

**BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet  
September 25, 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  
Jamie Evans, Director of Facilities  
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources  
Laurie Smith, Asst. Director of Special Services  
Denise Maurice, Principal

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Bern Rose, Brodey Priddy, Cassandra Demarais, Chris Moran, Christie Omodeo, Christine Parker, David Delcore - Times Argus, Ed Patterson, Eirene Mavodones, Lindsey Wells, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet, Raylene Meunier, Rep. Peter Anthony, Sarah Hill, Shara Vitagliano, Sharon Jacobs, Steven Thompson, Tyler Watkins.

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Mr. Boutin, called the Wednesday, September 25, 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 protocols. Present Administrators and each Board member stated their name.

**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**

**Mrs. Farrell made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to approve the agenda as presented; the motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda**

**4.1 Public Comment**

Mr. Watkins - It's National Suicide Prevention Month. He provided a handout from the Department of Health - Annual Suicide Mobility and Mortality Report—only the pages of the age groups for kids who attend the district. Mr. Watkins shared details and a list of top resources. There are plenty of free resources out there for the public, whether you have insurance or not.

Ms. Van Vliet, Thank you to our community. Shout out to our support staff, parents, educators, and behavior interventionists. They work with some of our most intensive needs students and have the most direct contact with them during the day, more than any other staff member. Your work does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

Ms. Mavodones, I just want to say thank you for all of the hard work people did to get the budget passed. The teachers are really happy about that. Thank you so much.

**4.2 Student Voice**

Brodey Priddy - Student Council - Homecoming, Day on Saturday, homecoming parade, this was the biggest parade we've had in four years. Barre Partnership involved help from the fire and police departments which without them would be impossible to do this year.

We had four floats, each made by each class, their student council, and their class officers, along with the band and JROTC program. The homecoming football game that night. The team had a good game, and the band performed their annual halftime show. Seeing everyone participate in Spirit Week, all were really happy to just take part in something that was fun and light hearted. The mentoring program we started with Dream last year is continuing this year, and we have a new group of freshmen, about 25 new freshmen. I know that this year, we're excited to keep that going. Had our first Pep Rally this past Friday, which, as always, was a success. Students had fun with eating competitions, and we played life-size hungry, hungry hippos.

## **5. Consent Agenda**

### **5.1 Regular Meeting Minutes - September 11, 2024.**

### **5.2 Warrant Approval: September 12, 2024, September 19, 2024**

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to approve the consent agenda with amendments, motion passed unanimously.**

Regular minutes September 11 - Correction 7.2 Discussion: change bad president to bad precedent.

Warrant Questions:

- SEA Staff transporting kids—Are there issues? If transporting in one's own vehicle, does it fall under the school's insurance? Ms. Canning agreed they do, but secondary insurance would be theirs.
- SD Associates ESYBI Services - Quantity of 18 per 10,000, what is 18?
- Visual Edge IT - Entry for copiers at each building, booked to supplies. Are those lease payments or toner and paper? We have lines for those so what's booked in supplies?
- 9/19 warrant Cooper Mechanical—Heating pipes. Was the capital concrete charge part of this? Mr. Evans shared that it was separate and unexpected, but it's part of this project.
- Green Mountain Behavior Consultants—Look at volume and divide it by the quantity; it's a significant number. Can we leverage that spend and negotiate a rate, or do we pay the rate they say they've got? Ms. Canning—Right now, we're paying the rate we've got. However, there are some ideas in the motion to look at quality as well as cost.
- Flood damage - Went over a lot. Why such a big mess? Mr. Evans - The flood damage overflowed the entire field. The track and the softball field were heavily damaged. The material to replace it with wasn't available, and we had to go with another material. To install that material scrape down all the material on top of the track, as well as the softball field. So a lot of man hours on that equipment to clean and trucking expense, the materials, and labor. That's the majority of the reason why it went far over. Hopefully, we'll get the 75% reimbursement from FEMA again. VSBIT gave us some reimbursement. VSBIT gave us a total of around \$50,000. A portion is given upfront, and then once we do the work and provide proof of payment, they will give us the remaining amount.
- Times Argus—posting for asbestos management. Advertisements. What is that? Mr. Evans—We're required to post public notice of management plans.
- On July 24th - emergency status - estimate about \$70,000. When you say emergency status, is there a policy? Does the school have a policy or a protocol that you follow to state that you're in emergency status? Mr. Evans did say at that meeting not to hold your hat on the \$70,000. I'm trying to give you some sort of ballpark figure, but that was before we knew that material wasn't available to repair the track and softball field. Mrs. Leclerc - Wondering if we should wait to really look at the situation instead of going by what people said to you and assuming. Where's the money coming from? Mr. Evans - Following the same practice as last year, being consistent. We put it in a general budget with the expectation of up to 75% reimbursement. I believe they created a separate line item for this to track the funding. Mr. Evans was asked to provide a report at some point to break down exactly what the reimbursements were from VSBIT and FEMA and our bottom line expenses after the reimbursements.

## **6. Principal Monthly Reports**

### **6.1 BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA**

Questions were raised and answered regarding links in the reports, the inability to find an athletic director in the BC report—look at one for the district instead of individual per building, and No Cell to Bell—it is going well, finding kids more focused. Compared to last year, teachers feel it is going really well. Most parents have been very supportive. New technology for medical devices on cell phones is considered, and access is allowed. More info was requested about PBIS. Behavioral statistics can be discussed but not monthly in reports. Put on the next agenda for more information, and if the full board would like a report, then Ms. Canning can provide it.

## **7. Current Business**

### **7.1 Debrief Budget Vote**

Ms. Canning, along with board members, thanked the entire community for allowing us to turn the page, move forward, and pass the budget. Going forward. I plan on having budget conversations with each of the faculties and being open to parent feedback. It's more of a listen-and-learn tour, not engaging in a dialogue but truly trying to understand where people are coming from. Invited a board

member or two to join. I'm interested to know how you think things went. What went well? What could we improve on going forward? Including community engagement because that was something I tried to target a little bit more intentionally.

- Municipal votes moved to May; the school district was the only item on the ballot in March. Consider sending a ballot out to every registered voter.
- Superintendent messages were gentle reminders about the importance of the day and were appreciated
- The superintendent provided a calm environment. Everyone worked collaboratively to reduce the budget from 12% to 7.5%, which was a win for everyone.
- It is time for us to all move forward, work together, and focus on ensuring these funds are used efficiently to support our students, staff, and programs. We should have our programs looked at to make sure that we're getting results out of the programs that we have in place.
- Need some real significant data on - What do we own? What's in storage? Why do we need certain things? Software, book, equipment needs? Put that information up front instead of having to explain it, after the fact, after the budget. Know what we need to be suited to have our students be successful.
- Some issues with confusion around terms used in education funding. Maybe we could make that less confusing. Would like to see all funds in a budget, including the stuff we don't see, like grants.

Ms. Canning wrapped it up by addressing some of the redundancies. Change is hard, but with the board's support, she will look at that. Those kinds of decisions will not be easy; it will be a hard conversation. She's happy to do the hard work and provide the data, and she's looking at those programs. She promised it would happen to the best of her ability, but she needs the board's support to understand the impact of looking at redundancy. This year, the special education program is going to be completely monitored by the agency of education. That will give us some compliance, cost, and quality information.

## **7.2 Board Retreat Proposals**

- Possible location: Millstone Celebration Bar, available in October
- Possible Catering: Locarno's Food - light fair - sandwiches, salads, drinks.
- Suggested Agenda Items: Governance Standards, Robert's Rules, Committees
- VSBA: The only dates available are October 30th and November 6th. It would be a two-person team costing around \$300 for Governance Standards and Robert's Rules. Committees discuss amongst themselves.
- Time: 4:30 p.m.? Two to three hours for presentation which would be interactive with questions.
- Tracy Wrend: Suggested Governance—It's going to be a self-evaluation of 14 different steps. As a board, each individual would review those steps and rate where we are with that. From that, we would come up with our goals. Board practice among community engagement-focused suggested. Cost of \$150 an hour and mileage.
- NESDEC doesn't provide any of the above. Customize what is wanted, and they get into strategic planning, people working with people to resolve issues, etc.
- We do it ourselves. Maybe it's a potluck. We've got members on this board with knowledge and skills that could probably lead us in board governance and Robert's Rules of Order. Or not have a retreat.
- Suggestions: A scribe so all board members can participate equally, Video recording, mediator; many like the VSBA option, not in favor of a self-designed program, not in favor of spending money for a facility, fine with potluck and recording,

Mrs. Leclerc will send all this information to board members tomorrow.

**Mr. Reil made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to go with the VSBA on October 30th for Governance, Roberts Rules, and potential committees at 4:30 p.m., motion passed unanimously.**

**Mrs. Spaulding moved to amend the first motion by adding an audio recording, which was seconded by Mr. Grant. The motion passed 7 to 1; Mrs. Leclerc voted against it.**

Location and food will be discussed at a future meeting.

## **8. New Business**

### **8.1 VEHI Proxy - Dental and Health [ACTION]**

**Motion made by Mrs. Leclerc, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, to appoint the superintendent as the authorized representative to appear and vote at VEHI's meeting and authorize the chair to sign both documents. Motion passed unanimously**

### **8.2 BCEMS Propane Tank Replacement [ACTION]**

Multi-year agreement with free tank replacement. Barre City school built in 1995, we have four underground propane tanks, that the school owns. the four underground propane tanks. That service is the kitchen needs, as well as the backup heating source for the building. Irving performed tests and determined that two tanks no longer passed that test. We need to replace these two tanks. For a project like that, you have to follow the current building codes of today and not from 1995. So, based on the size of those tanks. Approximate to the building, today's safety codes, and all that. Can we put these tanks in the same location? A couple of options were proposed but both would be costly and a hardship. Alternatively, they would dig up the four tanks, install eight 1000-gallon tanks in the same location, put chain link fencing around all of that, and then guardrail for physical protection. Irving Oil would own that service and be their responsibility. If for some reason, we change vendors, the new vendor would accept responsibility/ownership. The project would cost \$123,000 to excavate the old tanks, install the new tanks, and do all the hook-up, all the fencing, and all the guardrails. Turnkey project, start to finish. If the board recommends, we can ask Irving Oil to contribute 20 plus thousand dollars towards this project so that we're at an even one hundred thousand dollars that we're responsible for making this project happen. We have to replace these tanks, because these tanks also supply, our secondary heating source. They have requested a multi-year contract, it's a fair ask of them, and helps them recoup some of the 20,000 plus being contributed toward the project. Irving is under the state contract

The cost is 123,272.74. When we go back to Irving, we'll ask them to Give us the \$23,272.74 Funding would come from the capital reserve. Share grant from the State of VT due to last year's flooding, which helps with upgrading woodchip boilers

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding to authorize the administration to go forward with the replacement of the propane tanks at Barre City School for no more than \$100,000 out of the Capital Reserve Fund along with a multi-year contract with Irving propane, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, motion passed 6 to 2. Mr. Reil voted against the motion, and Mrs. Leclerc abstained.**

Mr. Reil referenced the bid law, saying we must go out to bid. The bid law doesn't state anything about emergency exceptions. It states that when the cost exceeds \$40,000, a school board or supervisory union shall publicly advertise and invite three or more bids from persons capable of providing items. In excess of \$40,000, shall means must.

AOE will grant a waiver for emergency status. and that was being submitted today.

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to Amend the first motion, which was contingent upon approval of the waiver for emergency status from AOE. The motion passed unanimously.**

The board took a 5-minute break

## 9. Old Business

### 9.1 VSBA Resolutions

Chair suggested the board review one by one.

#### 1. Residential and Non-Residential Property Tax Rates

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding to support the recommendation to pass as a continuing resolution, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, motion passed 5 to 3. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.**

#### 2. Data Collection and Reporting

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding to support, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, motion passed 5 to 3. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.**

#### 3. Artificial Intelligence

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding to support the recommendation to pass as a continuing resolution, seconded by Mr. Grant, motion passed 5 to 4. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell and Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion. Mr. Boutin voted for the motion.**

#### 4. Cell Phones in School

**Motion made by Mr. Grant to support the recommendation to pass as a continuing resolution, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, motion passed 7 to 1. Mr. Reil voted against the motion.**

#### 5. Secretary of Education

**Motion made by Mr. Cecchinelli to support the recommendation to pass as a continuing resolution, seconded by Mr. Grant, motion failed 4 to 5. Mr. Reil Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Whalen, and Mr. Boutin voted against, Mrs. Leclerc abstained.**

#### 6. Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding to take the board recommendation as presented for I.J, I.N., I.O., II.U., V.E, II.Q., V.A.A, V.F., III.B., III.E., IV.G., I.J, I.N, I.O, II.U, V.E., seconded by Mr. Grant, motion failed 4 to 5. Mr. Reil Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Whalen, and Mr. Boutin voted against with a decision to read each individually.

- a. I.J - Timely and Reliable Information & Implementation

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to approve the board recommendation, motion passed unanimously.**

b. I.N - Governance Standards

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to approve the board recommendation, motion passed 7 to 1. Mr. Reil voted against the motion.**

c. I.O - Collaboration to Benefit all Students

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Grant to approve the board recommendation, motion failed 5 to 4, Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Whalen, and Mr. Boutin voted against the motion.**

d. II.U - Separation of Church and State

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the board recommendation. The motion passed 6 to 2. Mr. Reil and Mrs. Leclerc voted against it.**

e. V.E - Universal Meals

**Motion made by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding to approve the board recommendation, motion passed 7 to 1. Mrs. Leclerc voted against the motion.**

f. I.E.- Roles of the State of Education

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the board recommendation. The motion failed 5 to 4. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Whalen, and Mr. Boutin voted against the motion.**

g. II.Q - Emotional Wellness of Students

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, motion failed due to lack of a second.**

h. V.A.A. - Social and Medical Services Provided in Schools

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli, to approve the board recommendation. The motion passed 5 to 3. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.**

i. V.F - Youth Mental Health

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the board recommendation. The motion passed 6 to 2. Mr. Reil and Mrs. Whalen voted against it.**

j. III.B - Student Assessment

**Motion made by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli to approve the board recommendation, motion passed 5 to 3. Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell, and Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.**

k. III.E - Pre-Kindergarten

**Mrs. Spaulding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the board recommendation. The motion failed 5 to 4. Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. Whalen, and Mr. Boutin voted against the motion.**

l. IV.G - Health Care for School Employees

**Motion made by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding to approve the board recommendation, motion passed unanimously.**

## **9.2 Second and Final Reading of Board Meeting, Agenda Preparation & Distribution (A20) [ACTION]**

**Motion made by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Grant to approve the second and final reading of A20, motion passed 6 to 2. Mr. Reil and Mrs. Leclerc voted against the motion.**

## **10. Round Table**

- Ms. Canning - Board Chair/Vice Chair forum for next 6 weeks every six weeks. Available on a webinar at 9:00 a.m in VSBA notes. Reach out to Tina if registration needed. School Board Chair training in lake morey on October 23 and 24, training great for any board member. Great Pep Rally at SHS
- Mrs. Whalen - Happy to have a budget in place that we can move on and start doing some other work
- Mrs. Farrell - Attended homecoming parade and the crowd downtown was spectacular and the parade was greater than spectacular. It was a lot of fun. Concern of mine is on major streets seeing lots of cars that are passing buses when red lights are on and the stop sign out. In particular the one type of bus that gets passed are the little white truck buses. People need to look for the lights on top of little white buses, suburbans and know you have to stop. Same as the big yellow bus.
- Mr. Cecchinelli - Attended parade and the football game, had a really good time.
- Mr. Grant - Day the school budget vote I participated in the painting of the Brook Street School Mural project on the corner of Brook Street and North Seminary Street. A lot of fun I believe over 80 people participated in the painting and they had a little celebration opening today. Co-worker Ian, our children's librarian played the bagpipes. Bernadette Rose wanted to let people know that the Montshire Science Museum offers discounts. There's a \$3 entry for EBT SNAP or Medicaid recipients.
- Mrs. Spaulding - Thanked everyone who came out to vote for the budget. Thank all the people who worked really hard to get information out to the community whether through lit drop, honk and wave, posting a sign, phone whatever it may have been. Thank you for participating if for the fourth time or first time, thank you. We will need your support again very soon.
- Mr. Boutin - Thank you to community for coming out and voting on the budget. The Barre Town Elementary school Open House is October 2nd from 5-6:30 p.m. School Pictures at Barre Town will happen on October 1 and September 30th. At National Life we're supposed to submit our pictures, anybody would be interested in us sending our school pictures to the office to have it posted online. Any school picture - Guess which one of the School Board members it is?

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

Bring back merging of the resolutions - Failed for lack of second. (Sonya)

Appoint a voting proxy for the VSBA Business Meeting (Sonya)

Old Parking Lot Items - Focus on and start adding to agendas (Nancy)

Update on Vendor Payments (Nancy)

Esser Financials (Nancy)

Monthly Financials (Nancy)

Organization Chart (Nancy)

Ms. Canning discussed the importance of requests coming from the full board versus individual members. Mrs. Leclerc added to the conversation. Mrs. Spaulding called **Point of Order** as this is a future agenda item and if we want to talk about it we should put it on as an agenda item or someone should make an action memo because we just had Mr. Reil called **Point of Order** reminding the chair he needed to address it, not someone calling out point of order and starts talking. You need to ask what their issue is and address it that's how its supposed to work. The chair returned to Mrs. Spaulding and asked what her point of order was, this is future agenda items and we should put it on a future agenda or someone could make an action memo because we just passed that policy.

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

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

October 23, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

### **13. Executive Session**

None

### **14. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Grant seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Tina Gilbert*