

Barrington School Committee  
Barrington Middle School  
261 Middle Highway, Barrington  
Thursday, May 7 2026

**Roll Call:**

**School Committee:** Chair TJ Peck, Tim McNamara, Frazier Bell, Liz Singh were present.  
Karen Rasnick was not present.

**School Administration:** Superintendent Robert Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent, Ruth Corley, Heidi Harris, Matt Bobola, Rebecca Trahan  
Attorney Lombardo was present

**School Committee Business:**

Mr. Peck requested a motion to call the meeting to order. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM

Mr. Peck requested a motion to seal the Executive Session Minutes. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative. Mr. Peck announced that no votes were taken in the executive session.

**Public Comment:**

Kathleen Dewiel of Rumstick Road stated that she was pleased to see class size on the agenda. She is interested in learning how the district determines class sizes and would also like to know whether a class size cap is being considered and, if so, when it might be implemented.

Katie Ostermeier of Roffee Street spoke regarding large class sizes at Nayatt School. She respectfully requested that the district consider adding a fifth second-grade classroom at Nayatt to help address the class size concerns.

**Superintendent Report:**

**Achievements/Recognition**

Mr. Mitchell recognized the Barrington High School Boys and Girls Basketball teams for their state championship titles. Coach Raffa offered remarks. He also congratulated and introduced the Barrington High School Math Team, which earned its 23rd state championship in the past 27 years. Coach Marley provided remarks and introduced the math team.

Mr. Mitchell also mentioned Jennifer Hines-Bowie on being recognized as the Teacher of the Year by the RI Mathematics Teacher Association.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move School Committee Business agenda item (h) to this part of the agenda. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Donation to pay owed lunch monies for Nayatt students:**

Superintendent Mitchell introduced Barrington High School student Kate Tracy, who presented her idea to help raise funds for outstanding school lunch balances.

Kate Tracy is the founder and regional director of the Rhode Island School Lunch Debt Relief Foundation. She spoke about her experiences in Providence Public Schools and the stigma and shaming associated with school lunch debt. She presented the foundation's mission of paying off student lunch debt and supporting families in need.

Kate shared that Nayatt School currently has approximately \$4,000 in outstanding lunch debt. She requested the School Committee's approval to begin fundraising efforts in partnership with the foundation. The School Committee expressed strong support for her initiative, commended her efforts, and stated they look forward to following up with Kate regarding the project.

**AI work in the district:**

Mr. Mitchell introduced Dr. Mark Davis and Tonya Curt-Hoard to present "Sailing into the Future of AI." Their presentation included discussion on the foundations and oversight of artificial intelligence, as well as implementation and engagement within the district.

They shared that the work has been supported by a volunteer team of educators, specialists, and administrators known as the Strategic AI Literacy (SAIL) Team.

**Financial Update:**

Matt Bobola reviewed the FY26 budget to actuals. Mr. Bobola pointed out the differences.

**Consent Agenda:**

Mr. Peck requested a motion to table consent agenda item (d) and (e) . Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck asked if any Committee members wished to discuss items on the consent agenda. Seeing none.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve Consent Agenda items (a), (b), and (c) Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Barrington Veterans Advisory Committee Presentation**

Amy Hurley, Vice Chair of the Barrington Veterans Advisory Committee, requested to speak regarding the absence of a Revolutionary War memorial in Barrington. She shared that the Advisory Committee would like the School Committee to consider placing such a memorial near Victory Gate when it is relocated at Barrington High School. Ms. Hurley stated that 190 soldiers from Barrington fought in the Revolutionary War and expressed the importance of providing the public with a way to honor those individuals. The Advisory Committee believes that, while the high school is under construction, it would be an appropriate time and location to establish the memorial.

Mr. Peck stated that he agrees Barrington should have a memorial honoring Revolutionary War soldiers, including enslaved soldiers who served. However, he emphasized that Victory Field and Victory Gate were created in the 1950's with a very specific purpose: to honor service members who gave their lives in combat, particularly the large number of Barrington residents who died in World War II and Korea. He expressed the importance of preserving the original spirit and intent of Victory Gate while also supporting recognition of additional individuals who served and sacrificed.

Mr. McNamara suggested that the School Committee offer a vote of confidence in support of the concept and express its interest in continuing discussions once an appropriate location for the memorial has been determined.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Hurley for her endeavor. The committee is committed to finding a mutually agreeable memorial place.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move agenda item (q) Solar Panel bids to after agenda item (c) Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Request for Town Council to waive building permit fees:**

Chris Spiegel explained that building permit fees for the project could total nearly \$1 million. He shared that he has been working with the Town Manager and Town Planner, and they have agreed to provide a lump-sum cost based on unit rates for inspectors to visit the project site weekly or as needed. The proposal also includes additional funding to support the Fire Department's design review process. As part of the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), the project team is requesting a not-to-exceed amount of \$150,000. Mr. Spiegel expressed appreciation to the consultants and town officials for collaborating to find a practical path forward.

Mr. Peck expressed his thanks to Phil and Herb for their partnership and efforts to ensure that as much funding as possible is directed into classrooms. He stated his appreciation for their collaboration throughout the process.

LeftField requested that the School Committee empower the Owner's Project Manager to draft a memo to the Town Council requesting the waiver of building permit fees.

Mr. Peck requested a motion authorizing LeftField to draft the memo to the town council requesting the waiving of building permit fees and paying for third-party inspections. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Bid results for Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Protection Trades:**

Mr. Spiegel provided an overview of the budget and bid results.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the bid recommendations for the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection trades for the school construction project based on the recommendations from Left Field. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Solar Panel Bids**

Mr. Dunphy and Mr. Spiegel reviewed the solar panel bids, noting that the bids were publicly advertised and thoroughly evaluated. They explained that in order to meet Safe Harbor requirements for the project, 5% of the equipment must be purchased by July 4, 2026. This deadline is necessary to secure tax credit incentives, including an estimated 40% return after the first year of service.

Energy Tree was ranked as the top bid, and they recommended awarding the project to Energy Tree based on their evaluation.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to award the solar panel bid RFP to NRG Tee Consulting LLC. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck asked Mr. Dunphy to detail the package that would be procured to meet Safe Harbor requirements. Mr. Dunphy explained that the purchase represents approximately 5% of the project cost, or about \$160,000, and would consist primarily of solar panels, which are easily stored off-site until needed.

Mr. Peck informed the School Committee that the funding source would be the capital reserve fund, with the expectation that rebates would later be received and used to replenish the account. The School Committee then engaged in a discussion regarding the use of capital reserve funds and the associated financial implications.

#### **Advisory Committee Membership:**

Mr. Peck began the discussion by asking if any school committee members had concerns about quorums. Mr. McNamara mentioned that the Facilities Committee could include another member as they had one step down.

#### **Strategic Plan Update:**

The committee discussed the potential of holding a workshop and would like to provide G&D with a sample of what they are looking for. They would also like the incoming superintendent to participate.

#### **BHS internet filtering recommendations:**

Becky Trahan explained that the School Internet Filtering Policy requires any proposed changes to the filtering system to first be reviewed by the Internet Filtering Committee. The committee would then make a recommendation to the School Committee before any changes are implemented.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Trahan and the Internet Filtering Committee.

#### **Projected Class Size for Grades K-3:**

Mrs. Singh opened the discussion by recommending increased transparency on the district website for current and prospective students and families. She also expressed interest in engaging in conversations with administrators to further examine and develop guidelines that would help teachers identify when class sizes become too large, particularly at the elementary level. The School Committee engaged in a discussion with administration regarding space constraints within the district. The lack of available space was noted, with the expectation that conditions may improve with the opening of the new schools.

#### **Appointment of Superintendent**

Mr. Peck began by thanking Superintendent Mitchell for his leadership, and for stepping into the role.

Mr. Peck then announced that Dr. Holly Hageman is being appointed as the Superintendent. The School Committee all expressed that Dr. Hageman is the right person for the job, they expressed excitement for the future of Barrington Schools.

Mr. Bell made a motion to appoint Holly Hageman as the new superintendent of Barrington Public Schools. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**Superintendent contract:**

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the superintendent contract with Dr. Holly Hageman. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

**FY26-27 Calendar RIDE waiver update:**

Mr. Mitchell notified the Committee that the School Department submitted a waiver to RIDE. Mr. Mitchell thanked Ruth and Becky for their work in coordinating the waiver process. BPS has added five minutes per day, which is equivalent to five instructional days. The Department requested a five-day waiver from RIDE and is currently awaiting a response.

**Policy Committee Update:**

Mr. Peck provided an updated report to the School Committee. The Policy Committee met earlier today and discussed a budget policy.

**Facilities Update:**

Mr. McNamara provided an update from the Facilities Committee. The Committee has been touring each school to identify priority needs. To date, they have visited HMS and the three K-3 schools, and they plan to tour the Central Office at the next meeting.

Mr. McNamara noted that one of the most significant issues identified thus far is a lack of storage space. Jason Malafronte has done research into off campus storage units. They are climate controlled and fairly reasonable. Mr. Bell mentioned that it would be more efficient to have all things stored in one place rather than at each school.

Attorney Lombardo recommended an audit of the paper the schools are storing.

Mr. McNamara said that Mr. Sangiulano identified a non-profit organization that will collect the old books and redistribute or recycle. He suggests the other schools use the same organization.

Mr. McNamara made a motion to direct the administration to do an audit and to investigate the possibility of climate controlled outside storage for whatever needs to be stored.

Mrs. Singh added that the district looks into Iron Mountain. The district currently uses Iron Mountain. Mr. Mitchell agreed this issue needs to be addressed, noting that it is a common challenge across many districts. He suggested designating an individual to oversee records retention and developing a systematic process for records disposal, recycling, and scheduled pickups.

The School Committee agreed that a designated point person should be identified at each school, as well as at the District Office, to oversee records retention and related processes.

**First Read Personal Device Policy:**

Attorney Lombardo noted that RI law requires the School Committee to review this policy annually. She also noted a typographical error on page one, it reads "RI Gen L" should be corrected to laws.

The school committee discussed broadening the policy in relation to locked pouch cases. Attorney Lombardo suggested changes regarding cell phones (page 2), whenever possible students should leave all devices at home. When that is not possible, devices must be stored

away from students in accordance with their respective school's protocol. Eliminate small Roman numerals (i,ii,iii) and default to school protocol.

Mr. Peck requested Attorney Lombardo to make the changes.

#### **First Read legal Guidance Policy:**

Mr. Peck stated that the School Committee unanimously agreed that the policy was needed. Attorney Lombardo drafted the policy and explained that administrators and any individuals with decision-making or managerial authority are required to consult with legal counsel when a matter involving potential legal consequences arises and to do so promptly.

She further noted the importance of providing all relevant facts and details so that legal counsel can offer the most appropriate advice. The policy emphasizes implementing and adhering to legal counsel's guidance in good faith and cooperating fully with the Superintendent and School Committee to ensure district actions align with legal advice. It also requires keeping the School Committee and Superintendent informed as appropriate.

The policy emphasized the seriousness of the policy and the expectation that legal guidance must be followed. Failure to adhere to legal counsel's advice and the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

The School Committee engaged in a discussion and determined that this requirement would be incorporated into all Administrator contracts. The policy will serve as a notice to all current admin staff. Ms. Harris stated that she would send an email blast distributing the policy.

The School Committee also inquired about staff sign-off on the Policy Manual. Ms. Harris confirmed that all staff have signed off on the Policy Manual.

#### **Amendment to Selection and Reconsideration Policy for BPS Libraries:**

Ms. Corley, pointed out the amendment to the policy regarding the complaint reconsideration process about materials. She noted the policy is in compliance with the new law. Ms. Corley also thanked librarian Jamie Greene for her work on the policy.

#### **Development/issuance of Transportation Consultant RFP:**

Mr. Peck opened the discussion regarding a transportation consultant RFP. He noted the Committee had previously discussed the possibility of self-performing transportation services. The Committee would like to engage in a consultant to provide expertise on logistics, including costs analysis, modeling, and related considerations.

Mr Peck made a motion to instruct the Superintendent and transportation team to issue an RFP for a transportation consultant to assist the district in evaluating the possibility of self-performing transportation. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

#### **Public Comment:**

Kerry O'Neil, Anthony Road. Mr. O'Neil, expressed excitement for the solar panel project at the schools. He also wanted to thank Superintendent Mitchell for his tenure in Barrington, noting that he "steadied the ship" during his time. Mr. O'Neil spoke about screen time and shared that he was impressed with the AI presentation. He stated that the policy BPS is heading toward is a positive one. As a parent of a middle school student, he noted that while Chromebooks are beneficial in school, they have not been as effective at home. He referenced scientific evidence suggesting a decrease in student performance associated with screen use. He cautioned about both screen time and the use of AI.

Kevin Igoe, Knapton St., thanked Bob as both a parent and a police officer for his leadership and for maintaining the relationship and navigating through several circumstances this year. He also inquired about the SRO policy and when it would be placed on a future agenda.

### **Superintendent Announcements**

Mr. Mitchell informed the School Committee that the High School Science Olympiad team will travel to University of Southern California for the Science Olympiad Nationals on May 21, 2026. He congratulated the middle school Unified Theater for their successful performance. He thanked Connie Oswald and Andrew Anderson for their leadership and commitment to the Unified Theater.

Mr. Mitchell announced two new hires, Courtney Buteau, Volunteer Coordinator, and Erin Aguilar, high school softball coach.

### **Agenda Setting**

The School Committee discussed the scheduled meeting on June 4, 2026. They would like to move this meeting to June 11.

Mr. Peck mentioned that he would like to discuss screen time at the next meeting. Mrs. Singh would like to know roughly how much screen time the students are getting.

Mr. McNamara mentioned adding the status of RFP of demographic study to the agenda.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Peck requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Adjournment: 9:50 pm

Approved: June 11, 2026