

**Barnet School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 13th, 2015**  
**Barnet School**

**Members in Attendance:** Louis Bushey, Robert Farlice-Rubio, Shellie Samuels;  
Principal Shawn Gonyaw, Superintendent Mat Forest

6:10pm

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shellie Samuels.

6:11pm

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Bobby Farlice-Rubio to enter Executive Session to discuss a student issue. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approved**

6:15pm

At this time, the meeting was joined by David Warden.

6:26pm

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Bobby Farlice-Rubio to exit Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approved**

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Dave Warden to approve the minutes of the December 9th, 2014 meeting without amendments. The motion passed unanimously with no further discussion.

**Approved**

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Bobby Farlice-Rubio to approve the minutes of the January 7th, 2015 special budget meeting without amendments. The motion passed unanimously with no further discussion.

**Approved**

**Pubic Input**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Chair Shellie Samuels decided to forward Facilities Manager Mike Bigelow's presentation on the corroded condition of the Barnet School's roof from **New Business**, in order to allow him to get home earlier after having already worked a full day.

Mike Bigelow provided several samples of the corroded sections of the red-painted steel roof over Barnet School for the Board's inspection. These pieces had been replaced in patches with the help of Palmieri Roofing, the original roofing contractor. Mike Bigelow had previously been tasked with investigating which party was liable for the needed repairs on the roof. Mike Bigelow discovered that there is currently a lawsuit in which the steel roof manufacturer is suing the company hired to prime and paint the steel stock used as roofing material in standing seam steel roofs. Mike Bigelow also discovered that the Barnet School is not the only building beset by a prematurely corroded roof: many other buildings roofed from the same "bad batch" of steel are also affected. Mike Bigelow stated that this strongly implies that the roof problem was not caused by any construction flaws in the school roof, and his inspection during the roof patching showed no sign of fault in the roofing underlayment materials or in the roof venting. Mike Bigelow strongly recommended against the proposal, put forth by the roofing manufacturer, that the Barnet School initiate a sand-blasting and repainting of the roof. Bobby Farlice-Rubio concurred, as his assessment of the roof samples showed areas with total deterioration including areas where the steel was completely gone and crumbled like dust under the pressure of his fingernail.

Mike Bigelow informed the Board that during the summer, a technician from a Maine-based engineering firm named ELT (or something similar, Mike was not completely sure of the name) came to inspect the roof, and that the technician found that the paint and primer were indeed thinner than they were supposed to be. David Warden asked if the Board could be assured that this firm was truly independent, or perhaps influenced by the roofing manufacturer. Superintendent Mat Forest reminded the Board that he had already been authorized, during the December 9th, 2014 meeting, to hire an independent architect to investigate the roof issue. Mat Forest stressed the importance of having an independent expert that could advocate for the Barnet School in the case that matters wound up becoming part of a law suit. Shellie Samuels asked if there was any connection between this issue and the significant renovations that Barnet School underwent in 1999. Mike Bigelow stated that these renovations occurred before his time at Barnet School. Principal Shawn Gonyaw ended the discussion by assigning Mike Bigelow the task of working directly with Superintendent Mat Forest to formulate a plan for the successful resolution of the roofing issue.

## **Administrative Reports**

After distributing copies of the administrative reports and budget, Mat Forest was at a loss to explain why CCSU Business Manager Pat Amsden was absent, as she had intended in presenting the final budget and the Financial Report. Despite Pat Amsden's absence, the Board was in possession of all relevant documents and review of these items was initiated.

In reference to the information contained in the Principal's Report, Shawn Gonyaw remarked on the "amazing" performance of the Barnet School's staff and teachers in their organization of the Parent-Teacher Conferences. He proudly stated

that their dedication helped garner a 95% participation rate in the scheduling of these important meetings with students' families.

In reference to the Superintendent's Report, Mat Forest remarked on an interesting crisis simulation exercise that was conducted during the teachers' in-service day on January 8th, 2015. Mat Forest explained that this activity was similar to a "War Game," in which teachers were scored, or even "fired" in a virtual way, based on their quick decisions in response to the simulated crises.

In reference to the pending contract negotiations, Mat Forest added that there was new uncertainty with the benefits portion of the contracts because of changes in the future of health care funding within the State of Vermont. Mat Forest mentioned the upheaval caused by Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin's recent announcement of his reversal on pursuing "single-payer health care," as this expected policy was factored into the original negotiations. This sparked a lively discussion amongst the Board about the potential future of health care funding in Vermont, and speculation on what the teacher's union would demand and accept in their contracts.

In reference to contract negotiations, Mat Forest mentioned that there was interest in teachers and staff receiving discounted tuition if they enrolled their children in the school where they were employed, instead of in their towns of residence. Shellie Samuels alerted the Board that this benefit had already been extended to Barnet School staff in the past and present. Louis Bushey expressed concern that this benefit could potentially cause inflation in classroom sizes. Mat Forest countered with the fact that higher enrollment also brings increased federal and state funding, so this benefit would not necessarily cause a burden if extended to all CCSU schools' teachers.

Superintendent Mat Forest presented the "Eligibility Checklist for Section 504 Disability in Learning" to the Board. Shellie Samuels asked why the Board was being asked to review this document, as this "nitty-gritty" was the purvey of trained experts in the field of Special Education. Louis Bushey added that these Special Education professionals were paid to formulate these documents, and that the Board was not necessarily qualified to make changes to it. Mat Forest responded by reminding the Board that none of the CCSU, including Barnet School, had a policy document on this until now. Mat Forest stated that he was not soliciting comments or changes to the document, but simply showing it to the Board to demonstrate that a policy was now in place.

In reference to the Curriculum Coordinator's report, Bobby Farlice-Rubio asked about the progress of implementing the new State standardized test: the SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium). Principal Shawn Gonyaw warned the Board that this new test would not likely provide good data in its first year as there were issues with familiarizing students with the computer-based interface, and that some of its features were "clunky." Mat Forest added that it might take more than one test administration before the results should be seen as reflective of student performance.

In reference to the Special Services Report, David Warden asked if there were any methods to reduce the number of students that needed placement outside of Barnet School because of special needs. Shawn Gonyaw informed the Board that two students had been prevented from needing out-placement due the successful use of the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) system. Louis Bushey asked the Principal about the number of students currently placed in other schools for special needs, and Shawn Gonyaw replied that there were none.

## **New Business**

The documents regarding the budget were reviewed and discussed. The final budget for FY16 of \$5,010,724, when adjusted for revenues of \$934,902, results in a Total Education Spending amount of \$4,075,821. This represents an effective decrease of 1.1% from the budget of FY15.

At this time, Louis Bushey expressed his concern about the use of 7th and 8th graders as kitchen helpers. Louis Bushey felt that this time working in the kitchen reduced educational opportunities for the participating students. Shawn Gonyaw mentioned that the new budget added staff to the kitchen, and that this kitchen helper program may no longer be needed. Shawn Gonyaw felt that the work experience and school community involvement more than justified the small, voluntary amount of time spent in the kitchen, and that some students showed marked improvement in their school performance after joining the kitchen helper program. Bobby Farlice-Rubio added that perhaps some math skills, such as statistics on meals consumed per day and similar quantitative analysis could be incorporated into the time spent in the kitchen, thereby enhancing the learning opportunities provided. Principal Gonyaw assured the Board that he would consider these recommendations.

Chair Shellie Samuels reminded the Board about the pressing need to authorize the final budget.

A motion was made by Louis Bushey and seconded by Bobby Farlice-Rubio to approve the Barnet School budget for FY16 of \$5,010,724. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approved**

David Warden recommended that the entire CCSU budget be included in the Barnet Town Report, instead of just the final expense figure. Shellie Samuels asked the Board for suggestions about the content of the letter to the voters of Barnet. The Board suggested inclusion of the fact the boiler had been fully paid off, and that part of the surplus of FY15 had been applied to setting up the new Pre-K program, among other highlights. Shellie Samuels also reminded the Board of the potential creation of a Budget Committee, as requested by the Town of Barnet. Louis Bushey stated his desire to have more input from the community on the budget making process. Shellie Samuels added that using the remaining surplus from FY15 to lower the tax rate for FY16 would require a separate vote.

## **Old Business**

Shellie Samuels asked Superintendent Mat Forest if he was prepared to have a second reading of the "Staff/Student Relations" policy document. Mat Forest indicated that the issues brought up in previous meetings, as well as conflict with union polices, had necessitated a revision of the document. Shellie Samuels then tabled the issue, adding that when the revised document was ready, it would be again need a first reading.

## **Other Business**

Shawn Gonyaw mentioned that, as in the prior Town Meeting, the Jazzy Children's Fund would be providing child care at this year's Town Meeting.

David Warden asked Shawn Gonyaw about recent reimbursement requests by families that were dated from March 2014. Shawn Gonyaw replied that some families greatly delay the filling out of necessary paperwork, and that this was the cause for the late reimbursement requests.

## **Future Business**

Superintendent Mat Forest, having previously emailed a survey form to the Board, reminded that he expected to be evaluated at the next meeting on February 10th, 2015. Shellie Samuels alerted the Board about next meeting being the final opportunity for preparation of the Town Meeting presentation, and the pre-Town Meeting informational session.

David Warden mentioned the passing of esteemed Barnet resident Sue Robinson, and reminded the Board of her upcoming memorial services to be held in the Barnet School Auditorium on Saturday, January 17th, 2015. Bobby Farlice-Rubio made a special mention of the passing of another esteemed Barnet resident: Merwyn Pearl. Bobby Farlice-Rubio expressed his gratitude for their great contributions to Barnet, and to the warm welcome he received from the Pearl family when he began his life in the town.

A motion was made by David Warden and seconded by Louis Bushey to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobby Farlice-Rubio, Board Clerk