

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
November 13, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Leclerc

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Luke Aither, SHS Co-Principal
Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services
Elizabeth Brown, Director of Early Education
Jamie Evans, Facilities Director
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Mari Miller, SHS Assistant Principal
Jennifer Nye, BTMES Principal
Erica Pearson, BTMES Principal
Brenda Waterhouse, BCEMS Principal

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore, Times Argus Rachel Van Vliet Jonathan Williams

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mrs. Spaulding, called the Monday, November 13, 2023 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda

Agenda item 6.2 will be taken out of order.

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Pregent, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the agenda as presented.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting Minutes From October 16, 2023

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the October 16, 2023 BUUSD Finance Committee meeting.

5. New Business

None.

6. Old Business

6.1 FY25 Budget Development Narrative, Draft 1

A document titled 'FY25 Budget Development Narrative – Draft 1: Updated November 8, 2023' was distributed.

Mr. Hennessey provided an overview of the Narrative, including; budget development based on the Strategic Plan, the proposed General Fund Expense total of \$55,421,430 (an increase of 11.7% over FY24), salary/wage and benefit increases, student enrollment (an increase of approximately 80 students), decreased grants (ESSER funds sun-setting 09/2024), FY23 unaudited fund balances, and ESSER positions (some moving to the general fund (8) or other grants (4), with a few being eliminated (4)).

BTMES considerations: addition of an HHB Coordinator, ESSER funded positions, pre-school tuition, and Principals' Office clerical overtime,

SHS considerations: contracted services (Virtual High School), Athletics, supplies (PE, Math, Art, and Health & Wellness), Library increases, Work Based Learning, Extra-curricular salaries, ESSER funded positions, an SRO/Security services, and considerations not impacting the budget.

BCEMS considerations: increased mental health/behavioral interventions, outplacement tuition, substitute wages, supplies (including instrument replacement, PE and Health supplies), 3 ESSER funded positions, and shifting of positions to Central Office.

Special Education and SEA considerations: addition of Special Educators, PT services, the Extended School Year Program, contracted services, student tuition, increases at SEA (1 Para-professional, .5 Youth Employment Specialist, contracted services and supplies), and the overall increase in students qualifying for special services.

Facilities: increases for summer help, custodial wages, custodial supplies, custodial substitutes, electricity, fuel, water/sewer, the addition of an electrician, playground equipment upgrades, and an increase in the Construction line item. It is proposed that security equipment (radios/cameras) be moved to the Technology budget.

Curriculum: addition of a Curriculum Coordinator, a grant writer, and refreshments for faculty and staff (on professional development days).

Business Office / Superintendent / Board / Human Resources: new copier contract, supplies, contracted services, legal services, staff appreciation, and the addition of a .5 FTE Hiring Coordinator.

Transportation: contracted services and leased vehicles.

Technology: increases for ink, equipment replacement for all buildings, software and Infinite Campus.

Early Education: addition of 2 para-educators.

Mr. Hennessey and Mrs. Perreault received comments and answered questions from the Committee, staff, and community members, including, but not limited to; transition of ESSER positions (all positions are currently filled), appreciation for the proposed alternative program at BCEMS, the increase in the number of students qualifying for special services, total compensation software/information (availability and access), the construction line item for SEA (no increase), the potential to grant fund playground equipment, confirmation of health insurance increases, limited grant funding for positions, the SRO position at SHS and staffing constraints of BCPD, addition of alternative classrooms at BCEMS, availability of grant funding for the BTMES sound system, consideration of spending down surplus funds for supplies, confirmation that increases in salaries include new positions and benefit increases are in a separate line item, ongoing increases for teachers new to the retirement system, projected grant numbers, number of ESSER positions that have previously been absorbed (none), development of alternative classroom(s) at BCEMS (to reduce the number of out-placements), difficulty in finding behavioral interventionists, space constraints at BCEMS (for alternative classrooms), lifespan of playground equipment, a belief that legal services can be reduced as contracts are settled (for 3 years), unfilled para-educator positions (9), the impact to students (for eliminated ESSER funded positions), continuation of post-pandemic needs, clarification that there are 8 ESSER positions being added to the budget (some at District level to allow allocation based on need), confirmation that necessary books have been identified and ordered (SHS), the need to build capacity for students with intensive needs, working to make internal programs similar to programs/models at outplacement facilities, addition of skilled staff to support students with behavioral issues or autism, confirmation that some outplaced students do not qualify for special education/IEPs, outplacement tuition (based on actuals), efforts to review programs to confirm successful outcomes and identify efficiencies, a request for the document to show the increase amount for each school, appreciation for efforts to increase capacity to serve intensive needs students, concern regarding the loss of a mental health professional at SHS, a request for more accessible mental health care, shifting of staff, and gratitude for the time and work on budget development as well as the creation of a grant writer position.

6.2 Budget Presentation Including Act 127 Implications

A copy of a presentation titled 'FY25 Draft 1 Budget Information – November 13, 2023' was distributed.

A copy of the presentation was displayed on screen as Mrs. Perreault presented to the Committee.

The presentation included information on; the FY25 budget timeline (highlights: 1st draft to Board on 11/29/23, with Board approval on 01/10/24), budget expenses for FY24 (\$55,615,633) and FY25 budget expenses (total of \$58,921,430 - a 6% overall increase), budget revenues for FY24 (\$15,867,039) and FY25 (\$15,200,486), education spending (General Fund) for FY24 (\$39,645,396) and FY25 (\$43,720,944 - an increase of 10%), history and implications of Act 127 (weighting structure changes), weighting is based on grade level, qualification for free and reduced lunch (including students who qualify for Medicaid), population density (no impact to District), small schools (by enrollment – no impact to District), and English language learner status (little impact), the increased pupil count (due to the number of students who qualify for Medicaid), the BUUSD increase in student count (an increase of approximately 900 students), the rollout of Act 127, limitations on per pupil spending increases (if over 10% requires review and approval), tax rate information, a chart that reflects what FY24 looks like under Act 127 (higher pupil counts resulting in a lower cost per pupil), and FY25 under Act 127, the District Tax Rate, per-pupil spending calculation, the Property Yield, the Homestead Tax Rate (examples with current formula and with the new student count calculation formula), the CLA, and the anticipated lower tax rate (though there is an increase in the budget).

7. Items for Future Agendas

- FY25 Budget Development
- Total Compensation Package
- Weighting Formula for Pupil Counts

8. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Monday, December 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference. It was noted that meeting dates need to be updated on the BUUSD website (tonight's meeting is listed as 11/20/23).

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin