

BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION #61 SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACT 46 - 706 STUDY COMMITTEE
Spaulding High School – Library
September 12, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gina Akley – (BT Community Representative) - Co-Chair
Tyler Smith - (BC Board / BC Community Representative) – Co-Chair
Marcia Biondolillo - (BT - Community Representative)
Jeff Blow - (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)
Guy Isabelle – (SHS Board – BT Community Representative)
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins - (BT – Board Representative)
Michaela Martin - (BT Community Representative)
Vacant Position - (BC – Community Representative)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

John Pandolfo, Superintendent

GUESTS PRESENT:

Dave Delcore – Times Argus

1. Call to Order

The Co-Chairs, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Akley, called the Wednesday, September 12, 2018, meeting to order at 6:09 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

2. Additions and/or Deletions to Agenda

Add 4.4 Default Articles of Agreement
Budget Discussion will be held under Agenda Item 4.3.

3. Approval of Minutes – August 20, 2018 Act 46 Consolidation Study Committee Meeting

The Committee had no questions, comments, or corrections to the Minutes. As there are questions regarding whether or not a quorum is present (given the vacant position), the Committee agreed to take no action on approval of the Minutes.

Approval of the August 20, 2018 Minutes will be added to the next Agenda.

4. Act 46

4.1 Update on Petitions and Board Seats

Petitions may be submitted to the City/Town Clerks from 09/27/18 through 5:00 p.m. on 10/09/18. There are currently no known candidates for the 1 year Barre Town seat (expiring 2020) or the 1 year Barre City seat (expiring 2020). Mr. Rousse cautioned potential candidates not to alter the headings on the petition forms. Anyone with an incorrect form should acquire a new form from the appropriate City/Town Clerk.

4.2 Ballot Printing Details

A ‘Sample Ballot’ was distributed for review. A sample of the actual ballot cannot be generated until all seat petitions are submitted to the City/Town Clerks. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the cost of holding a vote (approximately \$2000 in Barre City). Costs are associated with producing and printing ballots, programming of the tabulator, and possibly some ‘manpower’, but it was noted that the polls will already be staffed to handle the general election. Mr. Pandolfo has not heard from the Barre Town Clerk regarding the cost of the vote in Barre Town, though it is presumed to be similar to Barre City. Mr. Pandolfo advised regarding the legal requirement to print Article of Agreement #1 in its entirety, on the ballot.

4.3 Report From Communications Group

A copy of the informational pamphlet titled ‘Doing Whatever It Takes to Ensure Success For Every Child – Why Act 46 Makes Sense for Barre City and Barre Town’ was distributed. Mrs. Akley reported that the Communications Group created the content for the pamphlet, and the design was completed by Communications Specialist Ben Merrill. Mrs. Akley advised that the document was considered pretty much finalized, and asked that Committee Members advise of any changes, comments or questions. Ms. Whitcomb advised regarding changes suggested by teachers (add “bubbles” of information). Mr. Smith provided an overview of the suggested changes that had been implemented. It was noted that the back page was left fairly ‘open’ to allow it to be used for mailing purposes. The Committee agreed that the target audience should be the uninformed population and the ‘on the fence’ population. It was agreed that those who strongly oppose the merger would most likely not be swayed by the factual information being presented. It was suggested that a ‘bulleted’ postcard be utilized to supplement efforts to educate the community. A bulleted postcard might be more effective for individuals with limited time. It was suggested that contact information be added to informational pamphlets and postcards. Mrs. Akley will contact Mr. Merrill regarding changes to the pamphlet. Mr. Smith will mock up a postcard. The pamphlet and postcard will be sent to Committee Members via e-mail, for review and approval. The final approval does not require a formal vote. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding other possible venues for educating the public. A public forum was suggested, though it was noted that the public forums held by the last Committee were poorly attended. Mrs. Akley provided an overview of a list of various events she has identified for public education including; Lions Club, Barre City Back to School Night, Open Houses, Select Board Meetings, City Council Meetings, Parent/Teacher Conferences, PTO meetings, Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks meetings etc. Committee Members advised of additional opportunities for public engagement. Committee Members agreed to assist with public presentations. Mrs. Akley will e-mail a complete list to all Committee Members. Committee Members, those present and those absent from tonight’s meeting will be encouraged to assist with public speaking events and manning information tables. Committee Members are encouraged to identify other venues and notify Mrs. Akley regarding those places/events.

Mr. Pandolfo advised that the Committee is approaching the \$5000 budget limit, and will need additional funds to cover expenses associated with future meetings and to cover the cost of the votes being held in Barre City and Barre Town. On Monday night, the BCEMS Board approved the Superintendent’s recommendation to budget an additional \$2,500 for the work of the Committee. On 09/18/18, Mr. Pandolfo will seek approval from the BTMES Board to budget an additional \$2,500. Mr. Pandolfo advised that he may need to request approval for additional funding dependent on the cost of holding the votes.

4.4 Default Articles of Agreement

A document titled ‘Draft Default Articles of Agreement – Concerns Raised and Responsive Draft Articles’ was distributed. A document titled ‘Draft Default Articles of Agreement for initial consideration by the State Board of Education’ was also distributed. Mr. Pandolfo provided an Article by Article review of the Draft Default Articles of Agreement, highlighting specific Articles that pertain to; board make-ups (which differ between voluntary and forced mergers), Articles that can and cannot be changed by the Board or Member District Voters, the timeline for the State’s Final Plan, Organization of Transitional and Initial Boards, and voting for budgets and boards. Concern was voiced that under the State’s Draft Articles of Agreement, a forced merger of Barre will result in a board make-up of only four board members. If other towns are merged with Barre, each town, regardless of population, will have two representatives on the new board. Until the final outcome of whether or not a merge will occur, and whether or not the merger is voluntary or forced (in which case, what towns will be included as Member Districts), it is impossible to know which scenario Barre will fall into. Mr. Pandolfo’s review included comparisons between the Draft Default Articles and the revised Articles of Agreement that were presented to, and approved by, the State Board of Education.

5. Public Comment

None.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 2, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library.

6. Adjournment

The Committee agreed by consensus to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Poulin