

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Spaulding Educational Alternatives Building and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
October 27, 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)
Sarah Pregent (BC)
Terry Reil (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Principal
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Melissa Battah	Michael Boutin	Mike Deering, II	Gina Galfetti
Sarah Helman	Josh Howard	Prudence Krasofski	Eric Lafayette (EEI)	Dean Preston
Ed Rousse	William Toborg			

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, October 27, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding Educational Alternatives Building and via video conference.

2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment

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.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

The Board agreed to take some Agenda Items out of order.
Add 6.8 FOIA Request Discussion
Add 6.9 Board Leadership

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

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Mr. Toborg voiced concern that the Board Chair is not allowing public comment under Agenda Items 3 and 10 (Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda and Future Agenda Items). Mrs. Spaulding advised that community members can provide input by contacting Board Members outside of the meeting.

Mr. Boutin complimented the SEA Building itself, but suggested that Board Meetings no longer be held in this location, citing difficulty for community members to attend and noting that it is very difficult to hear the on-line portion.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

4.2.1 Student/Staff Presentation

Mr. Derner displayed on screen, a presentation titled “A Day in the Life of a SEA Student”. The presentation included an overview of the daily Community Breakfasts, Project Based Learning (students have built Adirondack chairs, corn hole games, a community garden etc.), classes (six 30 minute classes - including core classes and specials), birthday celebrations, student transportation (has increased attendance), Counseling Supports, ‘Experiential Wednesdays’ (allowing students to experience things they most likely would not get exposed to), Youth Employment Services (grant funded), and a separate afternoon program providing one on one instruction. Mr. Derner answered questions from the Board and was thanked for presenting this evening.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – October 13, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve as amended, the Minutes of the October 13, 2022 Regular Meeting.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

No candidates were presented for hire.

6.2 SHS Foundation Report

Mr. Rousse, President of the Spaulding High School Foundation, addressed the Board. The Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization whose purpose is to raise funds for projects outside of the scope of the regular school budget. The Foundation can help the school in three specific areas; academic enhancements, visual & performing arts, and athletics. Mr. Rousse provided some examples of projects and advised that athletic fields have been somewhat neglected since their construction in 1964. There was a master plan created years ago (by Dubois and King) to enhance the fields; including installation of artificial turf and a rubberized track. The current track is not able to host State sanctioned track meets and is somewhat dangerous. Mr. Rousse provided an overview of the Foundation’s Board and advised that Board meetings are held four times a year. There has been very little traction on projects since installation of lights in 2015. Mr. Rousse advised regarding the accounts (one at Community Bank: \$23,889 and one at Smith Barney - \$18,330). Donations can be restricted or unrestricted. The Spaulding Foundation can only serve Spaulding High School. Mr. Rousse noted that the BUUSD Board’s focus is normally on the ‘current’ timeframe. The foundation is focusing on items that will be in place for a long time, e.g. the athletic field lighting project. Other projects discussed by the Foundation include; a footbridge to the student parking area and improvements to Crimson Tide Way. Mr. Rousse advised that though the Board’s time is consumed with ‘current’ issues, the Foundation can focus on future items. Mr. Rousse has been researching some of the projects and noted that the SHS community is in a unique position in that there are local contractors who are willing to make in-kind’ donations. Mr. Rousse advised that the Foundation would like to move forward with a feasibility study, but cannot move forward without Board approval. The feasibility study could help determine the cost of potential upgrades to athletic fields. The Foundation could assist with funding of a feasibility study. Mr. Rousse advised he is happy to provide the Board with quarterly updates. Mr. Reil queried regarding reviewing a copy of the study performed by Dubois and King. Mr. Rousse advised that there are a number of alumni who are waiting to hear the ‘pleasure of the Board’, as they are anxious to assist. In response to a query, Mr. Rousse advised that the Foundation raises funds, but the projects are run by the school. Mr. Rousse reiterated that the Foundation raises funds, but does not ‘do projects’. The Foundation is waiting for ‘direction’ from the Board. Mr. Rousse advised that once costs are determined/estimated, and the Board approves a project, the Foundation will move forward with soliciting funds. Mr. Rousse advised regarding a \$10,000 donation that was restricted for use for a Maker Space. The Maker Space is now in place. Mrs. Pregent advised regarding recent discussion at the Finance Committee relating to the benefits of a robotics program, which could spark interest in careers for which the school has designated scholarships. Mr. Reil noted that he recently suggested that the District have a ten-year plan. Mr. Rousse has copies of the Foundation’s bylaws and will share them with any interested party. It is believed that Mr. Evans has a copy of the original athletic fields study.

6.3 SRO Contract

A document titled Barre Unified Union School District – Town of Barre – Services Agreement’ was distributed. Mrs. Spaulding advised that this item is on the Agenda for informational purposes only (as requested by Mrs. Leclerc). Mrs. Leclerc does not have any specific questions, but thought it would be beneficial for Board Members to review it. Mr. Deering queried regarding the funding for SROs. It was noted that the cost of an SRO (for BCEMS) has historically been split between the District and the City.

6.4 First Reading Policy on Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding (F2)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy. Brief discussion was held and it was noted that unless procedures are in place, the policy cannot be followed. Brief discussion was held regarding procedure development. It was noted that if there is not a procedure in place, the District is not in compliance with the law. Brief discussion was held regarding a formatting issue. Discussion returned to approval of the First Reading.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Malone the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Policy on Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding (F2).

6.5 First Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy and advised that the policy has been legally vetted.

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

6.6 First Reading Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C70)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the policy. Brief discussion was held.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C70).

6.7 Board Development/Retreat

It was noted that the 11/16/22 date (which worked for most Board Members, is no longer viable as it conflicts with the Superintendent's schedule. Mrs. Spaulding will try to determine an alternative date, possibly 11/07/22. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding the items they would like on the Agenda and how and by whom the Retreat should be facilitated. The general consensus of the Board is to have VSBA facilitate the Retreat. Mrs. Spaulding will contact VSBA regarding availability of a facilitator and creation of an agenda. Mrs. Spaulding will create a Google document listing potential agenda items and will share it with VSBA.

6.8 FOIA Request Discussion

Mr. Malone queried regarding the status of the FOIA request from Melissa Battah, requesting copies of emails between board members and others, regarding board member behavior, for the timeframe 03/01/22 through 10/14/22. Mr. Hennessey advised that the request, which was processed through HR (Carol Marold) and the Director of Technology (Mr. Ajanma), has been fulfilled. Mr. Ajanma completed the search and shared the information with Mrs. Battah this week. Mr. Hennessey advised he was not involved with the request. The plan is to share the information with Mrs. Spaulding on 10/28/22 and Mrs. Spaulding will share the information with the rest of the Board. Mr. Boutin requested a copy of the parameters of the FOIA request and advised he would like a copy of information. Mr. Boutin will send a request to Mrs. Spaulding via email. Mr. Howard also requested a copy of the output from the FOIA request. Mrs. Spaulding requested that Mr. Howard also send her an email requesting the output.

6.9 Board Leadership

Mrs. Leclerc addressed the Board, advising of her thoughts regarding what it means to be a Board Member. Mrs. Leclerc advised regarding the Code of Ethics (signed by all Board Members), and proceeded to read a portion of the Code of Ethics document, which names specific 'rules' that Board Members agree to adhere to. Mrs. Leclerc advised regarding an email shared by a community member at the last Board Meeting. Mrs. Leclerc advised that the email from the Board Chair (dated 08/31/22), solicited community members to attend an emergency meeting and included a copy of a confidential email from the Vice Chair to the Board, which advised of the reasons for the emergency. Mrs. Leclerc advised that in the Board meeting, the Chair denied knowledge of why the emergency meeting was being held. Mrs. Leclerc noted that community members have been asking for accountability, and she believes Board Members need to be accountable. Mrs. Leclerc shared her thoughts and concerns regarding this matter, including; concern that one of the roles of the Board Chair is to unite the Board, and that no individual should give directives (publicly or privately), yet the email solicited community members to attend the meeting to share their criticism to certain Board Members, and encouraged individual Board Member names to be mentioned. Mrs. Leclerc believes sending this email constitutes Violations of the Code of Ethics, is a conflict of interest, divides the Board rather than uniting it, and shows a lack of leadership. Mrs. Leclerc believes the Chair's actions have created trust, respect and integrity issues. Mrs. Leclerc is concerned about how the Chair can effectively lead the Board with the accountability issues and lack of decorum. Mrs. Leclerc is concerned regarding how the Board can move ahead to do its work. Additionally, Mrs. Leclerc advised that Robert's Rules require that the Chair be non-partisan, yet the Chair often 'argues' and 'counters' other's opinions, thus the Chair is participating in debate (not allowed under Robert's Rules) and is not acting in a non-partisan manner. Mrs. Leclerc feels that in the best interest of the District, the Chair should consider stepping down from the role of Chair.

7. Old Business

7.1 VSBA Resolutions Update

Mrs. Farrell provided an update on VSBA resolutions, advising that all of the Resolutions were passed as recommended by the VSBA. There was much discussion on each Resolution prior to voting. Discussion included the intent of Resolutions and what the outcomes might be. The 'ongoing' Resolutions were also passed as recommended. Much discussion was held regarding the Resolution pertaining to technical centers. There was much input from individuals from across the state. The input illustrated that there are many

different perspectives depending on what part of the state individuals are from. Many questions were documented and will be brought to the AOE.

7.2 VSBA Mini-Grant Update

Mrs. Farrell advised that decisions will be announced on 10/31/22 and that she will share the decision with the Board.

7.3 EEI Proposal Update/Ventilation Project

A document titled Spaulding High School – Barre, VT – 10/25/2022 (from EEI – Energy Efficiency Investments, Inc.) was distributed. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the Facilities Committee met on 10/25/22 for discussion of the EEI Proposal. Mr. Reil provided an overview of the discussion of the various options and advised that the Facilities Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposal minus the administration wing, for a total proposal of \$7,267,150. The Committee discussed using the \$7,000,000 ESSER grant and \$267,150 from the Capital Reserve fund, with the stipulation that future capital projects be ‘swapped’ out to accommodate utilizing Capital Reserve Funds for this project. Mr. Lafayette advised that most of the project will be completed by January 2024 and that the project will be completed in its entirety by 08/30/2024. Mr. Lafayette provided a brief overview of the timeline for the project. Brief discussion was held regarding additional ESSER funds only being available if something unforeseen is discovered. Brief discussion was held regarding increasing the facilities construction line item to \$1.00 per square foot. Mrs. Pregent noted that the Finance Committee is discussing Special Articles, including moving surplus funds to the Capital Project Reserves Fund. The Facilities Committee will hold discussion regarding a recommendation to move funds to the Capital Project Reserves Fund.

On a motion by Mr. Boltin, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to have the BUUSD enter into a performance contract with EEI, Inc., using \$7,000,000 in ESSER funds and \$267,150 from the Capital Reserve Fund or other local funding, for a project total of \$7,267,150.00.

8. Reports

8.1 Superintendent Report

A copy of the Superintendent’s Report (dated 10/26/22) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised that he does not have anything to add to the Report. Mr. Hennessey thanked Mr. Laflamme for sharing the daily challenges with the Board. Mr. Hennessey reiterated that staff members are working diligently to do everything possible to provide an engaging academic, social/emotional, rich day for students, and that the Barre District is not alone with these challenges. Mr. Hennessey advised that the District has a very stable leadership team in each school. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the McKinney-Vento Act, compliance challenges, and difficulty reporting on homelessness when circumstances are changing so rapidly. Mr. Reil believes the Board should collaborate with City Counselors regarding homelessness issues. Ms. Parker provided information regarding limited services that are available, advised that the numbers are higher than reported due to various circumstances, and noted that numbers will increase as colder weather arrives. On a positive note, Mr. Hennessey noted that community engagement is critical and reinstatement of community events is very beneficial for all in the District. Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding identifying the number of family units (in addition to the count of students). Mrs. Pregent noted that her daughter gave a positive report regarding the creative way in which a staff shortage was resolved. Mr. Malone queried regarding how to adequately educate students when staff are dealing with so many behavioral issues, and the schools are so short staffed. Mr. Malone believes that working towards creative (out of the box) solutions needs to be a priority. Ms. Parker stressed that there are many illnesses going around and she does not want the narrative to be that staff do not have a good work ethic.

8.2 Building Reports: BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA

Copies of the Building Reports were distributed.

Mr. Laflamme provided clarification related to staff shortages, noting that the magnitude involves a shortage of 20 unfilled positions as well as approximately 20 to 30 staff absences per day, but even with the challenges these staffing shortages present, BCEMS is still able to achieve brilliant things. These factors should be considered when reviewing raw data at an upcoming meeting. In response to a query, Mr. Laflamme advised that the current administrative plan to deal with absences is ‘how to function on a day to day basis’, how to look at ‘building up’ current staff, how to invest academic coaches’ time and energy (in an effort to retain new staff), and trying to find ways to keep the building open. Mr. Hennessey advised that he has included additional information in his Superintendent’s Report. Mr. Reil reported that BTMES appears to be having ‘record’ attendance at their Open House which is currently taking place. Mr. Maylor advised that SHS staff have been working very hard to come together to make sure they are available to assist with the challenges being presented this year. Mr. Maylor answered questions from the Board.

8.3 CVCCSD Board Report

Mrs. Farrell advised that CVCCSD is also experiencing staffing shortages. Mrs. Farrell noted that applications are ‘over the limit’ and all classes are full. CVCCSD is building relationships with local partners to assist students with gaining more work experience. More work needs to be performed to research creation of a technical high school that provides all academics and career orientation.

8.4 Finance Committee

Minutes from the October 20, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc advised that draft 1 reflects a 9.1% increase. The Committee held extensive discussion on budget considerations. Mrs. Leclerc advised that the 11/17 meeting will be mainly a community listening session (held at SHS). Mr. Hennessey advised that Mr. Allen is working on a survey to gather additional community input. Details of the community forum will be finalized next week.

The next meeting is Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference. The next Regular meeting is Thursday, November 17, 2022 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes from the October 11, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that there is nothing to add as both items were discussed this evening under other Agenda items.

The next meeting is Monday, November 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference

8.6 Policy Committee

Minutes from the October 17, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker advised that in addition to Second Readings of tonight's policies, additional policies will be presented to the Board. The Committee is discussing asking VSBA to perform a review of the District's policies. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding adding a 'procedures' column to the BUUSD's Policy Index.

The next meeting is Monday, November 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.7 Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the October 6, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the bulk of the meeting pertained to the 5-year Plan. Additional discussion included; blended classes, AP offerings, and Hattie Ratings (influences impacting student learning).

The next meeting is Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.8 Negotiations Committee

Mr. Hennessey advised that the BEA has their committee together and they are reaching out to start setting up dates for negotiation sessions. The next meeting date is to be determined

9. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Leclerc lauded the SHS Girls Varsity Soccer Team for recently pulling off a very hard win. Mrs. Leclerc noted that the players work well as a team and really depend on each other. The team plays again this Friday, 10/28/22 at BTMES at 3:00 p.m.

Mrs. Leclerc encouraged Board Members to attend. Mrs. Leclerc also advised that the SHS Football Team also plays on Friday and inquired regarding consideration of sending a bus for that game. Mr. Hennessey will look into student transportation to the game.

Mrs. Leclerc lauded Mr. Reil for his facilitation of the 10/25/22 Facilities Committee meeting.

Mr. Malone queried regarding the 'cancellation of Halloween'. Mr. Hennessey advised that Halloween will not be celebrated in the schools but other activities are planned (Harvest Day at BCEMS and Spirit Week at BTMES). Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the reasons that the District made the decision not to have Halloween celebrations in school.

Mr. Reil thanked Mrs. Nye, Ms. Pearson, and Mr. Mills for hosting 'Coffee with the Principals'. Mr. Reil attended the event and advised it was very informative and enjoyable. Mr. Reil congratulated sports teams and wished them well in the play-offs. Congratulations were extended to Spaulding High School Junior Garret Cameron for his selection to represent Vermont at the New England Golf Championship match at Mohegan Sun Resort, in Connecticut on October 31, 2022.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he attended Open House at BTMES. The event was well-attended and there were many activities.

Ms. Parker thanked administrators for their celebrations and reports and sharing the daily life at their schools. Ms. Parker advised she was thrilled to see the students of Barre City and Barre Town have the opportunity to play soccer under the lights.

Mrs. Pregent advised regarding Halloween activities in her neighborhood.

Mr. Hennessey reiterated Ms. Parker's sentiments regarding the mixed team soccer games played under the lights.

10. Future Agenda Items

- Discussion of the replacement for SBAC testing will occur at the Curriculum Committee meeting.
- IT Presentation/Cyber Security
- Agreed Upon Goals Between the Board and Superintendent (possibly at the Retreat)
- CFP and CIP Plans (Curriculum Committee?)

- Discussion of Board Procedures, including Community Input Procedures

Discussion of a 10-year Strategic Plan For Consolidation of Campuses, Programs, etc.(Including Agenda Items S – U). Mrs. Spaulding will contact Mr. Reil regarding what this will ‘look like’ on an agenda.

Brief discussion was held regarding the addition of data to Parking Lot items (name of requester and date added to Parking Lot). Brief discussion was held regarding adding a ‘Parking Lot’ for Retreat items.

November 10, 2022:

- First Draft FY24 Budget
- Second and Final Readings
- New Hires
- Policies to be Rescinded (Parking Lot A, B, C, and D)
- Behavior Data (Parking Lot E)
- Update on VSBA Mini-Grant
- Discussion of 10-Year Strategic Plan

Second Meeting for November will be held in December (12/01/22):

- CIA Plan Update (Parking Lot G)
- Enrollment Update (Parking Lot H)

11. Next Meeting Date

Next meeting dates;

Thursday, November 10, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and via video conference.

The November 24, 2024 meeting is cancelled.

Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via Google Meet

12. Executive Session as Needed

12.1 Personnel - Employee Legal Matter

12.2 Personnel – Discussion of Non-Public Records

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include an Employee Legal Matter and Personnel - Discussion of Non-Public Records. Mr. Boutin advised regarding qualifications for items to qualify for Executive Session and asked for clarification on the item labeled as Personnel, Discussion of Non-Public Records. Mrs. Spaulding advised that because the item related to personnel, she could not provide any clarification or additional information. Mr. Delcore advised that there are a range of personnel matters that can be discussed in Executive Session and queried regarding whether the issue was related to the appointment, evaluation, or employment of a public officer or employee, or a disciplinary or dismissal action. Mr. Delcore requested that one of the reasons be provided and voiced concern that no provision could be cited. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated that she could not provide any additional information.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the item proposed for discussion, specifically, the Employee Legal Matter, would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with the Superintendent in attendance for item 12.1 and possibly for item 12.2, at 10:17 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. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 11:32 p.m.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Boltin, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin