

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

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
May 15, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sonya Spaulding (BC) – Chair  
Paul Malone (BT) – Vice Chair  
Michelle Hebert  
John Lyons, Jr.  
Ben Moore (BC)  
Emily Reynolds (BT)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Giuliano Cecchinelli – joined at 6:27 p.m.  
Nancy Leclerc  
Terry Reil- joined at 6:35 p.m.

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent – departed at 6:30 p.m.  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager

**PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Monday, May 15, 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**

None.

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**4.1 Meeting Minutes From April 17, 2023**

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Moore, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the April 17, 2023 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

**5. New Business**

**5.1 Budget Cycle Reflection**

A document titled BUUSD FY25 Budget Development Schedule (dated 05/09/23) was distributed.

A document titled Draft Meeting Schedule was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding what in the process, individuals would like to see done differently. Input included; start the process for definition of Board goals and objectives earlier in the process (to avoid/lessen misunderstandings and miscommunication), have a clearly defined process, make decisions based on facts and statistics (rather than emotions), review data earlier, review line item information, keep track of finances during the entire year (to assist with identifying areas for increases/decreases), have the Board hear directly from administrators (regarding needs, priorities, and possible areas for cost savings), convey Board goals and objectives (to administrators) early, hold informational meetings earlier in the process (to assist with educating absentee voters earlier), review prior year's budget to identify items that were over/under budgeted, have more direction from the Board conveyed to administrators, have better student and staff counts, add budget promotional efforts added to the budget development schedule, hold a full Board budget discussion in October, receive proposed budget drafts in a timely manner, and include the various District committees' input regarding budgetary items identified in those individual committees. Brief discussion was held regarding Board committee structure. Brief discussion was held regarding holding Budget Workshops (this item is in the Parking Lot and will be added to a future agenda), and the need for better communication throughout the budget development process. In response to a query regarding whether or not the

Communications Director (who resigned) is still on the payroll, Mr. Hennessey advised that the previous Communications Director is performing contracted services for the District (there is funding remaining in this year's budget).

## **5.2 ESSER Update**

A document titled BUUSD Public Plan for ARP ESSER Spending was distributed.

A document identify ESSER funded positions was distributed.

Three documents relating to spent and encumbered funds (for ARP ESSER Funds, CARES ESSER Funds, and ESSER II Funds)

Mrs. Perreault advised regarding the "public facing" plan document (required under ARP ESSER), which addresses planning for use of funds (preparing for, preventing, and responding to COVID 19). One requirement is that at least 20% of funds needs to be used for academic impact and loss of instructional time. Mrs. Perreault provided an overview of the sections of the Public Plan for ESSER Spending, including some of the specific ways in which funds were spent. It was noted that another requirement of the grant is to have meaningful conversations with all stakeholders (this has been occurring and the document is updated with that information). Brief discussion was held regarding ESSER funded positions (approximately \$1,200,000) and it was acknowledged that when ESSER funds run out, these positions need to prioritized, and cut, absorbed into the general fund (hopefully through attrition), or funded through other grants.

## **5.3 Marketing SHS to Out of District Students**

A document titled 'Marketing SHS to Out of District Students' was distributed.

Mrs. Spaulding acknowledges that having additional out of district students has a positive impact on revenue, but noted that she does not believe marketing to these potential students falls under the responsibility of the Finance Committee. Mrs. Perreault reached out to Mr. Aither regarding how the District reaches out to market SHS to out of district students and his response is on the distributed document. Mr. Malone advised that this issue has been discussed for a number of years, and it has been noted that many out of district students pass through the BUUSD District on their way to another high school (U32). This is a great loss of revenue to the District. Mrs. Perreault advised that U32 provides transportation, that the BUUSD did provide some transportation, but currently isn't. Brief discussion was held regarding when transportation was offered to in district SHS students (parental response was very low, and there was a shortage of bus drivers). It was suggested that SHS might be more attractive to out of district students if transportation was provided. Mrs. Spaulding queried regarding having the Facilities/Transportation Committee discuss transportation to out of district students. Mrs. Leclerc believes this issue (promotion of SHS and transportation) should be discussed by the full Board, including costs and revenue. Mrs. Poulin advised that she plans to send additional information to the full Board, but is providing some information this evening. Mrs. Poulin advised that the Board made the decision to provide transportation to out of district students (in an effort to attract more students). SHS used to be the 'go to' school, but when another school started providing transportation, SHS lost the majority of the out of district students. Mrs. Poulin, citing a report from ECHO Valley School District, advised that the projected enrollment for the 2023/2024 year is: SHS: 7 students, with 42 students going to other high schools. The revenue potential is great. Marketing of SHS used to be discussed at the Communications Committee and it was recognized that SHS was not being promoted well. Mrs. Poulin advised that the previous Communications Director had reported that other schools have much more robust promotion. Mrs. Poulin believes it will not be easy to start bringing students back to SHS, but with the significant revenue at stake, it is well worth it for the District to invest in recruiting these students. Mrs. Poulin believes that the decision to cancel transportation this year (made without Board approval), left a 'bad taste' in the mouth of sending districts and caused a loss of trust, that will need to be regained. It was also noted that the student counts announced earlier, do not include the Chelsea District, so the number of potential students is higher. It was also noted that, other than the cost of transportation, it costs the District nothing to educate these additional students (don't need to add to staff), and the number of out of district students attending SHS this year, more than covered the cost of transportation. Mr. Malone noted that SHS is one of the largest high schools, has many great programs, and has a very large scholarship program. Mr. Malone also noted that perhaps the District should also look into transportation for in district students.

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 FY23 Year-end Projections**

A document titled 'BUUSD – FY23 Expense/Revenue Year-end Projection Summary Report – Updated 05/15/23' was distributed.

The current projection is an estimated surplus of \$569,863. Mrs. Perreault advised regarding the monthly report included in the packet, noting that the projections are conservative. There were no questions from the Committee.

## **7. Other Business**

Mr. Malone advised that it would benefit the planning process if there was a multi-year schedule of large items/construction costs (with associated dollar amounts). Mrs. Perreault advised that the 5-year plan will be worked on over the summer.

Solar Update - Mrs. Perreault advised that the 'end of life' costs associated with maintenance or removal of equipment is not the responsibility or obligation of the District.

In response to a query, Mrs. Perreault advised that the Final Yield is \$15,443 (a minimal drop that will not impact the tax rate).

In response to a query, it was noted that the CLA is announced in mid-December.

The Budget Schedule will be updated after discussion of Budget Workshops. Presentation to the Board will occur after updates are made.

Brief discussion was held regarding the CVCCSD Lease Agreement. This will be added to the June Agenda (if information is available).

**8. Items for Future Agendas**

- FY23 Year-end Projections
- Budget Workshops
- CVCCSD Lease

Add to Parking Lot:

- New Financial Accounting System Update (Added May 2023 – Requested by Mrs. Leclerc) – Put on August 2023 Agenda

**9. Next Meeting Date**

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

**10. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:16 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*