

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

Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
November 10, 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  
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Mel Battah	Jeff Blow	Stacy Boltin	Michael Boutin
Brandon Campo	Linda Couture	Erika Dolan	Pragya Donovan	Alice Harding
Sarah Helman	Josh Howard	Donald Koch	Tom Koch	Brandy Kolling
Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Kerri Lamb	Kayla Link	Joan McMahon
Sue Paxman	Heather Slayton	Diane Solomon	Kevin Spaulding	R. Lee Walther
Cameo Wells	802****93			

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, November 10, 2022, Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School Library and via video conference.**

**2. Pledge 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.

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

Add 6.9 Procedures  
Add 6.10 SEA Building Site Location for Board Meetings  
Add 6.11 Quarterly Staff Exit Survey  
Add 6.12 Statement

It was agreed that some Agenda Items will be taken out of order

**On a motion by Mr. Reil, 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**

Mr. Boutin requested follow up relating to the “Battah FOIA” request, advising that he has not received a response to his inquiry regarding whether or not the District can tell if people looked at the document.

**4.2 Student Voice**

None.

## **5. Consent Agenda**

### **5.1 Approval of Minutes – October 27, 2022 Regular Meeting**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the October 27, 2022 Regular Meeting.**

## **6. Current Business**

### **6.1 New Hires**

The resume and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Form for Joshua Barber was distributed.

A copy of a letter from the Superintendent to the Board (dated 11/07/22) was distributed. This document will also be utilized for Agenda Item 6.6

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidate, and answered questions from the Board. Brief discussion was held regarding the 'criteria' for mid-year resignations. It was noted that if a licensed individual resigns from a Vermont public school mid-year, they cannot be hired by another Vermont public school for the remainder of that academic year.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Joshua Barber.**

### **6.2 Rescind Admission of Resident Students Policy (C31)**

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 6.2 through 6.5 were distributed.

Ms. Parker advised regarding why policies C31, C32, and C43 are presented for rescinding.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to rescind the Admission of Resident Students Policy (C31), the Eighteen Year-Old Students Policy (C32), and the STI and Pregnancy Prevention Policy (C43).**

### **6.3 Rescind Eighteen Year-Old Students Policy (C32)**

Action taken under Agenda Item 6.2

### **6.4 Rescind STI and Pregnancy Prevention Policy (C43)**

Action taken under Agenda Item 6.2

### **6.5 Rescind Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C34)**

Discussed after Agenda Item 7.3.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to rescind the Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C34).**

### **6.6 Behavior Data**

See documentation distributed under Agenda Item 6.1

Mr. Hennessey provided a brief overview of the documentation, noting that it is important to understand that staffing issues have prevented administrators from performing a thorough analysis of behavioral issues and that the shortage of support staff also has an impact on behavior. Mr. Hennessey advised that a more thorough analysis will be performed at the end of the semester.

Mr. Hennessey answered questions from the Board and advised that data from all behavioral categories are reported to the AOE. Brief discussion was held including; increased social/emotional issues, the impact behavioral disruptions have to other students in the classrooms, possible expansion of the SEA Program, data by grade, the implementation of targeted interventions, and a query regarding professional development on managing classrooms and behaviors,

### **6.7 First Draft FY24 Budget (Including Board Goals/Limits/Parameters)**

A document titled BUUSD FY24 Budget Summary – Draft 1, 11/09/22, was distributed.

A document titled FY24 Budget Development Narrative – Updated 11/09/22 was distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc advised regarding work of the Finance Committee, advising that they have trimmed the initial first draft from 9.11% to 8.67% (an increase of a little more than \$4,000,000). Salary and benefits account for 74% of the increase. Some Board Members have advised they would like a level funded budget, though given the rate of inflation that does not seem doable. There is concern regarding how large of an increase tax payers can tolerate. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding the summary and narrative documents included in the packet and requested input from the Board. Mrs. Perreault advised that the District is very interested in hearing from community members and advised regarding the 11/17/22 public listening session and a survey that will be conducted. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding how the District plans to distribute the survey to reach as many community members as possible. In response to a query from Mr. Malone regarding a recent request for information, Mr. Malone was advised to provide the specifics of his inquiry in the Budget 'Question/Answer' section on the web site. Mrs. Perreault cautioned that the budget is usually passed by the voters prior to the teachers' contract being ratified. In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised that the narrative provides insight into absolute necessities vs. items that are perhaps not 'essential'. The budget draft continues to be a work in progress. Mrs. Pregent cautioned that if Universal Free Meals are not continued in FY24, the cost to the District to continue providing free meals is approximately \$800,000. Mrs. Pregent would like to hear from the community regarding this matter. Additional discussion included; proposed SEA increases, concern regarding disparities in spending between schools (extra-curricular, libraries, and principals' office line items), concern that

the Board has not set budget increase parameters, clarification that the percentage of the budget increase does not directly correlate to any resulting tax increase, the need for the Board to be cognizant that portions of the formula (to calculate taxes) are not known until after the budget development process has concluded, a request for clarification related to some of the positions listed in the narrative, and questions related to the increase in the number of special education students. It was noted that the AOE does not provide rules or guidelines related to budget increases. The Board agreed to set budget goals after the public listening session (11/17/22).

#### **6.8 Discussion of 10 Year Consolidation Plan (Evaluation of Staffing, Enrollment, Facilities, Building Capacity, and Combining BCEMS and BTMES Sports)**

Mr. Reil provided a brief overview of the reasons he suggested the District consider creating a 10-Year Plan. Mr. Reil stressed the importance of hearing from all stakeholders and holding objective discussions on this matter (which is in a conceptual state). Lengthy discussion was held regarding development of a 10-year plan, including; a suggestion that the length be shortened (5-year plan?), a suggestion of forming an ADHOC committee, the numerous areas that require research (including but not limited to: facility logistics, transportation, sports, instructional practices, and technology), holding community forums, holding preliminary discussion at the committee level, caution that those opposed will speak more strongly, and the need to get additional information prior to deciding the timeframe for a plan.

#### **6.9 Procedures**

Mr. Malone advised that he believes the Board should, as part of its routine business, add review of procedures. Mr. Malone suggests reviewing six procedures a month (until caught up). Mr. Malone suggested that procedures for new policies, be presented at the Second and Final readings of those policies. Mr. Malone believes the Board needs to chip away at the outstanding procedures until all are reviewed (as advised by legal counsel). Mr. Malone advised that his understanding of the legal perspective is that the Board needs to review procedures, and confirm that there are procedures in effect for the policies, and that the procedures are effective/working. It was suggested that each policy have an indicator that advises regarding the status/existence of associated procedures. It was suggested that a column be added to the Policy Index to advise regarding the status of procedures. It was suggested that the District contact VSBA to inquire regarding how other districts handle procedure review. Mrs. Leclerc stressed the importance of having up-to-date procedures to assure policies are adhered to, the importance of the Board reviewing procedures to assure they 'mesh' with the policy, that procedures are dated & notations present when updates are in progress and the importance of having a link to procedures on the policy page. It was noted that procedures related to rescinded policies may need to be revised (procedures still necessary though policy may not need to be in place). It was reiterated that legal counsel advised that the Board needs to see the procedures, know what they are, and see that they are being complied with. The Board is responsible for seeing that procedures are legally compliant and being followed. It was stressed that written procedures are critical for each policy to help assure consistency within each school and between schools. It was noted that there is a Board directive that all procedures be linked on the policy page (of the web site).

#### **6.10 SEA Building Site Location for Board Meetings**

Complaints have been received regarding the audio quality of Board meetings held at the SEA Building. The Board agreed to have the Policy Committee discuss amendments to the policy that would remove the SEA Building from the meeting rotation. Mr. Boutin suggested that all Board meetings be held in one location, and advised that the SHS Library is the most central location and is easily accessible for those with disabilities.

#### **6.11 Quarterly Staff Exit Survey**

Brief discussion was held. It was noted that some employees decline to take the Exit Survey. Concern was voiced that if data is presented quarterly, it might provide personally indefinable information (given the small number per quarter). It was suggested that Exit Survey data for the year be provided at the end of the year. It is important for the Board to know the reasons why teachers are leaving (identify trends). It was agreed that Exit Survey information will be provided at the end of the year and that the Board will receive timely resignation updates throughout the year.

#### **6.12 Statement**

Mr. Hennessey advised that he has been asked by the Board to read a statement. Mr. Hennessey read the following statement; "In the spirit of building a better relationship between the administration and the Board, I want to acknowledge my role in the disruption to the community resulting from the events leading up to and including the August 25, 2022 Board meeting. I already apologized to the Board and recognize that the situation was not handled appropriately. I appreciate that we are moving forward, and that I will continue to work collaboratively with the Board to best serve the District in our shared focus of educating students. Thank you."

### **7. Old Business**

Copies of policies referenced in Agenda Items 7.1 through 7.3 were distributed.

#### **7.1 Second and Final Reading Policy on Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding (F2)**

Brief discussion was held regarding a formatting matter.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Second and Final Readings of the Policy on Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding (F2), the Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26), and the Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C70), and agreed to adopt said policies. Mr. Boltin was not present for the vote.**

## **7.2 Second and Final Reading Electronic Surveillance Policy (F26)**

Policy adopted under Agenda Item 7.1.

## **7.3 Second and Final Reading Use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy (C70)**

Policy adopted under Agenda Item 7.1.

## **7.4 VSBA Mini-Grant Update**

Mrs. Farrell reported that the District was notified by VSBA that all the grant monies were awarded to other Districts. Mr. Hennessey advised that next Friday, he and Mrs. Anderson will be joining other regional superintendents and SPED Directors to discuss regional solutions, to bring in outside agencies and to look collectively at how to meet the needs of the students who are struggling the most. The focus of the discussion will be on grades K – 4.

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

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he attended the Veterans Day Parade (on 11/05/22) and was very impressed by the combined BCEMS/BTMES Band.

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding more ardently pursuing a student representative(s) to the Board. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding the number of SPED students for academic years 21/22 and 22/23. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding the use of granite name plates (a past practice). It was noted that there are name plates for members who were previously on the Board. Name plates for new Board Members will be ordered by Mrs. Gilbert.

Mrs. Leclerc reminded the Board and community members of the upcoming Finance Committee meeting on 11/17/22 (SHS Library at 6:00 p.m.), noting that the focus of this meeting is a listening session, to receive budget input from members of the community.

Ms. Parker advised that she received community feedback regarding the band performances at the Veterans' Day Parade and the wonderful mentoring experience it was for the BCEMS/BTMES Band to watch the SHS Band perform.

Mr. Hennessey reminded the community that 11/11/22 is Veterans' Day and that many events will be occurring in the District's schools. Mr. Hennessey will be working with JROTC students on a new 'showcase', which is scheduled to be released at the end of the day. A regional JROTC competition will be held on Pendo Field (SHS) over the weekend and there will soon be an announcement regarding an appointment (of one of the District's students) to West Point.

Mrs. Spaulding reminded the community of the upcoming budget survey and she encourages community members to share this survey with friends and neighbors.

## **9. Future Agenda Items**

### December 1, 2022 Meeting:

- FY24 Budget – include Board Goals/Limits
- CIA Plan Update
- Enrollment Home Study Update
- Reconsideration of Possible Retreat Dates
- Legislative Breakfast(s)

### Add to Retreat Parking Lot:

- Student Representative(s) to the Board (AF – 11/22)

### Add to Parking Lot:

- Review Community Members on Committees Document (TR - 11/22)
- Consolidation Plan (Board) (SS/TR – 11/22)

## **10. Next Meeting Dates**

Finance Committee Budget Listening Session: Thursday 11/17/22 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library and via Google Meet.

### Board Meetings:

Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library and via Google Meet. (Special Meeting – replaces 11/24/22 meeting).

Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library and via Google Meet.

Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via Google Meet. (Special Meeting – replaces 12/22/22 meeting).

**11. Executive Session as Needed**

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

**12. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:21 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*