

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
June 8, 2010
Merrimack High School – Cafeteria**

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

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

Public Hearing to Accept/Extend Gifts/Grants over \$5,000

- IDEA ARRA Fund for \$587,139.00
- IDEA Preschool ARRA Fund for \$15,710.61

Chairman Vaillancourt opened the hearing at 7:15 p.m. and welcomed David St. Jean, Director of Special Services, to discuss the development plan for spending the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds designated for the District.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that Mr. St. Jean was in attendance to explain what the initial plan for the expenditure of funds would be.

David St. Jean stated that the Federal Government had given entitlements to all the school districts in New Hampshire. The Merrimack School District's total IDEA ARRA entitlement was \$971,811.00 and total IDEA Preschool ARRA entitlement was \$34,449.66. He stated that the entitlement funds must be spent in certain ways according to the regulatory guidelines. He noted that the target was not just for children with severe disabilities. The funds could also be used for students who were integrated and included in the mainstream classes in which the teachers would improve the curriculum offerings while providing differentiated instruction.

Director St. Jean used the Logic Model to develop a long-term plan. The plan was focused on literacy, math, technology and the environment.

Director St. Jean stated that special education includes behavioral management and modifications to the curriculum. Technology creates a different learning tool for some students. The plan looked at traditional literacy, math, technology, and environment, which was then modified, adapted and changed to enable students to access the regular curriculum in an easier fashion.

Director St. Jean emphasized that the District did not want to hire staff or create expenses that could not be sustained. He noted the Special Education Department was looking for a long-term effect that would not create future liabilities for the District.

Director St. Jean stated that the Special Education Department would use the funds to purchase equipment, software, supplies, furniture and training.

Chairman Vaillancourt opened the meeting to the public for comments and questions.

There were no public comments or questions on this agenda item.

Chairman Vaillancourt closed the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Chairman Vaillancourt called the Merrimack School Board meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Vaillancourt led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Vaillancourt announced that Business Administrator Shevenell was not present. She also stated that this would be Student Representative Ortega's last meeting after serving on the Board for the past two years.

Student Representative Ortega stated that this was the highlight of her career in high school and the most unique opportunity offered to high school students. She hoped that the next student representative would have a similar experience.

2. Approval of May 17, 2010 Minutes

The Board decided to approve the May 17, 2010 minutes at the June 21, 2010 meeting.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher nominations.

a) Teacher Nominations

- Sara Campbell, Science Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Kelly Chiappetta, First Grade Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Lindsey Hunt, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Holly Lubelczyk, Part-Time Kindergarten Teacher, Mastricola Elementary School
- Jaclyn Petullo, World Language Teacher, Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Andrew Shaw, Fourth Grade Teacher, Mastricola Elementary School

b) Approval of New Policy

Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free Schools

Board member Swonger moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Thornton) to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Merrimack Middle School – A Year in Review

Chairman Vaillancourt welcomed Principal Deborah Woelflein and the Leadership Team from Merrimack Middle School. Principal Woelflein introduced Deborah Hodge, Language Arts Coordinator; Kathleen Nannicelli, Special Education Coordinator; Officer Thomas Prentice, School Resource Officer; Anne Wallace, Math Facilitator; Helen Fitzgerald, Technology Coordinator; and Nancy Hobbs, Computer Technology Educator. Assistant Principal Adam Caragher was unable to attend.

Principal Woelflein established a “presence” theme for the school year which meant that she and the assistant principal would be present in classrooms, at meetings, at events, and in the building at-large to get to know the culture as well as to build more collegiality and collaboration which would enrich the learning environment for students.

Principal Woelflein gathered new data on culture, climate and learning and reviewed previous surveys such as the My Voice student survey results, staff survey results on culture, and the New England Common Assessment Program results to see how the students were doing with learning. Merrimack Middle School utilized a grant to contract former principal and consultant Rose Colby to work with teachers to expand their instructional strategies. Student support personnel gathered data and tried to determine who the at-risk students were and how to better use the school’s resources to help them in areas of attendance, mental health and just not doing well in school. Student support personnel also took a good hard look at the resources available at the middle school and in the community to determine how they could be better utilized. After focusing on each part on the Logic Model, student support personnel worked diligently on long-term efforts to help students make continuous progress.

Reading

Debbie Hodge stated that it was important to look at existing resources and determine how they could be used to assist students. Reading intervention had been provided for seventh and eighth grade students through the use of a computerized reading program named Success Maker. The program addressed reading and math skills that were self-paced and individualized. Students were identified for the program based on their most recent Gates McGinite score, their NECAP score, and teacher recommendation. Parental permission was obtained and students began the program after a pre-assessment was conducted. An individual profile was built that denotes the student’s strengths and weaknesses and targets specific areas that need to be addressed for the student to attain mastery.

Thirty-four students were invited to participate in the reading intervention program that occurred during a study period. Twenty-seven students of the thirty-four met once or twice per week for 45 minutes from January to April. The class consisted of direct teacher instruction in a small group setting and a half hour of individualized computer practice on specific skills.

Principal Woelflein talked about Literature Circles that were used to engage all students in conversation around literature. She stated that discussions fostered improved understanding. Research indicated that when teachers use Literature Circles, reading achievement was improved, performance on reading comprehension assessments increased, and student motivation to read was enhanced. Literature Circles also encourage students to learn from one another.

Math

Anne Wallace stated that math teachers have reviewed, reflected upon, and refined the math curriculum. She noted that the teachers reviewed what was taught in the previous years to ensure that the instruction was in alignment with state guidelines. She stated that math teachers had built curriculum maps to track when teachers were teaching specific lessons throughout the year. They also compared student work to determine how students were performing; and they conferred with Consultant Rose Colby to assist them in differentiating their instruction to ensure that students' needs were being met. In addition, the teachers used their assessments and performance criteria in determination of student placement for children coming from the upper elementary school and for students entering the high school. The assessments have identified students ready to move at a faster pace, those who are right on target, and those who have gaps in their learning.

Mrs. Wallace report that over a five-year period only 23% of the eighth grade students that took the placement exam in algebra earned 80 or better and 52% earned below 65. In 2009, 62% of the eighth grade students earned 80 or better with only 13% earning below 65. Within five years, the middle school had a 158% increase in students earning 80 or better while having a 75% decrease in those scoring below 65. As Merrimack High School establishes their math competencies for students, the math department will keep the middle school informed in order to better prepare middle school students for what lies ahead. Merrimack Middle School Math Teachers have focused their efforts on assisting students in closing the gaps in their learning. Teachers have also worked on providing smoother curriculum transitions for entering students, and have purchased new programmatic material that is at the correct reading level for the struggling students.

Technology

Helen Fitzgerald stated that the middle school utilizes digital portfolios as required by the New Hampshire Information and Communication Technologies (NHICT) Literacy Standards. She reported that the middle school had adopted an integrated approach to the use of 21st century tools in all curriculum areas. By the end of eighth grade, students have demonstrated ICT competencies using assessment rubrics applied to the contents of their digital portfolios. Mrs. Fitzgerald reported that a prerequisite for all high school elective technology courses is the successful completion of the eighth grade portfolio task.

Nancy Hobbs defined the process that was utilized to ensure that eighth grade students have accumulated work samples from multiple categories in diverse curriculum areas over the course of two years. She stated that the assessed portfolios are forwarded to the high school.

Special Education

Kathie Nannicelli stated that special educators at the middle school were known as resource teachers and work with all students in a team-based instructional model. Special Education teachers have collaborated with content area teachers to address goals and objectives for each student's individual education plan and have implemented accommodations designed to enable those students to access the general education curriculum. Currently there are special education staff members including paraeducators on three of the four seventh and eighth grade teams.

Each resource teacher directly teaches study skills during the team academic instructional period otherwise known as TAPE. In addition to the team support there are also four programs designed to meet specialized needs. The language-based learning disability (LLD) program has provided individualized reading and writing instruction for dyslexic and language-impaired students. The resource room teacher has instructed language arts and math to groups of students whose skills are below grade level. The Program for Academic and Social Success (PASS) has provided support for students with emotional disabilities. The learning support program has addressed the needs of students with significant challenges. Students have been supported both inside and outside the classroom by the related-service providers to address the unique needs of these students. Social development has also been addressed in the special education area where there has been a strong collaborative effort among the special educators, guidance counselors and school psychologist. There has been a renewed effort to maintain students in the general education classroom and promote a culture of high expectations for all students. With the use of instructional supports and accommodations along with assistive technology, the special educators have been true resources for both students and the general education teachers.

Learning Environment

Principal Woelflein stated that some of the efforts the middle school had put into place for the school year were trying to combat bullying and harassment. Dr. Englander, a consultant came to the middle school to talk with the students and faculty about her research on bullying, harassment and cyber bullying. Dr. Englander clarified that conflict and bullying were different and needed to be handled differently. Polly Bath, another consultant worked with the teachers on behavioral intervention. Ms. Bath's research demonstrated that repeated punishment without a change in behavior would result in the same behavior repeated.

Officer Prentice stated that his SRO/JO position was grant-funded and was normally fulfilled by two individuals. Officer Prentice reported that he was expected to participate in state and national training. He stated that he has been contacted by other school districts and police departments regarding the grant and the program. Officer Prentice talked about the rapport that he has established with students because of his availability. He stated that the district had a zero tolerance for bullying. He met with the assistant principal for a half hour every day to discuss types of issues and to work on them until they are solved. He reported that one day a week he served as a Juvenile Officer which meant that his shift began at noon and conclude at 8:00 p.m. That schedule provided him with an opportunity to be out in the community or establishing appointments with families. Officer Prentice highlighted that he worked with the Juvenile Probation Officer to check on court-ordered curfews. Officer Prentice also served as the grant coordinator. He helped to complete the federal reports and meet deadlines in order to receive funding for the program. He stressed that the grant was overseen by the Merrimack Drug Advisory Coalition Committee which benefited both the middle school and high school. Officer Prentice implemented a prescription drug drop-off box at the police station; he has received training for "Say It Straight", a program to address drug issues and texting; he has facilitated articles that have been printed in the Merrimack Journal and school newspapers about different youth programs and activities that were available to help students with substance abuse.

Board member Swonger asked if Rose Colby and some of the other consultants were funded by various grants and, if so, what were the prospects for continuity of the grants. He questioned if the District had to reapply for the grant or if it was awarded over multiple years.

Principal Woelflein stated that the grants were entitlement grants overseen by Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that grants were status quo now; but, in the relatively near future that would probably change.

Board member Barnes asked what was the intervention strategy for reading. She noted that seven students had declined to participate in the computer lab work. She questioned if that was the election of the student or the parent.

Debbie Hodge stated that it was the parent's decision.

Board member Barnes asked about math performance on tests within a five-year span. She asked if the District was following the performance of those students in high school to see how they performed and if there was consistency. She asked if there were statistics on how many students used the web-based assistance for the additional math help.

Mrs. Wallace stated that a selective sampling had been done and that those students had been tracked. She reported that web-based assistance would be available for students in the future. Initially, the web-based assistance was not fully implemented.

Board member Ortega asked if there were only five opportunities for an eighth grade student to contribute to his/her portfolio over the course of a year.

Nancy Hobbs reported that eighth grade students selected five best samples of their work for the portfolio.

Board member Ortega asked about struggling students who didn't want to come for extra help after school and what issues there might be.

Principal Woelflein stated that a number of teams offered their own after school help sessions. She noted that it was very difficult to get students to come for help after school. She stated that it was not only convincing students that they needed to attend the sessions but also addressing transportation issues.

Kathie Nannicelli stated that some of the struggling students were tired at the end of the day and that school was not their favorite place. She noted that some of the students also have responsibilities at home. She felt that it was more profitable for students to receive academic help during the school day.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked Officer Prentice if having the ability to do both the SRO and JO positions was beneficial to his work, the school district and the town as a whole.

Officer Prentice stated that one issue he had overlooked was student attendance. He reported that it was beneficial to find out the underlying cause for poor attendance, and if necessary, to visit the home with a guidance counselor.

He reported that at the beginning of the year the middle school had fifteen to eighteen students with large amounts of absences and that by the end of the year the number was down to two.

6. Request to Administer National Outcomes Measure Survey to Merrimack Middle School Students

Principal Woelflein stated that Officer Prentice had previously informed the Board about the grant's requirements and the need for the district to accomplish specific tasks. She stated that a progress report had been submitted noting what had been accomplished thus far. The respondent stated that more surveys needed to be conducted. Principal Woelflein stated that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey had been conducted at the high school every other year and that the commitment to the survey was one of the reasons the grant had been received. She noted that it would be important to develop an appropriate survey for middle school students that could be issued in September and meet the guidelines of the grant. Principal Woelflein stated the mandates of the grant would have the survey capture: 1) Student's use of alcohol within the past 30 days; 2) Student's binge drinking; and 3) Student's perception of the risk of using alcohol as an under-age drinker. Principal Woelflein stated that students would take the five to ten minute survey in the computer lab. Survey data would be tabulated immediately and the results would be compared to the high school students' responses.

Officer Prentice stated that everything needed to be fact-based in the grant.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked if the Board were to put this item on the consent agenda and it was approved, would the middle school have to come back every year for approval or could the Board approve it into perpetuity with one vote.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the Board could place the item under consent specifying the name of the survey and the number of years that the survey could be conducted.

Board member Swonger asked if someone in Washington had to approve the survey after the Board's approval or if it had already been approved.

Principal Woelflein stated that this particular survey had already been approved.

Board member Barnes asked how the survey was going to be administered. She inquired if the survey allowed for anonymity given that it was computer-based and provided immediate data. She also inquired about the accuracy of the data if the students felt that their answers could be tracked.

Principal Woelflein stated that students know their answers are anonymous.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked about the ability for parents or students to opt out.

Principal Woelflein stated that whenever the district does a survey the administration always notifies parents and allows them the opportunity to opt out.

Board member Ortega asked if there were some criteria for percent of participation that needed to be targeted.

Principal Woelflein stated that she did not think there was because the student survey participation had been very high at 99%.

Officer Prentice stated that if a great number opted out of the student survey, the district would have to find other means to accomplish the task.

Chairman Vaillancourt it was her intent to have these items placed on the consent agenda for the next Board meeting unless a board member had a question or concern.

7. Board's Response to the Acceptance and Expenditure of Gifts/Grants over \$5,000

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that this item would be placed on the consent agenda for the next board meeting unless a board member had a question or concern.

Board member Swonger asked about the various trainings that were listed. He noted that each item was listed as a unit of one. He asked if the proposed training was a "train the trainer" model or if it was hiring one person to train the whole group.

David St. Jean stated that the training component was an important part of the grant. He noted that training staff would be the best use of any funds for the long run because teachers would learn new techniques or skills and they would retain that knowledge for a long time. Mr. St. Jean provided four examples of training needs. 1) Funding would be used to support educators who work with autistic children to receive BCBA training which is a new certification in applied behavior analysis beyond a Master's degree; 2) Funding would be used to train six educators (one from each school) in crisis prevention intervention (CPI) training which is a national certification program in behavior management; 3) A consultant would be contracted to provide the staff with training in how to develop an individualized education plan (IEP) that is based on standards; and 4) Polly Bath would be contracted to provide behavior management training for teachers who have students with emotional disabilities.

Board member Ortega asked Mr. St. Jean to go into more detail about some of the reporting requirements. He asked if the District was already doing this kind of reporting. He also asked what type of requirements might be attached to this grant that the Board may need to support in the future.

David St. Jean stated that this was an entitlement grant that was guaranteed to the District as compared to a competitive grant. He stated that there were guidelines in terms of the bidding process and how the funds could be spent. He stated that the District would have to apply for the monies which would then be approved by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Board member Ortega asked if the work was defined as submitting the grant, noting the expenditures, utilizing the bidding process and reporting what was actually done, with the District not being hooked into anything beyond that.

David St. Jean responded in the affirmative.

Board member Barnes inquired if the District had another half of the grant to spend. She asked if the District would have until September 2011 to spend the grant. She questioned if the District had identified specific areas of need at this point and if those waters had been tested yet with other districts.

David St. Jean stated that the District had until September 2011 to spend the other half of the grant funds. He stated that the District had not yet tested the waters. He suggested that it was important to share information, initiate training, get feedback from the constituents to see what was working and determine from the respondents what needed to be proposed for the second round of requests.

Board member Barnes asked what WIAT 3 kits were.

David St. Jean stated that it was an intelligence test.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that if the Board placed the item on the consent agenda for the next board meeting that it would be appropriate to make the purchases over the summer.

8. Next Steps Regarding Grater Woods Master Plan

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she had received a copy of the Conservation Easement Agreement that outlined the agreement between the Merrimack School District and the Town of Merrimack. This easement was entered into when Merrimack Middle School was built. As a condition of the wetlands permit for the construction of the middle school, the Merrimack School District was required to designate a portion of the property as conservation land. At the last Board meeting, the Board requested that Superintendent Chiafery contact the Town Council with an offer to possibly create a subcommittee that included some Board members to address concerns that had surfaced about the Grater Woods Master Plan.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she spoke with Town Manager Hickey, and Council Chairman Koenig and learned that there already was a process in place to ultimately look at the Grater Woods Subcommittee Master Plan. The plan would go from the Grater Woods Subcommittee to the Merrimack Conservation Commission (MCC) and, at that point, a public hearing would be conducted where the document would be vetted and people would be able to discuss any issues they might have. Once approved by the MCC, the plan would go before the Town Council for its deliberation. The Merrimack School Board or individuals from the Board would be able to use those two forums to state how they felt and raise any issues that might have surfaced as compared to creating another committee. Superintendent Chiafery was told by town Manager Hickey and Council Chair Koenig that the School Board would not be in receipt of any follow-up letter and to express such, if asked, at the next School Board meeting.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she would have liked to have seen a formal reply. She asked Board members what should the Board's next steps and what they desire relative to the Master Plan and the management of Grater Woods.

Board member Swonger stated that it was disappointing to not receive a response. He thought it would not be good to have individual Board members state their opinions. He felt it would be better to have the Board members speak as citizens versus speaking as representatives of the School Board. He noted that some of the things happening currently on the land were contrary to what was in the easement. He questioned what the timeline was for the public hearings.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the Grater Woods Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 10th. She noted that the item was no longer on the subcommittee's plate. She stated that the MCC had the plan as one of its agenda items, but it was pulled by the Chairman Andy Powell. There had been no public comment. Vice Chairman Mahon expressed concern over the process and management of the land at the May 13th Town Council meeting. Mr. Mahon indicated that he would like to go back and look at certain RSAs that would include, by state law, that the Parks and Recreation Committee have an opportunity to discuss recreational uses for a piece of property like this. He asked for all work to be tabled until the Town Council could have a discussion regarding the Parks and Recreation role. The Town Council will have a retreat meeting, which is a public meeting, on Friday, June 11th.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the Town Council retreat meeting would start at 9:00 a.m. at Residence Inn.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she thought the Town Council retreat meeting agenda had listed a discussion regarding process and land management about Parks and Recreation specific to Grater Woods.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the agenda was very long and that there were a number of committees listed including Grater Woods.

Board member Ortega stated that he wanted clarification on the process that was laid out from the Town Manager. Board member Ortega asked for clarification about how to best plug into a process that the Board was trying to define.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the MCC meeting should happen sometime in June or September.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that Vice Chairman Mahon basically asked that all work stop on the Grater Woods property until the Town Council could discuss it. She stated that whatever the Council decided could change the proposed process. She had not seen an agenda from the MCC and she was not sure when any of this was going to happen.

Board member Swonger stated that he has heard things that might happen on the Grater Woods property. He wanted to know under what authority or direction that work would be place and, if there was no master plan, the process had not been completed.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the MCC has the authority to approve any work on that land, independent from the Town Council.

Board member Barnes stated that it was not common knowledge to the public that citizens could not come through with ATVs on middle school property. She asked if the District could put signage at the middle school as a first step to prohibit citizen access to the property using ATVs through the middle school ingress. She asked if the District could make sure that it was clear to the public the limitations of accessing the property using ATVs from the middle school property.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she has been out on the property and has seen signs ripped off and thrown in fire pits.

Board member Barnes stated that the signs could be posted in the parking lot where citizens would be parking their trailers and hauling their ATVs. The middle school would need to monitor who was coming in and out and at what time. The signs would need to be placed where citizens would access the property.

Vice Chairman Thornton stated that she had spoken with Business Administrator Shevenell about ordering signs and getting them posted. It was her understanding that citizens rip down the signs and use them for ramps.

Board member Barnes asked if the signs would be posted on the property or parking lot.

Vice Chairman Thornton stated that the signs would be posted around the middle school property saying, "NO ATV USE". The original intent was that no motorized vehicles would be on the school property.

Board member Barnes stated that she had scheduled a walk with John Diggins, chair of the Grater Woods Committee, and would take a look at the conditions that the School Board was dealing with. She suggested that the School Board might want to prohibit the Grater Woods Committee's machinery from coming through the middle school property to get to the Grater Woods to maintain the Red Maple Trail. She noted that the Grater Woods Committee was calling the plan a stewardship plan and not a master plan. She stated that she did not feel the School Board's interests were being addressed.

Vice Chairman Thornton asked what the difference was between a stewardship plan and a master plan.

Board member Barnes stated that a stewardship plan was a less structured document. She noted that a master plan shows a vision and a stewardship plan shows day-to-day management. A stewardship plan does not contain rules and regulations.

Vice Chairman Thornton wanted to clarify that the reason the trail plan was moved forward was the belief that the trail work was being held up due to the lack of a master plan. It was her understanding that the plan was a working plan that would continue to be developed.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she was very concerned about allowing the other governing body in town to come speak under public participation. Typically, when you have a public hearing and have public comment, the work is already done.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she would like to have something in writing that mirrors what was done for Horse Hill. She stated that Business Administrator Shevenell expressed a desire to attend and participate in the Grater Woods Subcommittee meetings. She desired that no future trail building or work, including the Red Maple Trail and/or outdoor structures and classrooms, be conducted until a different process was put into place. The document/plan itself lacked any future grant writing opportunities. She asked if a message could be crafted stating that the School Board was offering to participate and help. She would like to send Board member Barnes to represent the District and have Business Administrator Shevenell sent as a backup. The School Board would like a committee to be formed in order to actively participate in the process.

Board member Ortega stated that the School Board has two objectives that are needed to protect District: 1) The School District's rights as an abutter to the property; and 2) The School District's rights in the easement that was granted. Certain things need to be reflected in the master plan; and the master plan needs to demonstrate how those rights will be protected into perpetuity. He stated that it was pretty clear that there shall be no structures built or cables or pipes laid across the easement. It was not clear how the plan addressed any of those issues.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the plan doesn't talk about the easement property. The plan talks about it being town-owned property. She stated that the District has determined that it has no rights regarding the town-owned property that abuts the school district property. If the Board was interested in getting a legal rendering, Attorney Van Loan would be invited to a future Board meeting.

Board member Ortega stated that it was not clear how the plan protects the easement.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the plan does not address it at all.

Board member Ortega stated that there are things that cannot happen on that easement. The plan should reference the easement. He noted that there was a contract about thirty-six acres specifically that was not reflected anywhere in the master plan. He stated that the School District should have protection for the piece of land that the School District has rights over.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the easement document stands by itself. She was concerned about what was going to happen on the property that directly abuts the middle school land. She noted that if the document was written and goes all the way to the Town Council, she was not sure how well the District's interests would be presented. She felt that the District should be involved on the ground floor of the plan's creation.

Board member Barnes stated that the plan was open to interpretation and vague in its structure that it opens the District, as abutters, to be the best access for ATVs on the middle school property. She reported that the middle school property was not being policed by the District or the Merrimack Police.

She stated the building that would abut the middle school which would be a place for children to learn would become a school entity, even though it is not on the District property. People will be getting to the building via the middle school property. She also noted that if the District was expected to have one of its cameras monitoring access then it would become the District's responsibility to police as well. She felt that the District needed to take a strong and definitive stand in stopping any further progress until the District became a partner in the project.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that everyone agreed that Board member Barnes and Business Administrator Shevenell should attend the meetings. Everyone had concerns about the District's rights not being protected in the formal document.

Vice Chairman Thornton wanted to know if the easement was considered part of the formal document and not the entire School District site.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the named portion is just the District's 20+ acres of conservation easement. It just pertains to the School District site and not the town-owned land.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that everyone would like to participate in the process from the beginning as a preference rather than having to wait until the plan reached the Town Council and then present the Board's thoughts under public comment.

Board member Swonger stated that he would really like to know what the process is as he does not see one in place. He stated that he has no idea when the MCC will have its public hearing or when the document will go to the Town or what opportunities there are for input by whom, or what the expectation is, or what would be done with that input.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked Superintendent Chiafery if the questions could be posed to the Town Manager or if he might say he had already explained the process.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that it might make sense to see if the Town Manager and/or the Chairman of the Town Council would come to the Board meeting on June 21st. She stated that it might be beneficial to have them state their own vision of the process.

Board member Barnes stated that the only agenda item for the Grater Woods Subcommittee meeting on Thursday, June 10th was how to address communications from the community and that no definitive decision on anything about the property was scheduled for the meeting.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that there might be a MCC meeting on June 14th and that this item could be on its agenda. If it was, she would still like Board member Barnes and Business Administrator Shevenell to attend the MCC meeting.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she was not sure that Town Council Chairman Koenig would approve coming to the School Board meeting on June 21st without discussing it with the rest of the Town Council. She stated that the Town Council might have to have a meeting between June 8th and June 21st to consider the Board's request. Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she would like Board member Barnes to have a clear message from the Board on the issues it agrees on.

Board member Swonger stated that the School Board's representation on the Committee was not a liaison position but a voting member of the Committee.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked Board member Barnes if she was comfortable to speak to the committee and had an idea of what the Board agreed on and what the Board's concerns were.

Board member Barnes spoke in the affirmative.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that Superintendent Chiafery would extend an invitation to the Town Manager and Chairman of the Town Council to attend the next School Board meeting.

Board member Thornton asked when the Grater Woods Committee changed the name of the plan to a stewardship plan, does that change the whole master plan concept that they are still going to be working on. She stated that she felt that they were two different documents.

Board member Barnes stated that they are going to edit the document as they proceed. She stated that it was a stewardship plan; it was going to be care for the land as it stands.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that MCC Chairman Powell was the one who proposed to change the master plan to a stewardship plan.

Vice Chairman Thornton asked if it was MCC Chairman Andy Powell's intent to still have a Master Plan at some point.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that was not implied at all.

9. Race to the Top Meeting Outcome

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she, Chairman Vaillancourt and Deb McLaughlin, the MTA President had attended a meeting at Exeter High School to understand what the Department of Education's Race to the Top application was going to contain. She noted that it was important to hear what the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner had to say about the grant's focus.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the grant had to be in Washington by June 1st which left little time for the Merrimack School Board to consider it given that its meeting was May 17th. She noted that it was a comprehensive strategic plan for the Department of Education. She suggested that the plan be compared to the District's Logic Model to determine the differences between the two plans.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that in round one only 23% of the state's school districts were included in the application and that in round two 50% had been included in the submission.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the Department of Education was involved in this endeavor for the long haul whether the grant funding came through or not. She expressed concern that school districts were being asked to sign on to the grant with very little time to process the material. She stated that it would be important to give the document some time and some thought.

Chairman Vaillancourt highlighted that one difference she noted in the grant was a change in wording from a highly qualified teacher to an effective teacher.

Chairman Vaillancourt noted that the state of New Hampshire does not yet have a lot of legislation in place to support the grant's concepts.

Board member Swonger stated that the grant did not seem worth applying for given the fact that it was going to be expensive to apply for and expensive to administer.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that discussions about the state plan needed to start now. She noted that Department of Education administrators went out of their way to answer the school districts' questions and provide attendees with information.

10. Other

a) Correspondence

Board member Ortega stated that he received an email from a parent in the district who was concerned about high school NECAP scores.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that graduation would be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 12th.

b) Comments

There were no comments to report.

11. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she needed a non-public session to do administrative reviews on Wednesday, June 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Superintendent Chiafery also stated that June 21st at 7:00 p.m. would be a good time to provide Board members with an opportunity to view Pay for Performance projects.

12. Committee Reports

Board member Barnes stated that she attended the Parks and Recreation meeting. The tennis courts at Wasserman Park have been resurfaced. Parks and Recreation announced the summer concert series. She reported that one field used by the Merrimack Youth Association (MYA) at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School had not been prepped properly for the beginning of the season. The MYA was going to contact Reeds Ferry Elementary School about the situation.

Board member Barnes stated that she attended the Town Council meeting as a School Board liaison because Parks and Recreation discussed its annual report. It was recommended that the Town Council consider the Board's concerns regarding ATV access to trails through school district property. Board member Barnes was informed that the Town Council received the School Board's letter.

Board member Ortega stated that the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee reviewed the results of the employee health and safety survey which would be helpful in the *WELLDollar* grant application process.

Board member Swonger stated that he attended a School Planning and Building Committee meeting. He noted that there were not enough members for a quorum.

Vice Chairman Thornton stated that she attended the Drug Advisory Council Coalition meeting on May 20th. Dr. Susan Nelson, the presenter, spoke about Awareness not Scareness.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that Dr. Nelson's presentation was delivered in two parts. The first part was Dr. Nelson's presentation to the community regarding the early signs of drug and alcohol use. The second part of the presentation was an opportunity for those in attendance to pose questions to Dr. Nelson in an open forum.

Vice Chairman Thornton noted that Frank Hoell had resigned his position as director of the Community Safeguard grant.

Chairman Vaillancourt asked Board member Swonger if the School Planning and Building Committee planned to meet soon.

Board member Swonger stated that the meetings were held on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. He stated that the committee was dealing with cost options and architectural drawings of the most viable option. He noted that the committee was considering the consolidation of two offices versus building a new building and using existing space to house both offices. He stated that there was no consensus about the best way to proceed because it was not clear how serious a construction company would be without a funding commitment.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that she had a concern about the Planning and Building Committee not making quorum. She also noted that the Board had money in the budget for an architectural study and it seemed that the majority of the committee was anxious to move forward as quickly as possible. She questioned if the Planning and Building Committee chair had invited Business Administrator Shevenell to attend the meetings in an effort to assist in moving the committee forward.

Board member Swonger stated that the district had never done a project like this before. He stated that the approach to building projects had varied based on the characteristics of the project.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that it would be appropriate for Ed Murdough, a consultant at the Department of Education to confer with the committee.

Board member Swonger stated that Rich Hendricks, Chair of the Planning and Building Committee, had talked to Ed Murdough on several occasions. He noted that another issue was the status of building aid for next year. The state Legislature has a one year moratorium on state aid and that would hit the District at exactly the wrong time unless the committee was able to justify the construction based on a safety concern.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

14. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:36 p.m. Board member Barnes moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Thornton) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.