

DRAFT

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Spaulding High School Library and via Video Conference – Google Meet
May 26, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Garrett Grant (BC) - Chair
Giuliano Cecchinelli II (BC) - Vice Chair
Emily Wheeler Reynolds (BT) - Clerk
Jackie Wheeler (At-Large)
Catherine Whalen (BT)
Ian Campbell (BT)
Jeff Eddy (BC)
Lindsey Wells (BT)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Samn Stockwell (BC)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

JoAn Canning, Superintendent

GUESTS PRESENT:

Bern Rose, Christie Omodeo, Ellen Kaye, James Carpenter, Justin S, Lisa Liotta, Nancy Leclerc, Nathan Callas, Paul Malone, Rachel Van Vliet

1. Call to Order

The Board Chair, Mr. Grant, called the May 26, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library in Barre and via video conference.

2. Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda

None

Mr. Eddy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wheeler, to approve the agenda as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Mr. Grant reviewed how public comment works

Mr. Malone and Mrs. Leclerc shared concerns about the setup for the committee meeting.

4. Current Business

4.1. FY27 Budget Revote Discussion

Ms. Canning clarified a media article that mentioned a possible \$170,000 deficit reported in April. There are many months left in the fiscal year, and it's too early to know the final numbers, but updates will be given as more information becomes available.

Mr. Grant provided an overview of the prior budget votes:

- March 3, 2026: Proposed 3.36% increase; not approved by voters.
- May 12, 2026: Proposed 2.73% increase; not approved.
- Voter turnout for the May revote was about 21%.
- May revote passed in Barry City but failed in Barry Town.

Thoughts shared:

- Most community feedback revolves around high property taxes. Few concrete suggestions from the public on what to cut or change. The board finds it challenging to address vague concerns without actionable proposals.
- Some suggest staff reductions due to declining enrollment. The board maintains that current staffing aligns with policy and educational quality requirements. Administrative staffing levels were discussed, but no clear consensus emerged.
- Surveys for public input had low participation. Current communication methods (flyers, emails, texts) aren't effective enough. The board agrees on the need for improved, year-round communication and possible outside support.
- The board is divided on continued use; concerns about sustainability versus public trust. Agreed, any use must be transparent and well-communicated.
- The board acknowledges public frustration and disengagement. Calls for regular forums and more open, two-way communication. Misinformation and complexity of funding cited as barriers to trust.

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Suggestions: Highlight positive school outcomes, not just test scores. Clarify administrative costs and address spending misconceptions. Recognize that budget challenges are linked to broader economic pressures.

4.2. FY27 Budget Revote Date

The board considered options for the next budget revote date.

Mr. Cecchinelli made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wheeler Reynolds, to approve September 15, 2026, as the revote date; the motion passed unanimously.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 1, at 6:00 p.m., to be held at the Barry City Elementary and Middle School Library due to a location conflict.

5. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mrs. Wheeler, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Gilbert