

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
October 23, 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
Denise Maurice, Principal
Jody Emerson, Superintendent CVCC

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mark McDermott, Cassandra Demarais, Chantelle Micheli, Christine Parker, Darby Hiebert, David Delcore - Times Argus, J Guy Isabelle, June Babel, Mindy Woodworth, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet, Raylene Meunier, Sharon Jacobs, Steven Thompson

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Mr. Boutin, called the Wednesday, October 23, 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.

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

Add under Executive Session 12.2 Appointment or Employment or Evaluation of a Public Officer or Employee 1 VSA 313 (a)(3)

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

4. Executive Session

4.1 Confidential Attorney-Client Communication 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(F)

On a motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Board 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. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Grant, the Board unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session, with Ms. Canning, Mr. Evans, and Mr. McDermott in attendance, at 6:08 p.m. under the provisions of 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(F).

Motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to exit executive session at 6:19 p.m., motion passed unanimously.

5. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

5.1 Public Comment

Cassandra Demarais - Runs the Top Soccer Capital Regional program, an adaptive inclusive clinic for kids. Sent an email earlier with some pictures from their season. In Central Vermont, kids came from Danville, Waterbury, and the Barre area. Many thanks to the middle schoolers who were buddies for the season and have been for the last couple of seasons. They donate their time, receive community service hours, and they buddy one-on-one with the kids while they're playing and learning skills. Want to thank Ms.

Bushway from Barre City for donating some equipment for us to use. At the end of the season, we always have Spider-Man show up, and the kids love that. It's a blast. We actually asked the buddies this year to come and bring something to spice up their costumes, as they're the real heroes helping the program keep going. It is a volunteer opportunity for any of the high schoolers to do every fall. We'll reach out to the school. Probably in August, to let them know and share that information.

5.2 Student Voice

None

6. Consent Agenda

6.1 Regular Meeting Minutes - October 9, 2024.

Mr. Reil made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 9, 2024 as presented with the understanding that any unidentified minor errors or inaccuracies may be correctly revised at a later date as they are identified, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion - In the minutes, #3, second line, amend motion - change Mrs. Farrell to Mr. Grant.

6.2 Warrant Approval: October 10, 2024, October 17, 2024

On a motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Ms. Reynolds to approve the Warrants of October 10, 2024 and October 17, 2024, the motion passed unanimously.

Warrant Questions: Mr. Reil will email his questions to Ms. Canning since no one is present from the Business Office.

Mrs. Canning followed up about staff transporting students from the SEA program, which happens on a pretty regular basis. She's in discussion with the bus company to see if routes can be changed to accommodate.

7. Principal Monthly Reports

7.1 BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA

Trouble accessing the BCEMS report link as well as the ECO Instagram link. SHS Graphs were helpful. Mrs. Maurice confirmed that 86 students are the size of the senior class attending every day, all day. Why was BC Athletic Director filled if it's a duplicate position? Being discussed and planned for the next budget round. Many positive comments: nice to see education content and discussions from the building principals, 2500 people attended the open house at BT, shout-out to Bridgett Apfel for the very popular Book Fair, shout-out to BC and SHS things seem to be going really good. SHS Graph - 31 students from senior class attending CVCC, 29 Early College, and SEA has 6 seniors this year. That's awesome. More information was requested regarding the SEA Curriculum Program - Ms. Canning shared SEA Teachers are working in collaboration with high school teachers on several curriculum points and working on making the curriculum aligned, working to do more to collaborate rather than looking at separate entities. Why does SEA have an individual Principal if it's a division of Spaulding High School? Ms. Canning explained his role is Director and necessary to administer the administrative responsibilities. Education Quality Standard - full-time principal for every 10 staff members, legal requirement.

8. New Business

8.1 ESSER Funding

Going forward designate one meeting a month where department administrators attend. Look forward to the final Report for ESSER 3 to get a full picture and Mr. Evans and EEI providing a comprehensive accounting of the Spaulding project, which equates to over half the spending. Original guidance required we spend a certain amount on specific things. There should be financial reports from the district system showing a record of spending. September 30th deadline, but not reported until November. What's driving that? Monies are not being applied for FY25. Reviewing to understand what's been spent is fine but money is already spent. Request for more information on what the specific use of this funding was for.

8.2 Superintendent Goals

Goal 1 - Each school will have an updated Emergency Operating Plan that aligns with the requirements of Act 129

Why does it take 8 months to have evidence of practice drills and updated manuals? Ms. Canning explained every month we're required to have practice drills in certain areas, buildings have to have safety plan meetings, and the district has a coordinating meeting four times a year. Meetings are happening, and we are up to speed in all areas. Improving and aligning the new requirements of Act 129, which is the requirement districts have to follow to update their emergency operating plan. There's work to be done, but principals have jumped on scheduling their meetings and getting things back in order.

Goal 2 - I will create and implement a year-long budget development plan based on data and policies

Suggested using the Barre Town Municipal budget process as a model. Incredibly thorough, transparent, and effective. NESDEC is used by most. Historical enrollment for 10 years and Special Education review they'll conduct. Staff-based Budget training will be held at the end of the week. Ms. Canning, Mrs. Whalen, Mr. Garrett, and Mr. Boutin will attend.

Goal 3 - To support the School Board to implement good governance procedures

All should agree to help support the goals and be more enthused about a board assessment. Really get into Board Governance and explore that.

Goal 4 - To conduct a special education program review to determine cost and quality options

Review based on historical data, predictive data, categories serving, look at paid programs. Multi-tiered plan based on data.

Goal 5 - Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Work Plan will address Curriculum Design process, Assessment Data, and Reporting and Professional Development

The board is accustomed to getting certain reports quarterly. Ms. Canning assured the reports are in the work plan. Ms. Canning shared that the Curriculum Design Process is a PK-12 process that's common among all. Starting to align what we teach to our proficiencies to get clear about that. There's going to be a website launched in the next month or so and the plan will be visible on the website, one for staff and one for parents to see what is being taught at each grade level. Local assessments happen 3 times a year. There are also general assessments, and we have a way to flag students we might need to do progress monitoring for and then more in-depth diagnostic assessments to tease out what instructional strategy or skill is missing.

Goal 6 - We will develop a multi-tiered support system for social-emotional learning through the Project Aware grant

We have MTSS systems and we may have strayed from the original intent of some of these systems. PBIS really good stuff but we need one umbrella where we're coordinating these efforts in order to improve the programs for our kids, look at success through data, and align the staff to where the biggest need is. Project Aware Grant - Federally funded grant that is given to 3 to 5 school districts per year. We are the 2nd cohort of the state and have it for the next three years. Brings together services for mental health, resources from the Agency of Education, and other social services agencies in order to help us look at our three tiers for social-emotional learning. Ms. Canning offered a presentation at another board meeting about it.

On a motion by Mrs. Farrell, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc to approve the the superintendent's goals, the motion passed unanimously.

8.3 Future CVCC Discussion - Jody Emerson

The CVCC board adopted a vision that the Facilities Committee put forward last spring, and the vision, is that CVCC's state-of-the-art facility serves all eligible students in our region, staffed and resourced appropriately. This would be expanded capacity for increased enrollment versus the applicant percentage. They've been turning away about 200 students each year for the last few years. Increased Academic Achievement Through Full Day Programming in a full-day schedule. Pathways to Advanced Career Credentials talked about working towards an associate's degree in some of the programming. Strengthening partnerships with middle schools across the region to improve student access and eliminate barriers to participation. We've come through a process of thinking about what our needs are and what sort of programming we might include in the standalone center, and that gives us about 150,000 square foot building. Which isn't going to fit here. We wanted to engage in a conversation about what this looks like for everyone else and not harm each other in that process. Our current process is to slowly expand one or two programs each year until we can open the doors in 2029 to a new facility. That would mean a bond vote next November. Sending schools are extremely important, and we are extremely conscious of the fact that any decision that we make will, most certainly affect those sending schools. Message in the past is there is no space here and using an area location would require significant clean up and renovation. CVCC has identified B list properties in Barre Town that would be feasible. There are roles that we play in industry development and in adult education that people aren't seeing. Having its own identity is extremely important to the continuation and the public acceptance of a career center that isn't just an arm of any general education high school, it's a regional technical high school. Ms Canning will work with Ms. Emerson on their needs and bring a plan back to the board regarding the use of space to expand over the next few years.

Darby Hiebert shared her thoughts on budget cuts last year and listened to the board's dream. Where is this money coming from for your dreams? The Chair spoke about the funding not being connected to our school board. She responded that he was talking out of both sides of his mouth. Mr. Reil called a **Point of order**.

8.4 Request for Proposal - Annual Financial Audit

Motion made by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, to provide public notification of the RFP Annual Financial Audit, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: \$60 million plus is more like \$68 million. We should consider hiring a new audit firm every 3-5 years. The merge and a new chart of accounts were reasons the same firm remained in place. The date for bids will be changed since it falls in a vacation week. Ms. Canning will provide the board with the list of audit firms to which this is being sent.

9. Old Business

9.1 October 24 & 25 - VSA/VSBA - School Board/Superintendent Training

No discussion

9.2 Meeting Conflict Proposal

Modify November and December and leave February and April for a later date. Meet November 13, cancel November 27, and meet December 4th and December 19th.

Motion made by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Spaulding, to approve the superintendent's recommendation to modify the dates as described in the memo, motion passed 7 to 1, Mr. Reil voted against the motion.

9.3 Board Retreat

Motion made by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, to approve the superintendent's recommendation to approve the purchase of food from Locarnos and the location will be at the Barre Town Municipal Building for the Board Retreat, motion passed 7 to 1, Mrs. Spaulding voted against the motion.

Discussion: Why not at one of our buildings? Mrs. Leclerc followed what's been done in the past and found an off-site place.

10. Round Table/Superintendent Report

- Mr. Grant - Golden Dome Award Book Challenge. He will try to participate and if anyone would like any books come and get them from the Aldrich Library.
- Ms. Reynolds - Will also do the Golden Dome Challenge.
- Mrs. Spaulding - Watched that entire video about the Golden Dome books and was mesmerized. Wanted to read every single book for every single age or grade range. Count her in. Vermont Public had a great piece yesterday about ED funding. Encourage everyone to go to the Vermont Public website and look it up. Very easy to understand and has a lot of great information. It's a great piece trying to understand the complexities of education funding in the formula. Want to thank them for that but also encourage everybody to listen.
- Mrs. Farrell - Continually seeing cars that are passing school buses. People need to be aware that those big yellow buses and bright red lights mean, stop. It's extremely dangerous on any street. Whether it's a street like Main Street or whether it's a side street, probability you cannot pass school buses. Early morning and mid-afternoon, be aware. It's extremely important not to pass the school buses.
- Mrs. Leclerc - Been going to the girl's soccer game and they've been playing their hearts out. They've been doing a great job. Witnessed another board member's daughter get her first goal and it was pretty exciting. Mr. Cecchinelli's daughter, she was so excited. The girls did good, they won tonight, six to nothing and it's amazing how well they play together. They're always looking for each other and getting that ball to their players. Great teamwork by these girls.
- Ms. Canning - NBC5 has a program called Weather at Your School. The meteorologist, Marissa Vigevani will be broadcasting weather updates from both Barry City and Barre Town School. This is all driven by the kids, they are the forecasters, and they're the ones who are going to be on television. On Channel 5 from 4:30 - 7:00 a.m. they will be broadcasting. This Friday will be Barre City, and on November 1st, between 4:30 and 8:00 a.m., we will broadcast at the Barre Town School. It's a great way to not only get our kids out there, but they give the principals an opportunity to talk about the positive things that are going on in their schools. Steven Pappas from the Times Argus has given four opportunities this year to have a full page taken out in the Times Argus to highlight the important and fun things that are going on in our schools. Barre City received an invite from the city to have our middle school instrument performers march in recognition of Veterans Day on November 11th at 10:00 a.m. It's a school day and all are invited to come down and see the parade. At least one high school senior from our school has been selected as a semifinalist in the 2024-25 Coca-Cola Scholars program. Only 1,336 semifinals were chosen among 105,000 applicants for their outstanding leadership, academic achievements, and dedication to their community. We want to identify and congratulate Isabella Checcinelli as a semifinalist.
- Mr. Boutin - Please share the weather video on social media. Tomorrow night between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., BCEMS Talent Show. Guest Judges are Shawna Trader, Thom Lauzon, and Kristin Baumann.

11. Next Meeting Dates

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

12. Executive Session

12.1 Student Academic Records 1 VSA 313 (a)(7)

12.2 Appointment or Employment or Evaluation of a Public Officer or Employee 1 VSA 313 (a)(3)

Motion by Ms. Reynolds, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, to go into executive session to discuss 1 VSA 313 (a)(7) and 1 VSA 313 (a)(3) at 7:54 p.m., inviting in the superintendent, motion passed unanimously. The Chair recused himself.

Following information provided by the Board Clerk

Motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to exit executive session at 8:45 p.m., motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Spaulding, seconded by Mrs. Farrell to authorize the Chair to work with legal counsel to draft a response to a complaint, motion passed unanimously.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Gilbert