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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and via Video Conference – Google Meet
August 3, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Garrett Grant (BC) - Chair
Emily Wheeler Reynolds (BT) - Clerk
Catherine Whalen (BT)
Jackie Wheeler (At-Large)
Ian Campbell (BT)
Jeff Eddy (BC)
Samn Stockwell (BC)
Lindsey Wells (BT) (arrived at 6:04)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Giuliano Cecchinelli II (BC) - Vice Chair

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:
Emilie Knisley, Superintendent
John Smith, Director of Operations
Carol Marold, Director of Human Resources
Dan Lagerstedt, IT Specialist

GUESTS PRESENT:
David Delcore - Times Argus, Bern Rose, Darby Hiebert. Jesse White, Jessica Maurais, Mary Bowers, Michael Boutin, Nancy LeClerc, Paul Malone, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet

1. Call to Order/Pledge/Mindfulness Moment
The Board Chair, Mr. Grant, called the Monday, August 3, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library in Barre and via video conference.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a brief mindfulness moment was observed.

2. Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda
Add 6.7 Set date for Informational meeting

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

3. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda
Mr. Grant explained the procedure for public comment
3.1. Public Comment
Comments provided by Bern Rose
3.2. Student Representatives
No student representatives present; they will report in September.

4. Consent Agenda
4.1. Meeting Minutes - June 1, June 15, July 15, 2026
Pull June 1 for corrections - headers and descriptions not lining up.
4.2. Warrant Approval: June 3, June 11, June 18, June 30, July 9, and July 21, 2026
4.3. New Hire: N. Mintken, L. Katz, S. Jordan, J. Smith, S. Jones, K. Cheney

Ms. Stockwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to approve the consent agenda (excluding June 1st minutes); the motion passed unanimously.

5. Board Reports
5.1. Building Reports (BCEMS, BTMES, SHS)
Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

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Ms. Stockwell suggested all programs provide updates on their Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), especially regarding absenteeism, management, and community skills.
Noted that the SEA building report was absent due to an administrative transition.

6. Current Business

6.1. Approve Current Expense Note

Mrs. Knisley explained that due to the lack of an approved budget, a current expense note (instead of the usual tax anticipation note) was needed to borrow up to $6,698,625 at a 12% interest rate. Mr. Smith, Director of Operations, summarized the process and financial implications.

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stockwell, to approve the Current Expense Note; the motion was amended

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stockwell, to amend and approve a Current Expense Note for $6,698,625 million and authorize John Smith, Director of Operations, to draw upon the note; the motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Budget Revote

The district is starting the year without an approved budget after two failed votes (March and May). Mrs. Knisley reviewed changes in state yield, impacts of property reappraisal, and common level of appraisal (CLA) for Barre City and Barre Town. Two options for the revised budget were discussed: (1) Rewarn the same budget, or (2) present a budget with $350,000 in temporary reductions (unfilled open positions with union agreement).
Board consensus favored presenting the budget with $350,000 in reductions (option 2) for the revote.

6.3. Appoint Board Member to Assigned Merger Committee

The board must designate a member to serve on the regional merger committee (per Act 170) and partner with Harwood, Montpelier-Roxbury, Paine Mountain, and Washington Central. Both Ms. Stockwell and Mrs. Wells expressed interest.

Ms. Wheeler Reynolds made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, for a secret paper ballot to decide on appointing a board member to an assigned merger committee; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Eddy made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Whalen, to accept the results of the secret ballot appointing Ms. Stockwell to the assigned merger committee; the motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Annual Vote Date

Motion proposed to move the annual budget vote from May back to March, citing concerns about contract timelines and the budget process. Board and public discussion considered impacts on transparency, voter turnout, and teacher contracts. Noted that voters had recently approved the change to a May vote by a wide margin.

Mrs. Whalen made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to present the original annual meeting date of March on the ballot for voter approval; the motion failed. Mrs. Wheeler, Ms. Stockwell, Mr. Eddy, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Wheeler Reynolds voted against the motion.

6.5. Community Engagement

Proposal to host back-to-school community dinners (spaghetti or other options) at each school to welcome students and families.

Ms. Wheeler Reynolds made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eddy, to approve the back-to-school spaghetti dinners for the BUUSD; the motion passed unanimously.

6.6. CESA Report: Met July 29, 2026

Mrs. Knisley reported on the first meeting of the CESA regional group. The Harwood superintendent was elected as chair. Meetings will be quarterly, with the next one in October. Subgroups formed to research bylaws and steps for accepting state grant funds. Future topics include identifying regional benefits.

We've increased collaboration discussions with the Central Vermont Career Center to share operational services and improve efficiency. The main goal is operational stability, especially regarding payroll and staff cross-training.

6.7. Set Date for Informational Meeting

Tuesday, September 8th at 5:00 p.m. (before the Board meeting at 6:00 p.m.)

7. Next Meeting Dates:

Special Board Budget Meeting: August 12, 2026, 5:00 p.m., SHS Library & via Google Meet
Regular Board Meeting: September 7, 2026, 6:00 p.m., SHS Library & via Google Meet (Labor Day)

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The Board is moving the September 7th meeting to Tuesday, September 8th, with the informational meeting starting at 5:00 p.m. and the Board meeting at 6:00 p.m.

8. Executive Session

8.1. 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, that premature general public knowledge clearly places the board at a substantial disadvantage, as it risks disclosing sensitive information; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Stockwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to enter into executive session to discuss 1 VSA 313 (a)(1) to discuss employee contracts, inviting in the superintendent, director of operations, and director of human resources at 7:59 p.m.; the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eddy, to exit executive session at 8:12 p.m.; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Campbell made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wheeler, to approve a leave plan for an employee as specified by the administration; the motion passed unanimously.

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Wheeler Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Eddy, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Gilbert