



PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

Merrimack School District
<http://www.isone.com/~merrpbc>

Minutes
October 13, 2003

Present: W. Morrison, C. Morrison, T. Koenig, F. Rothhaus, S. Heinrich and School Board Liaison P. McGrath.

Excused: K. Powell.

Also Participating: School Board Chair K. Coleman, Business Administrator M. Shevenell, MMS Principal T. Levesque, Superintendent M. Chiafery, MES Principal K. Custer, RFS Principal F. Hoell, TFS Principal L. Carter, Assistant Superintendent D. Woelflein.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by W. Morrison who announced that the meeting scheduled for September 22, 2003 had been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.

M. Chiafery told the Committee that she was aware that it was waiting for answers to several questions, including bussing, in order to finish its report and apologized for the delay. She suggested that the Committee report needed to be submitted in early December as it may have implications on what the School Board would be proposing as warrant articles.

Transportation/Bussing Plans

M. Chiafery told the Committee that the Administration has formed a transportation committee of Dick Dupont, representatives from Laidlaw, and building administrators to look at options for bussing students when the new middle school opens. She indicated the transportation committee is looking at several variations:

- Option 1 – four bus runs: elementary, upper elementary, middle school, and high school.
- Option 2 – three bus runs: elementary, upper elementary & middle schools, high school
- Option 3 – two bus runs: elementary & upper elementary schools, and middle & high schools.

She noted that the district has some new software that is helping plot bus routes, and bus populations. In addition to routes and bus capacities, there will be questions of fleet availability, cost and affect on starting and ending times of the school day. She also stated she hoped a decision would be made by early November as to which option the administration would be proposing to the School Board.

S. Heinrich asked if going to bigger buses was being considered. M. Chiafery that the current 70 person bus was preferable at this time. S. Heinrich suggested that it may make financial sense to use a larger bus on some routes.

T. Levesque brought up the issue of students driving to school and the resultant parking and traffic issues.

F. Hoell wanted Committee members to realize this was a unique, “once in a lifetime opportunity” for most of the administrators involved and the decisions reached will have a long-term impact.

T. Koenig stated he felt that mapping bus routes using software was a good technique for a short-term view of district needs.

S. Heinrich noted that the software will allow the district to easily and regularly update bus routes.

W. Morrison raised the issue of protecting student address information when posting the various charts that the software produces.

P. McGrath noted that another issue that the Transportation Committee is encountering is that many children ride buses to and/or from a daycare option rather than their homes. This makes plotting bus routes difficult.

M. Chiafery told the Committee that the Transportation Committee had met on September 15th and would be coming back to the PBC for input on their recommendations before going to the School Board.

Mastricola Renovation Report

M. Chiafery told the Committee that she expects to have information regarding upper elementary school “organization” by October 15th. The Administration is still determining how the federal legislation for “High Quality Teachers” will affect the proposed teaching model. They are currently looking at two person teaching teams.

C. Morrison asked if redistricting was being considered. M. Chiafery told the Committee she would like the Committee to be involved with an outside consultant to look at potential redistricting to be implemented with the opening of Public Kindergarten in the 2005-06 budget.

C. Morrison told the Committee that she has heard that trees on the Buker site will be selected to be followed as part of the UNH “White Pines” Project. The trees on the Mastricola site will no longer be part of the study.

M. Chiafery told the Committee that there has been a dramatic drop in the funds the district will be receiving from the state adequacy grant. As a result, the Administration is looking at the possibility of proposing no, or only minimal, renovations at the Mastricola complex. They may suggest only inexpensive, cosmetic enhancements as part of the Maintenance budget. Their primary concerns are safety issues and ways to enhance the learning environment. One of the safety issues M. Chiafery raised was asbestos abatement in the hallways. Some of the enhancement issues raised include additional lighting in the corridor, and painting walls and lockers

The current plan is to house the 5th grade on the first floor and the 6th grade on the second floor; all homerooms to be in the newer parts of the building. Classrooms in the older sections will be utilized for ancillary subjects and SpEd rooms. They are suggesting that the homerooms be located as close to one of several proposed large instructional areas, each of which has water and many electrical outlets.

In response to Committee questions the following information was brought up:

- There is currently no plan to move the main office.
- Sprinklers are not planned as no construction is proposed.
- The Committee would prefer to draft a list of suggested renovations, each given justification and a priority and then let the School Board decide which, if any, to propose.
- The categories used in the town C.I.P. are Compulsory, Urgent, Necessary, and Desirable.
- An issue that needs to be considered is safety versus aesthetics. Safety changes will cost more, but may be more important than aesthetic changes.
- Compulsory renovations might include code issues like door locks, fire alarm strobes, and secondary exits from each room.
- The School Board is considering a renovation line in the budget, which would then become part of the default budget.
- Some committee members felt, if all the needed renovations were not being proposed this year, that a plan for the rest of the renovations should be presented along with those proposed.
- Some committee members felt that any renovations should be proposed as warrant articles rather than in the operating budget.
- If major renovations are proposed, the State Fire Marshall is involved and could require sprinklers.
- Committee members had differing opinions on the importance of sprinklers.
- If asbestos removal is proposed, it could be accomplished over the summer, but would need to be scheduled as soon as possible.
- There was some discussion about the need to see how the building and resulting upper elementary educational program “shakes out” during its first year of operation. There may be other things that have not been suggested that crop up during the first year of operation as an upper elementary school. Alternately, there could be some that it turns out are not needed.

W. Morrison passed out copies of the “first Monday” attendance figures to Committee members.

S. Heinrich made a motion to adjourn. Second: F. Rothhaus. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,