

# **DRAFT**

**BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION #61 SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ACT 46 - 706 STUDY COMMITTEE  
Spaulding High School – Library  
October 25, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.**

## **MINUTES**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Gina Akley – (BT Community Representative) - Co-Chair  
Marcia Biondolillo - (BT - Community Representative)  
Jeff Blow - (BT – Community Representative)  
Guy Isabelle – (SHS Board – BT Community Representative)  
Ed Rousse - (BC – SHS Board / BC Community Representative)  
Jessica Vest - (BC – Community Representative)  
Kim Whitcomb - (BT Community Representative)**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**Giuliano Cecchinelli - (BC Board / Community Representative)  
Paul Cook (BC – Community Representative)  
Michael Deering - (BC Board / Community Representative)  
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins - (BT – Board Representative)  
Michaela Martin - (BT Community Representative)  
Vacant - (BC – Community Representative)  
Vacant - (BC Board / BC Community Representative)**

### **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

**John Pandolfo, Superintendent**

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

**Video Vision Tech**

#### **1. Call to Order**

**The Co-Chair, Mrs. Akley, called the Thursday, October 25, 2018, meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.**

#### **2. Additions and/or Deletions to Agenda**

**Under 4.4 – Other, discuss Public Informational Hearings, State Board of Education Meetings, and Fund Balance Comparison**

#### **3. Approval of Minutes – 08/20/18, 09/12/18, and 10/02/18**

**On a motion by Mrs. Biondolillo, seconded by Mr. Rousse, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes of the August 20, 2018, September 12, 2018, and October 2, 2018 Act 46 – 706 Study Committee Meetings.**

#### **4. Act 46**

##### **4.1 Update on Petitions and Board Seats**

**Mr. Pandolfo advised that the deadline for submission of petitions has passed. Petitions have been received as follows:**

##### **Barre City Candidates:**

**Anthony Folland is running for one of the 1-year seats. There is no candidate officially running for the second 1-year seat.  
Giuliano Cecchinelli is running for the one 2-year seat.  
Ed Rousse is running for the one 3-year seat.**

**Those interested in running for the Barre City one year seat may run a write-in campaign. If there is no winning write-in candidate, the new Board will appoint an individual to fill the seat.**

##### **At-Large Seat Candidates:**

**Guy Isabelle is running for the one At-Large seat.**

##### **Barre Town Candidates:**

**Victoria Pompei is running for the one 1-year seat.**

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Paul Malone and Dave LaCroix are running for the two 2-year seats.  
Gina Akley is running for the one 3-year seat.

If the Act 46 Consolidation vote does not pass in both the City and the Town, the Board seats referenced above will not exist.  
If the State forces a merger, seats will be filled based on the State defined Articles of Agreement (2 seats for each city and/or town that is included in the merger).

Mr. Isabelle advised that he believes Tim Boltin may run a write in campaign for the second 1-year Barre City seat.

## 4.2 Committee Budget

Mr. Pandolfo advised that BCEMS and BTMES originally approved an initial amount of \$2,500 each, and that both BCEMS and BTMES allocated an additional \$1,000 each, for a total Committee budget of \$7,000. Barre City charges the school district for votes (printing and programming costs), Barre Town does not charge the school district if a school vote is held in conjunction with another vote. BCEMS has allocated additional funds to cover vote related costs. Outstanding Committee expenses include recording of Minutes and videography by CVTV. Ms. Whitcomb asked that the record reflect that the BTMES Board voted not to fund additional money, and she is disappointed that the Committee is charged with working until the vote, but the BTMES Board doesn't want to pay for voter communication because they deem it is propaganda. Because of lack of support from the BTMES Board, some voter communication/education has been privately funded. Because the Committee has utilized private donations for voter communication, she would not like to hear any more negative comments from the BTMES Board regarding voter education that was privately funded. Ms. Whitcomb stressed that the Committee felt it was necessary to properly inform voters prior to the vote. Mr. Pandolfo advised that of the total budget, \$629 was spent on communications, with the remainder being used to cover video recording, recording of Minutes, advertising and some legal expenses.

## 4.3 Report From Communications Group

Mrs. Akley advised that most of the 'reach out' effort has been completed, including information being presented to service clubs, at the schools' open houses, and at teacher staff meetings. Informational pamphlets are still available, but some should be reserved for distribution at the pre-vote forums. A few Committee Members advised that they have received phone calls, with most community members asking for a better understanding of the implications of the vote on Act 46. Many advised that they did not clearly understand it well when the previous votes were held. Many were of the belief that the vote on consolidation referred to consolidation of schools, not consolidation of the Boards. Mr. Blow questioned the accuracy of the State's estimate on projected tax rates (BT up 1¢, BC down 1¢), advising that their estimate does not consider 3 important factors; CLA, income sensitivity, and the tax incentives. Mr. Pandolfo advised that a complicated formula was used to calculate the projected/estimated tax rates. The AOE was given information regarding the impact of debt. Mr. Pandolfo noted that the \$600,000 Barre City bond will be in year 2 or 3 by the time consolidation occurs, so the amount of debt will actually be lower than the amount of debt used in their calculation. The tax incentives granted for voluntary mergers will also have a positive impact. In the tax projections prepared by the State, Barre is impacted the least, with other cities/towns showing significant changes. Mr. Blow feels that it is easier for him to be 'disconnected' because he does not have children in the schools. Ms. Whitcomb believes that most of the community has, or at some point, had children in the school. Ms. Whitcomb believes that community and Board members all have a vested interest in education. Mr. Blow believes that parents of students have much more interaction with the schools and have more of an emotional investment. Mr. Blow believes that the Committee did an excellent job of creating new Articles of Agreement that address the issues previously raised. Mr. Blow wanted a representative from the Vermont Department of Education to address concerns on the State Board of Education's Default Articles of Agreement, but they showed no interest in attending a meeting or listening to concerns. Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Default Articles of Agreement are from the State Board of Education, and the State Board of Education should speak to them. Mr. Pandolfo also noted that the Default Articles of Agreement have not been finalized or adopted yet. It was noted that given the climate, and thought regarding the real possibility of forced mergers, some communities are working to try to get a vote in before November 30<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Biondolillo believes that the Committee has worked hard to create tailor made Articles of Agreement that are respectful and thoughtful of community members' concerns. Mr. Blow advised that he will most likely vote 'yes', but maintains his opposition to the State forcing Act 46 on Vermont's schools/communities. Mr. Isabelle believes that Barre's schools are good and that they will get even better under consolidation, and believes that good schools are good for the economy. Mrs. Akley advised that she will update the FAQs information with the 'rough tax estimates' from the State. It was noted that tax incentive information should be included on the FAQs page, and that it should be clarified that the State's estimated tax projection was calculated using 2018 data, does not include savings due to efficiencies, or savings resulting from tax incentives (under a voluntary merger). Mr. Rousse queried regarding talk that consolidation will cause property values to decrease. Mrs. Biondolillo advised that the claim of decreased property values is a 'fear factor', and is not credible. Mrs. Biondolillo advised that good schools assist with property values and all of the schools in the district are good. Additionally, Mrs. Biondolillo advised that she will be meeting with Michelle LaFrancis in the near future regarding highlighting the great things that SHS graduates are doing. Committee Members were asked to take lawn signs and put them up as soon as possible (50 signs were brought to the meeting).

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## 4.4 Other

### Public Informational Hearings -

Two documents were distributed; the 'Notice of Public Informational Hearings For Australian Ballot Articles....' for Barre City and Barre Town. Mr. Pandolfo advised that public informational hearings (forums) are required by law. The hearings must take place within 10 days prior to a vote and must be warned 10 days before the forums are to occur. The Public Informational Hearings will take place on November 5, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. Hearings will be held in the BCEMS and BTMES cafeterias. Mr. Pandolfo believes that it would be beneficial for Committee Members to attend the Public Informational Hearings. Board Members from BCEMS, BTMES, and SHS should also be in attendance. It was noted that early voters should be advised that they will need to ask for a school vote ballot.

### State Board of Education Meetings -

At the State Board of Education meeting on 10/17/18, the State Board of Education voted to merge those in the same category as Barre (union high school districts with common 'feeding' elementary districts). The decision will not be final until the Final Statewide Plan is issued. The State Board of Education will not rule on the Barre decision until after the November 6, 2018 vote. Thus far, there has been no word regarding a decision on Twinfield.

### Fund Balance Comparison -

A document titled 'BSU District and SU Fund Balances (end of FY2018 unaudited)' was distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided an overview of the Fund Balances document advising that the BTMES General Fund is higher than the General Fund Balance of BCEMS, but the BCEMS Tax Stabilization and Capital Improvement Funds are larger than the BTMES Tax Stabilization and Capital Improvement Funds. It was noted that the information contained in the Fund Balances document is unaudited FY18 data and that the numbers could change significantly by the end of FY19 (prior to the start of a consolidated district on July 1, 2019). It was also noted that Barre City gave half ownership of SHS to Barre Town, and that Barre City gave the Central Office building to the BSU. Per pupil costs at BCEMS and BTMES are very similar.

## 5. Public Comment

None.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library.

The services of Video Vision and Mrs. Poulin will not be needed at this final meeting of the Committee.

## 6. Adjournment

**On a motion by Mr. Rousse, seconded by Mr. Isabelle, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:54 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Andrea Poulin*