

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
October 9, 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
Jamie Evans, Director of Facilities
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Denise Maurice, Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:

AJ Jones, Cass Lang, Cassandra Demarais, Chris Moran, David Delcore - Times Argus, Jackie Wheeler, Joelen Mulvaney, Josh Howard, Lindsey Wells, Lisa Liotta, Representative Peter Anthony, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet, Sarah Capron, Sarah Hill, Sharon Jacobs, Tyler Watkins.

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Boutin, called the Wednesday, October 9, 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 and held a Mindfulness Moment.

Mr. Boutin reviewed the norms and public comment protocols. Present Administrators, Board members, and the student representative stated their names.

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

Add under Executive Session 1 VSA 313 (a)(6); 1 VSA 313 (a)(7)

Table 6.2 Stipend Allocation

~~Add Breakfast Discussion; Add Agenda Preparation A20; 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)~~

Remove 6.3 ESSER Funding - Next meeting agenda.

Add action for number 9 meeting conflicts.

Mrs. Farrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the agenda with amendments; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Grant made a motion to amend the motion to approve the agenda removing the stipend allocation agenda item, seconded by Ms. Reynolds, motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Leclerc made a motion to amend the current motion to add an executive session 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), add breakfast discussion, and A20 Board Agenda Preparation, seconded by Mr. Reil, the motion failed 5 to 3.

Mr. Reil, Mrs. Leclerc, and Mrs. Whalen voted to approve the motion.

Mr. Cecchinelli, Mrs. Spaulding, Mr. Grant, Ms. Reynolds, and Mrs. Farrell voted against the motion.

Mr. Reil made a motion to remove 6.3 ESSER Funding and add action to meeting conflicts, seconded by Ms. Whalen. The motion passed 6 to 2; Mr. Grant and Ms. Reynolds voted against it.

4. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

4.1 Public Comment

Tyler Watkins - October 1 - BCEMS Chorus led by Cechak and 27 students were asked to perform at the state historical society for an official state function where They sang "Hail to Vermont" and "These Green Mountains." Also, 17 students from the high school. Just a couple quick. Facts about the music From the US Department of Education, students who participate in a music group at school reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances, which include tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. They all score higher on reading, spelling, and math tests. And they. allow students to participate in extracurricular activities. I also want to. point out that several of these kids have IEPs or behavior plans, and those kids wouldn't be able to socialize, perform, or participate if it weren't for programs like this, So, I just wanted to say congratulations to both. Music. Directors. Happy early birthday to the Navy, October 13th. Senator Sanders and Welch were in attendance at this performance, and I'll send in a video clip and pictures for them to publish on social media.

4.2 Student Voice

None

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Regular Meeting Minutes - September 25, 2024.

Under VSBA section - add titles of what the motions were on

5.2 Warrant Approval: September 25, 2024, October 3, 2024

On a motion by Ms. Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Grant to approve the consent agenda with an amendment to the September 25, 2024 minutes, the motion passed unanimously.

Warrant Questions:

- \$40,000 oven and \$8,000 mixer. Ms. Canning shared that the oven and mixer were in the last packet as future purchases. The Food Service surplus was large, and you can only invest it back into the Food Service Program for equipment. A report of all money spent on the program and why requested. Kitchens has been up to snuff, and now we're replacing equipment. What's happening with old equipment that isn't too old? Concerned about how much money is being spent
- Food items and other items seem to be miscoded. Why is there not a specific line? Supplies have become a catchall for telephones, food, etc. Concerns about classroom supplies and budgeting. People need to understand supplies aren't supplies. It's a little bit of everything.
- Refrigerator purchase through SHS Project Graduation. Is that community donations and school matching? Is it a separate account? Mrs. Maurice, SHS Principal, shared it's all outside funds in a separate account under associated funds: same system and regulations regarding being available for auditing, receipts, etc. SHS does not have a line item for Project Graduation. Organized by parents and tables at games to raise money. Thinks it's probably equipment for the concession stand. It's not school equipment; its purpose is for groups like this to use that building to raise money. That organization makes decisions on spending. Mrs. Leclerc would like verification on that.
- Novus Solar—The contracts were negotiated over a decade ago, and renegotiating them may be a good idea. Given the generous amount of money we're spending on them, we should have some say in why they're raising the prices.

6. New Business

6.1 Appoint Voting Proxy - VSBA Business Meeting

Mr. Reil nominated Mrs. Leclerc as the voting proxy for the VSBA Business meeting, seconded by Ms. Whalen, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Grant, nominated Mrs. Farrell as the voting proxy alternate for the VSBA Business meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2 Stipend Allocation

6.3 ESSER Funding

6.4 Monthly Expenditure Report

Ms. Canning asked if this report is in a format the board finds helpful or do they have suggestions for improvement. Specific questions on the report will need to be deferred to Mrs. Perreault, who isn't present.

- Concerns about lines being in the negative already. Include information so we can understand why.
- F20 requires that any material deviations from the spending plan be explained.
- From now on, the monthly report for the previous month will be at the beginning of each month. There will be no overlap in months on any report. Excel format is preferred over PDF.
- No Revenue report, thinking some things were discussed as quarterly - Revenue Report, Balance Sheet.
- Financial reports for grants - The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight - probably quarterly.

- The Business Manager used to provide a report explaining some of the larger items that have variances.
- Solar \$160,000 negative. Is that the credits?

6.5 Solar Project - Next to SEA Building

Regarding land behind the SEA building. Encore company would like to create a quite extensive solar array. The edge of the property has an easement that this entity has the right of way to access property that we own to access their property. They've applied for permits and designed the project. As the landowners, they now need our permission to allow them to do this. The Superintendent, Business Manager, Facilities Director and the district's attorney have met with the Encore group to discuss. Mr. Evans requested the power lines and poles be underground, trying to preserve some of the integrity and aesthetics of the property. The district received a draft form of their confirmatory easement deed agreeing with underground power lines. Power poles will only be at each end. This property is their property, they're going to develop it and put a solar array there, and grant us a monetary gift of \$10,000 to the school district and cover the attorney fees. Ms. Canning has been working with Lynn, Lynn, Blackman & Toohey P.C. to create a legal agreement that the board will need to sign. No action tonight; information only. We will research any questions you have before moving forward.

Questions:

- Mrs. Farrell - Provided information. It's not a gift. They're buying this from us. So to give the assumption that it's a gift and their being kind, this really affects their business so that they can access their commercial entity. Has that strip of land been appraised for its value? It might be wise to have someone look at it and say, What's the value to us as the current owner, and what could it be over the years? According to this deed, it goes with the land every time it gets sold. It will be there whether we sell our piece or they sell their piece. Solar people change hands quite readily. How will the gravel road affect drainage and our parking lot/green space? Do we have a copy of the first warranty deed mentioned that is bound to Elmer? How far back did they go?
- Mr. Reil - The property south of Premier Properties is an undeveloped lot. Why wouldn't they put a right of way where there's nothing rather than something? This suggestion would impact two existing properties that are used. Move down the road a little bit and leave us out of it.
- Mrs. Leclerc - What kind of impact will this have on the property beside us? Mr Evans - It won't affect any of our future renovations or additions. Won't change our ability to put in a parking lot or other function. Ms. Canning added arrays won't be visible from the school. Mrs. Leclerc shared concerns about disruption for kids. Ms. Canning assured her that conversations are happening and that they know we're trying to keep school, so we will coordinate as many opportunities as possible when the kids are not there.
- Mrs. Whalen—Can this be achieved through a lease rather than a sale? A lease could be terminated, and everything could be returned as it was. They would still have the legal right to use the property. Any setbacks or potential development later wouldn't be an issue.

All questions will be provided to the attorney.

6.6 FY26 Budget Schedule

Ms. Canning and Mrs. Perreault created the schedule and have started meeting with each of the principals and will continue to do so over the next month. The first presentation to the board will be in November, and as many meetings as needed will be scheduled to reach an agreement. We'll talk more about committees when we have our retreat. At this point I'm recommending the budget go to the full board and not a Finance Committee. It will begin with a presentation from the superintendent in the next couple of weeks.

Board thoughts:

Include community engagement on this schedule.

Prefer to use the detailed version of the schedule.

Break out October and November and remove ESSER from the FY26 Budget schedule.

Discussion about the last budget cycle. What worked, what didn't.

Find a way to avoid repeating the same facts, answering the same questions, and maybe recording that information for folks to reference instead of wasting precious time reviewing it.

The chair jokingly wanted to ask Mr. Priddy if he knew what Festivus meant, which Mrs. Spaulding called a **Point of Order**.

7. Old Business

7.1 Merging of Three Resolutions

Looking for direction for our voting representatives for the VSBA meeting. The resolution was to merge those three resolutions into one resolution. The board approved two resolutions and didn't support or approve the first one. They're asking whether you support merging all three resolutions (Emotional Wellness of Students, Social and Medical Services Provided in Schools, and Youth Mental Health) into one.

The Chair read VSBA underlined resolution: In support of efforts to meet Vermont's Agency of Education's educational quality standards. The VSBA, urges the General Assembly in Congress to champion the health and well-being of Vermont's youth. Legislation must be enacted to ensure adequate funding for all mental health support services and programs. Further the VSBA advocates for an

approach that supports and protects Youth Mental health, through meaningful collaboration among the Agency of Education and Department of Mental Health, schools, designated agencies and other community partners.

VSBA was asking the board to approve removing those three resolutions and making them the resolution above.

Motion made by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to affirm the motion made at the last meeting, Mr. Reil rescinded the motion.

Motion made by Mr. Reil to reaffirm the decision made at the last meeting which was only to merge the second two items, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc. Motion passed

Mrs. Leclerc called the question, Mr. Reil seconded and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Spaulding called **Point of clarification**. When this comes to the delegates and is presented as one motion, I'm assuming our voting delegates will vote no because we didn't vote to merge them. The chair answered yes.

Ms. Reynolds asked a procedural question. The minutes were approved, and then we took action on something that was not reflected in them. Mr. Reil and Mrs. Leclerc called **Point of Order**. The matter on the table is concluded, and discussion ceases.

8. Round Table

- Mr. Grant - Monday through Friday, Aldrich Library will open an hour earlier. The new hours are 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
- Ms. Reynolds - Requested clarification again regarding the board approving minutes and acting on things not in the minutes. A separate conversation was requested.
- Ms. Canning - Recognitions and Appreciations - October 2nd was National Custodial Day. We made a big shout-out to the custodians and people who helped keep our buildings and grounds up and looking great. Met with Chief Vail to discuss hiring and SRO for Spaulding High School. He is having the same challenge because he can't fill the full police staff he's trying to hire. Decided to advertise specifically for an SRO, interested persons may be able to pick up extra hours on the police force. All schools have designated their safety teams and members. Monthly schedule for drills and team debriefings with a district meeting on October 17th. New requirement for conducting Behavior Threat Assessments. Administrators and local law enforcement partners are participating in training in October and November. Begun budget discussion with the faculty and visiting schools on October 22nd and November 5th. I am working on parent meetings for a night when there are no other events and would like board members to attend if able. Staff Development Day is Friday focusing on Curriculum and instructional planning, sprinkling in wellness opportunities. Public thanks to Melody Frank, Amanda Riggelman, and our principals for collaborating on this effort. Election Day discussion with Chief at Barre Town and thought is record numbers going to the voting booth that day and more staff will be available. Superintendents and Business Managers will be at a Killington conference this week focusing on best practices for budget development, healthcare costs, and updates on effective strategies for public engagement and communication.
- Mr. Reil - Tech Center is looking very close to home to build the next Tech Center in Barre Town and it didn't work. How can we let one of our best things move away, potentially two miles up the road? Why are we not doing everything we can to keep them here? This building has a capacity of 12 to 1500 students, and we have 400 students. This is a gem in Barre and we as a district and board should make it a priority to keep them here and find a space in this building. Should be a priority that we find a way to keep the Tech Center here in Barre, on our campus.
- Mrs. Leclerc - Circling back about Policy A20. It may clarify minutes, which is part of the agenda process. Board members directly ask about board business and are denied the option of having a discussion or getting information. Going into this budget season, get some things worked out about board members' requests and help provide as much information as requested. If we can't get information, is that when we start using a FOIA to get the needed information.
- Mrs. Farrell - Follow up on Mr. Watkins' presentation about students in music. Music is considered a foreign language because of the way it's set up. Students with musical experience are often far more successful in math and foreign languages. As we go through budgeting and curriculum, we need to be sure music is a very important part, not only for continued academics but certainly for opportunities in the field. Entertainment industry, news industry, wherever musical background is important. Still doing ALICE training? Ms. Canning stated a version of ALICE called OPTIONS. Reading Warrants, there are a lot of good books purchased for teachers. Do we have a library for teachers to access those? Ms. Canning will check into this. Some are outstanding and very important for our professionals to have access to those.
- Mr. Boutin - Photos are still a great idea, kids were able to get theirs done.

9. Next Meeting Dates

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

November 13, 2024, Spaulding High School Library/via Google Meet

Meeting Conflicts: November 27, 2024 - Thanksgiving Break **[ACTION]**

December 25, 2024 - Christmas Day

February 26, 2024 - Vacation Week

April 23, 2024 - Vacation Week

Suggested:

- Moving the first three meeting conflicts to the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. This accommodates all meetings and does not impact any vacation weeks. The new board that takes seats in March should decide on the April meeting. (Mr. Grant has a conflict on 3rd Wednesdays)
- Cancelling meetings on those dates. (Ms. Canning - We could, but would likely add another Wednesday to adopt a budget for January. We could do without meetings in either November or December or we could have two consecutive meetings. The retreat is on October 30th, so there are three meetings in October. Would need to be two consecutive weeks in November and December to avoid the third Wednesday. It's okay, but be aware of how that backs up with agendas. If we're trying to make budget decisions trying to make that adjustment for the following week, leaving a couple of days for your agenda is going to be a challenge.

Ms. Canning will return with a plan for the board to act on.

10. Executive Session

10.1 1 VSA 313 (a)(6)

10.2 1 VSA 313 (a)(7)

Motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to go into executive session to discuss 1 VSA 313 (a)(6) and 1VSA 313 (a)(7), inviting in the superintendent, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to exit executive session at 8:00 p.m., motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Grant to amend the statute used for executive session 1 VSA 313 (a)(6) to 1 VSA 313 (a)(10), motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Whalen, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Gilbert