

Addendum
Board Meeting
January 26, 2023

On Fri, Jan 20, 2023 at 10:16 PM mindy woodworth <mindy_woodworth@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: mindy woodworth <mindy_woodworth@yahoo.com>

Date: January 20, 2023 at 6:17:20 PM EST

To: sgabobsu@buusd.org

Subject: School Board Meeting Requested Correspondence

Good evening,

I am reaching out regarding the comments made at the board meeting on 01/19/2023, at the request of one of the board members. I was inquiring about the intentions of roughly half of the members of the board and imploring the remaining members who continue to act on behalf of the community to review and rectify the actions taken by their peers.

I have been coming to these meetings due to the actions of this board and continue to come due to the juvenile engagement I have seen while attending them. Multiple members have been raising their voices at concerned community members, school members and their own peers while refusing to answer any concerns brought forth. The outcry from board members to meet the expectations of these meetings is laughable as they often are the individuals who are acting in an unexceptionable manner.

Furthermore, the actions being taken by this board are clearly misaligned with the community as it is clear from the community's statements that they do not agree with the choices that are being made. Decreasing and reallocating funds to the extent that is being suggested is going to lead to a large deficit increasing our taxes exponentially in future years. The board members stating they are making these choices "for the children" mocking their peers is not only disrespectful towards their peers who refused to vote for this grossly underfunded budget but also to the members of the community who have been outwardly stating their views on underfunding the schools in this district.

The engagement with school staff and community members when board members disagree with them or want to avoid answering questions is often inappropriate and unprofessional. The members of the school board who are making decisions that do not align with the views of this community are not willing to answer for their actions and have unintentionally begun a movement to discontinue Barre Town's involvement in this district. Barre Town community members have always wanted what is best for our children but clearly the BUUSD School Board is not willing to meet our expectations. Should this movement success it will lie solely on the shoulders of this board.

I will continue to come to these board meetings and will ask my fellow town members to join me.

Regards,
Mindy Woodworth

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jeff Blow** <jeffblow70@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, Jan 25, 2023 at 11:34 AM

Subject: comment for visitors and communications

To: tboltin@buusd.org <tboltin@buusd.org>, gcecchinelli@buusd.org <gcecchinelli@buusd.org>, afarrell@buusd.org <afarrell@buusd.org>, nleclerc@buusd.org <nleclerc@buusd.org>, pmalone@buusd.org <pmalone@buusd.org>, cparker@buusd.org <cparker@buusd.org>, spregent@buusd.org <spregent@buusd.org>, treil@buusd.org <treil@buusd.org>, sspaulding@buusd.org <sspaulding@buusd.org>

Jan. 25 2023

BUUSD

Board Chair Spaulding

I request that you read this aloud during visitors and communications please.

BUUSD School Board Chair Spaulding,

I hear you read your meeting norms at the beginning of every meeting. They include being respectful of one another and respect the decision of the board.

I ask that you, madam chair respect the decision of the board and support the finance committees recommended budget and ultimately the budget approved by the school board. To privately or publicly be encouraging people to vote the budget down is in contradiction to the meeting norms that you read every meeting.

Lastly your silence last week, allowing a school administrator to single out one specific board member was a display of your lacking leadership. The school board members and the viewing public expect better from the board chair. Im sure there are training opportunities to help a chairperson understand their role, should you need any additional training.

Respectfully Submitted

Jeff Blow

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

BUUSD Central Office and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
January 18, 2023 - 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
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal
Emmanuel Ajanma, Director of Technology
Josh Allen, Communications Director
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Mari Goodridge Miller, SHS Assistant Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal
Rebekah Mortensen, Assistant Director of Special Services
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Peter Anthony	Bridgett Apfel	Mel Battah	Battah Family
Cassie Bell	Danielle Berg	Stacey Boltin	Amy Caffry	Emel Cambel
Erin Carter	Stephanie Collins	Michael Deering, II	Cassandra Demarais	Nora Duane
Andrew Duddy	Brendan Eaton	Stephen Finner	Jamie Frey	Miranda Green
Shayna Guild	Chelsea Haberek	Michelle Hebert	Sarah Helman	Josh Howard
Mariah Jacobs	Joseph Kill	Brandy Kolling	Prudence Krasofski	Michelle LaFrancis
Pat MacAskill	Ben Matthews	Raylene Meunier	Sue Paxman	Nick Ross
Diane Solomon	Rachel Van Vliet	Leslie Walz	Ashley Young	Jan Z

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Wednesday, January 18, 2023, Special meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., which was held at the BUUSD Central Office and via video conference.

2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment

Mrs. Spaulding read the Meeting Norms. The Board held a Mindfulness Moment.
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 Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as presented.

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4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Ms. Fredericks announced that there is currently an Open House taking place at BCEMS and the event is very well attended.

Ms. LaFrancis advised that Think Pink games will begin next week. There will be a Make-A-Wish kick-off game honoring alumni and colleague Jenn Bisson and her sons. Ms. LaFrancis encourages everyone to attend and sends best wishes to the Bisson family.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. New Business

5.1 Discussion BUUSD FY24 Budget

Mrs. Spaulding advised that this item is on the agenda to give individuals the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers they have related to the FY24 Budget. Mrs. Spaulding advised that after discussion, the Board will move on to Agenda Item 5.2 (Approval of the Warning). Mrs. Spaulding advised that the Warning must be submitted to the City and Town Clerks by Friday, January 20, 2023, which necessitates this Special Meeting. Lengthy discussion was held including; a query regarding cost of living 'numbers' for teachers, and supplies, expenses etc., concern that community member input was not given consideration, concern that there are those who are impacted by the budget who can't vote, a suggestion to put forth a higher budget and let voters decide, concern that the budget does not support the children, input from some voters that they will vote the budget down because it is too low, concern about using surplus funds, concern regarding conflicting information regarding cuts, concern that staff will leave and be difficult to replace, an expression of gratitude for those who have been working on the budget, a query regarding whether those who oppose the budget have reviewed the line items of the budget or are making uninformed decisions based on the increase percentage alone, a query regarding use of unaudited surplus funds, information regarding how deficits were handled in the past (the Tax Stabilization Fund was used to offset the deficit, if no funds in Tax Stabilization or the General Fund, deficits need to be added to the next year's budget. Capital Improvement Funds cannot be used to offset taxes or deficits), acknowledgement that the budget includes using \$700,000 in revenue from the tax stabilization fund, a query regarding future budgets if there is deficit spending, concern that use of \$700,000 from the Tax Stabilization fund has not been discussed, information that the proposed budget includes everything that is in place this year, information regarding the anticipated FY23 surplus, information relating to the 1.9% increase (for FY23) that was approved by the voters, historical information regarding past surpluses/deficits, the difficulty (nation-wide) of hiring special educators, historical information regarding FY24 budget development, the \$1,500,000 increase for salaries and benefits, concern regarding current and future difficulties in serving special education students, concern that the line item budget for the 1.5% increase has not been presented, concern that the budgetary process has not been followed, concern that guidance has not been provided by the Finance Committee, concern regarding how the proposed budget will address salary and benefit increases, concern regarding unknown special education expenses which may result in deficit spending, concern that middle school programming at SEA is not supported by the proposed budget, concern regarding the cost of outplacement for students whose needs cannot be met within the District, gratitude to the business office for the FY22 audit, reiteration of the legal and ethical obligation to meet the needs to all students, acknowledgement that intensive needs are increasing, the need to attract top quality educators, a reminder that discussion of the FY24 budget will be held at the 01/19/23 Finance Committee meeting, the work involved (line item review) in determining the proposed budget (1.5%), the need to plan for future budgets, a query regarding whether or not the SEA Program is adequately staffed (yes and 5 middle school students will be added to the program next week), concern regarding the lack of special education staff across the state, a possible increased need to utilize outside contractors and outplacement for special education students, concern regarding staff retention, and concern regarding the number of Board Members who voted.

Mr. Cecchinelli moved to accept the Administrative Team's plan for a \$49,603,687 budget, an increase of \$2,349,368, or 4.97%. Mrs. Pregent seconded the motion.

It was noted that as the budget has already been voted on, a vote to reconsider that vote needs to be made by a Board Member who was on the prevailing side of the vote. It is believed that this motion to overthrow the previous vote is in violation of Robert's rules. Mrs. Spaulding advised she would have voted against the original motion. Mrs. Farrell advised she would have voted for the original motion (1.5% increase).

5.2 Approval of BUUSD FY24 Budget Warning

A document titled 'Barre Unified Union School District Warning For March 7, 2023 Vote' were distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding read the Warning that was included in the packet.

Discussion of the Warning included; concern that the Board is approving a Warning for a budget that has not been reviewed (line items) by the Board, concern that Board Members have 'ignored the will of the voters', a request for a discussion with specific Board Members regarding activities at the SEA Program, concern that some individuals are making comments and decisions without factual information, concern that the Board as a whole did not provide parameters for budget development and that a line by line budget has not been presented (for review) by administrators, a belief that FY23 will end with a surplus, a concern that a prior version of the

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budget did not include reductions for line items that have been underspent for years, a query regarding what will be done to meet students' needs if positions are cut, clarification that the proposed budget does not cut any existing positions, concern that there will be difficulty in hiring additional staff (for the SEA Program) to accommodate additional students, concern that the motion on the floor pertains to the Warning and the discussion being held is off-topic (discussion the budget), the belief that the deadline for the Warning is 01/30/23, not 01/20/23, a request that if the deadline is 01/30/23, the Finance Committee provide information regarding how the 1.5% increase was arrived at, a belief that per information provided by the Barre City Clerk, the deadline is 01/30/23,

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board voted 4 to 3 to approve the Barre Unified Union School District Warning For March 7, 2023 Vote.

Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mr. Malone voted for the motion. Mr. Cecchinelli, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent voted against the motion. Mr. Reil was not present for the vote.

Mrs. Spaulding, for the record, advised that she is not voting, but if she did vote, she would vote against the motion. Additional discussion included; disappointment that though Board Members may not agree with the budget increase amount, they are not meeting their legal obligation to see that the District follows the law by not approving a Warning that is legally required, a comment that Board Members who vote against the motion, do not sign the Warning, and concern that Board Members are not following 'Board Norms' (supporting decisions of the Board). Mr. Reil advised that had he been present for the vote, he would have voted for the motion. A community member suggested that the Board Norms be 'thrown out' as they are not followed. A staff member advised that he does not believe the Board is in compliance with what the State has 'set out'. After objection by Board Members regarding the discussion that was ensuing, discussion was ended.

6. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board voted 6 to 1 to adjourn at 7:13 p.m.

Mr. Boltin, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Pregent voted for the motion. Mr. Cecchinelli voted against the motion. Mr. Reil was not present for the vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
January 19, 2023 - 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)
Sarah Pregent (BC)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Giuliano Cecchinelli
Alice Farrell
Chris Parker
Sonya Spaulding

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Rebekah Mortensen, Assistant Director of Special Services
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore – Times Argus	Cassie Bell	Michael Boutin	Erin Carter	Bella Cecchinelli
Stephanie Collins	Michael Deering, II	Cassandra Demarais	Brendan Eaton	Sarah Helman
Josh Howard	Claire Isabelle	Meredith Kerin	Joseph Kill	Pat MacAskill
Jessica Maurais	Dan Morrison	Dean Preston	Tina Routhier	Diane Solomon
Rachel Van Vliet	Mindy Woodworth	Ashley Young	Pierre	

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Leclerc, called the Thursday, January 19, 2023 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

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding a question asked at a previous Board Meeting regarding Board Members who have signed a petition for BTMES, to withdraw from the District (which is a conflict of interest). Mrs. Leclerc advised that this question is not appropriate and that these inquiries should be made to Board Members directly. Mr. Malone reiterated that he has not signed the petition. Mr. Howard advised that he has reviewed the petitions and Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Reil, Mr. Malone, and Mrs. Farrell have not signed the petition. Mr. Deering inquired regarding the reasons why the District is having difficulty retaining staff.

4. Approval of Minutes**4.1 Meeting Minutes From January 3, 2023**

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the January 03, 2023 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

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5. New Business

5.1 Budget Flyer

Mr. Hennessey advised that the budget flyer is being worked on and will be similar to what was produced last year. It was noted that the flyer which has more detailed information, will be posted online. The document included in tonight's packet is a copy of last year's Annual Report for discussion under Agenda Item 5.2.

5.2 Annual Report

A copy of the FY23 Annual Report was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised that work is being performed to draft this document, noting that this document is more time sensitive because it needs to meet deadlines from the printer. A draft of the Annual Report will be shared with the Board. Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding the process for Board approval of the Annual Report (prior to it going to print). It was noted that in the past, the Board has provided feedback and amendments to the Annual Report.

6. Old Business

6.1 FY24 Budget

Copies of graphs relating to equalized pupil counts, surpluses, budget information, and CLA information were distributed. Lengthy discussion was held, including; concern that administrators did not present the Board with a detailed budget for an increase of 1.5% (as requested by the Finance Committee), concern that a line item draft of the budget has not been distributed and that an across the board (by line item) increase of 1.5% will not work, concern that after increases in salaries and benefits, a 1.5% budget increase will not be sufficient to fund the District, clarification that the 1.5% budget increase does not eliminate any filled positions, a query regarding how long unfilled positions will remain in the budget (some have remain unfilled for 2 or 3 years), a perception that funds for currently unfilled positions can be used to fund the positions that are filled, efforts to recruit staff for vacant positions, the financial impact of outplacement of students (there are currently 7 students on wait lists for outplacement), the recent filling of 4 para-educator positions, concerns regarding IEPs not being met, a belief that surpluses should not be considered as part of the budget process, rather surpluses should be perceived as 'a gift', concern that surpluses could be easily depleted, a suggestion that areas in the budget that are not being used, should be reallocated to other areas of the budget, a belief that surplus funds from FY23 could be added to the Tax Stabilization Fund, a belief that the \$700,000 allocated as revenue for FY23 will not be needed (based on the projected surplus), the opinion that it would be better to overspend a little (in FY24), rather than have a large surplus, consideration of economic indicators, the loss of ESSER funds for FY25, concern that other districts are requesting money from the State Education Fund, the difficult challenge of balancing the needs of the schools and the needs of the tax payers, tax adjustments based on income sensitivity, a query regarding the balances in various funds, a query regarding identification of any line items that are significantly underspent, an overview of what occurs when the District runs a deficit (must use Tax Stabilization Fund / can't use Capital Improvement Fund, or add the deficit amount to the next year's budget), concern that public opinion is not being responded to, concern that salary increases will not be large enough, acknowledgement that salary increases are arrived at during the negotiation process, the correlation between per-pupil spending and academic achievement, acknowledgment that outplacement facilities are full and other outside contractors also have staff shortages, a query regarding how an FY23 deficit will be dealt with if the District is able to outplace students, concern that District employees are leaving the District to work for outside contractors, and are then hired back to work in the District (contracted employees) at a higher cost, concern that the proposed per-pupil spending amount (\$17,228) is significantly less than the state average (\$20,155), a suggestion that contracted providers may be more qualified to provide services, recognition that some individuals prefer to work outside of a school setting (year-round work) to increase their income vs a school setting (working 9 months per year), a query regarding current rates for para-educators, a request that the Finance Committee provide a written document to 'dumb down' an explanation of the proposed 1.5% increase, reiteration that the Board as a whole did not provide guidance regarding budget parameters, an overview of previous budget development work (including parameters set by the Board and subsequent meetings with administrators that included constructive/productive dialogue), concern that this process has not been followed this year and a request that a line item budget (with explanations for recommendations) be provided, a request for respectful, collaborative dialogue, a request (from Mr. Hennessey) for some direction from the Board regarding how to draft the budget to come in at 1.5%, concern that there was not enough collaboration with the Board or the Finance Committee, concern that the majority of attendees at the last Board meeting were employees of the District (rather than community members/tax payers), a query regarding whether or not employees were asked to attend the meeting, a suggestion that surplus funds be used to finance major facilities projects (rather than be used to support the budget), concern regarding upcoming, costly facilities projects (including mandated storm water run-off mitigation), concern that \$7,200,000 in ESSER funding was used for facilities matters rather than being spent on improving student education, concern that the Board voted to approve the budget, and 'owns' the budget, but the Finance Committee is being asked to explain the budget, concern that the Board Chair does not understand the budget and wants more information, concern that not enough individuals participated in budget development, but rather showed up at the '11th hour' to complain about the budget, a staff member's belief in what their responsibility is for budget development, concern that large text book replacements have been put off for ten years, a request for a 'summary' of 'where the budget is at', a belief that everyone involved does care about the children in the District, a query regarding the process moving forward, to work collaboratively in the best interest of the students, concern regarding the large surplus amounts from the past few years, a query regarding standards for surpluses and reserves, a request that Board Members put thought into what they believe is a 'good' surplus amount, a goal to hold a reflective session on FY24 budget development (at the February Finance Committee meeting), a request that the District discuss (and employees be provided with) the worth of the total compensation package

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(salaries and all benefits, HRA's, leave time, etc..) so that employees see the bottom line and know the total amount of money they are 'getting', a request that the Superintendent and administrators meet with the Finance Committee to possibly reach a different 'end' and consider a motion to reconsider the budget vote, Mr. Hennessey's understanding that the charge to he and administrators is to draft a line item budget with a 1.5% increase and they will begin to work on that, a query regarding possible discussion to consider a change to the number of student days, acknowledgment that the Board determines the number of student days and administrators draft the academic calendar, and a query regarding the amount of unallocated funds (FY22 surplus is \$2,350,000 and is addressed in Special Articles for use on three large facilities projects),

6.2 FY23 Year-end Projections

The BUUSD Expense/Revenue Year-end Projection Summary Report – Updated 01/19/23, was distributed.

The BUUSD Expense Report (dated 01/04/23) was distributed.

The BUUSD Revenue Report (dated 01/13/23) was distributed.

The BUUSD Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2022 was distributed.

The projected surplus is currently \$690,367 and is subject to change as the year progresses. It was clarified that the surplus includes the \$700,000 being allocated from the Tax Stabilization Fund. It was reiterated that if outside placements are made, it's possible that the surplus could be reduced significantly.

6.3 5-Year Capital Plan

A copy of the BUUSD 5-Year Facility Draft Plan (updated 01/04/23) was distributed.

Discussion included a request to amend the document to be more robust (more information), a query regarding whether or not the document includes any information pertaining to possible consolidation of schools (no), a query regarding funds available for immediate need, concern that classroom temperatures are very inconsistent at BTMES, a suggestion that more detailed information regarding projects would be beneficial for budgeting purposes, acknowledgement that the Facilities Committee does hold more in-depth discussions on potential projects, a query regarding the existence of formal forms/documents that are utilized to outline projects, a brief overview of the process currently used, a query regarding possible underfunding of some of the identified projects, acknowledgement that the Plan is a living/evolving document, clarification that amounts listed in the document are estimates (hard numbers cannot be added to the document until projects go out to bid), and confirmation that procedures related to bidding and procurement etc. are available on the District's web site,

7. Other Business

In response to an offer that the Finance Committee work collaboratively with the Superintendent and administrators (on details of the FY24 budget); Mr. Hennessey advised that he will first work with administrators (on Monday 01/23/23).

In response to a query regarding the audit finding related to the overage that is not FDIC insured, Mrs. Perreault advised that she has worked with a representative from the Community Bank, and the District will be moving funds from the Food Service Account into the District's operating account.

8. Items for Future Agendas

- FY23 Year-end Projection
- Act 173 Update (if data available) – (Parking Lot Item D- keep in parking for additional discussion)
- Budget Cycle Reflection (Parking Lot Item G)
- Warrant Process (Parking Lot Item A)
- 5-Year Capital Plan

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin