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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
March 23, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Giuliano Cecchinelli, II (BC) – Chair
Chris Parker (BT) – Vice Chair
Paul Malone (BT) - Clerk
Michael Boutin (BC)
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Terry Reil (BT)
Emily Reynolds (BT)
Sonya Spaulding (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ben Moore (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Pierre Laflamme, BCEMS Principal
Mari Miller, SHS Assistant Principal
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Dave Delcore – Times Argus | Battah Family | Mel Battah | Isabella Cecchinelli | Amber Cheney |
| Stephanie Collins | Cassandra Demarais | Erika Dolan | Alice Farrell | Andrew Frey |
| Jamie Frey | Garrett Grant | Rachel Greenfield | Karen Heath | Carol Hebert |
| Michelle Hebert | Sarah Helman | Jacob Hemmerick | Mariah Jacobs | Ellen Kaye |
| Meredith Kerin | Prudence Krasofski | Colleen Kresco | Kerri Lamb | Tracie Lewis |
| Lisa Liotta | Jessica Maurais | Joelen Mulvaney | Aiden Munding | Brodey Priddy |
| Jessica Rogers | Jesse Rosado | Bern Rose | Patricia Shane | Megan Spaulding |
| Rachel Van Vliet | Samantha Watkins | Sarah Watkins | Tyler Watkins | Becca Webb |
| Mindy Woodworth | | | | |

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Cecchinelli, called the Thursday, March 23, 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.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Add 13.2 Personnel, Contract Matter (Executive Session)
Remove 7.9 Rescind of Policy D32
Add 7.10 Addition of Community Member to Negotiations Committee

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

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Student Voice

None.

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4.1.1 Barre Partnership Kindness Project

A community member and student (Samantha Watkins) addressed the Board and advised regarding the Recycled Percussion event titled Kindness In Barre Art Project. BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, and the Saint Monica / Saint Michael schools are all participating in this event. Ms. Watkins provided an overview of her art project. Fifteen students from each school will be awarded 2 tickets to the upcoming concert. A statement from Stefanie Kingzett was read. Three additional students advised regarding the pictures they created for the Project and why they are participating in the project. Tyler Watkins challenged Board Members to perform one act of kindness for a student or staff member.

4.1.2 SHS – Student Led Survey Results

An undated letter from Isabella Cecchinelli was distributed.

Isabella Cecchinelli introduced herself to the Board and advised regarding student attendance at Board meetings and a survey she conducted (approximately 100 students responded). Ms. Cecchinelli provided an overview of the survey results, requested that the Board work in a more official manner to include students (high school and middle school) in Board meetings, and answered questions from the Board. Ms. Cecchinelli was thanked for conducting the survey and providing feedback to the Board. Brief discussion was held, including the previous practice of having student representatives to the SHS Board, and various options for increasing student / Board interaction and involvement.

4.2 Public Comment

A copy of a letter for the Board (dated 03/14/23) from Amy Richard was distributed.

Ellen Kaye introduced herself and advised that she voted against the budget because she believes it is too low and she would like to see a higher budget.

Jesse Rosado addressed the Board and advised that he believes discussions over the budget have spun out of control, advised regarding comments being made in other (non-school related) meetings, and requested that the District work to see that the District's school are some of the best in the state.

Joelen Mulvaney thanked Board Members for their service, expressed appreciation to Isabella Cecchinelli for speaking at this evening's meeting, and requested that student representation to the Board be reinstated. It was noted that Student Representation is listed as an agenda item for the Retreat.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Minutes – March 6, 2023 District Annual Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the March 6, 2023 Annual Meeting.

5.2 Approval of Minutes – March 9, 2023 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Poulin advised that the minutes are currently incomplete, as she is waiting for additional information. It was agreed to postpone approval of the minutes.

5.3 Warrant Approval

Two documents were distributed; Accounts Payable Warrant 1 (dated 03/16/23) and Accounts Payable Warrant #2 (dated 03/23/23). Brief discussion was held regarding the new Warrant process and changes/improvements that are being developed for this new process.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Boutin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Warrants (dated 03/16/23 and 03/23/23).

6. Building Reports

6.1 Building Reports ; BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA

Copies of the Building Reports were distributed.

Administrators answered questions from the Board, including; an overview of 'arena style' conferences at BCEMS, changes to special education laws (and associated professional development), rescheduling of (SHS) Sophomore Night, an update of the SHS HVAC project (which did necessitate a shift to the schedule – early release for students today (03/23) and no school for students tomorrow (03/24), recognition of staff who are assisting with relocating furniture as part of the HVAC project, that all sprinkler work will be performed/completed in the summer of 2023, and future updates relating to out of state/out of country field trips. Mr. Hennessey advised that the transition of middle school students to the SEA Program is proceeding well.

6.2 Superintendent's Report

A copy of the Superintendent's Report (dated 03/23/23) was distributed. There were no questions from the Board. No discussion was held.

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7. Current Business

7.1 New Hires

The resume and BUUSD Transfer/Change/Termination Notification Form for Adam Rosen (transfer from SHS teacher to Assistant Director of Special Services) was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the candidate. Brief discussion was held and it was noted that the Board approves the hiring of all administrator positions. The Board queried regarding the salary schedule for this position. Mr. Reil will be reaching out to Mr. Hennessey regarding the salary metric, which does not currently include these types of positions.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Adam Rosen for the position of Assistant Director of Special Services, as presented.

7.2 Update: S.56 Potential Changes to Universal Pre-K

A copy of a Presentation by Becca Webb, WVSA UPK Regional Coordinator, was distributed.

Ms. Webb addressed the Board, provided a brief overview of her experience, and proceeded to present the slide show which is an overview of current legislation (S56 and H208); which impacts both 3 and 4 year olds, and has both capacity and financial implications for the District. It was noted that the draft bills have changed since the presentation was created. Ms. Webb advised that the District will need to discuss goals and how to achieve those goals. Ms. Webb answered questions from the Board, including possible implementation dates of 07/01/24 or 07/01/25, capacity issues, staff to student ratios, and acknowledgment that much could change prior to finalization of legislation.

7.3 FY24 Budget Time Table for Revote

A document titled 'FY24 Budget Revote Options & Timeline – Updated March 22, 2023' was distributed.

A document titled 'FY24 Budget Revote Details, Options 1 and 2' was distributed.

A copy of the BUUSD FY24 Budget Development – Draft 6 at 5% (dated 03/22/23) was distributed.

Discussion began with the potential vote date (05/09/23), concern regarding voter suppression for Barre City residents (05/09 is not a regular voting day for them, but is for Town residents), and the change in location for voting for Barre City voters (Labor Hall rather than the Barre Auditorium). Discussion of the revised drafts included; concern that not all items that were removed have been added back in (items that were included in the 4.97% draft, but are not in the 5% draft), a substantial increase in CVCCSD tuition (increase of \$285,000), a request for a list of changes and newly identified efficiencies, the importance of educating community members regarding which 'wanted' items are being added back in vs not being added back in, a request to remove the Director of Communications position, reiterated concern that not all items have been added back into the budget, administrators' involvement on the revised drafts, clarification regarding how changes in health plan choices impact the budget, lengthy discussion regarding para-educator positions, tax increase implications (Option 1 (5%) increase – BC 8.5¢ BT 3.5¢ and Option 2 (6.5%) increase BC 11¢, BT 5.7¢), community concern that the tax implications are significant and not affordable to community members, community member concern that the previous budget was too low, community input that there be a focus on how to increase the income in the communities and funding from the State. The Board discussed possible meeting dates to approve a budget and a Warning as well as when additional detailed budget information will be provided (03/24/23). It was noted that the absolute deadline for approval of a budget and Warning, is 04/12/23.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Ms. Reynolds, the Board voted 5 to 2 to hold a Special Meeting on Thursday, March 30, 2023 for the purpose of reviewing and approving an FY24 Budget and corresponding Vote Warning.

**Mr. Boutin, Ms. Parker, Mr. Reil, Ms. Reynolds, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion.
Mrs. Leclerc and Mr. Malone voted against the motion.**

The Board recessed at 8:33 p.m. and reconvened at 8:38 p.m.

7.4 Heritage Festival POs

A copy of Purchase Orders BUUS/3245, BUUS/3242, and BUUS/3259 were distributed.

Mrs. Farrell addressed the Board advising about outreach activities at the Barre Heritage Festival and the request for approval of purchase orders to assist with BUUSD outreach. Brief discussion was held, including use of the popcorn machine and use of the Board line item to fund these purchases.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Boutin, the Board unanimously voted to approve purchase orders BUUS/3245, BUUS/3242, and BUUS/3259 (\$360.00, \$319.20, and \$131.25).

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7.5 First Reading Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation and Distribution Policy (A20)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the amendments to the policy.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the First Reading of the Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation and Distribution Policy (A20).

7.6 First Reading Student Athletics, Clubs, and Activities Policy (C22)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview VSBA's reasoning for changes to this policy. Brief discussion was held regarding whether or not to add parental notification of student participation in clubs and activities that don't require parental permission.

Mr. Boutin called the question. The motion was not seconded.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to approve, the First Reading of the Student Athletics, Clubs, and Activities Policy (C22).

7.7 First Reading English Language Learners Policy (C4)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the changes provided by VSBA.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board voted 5 to 2 to approve, the First Reading of the English Language Learners Policy (C4).

Mrs. Leclerc, Mr. Malone, Ms. Parker, Ms. Reynolds, and Mrs. Spaulding voted for the motion. Mr. Boutin, and Mr. Reil voted against the motion.

7.8 First Reading Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23)

A copy of the policy was distributed.

Ms. Parker advised regarding VSBA recommended changes relating to this VSBA Recommended policy, and noted that though the Policy Committee was hoping to adopt this policy after creation of VSBA Model Procedures, it is anticipated that procedures will not be available until at least June 2023. The current policy (D32) is no longer aligned with statute. The Committee is in the process of creating a new local policy (D40) to address teaching of sensitive issues.

Mr. Malone called the question. The motion was not seconded.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to approve the First Reading of the Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D23).

~~7.9 Rescind Selection of Instructional Materials Policy (D32)~~

A copy of the policy was distributed.

7.10 Addition of Community Member to Negotiations Committee

Mrs. Spaulding advised regarding previous discussion of the possibility of adding a community member on the Negotiations Committee on an exception basis. Mrs. Spaulding believes Mrs. Pregent has a unique skill set and is an asset to the Negotiations Committee. Mr. Boutin queried regarding the possibility of having Mrs. Pregent sign a confidentiality agreement (for protection purposes).

Mr. Boutin moved to add Sarah Pregent to the current Negotiations Committee. Mrs. Spaulding seconded the motion.

Lengthy discussion ensued, including; advice previously provided by legal counsel (advising to exclude community members from the Negotiations Committee), and the procedure which restricts community members from the Negotiations Committee. **Mr. Boutin withdrew the motion.** It was clarified that the request is for Mrs. Pregent to continue on the Committee for current negotiations to provide continuity, as she was on the Committee when negotiations started. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he has spoken with legal counsel about this specific circumstance, and legal counsel does not believe adding Mrs. Pregent presents an issue under these circumstances. Additional discussion included concern that the Board is not 'honoring the decisions' of the Board, and that this exception goes against Board Norms, the ability of the Board to change policies and procedures when necessary/appropriate, and a suggestion that the Board review and possibly change the procedure, noting that this item was not properly warned. It was noted that the most recent procedure is not on the District web site. Mr. Malone queried regarding whether or not Mrs. Pregent would be a voting member on the Committee and whether or not she would have a voice in decisions made by the Committee. **Mrs. Spaulding called the question. It was noted that Mr. Boutin withdrew the motion and that a new motion is necessary.** Mr. Boutin reiterated that he prefers that the Board review the procedures prior to making a decision on this matter. Concern was raised that Board matters are consistently being revisited. Ms. Reynolds queried regarding why there is objection to making a decision that could strengthen the

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Negotiations Committee. Ms. Parker queried regarding whether the Board should amend a procedure for a specific person, and then need to re-amend at the close of current negotiations. Mrs. Spaulding will ask to have this item as a future agenda item.

8. Old Business

None.

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Finance Committee

Minutes from the March 16, 2023 meeting were distributed.

No discussion.

The next meeting is Monday, April 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

9.2 Facilities & Transportation Committee

The Committee met on March 13, 2023. Minutes will be generated after information is provided. The meeting was not videoed.

No discussion.

The next meeting is Monday, April 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

9.3 Policy Committee

Minutes from the March 20, 2023 meeting were distributed.

Mrs. Leclerc advised regarding procedures; that legal counsel advised they are as important as policies and that the Board should be reviewing procedures. This item will be added to a future agenda.

The next meeting is Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

9.4 Curriculum Committee

The next meeting is Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

9.5 Negotiations Committee

Minutes from the March 20, 2023 meeting were distributed.

The next meeting date is to be determined

9.6 CVCCSB Report

No report in packet. No discussion.

10. Other Business/Round Table

Ms. Parker queried regarding removal of the Mindfulness Moment from the Agenda. Brief discussion was held and it was agreed that it was a Board decision to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and hold a Mindfulness Moment.

Mrs. Spaulding recognized SHS wrestlers Coy Lyford and Elias Kalat for winning State titles in individual events.

Mr. Boutin advised regarding a Zoom meeting he and Mrs. Leclerc attended with a representative from Gallup, a company that performs cultural surveys and employee engagement. Mr. Boutin is hopeful that at some point in the future, the District can utilize Gallup's services to improve employee engagement.

Mr. Hennessey advised that this evening he has set up three job interviews for tomorrow (for perspective employees).

11. Future Agenda Items

All items listed will be added to the Parking Lot. Mr. Cecchinelli and Mr. Hennessey will coordinate what to add to the next agenda.

Second Readings/Adoption of Policies A20, C22, C4, and D23 (second meeting in May)

Rescinding of Policy D32

Addition of Community Members on Committees (add by Mrs. Spaulding - March 2023)

Procedures (added by Mrs. Leclerc – March 2023)

Hiring Committee for BCEMS Principal Position (added by Mr. Reil – March 2023)

Salary Metric (Added by Mr. Malone – March 2023)

Resignation Letters (Mr. Reil – March 2023)

12. Next Meeting Date

Board Retreat - Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at a place to be determined.

The Wednesday, April 26, 2023 meeting is cancelled.

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The next Regular meeting is Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

Parking Lot items slated for April 26, 2023 will be moved to a future Agenda.

13. Executive Session as Needed

13.1 Superintendent Evaluation

13.2 Personnel - Contract Matter

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

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the item proposed for discussion, specifically the Personnel Contract Matter, would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public.

On a motion by Mr. Boutin, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Mr. Hennessey in attendance, at 9:44 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. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to exit Executive Session at 10:57 p.m.

14. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin