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BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
INFORMATIONAL/BOARD MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 8, 2026 - Informational Mtg 5:00 p.m.; Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Garrett Grant (BC) - Chair Giuliano Cecchinelli II (BC) - Vice Chair Emily Wheeler Reynolds (BT) - Clerk Catherine Whalen (BT) (virtual) Jackie Wheeler (At-Large) Ian Campbell (BT) Jeff Eddy (BC) Samn Stockwell (BC) Lindsey Wells (BT) **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None	**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:** Andy Evans, Student Council President Gavin Cook, Student Council Vice President **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Emilie Knisley, Superintendent John Smith, Managing Director of Operations Jamie Evans, Director of Facilities Denise Maurice, Principal SHS Dan Lagerstedt, IT Specialist Michelle Leeman, Director of Finances Ashley Young, Asst. Director of Finances
GUESTS PRESENT: David Delcore - Times Argus, Angela Valentanetti, Bern Rose, Chris Parker, Cidney Bonneau, Nancy LeClerc, Prudence Krasofski, Rachel Van Vliet, Sarah Hill, Tyler Watkins, 1-802-***-**09.	

1. Call to Order/Pledge/Mindfulness Moment

The Board Chair, Mr. Grant, called the September 8, 2026, regular Board meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library in Barre and via video conference.

2. Additions or Deletions with Motion to Approve the Agenda

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to approve the agenda as presented; the motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Whalen wasn't present for the vote.

3. Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

Mr. Grant explained the procedure for public comment

3.1. Public Comment

Comments provided by Tyler Watkins

3.2. Student Representatives

Andy Evans, Student Council President, and Gavin Cook, Vice President of Student Council, shared upcoming events. Homecoming to include bands, community tailgate party, football game, instead of a parade there will be hallway decorating competition. Blood drive on October 13 at SHS is open to the public. Surveys will be out soon for student feedback to share.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1. Meeting Minutes - June 1, August 3, August 12, August 14, 2026

4.2. Warrant Approval: August 10, August 26, 2026

Mr. Campbell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cecchinelli II, to approve the consent agenda; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Board Reports

5.1. Building Reports (BCEMS, BTMES, SHS, SEA)

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions. Interest in seeing CIP updates in reports.

5.2. Act 170 Merger (AOE/VSBA) and CESA Committee

- Weekly updates on the regional merger committee are provided by VSBA and VSA through Dave Younce and facilitators.
- There is discussion about sending more than one representative (currently only Sam) to the regional merger committee and considering proportional representation.
- No actions are required yet; adjustments may be required next month based on new guidance.
- Barre has appointed one person each to the CESA and regional merger committees as requested.

- More information about representation and committee makeup is expected soon.
- The regional merger process runs from September 2026 to March 2028, with committees starting by October 15 and community votes set for March 7, 2028.
- Consultants each have only 70–80 hours to support their boards, which may be a constraint.
- Regional superintendents are collecting data (enrollment, class sizes, salary ranges) to inform the committee.

Board members discussed the need to clarify and set priorities, possibly at a board retreat, to ensure effective representation in the merger process.

5.3. Paine Mountain School District Tuition

Central Vermont Supervisory Union (CVSU) requested info for a tuition feasibility study on high school capacity (Northfield, Williamstown). Options: keep both, combine, close and offer choice, or designate schools. Requested info by September 15th: tuition rate, capacity for more students. Decisions may take up to three years; require state and voter approval. Facility could take more students with advance notice, but needs more staff and planning. Transportation and parking need consideration if numbers rise.

6. Current Business

6.1. Boiler Project Final Review; RFP Proposal Approval

Mr. Grant reviewed that the Facilities Committee voted to advance boiler replacement to the school board. Recommending funding from capital reserve and FY27 maintenance funds. The school board approved, not to exceed $800,000.
Mr. Evans, Director of Facilities and James Harrington, Mechanical Engineer working with EEI, provided the following details: The project will cost $783,000, funded from the capital reserve. Lead time for the new boiler is an issue, but the target completion is April. Only one bid was received; scope was reduced from two boilers to one after review, saving costs. A possible state grant with a July deadline may be revisited if timing allows.

Mr. Cecchinelli II made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stockwell, to approve $783,000 from the Capital Reserve for the Spaulding boiler upgrade; the motion passed 7 to 1. Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.

6.2. VSBIT Proxy Approval (Multi-Line/Unemployment)

Ms. Wheeler Reynolds made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eddy, to appoint Mr. Campbell as its authorized representative; the motion passed 7 to 1. Mrs. Whalen voted against the motion.

6.3. Appoint New Treasurer

Two letters of interest submitted (Cidney Bonneau/Angela Valentinetti) . Mr. Grant open the floor for the interested parties to speak. Ms. Valentinetti withdrew.

Mr. Campbell made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wheeler, to appoint Cidney Bonneau as Treasurer until the May 2027 Annual Meeting; the motion passed unanimously.

6.4. First Reading of Policies: A23, A24, A25, A26

Ms. Wheeler Reynolds explained the changes reviewed by the Policy Committee, and the changes are aligned with VSBA's review.

Ms. Stockwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wheeler Reynolds, to approve the first reading of A23, A24, A25, and A26; the motion passed unanimously.

6.5. Budget Revote: Cost Control Action Steps

Mr. Grant reminded that the revote is Septmeber 15th, 7:00 a.m - 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Knisley provided additional information. Loan extension could cost up to $22,000/month in interest, affecting the budget. District may operate on 87% of last year's budget, requiring significant cost reductions. Possible cuts: transportation, sports, extracurriculars, field trips; spending and hiring freeze likely. Each budget revote adds costs for logistics and staffing. Vermont law allows quick revotes, but feasibility is uncertain. Policies allow—but do not require—transportation and activities, subject to funding. Cuts may negatively impact students, especially vulnerable groups; public requested more details on cuts and alternatives.
No board action taken; further proposals expected if budget not passed in September.

6.6. Ratification of AFSCME Agreement

Mr. Cecchinelli II provided information regarding the agreement agreed upon.

Mrs. Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to ratify the AFSME agreement and approve the chair to sign; the motion passed unanimously.

6.7. Fuel/Propane/Woodship Contracts & Snow Removal Contract

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Mr. Smith shared that it took several weeks to get access to the state site to put out an RFP. Normally this would be reviewed and approved now but it just went out. Letting board know this topic will be discussed next month so no action tonight.

6.8. BUUSD/CVCCSD Lease Agreement Revision Work Approval

Since both districts use the same legal firm it requires board approval to allow.

Mr. Cecchinelli II made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to allow VSBIT to review the lease agreement; the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Leeman, Business Manager for CVCC, clarified that this law firm is working on both districts behalf on something that we both have a vested interest in. Board agreed they understood the request.

6.9. Board Retreat Set Date

Mr. Grant shared an email from Debbie Singiser from VSBA with a proposal for possible Board Retreat topics and dates. The board likes the direction of the outline proposed. Mr. Grant will reach out for November dates.

7. Next Meeting Dates:

Regular Board Meeting: October 5, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Spaulding High School Library & via Google Meet

8. Tentative Executive Session

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli II, seconded by Mrs. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Gilbert