

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
November 29, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Leclerc (BT) - Chair
Terry Reil (BT) – Vice Chair
Michelle Hebert
John Lyons, Jr.
Paul Malone (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sarah Pregent (BC)

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alice Farrell
Chris Parker
Sonya Spaulding

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus Kerri Lamb

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Leclerc, called the Tuesday, November 29, 2022 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting Minutes From November 17, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the November 17, 2022 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Finances for SHS Asbestos

Mr. Reil advised that discussion was held at the Facilities Committee meeting; testing has identified asbestos tiles that need to be removed. The cost to replace these tiles is \$450,000. The replacement of these tiles, which does not include the auditorium, falls outside the scope of the HVAC Project. The Facilities Committee briefly discussed possible financing sources, including; the proposed increase to the square footage amount for the Facilities budget (an increase of 25¢SF - \$125,000), and shifting of ESSER Funds (\$200,000). It was not known where the remainder of the funds would come from. It was noted that the threshold for asbestos has changed since the tiles were previously tested. Mr. Reil advised that if tiles are not replaced in lighting project areas, one option would be to retro-fit new lighting. Concern was raised that the HVAC Project already had an overage that might require use of Capital Improvement funds, and that if those funds continue to be utilized, there may not be enough funding for the BCEMS roofing project. Mr. Reil also noted that documentation from EEI indicates that they believe work also needs to be performed to bring electrical wiring up to code. Wiring improvements were not discussed at the Facilities meeting, but will be discussed at the next meeting. In response to a query, it was noted that the EEI quote did include a contingency and that contingency will cover the cost of disposal of asbestos tiles in the lighting project areas. Concern was voiced regarding ‘piece-meal’ additional expenses being identified. Mr. Reil needs to confirm if the electrical upgrades are included in the \$450,000 estimate. Mr. Reil has documented all of the questions and will bring them to the next Facilities Committee meeting.

5.2 5-Year Capital Plan Update

A document labeled BUUSD 5-Year Facility Draft Plan (last updated 07/18/22) was distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc is pleased with the format of the Plan and thanked Mr. Evans for his work on this document. It was noted that the HVAC and Asbestos projects should be added to the Plan (including overages). Mrs. Leclerc is waiting to hear back regarding dollar amounts associated with the Storm Water Run-off Projects. Mr. Malone believes the plan needs to be expanded to include all Capital Improvements and 'up-keep' items. Mr. Reil agrees that the Plan needs to be expanded. For budgeting purposes, it will be necessary to see dollar amounts associated with projects (when possible).

6. Old Business

6.1 FY24 Budget Development

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

A document titled BUUSD Budget Development – Draft 1, 11/22/22, was distributed.

Mr. Malone advised regarding a number of questions, including; budgeted increases that are higher than what was actually spent in the previous year, additional personnel (that were going to be funded through attrition), how many new positions have been added to the draft, the large surpluses (over the past two years), and positions that have remained unfilled over a long period of time. Ms. Hebert queried regarding the number of ESSER positions that were slated for elimination, but are now wanted in the budget. Mr. Reil advised regarding data included in the narrative document and brief discussion was held regarding ESSER funded positions and it was noted that ESSER funded positions were supposed to be temporary to fill the 'gap' caused during COVID, but there is a trend to keep the positions permanently. Additional discussion included; the possibility of eliminating unfilled positions (that have remained vacant for several years), shifting of funds from unfilled positions to other positions, concern over the proposal to add 2 custodians (\$100,000), strong concern regarding the impact of teacher and para-educator contracts (\$175,000 for each 1% increase), health and dental premium increases (which the Board has no control over), recognition that health/dental increases are an 'increase/added benefit' for staff, a suggestion that departments review and prioritize their supply line-items (looking for creative reductions), a query regarding including kitchen upgrades in the expense budget (as they are funded through the food service surplus), the need for additional cyber security (including input from Mr. Ajanma), the need to continually replace/upgrade equipment (Chromebooks), the need to update classroom software subscriptions, a query regarding a review of how Federal grants (Title Funds) are being utilized and shifting funds (if possible) to items that have a direct impact to students, concern that the Committee/Board/Administrators have not set budget parameters/goals (this is time sensitive), a query regarding any off-set from Medicaid reimbursement (for OT services), concern that the Board initiative to provide transportation to out of district (tuition paying) students was cancelled without Board discussion and that the District has not been aggressively marketing SHS (including transportation) to the three sending districts, the need to (at the Board level) discuss and possibly eliminate increases that don't provide direct classroom instruction/benefits, the need to receive answers to outstanding questions and then prioritize budget items, concern that the budget, with an 8% increase, will be a hard sell to tax payers, the need for the Board to set budget parameters, discussion of administrator salary increases (which are missing from the narrative) and were not approved by the Board, and the need to provide clear/factual information to community members (regarding the tax impact and benefits to students).

7. Other Business

None.

8. Items for Future Agendas

- FY23 Preliminary Projection Report
- School ERP Pro Implementation Schedule
- FY24 Budget Draft 2
- Update on the Annual Report
- Asbestos Financing
- 5-Year Plan
- 10-Year Strategic Plan Conceptual Discussion

9. Next Meeting Date

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

An additional meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 4, 2023 to prepare for presentation to the Board on 01/12/23.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin