

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
August 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)
Ben Moore (BC) – joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m.
Terry Reil (BT)
Emily Reynolds (BT)
Sonya Spaulding (BC)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal
Jason Derner, Alternative Education Administrator
Mari Miller, SHS Assistant Principal
Ted Mills, BTMES Assistant Principal
Kristin Morrison, BCEMS Assistant Principal
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

Lea Buel	Erika Dolan	Jody Emerson	Nicole Gallup	Prudence Krasofski
Sandy Perreault	Andrea Poulin			

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Cecchinelli, called the Wednesday, August 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. The Board held a Mindfulness Moment.

3. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Discussion included the possible addition of the Stipend Discussion, Behavioral Issues, Follow Up For Open Law Meeting Violation, Discussion on Appeal of Chair Decision, Status of SHS SRO, Update on 5-Year Plan, Emergency Shelter Status, Update on Legal Opinions (Warrants, Other Business, Board Member Issues), FY23 Year-End Balances, Student Test Scores, Spending of Para-Educator Budgeted Monies, SEA Expenses – Plans, SHS Foundation Report, Negotiations – Special Meeting Date, Executive Session for Negotiations, Warrant Signature Page, VSBA Information Re: Evaluation Committee, and Financial Software Update. Concern was raised that some of the critical work of the Board and Parking Lot items are not being added to the Agenda.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Boutin, the Board unanimously voted to add an agenda item for Discussion About Negotiations for a Special Meeting under Current Business.

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Malone, the Board voted 5 to 4 to add Appeal of Board Chair Decision (8.4) and Open Meeting Law Violation (9.1).

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

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Board voted 5 to 3 to add Student Test Scores to the Agenda.

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

Add 8.3 Special Meeting for Contracts
Add 8.4 Appeal of Board Chair Decision
Add 8.5 Student Test Scores
Add 9.1 Open Meeting Law Violation

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

4. Executive Session (if needed)

No items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

5. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

5.1 Public Comment

None.

5.2 Student Voice

None.

6. Consent Agenda

6.1 Approval of Minutes – August 9, 2023 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Boutin, the Board unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the August 9, 2023 Regular Meeting.

6.2 Warrant Approval (08/09/23 & 08/17/23)

Discussion included; questions related to Warrants in excess of the limit stated in policy F20 (construction work in the girls locker room (SHS) and BC custodial equipment), and a suggestion that some items be added to the 5-Year Capital Plan.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the Warrants dated August 9, 2023 and August 17, 2023.

7. Building Reports

7.1 Building Reports; BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA

Copies of the Building Reports were distributed.

BCEMS – Mrs. Waterhouse and Mrs. Morrison answered questions from the Board, including; changes to behavioral protocols/procedures (elementary and middle school), staffing shortages (including 10 open para-educator positions), roof repairs, improvements to education (for high achievers), areas of greatest difficulty, all around supports for teachers (behavior and academics), and any significant changes to curriculum.

BTMES – Mrs. Nye, Ms. Pearson, and Mr. Mills answered questions from the Board, including; behavioral related expectations/training/reporting/accountability (including vertical alignment between the elementary and middle school), open positions (7th grade math, school psychologist, and 9 para-educators), facility needs, Board recognition of Lexington Food Services, new teacher orientation, and staff supports.

SHS – Mr. Aither advised regarding preparations for the new academic year, recognized IT personnel, recognized the head of Maintenance, provided an update on the SRO position (including next steps), provided an update on the SHS Foundation, and answered questions from the Board, including; ‘6 Seconds’ staff training (reflecting on emotions), The Harbor (a break space), community forums, construction updates, installation of granite benches, the SRO position (requires BCPD to be fully staffed), priority projects, open positions (Director of Guidance, PE instructor, World Language instructor, Student Support staff), the new administrative model, early release of students at 2:10 p.m. (Wednesdays only) replaces PASS, the status of re-opening West Patterson Street (a main egress from SHS) (Mr. Boutin advised that city residents will be asked if they want this street re-opened), and liability issues arising from closure of West Patterson Street (especially during an emergency situation).

SEA – Mr. Derner answered questions from the Board and provided some additional information, including; acknowledgment of Laura Potter and the Tech Team, projected enrollment (63 students), parking lot capacity issues, summer construction projects and plans for the barn (plans are loose at this point and will be better defined at a later date dependent on the will of the Board), current use of the barn, lack of storage capacity, acknowledgement that there is currently no Capital Plan for the SEA Building (Mr. Hennessey advised that administrators from each building are currently working on lists of short and long-term improvements), confirmation that

each building has a 'facilities' budget which is managed by the Facilities Director, food services (Lexington advised it was not viable for them to provide food service to due short staffing), student engagement in Work Based opportunities, the addition of middle school, the farm-to-school program, and training in the '6 Seconds piece' (strategies to work through emotions).

7.2 Superintendent Report

The Superintendent's Report (dated 08/16/23) was distributed.

A document titled 'FY23 Staff Changes/Replacements 2023-08-18' was distributed

Mr. Hennessey advised regarding New Teacher Orientation, an invitation to the Board to attend the Kick-off meeting Friday morning (08/25/23 at 8:30 a.m. – coffee/pastries at 8:00 a.m.), the goal for the year (stressing that everyone in the community feels welcome in the District and increased academic results), provided clarification that parents have always been welcomed into the schools (parents should set up an appointment), staff changes (including 8 professional vacancies, and 20 para-educator openings), a resignation from the administrative team (the individual then applied for and was hired as an SLP), the transfer of other employees to different positions, the resignation of a new hire (SHS PE teacher), and protocols (the formal process) for parents who wish to volunteer. The Board recessed from 8:26 p.m. until 8:22 p.m.

8. Current Business

8.1 New Hires

The resumes and BUUSD Notification of Employment Status Forms for Ragini Misra (SHS Science), George de Nagy (SEA Science), and Allyson Holt (BCEMS Special Educator – Intensive Needs) were distributed.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Boutin, the Board unanimously voted to approve the hiring of Ragini Misra, George de Nagy, and Allyson Holt.

8.2 RFP Approval – Fuel Oil/Propane Action

A document titled 'Fuel Oil and Propane RFP – 08/04/23' was distributed.

Mr. Boutin moved to accept the bid from Irving Energy. Mr. Malone seconded the motion.

Brief discussion was held, including a suggestion that the Business Office reach out to other suppliers (noting that some of the vendor's listed, do not provide both propane and fuel oil), the Superintendent's recommendation that the District continue to monitor fuel prices, last year's process which allowed the Business Manager to continue monitoring prices and enter into a contract when she believes it's appropriate, woodchip prices/bids (there may already be a contract in place with a woodchip vendor), and a request for information regarding the volume of fuel utilized and prices. **Mr. Boutin withdrew the motion.** The Board agreed to continue to monitor prices and agreed that no action is necessary this evening.

8.3 Special Meeting for Contracts

Mrs. Spaulding believes the teachers and para-educators plan to ratify the contracts on Friday 08/25/23 (after the Kick-off Meeting).

The Board held brief discussion regarding holding a Special Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at the BUUSD Central Office and via Google Meet. The Board was polled and it appears that a quorum is available.

8.4 Appeal of Board Chair Decisions

Mr. Reil queried regarding clarification of documentation of the process for appealing the Board Chair's decisions (policy? statute?).

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that when he makes a decision that the Board doesn't agree with, Board Members can appeal the decision.

Mr. Cecchinelli believes the appeal process should follow the process outlined in Robert's Rules. Additional discussion included; concern that the Robert's Rules Appeal process, pertains to Robert's Rule's procedural issues, not other non-meeting related decisions/actions that the Chair may make. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he serves at the pleasure of the Board and if he makes a decision that someone disagrees with, he wants to hear about it. Mr. Reil will look into this matter further.

8.5 Student Test Scores

Mr. Hennessey advised that he does not have a lot to share at this time. The VTCAP results will be released shortly, and it is unknown whether or not they will be embargoed. Mr. Hennessey advised that there were many technical issues with the new assessment software which may have impacted test results. Mr. Hennessey believes that local assessments are more accurate.

9. Old Business

9.1 Open Meeting Law Violation

Mr. Reil advised he sent an e-mail to the Chair regarding whether or not he planned to take any further action or discussion regarding the violation discussed at the 08/09/23 meeting. Mr. Reil read from statute and advised he believes further action is necessary.

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that he does not believe action is necessary because the email wasn't an official notification because the individual making the claim, indicates the statute they believe was violated, but neglected to put in writing the action they would like to see for resolution. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that legal counsel recommended removing 'Other Business' from future agendas. This is the action Mr. Cecchinelli has taken as no 'cure' was requested in the email. Mr. Reil believes that the violation was not allowing a community member to participate and he believes the cure is to allow community members to participate. Mr. Reil believed the 'cure'

was implied. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that an open meeting violation claim needs to state what the complainant would like to happen. Mr. Cecchinelli believes that Mr. Malone, acting as a community member, could not introduce 'Other Business'. Mr. Cecchinelli believes 'Other Business' is a category, not an actual agenda item and a community member cannot bring up an item for discussion. Mr. Reil advised that because Mr. Cecchinelli did not know what the question or comment was, he should have allowed it. Mrs. Spaulding reiterated her belief of what she believes Mr. Cecchinelli is trying to convey. Mr. Reil advised that statute does not make the differentiation between a 'category' and a specific agenda item. Mr. Reil advised he will resubmit the complaint with a requested 'cure'. Mr. Malone advised that had he been allowed to ask his question, even if told that the question was not appropriate for that meeting; that would have satisfied the matter. This issue has arisen because he was not allowed to speak at all under that agenda item. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that no one can speak on a matter once that agenda item is closed and the Committee/Board has moved on to the next agenda item, including the Public Comment agenda item. Once Public Comment is over, community members have lost the opportunity to speak on any item not on the agenda. Mrs. Poulin, though believing it is a moot point, as most Chairs are going to do away with 'Other Business', that previously, certain agenda items were not categories. 4.0 used to be for Approval of Minutes and at some point, someone decided to call 4.0 Consent Agenda, and mark the actual minutes as 4.1, 4.2 etc. Other Business, has always been, as announced by the attorney who runs the Annual Meeting, its own agenda item, with the attorney asking 'Is there any other business to come properly before the Assembly'. Any community member was allowed to bring up any business that is proper to come before whatever assembly is meeting. There has never been any specific agenda items listed under Other Business. Mrs. Spaulding does not agree with what Mrs. Poulin has conveyed but agrees it is a moot point. Mrs. Leclerc noted that there is no 'Other Business' listed on this evening's agenda, and asked the Chair to define what can be introduced under Round Table. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that Round Table is not a discussion item and is to be used for congratulatory comments, and other matters of that nature, not Board business.

10. Committee Reports

10.1 Finance Committee

Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the Committee met August 21, 2023.
No discussion was held.

Discussion held after returning to this agenda item (during Agenda Item 10.2):

Mrs. Spaulding reported that the Committee discussed the Warrant Signature page, the Warrant Procedure, Board Stipends (how to donate or refuse a stipend), FY23 Year-end Projections, how to handle Budget Workshops, and an update on ESSER and grant funding. Mrs. Spaulding volunteered to provide more detailed information if requested.

Discussion moved back to agenda item 10.2

10.2 Facilities & Transportation Committee

Minutes from the July 31, 2023 meeting were distributed.
Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the Committee met on 07/31/23.
The next meeting is Monday, August 28, 2023

Mr. Malone queried regarding whether or not Committee Reports were being provided this evening or if Mr. Cecchinelli was just providing the schedule. Mr. Malone did not know if Mrs. Spaulding was going to provide an overview of the Finance Committee meeting. Mrs. Spaulding offered to provide a report. Mr. Cecchinelli advised Mrs. Spaulding to provide her report.

Discussion moved back to Agenda Item 10.1.

Discussion of 10.2 resumed. Mr. Cecchinelli advised that the Facilities Committee met on July 31, 2023 and will next meet on August 28, 2023.

No discussion.

10.3 Policy Committee

The August meeting was cancelled.
The next meeting is Wednesday, September 20, 2023

10.4 Curriculum Committee

The August meeting was cancelled.
Mr. Boutin advised that the September meeting is cancelled. Mrs. Leclerc advised that all committee members are supposed to be involved in the decision making process (to cancel a meeting) and queried regarding whether an email was distributed requesting committee member input. Ms. Parker advised that the Committee may have already agreed to cancel the meeting if there was nothing for the agenda. Mrs. Leclerc reiterated that there is an agreed upon process that was not followed.

10.5 Negotiations Committee

Mr. Malone reported that negotiation sessions have been held and concluded where both parties want to be and the District is waiting for ratification. The Board will be updated when the negotiation parties have moved on ratification.

10.6 CVCCSD Board Report

Minutes from the August 14, 2023 meeting were distributed.

Mr. Cecchinelli reported that the CVCCSD Board met on August 14, 2023 and will meet next on September 11, 2023.

11. Round Table

Mr. Reil implored the Board Chair to answer e-mails. Mr. Reil noted that when emails go a week or more without being responded to, it diminishes the ability of the Board or Board Members to meet their obligations and responsibilities. Mr. Reil encourages the Chair to respond to emails. Additionally, Mr. Reil provided an update, as a community member who attended the Finance Committee meeting, that he queried the Superintendent regarding some left over monies from unfilled positions, which the Superintendent felt was an interpretation issue. Mr. Reil has gone back and watched videos, reviewed minutes, and reviewed the Superintendent's communication and correspondence regarding this matter and he believes that what was communicated was very clear, that those dollars needed to be left in the budget and reserved/spent (for the open positions). Mr. Reil believes his interpretation was fine.

Mrs. Spaulding, on the eve of school, wished staff and students a 'merry school year'. Mrs. Spaulding would implore Board Members who have already had questions answered in e-mails, to not bring them up in Board meetings because the Board already knows the answers.

Mr. Boutin had a lot of fun 08/22/23, eating hot dogs and cake, and very much enjoyed the event.

Mr. Malone advised that 2 meetings ago, he asked the Superintendent that there be a staff presence at the 08/09/23 meeting and was assured that that would be taken care of. No staff members were present. Mr. Malone encourages that there always be a staff member present so that questions and concerns, even if not answered, can be directed and get out to staff. Mr. Malone advised that the lack of administrators at the meeting was embarrassing and was noticed. Mr. Malone does not want this issue to happen again.

Mrs. Leclerc noted that the Board Retreat minutes are not posted on the website for public access. Mrs. Leclerc noted that the Board has not received the communication (written legal opinion) regarding the Board Member matter, and have also not received the communication from VSBA regarding the Committee. Additionally, Mrs. Leclerc requested that if the Superintendent can't be in attendance at a Board meeting, that a principal and an individual from the Business office be present.

12. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Boutin reiterated his request for a standing agenda item (at least once a month) for removal of Articles 3 and 4 (PL Item M).

Mr. Cecchinelli would like to discuss this item in more detail (with Mr. Boutin).

Mr. Reil requested that Parking Lot Item B (SHS Athletic Fields) be added to the next Agenda, including appointing Mr. Cecchinelli to the SHS Foundation Board. Mr. Cecchinelli agreed to the request. The item should remain in the Parking Lot for future discussion. Mr. Reil requested that a Personnel Matter, bumped from 08/09/23 be added to the next Agenda in open session. A decision will need to be made regarding whether or not this matter qualifies for Executive Session.

Mr. Malone would like to add the 'over taxation' of the Board Chair who is serving on multiple committees/boards.

Mrs. Leclerc request that Parking Lot Item A (5-Year Capital Plan), be added to the next Agenda.

Mrs. Leclerc requested that FY23 Expenses/Revenue, Total Compensation, Parking Lot Item E (Warrant Signatures) and Warrant Procedures be added to the next Agenda.

13. Next Meeting Dates

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

14. Executive Session as Needed

No Items were proposed for discussion in Executive Session.

15. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin