

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

August 28, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

In-Person: Spaulding High School Library, 155 Ayers Street, Barre

Virtual Option: Click this link to join the meeting remotely:

Meeting ID: meet.google.com/vxi-arvi-mgb

Phone Numbers: (US)+1 929-777-4801 PIN: 769 689 006#

PLEASE NOTE: If you attend the meeting virtually and the video link fails, we will still proceed with the meeting at the assigned in-person location. You must state your name for the record to satisfy the Open Meeting Law.

Public comment is welcomed and limited to 2 minutes per agenda item. The board will hear public comments and questions, but won't respond directly during public comments. This can feel impersonal, but is in place to allow the board to stay on task and address the work of the board for that meeting.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment
3. Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda
4. Public Comment
 - 4.1. Public Comment
 - 4.2. Student Voice
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Regular Meeting Minutes - August 14, 2024
 - 5.2. Special Meeting Minutes - August 7, 2024
 - 5.3. Warrant Approval: [August 15, 2024](#), [August 22, 2024](#)
 - 5.4. New Hires
6. Current Business
 - 6.1. Board Retreat - NESDEC
 - 6.2. Board Training - VSBA
 - 6.3. Policy A20
7. Old Business
8. Round Table
9. Future Agenda Items
 - 9.1 Budget Information Night September 11, 2024
10. Next Meeting Dates: September 11, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet
September 25, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet
11. Executive Session
12. Adjournment

MEETING NORMS (link for the Board Operating Protocols)

1. Keep the best interest of the school and children in mind, while balancing the needs of the taxpayers
2. Make decisions based on clear information
3. Honor the board's decisions
4. Keep meetings short and on time
5. Stick to the agenda
6. Keep remarks short and to the point

7. Everyone gets a chance to talk before people take a second turn
8. Respect others and their ideas

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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Aldrich Public Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
July 24, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Boutin (BC) – Chair
Giuliano Cecchinelli II (BC) - Vice Chair
Sonya Spaulding (BC)- Clerk
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Emily Reynolds (BT)
Terry Reil (BT)
Garrett Grant (BC)
Alice Farrell (BT)
Catherine Whalen (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

JoAn Canning, Superintendent
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Jesse Schattin, SEA Administrator
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources

GUESTS PRESENT:

Adam Jacobs, AJ Jones, Alex Alexander, Allison Mills, Amy Scalabrini, Brodey Priddy, Cassandra Demarais, Chris Moran, Colleen Kresco, Courtnie Lange, Darby Hiebert, Dave Wendt, David Delcore - Times Argus, Denise Lavallee, Holly Hoyt, Jackie Wheeler, Jasmine Wible, Jessica Maurais, Josh Howard, June Babel, Karen Moran, Kristina Merrifield, Kristina Safford, Lara Merchant, Lindsey Wells, Mary Bowers, Megan Spaulding, Michaela Morris, Nicole Fuller, Paul Malone, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet, Rep. Peter Anthony, Roberta Melnick, Stephanie Collins, Steven Thompson, Susan Thompson, Tyler Graves, Tyler Watkins, Wendy Sell.

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Boutin called the Wednesday, August 14, 2024, Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., held at the Spaulding High School Library, Barre, 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 with Motion to Approve the Agenda

The chair recited the norms from the agenda

Motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, to approve the agenda as presented, motion passed unanimously.

4. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

Mr. Boutin reminded these are comments that are about anything but the fuel and the budget.

4.1 Public Comment

- Mr. Watkins - Appreciate any veterans online or in person, including spouses. Challenge each board member to spend an hour, at least once a month, in one of the schools. Get a good feel of how things are working. He has faith in both sides of the aisle.
- Mrs. Thompson - Spoke about [Act 35](#) which took effect in 2022 banning suspension and expulsion for students under age 8 except when a student poses an imminent threat of harm or danger to others in the school. Barre Town handbook contains information about Act 35 but important items are absent. If an administrator is considering suspension or expulsion they must follow the appropriate due process requirements. It is vital for families to be informed of this and other education laws so that everyone can ensure accountability from the institutions that care for our children. [VT AOE Guidelines](#)

4.2 Student Voice

None

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5. Consent Agenda

- 5.1 Regular Meeting Minutes - July 24, 2024
- 5.2 Special Meeting Minutes - July 31, 2024
- 5.3 Warrant Approval: August 8, 2024
- 5.4 New Hires - No new hires

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to approve the consent agenda, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Clarification on Warrants? Will the Board receive a heads-up when large instructional programs are being purchased? Ms. Canning's experience if it goes through a full curriculum review is when it's purchased and approved by the administration. Are there any expenses on the warrant related to the overhead door replacement at Barre Town? Mrs. Perreault shared if it's over \$5000 it's a capital asset and would be documented.

6. New Business

6.1 Action Memo: Annual Fuel, Oil, Propane, Wood Chip contracts approval

Based on the action memo this is giving authorization for the district to go for the lowest bid when it comes.

Mr. Grant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding to authorize the Business Manager to make the best decision for the lowest price for fuel, oil, propane, and wood chip contracts, motion passed 6 to 2. Mr. Reil and Mrs. Leclerc voted against the motion.

Discussion: Comparisons, last year's process, copy of bids, and budgeted amount requested. Mrs. Perreault sent an RFP to 12 different vendors and expects to get bids back on the 19th, which are good for 24 hours. Ms. Reynold's asked for a point of information. **Mr. Reil called point of order.** Ms. Canning assured in the future, if not prepared to give the comparisons we'll provide RFPs. Bids are reviewed and approved by Mrs. Perreault and Mr. Evans looking at quality, price, working relationship, responsiveness, and invoicing. Ms. Reynolds point of information is a procedural question about how we're conducting our business understanding board members direct their questions and comments to the chair, we're not engaging in discussion if we are we're directing conversations to our superintendent. It was clarified that the superintendent directed the conversation to Mrs. Perreault. If we want to lock in at the lowest price we will probably have to trust that the Business Manager is going to make the best decisions which is what's in this motion.

7. Old Business

7.1 FY25 Budget Discussion

Ms. Canning appreciated the level of detail and feedback from board members given at the last meeting. Some had questions about some of the reductions, some had suggestions for those reductions, and concerns about reducing our budget any further. She went back and spoke to some community members. She will continue to be open to those discussions as well as reviewing the video.

- Provided a list of ESSER funded positions (15 of them)
 - Some funded in different ways since 2021 according to the chart.
 - Some are in grants, some in the operating budget, and some are terminated or no longer part of the budget.
- Provided a list of reductions from votes 1, 2, & 3
- Defined unfilled positions in the previous presentation
 - Not filling Curriculum Coordinator/Math Coach (not literacy), individual move to another position.
 - Filling only one of two Intergration Specialist positions. Hiring for one and sharing amongst the schools
 - Will not fill the Grant Manager position; recent resignation. Responsibilities will be distributed to the Curriculum office, the Special Ed office, and potentially the Superintendent's office for management.
 - Support Services positions - Large number of openings in Special Education ranging from teaching and support. Student populations change all the time. Kids move in and move out. Two unfilled positions, at this point we don't need. If support is in an IEP we will continue to look for those positions and we will fill those positions to support.

Let it be known that these are changes in student's needs, they are not for our existing population and we will fill every position to make sure those IEPs are met.

The budget sent out yesterday is 7.8% increase in the overall budget. Ms. Canning and the Admin team went specifically through recommendations and some of those are impossible because people are under contract. Some are areas where we've already done some level of reduction and some had some thoughts and ideas for future planning.

The following were taken into consideration:

- Cares program - aware we can't hire with so many other positions open so we intend to hire two Behavior Interventionist. Those are the most critical student-to-student positions. The original request was \$350,000 we're going to reduce that by \$210,000.

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- Reducing custodial overtime by \$20,000 which occurred due to unfilled positions and not fully staffed.
- Vehicle lease - the plan to go out for another vehicle lease will not happen at this point and that expense will be a reduction of \$14,000.
- Reinstate \$50,000 for the SRO at Spaulding High School.

Additional cuts of \$194,000 changed the general fund expenses down to 7.4%. The information was appreciated but pointed out it wasn't shared in advance with the public and the board is looking at something the community hasn't seen. Ms. Canning could table this document and bring it up next week for a full discussion after it becomes public. There are two more times to discuss this budget with the hope for a vote on the 21st. The board can vote that evening or wait until the 28th.

Questions:

- \$15,000 cell phone reimbursement. (The use of cell phones is part of contracts for some of our administrators.)
- Facilities - Projects, money needed, reductions, and maintenance. How do they affect this year's budget? (Ms. Canning has a 5-year plan and there are questions about whether it contains all of the information that it should but there is a document)
- Bus Riders - Budgeting \$150,000 but incurring 300,000 in expenses
- Custodial overtime - documentation supporting \$40,000. No justification for budgeting that amount.

Ms. Canning hopes the board allows her to get her arms around staffing and that is not an overnight task. Redundancy was not looked at when the district merged and there is redundancy in this budget. We need to decide are we going to tackle those redundancies, share in some resources, and be able to do things in different ways.

Mixed feedback from the board included: Current increases seem very reasonable and other communities are not able to put for such a low spending, low percent increase to their budget, Cares program why put it in at all, SRO - though important - should be in the category of not being able to fill for multiple years, list of reductions lowered increase listening to taxpayers and voters. Some feel there's more to do and this shows it's doable, surplus clarification to taxpayers, focus on moving forward by providing information and answers. Over \$2 million in reductions to date..

Ms. Canning agreed community engagement strategy would be a large part of the next meeting. We'll be talking to people and putting things up on our website, but what is the most important information that will give people what they need to understand? She will look into Special Ed extraordinary reimbursement, changed with Act 173, and bring the answer back to the board. She agreed to set up a question/answer page for the superintendent to answer questions specific to the budget and the board will have access to answers.

Clarity provided by Mr. Reil: Tax stabilization comes into a budget essentially from two years before. FY24 surpluses wouldn't be able to be used until the FY26 budget. You can't use them until after they're audited so some monies that are in this current FY24 budget 686,000 came from the FY23 surplus. The remaining amount was leftover money in the tax stabilization fund from previous years. Also mentioned a report provided on June 30th says we had a balance of 692,000. In six weeks what happened to 700,000? Mrs. Perreault explained year-end expenses, insurance, reconciling bank statements, HRAs not included in the report.

8. Superintendent Report

- Bringing back Working Protocols to the next meeting
- Convocation (welcome back to staff) - Thursday 22nd, at SHS Auditorium, 2-hour program. Board members are invited to join. Let the superintendent know so seats can be reserved.
- The Interim Secretary of Education visited Barre Town a couple of weeks ago. She has started her Listen and Learn tour. Planning a regional meeting with superintendents and a variety of Central Office people with some Agency of Education personnel on the 17th of September at U32. Looking at some state-generated data with a set of questions that they'd like us to answer to respond to what schools need now and in the future as a way to give that feedback to the Agency of Education.
- Energy is speeding up, school is about to start. Can't believe the staff is coming back next Thursday. Had my last summer meeting with the administrative team today and asked on a scale from 1 to 10 how well you think you're prepared for the new school year. As you can well imagine when there are still open positions people are not feeling like they're ready for the school year. I'm an eight because I'm defining readiness as a mental state. I am ready to get back, welcome the teachers, and get this school year started. Meeting the kids and the families so that level of energy is real.

9. Round Table

- Mrs. Farrell: Excited about going into this school year. Probably the first time in a long time, sitting on this board, to be excited about going into a school year. We're making good progress and continue to keep that level of progress going on. Recommended the superintendent ask the board about their level of readiness and see how we are doing at the next or future meeting.
- Ms. Reynolds: TOPSoccer Capitol Region Vermont is looking for athletes, buddies, coaches, and board members for the 2024 fall season. Join us for an hour on Sundays for smiles and fun and earn volunteer hours while you do it. Beginning the first Sunday after Labor Day and lasting six weeks in Barre Town. Find them on Facebook at [TOPSoccer Capitol Region](#)

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[Vermont](#). Offering kids with unique challenges an inclusive opportunity to thrive and enjoy a sport they watch siblings and peers have fun with every day. If anyone wants to volunteer reach out to Cassandra Desmarais and Heather Slayton on Facebook or reach out to me and I'll connect you.

- Mrs. Spaulding: She often talks about balance between taxpayers and the student needs. Boiled it down to beyond taxpayers and student needs. Things she's struggling with most recently in this seat and the other seat she sits on is the idea that there's math and then there's people and sometimes it's hard to hold both of them at the same time. Encourages us to think about how, even though these are very carefully, crafted cuts, they will impact people and students. In some way, shape, or form. Recognize that every time we make a cut it's going to have an impact on other people. When we reduce the Grant Manager we're now asking other people to take over the responsibilities for that role. Be aware that every single time we cut, that cut is going to have some kind of domino effect on other people and this isn't just a simple math equation that it's bigger than that. Just ask people to think about that.
- Mr. Grant: So apart from being on this board he's also on the board of the Barre Community Justice Center. They are always looking for volunteers for the restorative justice panels, which to put it very simply is about repairing harm in the community, making sure that victims of lower-level crimes feel heard and that also we put defenders on the right path instead of recommitting crime. So if you're interested in that or want to learn more about that, feel free to speak with him or you can visit their website, barrecjc.org.
- Mr. Cecchinelli: Very excited to start the school year and would consider himself at a nine.

10. Future Agenda Items

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Work Plan - not stagnant, it will move. October Board will receive report on solar credits
- Parking lot - No parking lot those items will become part of the Work Plan. Work Plan will be updated to reflect items.
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) - Update on how that's going with vendor payments.
- VSBA Resolutions

11. Next Meeting Dates

August 21, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet (Special Mtg)

August 28, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

12. Executive Session

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Leclerc, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Gilbert

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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
August 7, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Boutin (BC) – Chair (attended online)
Giuliano Cecchinelli II (BC) - Vice Chair (Chaired the meeting)
Sonya Spaulding (BC)- Clerk
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Emily Reynolds (BT)
Terry Reil (BT)
Garrett Grant (BC)
Alice Farrell (BT)
Catherine Whalen (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

JoAn Canning, Superintendent
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Elizabeth Brown, Director of Early Education
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager
Melissa Greenwood, Asst. Principal BCEMS
Ted Mills, Asst. Principal BTMES

GUESTS PRESENT:

AJ Jones, Allison Mills, Ben Matthews, Bern Rose, Chris Moran, Christie Omodeo, Christine Parker, Colleen LeFebvre, Courtnie Lange, Danielle Owczarski, Darby Hiebert, David Delcore (Times Argus), Emily Thomas, Erika Dolan, Guy Isabelle, James Carpenter, Jasmine Jones, Jasmine Wible, Jennifer Bisson, Jeremy Scheid, Jessica Maurais, Joelen Mulvaney, Josh Howard, Katie Jarvis, Kirsten Evans, Kristina Safford, Laura Ortiz, Lindsey Wells, Mary Bowers, Megan Spaulding, Michaela Morris, Nora Duane, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Greenfield, Rachel Van Vliet, Roberta Melnick, Samantha Lawrence, Sarah Attig, Sarah Helman, Sarah Hill, Sharon Jacobs, Stacie Jacques, Stephanie Collins, Steven Thompson, Tamara Cooley, Victoria Pompei, Wendy Sell

1. Call to Order

The Vice Chair, Mr. Cecchinelli called the Wednesday, August 7, 2024, Special meeting to order at 6:01 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 with Motion to Approve the Agenda

None

Motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to approve the agenda, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Clarification on the executive session, minutes not in packet or website. Ms. Canning shared this is a special meeting and minutes will be provided at the next regular board meeting. Ms Canning explained the executive session as client attorney privilege. It's concerning Open Meeting Law and it allows the board to share information with their attorney in order to avoid any future liabilities. This evening, the training and the opportunity to interact with your attorney is recommended in this way. It is a board training, however within the content of some issues that the board is dealing with and premature public knowledge would leave the board at a disadvantage. Mr. Toohey, Board attorney, was invited to the table to explain. He shared this being a challenge for him because he's here as your attorney and by virtue of speaking to you in public they're essentially waiving attorney-client privilege which is part of the reason why under Open Meeting Law there's a provision that allows a municipal board like this to go into executive session and speak to your attorney so that you preserve attorney client privilege. Interactions with the Attorney General's office resulted in a request that he provide training to the board. His understanding of this training tonight is giving the Board advice. He and his firm do training for school boards all over the state and regularly do the training in executive sessions for boards. There are different legal opinions and he's open to that but his advice as a board tonight is to go into executive session to have this. He does not

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expect at the end of the training the board to come out and make some decisions. We are going to discuss open meeting law concepts generally in an effort to address the issues that were raised in complaints. He's not going to be talking about those specific complaints. Legal advice given on how to avoid future complaints was through training. He's not there to make a decision if the violations were legitimate or not, that's not the point of the training. The process Mrs. Leclerc outlined under the open meeting law about how to handle a complaint, he agrees, but that's not what he's doing tonight. It's attorney client advice and falls outside the vast majority of the work the board does which is done in public.

Recommended by Mr. Reil to move this item to the front of the agenda since Mr. Toohey is present and being paid an hourly rate. Mr. Cecchinelli agreed they usually try to do that with any guest.

Previous motion amended to move item 6 to the beginning of the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Ms. Mulvanhey spoke about Project 2025.

Mr. Malone commented about underfunding, money to private schools. Private schools, daycares, institutions, and other programs students are sent to deal with the social emotional things. He doesn't know how to get them out.

Ms. Owczarski spoke of an assertion at a previous meeting about rejecting grant funding derived from tax revenues. Mr. Cecchinelli reminded her that budget discussion is on the agenda. She agreed to speak then.

Ms. Van Vliet is grateful for alternative/therapeutic schools who can meet the needs of our students when we can't. Internal programs like SEA and Cares are helping. Placements are made by IEP teams through the IEP process through Special Education.

4.2 Student Voice

None

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Warrant Approval: July 25, 2024, August 1, 2024

5.2 New Hires: J. Merritt, K. Brons (Teachers); J. Bisson, Melody Frank, Jesse Schattin (Admin)

Mr. Boutin made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Seconded by Mrs. Spaulding

Discussion: Mr. Reil questioned why Melody Frank and Jesse Schattin were back in the packet. Ms. Canning's understanding was that when those two contracts were signed they were not signed with board understanding and we are trying to correct that. Mr. Riel shared they were and he hadn't heard back from anyone so he went and looked, dug out all the minutes and videos and watched and they were actually included so they were approved and can be dropped off.

Mr. Reil made an amendment to the motion to remove Melody Frank and Jesse Schattin from the list. Mr. Boutin withdrew his initial motion.

Mr. Reil made a motion to approve the consent agenda removing Melody Frank and Jesse Schattin from the list, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, motion passed unanimously.

6. Executive Session

6.1 Opening Meeting Law 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(F)

On a motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, the Board unanimously agreed to find that premature general public knowledge of the items proposed for discussion would clearly place the Barre Unified Union School District at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. Motion passed unanimously.

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Grant, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Ms. Canning and legal counsel in attendance, at 6:21 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(F) to discuss the items proposed for discussion.

The Board exited the Executive Session at 8:02 p.m.

7. Current Business

7.1 FY25 Budget Discussion

Ms. Owczarski - A suggestion made to reject grant funding from tax revenues is a misuse of the school board's focus which shouldn't be a platform to protest tax-funded education grants. School Board's responsibility to seek and accept all legitimate funding opportunities, tax-funded education grants have already been approved and it's not within the board's purview to retroactively question their allocation during budget discussions. If board members oppose tax funded grants their engagement should be during the

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allocation process, not when discussing the budget. Board Goal - ensure an informed community free from political agendas is working towards the long-term benefits of a well-funded school system. Need alternative solutions to ensure affordability without compromising the school budget. This isn't about reducing the budget to the detriment of our educational standards but about structuring funding mechanisms so that everyone can contribute according to their means.

Ms. Canning shared September 17th will need to be the re vote date because both the city clerks and Barre Auditorium are not available on the dates the board asked her to research. Board will be meeting on August 14th, a special meeting on August 21st and on August 28th so in the event the board needs three more sessions to discuss the budget, we have the opportunity to do so and warn the budget for a vote on September 17th.

From the last meeting there seems to be two schools of thought

1. Present the same budget back to the voters.
2. Continue with the reductions to a 6.5% increase to the current year over the last year.

Reviewing the three previous votes it seems the board got a little bit closer but there was still a decision not to accept the school board's recommendation.

Ms. Canning does not expect a vote tonight, only a discussion, questions, and requests for further information should you need it. What would those reductions need to be going into a fourth vote? She'll be looking at coordinating positions across the district and reducing repetition in some roles and responsibilities across buildings.

- Substitute budgets looked at again and continuing to make a recommendation that it can be reduced slightly
- Take an additional \$6000 in supplies
- SHS General Education Student Tuition reduce by \$20,000
- Four to Five positions, not been able to hire for.
 - Vacant Math Coordinator for 1 year only. This position does not directly work with kids
 - Student changes in Special Education and plans to reduce staff there
 - Bus Monitors for preschoolers, paid via transportation contract. Looking at roles of current PreK staff to fill this.
- Co-Curricular
 - BTMES - Vote #3 it was increased by \$45,000 based on actuals. Reviewed why that line was over budget again and realized there had been some advisors and coaches coded there incorrectly reducing that by \$25,000.
- Travel and Conference
 - During the 2nd vote - looked at these lines as they wouldn't impact students - zeroed out all of them for a total of \$62,100. That's not reality as we need to reimburse for mileage so reducing by \$50,000 instead. Left us with \$12,100 to distribute throughout the budget.

To date in votes 2 & 3, reductions in the amount of \$1,194,088 were made. Should the board accept the administration's recommendation it would be an additional \$624,107. Ms. Canning feels any further reductions will have a significant impact on our students. Next cuts extracurriculars at middle schools, staff recommended to provide support to students as well as to help the administration with doing legal investigations.

Discussion opened up to the board.

- Statewide about a 14% tax increase, 1.36 tax rate increase for Barre City and a 3.49% tax rate increase to Barre Town, so both well below any 14% increase. General Fund Expense variance increase of 7.95 but education spending is 3.73% of an increase. Education spending is your expenses less your revenues. Education spending is what you pay tax on. Asking voters to approve 41,125,402 represents a 3.73 increase from last year. Still well below any 14%. Tax rate last year based on education spending and equalized pupil and long-term weighted average daily membership got us to a rate last year of 1.64 and this year's tax rate is 1.22. Only increase we are seeing is based solely 100% on the ELA. We have basically adjusted our budget to account for the increase based on the CLA.
- Concerns about cutting Math Coordinator positions as well as assigning PreK staff to transportation will impact students - Ms. Canning shared it's not uncommon for the Curriculum Director to play the role of Coordinator. She feels comfortable for this year, testing this out and having her play that role of Math Coordinator. It's a good year solution as positions like that will be hard to fill this time of year. Still be a bus monitor but it will be current staff riding the buses. We can provide the level of support without having a separate monitor that we're paying. Concern about putting another burden on the PreK staff who cancelled a lot last year due to staffing issues. Ms. Canning will research further for the next meeting.
- Voters have said three times very clearly no, we want lower. Which Ms. Canning delivered but is it enough. We typically have \$700,000 of tax stabilization. In this budget we've got almost 1.4 million. Buys down the tax rate but if we don't have duplicate funds next year that is money that's going to be made up by the taxpayers. Barre City's grand list took a big hit, had a lot of reductions because of flooding, and it just happened again and indications are there's going to be another large impact to Barre City's grand list. If the grand list or the tax space shrinks that means there's less people paying taxes. Those folks still paying are going to pay more. Barre City reappraisal is scheduled for 26th but don't know the impact of that's going to

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be. Barre Town doesn't have reappraisal but CLA has been dropping so we know a dropping CLA pushes tax rates up for ed funding. Student enrollment is decreasing, it's a trend across the state and the whole country. At what point do we leverage those decreases to reduce expenses as well. With Act 127, no doubt the Vermont Legislature is going to tackle education funding and waiting again in this next session. We have no idea where that's going to land and that has a direct impact on tax rates, expenses, and ed funding. There's a whole bunch of variables we can't ignore. These are things we have to be aware of.

- Hoping as a board we can all rally together behind a budget we can collectively support. Repeated failures of the budget are an effort to defund our students' education, misinformation, and lack of honesty, some say. These implications are irresponsible and unfair and especially towards our students' education. All budget information has been available on the website and details have been shared over the past six months. It is perplexing that despite spending nearly \$69 million on education in 2023-2024 there are accusations of defunding and misinformation. Approaches to any budget involves reviewing prior year expenditures and adjusting any overages and under spending by reallocating and reducing spending. Need to look at: programs - compare outcomes with the results that we were expecting, comprehensive report of all capital expenditures including projects, large equipment purchases, tools and needs of the facilities, assessing the needs of our curricular curriculum program, projecting student enrollment, list of open and needed positions, spending around four million on transportation with no busing to our high school, there's a lot of vehicle usage in the warrants for getting students to and from school and SEA Program, snapshot of those costs associated when we're paying parents, individual community members, and staff for student transportation, haven't seen any cuts from facilities. Bus riders - looking at line by line for fiscal year 2023, we paid \$281,000 for bus riders. Fiscal year 2024 we budgeted \$150,000 but as of today we've spent \$267,000. Trying to rationalize how we under budgeted but we've spent almost \$300,000 on bus riders. Special Education program, making sure we're meeting all of the needs of the students. Reductions to look at \$15,000 for cell phone reimbursement and supporting information to justify the \$60,000 in custodial overtime. SRO at Spaulding High School - entertain supporting that, need conversations with the police departments, coordination, is it available? \$350,000 set aside for the Cares Program was mentioned to take a look at that as a possible reduction, needing more information on that.
- We have looked at these numbers till we're almost blind with them and we have a grasp of what they're talking about. When folks see General Fund Expenses and they see a number, see a percentage, and then they see per pupil spending and education spending. This may be the root of a community engagement plan to explain why those numbers are different. When we talk about facility spending, staffing and instruction, what has gone before and what is coming down the pike so if we're spending X amount of dollars on staffing, where's the report about staffing, where's the plan for staffing, where's the plan for facilities. We can look at that and say, if we have these folks doing this amount of work we can anticipate that we will have some good outcomes. AOE did a staff to student ratio report in 2019, we are at 1 to 7. Seven students per every teacher, seems to be a little bit off but that's what's out there. Those kinds of things, to bring that in and knit it into a community engagement plan as we approach this next budget vote so that the public has a really good idea of what it is they're voting on. They hear this amount of spending, that amount of spending, tax rate, CLA, their heads spin. I think that has been a root cause of individuals not understanding so therefore not being supportive. If we can show that, here's a bucket and into this bucket goes non negotiables, the already existing contracts whether for staff, transportation or Xerox machines, etc. Those have to go in there, we can't cut them out. Here's what we need for instruction, here's what we need to have facilities: safe, clean, operable, warm, the lights stay on. What is the co-curricular, the transportation. Look at those buckets and make it very simple for people to understand we would be making a tremendous amount of headway. Mrs. Farrell will gladly assist with any kind of documentation or written piece to share with the community because that's really important.
- We have to be brave enough to address the spending and it's not something that's fun to do or we like to do but that's what I'm hearing from the voters. It's not so much the taxes, it's the spending and where the money is going and where it is exactly. A lot of the things I see are very vague. Substitutes, is that from all schools, is that one school, how many positions is it. As an elected member that's in charge of oversight, it's difficult when we don't get specifics and then can't vote because we don't know what we're voting on. I don't think it's much different for members of the public when they are looking at things that are put out for public documents and see the same things. ESSER positions - put out in the public that they were temporary positions and were not going to be rolled into the general fund. It's not comfortable but it's got to be discussed. It's a huge portion. How can we get around it? How can we make it work? That's why we're here, we need to talk about it because pushing it away and trying to put through another budget is like doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result has not been a good method.
- Concerns about conferences being reduced. Hate to see opportunities taken away from staff to improve their skills, refine their skills, and network with other professionals. Having some confidence that there will be sufficient opportunities whether those are provided at in services or such to provide that. I understand the impact of not having those opportunities. A bit of perspective, when we look at these numbers line by line, just for the board we lose \$353,000 in the proposed budget. There are just realities of how much things cost if 9 members cost \$353,000. Imagine what it costs to educate over 2,000 students and over 600 which require an IEP, just a piece of perspective offered as we continue this discussion.
- Reductions List offered: If we're going to budget effectively we really need to see what is the plan for the next 12 months for Capital repairs, assets, and all those kinds of things. Reduce the tax stabilization from 1.4 million back down to 700,000. ESSER funded positions. Need to look at the 40 open positions and accommodate those positions into the open positions that we have to see if we can offset that ESSER funding. Sitting on a lot of open positions that we could utilize to slide those into permanent roles that aren't going to increase expenses. Open positions don't provide services to anybody. It's been 3 to 4

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years we've carried double digit open para positions, we need to reduce that number by half. It's not fair to continue to ask the community to fund positions that we're just not filling. We are pushing approximately a million dollar surplus annually and we need to take half of that. All of our buildings, except the SEA building, have one principal and two assistant principals. Our two elementary schools have 800 plus students in them and Spaulding, to my understanding, is around 400. Why do we have three principals there? Need to move to one principal and one assistant principal with half the students that are in the other buildings from an equity standpoint. What should be on our minds for the next budget is the SEA program? The Tech Center is going to leave eventually. Building designed to house 1200 students, we're in the 400 range. We need to move the SEA building into the Spaulding building and get rid of that property. It would save the district a tremendous amount of money. With the Tech Center leaving we will have the space. When they leave, if we don't have a tenant or a use for it we absorb that additional cost. Factors we need to talk about, not intended to be inflammatory but I would reduce the Director of Facilities position in the district. We have facility leads in each building with principals who know their buildings and handle the day-to-day operations and things that happen in their buildings. If choosing between positional cuts that affect students or positional cuts that don't. That's one we can do without or think outside of the box. Mr. Reil's opinion, when I perceive some of the directors that we have Facilities, IT, HR, I think of those as administratively support positions. I don't think of those as director level positions. We either reduce the Director of Facilities position or reduce those three director positions to administrator positions aligned underneath the Business Manager. To me these are support positions, not director level positions. Adding SRO back in, travel/conference should only cut down to \$32,000 not \$12,000, course reimbursement reduce it \$50,000, it's excessively overspent and needs to be managed better, bus riders keep flat at 150 though significantly overspent, supplies underspent about \$45,000, drop \$50,000 across the board, BC Mindfulness Coordinator not replaced, custodian/maintenance supplies underspent by \$80,000 reduce \$80,000, propane underspent \$30,000 split that and take some money there, wood chip under spent almost 50 again split it or 40, Board legal fees - no contracts to negotiate should be able to reduce \$15,000, and contracted services \$5000. There was a big bump in the central office in Tech for purchased security - budget for 20 which was underspent and asked for a \$50,000 increase. Unless that something specific that can take substantial reduction. Budget narratives that we've had there are several vehicles, those need to be reduced. Assistant coaches have been in and out of the budget, need to look at that. Cares program, new program, but that's a big ticket item. Increase for playground equipment for \$100,000 but we're doing all that work this year, not sure if that's redundant. Potential reduction of \$100,000. Big bump in custodian but don't think we're adding custodian positions. I think we're short a couple, there was a \$270,000 bump in all those lines combined. It's either adding positions we haven't discussed or something, 60,000 of it is the overtime increase which I don't think is justified. Would rather see us increase a staff member which would reduce overtime.

- Ms. Canning shared it really is her full intent to look at all staffing and we have many of the positions you were talking about already under contract so I think the ideas that you have are similar to a vision but to get there would not be in time for September 17th. Mr. Reil feels if positions are eliminated then that negates the contract. Both agreed now's not the time to figure that out.
- SRO position at Spaulding supported, reason why removed in first initial cut back in March the city is chronically understaffed for the police. It's a problem in the state of Vermont in general. Requested Ms. Canning provides a list of cuts next week that we will be able to systemically go through and make motions on to remove them or what have you. She will have a response to the board's feedback this evening. She can't predict what that's going to look like because she works with the administrative team and the directors to answer the questions. She doesn't expect they are going to take my suggestions line by line. What she will ask at some point in the next three meetings is that the board vote on a budget. It was pointed out because we're talking about the cost of education, that the cost of education would be far easier to handle in our district if we actually merged the schools the way that they should be merged. Which includes classroom sizes, all of that is something we really have to think about if we're actually concerned about the tax rate in our community. We need to really move forward on that.
- Hearing that this is around the time when we normally start doing the budget for next year. There's an article in the paper about rising health care costs again of 20 to 24%. Looking ahead to next year's budget and being cognizant of potential increases that are going to be coming right away. The tighter we can keep this one the easier it's going to be to just go right into the next year's budget to plan. Revising our purchasing policies to consolidate those there's big savings to be had in that. Looking at the budget there's many redundant lines for each different school. I think that with a coordinated effort that could save a lot.
- The \$63,000 for substitutes is that one school versus another school. Mrs. Canning responded that it is a combination of the Barre Town K-8 and High school. That detail is great because we ran into issues about the budget and the percentage that went to each school. Supplies questioned - that's spaulding. General Ed Student Tuition is the High school. Four to Five positions are still being worked on. Transportation - PreK busing. In reviewing the warrants we are continuously seeing large purchases by facilities and projects. If we can really get that plan of expenses so we can see them so we're not blindsided by large ticket items that are coming across.
- Last legislative session there was the Board of Cooperative Educational Services Bill passed and signed by the governor which allows for schools to come together in regions and work together. As we look at our space which we will be reabsorbing from the Career Center, it's a good idea to look at the SEA building coming back into Spaulding High School so we have a program that is in gear with IDEA, rather than separate but equal. A truly integrated program. Use the SEA building to generate revenue. An ideal program would be to turn it into a preschool center and then we could share with

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surrounding districts to have a cooperative preschool. It's important that we serve all levels from PreK all the way through to graduating seniors. Course reimbursement - in favor of teachers constantly increasing their knowledge but staggered so that we have individuals who need licensing that they would get first dibs. individuals who may be pursuing a Master's program would be on the list and anyone pursuing a second or third Master's or PhD program that maybe they could wait. Those kinds of degrees are specialty degrees and even though they enhance what we have in our district it may not be the right time for us as a district to be providing financial support for that type. If they have a license and are doing a fine job it might be something for them to pursue on their own.

- Ms. Canning shared some of the items are Collective Bargaining agreement items and course reimbursements would be one of them and that would not be something she could unilaterally make reductions in. Mrs. Farrell agreed but something to be looked at as far as this whole planning. If we're looking at a facilities plan, spending plan and instructions plan, where does that fit into our needs to serve students?
- Concerns shared that we're at a point where we're not balancing the needs of the taxpayer with the needs of the students. We're just thinking about the needs of the taxpayers. We need to remember it's a balance. How do we make sure that we are serving our students in the best way possible and recognizing that sometimes that means we have to increase budgets. We have increased salaries, health care, and costs just like everyone else. We are being asked to absorb all of those so that we can appease taxpayers. I understand that's part of our job but we also have to remember part of our job is doing what's best for our students.
- Sometimes investing in the schools can provide a benefit to taxpayers. Providing students meals actually saves costs for some families compared to the tax burden. We have buildings that are in really good shape. I looked at the central office which is a really old building from 1908. It's remarkable how well that has been maintained. Maintaining is cheaper than fixing big problems in the long run and in the age of flooding it's important for us to make our buildings more resilient. We may have a legal obligation to provide certain standards for our students. Just some considerations to put out there as we continue the discussion.
- Lots of great points made and lots of great discussions. Agrees with educating our community, using plain language, really making sure people fully understand what we're talking about. It's very hard and very complex and a lot of people ask me to explain it and I could just see the glaze over happen when you start talking about taxes. It's a lot and it's really hard to comprehend. Community engagement and education should definitely be part of our budget plan going forward. Talking about Act 127, the district tax rate. That tax discount will be available to us for the next five years. I think the first three years is 3 cents and then it tapers off. That's designed to help us build tax capacity as we transition out of the discount. We'll start being in a position where we're growing our tax base. The CLA in Barre City is going to change in the next couple of years to be 100%. That will take a huge tax burden off of taxpayers. I would love to ask our Barre Town Selectboard to consider a reappraisal and say that would really reduce a burden of taxes going forward. Community engagement and community outreach is still very important.
- Next meeting Ms. Canning will bring back to the board some open house dates and ways in which we can reach out to parents and the events that are happening in schools. We're also going to the Currier Park music in the park in September and that would give us an opportunity to reach out to folks.

8. Old Business

None

9. Round Table

Mr Reil: Thanks everyone, it's been a great discussion tonight and he looks forward to the next piece. Thank you.

Mrs. Farrell: What he said. We did good.

Mr. Boutin: Thank you to Giuliano for jumping in and being the chair tonight. I have COVID and was not allowed in the building or out in public for that matter. I do want to say thank you. I'm very happy with the discussion tonight and learning about open meeting law

Mrs. Leclerc: Felt the Open Meeting Law training was very good for this board. Felt it was beneficial. We should initiate having a regular discussion about Open Meeting Law compliance training for all of us. I think in January it's going to be required that we take it again anyways. It's challenging to rely solely on the board chair to interpret all the rules and I think if the board made a concerted effort to become more familiar with the statutes and Robert's Rules it would significantly benefit our board's functioning and decision making. I'm glad we did this tonight. Thank you.

10. Future Agenda Items

Budget

11. Next Meeting Date

August 14, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

August 21, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet (Special Mtg.)

August 28, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

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12. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Ms. Reynolds, to adjourn at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Gilbert



BUUSD

Barre Unified Union School District

ACTION ITEM BRIEFING MEMO BUUSD

BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM

BUUSD BOARD MEETING AGENDA: August 28, 2024

Consent Item No.: ____ **Discussion Item No.** ____ **Action Item No.** 6.1

AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION(How the item shall appear on the agenda):

Board Retreat

SUBJECT(Explain what the item is):

Give an update on the board retreat and discuss timeline

SUBMITTING STAFF PERSON or COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Michael Boutin

RESOURCES NEEDED INCLUDING STAFF TIME:

\$1,850 and staff time to be there for the retreat and possible food expenditures

STAFF RECCOMENDATION:

N/A

DESIRED OUTCOME(What is the purpose of this item):

To provide an update and approve the contract with NESDEC to facilitate the session.

BACKGROUND/SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION(If there is an background/history regarding it please advise):

I asked NESDEC if they could facilitate our board retreat. I explained some of the challenges we are facing in our district and they reached out to local partners and created a brand new workshop specifically catered to BUUSD. They have indicated that it would likely be best to do this workshop with the new superintendent. Please see the NESDEC documents for additional information.

LINK(S):

ATTACHMENTS:

Contract and workshop outline

INTERESTED/AFFECTED PARTIES:

BUUSD Board

RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION:

Make a motion to approve the contract with NESDEC and authorize the chair to sign.

NEXT STEPS

Once we have a superintendent selected we should schedule the retreat which will likely be in June or July. Sonya or someone else can send a poll to work out schedules.

ADDITIONAL MOTION IF WANTED

Authorize the chair to work with staff to set the venue and organize any refreshments as needed, once the date and time is set for the retreat.



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ▶ Tel: 508-481-9444 ▶ www.nesdec.org

April X, 2024

Michael Boutin, School Board Chair
Barre Unified Union School District
120 Ayers Street
Barre, VT 05641

Dear Mr. Boutin:

In response to your recent inquiry regarding an on-site school board workshop, I am pleased to forward an agreement for this training, entitled "Reconnecting to the 'Why' of Our Work", for the Barre Unified Union School District. Please be assured that any aspect of the agreement is subject to modification at your request.

If the agreement meets with your approval, please return a copy to our office with an authorized signature as indicated on page 2. We will then sign and send you a copy of the fully executed agreement. Should you require additional information or clarification regarding the services that NESDEC can provide, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Barre Unified Union School District.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David DeRuosi, Jr.", is written over a large, light gray watermark that says "DRAFT".

David DeRuosi, Jr., Ed.D.
Executive Director



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ➤ Tel: 508-481-9444 ➤ www.nesdec.org

**AGREEMENT
SUBMITTED BY
NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
TO
BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR
RECONNECTING TO THE 'WHY' OF OUR WORK
SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP**

Purpose of the Training/Overview

This workshop will focus on the “why?” associated with School Board work. Through interactive activities and discussions, Barre Unified Union School Board members will unpack the purpose of their work. To accomplish this, the Board will engage in facilitated discussions, exploring personal experiences and expectations, and looking at the strengths of the board and some of the challenges it may face.

The goal in this training would be to bring the Barre Unified Union School Board together to support them in their work by transitioning them from the “why?” of the work, to the “how” they will work, and ultimately to “what” they wish to accomplish.

Scope/Proposed Workshop Format

NESDEC will develop and present a custom-designed school board training program for members of the Barre Unified Union School Board.

Phase I: Start with Why

Using the work of Simon Sinek, author of *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*:

- Participants will share their “why” regarding their decisions to run for the School Board
- Participants will observe a Ted Talk video
- Participants will engage in a variety of interactive activities cumulating in a better understanding of each other’s purpose and the purpose of the School Board

Estimated time: 1.5 hours

Phase II: What do we need to do as Board to achieve our purpose?

Continuing with the recommended text, participants will transition from the “why?” of the work, to the “how” they will work, to “what” they wish to accomplish. Participants will engage in a

variety of interactive activities cumulating in a reflective understanding of what a Board needs to function as a high performing leadership team.

Estimated time: 1.5 hours

Total estimated workshop time: 3 hours

The above format is provided by way of example. The program content can be adjusted and finalized, in advance of the workshop, through further discussion. It is understood that substantial changes in the design and/or content of the workshop may impact the cost of the activity.

Logistics

The Board training sessions will be conducted at a date and time to be determined, at a Barre UUSD facility to be determined, as agreed to in advance by the parties.

Cost

The consulting fee for this workshop will be **\$1,850**. This quote includes the fee for the consultant(s) and reasonable associated expenses such as travel, materials, and copying, as necessary.

Additional expenses incurred by NESDEC (i.e. overnight accommodations, technology, etc.), if agreed to in advance by the parties, will be reimbursed by the district upon receipt of invoice and receipts/ documentation.

Fee Payment Schedule

Terms: Payment in full is due within 30 days of completion of training.

This price quote will remain in effect until XXX.

Signatures

In order to accept and approve the work described above, an authorized individual signs below:

For the Barre Unified Union School Board:

Signature

Title

Date _____

For the New England School Development Council:

David DeRuosi, Jr., Ed.D.

Executive Director

Date _____

DRAFT



BUUSD
Barre Unified Union School District

**ACTION ITEM BRIEFING MEMO
 BUUSD BOARD AGENDA ITEM
 BOARD AGENDA: 08/28/2024**

Consent Item No.: _____ Discussion Item No. _____ Action Item No. 6.2

AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION: VSBA training

SUBJECT: Consider VSBA for board training/development

SUBMITTING STAFF PERSON or BOARD MEMBER: Sonya Spaulding

RESOURCES NEEDED INCLUDING STAFF TIME: None

STAFF RECCOMENDATION: N/A

DESIRED OUTCOME: Choose the best organization to help with board development

BACKGROUND/SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Debbie is out of the office until June 10th, so we have not been provided a quote yet. Information will be sent to be included in an addendum as soon as it is received.

LINK(S): none

ATTACHMENTS: VSBA 2024 Service Brochure pg 9-11

INTERESTED/AFFECTED PARTIES: Board members and Superintendent

RECOMMENDED ACTION/MOTION: Approve the VSBA to provide training/board development for the board retreat Summer 2024

Customized Board Development

Board Retreats

Frequently held during the spring and summer months, board retreats provide an excellent opportunity to examine how the board is doing with a focus on continuous improvement. Typically, these are a three to four hour workshop held off site in a relaxed setting. They allow board members to get to know each other, learn together, and plan work for the coming year. A retreat facilitated by the VSBA helps the team stay focused on good governance and maintain clarity around respective roles and responsibilities. A customized retreat agenda is created with the chair and superintendent. Board retreats help boards comply with DQS Governance Priority 113.1.2: "At least annually, the Board sets measurable goals and regularly reviews the progress toward those goals."

Governance Standards

The VT AOE's District Quality Standards, which include governance standards for school boards, were adopted in 2023 and will go into effect on July 1, 2025. The standards are general principles of good governance and provide boards guidance on what is essential to their work. There are 14 standards organized into three core areas: Governance Priorities, Governance Protocols, Governance Processes. The VSBA offers a self-evaluation for individual boards to determine where the gaps are between its current practices and the new standards. Boards then develop an implementation plan to address these gaps. This is offered as a stand-alone training or can be incorporated into a board retreat.

Educational Excellence & Equity

The Leading for Educational Excellence & Equity Curriculum is intended to support boards with their equity work by building awareness and commitment to educational equity. Educational equity is also woven into other VSBA Board Development workshops and resources.

Board Self-Assessment

A hallmark of effective boards is regular assessment of their performance. Self-assessment is required by DQS Governance Protocols 113.2.1: “The Board annually assesses its performance, including adherence to agreed protocols, processes, and policies”; 113.2.2: “The Board annually reviews whether and/or how its actions and contributions have impacted the school system’s success in meeting goals”; and 113.2.3 “The Board annually evaluates the effectiveness of community engagement and public communication efforts.” The VSBA offers a board self-assessment tool for members to complete. Using the results, the VSBA facilitates an interactive discussion on growth opportunities and helps the board develop a plan for continuous improvement.

Community Engagement

Engaging the community in supporting the education of students is one of the essential roles of school boards. Clear, consistent, and candid communication from the board to the community is important all year round, not only during budget season. Community outreach should be two-way. One example where boards should engage the whole community in a dialogue is the creation or updating of the district’s vision. DQS Governance Priority 113.1.1 states “The Board follows an inclusive process to invite and incorporate community input into the vision and goals for the school system.” The VSBA can support boards in this role by facilitating a community forum and/or working with the board to develop a community engagement plan.

Roles, Responsibilities & Teamwork

Effective and high-functioning boards can have a positive impact on student achievement. A key characteristic of an effective board is meeting its responsibilities by understanding its role. This workshop discusses the difference between governance and management in school systems, and who is responsible for what. It clarifies the different roles in the district and how this relates to the chain of accountability and authority. Other topics include the board-superintendent partnership, managing requests for information, and handling complaints. While best if facilitated in a three-hour interactive workshop, this content can be provided as a one- or two-hour training and combined with Open Meeting Law and Roberts Rules of Order.

Policy Governance®

What to Expect as a Policy Governance® Board

Policy Governance® is a trademarked governance system created by John and Miriam Carver in the 1970s. Policy Governance® is a unique and complete system to organize board work based on ten principles. It clearly defines the roles of all stakeholders in a supervisory union, supervisory district or school district: school board (board of directors); superintendent (chief executive officer); and taxpayers (owners). The VSBA can help a board understand “what to expect” as a Policy Governance® board should it choose to adopt it. At a full board session, the VSBA provides an overview of Policy Governance® (including the 10 principles), characteristics of what makes a strong Policy Governance® board, the benefits of it, what it requires to work well and other questions to consider while determining whether or not to adopt it.

Open Meeting Law & Robert’ Rules of Order

Vermont law requires school boards to follow Vermont’s Open Meeting Law and Robert’s Rules of Order. This two-hour workshop provides school boards with an overview of Vermont’s Open Meeting Law, and practical guidance on implementing Robert’s Rules of Order. Through interactive discussions and case studies, school board members are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to confidently run lawful and effective meetings. This training can be stand-alone or combined with Roles & Responsibilities.

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #097
POLICY**

CODE: A20

1ST READING: 03/23/2023

2ND READING: 05/10/2023

ADOPTED: 05/10/2023

Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution

Policy

All Barre Unified Union School District Board meetings will be held in compliance with Vermont's open meeting laws, 1 V.S.A. §§310 et seq.

Regular Meeting Schedule

Regular meetings of the board will be held at the Spaulding High School Library, on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The meeting schedule will be published and made available by the superintendent to any person on request.

Special and emergency meetings will be called by the chair on his or her own initiative or when requested by a majority of the board and shall be warned appropriately. Only items on the agenda may be acted upon at these meetings.

Conduct of Board Meetings

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. One or more members of the board may attend and participate in a regular, special or emergency meeting by electronic or other means so long as the requirements of 1 V.S.A. §312(a)(2) are met.

Executive Sessions

Executive sessions of the board will be convened only for the purposes stated in 1 V.S.A. §313. The minutes of any meeting where an executive session takes place will reflect the specific statutory reason for convening the executive session. Board members will not make public the confidential issues discussed during an executive session.

Agenda Preparation

The superintendent will prepare proposed agendas for all meetings of the board after consultation with the board officers. Items of business may be suggested by any board member, staff member, student, or resident of the district. The inclusion of items on proposed agendas will be at the discretion of the board chair and superintendent. An item may only be added or removed from a meeting agenda as the first order of business at the meeting. Other adjustments to an agenda may be made at any time during the meeting.

Agenda Distribution

The proposed agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to board members by the superintendent three days prior to regular meetings and as soon as practicable before special and emergency meetings. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting and 24 hours prior to a special meeting, the superintendent shall ensure that the agenda is posted in the municipal clerk's office and [two other designated physical locations in the municipality]. In addition, proposed meeting agendas will be made available to any interested person upon specific request.