

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
January 26, 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
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Marlon Maylor, SHS Co-Principal
Mari Miller, SHS Assistant Principal
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal
Rebekah Mortensen, Assistant Director of Special Services
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus	Seanna Amell	Cassie Bell	Martha Blaisdell	Isabella Cecchinelli
Cassandra Demarais	Claire DuBelle	Brendan Eaton	Nathaniel Fredericks	Carol Hebert
Sarah Helman	Josh Howard	Shannon Huda	Meredith Kerin	Prudence Krasofski
Colleen Kresco	Kerri Lamb	Pat MacAskill	Dan Morrison	Christopher Paul Roberts
Megan Spaulding	Mike Titus	Jan Trepanier	Rachel Van Vliet	Mindy Woodworth

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Thursday, January 26, 2023, 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

Add 12.2 Personnel Matter (Executive Session)
The Board agreed to take some agenda items out of order.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

A copy of an e-mail from Mindy Woodworth, dated 01/20/23 was distributed.
A copy of an e-mail from Jeff Blow, dated 01/25/23 was distributed.

Mike Titus addressed the Board, provided a brief overview of his background and conveyed his disappointment that administrators have been allowed to address members of the Board disrespectfully and in violation of Board Norms. Mr. Titus believes that administrators need to understand that they work for the Board, who represent everyone in the District. Mr. Titus believes everyone wants the best for students, but there needs to be a balance between student needs and what tax payers can afford and he believes that more money is not needed, but rather administrators need to find better ways to manage the budgeted money.

Stacey Boltin voiced concern regarding the need for action to manage behavioral issues and bullying within the District. Mrs. Boltin advised that some ideas have been presented, but no action has been taken yet.

Megan Spaulding expressed disappointment regarding comments at a recent Finance Committee meeting, and reminded the Board that individuals who work in the schools have a right to express their opinions in meetings. Mrs. Spaulding will be voting the budget down as she believes the budget needs to be higher.

Mrs. Spaulding read email correspondence submitted by Mindy Woodworth and Jeff Blow. Copies of these emails are included in the packet.

4.2 Student Voice

None.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – January 12, 2023 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the January 12, 2023 Regular Meeting and the Minutes of the January 18, 2023 Special Meeting.

Mrs. Poulin advised that letters that were supposed to be submitted for posting in an addendum, or attached to minutes, have not been submitted.

5.2 Approval of Minutes – January 18, 2023 Special Meeting

Approved under Agenda Item 5.1.

6. Current Business

6.1 New Hires

There are no candidates to present for hire.

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 8.2 Building Reports.

6.2 Final Audit Approval

A letter dated 01/09/23 from Mudgett, Jennett & Krogh-Wisner, PC (to The Board of Education) was distributed.

A document titled BUUSD Financial Statements – June 30, 2022 and Independent Auditor's Reports was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey thanked Mrs. Perreault and her Team for their ongoing work that assured a smooth audit.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the FY22 Audit Report.

6.3 PATH Grant Approval

A document titled 'PATH Forward Grant Application' was distributed.

Mrs. Marold provided a brief overview of the uses and benefits that can be achieved utilizing PATH grant funds, and requested that the Board approve submission of the grant, including approval of the Board Chair's signature. Mrs. Marold answered questions from the Board.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously agreed to approve submission on the PATH Forward Grant Application and authorized the Board Chair to sign the application.

6.4 First Reading Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (C15)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a review of the changes proposed by VSBA, and VSBA's reasoning for the proposed changes. Brief discussion was held and Ms. Parker and Mr. Hennessey answered questions from Board and community members.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (C15).

6.5 First Reading Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy (C2)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a review of the changes proposed by VSBA, and VSBA's reasoning for the proposed changes. Brief discussion was held and Ms. Parker and Mr. Hennessey answered questions from the Board. Mr. Aither advised regarding recent professional development including drug identification training (put on by the Vermont State Police), and noted that there was a recommendation to amend the definition of 'Drugs'. The 'definition' section of the policy may need to be revisited in the near future. Brief discussion was held regarding the possible issue with the current definition of drugs, and that the current definition does not encompass all drugs that cause impairment. In response to a query, it was noted that procedures do exist and can be found in student handbooks.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy (C2).

6.6 First Reading Students Who Are Homeless Policy (C13)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a review of the changes proposed by VSBA, VSBA's reasoning for the proposed changes, and local changes made to assure consistency in language throughout the policy. Brief discussion was held and Ms. Parker and Mr. Hennessey answered questions from the Board, including procedure development questions. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey advised that it is his goal to have all procedures developed and documented by the end of this school year. Mr. Hennessey will provide information pertaining to how far along the District is with procedure development.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Students Who Are Homeless Policy (C13).

6.7 Create Procedure/Practices from Rescinded Policy A34 (Board Relations with School Personnel)

An untitled/undated document relating to BUUSD Board protocols was distributed.

A copy of the Board Relations With School Personnel Policy (A34) (Rescinded 12/01/22) was distributed.

Mrs. Farrell provided a brief overview of the document she drafted, which she believes falls under the category of protocols, rather than procedures or practices. Visitation protocols were taken from rescinded policy A33. It was noted that the incorrect policy (A34) was included in the packet. After lengthy discussion, it was agreed to add this item to the 02/09/23 agenda, and to have Policy A33 included in that agenda packet.

6.8 Spaulding High School Field Trips

Mr. Aither advised regarding upcoming field trips, including; Chorus and Band to Disney World (February), French Class to Quebec, Canada (March), and ongoing Work Based Learning field trips.

7. Old Business

7.1 Revise Appointing Community Members to Committee Guidelines

A document titled 'Guidelines for Community Members on BUUSD School Board Committees (approved 12/02/21) was distributed.

A document titled 'TR Community Members on Committees Edits – 01/12/23' was distributed.

Mr. Reil provided an overview of the amendments he is proposing, including; temporary appointment of community members who are subject matter experts. It was suggested that the committees be named in the document. It was noted that in the past, District counsel advised that community members not be appointed to the Negotiations Committee, though Mrs. Spaulding would like to have the Board consider extending a special invitation to individuals for the Negotiations Committee. Mrs. Spaulding advised that she would like Mrs. Pregent (who is leaving the Board) to continue participating on the Negotiations Committee. Additionally, Mrs. Spaulding recommends that the Board not hold committee member interviews at the Board Reorganization meeting, as that meeting is usually quite lengthy. It was suggested that terms be extended to two years. It was suggested that two year terms be staggered, to avoid having all 'new' community committee members. Brief discussion was held regarding the temporary addition of subject matter experts (to committees), as they may be bidding on projects and have a conflict of interest. It was suggested that appointment of any subject matter experts be made by the Board rather than the committee. It was suggested that the Board consider changing the 'term expiration' from February until sometime in April or May as that would prevent 'gaps' when there are no community members on committees. Mr. Reil will present a revised draft at a future meeting. The Board agreed by consensus, to have all seats be 2 year terms. The Board agreed by consensus to offer a one year extension to all existing community committee members, and will contact those committee members as soon as possible regarding their willingness to serve an additional year.

7.2 FOIA Request Discussion

A document titled BUUSD Procedure: Records and Documents Request (updated 11/28/22) was distributed.

A document titled BUUSD Public Records/Documents Request Fee Schedule (updated 11/28/22) was distributed.

A document titled Public Information Request Form was distributed (updated 11/28/22).

Mr. Hennessey displayed the BUUSD Policies/Procedures web page, noting where procedures have been added for Freedom of Information Act requests. Mr. Hennessey advised regarding discussions he has had with District counsel, and procedures written based on those discussions. Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the steps in the process. Concern was raised that the Board is not the final authority for approving or denying FOIA requests. Mr. Malone requested a legal opinion regarding costs associated with FOIA requests, citing concern that some individuals may be denied access to information because of their financial status. It was noted that statute does allow charging for FOIA request fulfillment. Mr. Hennessey will look into this matter further. Additional discussion included; concern regarding a previous FOIA request (the Battah FOIA) for which there was supposed to be an investigation (nothing has been shared with the Board), concern that the procedures do not spell out how information will be acquired or produced, a suggestion that FOIA request information on electronic data have parameters submitted to IT so that a query can be run over a database, concern that individuals making decisions on what to share, may exclude some applicable data, concern regarding content matter expertise of individuals reviewing data, concern regarding how review and redaction will be performed, concern that all forms of media are not defined in the document (text messages etc), concern that statute does not require submission of a form, but the procedure does, a suggestion that everyone involved in the chain of producing information for a FOIA initial the request form, and a suggestion for the adoption of an additional process for emails (e.g. identifying confidential matters, student matters, etc in the subject line). It was suggested that the “in-house” process be documented separately. Mr. Reil believes that given the ‘track record’ for past FOIA requests, all ‘processes’ need to be documented immediately. In response to a query regarding any associated policy, Mr. Hennessey advised that the procedures relate directly to statute and do not require policy. In response to a query, it was noted that the definition of what is considered ‘confidential information’ is defined in statute. In response to a query regarding training for “Public Information Officers”, Mr. Hennessey advised that he will need to look into that matter. It was noted that there is a ‘pathway’ to personal e-mail accounts and Board Members should confine all school business to their BUUSD assigned email addresses. Concern was raised that in the 2nd Battah FOIA response, emails that should have been included were not provided, and there was some data that should have been redacted, and wasn’t.

The Board recessed at 8:05 p.m. The Board resumed the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

8. Reports

8.1 Superintendent Report

The Superintendent’s Report (dated 01/20/23) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding the ‘Think Pink’ basketball game, which was an extraordinary event, including the U32 community rallying for the Bisson family. A joint celebratory announcement will be put out. Mr. Reil advised regarding the double header hockey game (Saturday 01/28/23) that is also part of this fundraiser. Mr. Hennessey highlighted the various trainings that occurred during Professional Development (01/23 and 01/24). Mr. Hennessey advised regarding on-boarding of 4 para-educators, but noted that 4 behavioral interventionists resigned after the winter break. In response to a query, Mr. Hennessey provided clarification regarding definitions of the special educator positions listed.

8.2 Building Reports; BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA

BCEMS, BTMES, and SHS Building Reports were distributed.

BCEMS – Mrs. Waterhouse thanked the community for making the event on 01/18/23 truly wonderful. Additionally, Mrs. Waterhouse advised that since the return from Christmas break, both student and staff absences are down.

BTMES – Ms. Pearson thanked Karen Fredericks for the successful 2 days of professional development, highlighting the benefits of the Neurodiversity Training, noting much positive feedback from staff.

SHS – Nothing to add to report.

SEA – No report was submitted.

Discussion moved to Agenda Item 6 – New Business

8.3 CVCCSD Board Report

Minutes from the 01/09/23 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Farrell provided an overview of the Board meeting minutes provided in the packet, including discussion on; the method for comingling of ballets, student applications (exceeding the number of spaces), budgetary items (health insurance etc.), guidance counselor involvement, positive events occurring in their district, and the budget. Brief discussion was held regarding the CVCCSD budget increase and the impact it has on tuition rates for sending schools. Mrs. Farrell answered questions from the Board including; CVCCSD student population, the impact to sending districts (resulting from the district providing all academic portions), the number of SHS students slated to attend CVCCSD, concern regarding the budget increase, and a query regarding BUUSD budgeting for tuition payments to CVCCSD.

8.4 Finance Committee

Minutes from the 01/19/23 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc provided an overview of the Special meeting on 01/03/23 and the 01/19/23 meeting, including discussion of; the recommendation for the FY24 budget, discussion of the Board approved FY24 budget, budget flyer, and Annual Report.

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

8.5 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes from the 01/09/23 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Reil provided an overview of the meeting including' review of the 5-year Plan, HVAC/Sprinkler/Lighting Project update, asbestos tile removal (at SHS), and SEA Transportation.

The next meeting is Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.6 Policy Committee

Minutes from the 12/19/22 meeting were distributed.

Ms. Parker provided an overview of the meeting, including; utilizing the Policy Manual Index (eliminating review of the VSBA Policy Index), updates to the Policy Manual Index (to include procedures), use of VSBA Policy Notes, and delays to policy E1, which requires many amendments at the District level. Concern was raised that policy D32, which no longer aligns with statute and was deleted by VSBA on 05/11/22, is still being utilized by the District. It is Mrs. Poulin's understanding, that VSBA recommends deleting policies that don't agree with statute, because it is better to have no policy, than to have one that is in violation of statute. Policy D23 is the VSBA replacement for D32, and is in the Parking Lot for the Policy Committee. Mrs. Spaulding requested that discussion of this issue be held at the 01/30/23 meeting.

The next meeting is Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.7 Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the 01/05/23 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Malone provided an overview of the meeting, including discussion of; the Fall Climate Survey and an update on Intervention/Enrichment programs, including the PSTL Program.

The next meeting is Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

8.8 Negotiations Committee

Minutes from the 01/18/23 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the Negotiations Committee continues to meet regarding strategy, has participated in three negotiation sessions with the BEA, and has traded 'final proposals'. The next negotiation session is in February, though the Negotiations Committee will be meeting prior to the negotiation session.

9. Other Business/Round Table

Mrs. Farrell advised that Phil Gore, VSBA Board Development Consultant, will be leaving the VSBA on 03/17/23. Mr. Gore has contributed much during his tenure and will be greatly missed.

Mrs. Pregent advised that the CVCCSD 17.5% increase is approximately \$600,000 compared to the District's \$700,000 increase.

Mrs. Farrell advised that the Career Center has 18 contributing schools, which needs to be taken into consideration.

Mrs. Leclerc queried regarding when the Board should expect to see a line by line budget. Mr. Hennessey advised that he and administrators are meeting regularly. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Mr. Hennessey advised that something should be available for review on 01/31/23 or 02/01/23.

10. Future Agenda Items

- Create Procedure/Practices from Rescinded Policy A33 (Board Relations with School Personnel)
- Second Readings of Policies C15, C2, and C13
- Revise Appointing Community Members to Committee Guidelines
- Climate Survey Update (Parking Lot A)
- CIA Plan Update (Parking Lot B)
- Enrollment/Home Study Report (Parking Lot C – keep in Parking Lot for additional meetings)

Add to Parking Lot:

- Report on FOIA Investigation (Executive Session)

11. Next Meeting Dates

Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

12. Executive Session as Needed

12.1 Superintendent Evaluation

12.2 Personnel Matter

Items proposed for discussion in Executive Session include the Superintendent's Evaluation and a Personnel Matter.

On a motion by Mrs. Pregent, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey in attendance, at 8:48 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.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 10:09 p.m. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Pregent were not present for the vote.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:10 p.m. Mr. Boltin and Mrs. Pregent were not present for the vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin