

**BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION #61 SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**ACT 46 - 706 STUDY COMMITTEE**  
Spaulding High School – Library  
June 25, 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  
Jeff Blow - (BT – Community Representative)  
Giuliano Cecchinelli - (BC Board / Community Representative)  
Paul Cook (BC – Community Representative)  
Sarah Costa - (BC – Community Representative)  
Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins - (BT – Board Representative)  
Ed Rousse - (BC – SHS Board / BC Community Representative)  
Jessica Vest - (BC – Community Representative)  
Kim Whitcomb - (BT Community Representative)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Marcia Biondolillo - (BT - Community Representative)  
Michael Deering - (BC Board / Community Representative)  
Guy Isabelle – (SHS Board – BT Community Representative)  
Michaela Martin - (BT Community Representative)

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Video Vision Tech      Dave Delcore – Times Argus      Alice Farrell      Patrick Healy      Tara Reil

**1. Call to Order**

The Co-Chair, Mr. Smith, called the Monday, June 25, 2018, meeting to order at 6:06 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library.

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

**Add 4.7 Visitor Patrick Healy – Twinfield Union School Board Chair**

Discuss Agenda Items out of order: Discuss Items 4.7, 4.5, and 4.6 (in that order) then discuss the remaining Agenda Items.

**3. Approval of Minutes – June 18, 2018 Act 46 Consolidation Study Committee Meeting**

**On a motion by Mr. Rousse, seconded by Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins, the Committee unanimously voted to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the June 18, 2018 Act 46 – 706 Study Committee Meeting.**

**4. Act 46**

**4.1 Articles of Agreement**

A Draft of the Articles of Agreement dated June 25, 2018 was distributed. Discussion began with the topic of Site-Based Councils. If a date is established in the Articles of Agreement, does the Site-Based Council have to be in place with designated members or is it acceptable to have just the structure in place? Mr. Cecchinelli queried regarding assignment of members during the unified board's committee formation process. The Committee would like more information regarding the definition of site-based councils, including what authority, if any, the council has. Mrs. Farrell advised that discussion of site-based councils is occurring as part of the work under the Technical Assistance Grant (for improved community engagement). A site-based council is usually comprised of one board member, and multiple community members. Community members are usually recruited through administrators from each school. Mr. Smith believes the structure should be put in place prior to the commencement of a joint district. Mr. Smith will forward wording to Mr. Pandolfo so that the Articles of Agreement can be amended. The Committee was queried regarding comments and questions on the Articles as presented. There were no questions. It was reiterated that Article #13 confirms that no restructuring or closings can occur without voter approval.

**4.2 Ballot Warning**

A draft Warning was distributed. Mrs. Akley provided an overview of the Warning, advising of the specific Articles that are included. It was noted that other than the vote date, the Warning appears to include all of the necessary information. Mr. Cecchinelli would like the Warning to contain the Article numbers and verbiage only. If the Article titles are not included, Mr. Cecchinelli believes more

voters will read the actual Article descriptions, which will hopefully result in voters making a more informed decision. The Committee will ask Mr. Pandolfo to research if it is allowable to leave titles in the actual Articles of Agreement, but remove titles from the Warnings and ballots.

#### **4.3 Vote Date**

A document titled 'Barre Act 46 Committee – State Board of Education Meetings Dates – And Other Key Dates' was distributed. Mr. Smith advised that Barre is on the Agenda for the August 15, 2018 Regional Meeting. The Committee agreed that the earliest possible vote date is in September. A Final Report could not be crafted and submitted to the AOE in time for the July 8<sup>th</sup> deadline (a requirement for holding an August vote). The Committee should plan on submitting a Final Report to the AOE on or before August 5, 2018, for a vote not to be held before 09/04/18. There are various opinions regarding whether to hold a vote date earlier, or later in the year. It is agreed that much needs to be done to educate the community prior to a vote. There is concern regarding holding a vote in November because of the required certification and petition timeframe. It was reiterated that a petition for a revote requires that the exact same ballot/Articles of Agreement be presented to voters for a second time. If an initial vote is held in September, a revote (if required) will most likely occur in November. A November vote date, for the initial presentation of the altered Articles of Agreement may not be approved by the State, as the petition timeframe ends after the deadline for the State's Final Plan (11/30/18). Mr. Cook reiterated his support of a merger, but does not believe the Barre Town community will support a merger. It is not known if the State can mandate a Final Plan for Barre while certification of a vote is pending. It is not known if incentives are available if a positive vote is received after the State mandates a merger. There is concern that during the summer months, it will be difficult to recruit individuals to run for a unified board. The Committee agreed to gather additional information prior to selecting a vote date.

#### **4.4 Tax Incentive Projections**

An updated projection on tax incentives, which will include the CLA and income sensitivity, is in the process of being prepared. Discussion will be held after receipt of an updated projection.

#### **4.5 Reasons Not to Merge**

An untitled document submitted by Jeff Blow and Rebecca Kerin-Hutchins was distributed. The document outlines reasons that Mr. Blow and Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins believe are negative aspects of a merger. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins advised that some of the reasons initially listed have been covered/resolved. Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins still has questions regarding site-based councils, including council authority, and queried regarding whether or not incentives are still available. Mr. Blow reiterated that he is waiting for updated information on tax incentives, and would like to see figures that account for income sensitivity and the CLA. Mr. Blow is concerned that with everything factored in, incentives will not be in the \$4,000,000 range. Mr. Blow supports and Articles of Agreement as amended, and the ballot language. This support is Mr. Blow's personal view, but he is unsure if the changes are enough to persuade Barre Town voters to change their minds regarding a merger. Mr. Blow would prefer to have additional tax incentive information prior to voting. Mr. Blow believes that if a vote is to be held, there needs to be much more communication with voters, and believes a vote should be held further out to allow more time to educate voters. Mr. Cook believes that most of the budget has been spent and is concerned that there is no money left to be used for educating the public. Ms. Vest believes that discussion relating to educating the public, should be held after a decision has been made regarding whether or not to hold a vote, and suggested that there may be community members who are willing to support a PR campaign. It was noted that the second vote that was petitioned in Barre Town, was legally required, and it was also legally required that the exact same Articles of Agreement (as the first vote) be presented for the revote. It was noted that Mr. Pandolfo has been providing much more support to the Committee than what was required or expected of him, and should be thanked for the role he has played assisting the Committee. Mr. Rousse reminded the Committee that tax incentives are still 'on the table'. Mrs. Costa doesn't believe that the proposed tax incentives will draw voters, and believes that the community needs to be better educated regarding the revised Articles of Agreement, and the possible ramifications resulting from a 'no' vote (possible State mandated merge). Mrs. Costa believes that holding a vote is the best way to maintain control.

#### **4.6 Committee Decision on Vote of the Communities**

A straw poll was taken, with 5 Committee Members indicating they support a vote and 4 not supporting a vote. Brief discussion was held. **On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Rousse, the Committee voted 5 to 3 to put the Articles of Agreement on a ballot to be presented to the communities for a vote on an Act 46 Merger. Ms. Vest, Ms. Whitcomb, Mrs. Costa, Mr. Rousse, and Mr. Cecchinelli voted for the motion. Mr. Cook, Mr. Blow, and Mrs. Kerin-Hutchins voted against the motion.**

Mr. Cook advised that he is very supportive of a merger, but voted against the motion because he feels that it is pointless to spend time and money on a vote he believes will not pass in Barre Town.

#### **4.7 Visitor Patrick Healy – Twinfield Union High School Board Chair**

Mr. Healy addressed the Committee, advising that Twinfield does not want to be part of a merger with Barre, but is interested in being part of the Supervisory Union. Under the structure that Twinfield prefers, expenses would be shared at the SU level, but not at the local level.

## **5. Communication Plan**

No discussion.

## **6. Public Comment**

Mr. Rousse advised regarding Mr. Isabelle's comments to the Committee, as stated in an e-mail sent by Mr. Isabelle to Committee Members. A copy of the e-mail was forwarded to all individuals who receive copies of the Agenda. Mr. Isabelle believes that if the Committee can't reach a consensus, the Committee should disband, let the State dictate Barre's future, and do so knowing that any and all tax incentives will be lost.

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on Monday, July 16, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the SHS Library.

### The Agenda will include:

Finalize Articles of Agreement

Finalize Warning

Communication Plan

Tax Incentive Projections

## **7. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mr. Cecchinelli, seconded by Mr. Rousse, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Poulin*