

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
December 1, 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) – joined at 7:14 p.m.
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Paul Malone (BT)
Sarah Pregent (BC)
Terry Reil (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Peter Anthony	Jeff Blow	Stacy Boltin	Michael Boutin
Cassandra Demarais	Josh Howard	Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Kerri Lamb
Sue Paxman	Tina Routhier	Mindy Woodworth		

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, December 1, 2022, Special meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at 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.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Cecchinelli was not present for the vote.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

None.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2022 Special Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the November 7, 2022 Special Meeting and the November 10, 2022 Regular Meeting. Mr. Cecchinelli was not present for the vote.

5.2 Approval of Minutes – November 10, 2022 Regular Meeting

Approved under Agenda Item 5.1.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Jade Law (BTMES PE 3 – 5) and Jennifer Curtin (BCEMS Librarian) were distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidates, and answered questions from the Board.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Jade Law and Jennifer Curtin. Mr. Cecchinelli was not present for the vote.

6.2 Fall 22-23 Climate Survey Summary

A document titled BUUSD Fall 2022 – 2023 Climate Survey Summary' was distributed.

Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of the survey, including; advising of the survey window, the various stakeholders, that the questions were defined by PBIS, and that there was no 'open comment' section on the survey. The data summarizes information based on stakeholder categories (grades 3 – 5, grades 6 – 12, families, and personnel). Brief discussion ensued and included; defined areas needing improvement (student behavior that impacts teaching, school safety, cultural acceptance, peer/adult relations, parental involvement, and younger students 'not liking school'), and questions from the Board and community members (including causes impacting areas of concern, the percentage of participants, and plans to address known issues). It would be beneficial to add a comments section on a future survey. More definitive information related to 'causes' may be identified if data is disaggregated further. Ms. Fredericks plans to 'drill down' on the data based on demographic groups, and then create (and share) action steps. In response to a query, Ms. Fredericks advised that she hopes to begin comparative analysis within the next month. Another survey will be performed in the spring. Concern was voiced that action for the areas of concern relating to safety and behavior issues needs to be accelerated. Ms. Fredericks believes it would be more beneficial to share additional information with the Board after action steps have been identified. This item will be added to the January or February agenda for an update and sharing of action steps.

6.3 Budget Survey Summary

A link titled Budget Survey Summary was listed on the Agenda.

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the process for the survey. There were 327 responses. The survey was open for one week and was shared via email, the district web site, school web sites, city and town clerks, and social media. Availability of the survey was also shared at the public listening session. In response to a query, it was noted that some responses (those deemed hurtful or disrespectful, or named specific individuals) were removed from data posted on the web site. Mr. Boutin's observation is that community members are concerned with taxes, parents are concerned for academics, and staff members are concerned with salaries. Additional discussion included; concern that there were only 327 responses when the tax base is over 6000, concern that only 19% of responders (approximately 62 people) identified as community members, concern that the survey may not be giving a 'good pulse' on how the community feels and that there should have been more outreach to gain community participation, a suggestion that if done again in the future, it should be done earlier and questions should be refined, a query regarding whether or not questions posed would be answered, a query regarding comments related to salary increases (what are some ideas on how individuals would like to accomplish that initiative), discussion on how to increase the number of survey participants (a designated spot at the polls?), and agreement that the survey does not provide a clear consensus, and that the Board needs to find a balance between the District's needs and tax payer affordability.

6.4 Legislative Breakfast

Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Legislative Breakfast is tentatively scheduled for 01/09/23 at 7:00 a.m. at Spaulding High School. The District will need to confirm the date with Barre City and Barre Town House Representatives and Senators. Board Members and District Administrators should be in attendance. Discussion usually includes upcoming legislation and legislation that the District feels needs to be introduced. There are no formal presentations at these 'breakfasts', though Representatives usually introduce themselves and advise regarding what committees they are on and legislation of importance to schools.

6.5 Superintendent Evaluation: Timeline/Process

Mrs. Gilbert sent an e-mail to the Board that includes the timeline and the process. This information is not included in the Board packet. Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of the timeline and process, including those who are invited to provide input. It is hoped that the evaluation process will include documentation on goals and objectives for the Superintendent. Mrs. Spaulding requested that Board Members advise her regarding any revisions they believe are necessary to the process/forms. The District uses a 360° type of evaluation that includes input from many sources. Though the due date for the evaluation form is 12/21/22, Mrs. Spaulding requested that Board Members begin their evaluation documents as soon as possible.

6.6 Review Appointing Committee Members to Committees

A document titled 'How to Engage with the BUUSD Board' was distributed.

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

Mr. Reil suggested that discussion be held early, and all questions be answered and the document updated, as necessary, so that Committee openings can be posted in February and possibly appointments made at the second meeting in March. Brief discussion

was held regarding the process and concern was voiced that committee appointments are for one year, but it takes a good deal of time to 'ramp up' on some of the committees. Mr. Malone suggested that the Board consider making some of the appointments 2-year commitments. It was suggested that Board Members take time to consider the 'Committee Guidelines' and come to a future meeting prepared to discuss any modifications they would like incorporated into the Guidelines. This item will be added to the January agenda, where guidelines will be finalized. In response to a query, Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding the creation of the 'How to Engage with the BUUSD Board' document, advised that it was approved by the Board and is available on-line. Discussion of this document is in the Parking Lot and is slated for discussion at the Board Retreat.

7. Old Business

7.1 Enrollment/Home Study Report

A document titled 'November 2022 – District Enrollment/Staffing' was distributed.

A document titled 'Home Study Report (AOE provided data)' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the reports and advised that those listed as 'home study' have had their home study approved by the State. Home study applications pending, are applications currently waiting for approval by the AOE. The number of core classroom teachers has been corrected on the District report. Brief discussion was held and it was recognized that there are many licensed educator positions that are not reflected in the report (Special Educators etc.). Census data shared by Mrs. Perreault includes all individuals covered under the 'teachers' contract. The class size policy (for teacher/student ratios) refers to the number of teachers/students in 'core' classes and does not include all employees covered by the teacher contract. Brief discussion was held regarding the numbers for the SEA building. In response to a query regarding SHS 'class sizes', it was noted that at the high school level, the computation is more complex. Given the low teacher to student ratio for kindergarten at BTMES, Ms. Parker queried regarding enrollment projections for FY24. In response to a query, it was noted that Pre-k student counts include both morning and afternoon classes.

7.2 CIA Plan Update

A document titled '5-year Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Plan (On-going) 11/30/2022 Update' was distributed.

The CIA Plan is a 'living' document that evolves based on new information. The Plan is organized by Strategic Plan goals. Action Steps are listed by year. Ms. Fredericks provided a brief overview of action steps for the current academic year and advised regarding some changes that were made to the document. Ms. Fredericks advised regarding a change to statewide testing. SBAC assessments are being replaced with Cognia Assessments. The new assessment system is referred to as VT CAP – Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program. Ms. Fredericks answered questions from the Board. Mrs. Farrell queried regarding why SHS opted out of the CVCCSD tours for 9th and 10th graders. Additionally, Mrs. Farrell believes that in-house job imbedded supports/coaches, should be the 'go to' people and the District should be able to reduce its reliance on outside consultant support.

The Board recessed at 7:58 p.m. and reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

7.3 FY24 Budget

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

A copy of the BUUSD FY24 Budget Development – Draft 1 – 11/22/22 Report was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding advised that this item is on the agenda so that Board Members can provide input regarding any parameters/limits they feel should be applied to budget development. Mr. Hennessey advised that administrators have been working on Draft 2, and it will be ready to distribute to the Finance Committee by the end of next week. Mrs. Perreault advised that she has now received updated child count information and has additional information relating to the Curriculum Coordinator job responsibilities. Mrs. Perreault has not yet received Property Tax Yield information and has reached out to the State regarding this information. Additional information should be received/available by the end of December (Equalized Pupil Counts, CLA, and Revenue Projections). Mrs. Perreault provided a brief overview of the budget process (line by line review), and how projected salary increases are calculated. Two years' worth of data is reviewed during the budget process. It was noted that administrators review their past budgets and actuals and make proposals based on what they believe is needed. In response to query, it was confirmed that Draft 1 includes 3% and 5% increases for teachers and para-educators. Each 1% increase equates to \$175,000. Mr. Malone queried regarding whether or not these percentages are practical, and queried regarding the impact if this budget passes and then a higher rate is negotiated. Mrs. Perreault advised that salary increases in excess of the approved budget would most likely result in RIFs (Reduction in Force Notices– layoffs).

Mr. Malone queried regarding funding to cover the cost of remediation for recently discovered asbestos tiles. Mrs. Perreault advised of the possibility of using \$200,000 of ESSER funding, the proposed square footage increase for facilities, and Capital Reserve Funds. It is hoped that voters will approve moving some of the FY22 surplus to the Capital Improvements Fund. The Capital Improvement Fund currently has approximately \$865,000. Mr. Malone queried regarding whether or not \$350,000 of that fund is reserved for the BCEMS roof project. Mr. Malone is concerned regarding whether the Capital Improvement Fund is large enough to cover all of the necessary projects. Additional questions included; the facilities square footage amount increase and food service improvements (are not in the budget and are covered by the Food Service Program surplus). Food Service surpluses cannot be utilized to fund meals for students. Additional discussion included; concern that attrition has not occurred to absorb ESSER funded positions, queries regarding the number of ESSER funded positions and the number of those positions the District wants to keep, the number of new positions being proposed (14 ?), concern over overages on the HVAC project, the ability to sustain ESSER funded positions, concern that the BTMES increase percentage is larger than the other schools (equity issue?), a suggestion that for class sizes that are between the

minimum and ideal amounts, staff reductions be considered. It is important that the Board provide clear direction regarding budget parameters/thresholds/goals. Mrs. Spaulding polled the Board regarding how they wish to direct administrators to move forward with budget development. Responses included; a request that there be coordination between curriculum & instruction and the budget, a suggestion that survey results be used as a guide, a request to perform a deeper dive into FY22 actuals & FY23 actuals (to-date), that it be recognized that teachers are receiving an increase because of the 13% increase in health insurance premiums, that the budget be level funded (4 Board Members), and that the increase be no more than 5% or 6%. (2 Board Members). Two Board Members did not share thresholds/parameters. A community member advocated for retention of SRO positions, and suggested that the District consider consolidating all preschool students in one school. Budget Draft 2 will be available on 12/09/22.

7.4 Board Retreat Discussion

Mrs. Spaulding advised that she sent out a poll and is waiting to hear back from a majority of the Board. Brief discussion was held regarding the Agenda, and a community member suggested that given how close it is to election time, it may be best to postpone the Retreat until after the election

8. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Farrell enjoyed the recent Christmas parade.

Ms. Parker appreciates the productive meeting this evening and the input from individuals who all bring different strengths to the 'table'.

Mr. Reil would like the Board to discuss a recent FOIA Request

Mr. Malone believes the Board needs to discuss procedures as he believes the District is very behind on procedure development (current and existing procedures). Mr. Malone queried regarding administrators receiving the principals' budgets and if it would be appropriate for the Board to review that information. Mr. Hennessey advised that administrators will be present at the next Finance Committee meeting as well as the Board meeting. Mr. Malone expressed concern regarding the lack of administrators and Business Office personnel at the last Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Malone suggests that there always be administrator and Business Office representatives at those committee meetings.

Mrs. Leclerc wants assurance that the Board keeps 'procedures' on the radar. Mrs. Leclerc also appreciates the productivity of this evening's meeting.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he attended the Winooski Valley Concert on 11/18/23, and lauded the SHS Band and Chorus for their performances. Mr. Booth was recognized for his work with the SHS Band.

9. Future Agenda Items

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

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

The Agenda for the 12/08/22 meeting has already been constructed. Mrs. Spaulding provided a brief overview of that agenda. Discussion of the meeting location rotation will be added to the Agenda (Policy A20).

Mr. Malone voiced concern regarding Policy E1 (related to Title I), a required policy which is not up to date.

It was suggested that the CVCCSD Minutes be included in the Board packets. The Minutes from the RAB Board used be included in the packets when CVCC was part of the District.

12/20/22 Meeting:

- Discussion of FOIA Request/Data – Issues Regarding Procedures
- Procedures

Parking Lot:

- Change A 'Consolidation Plan' to '10-Year Strategic Plan - Reorganization'
- Review Appointing Committee Members to Committees – January

10. Executive Session as Needed

10.1

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

11. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin