board needs to continually ask for information, noting that the information provided to the Board was minimal (a spreadsheet). Mrs. Farrell advised that under 563 section 8, the Board needs to be aware with what is going on with the budget and the District's money. Mr. Reil advised that since the metric was provided to the Board, it has changed multiple times, and it has even changed since the last Board meeting. Mr. Reil advised that the most recent copy, with updated figures, needs to be distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding will add this item to a future agenda, with her intent that it be included in the next meeting.

## **7. Old Business**

### **7.1 Update Enrollment/Home Study Reports**

Copies of District Enrollment/Staffing Reports for June and August 2022 were distributed.

A copy of the Home Study Report (AOE provided data) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding a small error on the report, and advised that overall, the numbers are shifting, but are trending fairly steadily. Mr. Reil noted that the average class sizes for BCEMS and BTMES are generally below the ideal level and queried regarding this affording the opportunity to shift classes to accommodate areas that are short staffed. Mr. Hennessey advised that this is happening to some degree, and advised regarding a shift at BTMES. This item will be added to a November meeting

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to discuss Agenda Item 7.5 Employee Exit Survey out of order, immediately following Agenda Item 7.1, in an effort to allow Mrs. Marold to leave the meeting.**

### **7.2 Summer Projects Update**

A document titled 'BUUSD FY23 RFP Schedule, Facility Projects, etc...Spring/Summer 2022, August 9, 2022' was distributed. Brief discussion was held on the report and it was noted that the document needs to be updated.

### **7.3 Approval of 2<sup>nd</sup> HHB Designee for BCMES for Policy C10)**

A copy of the Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bulling of Students' was distributed.

In response to a query, it was noted that it is believed that the SEA Building does not require a designee. Mr. Aither reported at the Policy Committee meeting that SEA students would be covered under SHS. As the statute refers to designees for each campus, Mrs. Poulin queried regarding whether including the SEA Building (a separate physical location) under SHS was legally vetted.

Mrs. Leclerc suggested that SEA be added to the policy and was advised that it was not necessary because the employees and students are SHS employees and students.

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Kristin Morrison as the 2<sup>nd</sup> HHB Designee for BCEMS.**

### ~~**7.4 Board Development Workshop**~~

A copy of an email from Sonya Spaulding to the Board, titled 'Board Development Recommendation' (dated 08/05/22) was distributed. This Agenda Item is being moved to the Parking Lot.

### **7.5 Employee Exit Survey**

A document titled 'Exit Interview Questionnaire' was distributed.

Mrs. Marold advised regarding the process, noting that exit interviews are normally an internal tool. Mrs. Marold apologized to all employees who took the survey, not realizing it would be a public document, and advised that she believe employees thought the data was only going to be used internally. Mrs. Marold has changed the survey so that it reflects that information may be shared.

Mrs. Marold advised that the survey information was only collected from full time employees (no substitutes, bus drivers etc.).

The return rate is approximately 43%. There were 55 responses, 37 of which were teachers, representing 67% of teachers who resigned. Mrs. Marold noted that the last question had fewer than 55 responses as it was added at a later date. Mrs. Marold advised that typical turnover is 20% and this year, turnover was at 22% to 24%. 129 employees left over the course of the year. Mrs. Marold volunteered to generate a Climate Survey to assist the Board in understanding employee satisfaction. Mrs. Marold noted that she received a question from a Board Member relating to a survey comment pertaining to 'slackers and sexual harassment', and she advised that she always addresses these types of issues when they are reported. In FY20, 36 professional staff left the district, in FY21 it was 51, and in FY22, 69 professionals left the District. Mrs. Marold believes that a normal turnover rate is 20% and she believes that it's reasonable to expect that going forward. In response to a query from Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Marold confirmed that there are standard procedures in place for when employees report harassment and other types of grievances. It would be a misconduct issue if someone did not report harassment concerns to HR. In response to a query, Mrs. Marold advised that one trend that she anticipates will continue is that employees have a choice of where they want to go. Mrs. Marold believes retention is one of the most important things the District can do (recruiting and retention). Mrs. Marold advised that the District needs to allow employees opportunities for growth. Mrs. Marold provided information regarding a recent AOE effort, supporting internal growth for hourly employees. Mr. Hennessey advised that the reliance on support staff is no longer working as there is much difficulty hiring for those positions. The District is being forced into a positive direction, relying on more professional positions. In response to a query, Mrs. Marold believes people are

leaving the profession mainly for financial reasons, not COVID, though she does not believe para-educators are leaving because of the pay. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding how administrators plan to utilize the gathered information to make improvements, making note of the climate question (approximately 70% rated 3 or below on a 1 to 5 scale). Mrs. Marold believes administrators are listening and trying to make improvements. In response to a query, Mrs. Marold advised that she does not have a breakdown of results by school. Additional discussion was held including ways in which additional information might help identify why individuals are leaving and what could be done to encourage individuals to stay. Mrs. Spaulding believes it would be beneficial to speak with long term employees to understand why they have stayed as long as they have, and also noted that the Board can also assist in retaining employees, including during negotiations.

## **8. Reports**

### **8.1 Superintendents Report**

A copy of the Superintendent's Report dated 08/19/22 was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey read a prepared statement relating to his belief that the Board is working in direct conflict with the District's efforts to attract young families to move to Barre (students and staff) as well as other concerns, and his expectations from the Board moving forward. Mr. Hennessey will share a copy of the prepared statement with Board Members and staff. A copy is included in the minutes as Attachment A.

Mr. Howard thanked Mr. Hennessey for receipt of the BTMES staff count that was requested by the PTO.

Mr. Howard voiced concern regarding 'trust', as he believes the Board and community members were misled when the Superintendent advised that there were no additional employee payouts similar to the one for Mr. Wells. Mr. Howard advised that an FOIA request shows there was a payment to another employee in November 2021. Mr. Howard requested that Mr. Hennessey provide information regarding this matter. Mr. Hennessey advised that Mr. Howard's statement is false and he will not address it.

Kristin Martin and Roberta Melnick thanked Mr. Hennessey for sharing his statement and agree that everyone should 'come to the table' modeling respectful behavior.

Mrs. Pregent thanked Mr. Hennessey for outlining (in his report), all of the things the District is doing to try to attract staff.

Mrs. Spaulding appreciates the video that went out to the community (highlighting the schools and the Strategic Plan).

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 6.2.

### **8.2 Building Reports: BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA**

Copies of the Building Reports were distributed.

BCEMS - Brief discussion was held regarding an After School Program, though lack of available staff remains an issue.

Mr. Hennessey suggested that Mrs. Nye and Mrs. Waterhouse have some time to collaborate on this matter. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey advised that a more detailed report can be provided in the future.

BTMES – Appreciation was expressed for the time spent teaching students routines and expectations, and for the list of fundraising at the school. It was suggested that items purchased for Crops-For-Kids be funded through the science budget line, and that the general budget include all classroom supplies, rather than having them funded by the Schoolstore fundraiser. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey advised that paper copies of Student/Parent handbooks are available and individuals should contact their respective school office if they would like to receive one.

SHS – Mrs. Pregent likes the format of this report. Mr. Reil noted that the report invites Board Members to visit the school.

Mr. Reil and Mrs. Leclerc requested that administrators contact them via email regarding scheduling a visit. Mr. Malone suggested that all Board Members visit each of the schools. Mr. Maylor will send out email invitations. Mr. Maylor reported that the in-service day was a great success and teachers are energized to return to school.

SEA – Most discussion was held under Agenda Item 6.2. In response to a query regarding meeting requirements that SEA students be integrated with general education students, Mr. Derner advised that many students participate in Driver's Education, and students do have access to the main stream for other elements that cannot be provided at SEA.

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 6.1

### **8.3 CVCCSD Board Report**

Mrs. Farrell reported that the CVCCSD Board has not met since she last reported, and advised that they have now filled all of the positions they needed to fill. Mr. Hennessey advised that BUUSD counsel is reviewing the lease and should have that work completed by the end of next week.

#### **8.4 Finance Committee**

Minutes from the August 9, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc provided an overview of the minutes and advised that much of this has been discussed during this meeting.

The next meeting is Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

#### **8.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

Minutes from the August 1, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the Committee's discussion was covered at the previous Board meeting where the HVAC project was approved.

The next meeting is Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

#### **8.6 Policy Committee**

Minutes from the August 15, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker reported that it has been very beneficial to work with Sandra Cameron (at VSBA), and that the Committee is starting to work on issues in the Parking Lot.

The next meeting is Monday, September 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

#### **8.7 Curriculum Committee**

Minutes from the August 4, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the Committee postponed reorganization until a new Board Member was assigned to the Committee, and provided an overview of the minutes, including; a review of SBAC data, Effective Practices as a Universal Focus, and Progress Monitoring. Mr. Malone requested a copy of the information provided at the last meeting.

The next meeting is Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

#### **8.8 Negotiations Committee**

The next meeting date is to be determined

### **9. Other Business/Round Table**

Mrs. Pregent advised that she and another individual served popcorn at the new staff luncheon and also advised that long time Barre Town Principal Dr. Theodore Rikken has passed away.

Mrs. Leclerc wishes all students and staff well as they begin the school year.

Mrs. Farrell advised that she does not believe the Superintendent's statement from earlier in the meeting should be ignored. She believes there are accusations and innuendos in the statement that she believes need to be discussed. Mrs. Farrell asked if there was an email that was sent to staff asking them to show up at the meeting because there was a fear that there might be some discussion of the Superintendent? Mr. Hennessey advised that there was not, he did not send any email, and he has no knowledge of any such e-mail.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that she watched the video of the previous meeting, and welcomed Mr. Malone back to the Board and thanked all those who submitted letters of interest. Mrs. Spaulding hopes that rather than talk about the Superintendent's Statement, she would like to discuss a Board Development Workshop where some of his concerns could be addressed.

Mrs. Farrell advised that there is currently a Quality Standards for Boards Task Force, and it might be wise to hold off on Board Development until the Standards are produced. The Standards should be ready by mid-September. Mrs. Farrell stands firm that the Board needs to address the Superintendent's Statement.

Mrs. Poulin advised that based on research, she has found that the AOE or State web site continues to have a version of the BUUSD Articles of Agreement that are blatantly wrong, including that the Board is made up of four members and all voting is done at large. This issue has been brought up several times and it needs to be addressed. Anyone reviewing that data for informational purposes or legal opinions is looking at the wrong information. Mrs. Poulin provided clarity between the difference between the Board Clerk (Ms. Parker) and the District Clerk (Tina Lunt). The Board Clerk is appointed/elected at the Board Reorganization meeting, the District Clerk is elected/appointed at the District's Annual Meeting (Australian Ballot was used during COVID when the Annual Meeting could not be held). There is also a District Treasurer (Carol Dawes was elected to that position). The statute pertaining to appointing Board Members to vacant seats advises that the District Clerk, not the Board Clerk, was to notify the Select Board.

Mrs. Poulin advised that there have been numerous violations of Roberts Rules this evening, including; individuals speaking out when they are not the recognized speaker, individuals who are speaking are addressing someone other than the Chair (all comments are to be directed to the Board Chair, no one is allowed to address the public, staff or other Board Members), any individual who wants to speak must be recognized by the Chair. Mrs. Poulin has asked that individuals try to reign themselves in and only speak when recognized, as this will assist with keeping meetings to a more reasonable timeframe. In response to a query, it was noted that Robert's Rules of Order pertain to the meeting itself, and during the meeting, all participants need to abide by Robert's Rules (not just Board Members). Robert's Rules is how the meeting is to be run and applies to anyone attending the meeting. Additionally, Robert's Rules dictate that



the Chair is the facilitator and only the Chair can recognize individuals to speak. There have been multiple meetings where individuals other than the Chair are recognizing people to speak.

#### **10. Future Agenda Items**

- Values and Goals for Budget Development (September)
- Salary Metric (September – from Parking Lot)
- Superintendent’s Statement (September)
- New Hires (September)
- Policy Second Readings (September)
- Behavioral Task Force Reporting (September – from Parking Lot)
- Student Behavior and Discipline (September – from Parking Lot)
- Procedures (TBD)
- Meeting Norms (TBD)
- Board Development Workshop (back to Parking Lot)
- Strategic Plan (early fall – already in Parking Lot)
- Barre City Before and After School Care Concept or Plan (TBD)
- Expanded Special Education Report (TBD)
- Interview and Appoint Barre Town Finance Committee Member (October)

#### **11. Next Meeting Dates**

Thursday, September 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at BCEMS in the James Taffel Library and via video conference.

Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at BCEMS in the James Taffel Library and via video conference.

#### **12. Executive Session as Needed**

##### **12.1 Personnel Issue Related to a dismissal, resignation, and or complaint**

A personnel issue related to a dismissal, resignation, and or complaint was proposed for discussion in Executive Session

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey in attendance, at 11:09 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. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 11:21 p.m.**

#### **13. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:22 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*

August 25, 2022

Good evening, and thank you all for respectfully listening to our administrators, staff, and community members tonight. Sharing the negative impact these meetings are having on our morale, our health, and our work in such a public way has required incredible courage, and I am grateful for the candor my colleagues have shown tonight.

At a time when our administration and staff have been celebrating an incredibly exciting, inspirational, and successful week of preparing for opening day, the reality we face is that what is occurring in our school board meetings is currently working in direct conflict with our efforts to attract young families to move to Barre, to recruit teachers and staff to join our district, and most importantly to improve outcomes for all of our students.

We repeatedly hear from some of our most steady critics that their intention is to actually support our schools and that they are simply trying to help improve things. Well, we are clearly no longer in a place where we can excuse unacceptable words and actions simply because the person intends to be helpful - our focus going forward is going to be on the *impact* of those words and actions. And, to be clear, the impact of what goes on in our board meetings has had a devastating effect on both our district's reputation and the morale of our administration, faculty, and staff. I also want to be clear that our board chair's efforts to make our board meetings true public meetings were one of the main reasons I decided to take on this job. However, the relentless efforts on some people's parts to undermine that work week after week have been very discouraging to all of us.

Like virtually all districts in the country, we recognize we need to continuously improve our efforts to better the academic and social/emotional performance of all of our students. That is the work! As I've repeatedly said, we are not closed to hearing hard questions and being held to account. That too is the work. However, the board needs to understand and accept that the relentless narrative of school failure that comes from many of you and some of our community members both in our board meetings and on social media is taking a tremendous toll on our employees morale, mental health, and ability to do our jobs. As I hope you have heard tonight, this narrative of failure is completely unsustainable and will no longer be tolerated by us.

Less than 24 hours ago, I heard directly from two board members who responded to the Welcome Back message we shared with our community yesterday. I shared both with our administrative team, and both responses had a huge impact on us.

The first board member simply thanked us for our efforts and shared that her school district gave us a shout out during their opening kick off with their staff. She made it clear that our efforts to engage with our community are being both appreciated by her and noticed by other districts in the region.

The second board member simply stated, "Maybe you can make one of those fun little videos about not bullying - you know something important."

It would be easy to infer that the intent of the second comment indicated that welcoming our kids and community back to school and introducing our strategic plan to them was somehow not important. But, again, the intent really isn't what matters here - it's the *impact* of both statements that matter. I can assure you that both statements from our board members had a major impact on our team. And on me.

So going forward, which of these impact statements is going to be the acceptable norm for this school board? Unfortunately, the second one has really been taken by our team and all of our staff as a symbol of what it's like to experience these board meetings: demeaning and insulting; openly questioning our competence, motives, and integrity. We can no longer accept this as

normal, and going forward, I will no longer quietly accept that a school board can tolerate and even encourage this behavior.

I want to be as clear as possible what our team is going to need to see for us to get to a place where we can trust our school board and see that they indeed have the best interests of our students, staff, and schools at the forefront of their work. Again, to be clear, we are not "hoping" what follows will happen, we are expecting that it happens.

1) The board will agree to participate in all recommended trainings from the VSBA and our legal counsel. Most recently, at least three board members emailed the board chair this summer indicating they had no interest in participating in the training offered by VSBA Director of Board Services Phil Gore earlier in the summer. What is considered by other districts as a matter of course and completely normal is for some reason considered optional and unnecessary by our board. This is unacceptable, and though the dates that Mr. Gore offered have long passed, it is our expectation that the board regroup and set up a time to engage in his training early this fall. I would be happy to help facilitate this.

2) The board will agree to participate in a training and protocol facilitated by me and Director of Curriculum Karen Fredericks to dive deep into the BUUSD Strategic Plan. This protocol would take about 45 minutes, and we would encourage the public to listen and participate. As the plan clearly states, "Our strategic plan guides the work of every member of our community." It is our expectation that this training occurs very early in the school year; Karen and I can be ready as early as our September 8 board meeting, but we can't go later than September 22. The work conducted in our board and committee meetings needs to be directly tied to the goals of the Strategic Plan.

3) Following successful completion of the VSBA training offered by Director Gore, the board will agree to participate in a discussion about the roles and responsibilities of our various board committees. This topic is a source of great concern for me and our leadership team, and it has been for many years. I shared in a board retreat last year that it is well known in the Vermont educational community that our district is an outlier in terms of the number of committees we have, how often we meet, and, most importantly, what role the committee members play in the day to day operations and planning for our schools. We understand that this won't be easy, but we expect clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each committee early in the fall.

I understand that what you have heard tonight from all of us is a lot to consider, and we all understand that our leadership team and I have no ability to force our board to follow these expectations. It will be on you as a board to come together to determine if meeting these expectations will help you grow and serve our community in the way we expect.

However, as I mentioned earlier, the stakes are very high now. I will not risk speaking for our team, and I will only speak for myself here...

Despite all of the obvious challenges I face every day, I truly love this work, my job, and our community. I hope it shows. Though I had never planned on being a superintendent, I am fully committed to getting better at my job while reflecting every day on how I can build trust with our school community. I fully understand the impact of my decisions on all of you, and regardless of how good my intentions have always been, I know that some of those decisions have made some of you question my motives. I am prepared to be reflective and open to feedback on all of this, and it is my expectation that the board does the same. However, I will no longer compromise my values in doing so.

Though I am highly concerned with the direction of the board these last six months, I am also highly optimistic that following our team's expectations for the board outlined earlier will help bring us to a place where we can truly work together in the best interests of our students. We want to work with you. Together.

I urge you all to take time in the next few weeks to individually and collectively slow down and truly reflect on what you've heard tonight. It was shared earlier by Josh Allen that what goes on in our board meetings is not "normal." Well, I fully understand that how we are addressing you this evening is also not "normal." But that's how high the stakes are for our community at this moment.

My hope is that our administration and staff will share the impact of the board on their morale, health, and work in an increasingly positive way in the months ahead, and that can happen as early as our next meeting in September. Let's begin that work tonight and focus on celebrating the opening of the 2022-23 school year together.

Thank you for listening.