

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
August 31, 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
Josh Allen, Communications Director
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Karen Fredricks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal
Kristin Morrison, BCEMS Assistant Principal
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Pamela Ahearn	Pete Aldrich	Rachel Aldrich-Whalen	Glenda Allen
Peter Anthony	Bridgett Apfel	Sarah Attig	Leslie Babic	Melissa Battah
Kelsey Bedard	Cassie Bell	Kim Benson	Martha Blaisdell	Sophia Boltin
Stacy Boltin	Mike Boutin	Mary Bowers	Sue Brennan	Danielle Brizzolara
Lauren Buck	Sandra Cameron	James Carpenter	Erin Carter	Kristina Charissakis
Tyson Chouinard	Hayden Coon	Judie Copping	Tana Cosgrove	Mike Deering, II
Jordan Doctor	Erika Dolan	Nora Duane	Brendan Eaton	Eliana
Michael Emmons	Nicole Gallup	Mary Gaudreau	Michael Greig	Alice Harding
Karen Heath	Sarah Helman	Darby Hiebert	Sarah Hill	Josh Howard
Holly Hoyt	Mary Ann Huang	Jenny Hyslop	Guy Isabelle	Katie Jarvis
Stefanie Kingzett	Shannon Kirkpatrick	Samantha Knudsen	Thomas Koch	Brandy Kolling
Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Laura Lagerstedt	Kerri Lamb	Kelsey LaPerle
Jake Larrabee	Patrick Leene	Sherry Lewton	Shelby Lindley	Phayvanh Luekhamhan
Jeff Maher	Kristen Martin	Ben Matthews	Molly McFaun	Dan Morrison
Allison Moyes	Matt Mulligan	Milika Neddo	Victoria Pompei	Michael Pope
Renato Revoredo	RenatoSG	Merrin Rousseau	Tim Sanborn	Vika Simons
Cohen Slayton	Heather Slayton	Kevin Spaulding	Megan Spaulding	Jill Sweet
Therese Taylor	Rachel Thomas	Melissa Tobin	William Toborg	Sean Toohey
Jan Trepanier	Jessica Van Orman	Rachel Van Vliet	Tyler Watkins	Cameo Wells
Michael Whalen	Jesse Willard	Connie Willard Godin	Jonathan Williams	Mindy Woodworth
Ashley Woodworth	Jan Z	Phone # ending 68 (unknown)		

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Wednesday, August 31, 2022, Emergency meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held in the SHS 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, read the public participation guidelines, and advised that she will not be entertaining public comment on Agenda Item 3 (Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda) .

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Mrs. Pregent queried regarding the calling of an Emergency Meeting when there are no action items listed on the Agenda, the need for the meeting and whether items could be addressed at a Special Meeting. Mrs. Spaulding advised she is not aware why the meeting was called and deferred to Mrs. Farrell to provide clarity regarding why this meeting was called. Mrs. Farrell advised that it has been brought to the Board's attention that there is a matter that requires immediate 'interest' and that there may not be any action taken this evening, but that information may be collected in Executive Session that could result in a decision at or after Executive Session.

Mrs. Spaulding recognized Jenny Hyslop to speak. Ms. Hyslop addressed the Board querying regarding the standards/conditions for requesting an emergency meeting.

Mr. Cecchinelli read from Open Meeting Laws, the criteria for calling an Emergency Meeting.

Mrs. Spaulding urged those who are interested to review a Board policy that indicates the Chair can call a meeting, or a majority of the Board can request a meeting. Mrs. Spaulding advised that Ms. Hyslop should pose her question during Agenda Item 4.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board voted 6 to 2 to approve the Agenda as presented.

Mr. Boltin, Mr. Cecchinelli, Mrs. Farrell Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, Mr. Reil voted for the motion.

Ms. Parker and Ms. Pregent voted against the motion.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Community members Matt Mulligan, William Toborg, Rachel Aldrich-Whalen, Rachel Van Vliet (on behalf of the Barre Educators Association), Dan Morrison, Jenny Hyslop, Tyler Watkins, Heather Slayton, Sophia Boltin, Stacy Boltin, Melissa Battah, Megan Spaulding, Kristen Martin, Michael Boutin, Sarah Helman, Dan Spaulding, Thomas Koch, Cassie Bell, Brendan Eaton, Marrin Rousseau, Jon Valsangiacomo, Martha Blaisdell, and one additional individual who was not identified, addressed the Board. Lengthy input ensued, including; concerns related to safety/safe spaces, reactive responses, Board Member responsibility for promotion of an unsafe meeting environment, concern that the Agenda does not promote items to contribute to transparency, a concern that some individuals are trying to prevent transparency, lack of availability of curriculum related information, and the reading of a copy of an email sent to Board Members regarding the perceived toxic climate of Board meetings. After brief discussion, Mrs. Spaulding cautioned speakers against naming individuals in complaints and advised that specific complaints against Board Members can be emailed to the Board, and the Board will 'take up' those issues as a private matter. Public comment resumed and included; a request from the Barre Educators' Association for clarification on what unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring emergency action triggered this Emergency Meeting, support for staff and leadership of the school system, concern that some Board Members are a distraction from Board work, that some Board Members are 'misbehaving', concern regarding the nature of the discussion to be held in Executive Session, concern that the actions of the Board are stressing staff and administrators, concern over a bullying incident that caused a student to remove them self from school, concern of ongoing bullying issues, concern that the 2 minute public speaking rule is not enforced consistently, concerns that community concerns relating to bullying and classroom behaviors are not being taken seriously by some members of the Board, support for the portion of the Board that supports addressing issues, concern that the reason for the emergency meeting has not been announced, concern over perceived micromanagement, an accusation of harassment and bullying by board members, a request for the Board to perform some self-reflection and additional training, a belief that 'arguments', questions, and concerns are normal board behavior, that it is not normal for a Chair to aggressively stir up members of the community, or try to silence board members, that it is not normal for an executive officer to be organizing and colluding with the Chair to drum up discontent amongst employees, that it is not normal for an executive officer to be sharing emails from a board member to drum up discontent within the ranks, and that what is happening behind the scenes is also not normal, an urge to consider how the Board can become a normal board, concern that there is a constant effort to belittle the Superintendent, concern that board members are pushing personal agendas, and micromanaging, concern regarding the comments made by the Superintendent last week, that the school board represents the people, and a query of whether the Superintendent thinks the school board reports to him or the other way around, a request that the Board do what is right for students, support for the Superintendent, board dysfunction, the belief that disagreement is good for a board and facilitates learning and educating of individuals, that opposing sides need to be respectful, that the board's negativity is reflecting on the community, appreciation for the positive things Board Members have been involved with, and a query regarding why the Board is going into Executive Session.

Mr. Reil advised that today, August 31st is International Overdose Awareness Day and announced that there is a large event this evening at the State House in Montpelier. Mr. Reil is making this announcement in memory of his son Jeffrey, who died from an overdose.

In an effort to provide clarification regarding Emergency Meetings, Mrs. Leclerc read information from The Vermont State Education Law Book.

In response to a query, Mrs. Spaulding advised that as required, the Board will be announcing why they are proposing to meet in Executive Session.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Executive Session

Mrs. Farrell moved to move to Executive Session for Discussion of Performance Issues Related to the Contract with the Superintendent and the District. Mrs. Farrell withdrew the motion.

Discussion of Performance Issues Related to the Contract of the Superintendent with the District was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board voted 5 to 3 to agree to find that premature general public knowledge of the item proposed for discussion would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, and Mr. Reil voted for the motion. Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Parker and Ms. Pregent voted against the motion.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board voted 5 to 3 to enter into Executive Session, with District Counsel Sean Toohey in attendance, at 7:07 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss Performance Issues Related to the contract of the Superintendent with the District. Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, and Mr. Reil voted for the motion. Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Parker and Ms. Pregent voted against the motion.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 9:45 p.m.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that no action is being taken this evening.

It was clarified for the Board (for future meetings) that there is no legal requirement to post 'Action' on Agenda Items, for action to be taken in meetings. If a motion is made and seconded, a vote must be held.

6. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin