

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
September 11, 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) (joined online)  
Terry Reil (BT)  
Garrett Grant (BC)  
Alice Farrell (BT)  
Catherine Whalen (BT)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

JoAn Canning, Superintendent  
Lisa Perreault, Business Manager  
Ashley Young, Asst. Business Manager  
Melissa Greenwood, Asst. Principal  
Jamie Evans, Director of Facilities  
Mari Miller, Ast. Principal  
Shannon Miller, Co-Principal  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Mike Martin, Director of Technology  
Jesse Schattin, SEA Administrator  
Denise Maurice, Principal  
Brenda Waterhouse, Principal  
Melody Frank, Special Services Director  
Erica Pearson, Principal  
Amanda Riggelman, Director of Curriculum

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Alex Alexander, Brodey Priddy, Chris Moran, Christie Omodeo, Christine Parker, Colleen Kresco, Courtnie Lange, Dan Morrison, David Delcore (Times Argus), Denis Martel, Denise Lavallee, Helene Martel, Jackie Wheeler, James Carpenter, Jasmine Jones, Jasmine Wible, Jessica Maurais, Joan McMahon, Joelen Mulvaney, Karen Heath, Laura Ortiz, Laurie Smith, Lindsey Wells, Melissa Metayer, Michaela Morris, MJ Wheaton, Nicole Fuller, Paul Malone, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Greenfield, Rachel Van Vliet, Sandi Kirkland, Sarah Attig, Sarah Capron, Sarah Hill, Sharon Jacobs, Steven Thompson, Tyler Watkins, Wendy Sell.

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mr. Boutin, called the Wednesday, September 11, 2024, Regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., held at the Spaulding High School Library, Barre, and via video conference.

Mr. Boutin reviewed the norms and public comment protocol. Each Board member, director, and administrator stated their names.

**2. Pledge and Mindfulness Moment**

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance and held a Mindfulness Moment.

**3. Additions and/or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda**

Remove New Hires - No New Hires  
Add three Executive Session Item - Student Matter 1 VSA 313 (a)(7), FOIA Request 1 VSA 313 (a)(6), Parent-Attorney-Client Communication 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)  
Add 7.4 Community Response  
Add 7.5 Board Retreat Discussion

**Mrs. Farrell made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to approve the agenda with the amendments, motion passed 7 to 1, and Mr. Reil voted against the motion.**

#### **4. Budget Information Meeting Session**

Mrs. Canning and Mrs. Perreault reviewed the presentation on the screen. Then, the public and the board members were invited to ask questions or provide comments.

Many looking for support and moving forward, affordable budget, bare-bones, no more delaying or cuts, 87% untouched, and no interest yet. Act 127 tax rate discount (3,2,2,1,1 cent over five years), surplus money to Ed Fund, \$2 million dollars in cuts, \$10 increase per year for every \$100,000 assessed value on your home in Barre City; \$35 in Barre Town before income sensitivity for households making under \$128,000, below average increase for the state of Vermont. Current increase - 56% of it is wages, 28% is benefits, 12% represents tuition for our students and the career center, and 4% is supplies, equipment, building repairs, and utilities.

Many have concerns about next year's budget, inaccurate surplus amounts, compounding effects, and 7% to start next year. The WCAX article mentions small schools, high staffing, and levels of deteriorating enrollment. One cent/three cents may be the last dollar or too much for a struggling family. Per pupil spending was reviewed again. Radical changes occur throughout the year, not during the budgeting process.

Hopes for the future included looking at merging and how we conduct business in general: how we educate, instruct, manage our facilities, and spend our money. We should continue to offer substantive education in an organized and fiscally responsible fashion. When students fundraise for field trips, please support that.

Mr. Reil clarified that the FY24 surplus is unavailable until FY26...Ms. Reynolds called **Point of Order** as she was waiting for the chair to recognize her to speak first.

Ms. Canning reminded there is a page on the website where the community can log on and ask budget questions, which the administration will answer within 48 hours. .

#### **5. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda**

##### **5.1 Public Comment**

None

##### **5.2 Student Voice**

None

#### **6. Consent Agenda**

##### **6.1 Regular Meeting Minutes - August 14, 2024, August 28, 2024**

##### **6.2 Special Meeting Minutes - August 21, 2024**

Corrections: out of executive session at 8:04; Mrs. Spaulding made motion Ms. Reynolds seconded, unanimous; Mr. Grant and Mrs. Farrell adjourned at 8:05. Mr. Boutin recused himself a few minutes into executive session and returned after executive session. Mr. Reil left at 6:45 p.m.

##### **6.3 Warrant Approval: August 29, 2024, September 5, 2024**

##### **6.4 ~~New Hires~~ - No new hires**

**On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Grant to approve the consent agenda with amendments to the minutes of August 21, 2024, motion passed 6 to 1, Mrs. Spaulding Abstained**

Warrant Questions:

September 5th - Food Service Equipment two \$15,000 expenses plus \$10,000 - Vendor invoice shows a Vegetable peeler for \$15,000.

*Reason: It takes more manpower to cut up and prepare fresh food. This equipment saves time in the morning and automates that. We own this equipment, and it was purchased with Food Service surplus funds. It doesn't impact the General Budget.* Ms. Canning will look into the other expenses.

Mentoring for the VT Principal's Association—It's not booked to the school where the administrator works. Ms. Canning will research it.

August 29 Warrant: A Vendor provided a bunch of food and it's booked to our ESSER supplies. Shouldn't it come from the Food Service surplus fund, not the supply fund in ESSER?

Three large purchases for Work-Based Learning—some programming and some internships booked to the Central Office. Isn't that program at Spaulding? *Reason: It's through a grant, which is why it's at the Central Office.*

Was the Food Service van purchased from Food Service surplus funds? Ms. Canning will confirm but makes sense it would. Mrs. Leclerc thought so, but she asked for the spend-down plan but didn't...Ms. Reynolds called **Point of Order** meeting off topic.

Public comments ensued about what was in the general fund.

**Mr. Grant called the question, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, motion passed unanimously.**

Returned to original motion for the vote.

## **7. Current Business**

### **7.1 VSBIT (Multi-Line/Unemployment) Proxy Approval [ACTION]**

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, to nominate Ms. Canning to be the proxy for both the Multi-Line program and Unemployment program, motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion: What does VSBIT stand for? (*Vermont School Board Insurance Trust*)

### **7.2 First Reading of Board Meeting, Agenda Preparation & Distribution (A20) [ACTION]**

Modified agenda preparation - added to the paragraph - by providing a memo form to the superintendent or superintendent designee.

Agenda distribution - changing from three to five days.

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to approve the first reading of policy A20, motion passed 4 to 3, Mrs. Whalen abstained.**

**Mrs. Spaulding, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Boutin voted for the motion.**

**Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion.**

Discussion: There's no statutory basis for Action Memo. Setting bad precedent that if a board member so chooses to put something into a policy and can get the support of the board, you can put anything you want in a policy. Unnecessary step, cumbersome, and creates a duplication of effort. We can add items at the beginning of the meeting and ask for future items at the end of the meeting, unnecessary extra effort. The memo should not be part of the policy.

Benefits - information summarized, saves on a lot of questions and assists with the length of discussions, it can be changed, give historical context for items, a clean quick summary of items.

Ms. Canning stated this is the first reading, there will be a second reading and she will take from the board the feedback and come back with another draft form for next time. Hoping where it says links and attachments, it would be great if we could just plug a link in there so you can click on that link instead of having lots of paper in your report. Will links stay as they are at the time attached or do they change and update when the document is changed?

Mr. Boutin shared that he emailed a response from Mr. Toohey on May 3rd, page 10 & 11 of the PDF contains the legal opinion. "There's nothing state in open meeting law or Robert's Rules of Order that prohibits the use of a form to submit proposed agenda items". "The form would aid the public in understanding what is being considered by the board at a meeting." "The board can vote to adopt the use of the action item, briefing memo template for proposed agenda items."

Mr. Boutin reminds the agenda is proposed and becomes the agenda at the meeting when the board approves it. At that time, a board member can add an item to the agenda and requires majority vote. He thinks it's beneficial and took a comment regarding VSBIT..Mr. Reil called **Point of Order** - Chair is not supposed to participate in debate which is what you would essentially be doing because we have a motion on the floor so you participating would be participating in debate. Mr. Boutin asked the vice-chair to preside so he could finish his comment. Mr. Cecchinelli agreed. Mr. Boutin felt the memo would have been beneficial with VSBIT as it would have had what VSBIT stands for and would have given some context, this is an annual thing, etc.

### **7.3 Facilities Projects Update/Solar Credits**

Included in packet was a report from Mr. Evans concerning 2024 Summer Projects and Mrs. Perreault provided data related to the solar project overview.

#### **Project Update**

Mr. Reil stated a lot of these items are not on 5-year Capital Plan. Requested specific reports on big projects. Storm Water was on target but behind schedule because of some of the last minute permitting that was a hold up. HVAC project winding up and can be discussed in a future meeting. Gym roof cost, numbers are estimates but there's nothing listed at all for that. BC gym floor refinishing is done annually. BC roof 98.5% done, finish putting the skylights in and there's a delay in the delivery forcing them to do the work on the weekends. Mr. Reil asked about BT floor tiles for \$20,000; warrant purchase \$30,000. Does that mean it's ongoing and we're doing 10 more? Mr. Evans will check that. BT maintenance garage overhead door was undersized. Larger door installed to allow for parking of the dump truck when loaded with salt so the salt doesn't freeze. Internalize oil changes and a lot of repairs, on the 5-year plan under exterior doors. Mr. Reil added the door was old but functioning. Probably not going to get a return on the cost and \$27,000 could have been used elsewhere.

Stormwater, indicate on the report what part of that money is grant/general fund. Little more detail then just exterior door needed.

Discussion ensued between Mrs. Leclerc and Mr. Evans regarding the 5-year plan, Mrs. Spaulding called **Point of Order** asking for this to be put on a future agenda item. Mrs. Leclerc has additional question, inaudible comment from Mrs. Spaulding, Mrs. Leclerc

called **Point of Order**. Roof replacement of \$546, you did that in two parts? It totals \$607,000 but listed as \$546. (\$387 plus \$386 listed).

Thank you to Mr. Evans and his crew for keeping our schools clean, operating, well-maintained, and open. Last spring there were several weeks in May where schools all around Vermont were closing because their buildings were failing and students could not attend school. Agency of Education estimates that Vermont has the second oldest building stock in the country, also estimate in next few years school buildings will... Mr. Reil called **Point of Order** (Ms. Reynolds cont'd) need \$6 billion in improvements. Ended with a huge thank you to our buildings and facilities crew for keeping our buildings open so our students are not interrupted. They're not missing school.

Storm Water Mitigation—Friends of Winooski grant monies to help with a preliminary design for Barre Town School. Grant funding for all three schools to do the design phase of their project. We applied for and were preliminarily approved for the second phase of construction funding for those two other schools. It will be next summer and 90% funded; we'll pay 10% of what those costs. Is this million dollars typical of a summer list? Yes, plus or minus. A little scaled back, knowing we don't have an approved budget. These are basic necessity projects.

Saturday, the SHS building will be closed to remove a rooftop unit to readjust some of the curving. It is planned by design to do this when school is not in session.

### **Solar Credits**

Third format on solar credits in 3 years. Figure out which format is the best one and stick with it for comparing. We don't budget solar fees in line-by-line budget. The line has nothing there and the solar credits we get are netted out in the electricity lines. Why can't those be their own line, the credit and the cost, and let the system do the work? Ms. Canning will look into it. Barre Town solar stuff has had issues and that solar contract is the only school that pays a fixed price every month. Can that be renegotiated? We wait until end of every year (June) for a reconciliation and it's September before we know if Barre Town came out okay or not. Ms. Canning will review.

Revenue report has Green Mountain Power Solar Energy rebate of \$48,907 but none of these credits that you have are in the revenue. Add all the schools it's \$277,000. Net Power savings has another dollar assigned to that. Should the credits all be going into revenue and then the net power savings as accounted as something different. Novus Solar payments, 12 months, July \$10,196, \$17,000, and BC \$12,120. Are those payments? What are those payments in connection with this? Mr. Evans shared we pay a monthly fee to belong to Solar Consortium guaranteed a certain percentage of savings throughout the year. When all said and done we will save a little more than what we paid in. Novus Solar fees are they embedded in the bill from the company? Ms. Canning has noted questions. Listing of the Novus LLCs, Pine Hill Solar, Are those the actual locations? Contract with BSU and SHS is the oldest contract associated with one of the newest solar sites. How does that work?

Five minute break taken at 7:56 p.m.

### **7.4 Community Responses**

String of emails that went out and a response went to a committee member but the rest of the board wasn't included on it. We didn't have any idea what was going on and if this was responded to. Community member email sent 3 times and no response. Looking at procedures, being that our committees are inactive it relies on the board chair to be responsible for responding and that all board members be included in the response per the procedure. Any response, acknowledgment that we've received your email, and tentatively we're working on it, something. Ms. Reynolds shared that an individual Board member took it upon themselves to respond to the community member which is not in our procedure. Need a discussion about what happens if someone oversteps. Mr. Boutin reminded technically, information coming from the board should be through the board chair. This case had a hiccup issue which we're all aware of and Mr. Cecchinelli did respond to it, apologize for the delay in the response, and we'll try to do better next time.

### **7.5 Board Retreat**

Suggested by Mrs. Leclerc, offering herself up and a couple other board members to put heads together and come up with a Board Retreat plan. Could have discussion offline and then send to whole board for input. Ms. Canning connected with Tracy and took up the areas that the board was thinking about and there's some ideas but she'd be happy to work with a subcommittee of people to go over what we discussed in preparation for the next meeting. Ms. Reynolds supports a subcommittee, board professional development is very important. Reiterated again that she preferred there to be a moderator and for the retreat to be recorded. Ms. Canning will work with Mrs. Leclerc and Ms. Reynolds.

## **8. Old Business**

None

## **9. Committee Reports**

### **9.1 Curriculum Committee: Met September 4, 2024**

Mrs. Farrell shared there was a solid discussion about this committee and what the expectations are. What the anticipated needs may be? What do we want to accomplish? With that discussion the piece missing in all the committees is that it lacks particular charge. The

first brick in the foundation for our committee should be a policy dealing with the curriculum committee and what its actions should be. Suspending until November, during that time look at what is our charge, know to support the board, to be an ambassador to the community, to have financial alignment with the administrations in the board as far as curriculum is concerned, to advise the board in making informed decisions about Curriculum and instruction, and to be accessible and understandable. Link between what it is the Curriculum Committee, the Board, and the educational community, what that does to link to the strategic plan. During the time until November and example policy will be created to have the committee have direction and value and to be able to focus on the work it needs to do.

Mrs. Spaulding thinks it's the board that sets the charge for committees and not committees setting a charge for themselves. Suggesting the board discuss a charge for each committee. Mrs. Leclerc thinks each committee comes up with it's own charge, advises the board on it, and the board can review it. Doesn't think the board is going to be able to work on these committees and come up with a charge on their own. Let the committees figure it out and then we can tweak it if needed. Ms. Reynolds feels we need to address the fact that some board members are not on committees and some are on multiple. This idea of talking about committees is very complex, and I think the charge for the committees should come from the board. We should give direction instead of asking them for direction and then deciding if we're going to approve it or not.

#### **10. Round Table**

- Mrs. Farrell - Echoed Mr. Watkins on today of all days isn't just the folks who were lost on September 11th but is the ongoing challenges of those who were involved in any kind of a rescue or any kind of work at the pit during that time. We're now seeing 20 years later the ramifications of that. Many people here in the northeast went there and we've lost them.
- Mrs Leclerc - Also acknowledged the significance of today was 23 years ago that this tragic event occurred and it altered our course of history. We need to never ever forget and need to remember those who lost their lives and their families.
- Mr. Grant - Thinking about September 11th a lot today because 23 years ago when I found out I was 7 years old, in my second grade classroom and it was my teacher that had to tell everyone. I've been thinking about it a lot knowing I have to come here tonight, it's really this interesting moment thinking about how our teacher had to keep us calm while explaining such a tragic event to a room full of second graders. Makes me appreciative of the teachers I had growing up and what our teachers continue to do for our students and all sorts of current events that continue to happen.
- Mrs. Spaulding - I had a good friend who died at the Pentagon on September 11th and the day continues to hold a lot of sadness, anger, and frustration. I feel like there are a lot that, as many have said, we can't ever forget. There are families who are still struggling with a loss of loved ones. Reminder to people to vote. If you have an absentee ballot I encourage you to drop it off. Not sure what your mail is like but I'm getting mail twice a week at my house and business. Encourage not putting in mailbox because it might not get there. Bring it to the town or city clerk's office and drop it off. If you're not able to do that I even dropped it off on the day of. I have an absentee ballot and I just put it in the box in Barre City. It's easy, fast and it's one question. You can do it and we appreciate you for participating.
- Ms. Canning - There's literally a drop off. You don't even need to get out of your car. I had a visitor this week, Lyman Amsden. I started my career as a superintendent when he was in Burlington. I know Linda very well. We were Special Ed Directors when she was also in her position. Don't know if you're aware of this but Lyman brought some grant money to you. There's been a fund put aside where there are decisions made to provide that money to schools. Not something to be used in the general fund. It's used to expand learning opportunities. He mentioned he'd really like to see us expand on some afterschool programs. I was really happy to accept that from him today and we'll be working with the principals to design how to use that in enrichment ways for students afterschool.
- Mr. Boutin - Echoed sentiments about 911. Very important to remember. Sentiments about the budget on Tuesday, September 17th. It's way past the time to mail them back and more than likely the ballots will not make it. Highly encourage folks to drop them off or come to the polling areas on Tuesday, Barre Town School and Barre Auditorium. People can bring their ballots in. If you can't get it there you can call someone as long as they don't pick up more than 25, it's okay. Vote and let folks know if you need help. There's lots of people out there that have offered rides to the polling booth. I really hope folks come and support the budget so we can move on.

#### **11. Future Agenda Items**

None

#### **12. Next Meeting Dates**

September 25, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

October 9, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

#### **13. Executive Session**

**13.1** Student Matter 1 VSA 313 (a)(7)

**13.2** FOIA Request Update 1 VSA 313 (a)(6)

**13.3** Parent-Attorney-Client Communication 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)

Mrs. Farrell made a motion for findings, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, motion passed unanimously.

**Mr. Grant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, to enter into an executive session to discuss student matter, FOIA, and Parent-Attorney-Client communication, inviting the superintendent. Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Boutin recused himself. Mrs. Leclerc was not present for the vote.

Following information provided by the Board Clerk

**Motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to exit executive session at 8:44 p.m., motion passed unanimously.**

**14. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Grant seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:44 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Tina Gilbert*