

**Addendum  
Board Meeting  
February 9, 2023**

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

From: **Victoria Pompei** <[vcpompei@gmail.com](mailto:vcpompei@gmail.com)>

Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2023 at 9:40 AM

Subject: Letter for Public Comment: I hope someone will volunteer to read it aloud as I am unable to attend.

To: <[tboltin@buusd.org](mailto:tboltin@buusd.org)>, <[gcecchinelli@buusd.org](mailto:gcecchinelli@buusd.org)>, Alice Farrell <[afarrell@buusd.org](mailto:afarrell@buusd.org)>, <[nleclerc@buusd.org](mailto:nleclerc@buusd.org)>, <[pmalone@buusd.org](mailto:pmalone@buusd.org)>, <[cparker@buusd.org](mailto:cparker@buusd.org)>, Sarah Pregent <[spregent@buusd.org](mailto:spregent@buusd.org)>, <[treil@buusd.org](mailto:treil@buusd.org)>, <[sspaulding@buusd.org](mailto:sspaulding@buusd.org)>

Dear Madam Chair, Board members, School staff, and Citizens of Barre.

I write this letter out of sheer frustration. As many of you are aware I have served on the Barre Town, BSU, and BUUSD Boards. I have weathered a few budget cycles and seen board disagreements, but I have never seen this level of theatrics, misdirection, and maliciousness. In my opinion the latest round of cuts, to achieve the Board directive of 1.5%, was done out of a desire to provoke even more public outcry against the BUUSD Board and not because they were the appropriate cuts to make. I can only assume that this evening's board meeting is filled with angry parents, staff who see their positions up for non-renewal, and citizens who are concerned for where our district is heading. Unfortunately, they are all correct.

For a single example, I was shocked and appalled to see the three tech integrationist positions, people who serve all 2251 current students at risk for non-renewal. How does one justify cutting three positions that assist every single student in the district while continuing to implement an administrative salary schedule that still has not been approved for implementation by the Board? They justify it by knowing that those three individuals will advocate for this budget to be voted down while hoping a No vote will result in a higher budget in the next round. They hope that people will be so upset by the numbered list that they won't notice administration and administrative staff wage increases from 3.87 to 28.28%. This is not Amazon; we do not pray that our teachers and paras will settle low so that our executives can have double digit percentage increases.

Parents who are concerned that Special Ed spending is being cut, the SPED budget is up over seven percent. It is not a matter of money that is preventing your children from receiving IEP and 504 services, it is a lack of staffing. Look back at Board minutes to see the number of provisionally licensed teachers currently in the District. There is a shortage everywhere; it is not unique to the BUUSD.

Those who are concerned that the high school doesn't have new math textbooks, look at lines 256 and 257 of the budget, last year FY22, there was seven thousand dollars allocated for math supplies and two thousand dollars for math books. Of that budget, two thousand, three hundred sixty-four dollars and eleven cents were spent on supplies and only SEVENTY-FIVE dollars of the available two thousand were used to purchase books. I believe the over six thousand five hundred dollars remaining would have been more than adequate to replace the Calculus texts, however, what prop would have been used to berate the Board for cutting two thousand dollars from the budget of largely unspent funds?

I know this has been long and I am certain there are many that are upset about a different perspective being voiced, however I implore everyone listening to do four things.

1. Read the actual budget, not the numbered list that the superintendent puts out, but the actual budget that compares the year-to-year changes, all 50 pages of it. See where your tax dollars are going and advocate for the places where you would like to see changes.

2. Vote for what you are willing to risk and what you can afford. I fear that the move of "vote down to go up" could backfire given the number of people who are looking at increased municipal tax rates and inflated prices everywhere.

3. If the budget is voted in, pledge to put your money where your mouth is and donate the difference to your school. Earmark it for the programs that are important to you, this can help the schools in the next fiscal year and guide the future board for public priorities better than any SurveyMonkey poll ever could.

4. If you are passionate enough to berate a school board member then you should be ready and willing to run for their seat. I have been there, and it isn't easy work. People will attack your character, they will try to manipulate your positions, and at their worst, they will take it out on your children.

I feel for every one of the nine people sitting in front of you because everyone, regardless of your opinion of them, is trying to do their best for the schools and their community and for that I thank them for their service and all of you for your time.

Victoria Pompei

On Tue, Feb 7, 2023 at 4:27 PM Anastasia Douglas <[anysadouglas22@gmail.com](mailto:anysadouglas22@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Good afternoon,

Could you please read this out loud at the board meeting? Thank you!

Dear BUUSD Board,

I would like to first thank you for all your hard work. You each put in a lot of time and energy on behalf of our community and as a parent to three children within the district I appreciate it.

I am writing to let the board know that I will be voting against the budget and would encourage others to vote no as well. The budget will have devastating impacts to the community because it fails to adequately fund the necessary staffing, academic and extracurricular activities that allow students to thrive. I cannot support a budget that provides the bare minimum for my children.

As a member of the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council and the vice chair of the Disability Rights Vermont board I am embarrassed to read a budget with such significant cuts to special education. I am the parent of a child with a disability and have seen firsthand how staffing shortages can disrupt his education. The special education staff at Barre Town is stellar but cannot be expected to continue to carry the workload of the vacant positions. Schools are required to provide children with a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Cutting needed special education, paraeducator and other support positions leads to restrictive and inappropriate environments for our children. This budget will open the district up to lawsuit.

The budget also includes cuts that would impact the safety of our children and their ability to leave the district as well-rounded individuals. Cuts to security cameras, bus riders and reducing telephone lines all lead to a less safe environment for our children. Cuts to books, driver's education, the work-based educator position, athletics, clubs and workshops all reduce our children's opportunities to gain experience in non-academic areas they could excel at, as well as limit the academic experiences they receive.

Don't our children deserve more than a bare bones education? I will be voting against the current budget. I hope that after the budget fails the board will support investing in our children and the bright futures they deserve.

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Anastasia M. Douglas, Esq.

# DRAFT

## BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
January 31, 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  
Mari Miller, SHS Assistant Principal

#### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Cassandra Demarais      Diane Solomon

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Tuesday, January 31, 2023, 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 and read Public Comments information from the Agenda.

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

Delete Agenda Item 5.2

**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**

None.

##### **4.2 Student Voice**

None.

#### **5. Executive Session**

##### **5.1 Student 1 Matter**

##### **~~5.2 Student 2 Matter~~**

A Student Matter was proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey, Mr. Aither, Ms. Miller, and the family of Student 1 in attendance, at 6:05 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA section 313 to discuss the items proposed for discussion.**

The remaining information was provided by the Board Clerk.

# DRAFT

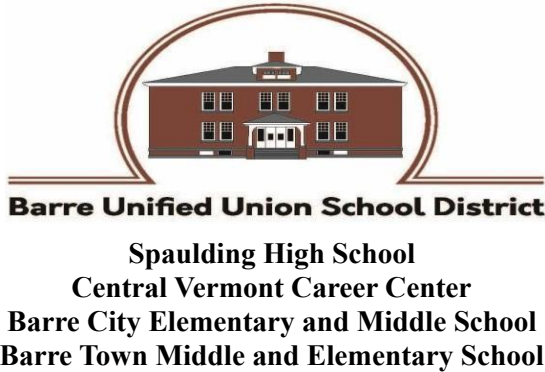
At approximately 7:30 all administrators and guests departed Executive Session.

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to enter into a deliberative Session.**

## **6. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:14 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*



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***Chris Hennessey, M.Ed.***  
Superintendent of Schools

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*A rock solid education for a lifetime of discovery.*

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Dear BUUSD Board,

I am writing to clarify the reasoning behind the FY24 budget the BUUSD administration shared with the board and community last week. To be clear, no one on the administrative team wants the proposed cuts to happen, and we fully understand the impact such cuts will have on our schools. Our charge and responsibility has been to work within the confines of the 1.5% general fund expense increase approved by the board, and we are doing our best to make this work. The following questions and answers will hopefully help people understand why we went forward with the proposed cuts:

**1. Can anticipated and assumed surpluses be considered as revenue to be used in the FY24 budget?**

No, we cannot create a budget based on projected unaudited surpluses. The expense budget and revenues must "net out," meaning the expenses and revenues must be equal. We cannot show "intended" savings as revenue toward the proposed budget. We are currently using \$700,000 of the tax stabilization fund for FY23, and we plan on using another \$700,000 of the tax stabilization fund for FY24 (pending voter approval). As you will see below, that will leave us with a projected \$157,962 in the tax stabilization fund.

Additionally, our auditor has made it clear that using "anticipated and assumed surpluses" would be premature and could spell trouble if an audit of FY23 reveals misstatements which then changes those "anticipated and assumed surpluses" that are then already factored into the FY24 budget. Please refer to [16 V.S.A. § 567](#) for clarification.

Here are our current fund balances:

- **General Fund: \$2,350,301** (this is part of the warning to be allocated to capital projects)
- **Tax Stabilization: \$1,557,962 - \$700,000 (FY23) - \$700,000 (FY24) = \$157,962**
- **Capital Projects: \$864,737** (if voter-approved in March, add \$2,350,301 = **\$3,215,038**)  
(See details below for question #2.)

- **Food Service: \$951,929.** These funds are used annually to purchase food service supplies, equipment, and to support preventative maintenance at each facility. They are also used to support school nutritionist and food service director wages/benefits. These funds can only be used for these purposes.
  - Source: [USDA/FNS federal code 7 CFR 210.14\(a\)](#)
  - Source: [§ 210.19\(a\) of this part.](#)

**2. Can the \$2,350,301 general fund surplus from FY22 be used as a source of revenue for FY24?**

No. The \$2.3M from FY22 is on the ballot to be allocated for capital projects. All of these funds will be allocated to capital projects, based on the approval of the voters (provided it passes). This nearly depletes the tax stabilization fund which will impact the budget and tax rate in FY25. It was recommended by the BUUSD administration to split the 2.3M towards capital projects and tax stabilization, but the board did not vote in favor of this, and it was recommended by the finance committee the funds be allocated to pay off the SHS lighting lease, asbestos abatement, and the next phase of the BCEMS roofing project. **This money is allocated for capital projects and capital projects only.**

**3. Can we cut the unfilled positions in our current budget to help get the FY24 budget to 1.5%?**

For the most part, no. The majority of the unfilled positions in our current budget are professional special education positions and student support positions for children who are on IEPs. As has been stated before, we have a legal obligation to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all of our students, including children with disabilities. This is one reason we were forced to look at cuts in other places. Please see the IDEA regulations below:

*"A free appropriate public education must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school, as provided for in §300.530(d)."*

Source: [IDEA: Sec. 300.101 \(a\)](#)

Additionally, please see VT Rule 2361.1 @, which clearly defines FAPE:

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). A FAPE means special education and related services that:

- (1) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parent or student;
- (2) Meet the standards of the State, including the requirements of Part B of the IDEA and include preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education; and
- (3) Are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of Rule 2363.

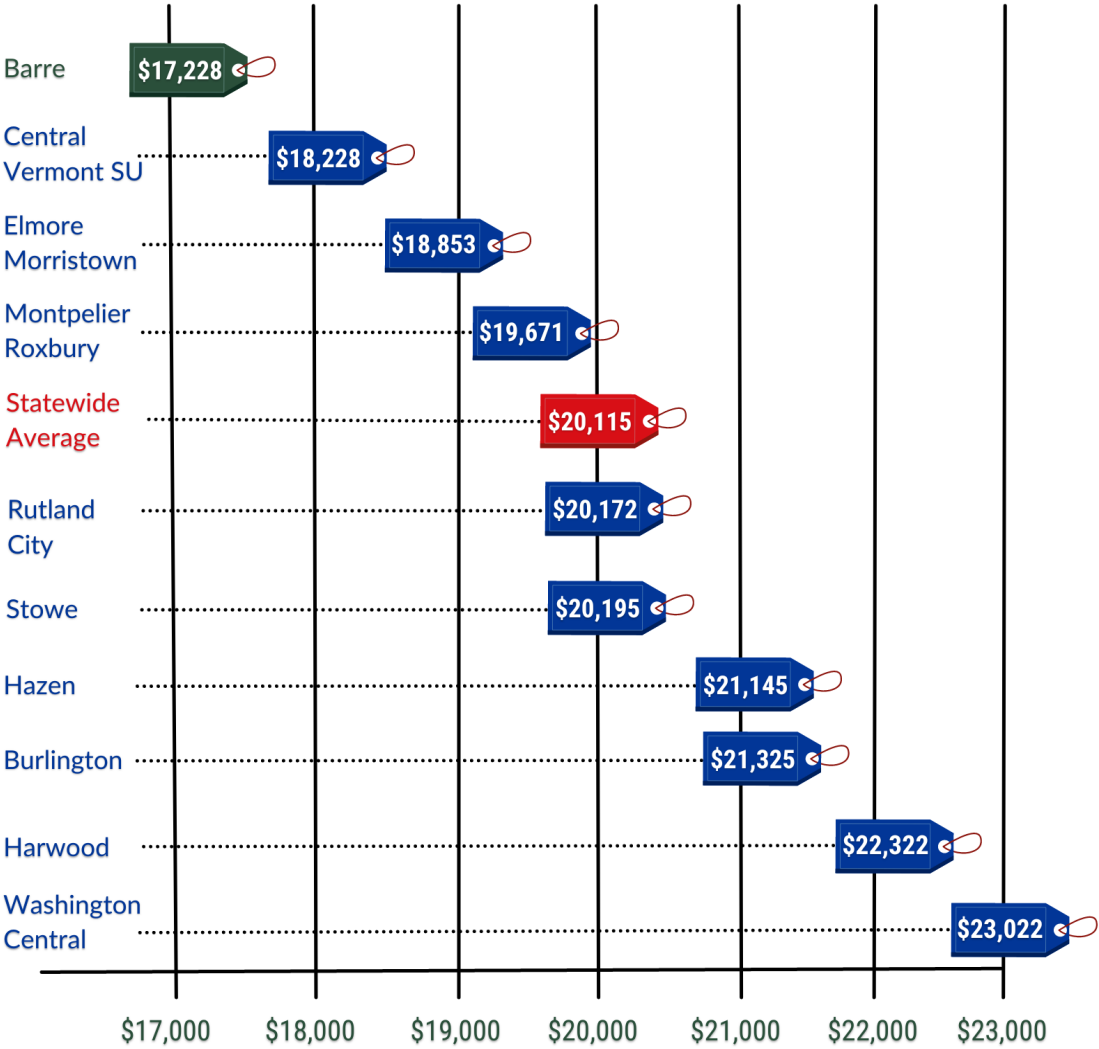


**Consistent with Rule 2363.1 the Agency (Local Education Agency, meaning the BUUSD) shall ensure that there is no delay in implementing a child's IEP, including any case in which the payment source for providing or paying for special education and related services to the child is being determined."**

Source: [State of Vermont Special Education Rules](#)

**4. Where will this budget put us compared to our neighbors for per-pupil spending for FY24?**

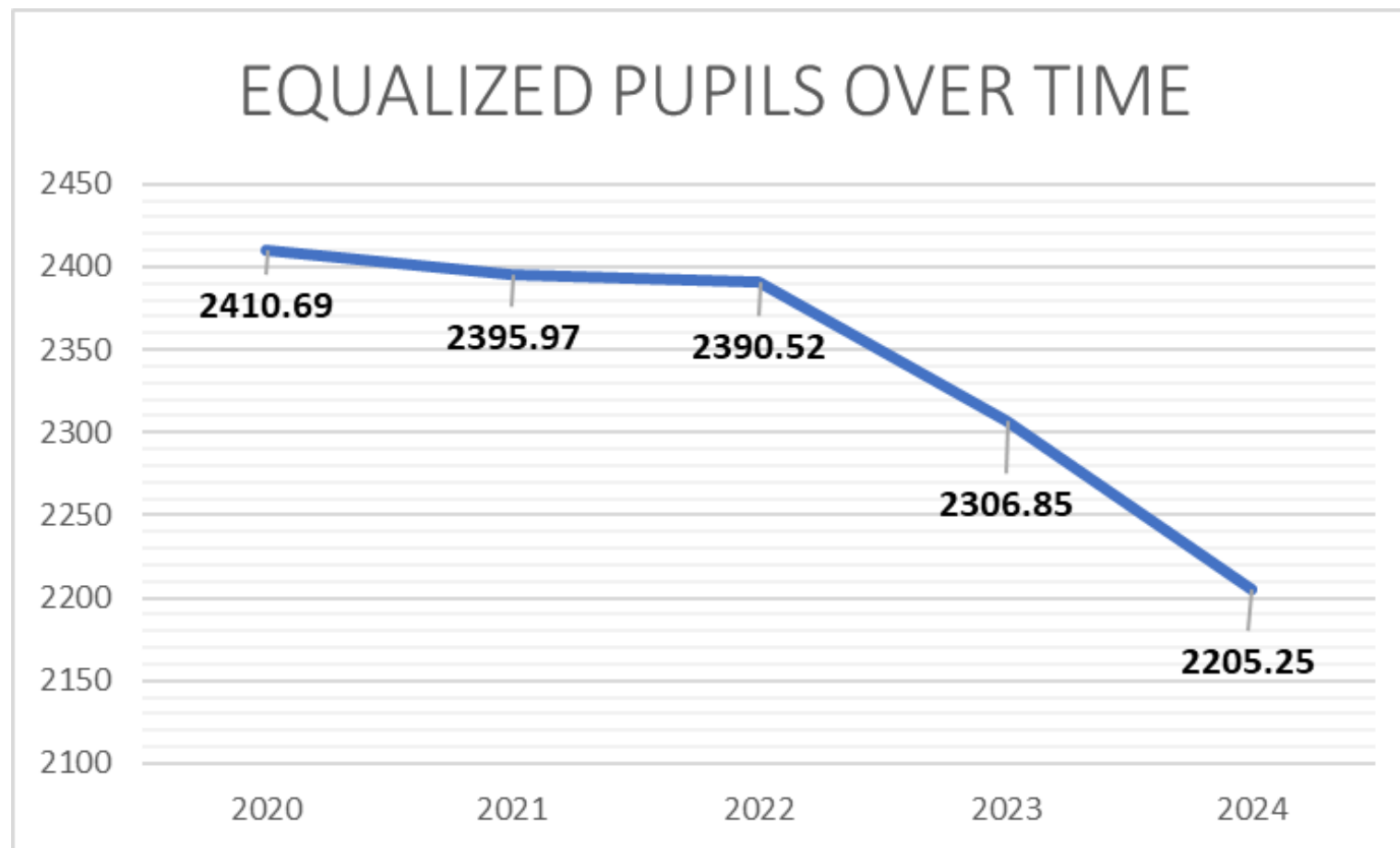
This budget will put us at or near the bottom of per-pupil spending in the state for FY24. Comparable per-pupil spending figures in the region projected for FY24:



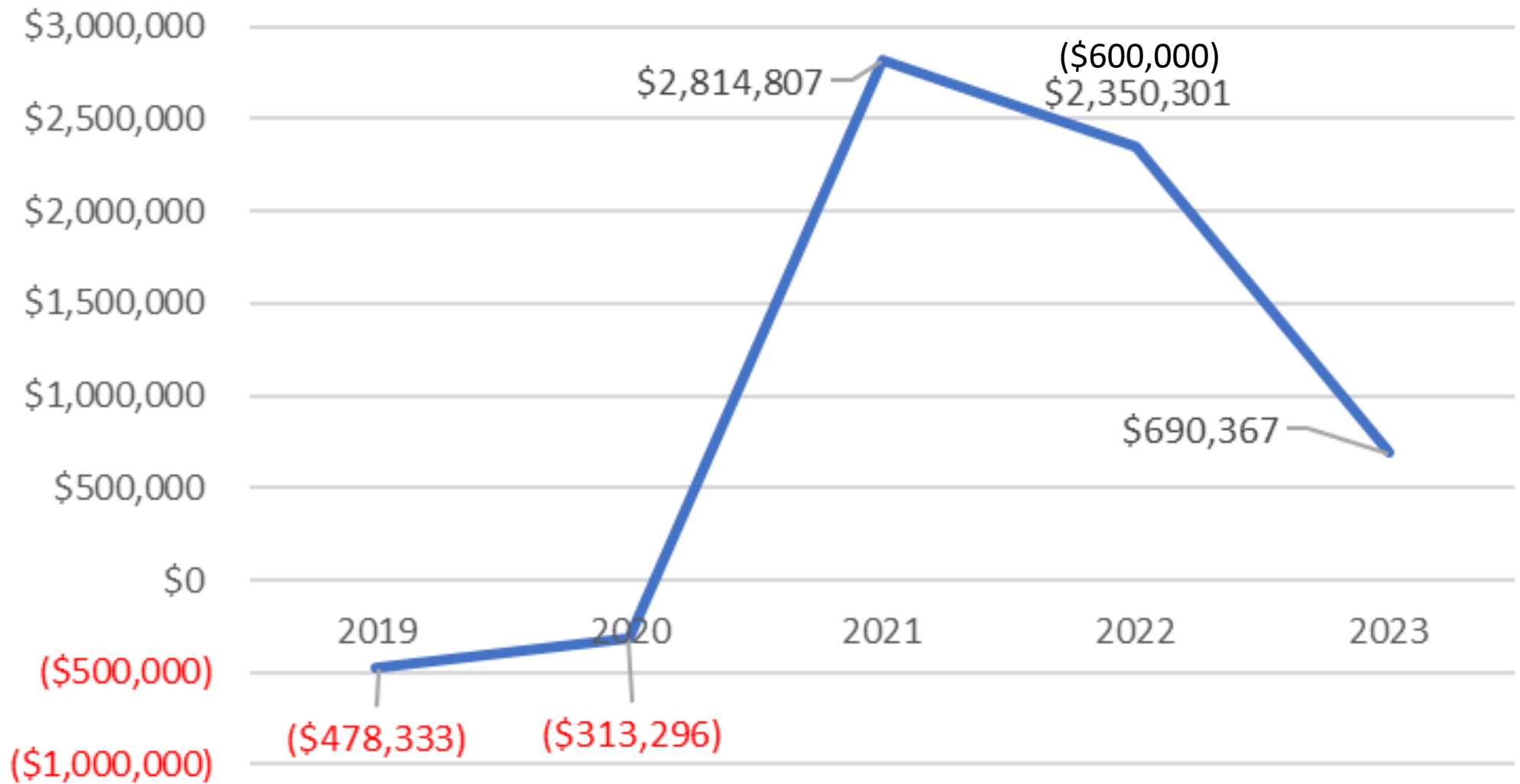
Again, we hope this information is helpful. The BUUSD administration and I look forward to answering questions when we meet with the board on February 9.

Respectfully,

Chris Hennessey

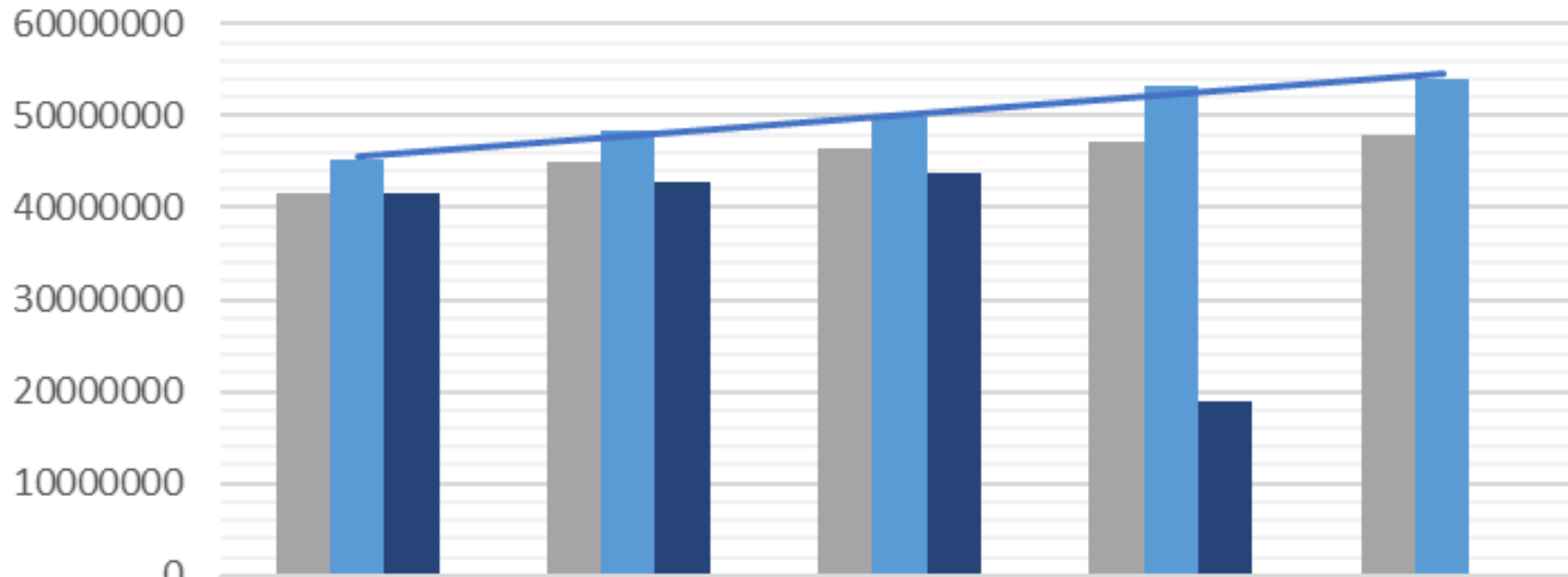


## Surpluses



# Budget, w/Grants, Actual

■ Budget   ■ w/Grants   ■ Actual   — Linear (w/Grants)



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
■ Budget	41684804	45029968	46352503	47254318	47963133
■ w/Grants	45134804	48479968	49947503	53254319	53963133
■ Actual	41467115	42723893	43683573	18822539	

	BUDGET % INCREASE	BUDGET \$ INCREASE
FY23	1.95%	\$ 903,873
FY24	1.50%	\$ 708,814
	-0.45%	\$ (195,059)

	ACTUAL % INCREASE	ACTUAL \$ INCREASE
FY23	8.17%	\$ 3,570,745
FY24	*9.79%	\$ 4,279,560
	* Compare to	FY22 Actual

			THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
	7/20 - 6/21	7/21 - 6/22	7/22 - 6/23	7/23 - 6/24
BUDGET	\$ 45,029,968	\$ 46,352,503	\$ 47,254,318	\$ 47,963,133
ACTUAL	\$ 42,723,893	\$ 43,683,573		
SURPLUS	\$ 2,814,807	\$ 2,350,301	\$ 690,000	
BUDGET INCREASE		2.937%	1.946%	1.500%
ACTUAL INCREASE		8.493%	8.174%	9.796%*

FY23 BUDGET

\$ 47,254,318

POTENTIAL SURPLUS

\$ 1,500,000

BALANCE

\$ 45,754,318

Open Position/Underspending

Everything we Have Today

FY23 BUDGET

\$ 47,254,318

1.5% INCREASE

\$ 708,815

FY24 BUDGET

\$ 47,963,133

4.97% = \$2,348,539

BALANCE

\$ 45,754,318

\$ 2,208,815

Everything we Have Today

Salaries/Benefits/Positions

GENERAL FUND	\$ 2,350,301
TAX STABILIZATION FUND	\$ 1,557,962
CAPITAL FUND	\$ 864,737
FOOD SERVICE FUND	\$ 951,929
	\$ 5,724,929

\*\$700,000 FY23

GENERAL FUND	\$ -
TAX STABILIZATION FUND	\$ 1,557,962
CAPITAL FUND	\$ 3,215,038
FOOD SERVICE FUND	\$ 951,929
	\$ 5,724,929

\$456,780 SHS ASBESTOS  
 \$350,000 BCEMS ROOF  
 \$719,000 SHS LIGHTING LEASE  
\$1,069,000 BALANCE OF \$2,146,038

TAX STABILIZATION FUND	\$ 1,557,962
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\*\$700,000 BALANCE OF \$857,962

FY23 SURPLUS (PROJECTED)	\$ 690,000
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