



**Minutes of the Barker Central School District  
Board of Education Meeting  
Monday, April 10, 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Moved to High School Cafeteria**

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<b>Present</b>	R. Atwater, D. Carnes, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, K. Stoll, J. Sweeney, Jr., V. Voss
<b>Excused</b>	J. Harris
<b>Also Present</b>	J. Reimer, M. Carter, C. Cornwell, M. Eadie, M. Learo, M. Love Public – 48
<b>Call to Order</b>	Mr. Atwater called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The pledge to the flag was done.
<b>Agenda</b>	Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow, to approve the Board Meeting agenda as presented for April 10, 2025. Yes: 6, No: 0 Motion carried.
<b>Minutes</b>	Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2025 regular meeting as presented. Yes: 6, No: 0 Motion carried.
<b>Public Forum</b>	<p>Mr. Atwater read a statement pertaining to public forums. He noted that the purpose of the public forum is to provide an opportunity for District residents to address the Board. Comments should be limited to less than three (3) minutes and be confined to subjects normally addressed at the Board level. The Board does not intend for the public meeting to be a dialogue. He noted that this is a meeting held in public; it is not a public meeting.</p> <p>The first speaker was Denise Flagler, community member, who said a prayer regarding bringing peace, answers, and wisdom to decisions pertaining to the dress code for the students.</p>



Loriann Martell introduced herself as a Science Teacher and BTU President for the District and spoke next. She noted that at the March 26th faculty meeting the staff were provided the proposed dress code language. She discussed the changes that were discussed at the meeting by Dr. Love, concerns relative to the proposed revisions and with the process. She commented that the BTU strongly objects to the proposed changes to the language siting it would open classroom teachers up to unwanted sexual harassment complaints by students, as well as by students making sexual advancements towards teachers resulting in a very uncomfortable work environment; there are some classroom spaces where this dress becomes dangerous such as the shop, kitchen or chemistry lab. She stated she felt that Section 6.1 allows her to set a standard of dress for the chemistry lab but Section 6.1.a. would allow parents/students to dispute her standards, to which she stated she does not trust Administration to back the teachers up. She commented that part of the Board's Mission and Vision has been to foster respect. The proposed language would allow for a break down of this policy by allowing students to wear hats in the building. She felt it was a sign of respect to remove hats upon entering the building. She noted that the military remove their hats when entering the building. She also thought fostering respect for oneself by dressing appropriate is important. She felt there would be a greater disruption to learning if the language was adopted. She noted that it has been the Board's policy for 30 years that teachers were to create a semi-professional atmosphere preparing students for job interviews and college. A sign of respect is the removal of one's hat. If the ability to wear hats is at the teacher's discretion, she felt it would pit teachers against teachers, and there would be more behavior issues to deal with and for Administration to resolve. She stated it was the BTU's sincere request that the Board does not adopt this proposed language and further revision is needed. She stated she provided Dr. Love a flyer that Starpoint Central School District has that is specific with pictures addressing the expectations of their dress code.

Melissa Phillips, Art Teacher, allocated her time to the teachers.

Drew Burke introduced himself as a Music Teacher in the District. He then read his written statement:

Ladies and gentlemen of the School Board and Administration, we are gathered today at a moment when our school is considering adjustment to the language in the dress code. This new language is seen by many stakeholders as creating a deeper flaw in the currently relaxed nature of the dress code. Before we embrace this change, it's important to reflect on its broader implications for both our students and the Board's core mission of education.



When the dress code changes began in June 2022, the reason given was quote: "The issues we [are] having is that some of the language in our Code of Conduct doesn't exactly match the type of fashion/trends that are available, and just because something is technically against our Code of Conduct doesn't mean it is indecent or lewd." While I believe there is room to update the language, this statement was not only untrue, in that we live in a time where more fashion than ever before is available both in store and online, but it lacked any educational rationale, which has always been the core focus of Board decisions regarding student life. I will now outline concerns about our potential language change in regards to their correlations with our mission of education. Additionally, I will address broader issues directly or tangentially connected to the dress code that are leading to a decline in student performance, yet remain unaddressed. I would like to say before I proceed that I understand our current and potentially new language does allow for discretion on the part of teachers and administration, but I also understand that it is this very discretion which is a concern to at least some individuals on both sides of this debate. I understand that statement seems vague now, but I will return to that point.

First, a dress code serves a purpose far beyond preventing as the new language states "obscene and vulgar" appearances. It's a tool for preparing students for the world they will enter after leaving these walls. As educators, it is our responsibility to guide students in understanding societal expectations, including how to function in professional environments. The way students present themselves matters. School is where they should practice responsibility in their attire, learning the level of professionalism required in more formal settings. Though I would not support the enforcement of a uniform, just as we teach age-appropriate skills in subjects like math or English, we must teach age-appropriate professional dress. A relaxed dress code undermines this vital preparation. While we must recognize that professional attire is evolving, and that it is good and valuable to challenge societal expectations that may be founded on outdated and marginalizing viewpoints, there are still collectively understood guidelines we must follow. If an outfit wouldn't be acceptable in a job interview or workplace, it probably shouldn't be acceptable in school, the place we train young people for these eventualities. It might seem well and good to leave young people to their own devices of self-exploration and self-expression but I ask that you remember, young people still need guidance. As a society we don't allow children to vote until 18 because we recognize that there are still areas they need guidance and instruction. Surely our manner of dress is less significant than who our leaders are, but it serves none the less to point out that we must have some element of Code and structure by which we can guide them as to what is and is not suitable for various occurrences. To speak artistically, we do not encourage students to make experimental 20th century art forms, until



they have learned the basic structures and motifs from which they deviate. Without a firm rule, there is no deviation, simply chaos. Furthermore, the argument that trends change and we must adapt is simply untrue. Trends are driven by capitalistic interests, not educational values. Should we let trends dictate what we teach in the classroom? Does the lack of popularity in certain subjects mean we drop them from our curriculum? From the outset a change based on what is in vogue was doomed to fail and bring about disorder. We shouldn't base decisions solely on what's popular at the moment. History has shown us that popular opinion isn't always right. Again, it is necessary that we recognize societal shifts. No one expects the children to dress like it is the 1950's, but we must teach our students to critically evaluate the world around them, making choices that reflect responsibility, respect, and personal growth.

Second, relaxing the dress code raises concerns about discipline. While the Administration is not claiming that relaxing the dress code is an easy fix to the problem of policing it, many staff members, parents, and the broader community perceive it as one more step toward eroding behavioral expectations, potentially leading to deeper behavioral issues. Reducing structure may avoid conflict, but it undermines the necessary role of discipline in education. We're already seeing a decline in respect among students—disruptive behaviors like swearing, talking back, and bullying. The dress code isn't just about clothing; it's an extension of the rules and behaviors we expect. By loosening these standards, we risk sending the message that we are catering to students' whims, weakening the boundaries that are essential for success. This is not the solution our community is asking for. There is a clear call for stricter boundaries, not fewer. By relaxing the dress code, we risk abandoning the structure our students need to succeed. We must ask ourselves: Are we preparing students for success, or simply giving them freedom at the expense of long-term growth? Additionally, I'm concerned about areas we have already slid. Items like pajama pants, backpacks, and jackets, which were previously restricted, have now become commonplace. The previous intention on the dress code was to have students recognize that they are preparing for a full day of learning and success. Wearing pajamas suggests that students haven't mentally prepared for the day; they are still in the comfort of home. Carrying backpacks and coats (in addition to the ease with which a child could hide a weapon) indicates a transient attitude—students aren't fully engaged in school; they are here for a moment and then when it is over already packed up for what comes after it. The perception these items create in students is significant. In the same way that our minds and bodies respond to professional attire like a suit or dress shoes, they react to these more casual items. Allowing students to remain in a state of transition, rather than fully engaging with their school day, undermines their readiness to learn. While self-expression is valuable, catering to the preferences of the child at the expense of reason and



educational value sends the message that not only are they the central focus of all things, increasing an attitude of entitlement and undermining authority, but also that appearance is the primary means of being noticed. We must teach students that their value is rooted in their character and contributions, not their appearance. This is a skill that will benefit them in their future careers.

Third, there is an issue with the current and proposed language that raises concern over wherein the boundaries lie. At what point are things up to discretion, and to whose discretion? Under the new guidelines, an individual could technically show up wearing a jockstrap, a towel to cover their posterior, and a sports bra, and it would fall under the letter of the law. At that point, it would be up to our discretion to intervene. But, what if I send the student down to the office only to have one of the administrators disagree with my discretionary choice? This sends a message to students that we lack consistency as a team when it comes to expectations. This would also create more work for Administration who would have students sent down constantly by teachers who are more stringent in their discretionary assessment. All of this will serve to undermine school structure, student opinions on staff solidarity and even the child's opinion on the educational value of a classroom. If my teacher is wrong about their assessment of my outfit, what else are they wrong about? And, if the Administration isn't going to enforce the rule in the same way the teacher does, why would I even worry about following rules in this teacher's class? And in regards to this discretion, why should we only be allowed to exercise discretion in such extreme cases? If we were to establish stricter and clearer language regarding what is and isn't acceptable, students would have a clearer understanding of boundaries because there would be no disagreement among faculty and staff. A firm but fair dress code would ensure consistency, while still allowing teachers to make informed decisions in specific situations.

This brings us to my mention of discretion in my opening statement. I am aware that there is concern over undue persecution of certain body types. The same outfit may seem revealing on one student but modest on another. We absolutely need to use our discretion in a way that would not create a negative body image or shame an individual for simply being who they are. Every student in this building needs to feel comfortable in their skin and adjusting strict language to ensure this fair treatment is not only sensible but absolutely necessary. These changes might mean further educating our staff on utilizing appropriate discretion but ultimately, if we can't trust their judgement to realize that an outfit may seem more revealing on one individual than another, do you really think that discernment will become easier when we allow more exposure? A tube top looks very different on two different bodies. And, per the new language, at what point do we recognize something other than revealed



genitals as obscene? The area around the pubic bone is not the genitals, nor is pubic hair. Will this area be allowed? In a world where we are concerned about the discretion of an individual to recognize one person may by virtue of their body shape show more skin than another, do you really think that job will be easier with less clothing to cover the body? I would argue, if anything, you will have greater discrimination and create a worse sense of body dysmorphia and self-image issues under the new language. Let us educate our staff on proper discernment so that all students can feel loved and accepted for who they are, rather than opening the door for more confusion and judgement.

Lastly, and of vital importance, we cannot ignore the complications that arise for faculty when students dress in more revealing ways. In today's climate, even noticing a student's attire can lead to unjust accusations, placing unnecessary risks on teachers' professional conduct. As someone who spends a great deal of time in class focusing on lower abdominal breathing, do you expect me to look at the bare stomach of a child? I can assure you that neither they or I would be comfortable with that. Yet, if I asked them to cover up so that I could do my job and observe their abdomen, I am now put in a position where I come off as perceiving things in a potentially perverse way. This creates a hostile work environment and opens the door for potential allegations of sexual harassment. Furthermore, in our world of relaxed dress code where more and more seems to be gotten away with each day, I don't always want to report the violations I do see. I don't want a student who has spent the full day walking around in what I would consider a dress code violation to know I was the one who reported them because I saw them for the first time right at the end of the day before the report came in. I don't want anyone to assume I'm noticing things I shouldn't, even if those things are body parts on full display, for fear that I will be called a predator. Why is it that students make it through a full day without being sent to the office? Because there is an inability to consistently police policy due to its already vague and lax nature which creates a serious challenge in maintaining the integrity of the learning environment while ensuring students adhere to standards.

While I understand the value of occasional breaks from formality—like pajama days or "wacky dress-up" events—these should remain exceptions, not the rule. They allow students to express individuality, but the general standard for how we present ourselves in school should align with responsibility and professionalism.

In conclusion, relaxing the dress code is not just a policy shift—it reflects the values we choose to impart to our students. A dress code is about teaching responsibility, professionalism, and respect. By maintaining a





detailed and structured dress code, we ensure our students are equipped with the tools they need to thrive, both now and in the future. Thank you.

Christine Bish, community member, thanked the other speakers. She felt the proposed language was ambiguous and left language for students to petition. She asked for further review and to make the dress code language less ambiguous. She discussed the correlation to the students and the understanding that they are valued and to hold them at a higher standard so they understand they are valuable and precious, which would then enable them the ability to obtain it. She provided examples and studies correlating to why dress code in a school environment has an impact on behavior and value of self-worth. She discussed DeSales school and uniforms and how a more formal dress, not necessarily to have uniforms at Barker, but slacks and tops with sleeves would set a higher standard. She invited Administration to call parents and put the responsibility on parents to hold a higher standard with their children. She felt structured dress codes and uniforms equates to a higher focus with students on learning and behavioral issues decrease.

Meghan Black, Elementary Teacher, agreed with the comments, noting the others already addressed her concerns, and provided her time to the other speakers.

Jessica Pavlock, Elementary Teacher and parent, agreed with the comments and noted that vague dress code policies can sexualized girls and criminalize boys and teachers.

Jamie Weller, Kindergarten Teacher and parent, noted her concern about how the little kids who go up to the high school are being exposed to various dress styles and how the younger students perceive things differently than the high school students. She provided an example of if an outfit is revealing different parts of one's body, the younger students could interpret it as being naked. She noted that the younger students think differently and she questioned how they would handle it.

Renee Atwater, community member, noted she was using Stephanie Mason's time. She appreciated the student-centered focus and that the student's voices were heard when it came to this subject. She commented that one needs to refrain to what should be worn to reflect and influences goals, and dress in alignment with one's goals vs. putting limits on it and on what has been. She stated there is a need to realign focus. She questioned if we are creating optimal atmosphere for what is acceptable and focus on education. She stated that inappropriate dress can objectify individuals, and also create self-objectification, both of which are not empowering. She commented how one can be judged by their appearance and not who they are and the dress code would be set for what is



acceptable and how it cultivates a focus of respect, focus on learning, and not being judged/judgmental. She felt the best learning environment is free from distractions. This is an opportunity to teach self-awareness and making proper choices, to socially and culturally bring awareness to all. She commented that how you see yourself and others should make one feel valued and respected. She asked if the proposed language would do that. She commented that 68.5% of those surveyed wanted to keep the dress code as is. The Mission of the school should be the focus of the dress code review vs. the language of “lewd”.

Mark Scofill, English Teacher, agreed with the comments spoken and did not have any additional input.

Kevin Bish, community member, agreed with Mr. Scofill and Mr. Burke. He noted that as a parent, the sentiment at his home is never to lower the bar, it is to raise the bar. He worried about the younger students on the bus, raising the bar with dress standards, how the dress code relates to authority. He is concerned for the teachers and protections of the staff. He is concerned about protecting the minds of the students and their safety. He asked that the bar be raised with regard to the dress code vs. lowered.

Tracy Bowerman, community member, noted that she did not wish to speak and signed the wrong sheet.

Margaret Zaepfel, community member, agreed with Mr. Burke, the BTU and others. She commented that it is an epidemic of sexualization that has taken over our children. One should wear the proper attire for where they are at such as the beach, church, school. She felt people need to know what it is and what is appropriate. Students should dress for success and we need to foster that in children.

Matthew Rose, community member, noted he is a pastor and the dress code is a guide for the parent, and there could be inequity from teacher to teacher by the proposed language which is ambiguous. He felt the school has been chasing verbiage for the right policy for a year. He wanted to keep standards high, unambiguous, and enforcement equal and not so much time spent on this matter, rather focus on education. He commented that the kids need more clear language with regard to the dress code.

Mr. Atwater noted that that represented the list of those who wanted to speak this evening. He inquired if there were any additional comments to be heard. There were no additional comments.





## **Presentations**

### Seal of Civic Readiness Presentation: Vending Machines - Owen

#### Donovan, Jake Munn, Wyatt Payne

Students Owen Donovan, Jake Munn, and Wyatt Payne introduced themselves and provided a presentation regarding their Capstone project pertaining to a vending machine idea in the school as part of their requirements for a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness for graduation. Mr. Payne discussed the rationale for having a vending machine in the school as it relates to fundraising to help student council and club activities; provide a source for students for food so they would not leave the campus tenth period, and also provide access to healthier snacks in school as a means to bring in less junk food from home or buying through other sources. Mr. Munn discussed their reasons for the development of this idea which included convenient access, more money for events to offset costs such as for prom, senior trip. He noted that the profits would be distributed equally to the students' groups. Mr. Payne discussed the process and development of this idea which included multiple meetings with Mrs. Fuerch and Mr. Carter as to how to get a machine here, purchasing, researching related food regulations, surveying students on what they would like in the machine, as well as responsibility for maintenance of the machine and restocking. They reviewed the survey results received from 160 students regarding the top ten food choices to put in the vending machine. The students thanked Mr. Carter for his assistance, as well as Mrs. Fuerch for all her work with them and support to make this idea happen.

Mr. Carter noted that the Cafeteria fund will be buying the vending machine and the initial purchase of merchandise and then it will be self-funding itself. He expects the vending machine to arrive next month.

### Seal of Civic Readiness Presentation: Cap and Gown Drive - Meghan Mallon and Evangeline Harris

Evangeline Harris and Meghan Mallon presented their Capstone project based on their idea of having a Barker caps and gowns closet here at school. Their idea was to collect gently used caps and gowns from the Barker Alumni to support sustainability efforts by reusing and recycling graduation attire that usually sits in closets for years. This would ensure affordability for future graduates who may face financial challenges as they would only need to purchase a tassel and a cap should they choose to decorate their own cap. They detailed how they would get the word out to the community and future Seniors to promote the closet, as well as having drive-thru collection events and other events to collect them. Storage options for the caps and gowns are being reviewed now.

### Principal's Update - Dr. Love

Dr. Love thanked everyone for their feedback with regard to the proposed dress code changes. She thanked the students for presenting, especially in front of such a large group. She noted the students did a lot of work on the



Capstones. She thanked Mrs. Monaco and Mr. O'Sullivan who pioneered this opportunity for the students and their support of each of them. She also gave a huge congratulations to the students, parents, and team which made the recent Music Man such a success! She said they did an amazing job. Dr. Love provided a scheduling update noting that the elementary schedule mostly set and pending the finalization of the high school schedule which is being worked on based on the students' requests and graduation requirements. The Guidance Department is working through this with students. She will be meeting with the Guidance Logistics Team and core subject teams after break to discuss courses. She noted there are no new courses being offered in the catalog next year. Summer school planning continues and letters were sent to families with responses due back by April 10<sup>th</sup> if they are interested. The summer school teachers must have their application in by April 7<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Love noted that the District is already heading into the last quarter and grades 3-8 ELA and Math testing will start tomorrow. Science testing for grades 5 and 8 will take place after break. Regents will take place in June. She noted that the District opted to take the old format Regents exam for Science as it had an option. Dr. Love noted that other districts chose to do the same. The students however, will be taking new geometry math exam. She reviewed upcoming dates, which included Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup> as the last day for Junior/Senior High students before exams, Honors and Awards scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Graduation which will be Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Director of Instructional Services/AP's Update - Mr. Learo

Mr. Learo thanked the guests for coming to the meeting tonight and sharing their thoughts. He commented it was nice to see so many attend the Board Meeting. He introduced himself to the group too. He provided a Special Education update. With regard to self-contained program planning, the District is ready to move forward with the discussion and planning of a K/1<sup>st</sup> 12:1+1 self-contained class for next school year. This class will be populated by current Barker students with the possibility of returning two current out-of-district placed students to the building. Mr. Learo will hold an informational meeting for staff soon to roll out the overview and determine what staff would like to participate as a member of the planning team. He noted that the goal is to populate the program with Barker students now to building a program for the future.

Coor. of Curriculum & Prof. Learning/AP's Update - Mr. Cornwell

Mr. Cornwell introduced himself and noted his appreciation for those in attendance. He congratulated the students for their presentations and noted this graduating class will be the first to receive the Seals of Civic Readiness for the District. He thanked Mrs. Monaco and Mr. O'Sullivan for spearheading the program.



Mr. Cornwell provided an instruction update, noting that he and Dr. Love attended a webinar session focused on uplifting all students in March which was put on by the NYS Department of Education which focused on how school districts across the state are implementing programs that enhance overall student wellbeing, partnering with families and communities, and collaborating with a range of stakeholders to support all students. Some specific topics discussed included: creating diverse student support teams, elevating student voice through student youth forums/advocacy groups, and school eligibility policies. Ideas on fostering greater community/family involvement were also shared.

On Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, he attended a literacy workshop on the topic of developing a district early literacy plan. A Barker teacher also attended on her own time. This workshop was put on by Angela Hanlin. She is a former teacher and administrator who works with districts on literacy improvement efforts across the country. He commented that he found the workshop extremely helpful and validating. The work Barker has started in District over the past year or so with regard to data driven instruction in a collaborative model to strengthen its collective teacher efficacy (effectiveness) was referred to repeatedly as examples of best practices that successful schools engage in throughout the workshop. He commented that the District needs to continue to stay the course in this area and improvements in student learning will occur.

Mr. Cornwell stated the NYS testing in grades 3-8 ELA, Math, and Science begins tomorrow. The first assessment is in ELA, followed by Math and Science in that order. The testing is fully computer-based. ELA and Math are administered over a two-day period, while Science is administered in one session, and only to 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mr. Cornwell continued, and noted that on the agenda tonight are two resolutions regarding curriculum and instruction. The first involves data protection agreements. NYS has developed a consortium that allows districts to enter into data protection agreements with vendors in a more efficient, streamlined fashion. Previously, districts had to negotiate their own agreements with technology vendors. Now, using this consortium districts can “piggyback” onto existing agreements that a vendor might already have with other districts or BOCES. The second involves technology textbooks/resources. With the technology classrooms undergoing renovations and being brought up to date, the District is taking steps to ensure that its curriculum is also up to date. These resources are very current and reflect best practices in teaching technology and trades content to students.

#### Student Update - Miss Stoll

Miss Stoll noted she did not have any information to report this month.



Financial Update - Mr. Carter

Mr. Carter noted that the Board has been working monthly since October on the preparation of the budget, along with Administration and the Budget Advisory Committee. He then discussed the 2025-2026 proposed budget, noting that Section 10.E – Approve the 2025-2026 Tri-Component Budget Statement and Budget Notice, and 10.F. has the Property Tax Report Card information contained within. Last year's budget totaled \$18,895,718. The proposed 2025-2026 budget total is \$22,475,710, and increase of \$3,579,992 or 18.95%. Mr. Carter highlighted some of the reasons for the changes as outlined in the line by line of the tri-component budget summary. He noted that most of the increase is due to Special Education and Debt Service. The 15% increase in Special Education does not include the addition of the 12:1:1 program, which is anticipated to be less than the expenses if all students were in out of district tuition placements. Overall, Instruction Regular School decreased \$262,270 primarily due to nine retirements accounted for. This part of the budget also includes the addition of an Assistant Principal. The same number of positions have been maintained in the budget but at an estimated lower starting salary. Insurance is projected to increase over \$57,467 or 46.90%. Pupil transportation increased approximately 2% as the District works with STA and is working on a contract extension. Total Employee Benefits, which encompasses retirement accounts, social security, health insurance, workers compensation, dental, increased \$37,050 or 0.94%. Total Debt Service increase substantially with Serial Bond Principal and interest changes a combined \$1,767,029 or 857.42%. He noted that the Debt Service will be offset by building aid.

The release of the pending state aid numbers is impacting the finalization of the revenue portion of the budget. Mr. Carter noted that the February run is being utilized and resulting in an estimated \$14.2 million, with an estimated increase of 20% in state aid. Foundational aid is projected to increase 2%.

Mr. Carter discussed the property tax report card with the projected budgeted revenue amount of \$22,475,710 as previously mentioned is an 18.95% increase from the prior year. The proposed tax levy is \$5,283,993 and the library portion an additional \$98,834 resulting in a 2.6% tax levy

Mr. Carter also discussed the other sources of revenue given the decrease in the energy cessation fund of \$263,000. The PILOT revenue from Mayer Bros will provide approximately \$36,000; tuition charges; interest on cash he noted is the vast majority of other revenue as the District made over \$200,000 in cash this year which is budgeted for in 2025-2026. He then discussed the use of the appropriated fund balance as discussed at Board and with the Budget Advisory Committee as outlined in the Reserve Plan



Policy. \$992,000 of appropriated fund balance is being used from the end of the current fiscal year. We are also budgeting \$180,000 from the retirement reserve to offset expenses for the Employee Retirement System.

He commented that he does not want to spend the monies out of the appropriated fund balance and hoping not to use the pending revenue, but as the District does not have a state budget yet, and there is a sharp drop in Energy Cessation Mitigation Fund revenue.

Mr. Carter noted that the Budget Advisory has been assisting with the development of the budget newsletter and there will be one final review by them prior to printing. This will be distributed to the community the last week in April, beginning of May.

Mr. Atwater noted that he felt the budget looked solid and he appreciated all the work on it by so many people.

### **Superintendent's Information**

Dr. Reimer noted that an email was issued today that the state is still in a deadlock with regard to the final budget. One item the District is waiting to hear is with regard to the use of cell phones guidance. He noted that the District will not make any decisions with regard to the usage until that is received which he anticipates to be released in the next several days. He noted that he also anticipates there will be extra monies in the foundation aid which will help to offset appropriations.

Dr. Reimer then discussed the Federal Department of Education. He noted that there has been a lot of things happening lately due to changes in the Department of Education. The District continues to follow all requirements but is working on safeguards in place for potential changes that have been made.

With regard to Capital work, he noted that a lot continues to be done. The 2022 Capital Improvement Project is almost finished and the rooms will soon be turned over once the heating is completed which is anticipated to take place in June. Dr. Reimer discussed the dedication of the library media center and conversations with Mr. Lowell McAdam about the same and a potential date.

The secured entry work continues, and the Tech Area move continues. Dr. Reimer noted how the planning of the Tech wing work is being done to accommodate the students' needs through year end. The Tech computer room was moved up to the library too. He noted the staff has been very flexible and handling all the changes necessary to keep the project moving. Work is on track to be done by the beginning of the school year currently. Dr. Reimer then discussed a change order on the



boiler that is on the agenda for approval for the feed tank and pump replacement.

Dr. Reimer also discussed a leadership retreat by our regional JMT which is for all BOCES in our area that is scheduled for July 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> which includes one day for Board of Education members. He provided information to the members and noted if they were interested to contact him or Mrs. Eadie. The cost of the retreat is covered through the co-ser. He also noted there were a number of good speakers scheduled to present.

## **Policies/Plans**

The first reading of the following policies was presented.

5512	Reserve Funds
5520	Extraclassroom Activity Fund
5530	Petty Cash Funds And Cash In School Buildings
5540	Publication Of District's Annual Financial Statement
5550	Maintenance Of Fiscal Effort (Title I Programs)
5551	Allocation Of Title I, Part A Funds In The District
5560	Use Of Federal Funds For Political Expenditures
5570	Financial Accountability
5571	Allegations Of Fraud
5572	Audit Committee
5573	Internal Audit Function

There were no questions raised or comments.

The second reading of policies was presented. There were not comments or changes brought forward.

5322	Use Of The District Cell Phone
5323	Reimbursement For Meals/Refreshments
5330	Budget Transfers
5340	Borrowing Of Funds
5410	Purchasing: Competitive Bidding And Offering
5411	Procurement Of Goods And Services
5412	Alternative Formats For Instructional Materials
5413	Procurement: Uniform Grant Guidance For Federal Awards
5510	Accounting Of Funds
5511	Maintenance Of Fund Balance
3421	Title IX and Sex Discrimination



There were no changes recommended. Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to approve the policies as presented.  
Yes: 6, No: 0  
Motion carried.

## Education

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of the Barker Central School District, through its affiliation with a locally based Regional Information Center, participates with the ROC and desires, for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, to authorize the ROC to enter into Data Privacy Agreements and related exhibits (DPAs) with vendors and third-party contractors that include the requirements of, and compliance with, New York State Education Law Section 2-d and Part 121 Regulations (collectively, “Ed Law 2d”) related to student personally identifiable information (PII) and certain Teacher and Principal APPR data;

**WHEREAS**, the ROC also partners with NYSED, the Access4Learning Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) and The Education Cooperative (TEC), to negotiate and approve Ed Law 2-d compliant DPAs;

**WHEREAS**, the DPAs are presented to school districts and/or BOCES for final execution and do not require the expenditure of funds beyond those budgeted; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, Board of Education of the Barker Central School District authorizes the attorneys designated by the ROC to negotiate and approve of DPAs for software and/or technology resources; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Barker Board of Education grants the ROC and its designated attorneys the authority to negotiate the terms and conditions of DPAs and take such actions so as to effectuate the purposes and intent of this resolution.

Yes: 6, No: 0  
Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the following textbook series to be adopted for the Technology Department effective with the 2025-2026 school year: Modern Metalworking 11<sup>th</sup> edition (copyright 2023) G-W Publisher.

Yes: 6, No: 0  
Motion carried.





Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the following items from the library collection be declared excess property and that the Superintendent, or his designee, be authorized to dispose of said items.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

#### Dress Code Discussion/Action

Dr. Love thanked everyone for sharing their voices as the goal was to get stakeholder feedback. She noted that everything the District does is based on its Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan of three goals which she read. She then reviewed the timeline of the project which commenced in March 2024 as a result of discussions at Board after students brought forward a request pertaining to hats/hoods. The survey went to staff members regarding the wearing of hats and hoods, and the current cell phone language at that time. In October 2024 the Code of Conduct Survey to stakeholders (parents, students, staff members) regarding the current dress code language and cell phone regulations. She noted that the cell phone aspect was put on hold until further guidance was received from the state. An Ad Hoc Committee was created and met in February 2025 to discuss the current dress code language and areas to potentially edit. This group was made up of teachers, students, parents, and Board Members. This feedback was taken and based on feedback received the Code was taken and word-smithed. The group then met again during March and discussed edits to sections 6.1 and 6.2 based on feedback to present to the Board at the April meeting. She reviewed the current dress code, noting that Sections 1 and 2 were the areas addressed and all other parts of the Code remain unchanged. She then reviewed the results of the initial survey noting that 65.8% opted to keep the regulation as written at that time with regard to the full Code. With regard to hats and hoods, 34.5% selected to keep the regulation as written, 21.4% were to allow hats and hoods. She noted that there were 336 responses. The current Code does not permit hats and hoods to be worn during the school day. Section 6.1 which addressed the usage of “lewd” had 76.5% respond to keep the regulation as written, 19.3% selected to include more specific definition of lewd (list specific clothing items that are not acceptable). Dr. Love reviewed the makeup of the Ad Hoc Committee participants. She highlighted the purpose the Committee was driven by a review process that aimed to thoughtfully examine Barker Central School's Dress Code policy and provide input to the Board of Education on whether to maintain the current language or implement changes. The process would ensure alignment of the policy with the District's Vision, Mission, and prioritize the District's Strategic goals by: (1) enhancing student engagement through a collaborative and inclusive approach to the dress code; (2) promoting a respectful environment; and ensuring instructional outcomes are supported by a dress code that aligns with data-driven practices and fosters equitable



opportunities for student success. She noted that by grounding decisions in those guiding principles, the panel sought to provide feedback regarding the Code that reflected the diverse needs of the school community while upholding a culture of respect and academic excellence. The Committee was also asked to consider clarity and language; inclusivity; compliance with NYS and Federal laws, anti-discrimination laws, or District policies; enforcement and flexibility – is the policy enforceable and appropriate in a fair manner. Are there considerations for exceptions with regard to enforceability and flexibility. Does the Code align with culture, does it reflect the District's image, values and educational atmosphere it aims to foster? They also needed to consider specificity vs. ambiguity – does the policy need more detail or is it too prescriptive. She noted the key takeaways from the stakeholders which included: (1) the usage of “lewd” being outdated, subjective, and potentially sexualized language which she commented reflects a lot of the feedback this evening; (2) balance between current fashion and appropriateness for a learning environment; (3) “lewd” allows for inconsistent interpretations of the expectations; and (4) suggested replacing “lewd” with more clearer, objective terms to eliminate potential bias and ensure fair enforcement. She then discussed the key take-aways with regard to hats and hoods. Some stakeholders felt that removing hats/hoods as a sign of respect and decorum; others viewed wearing hats as a way for students to be comfortable at school and express themselves; the general tone was to pilot allowing hats in some way, but not in all spaces, and allowing teachers to make decisions about hats in their classrooms; specific language was needed to specify against hats that interrupts learning; although hats could obstruct the view of a face, students are more easily identifiable from the multiple camera angles than a hood; and hoods cause safety concerns and distraction concerns. The minutes from the first meeting were brought to the Board for review and discussion which resulted in the second meeting for the wordsmithing process. She noted the participants at that meeting, commenting some were unable to attend as the same people were invited and two administrators also joined the meeting. She reviewed the current policy and reviewed the changes that were suggested with the use of Chat GPT and the resultant suggestions after a lengthy discussion at the meeting which were presented to the Board for direction to make it clearer and for clarification. She noted that the suggested language with regard to hats/hoods was split as to if there was a place to wear hats that could be appropriate in the learning environment but with regard to hoods, most concurred to not being able to wear hoods. Dr. Love commented that the suggested language was presented at a Faculty Meeting for staff feedback after the Committee's second meeting. She provided the feedback and the Starpoint Central School District Code she received as examples for the Board too. She also noted that she looked to the Board for guidance with regard to the current language suggested. Mr. Atwater thanked Dr. Love and those who worked on the project. He commented that it is a sensitive



issue that needs to be decided upon. Mrs. Gow noted she was on both committee meetings and was in favor of what was written and the timeline. She thought it was defined and thought students should be given a chance to try hats. Mrs. Gancasz noted that where was it okay for tube tops, and that the current language could result in the dress code being out of control, she agreed with the Starpoint version of the dress code which had been circulated, and to make the Code simple. She was not sure she agreed on the timeline and trial run idea, and felt it should be simple and there has been too much time spent on this. She noted that the District needs to say this is what we are going to do, and the big issue is consistency across the District as key. She felt that there was a need to go back and simplify, and get clarity and put it out there. Mrs. Voss remembered month's ago she was looking at more restrictive language when in school and felt she was of the minority at the first meeting and mostly listened and wished she had spoke up after hearing the comments today. She suggested keeping as it is now and with definitive language for next year. She noted she appreciated the input this evening and the different perspectives of Mrs. Weller and position of male teachers, commented that the Code is not here to body shame, and felt there should be no hats/hoods, and to keep it the same. Mrs. Carnes thanked everyone for sharing the views and providing a lot of perspective. She also liked Starpoint's version with the pictures and thought it was cut and dry. She thought the group needed to re-evaluate and keep the current policy in place and review based on feedback. Mr. Sweeney, Jr. felt there was a need to put the brakes on, that the suggested language was going backwards, and in agreement with the feedback and Starpoint's example. He said to keep the Code as is and maybe over the summer and fall review how the District can be more restrictive. Mr. Atwater stated that the consensus of the Board was to not adopt the revised suggested language tonight, Starpoint's format was good, and there was a need to go back to the well, and revise based on community and faculty input. He asked how the Board wanted to proceed. The Board summarized to consider more specific language, the intent being not to make it more liberal but rather more specific, and determine next steps. Dr. Reimer outlined the full Code review timeline process with a work session in June, public hearing in July, and presentation to the Board in August. He noted though that the Board can make the process the way they want it, which stakeholders they want, and Administration will coordinate for them. Mr. Atwater thought that it would be worthy of another group review and suggested tabling the subject this evening, and pickup at the next meeting. Dr. Love noted she would do what the Board suggested for the process. Mr. Atwater asked about a timeline driven by a pilot of the language changes. Dr. Love agreed that the Board should take the next month to think about the comments this evening, regroup in May, and review in June. Mr. Atwater asked the Board to think of elements they want included for the May meeting and next steps.



Upon conclusion of the discussion, a motion to table the matter until May was brought forward by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., and seconded by Mrs Voss.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

#### **Personnel Items**

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of David Carson as Summer School Coordinator for the 2025-2026 school year effective April 1, 2025 at \$50.00 per hour through August 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Abrielle Harding to shadow and observe the second-grade level classroom with Mrs. Zablocki from approximately May 1 - June 30, 2025 for 120 hours as part of his post-secondary for Elementary Ed with Keuka College.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the resolution regarding authority of the District Clerk with regarding the notice of annual meeting and election without reconvening a Board meeting or Board approval.

**Resolved,** that the Barker Central School District Board of Education hereby authorizes the District Clerk to amend and publish a revised Notice of Annual School District Meeting and Vote as may be necessary to comply with any requirements set forth in the Executive Order of the Governor of New York State, other federal or state legislation, or as may be necessary in conjunction with the various district-wide projects.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Election Inspectors, and Election Inspector Alternates for the May 20, 2025 Annual Meeting at a rate of \$16.00 per hour, and designate the District Clerk to name another Election Inspector if absence should the need arise.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Matthew Costello as Election Custodian with a stipend of



\$120.00 for the May 20, 2025 Annual Meeting, and designate the District Clerk to name another Election Custodian in his absence should the need arise.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Marcia Frost as Election Chairman/Chief Inspector for the May 20, 2025 Annual Meeting, and designate the District Clerk to name another Election Inspector in her absence should the need arise.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the leave of absence for Julia Domiano, ENL Teacher on or about May 16, 2025 through a date to be determined.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Loriann Martell with accommodation and regret as a Science Teacher effective June 30, 2025 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Paul Sanford with accommodation and regret as a Physical Education Teacher effective June 30, 2025 and approve his appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Karen Schian with accommodation and regret as a Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Teacher effective July 1, 2025 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 2, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Cheryl Johnson with accommodation and regret as Music Teacher effective June 30, 2025, and approve her



appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Pilar Voutour with accommodation and regret as an Elementary Education Teacher effective June 30, 2025, and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12 at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Michael Gendrue as Guidance Counselor with accommodation and regret effective June 30, 2025 and approve his appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Leann Briggs with accommodation and regret as an Elementary Education Teacher effective June 30, 2025 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12 at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Heather McIntyre with accommodation and regret as a Science Teacher effective July 1, 2025 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12 at the per diem rate effective July 2, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Kate Broderick with accommodation and regret as a Foreign Language Teacher effective July 1, 2025 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 2, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.



Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Joy Dabill with accommodation and regret as a Special Education Teacher effective June 27, 2026, and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 28, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Amy Tierney-Luthart with accommodation and regret as a Special Education Teacher effective June 30, 2026, and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of William Bruning with accommodation and regret as a Physical Education and Health Teacher effective June 30, 2026, and approve his appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Thomas R. Mallon with accommodation and regret as a Tech/Industrial Arts Teacher effective June 30, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Wendy Pellow with accommodation and regret as a Special Education Teacher effective June 30, 2026, and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Leslie Mocarski with accommodation and regret as an Elementary Education Teacher effective December 4, 2026 and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective December 5, 2026.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.





Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Cynthia Calandra with accommodation and regret as an Elementary Education Teacher effective June 30, 2027, and approve her appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2027.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Jeffrey W. Pyskaty with accommodation and regret as a Math Teacher effective June 30, 2027, and approve his appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2027.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Jeffrey Costello with accommodation and regret as a Teaching Assistant effective June 30, 2027 and approve his appointment as a Substitute Teacher, grades PreK-12, at the per diem rate effective July 1, 2027.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Cameron Calandra as a volunteer track assistant for the Spring 2025 season of the 2024-2025 school year.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

## **Business & Financial**

### **Items**

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to accept the Warrant Report for January 31, 2025 and February 28, 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to accept the Extraclassroom Report dated March 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to accept the Treasurer's Report dated March 2025.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.



Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the proposed budget of expenditures of the Barker Central School District for the 2025-2026 school year in the amount of \$22,475,710 and direct that such proposed budget of expenditures be submitted at the annual meeting of the qualified voters of the Barker Central School District, Niagara and Orleans Counties, State of New York, as Proposition #1 scheduled on May 20, 2025 subject to further federal or state directives.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the 2025-2026 Tri-Component Budget Statement and Budget Notice.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the Property Tax Report Card upon approval of the 2025-2026 Barker Central School Budget.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gow to approve the change order to the contract for the 2022 Capital Improvement Project for Nairy Mechanical Inc. in the amount of \$34,852.00.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the Claims Audit Report dated January and February 2025.

### **End of Public Session**

Motion by Mrs. Gow, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz to adjourn public session at 9:02 p.m., and move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employment history of particular persons.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

### **Executive Session**

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to approve the adjournment of the Executive Session at 9:35 p.m., and return to Public Session.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.



**Public Session/  
Adjournment**

A motion was then made by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, Jr., to end the Public Session and adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie  
District Clerk