

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
April 19, 2010
Merrimack High School – Cafeteria**

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman Thornton, Board members Barnes, Ortega, Swonger and Student Representative Ortega. Also present were Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Business Administrator Shevenell.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Vaillancourt led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that Student Representative Caitlin Ortega would arrive late to the meeting. She welcomed newly elected Christopher Ortega and Shannon Barnes to the School Board. She noted that Christopher Ortega was Student Representative Ortega was the first father and daughter team that we have had on the School Board.

2. School Board Reorganization

Board member Swonger moved (seconded by Board member Barnes) to nominate Board member Vaillancourt for the position of School Board Chair.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board member Barnes moved (seconded by Board member Ortega) to nominate Board member Thornton for the position of School Board Vice Chair.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

3. Approval of April 5, 2010 Minutes

Vice Chair Thornton moved (seconded by Board member Swonger) to approve the April 5, 2010 minutes.

Vice Chair Thornton requested the following changes to the April 5, 2010 minutes.

- Board member Coburn was not in attendance at the meeting and requested that her name be removed from the list of attendees at the top of page 1 of 9.
- Page 5 of 9, second full paragraph, last line, change "...that she people..." to read "...that people..."

Board member Swonger requested the following changes to the April 5, 2010 minutes.

- Page 6 of 9, section 8, paragraph 4, add the following phrase to the end of the sentence "... and still be within the desired class sizes."
- Page 7 of 9, comments section, first paragraph, last sentence, change the word "there" to "their".

Board member Vaillancourt requested the following change to the April 5, 2010 minutes.

- Page 7 of 9, line one, change the spelling of the word "Counselor" to "Councilor".

The motion passed as amended 3-0-2 with Board members Ortega and Barnes abstaining.

4. Public Participation (15 Minutes)

Andy Schneider, 34 Woodward Road, spoke as Budget Committee Vice Chair. He stated that the Budget Committee was expected to hold an organizational meeting in late May. Plans to address the next budget will be discussed.

Mr. Schneider spoke to the agenda item #11, formal consideration of additional half-time business teacher at Merrimack High School. He stated that the Budget Committee added funds back into the 2010-2011 budget for the half-time business teacher position at Merrimack High School. He asked the Board to recall the discussions of the Budget Committee when addressing agenda item #11.

Barbara Publicover, 75 Amherst Road, spoke as a parent and facilitator of the Special Education Parent Support Group in Merrimack. She reminded parents of students receiving special education services that April 24, 2010 was the deadline to respond to the survey. She announced that last year Merrimack's survey participation rate was 29% compared to the state survey participation rate of 15%. She encouraged parents to complete the survey by mail or the web.

5. Commitment to Board Code of Ethics

Board members voluntarily signed the Code of Ethics document for the 2010-2011 school year.

6. Consent Agenda

- Teacher Nomination

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher nomination.

- Jan Moynihan-Cooney, English Teacher at Merrimack High School

- Teacher Retirements

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher retirements.

- Susan Krolkowski, Science Teacher at Merrimack High School
- William Sousa, Social Studies Teacher at Merrimack High School
- Al Simoes, English Teacher at Merrimack High School
- Theresa Maki, Special Education Teacher at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

- Teacher Resignation

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher resignation.

- Lisa DiNucci, French Teacher at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Board member Swonger moved (seconded by Board member Ortega) to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

7. Request to Use School Grounds for Midway on July 4th

Chair Vaillancourt introduced Kevin Lemos.

Kevin Lemos, an operator of a food service concession company in Hudson, informed the Board that he was interested in taking over responsibilities for the July 4th midway activities at no cost to the town. He reported that Town Manager Keith Hickey asked him to meet with the Chief of Police and the School Board before a permit would be issued.

Mr. Lemos reported that details regarding a midway dumpster, trash pick up and portable toilets still needed to be confirmed with town of Merrimack.

Mr. Lemos announced that he would pay for the cost of police detail for the length of time following the parade through the start of the evening fireworks.

Mr. Lemos asked the School Board for permission to use the high school parking lot for the midway activities on July 4th, school district electricity for refrigeration purposes from the evening of July 3rd through the morning of July 4th, and access to water for hand washing purposes. He explained that he has a million dollar liability insurance policy that could identify the school district as a policy holder or an additional insured. He stated that he could provide the Board with references, if requested.

Mr. Lemos stated that he would prefer to provide power to the midway on July 4th with his large generator rather than rely on the electrical boxes which have been unreliable under heavy usage in the past.

Mr. Lemos stated that he anticipated asking local non-profit groups to volunteer their time to run some of the attractions.

Student Representative Ortega arrived at this time.

Superintendent Chiafery added that she and Mr. Lemos had discussed a minimal fee of \$75 for the use of the parking lot because of his for-profit entity.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the \$75 fee for use of the parking lot was in keeping with the fee assessed to the organization that uses the parking lot for motorcycle safety training.

Mr. Lemos stated that the \$75 fee for use of the parking lot was reasonable.

Board member Ortega applauded Mr. Lemos for his efforts to maintain the tradition of the July 4th midway. He asked Mr. Lemos to clarify his need for access to the electrical boxes in the parking lot.

Mr. Lemos responded that he expected most of the midway equipment to be powered by his large generator. He clarified that he would need to use the school district's electrical power boxes located on poles in the parking lot for a few appliances.

Board member Ortega stated that he received the impression that Mr. Lemos was not confident that the town would commit to providing trash pick up, barrels, and a dumpster.

Mr. Lemos stated that Board member Ortega's impression was accurate. He added that he planned to facilitate clean up in the midway area to the best of his ability.

Board member Swonger requested that a representative from the town of Merrimack, the School District, and Mr. Lemos meet to finalize the details for the July 4th midway within the next two weeks.

Board member Barnes stated that she would like the town to provide an itemized list of July 4th midway expenses that Mr. Lemos would be responsible to pay. For example, she would like to know how many portable toilets and barrels Mr. Lemos would be expected to pay for based upon the expected capacity and usage. She stated that she would like the itemized list of expenses prior to the Board's vote on the usage of the parking lot.

Chair Vaillancourt stated that the Town Manager and the Town Council announced during a recent Town Council meeting that money for the July 4th midway had been cut from the budget. She stated that the July 4th midway has been a town event for years. She felt that if the town could not afford to pay for the midway activities and did not provide Mr. Lemos with a detail list of July 4th midway expenses, then the school district had no business offering up its parking lot.

Chair Vaillancourt asked Superintendent Chiafery to schedule a meeting with herself, Superintendent Chiafery, Town Manager Hickey and Mr. Lemos within the next two weeks. The purpose of the meeting will be to define responsibility for expenses related to the midway activities.

Chair Vaillancourt thanked Mr. Lemos for taking an interest in the midway tradition.

8. Request for School District Representative on the Town Center Committee

Chair Vaillancourt introduced Tracy Bull.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that the iTRaC Committee was formed for the purpose of reviewing walk ways and trails in Merrimack. Peter Flood, Chairman of the iTRaC Committee asked Superintendent Chiafery to recommend a parent who was engaged in the School District who would be willing to serve on the Town Center Committee.

Superintendent Chiafery announced that Tracy Bull had served on the iTRaC Committee and that she had also agreed to serve on the Town Center Committee.

Mrs. Bull distributed copies of the iTRaC Committee's formal report to the two new School Board members. She explained that the iTRaC Committee formed a charge that a permanent Town Center Committee be formed for the purpose of implementing the plan.

Vice Chair Thornton thanked Mrs. Bull for volunteering to serve on the Town Center Committee.

Board member Barnes appreciated the continuity from the iTRaC Committee to the Town Center Committee and thanked Mrs. Bull for the work she was about to undertake.

Board member Ortega thanked Mrs. Bull for providing him with a copy of the iTRaC Committee report and for agreeing to participate on the Town Center Committee.

Tracy Bull clarified that she did not know the names of the other individuals who would be serving on the Town Center Committee. She stated that she would share that information with the Board as it became available to her.

Chair Vaillancourt stated that the Town has created great plans in the past; however, implementation of those plans has been difficult in the past. She supported Mrs. Bull as the School District's representative on the Town Center Committee.

Chair Vaillancourt stated that the approval of a School District representative to serve on the Town Center Committee would appear on the next consent agenda, unless a board member requested that it be a separate agenda item.

9. Request to Commissioner for School Calendar Less Than 180 Days for James Mastricola Elementary School

Superintendent Chiafery reported that on February 10, 2010 the students at James Mastricola Elementary School did not have school due to a mechanical malfunction of the fire panel at that school.

Superintendent Chiafery stated rather than have the students at James Mastricola Elementary School attend school for one additional day at the end of the year, she would prefer to select the instructional hour option for that school only. She explained that the state requirement for instructional hours at the elementary school level was 945 hours per year. She reported that the 179 days of school for the students at James Mastricola Elementary School would be equivalent to 984.5 hours of instruction, which exceeds the minimum requirement.

Superintendent Chiafery asked the Board for approval to petition Commissioner Barry for a one day waiver for the students at James Mastricola Elementary School and to waive the two week rule.

Board member Ortega stated that he was in support of the petition for a one day waiver. He questioned why the District opted for the 180 day option when the requirement can be met more readily using the instructional hour option.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the New Hampshire Department of Education prefers school districts to complete 180 days of school; however, the number of instructional hours is an option under extenuating circumstances.

Board member Swonger moved (seconded by Vice Chair Thornton) to approve the request to use the count of instructional hours for James Mastricola Elementary School for the school year and to waive the two week rule.

Board member Swonger felt that one additional day for one school would not be productive.

Board member Barnes emphasized that the number of instructional hours exceeds the number required by the New Hampshire Department of Education. No child in this district was limited in any educational opportunity by this motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. School Board Committee Assignments for 2010-2011

Chair Vaillancourt asked Board members to submit their committee assignment preferences to her as soon as possible. A complete assignment list would be distributed prior to the May 3, 2010 meeting.

Chair Vaillancourt questioned if the Merrill's Marauders Bridge Trails Project Committee was still active.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the Merrill's Marauders Bridge Trails Project Committee does not have a regular monthly meeting, but that it is an active committee.

Board member Swonger asked if the science, technology, arts, and health curriculum committees were expected to be more active than the others.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that he and Chair Vaillancourt had plans to talk tomorrow to discuss the expectations of the various curriculum committees for next year and that additional information would follow. He stated that the science, technology, arts, and health curricula would be active and that efforts would be directed toward construction. The math and social studies curricula required an oversight of the implementation.

11. Formal Consideration of Addition of Half Time Business Teacher Position at Merrimack High School

Chair Vaillancourt explained that the School Board removed one half-time business teacher position at Merrimack High School from the 2010-2011 budget. She stated that the Budget Committee voted to add \$22,000 to the bottom line of the budget with the recommendation that that money be used to fund the half-time business teacher position. The voters approved the 2010-2011 budget as presented by the Budget Committee.

Board member Barnes moved (seconded by Board member Swonger) that a half-time business teacher position be restored to the 2010-2011 budget.

Board member Barnes expressed her support for the additional staff, the DECA program, and the opportunity for high school students to obtain college credit.

Board member Swonger expressed concern that some of the classes would not have been able to handle the full number of registrants without the half-time teacher position.

Board member Swonger asked if the introduction to sports management class could be offered in the event the half-time business teaching position was not restored.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the introduction to sports management class would probably not be offered in 2010-2011 because the certification of the teacher would not allow for the students to obtain college credit.

Vice Chair Thornton asked if the individual who would be offered the half-time business teacher position would accept the position.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that a half-time teaching position does not include benefits. It would be understandable if the individual chose to seek full-time employment elsewhere.

Vice Chair Thornton stated that she would support restoring the half-time business teacher position. She supported the DECA program and the opportunity to obtain college credit.

Chair Vaillancourt recalled that Assistant Principal Zampieri stated, during the budget session, that the introduction to sports management would be offered in 2010-2011. The teacher would need to hold a specific certification in order for the students to receive college credit for the course. She stated that DECA was a co-curricular program and that the administration did not take co-curricular programs into consideration when determining staffing levels.

Board member Ortega stated that one of the many reasons the budget committee was in support of the half-time business teacher position was because of the scholarships that are available to the students who participate in the DECA program. He asked if the DECA program would exist next year.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that DECA is an enhancement to the curriculum and not a course offering. The DECA program is currently offered after school. It may need to be offered before school; however, it would depend on the schedule of the half-time teacher.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

12. Request to Change June 7th Board Meeting Date

Superintendent Chiafery requested that the Board consider changing its first meeting in June from Monday, June 7th to Tuesday, June 8th in order to accommodate a request from Principal Johnson to schedule the high school student awards on June 7th.

The Board agreed to meet on Tuesday, June 8, 2010.

13. Other

a) Correspondence

Chair Vaillancourt stated that she forwarded her response to email messages regarding the February 2011 vacation week to all School Board members. She received many email messages that expressed a desire not to change the February 2011 vacation week.

Chair Vaillancourt stated that she received an email message from a parent regarding the use of AlertNow.

b) Comments

Chair Vaillancourt stated that two newspaper articles reported that the anticipated state budget deficit was higher than first projected. She noted possible areas of impact to Merrimack may be retirement contributions and a decrease in the catastrophic aid.

14. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery announced that next year two preschool classrooms would relocate from Reeds Ferry Elementary School to James Masticola Elementary School. Reeds Ferry Elementary

School will have one preschool class and James Masticola Elementary School will have 2.5 preschool classes. The personnel would remain the same and there would be no financial impact to the budget.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the year end review of schools would begin on May 3. The administrators of the K-4 schools might address the preschool move at that board meeting.

15. Committee Reports

Board member Swonger reported that the Planning and Building Committee met last week. The major focus was discussions regarding the plans to consolidation the Superintendent's Office and Special Services offices could begin.

Vice Chair Thornton reported that the Grater Woods Committee finalized the Master Plan.

Vice Chair Thornton reported that the SERESC Board of Directors met on April 14. The Department of Education provided information about the focused monitoring process. She provided all Board members with a booklet describing the SERESC services provided to member school districts.

Chair Vaillancourt reported that the Cable Advisory TV Committee has not met for two months due to conflicts. She anticipated a meeting in the month of May.

Chair Vaillancourt asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin to report on the Program Development Committee and the Drug Advisory Council Coalition meetings.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported that the Professional Development Committee members discussed the process for reimbursement and the desire to provide clarity to teachers.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported that the Drug Advisory Council Coalition was promoting the benefits of the Community Safeguard Grant to the community.

16. Public Comments on Agenda Items (15 Minutes)

Andy Schneider, 34 Woodward Road, thanked the Board for voting on the half-time business teacher position even though there was a possibility that the teacher may not be the same person that is teaching the subject now.

Mr. Schneider stated that another school district received many benefits as a result of extending the school day by 20 minutes a day. He asked the Board to consider using the instruction hour option in the future.

17. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:50 p.m. Vice Chair Thornton moved (seconded by Board member Swonger) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a),(b),(c).

The motion passed 5-0-0 on a roll call vote.

At 9:25 p.m. Board member Swonger moved (seconded by Vice Chair Thornton) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.