

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
August 11, 2014
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman Ortega, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Powell, Guagliumi and Schneider, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, and Business Administrator Shevenell.

1. Call To Order

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of the July 14, 2014

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2014 meeting.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 9, line 210, add the word “out” after “opt”.
- Page 5 of 9, line 223 should read, “Director Fabrizio explained that parents are not notified because the State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) numbers are referenced, not student names.
- Page 6 of 9, line 271, after “process” add, “as it relates to the long-term strategy of having MEEP Programs (Merrimack Early Education Programs) at all three elementary schools.”
- Page 8 of 9, line 342 should read, “Vice Chair Barnes asked if there would be another pilot with revisions prior to rolling it out.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 9, line 136, add “to” between “volunteers” and “teach”.
- Page 4 of 9, and throughout the minutes, change “Board Member Barnes” to “Vice Chair Barnes”.
- Page 4 of 9, line 178, add the word “unified” before “volleyball team”.
- Page 6 of 9, line 268, remove the word “to” before the word “consider”.

The motion to accept the minutes of the July 14, 2014 meeting as amended passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Acceptance and Expenditure of Gifts/Grants over \$5,000

- Gift from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department for three hundred dollars (\$300.00) to plant wild roses to support the Cottontail Rabbit Habitat on the middle school grounds

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the gift from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department for three hundred dollars (\$300.00).

The motion to accept the gift from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department passed 5-0-0.

5. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

- Teacher Resignation
 - Patience Joy, Health Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
 - Jay Gratton, Assistant Principal at James Mastricola Elementary School
- Teacher Nominations
 - Andrew Bray, Part-Time World Language Teacher, Merrimack High School
 - Jessica Field, ESOL Teacher, Merrimack Middle/High School
 - Ryan Haggerty, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
 - Robert Huckins, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack High School Department Head
 - Hannah Lowell, Grade 6 Teacher, Mastricola Upper Elementary School
 - Milagros Santiago, World Language Teacher, Merrimack High School
 - Matthew Stemkowski, Science Teacher Merrimack High School

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

6. Entrance to James Mastricola Upper Elementary School When Used as a Polling Site

Chairman Ortega explained the background:

- The April election/town meeting at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School (JMUES) was the first time an election was held there since putting in the secured entrances.
- The board stated that they wanted to keep those secure entrances locked and to find a way that voters could enter and exit the polling place and the APR (All Purpose Room) through one of the external entrances. This was based on the concerns for the safety of the students with adults coming in and out of the building.

- Through discussions at that time, the Town Moderator and the Town Clerk were given some guidance that said that there should be a single entrance for all voters and that entrances need to be handicap accessible.
- Subsequent to that discussion, the board allowed those entrances to be open for the purposes of voting during the April election.
- Everything went well during the April voting, in terms of student safety. Steps were taken to keep students away from that area of the school, i.e. lunch was held in a different area and it was continually monitored by staff and the police department.
- Chairman Ortega requested information from the Town Clerk regarding the Secretary of State's requirements for polling places.
- At the same time, Superintendent Chiafery asked Mr. Touseau what might be done with the rear entrances of the APR in order to make them accessible for voting so the school could remain safe and secure through the main entryway. Voting would take place entirely in the APR.

Mr. Touseau explained that the discussion would focus on entering/exiting the APR at James Masticola Upper Elementary School without going through the school. Highlights of his discussion:

- After discussions on the matter, it was determined that the logical door to use would be the door closest to the stage in the APR. It is a door that exits out close to the church.
- One way to use that door, to make it handicapped accessible, is to build a fully enclosed ramp that would be seven feet wide. It would start as you were coming out of the APR taking an immediate left, running along the entire building. The approximate price would be between one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars (\$115,000) and one hundred and twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000). At this point there are no drawings and no approvals for the project. He added that this ramp would be heated and have sprinklers. It would be finished off to look like a part of the building, not an add-on.
- The other option is a ramp that is not enclosed with an estimated cost of between forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) and fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). From the APR you would go to a platform, turn left and go down the ramp. It is possible to get a temporary covering for the ramp for a cost of five hundred (\$500.00) to six hundred dollars (\$600.00) per day.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how far the ramp would extend out.

Mr. Touseau responded that as you are coming out of the APR, there would be a platform which would be seven feet out from the building and would immediately turn left and run approximately forty (40) feet alongside of the building.

Chairman Ortega stated that it would be roughly equivalent to the depth of the stage because that door is at the foot of the stage.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how the permanent ramp would affect the traffic flow at the school during the day.

Mr. Touseau responded that the ramp would not extend into the parking area. The ramp would end at the end of the school. He added that he didn't believe that the traffic flow would be affected.

Vice Chair Barnes asked Mr. Touseau his recommendations regarding the uncovered ramp based upon having events at the school or in the event of inclement weather while school is in session. If the plan is to rent a covering for the ramp during elections, she wanted to know if a covering would be rented for other events.

Mr. Touseau responded that the ramp is permanent, and the covering is what would be rented. He added that the covering would only be rented for elections.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if the covering was for comfort, not for safety.

Mr. Touseau responded that she was correct.

Board Member Powell asked if the project would be ADA compliant, with railings, etc.

Mr. Touseau responded that it would all be ADA compliant.

Board Member Schneider asked if the entrance and the ramp would all be completely enclosed for the covered version and if the ramp would have entrance/exit doors onto the ramp and out of the school and if the ramp would hug along the side of the building.

Mr. Touseau responded that there would be entrance/exit doors out of and into the school and that it would hug the side of the building.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the ramp is in consideration of having one entrance into the room versus what is already an ADA compliant main entrance.

Mr. Touseau responded that would adjust the problem of being ADA compliant without going through the school.

Board Member Guagliumi asked how often the proposed ramp entrance/exit would be used other than on election days.

Chairman Ortega responded that the APR is used annually for the April Town Meeting and every other year for the state primary elections in September. He added that school is in session for the September election and school will not be in session during the November elections.

Board Member Guagliumi asked what other uses there are for the APR when school is in session.

Chairman Ortega responded that are a number of events when school is in session, but he did not think the ramp would be used at those times.

Board Member Guagliumi responded therefore, if school were not in session for any of the elections, a ramp would not be needed at all.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the presentation from Mr. Touseau was to share information with the board. She added that it is difficult to picture something and if the board was interested in pursuing this to the next step, there would be drawings and plans to reference. She stated that they were trying to see if there was a way to not use the secure main entrance, but to establish another secure entrance when school was in session.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that nothing will be done for the September election. This is something that, if the board is interested, could become part of the Capital Improvement Plan, because of the high cost of the permanent covered ramp.

Board Member Schneider stated that with this scenario, the attempt is to remove the secured entrance from the equation and to allow an entrance and egress. He suggested that if the ramp were to be put in, it should be wide enough to handle traffic going both in and out of the building at the same time.

Chairman Ortega stated that they were told they needed one and only one handicapped accessible entrance and exit for the voters. The reality is that using that door without a ramp is not ADA compliant those that needed handicapped accessibility needed to use the main entrance. In reading through the Secretary of State's guidelines, it states (RSA 658:9-a):

“There shall be at least one primary entrance to the polling place accessible to elderly persons and persons with disabilities and clearly marked with the international symbol of accessibility. If there are entrances that are not accessible, they have signs posted directing voters to the accessible entrance. There must be at least one primary accessible entrance to the polling place which is clearly marked with the international symbol of accessibility. Note: It is strongly recommended that the main entrance also be the accessible entrance.”

Thus, Chairman Ortega stated, the requirement is not that there needs to be a single entrance, but it is highly recommended and that the main entrance is to be handicapped accessible, but it is not a requirement. He therefore felt there could be some leeway and the board should look at all the options.

7. Planning for Future Joint Town Council Meeting Schedule

Chairman Ortega reviewed that he had previously met with the Town Council Chair David Yakuboff regarding a joint meeting. He recently met with the new chair, Nancy Harrington, and reviewed the notes from that last meeting. They took the list of topics that both the Town Council and the board had in common that needed to be addressed as well as additional topics. The list was settled on the major topics that would be addressed at a joint meeting would be:

- O’Gara Drive Tennis Courts
- The Chestnut Hill Development, off Old Blood Road
- Merrimack Safeguard and the status of the grant request for the School Resource Officer (SRO) at Merrimack Middle School
- CIP planning- regarding warrant articles on a new highway building and a new SAU/SPED building
- Recycling efforts in the town and in the schools

Chairman Ortega suggested potential dates for the joint meeting:

- Monday, September 22, 2014
- Monday, September 29, 2014
- Thursday, October 2, 2014
- Thursday, October 16, 2014

Chairman Ortega noted that Thursday, October 2, 2014 is a conflict with a Merrimack Safeguard meeting. There were no other conflicts with the proposed dates.

Board Member Powell stated that he thought the discussion on the ramp for the middle school be put on a future agenda of a meeting with the board and the Town Council. He also suggested that the Town Moderator and the School Moderator be invited to attend that meeting.

Chairman Ortega agreed that he would add Board Member Powell's idea to a future agenda.

8. Modification to School Board Meeting Schedule

Superintendent Chiafery reported that there are two dates on the school calendar for 2014-2015 that needed to be shifted due to Monday holidays. The two dates are Labor Day (Monday, September 1, 2014) to be held on Tuesday, September 2, 2014 and Martin Luther King Day (Monday, January 19, 2015) to be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2015.

Board Member Schneider stated that the dates are fine but if there are non-public sessions prior to the meetings it may be problematic for him.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that as the year progresses the non-public sessions will probably be held after the public meeting sessions.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if board meetings were scheduled during holidays in the past, were they moved to the Tuesday following the holiday.

Superintendent Chiafery responded yes.

9. Other

a) Correspondence

Chairman Ortega reported that he had been contacted by the Superintendent of the Pembroke New Hampshire school system expressing their displeasure with the fact that the NHIAA Division I membership, which includes our High School Principal and Athletic Director, denied Pembroke Academy a chance to play on the Division I schedule this year.

Chairman Ortega and the board received a request from a constituent to not fill the vacancy of the Assistant Principal at Masticola Elementary School.

Board Member Guagliumi received an email from a parent of a high school student regarding the protocols for letting parents know how their student is doing before the final grades come out.

b) Comments:

There were no comments.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Committee Reports

Board Member Schneider reported that the Merrimack Safeguard meeting and the Planning and Building meeting were postponed because of committee members not being available due to vacation schedules.

Board Member Guagliumi reported that the next Professional Development Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2014.

Chairman Ortega reported that the Technology Curriculum Committee met on July 30th and 31st. By all reports, the sessions were very productive and great progress was made.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on the agenda items.

13. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:15 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.