

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
December 8, 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)  
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)  
Paul Malone (BT)  
Sarah Pregent (BC)  
Terry Reil (BT)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent  
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal  
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services  
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Principal  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal  
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal  
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal  
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal  
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Jeff Blow	Stacie Boltin	Michael Boutin	Jody Emerson
Sarah Helman	Josh Howard	Guy Isabelle	Mariah Jacobs	Suzanne Jacobs
Prudence Krasofski	Colleen Kresco	Sue Paxman	Tina Routhier	

**1. Call to Order**

**The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, December 8, 2022, Regular 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**

Delete - 7.1 Budget Draft 2

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, 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**

Josh Howard addressed the Board and voiced concern regarding a FOIA request. Mr. Howard believes specific e-mails were intentionally left out. Mr. Howard proceeded to read emails; one from Mr. Hennessey to Sonya Spaulding (dated 08/25/22) outlining public comment and his plan for that public comment, and one from Mrs. Spaulding (a reply to Mr. Hennessey's email), advising of her feedback/input regarding the Superintendent's planned statement. Mr. Howard advised that on 09/08/22 Mrs. Spaulding read a statement advising that she was not aware of the planned statement or plan for employees to speak. Mr. Howard queried regarding why misinformation is being provided to the public.

Jeff Blow addressed the Board and queried regarding the Board Chair regarding whether the information provided by Mr. Howard was factual. Mr. Blow voiced concern that the Board does not answer question put forth to them, and advised that the public deserves the

respect of an answer. Mr. Blow believes the accusation voiced by Mr. Howard, towards the Board Chair is serious in nature and queried again regarding whether the information provided by Mr. Howard is factual. Mr. Blow reiterated his belief that the public deserves the respect of an answer, rather than silence from the Board. Mr. Blow advised that he believes the statement read by the Board Chair on 09/08/22 was false and he requested that the Board Chair immediately resign from the position of Chair, serve the remainder of her time on the Board as a Board Member, but let someone with more credibility lead the Board. Mr. Blow queried regarding whether or not the Chair is willing to resign. Mr. Blow believes the Chair is setting a terrible example to students and faculty and reiterated his displeasure that questions are not being answered. Mr. Blow requested that his questions be answered in writing (request occurred during Agenda Item 8.2).

Stacie Boltin addressed the Board, noting that in June the Board discussed bullying that resulted in physical violence. Mrs. Boltin is speaking this evening to voice concern regarding a recent Facebook post, where a parent advised that their child has been being bullied, the bullying was reported, and has recently escalated to physical violence. Mrs. Boltin believes the community 'cried out' for an end to bullying back in June, and bullying is continuing. Mrs. Boltin queried regarding why bullying has not been addressed and what steps are being taken to prevent bullying/rectify the situation. Mrs. Boltin believes the Board can address the item of bullying prevention without divulging personally identifiable information. Mrs. Boltin recognizes that bullying is a multifaceted issue that needs to be addressed, and reiterated that the community needs to know what is being done and deserves answers. Mrs. Boltin is concerned that bullying may escalate to further violence, and possibly the loss of life and stressed that this matter urgently needs to be addressed now. Mrs. Boltin stressed the urgency of the matter and queried regarding whether or not bringing this issue to the Board's attention is the correct way to deal with it, and if not, who should members of the public contact (chain of command).

Michael Boutin addressed the Board regarding discussion held a few months ago relating to having an anonymous survey (regarding morale etc). Mr. Boutin believes this type of 'poll' should be revisited as it is a good way to solicit feedback. It was noted that other employers have found it beneficial to perform these types of surveys.

#### **4.2 Student Voice**

None.

### **5. Consent Agenda**

#### **5.1 Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2022 Special Meeting**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the December 1, 2022 Special Meeting.**

Discussion moved to Building Reports (Agenda Item 8.2)

### **6. Current Business**

#### **6.1 New Hires**

No candidates were presented for hire.

#### **6.2 CVCCSD Budget Presentation**

A document titled CVCCSD Budget Overview – Fiscal Year 2024, was distributed.

Jody Emerson addressed the Board and presented an overview of the Power Point Presentation titled 'CVCCSD Budget Overview – Fiscal Year 2024'. The presentation included CVCCSD's Mission Statement, Budget Development, Conditions That Affect Budget Development, Budget Facts, Enrollment, Tuition, and Revenue Sources. Tuition is anticipated to be \$19,820 (an increase of 15%). Ms. Emerson answered questions from the Board and was thanked for this evening's presentation.

#### **6.3 First Reading Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy (A22)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the amended policy and answered questions from the Board.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy (A22).**

#### **6.4 First Reading Student Distribution of Literature Policy (C27)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the amended policy and answered questions from the Board. Brief discussion was held.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Student Distribution of Literature Policy (C27).**

#### **6.5 First Reading Selection of Library Materials Policy (D22)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the amended policy and noted that once this policy is adopted, Policy D31 will need to be rescinded. Brief discussion was held, including a request to view written procedures associated with this policy. Discussion was held regarding the need to have associated procedures listed on the District web site. Mr. Hennessey will provide additional procedural information. This information will be included as supplemental information at the second reading (in the board packet). In response to a query, it was noted that the document outlining reasons for VSBA changes will be included in future Policy Committee packets. It was noted that much of this information is included in the weekly VSBA newsletters/emails.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Selection of Library Materials Policy (D22), with the caveat that additional information will be provided at the Second and Final Reading.**

#### **6.6 Rescind School Visits by Board Members Policy (A33)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the policy noting that a copy of the rescinded policy will remain on the District website.

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to rescind the School Visits by Board Members Policy (A33).**

#### **6.7 Rescind Board Relations with School Personnel Policy (A34)**

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the policy noting that a copy of the rescinded policy will remain on the District website and that the Committee recommends that the Board keep as ‘procedures’, the sections labeled ‘At School Board or Committee Meetings’, ‘Relations with the Principal’, and ‘Relations with Other School Staff’. Brief discussion was held, including discussion regarding having procedures without the existence of corresponding policies, a suggestion to have two separate motions, and a suggested verbiage change to the section labeled “Relations with the Principal” from ‘the superintendent’ to ‘the superintendent and the Board’ will develop guidelines.....

**On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board voted 6 to 1 to rescind the Board Relations with School Personnel Policy (A34).**

**Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Malone, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent, and Mr. Reil voted for the motion. Mrs. Leclerc voted against the motion.**

**Mrs. Farrell moved to take, from the rescinded policy, the sections labeled ‘At School Board or Committee Meetings’, ‘Relations with the Principal’, and ‘Relations with Other School Staff’ and keep those sections as procedures. Mrs. Pregent seconded the motion.**

Brief discussion was held regarding possible verbiage changes. **Mrs. Farrell withdrew the motion.**

**After brief discussion, it was agreed that verbiage for procedures (related to Board Relations with School Personnel) will be amended and presented at a future Board meeting. Mrs. Farrell agreed to make proposed amendments.**

Discussion was held regarding the need for up-to-date written procedures and the risk of not having written procedures.

#### **6.8 Discussion of Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution Policy (A20)**

This policy is on the Agenda for the purpose of discussing/revisiting the location of Board meetings (keep a rotation schedule or change to hold all meetings in one location). Board Members were polled regarding their preference and feedback.

**After discussion it was the general consensus that all Board meetings be held in the Spaulding High School Library, and that signage be posted advising community members how to access the building (parking lot sign and door sign) and that Board Retreats will be held at other schools. The Board agreed to hold January Board meetings at Spaulding High School. The Policy Committee was directed to change Policy A20 by removing the meeting rotation section.**

### **7. Old Business**

#### **7.1 FY Budget Draft 2**

### **8. Reports**

#### **8.1 Superintendent Report**

A copy of the Superintendent’s Report (dated 12/02/22) was distributed.

A copy of a letter from The Superintendent to Ms. Brownell (dated 12/01/22) was distributed.

A document titled ‘Saunders: Barre City Challenge and Triumph’ was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey reminded the Board that Draft 2 of the FY24 Budget will be ready on 12/09/22. Additionally, Mr. Hennessey advised that the District has not been able to produce a 'weekly showcase' video since the week of Veterans Day. A new showcase video will be forthcoming shortly. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the upcoming 'Hour of Code' that students will be participating in and that there is no pending candidate for the vacant Special Educator position (at SEA). There is currently an open position for a night time Head Custodian at BCEMS. Mr. Hennessey answered additional questions from the Board, including the proper chain of communication when issues arise. It was noted that Board Members are put in a difficult position when they are not kept apprised of potential 'hot button' issues. Brief discussion was held regarding the 'letter of support' pertaining to a City of Barre grant request.

### **8.2 Building Reports: BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, and SEA**

Copies of the Building Reports were distributed.

BCEMS - In response to a query, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that the PTO has not yet appointed a contact person and an e-mail address has not yet been set up. For the time being, questions/comments can be sent to Mrs. Waterhouse. In response to query, Mrs. Waterhouse and Mr. Laflamme advised regarding training for Restorative Practices. Mrs. Waterhouse advised that due to staffing shortages, the school has been cancelling individual classrooms when necessary. Every day presents staffing challenges (vacant positions, illness, and family illness). There are also significant student absences due to illness. Concern was raised regarding how to fill academic learning gaps given the number of student and staff absences.

BTMES – It was noted that Mrs. Waterhouse's summary of issues relating to absences is mirrored at BTMES. In response to a query regarding filling academic gaps, Mrs. Nye advised that BTMES continues to hold assessments in an effort to keep a 'pulse' on where individual students and grades 'are at'. Absences/vacancies do have a district-wide impact as staff members are shifted to cover positions.

SHS – Mr. Maylor announced that the one-act plays will be presented 12/09/22, doors open at 6:30 p.m., the show starts at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Aither advised that a recent email (relating to student athlete participation) has been responded to. Mr. Aither advised regarding student absences (80 – 100 per day), and staff absences in the low 20's daily. SHS has been able to maintain all classes. In response to a query, Mr. Maylor advised that he will research information regarding community service opportunities. Information will be provided at a later time. Ms. Parker recognized the high achievements noted in the Tide Pride.

SEA – In response to a query, it was noted that the SEA Program is currently fully staffed. Discussions are being held regarding expanding the program to allow for admission of middle school students. Mr. Hennessey advised that there is currently room to add more high school students, and that some students have transferred from outplacement to the SEA Program. Mrs. Anderson provided additional information regarding the SEA Program which was just implemented this year. A meeting will be held on 12/13/22 regarding plans for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, including the transfer of students who receive services out of district. Brief discussion was held regarding utilizing different 'shifts' to accommodate middle school students. Mrs. Spaulding lauded the Program for the project based learning opportunities and the students who joined the AP Government class on a trip to Boston.

### **8.3 CVCCSD Board Report**

Minutes from the 11/07/22 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Farrell provided an overview of the meeting, including; budget development, program expansion, a presentation by the cosmetology staff, and how to work with the existing space to provide as many services/programs as possible.

The next meeting is December 5, 2022

### **8.4 Finance Committee**

Minutes from the November 17, 2022 meeting were distributed. The Committee also met on 11/29/22.

Mrs. Leclerc provided an overview of recent meetings, including the public listening session, and review of budget drafts.

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

### **8.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee**

Minutes from the November 14, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Reil provided an overview of the meeting, including' SEA transportation, outside contractor procedures, visionary lists for each building, use of the Capital Reserve Fund, an update from EEI (regarding asbestos ceiling tiles), lighting project lease numbers, and the resignation of Mr. Cecchinelli from the position of Committee Chair. The next meeting will include discussion of how to finance asbestos remediation.

The next meeting is Monday, December 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

### **8.6 Policy Committee**

Minutes from the November 21, 2022 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker advised regarding review of Policy Indexes, including the addition of a procedures column (including discussion of splitting the column in 2 to differentiate “understood” ‘operational procedures’ and official written/formal procedures. Mr. Malone voiced concern regarding ‘operational’ procedures. Ms. Parker advised that administrators are struggling with finding time to get formal procedures written, and that they hope to have more time for procedures during the summer. The next meeting is Monday, December 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

### **8.7 Curriculum Committee**

Minutes from the November 3, 2022 meeting were distributed. The December meeting was cancelled. Mrs. Pregent provided an overview of the meeting, including a review of the CIA personnel flow chart, student drop-out and completion dates, the difficulty in defining those categories consistently amongst other schools, student needs, review of diagnostic data from a third grade class, and cancellation of the December meeting. Mrs. Pregent advised regarding upcoming agenda items.

The next meeting is Thursday, January 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

### **8.8 Negotiations Committee**

Minutes from the November 8, 2022 meeting were distributed. Mrs. Pregent noted that the Committee met on 11/08/22, and also met with BEA Representatives to set ground rules. Three or four negotiation sessions have been scheduled (the first one is next week)

The next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via video conference.

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

Mrs. Farrell queried regarding plans to accommodate students with asthma or other breathing issues (during construction at SHS). Mr. Reil advised that plans are in place that prohibit students from entering construction areas and that the areas will be under negative pressure so there should be no threat to student safety.

Mr. Reil advised that given the issues with staff and student absences, he suggests that the Board keep that item as a regular agenda item.

### **10. Future Agenda Items**

#### 12/20/22 Meeting:

- FY24 Budget Development

#### January Meetings:

- Audit Presentation
- Revise Appointing Community Members to Committees Guidelines (Parking Lot Item B)
- IT Presentation/Cyber Security (Parking Lot Item E)
- Second and Final Readings of Policies
- Rescind Policy D31
- Procedures for Board Relations with School Personnel
- Asbestos Remediation Discussion (possible vote on financing of)
- Climate Survey Follow Up (January or February – Parking Lot Item C)
- Asbestos Update

Discussion was held regarding Procedures, documentation of those that exist, addressing procedures for new policies, addressing procedures for existing policies, the importance of having a ‘full picture’ of what needs to be done, a suggestion that updates on procedure status be provided to the Policy Committee, the need for a plan to accomplish procedure development, and how the District will respond to a FOIA Request for procedures. Additional discussion was held regarding when additional budget information will become available (CLA etc.), and reviewing guidelines for community members on committees (January agenda).

Additional discussion included Parking Lot and new items;

- SPED Student Counts (current and past) (AF 12/0//22)
- What Can The Board Do to Assist With Bullying Issues / Disruptive Behaviors (AF 12/08/22)
- Expanded Special Education Report (Parking Lot Item I)
- FOIA Discussion (Parking Lot Item K)

#### February Meetings:

- CIA Plan Update (Parking Lot Item F - moved from January)

**11. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office and via video conference. (Special Meeting)

**12. Executive Session as Needed**

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

**13. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:51 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*