

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
October 6, 2014
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman Ortega, Vice Chairman Barnes, Board Members Powell and Guagliumi, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, and Business Administrator Shevenell. Board Member Schneider and Student Representative Crowley were excused from the meeting.

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 September 15, 2014 minutes

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2014 meeting.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 20, line 178, change Clark Fox to Kyle Fox
- Page 15 of 20, line 646, the sentence should read, "Vice Chair Barnes.....passes, the CIP figures in the operating budget will be..."
- Page 18 of 20, line 818, change "the board" to "the SAU office"

Board Member Powell requested the following change to the minutes:

- Page 15 of 20, line 673 should be Board Member Powell

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 20, line 52, after the word "which", add the phrase, "she believed".
- Page 7 of 20, line 305, add "/team" after the word "staff".

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 20, line 105, add "as opposed to an emergency access only road."
- Page 15 of 20, line 653, the first sentence should read, "Chairman Ortega stated if we have a field with a potential life of fifteen plus years, we could plan to pay it off in five years which is one third of its lifetime, there would be an estimated.....dollars"
- Page 19 of 20, line 828, should read, "who are working on their teaching..."

The motion to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2014 meeting as amended passed 4-0-0.

3. Public Participation

Barbara Publicover, 75 Amherst Road, as one of the facilitators of the Merrimack Special Education Parent Support Group, invited the public and the school board to attend a program entitled "Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents – How to Stop the Worry Cycle" on October 21, 2014 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the high school. This event is co-sponsored by the Parent Support Group and the Merrimack School District.

4. **Acceptance of Gifts/Grants Under \$5,000**

Business Administrator Shevenell presented the following gifts/grants for under \$5,000:

- Lifetouch National School Studios to Masticola Upper Elementary School for nine hundred twelve dollars and forty-five cents (\$912.45) to support the Enterprise City Economics Unit.
- Target Take Charge of Education to Merrimack Middle School for two hundred one dollars and fifty-two cents (\$201.52) for classroom supplies
- Merrimack Lions Club to Merrimack High School for one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for adding the technology of hot glass working to the MHS glass program.
- Target Take Charge of Education to Thorntons Ferry Elementary School for eight hundred fifty-eight dollars and sixty-seven cents (\$858.67) for supporting programs.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the generous gifts/grants with gratitude.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

5. **Request to Conduct Student and Teacher Surveys for Graduate Work**

Principal Marsha McGill, of James Masticola Upper Elementary School, introduced the educators who will be receiving their Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) as part of the Merrimack Cohort Group. This semester they have been working on their Practicum. Each of the participants spoke about their projects:

Colleen Rush, Catherine Goodman and Lisa Labreche worked together on their project.
Colleen Rush, grade 5 classroom educator

- This course is a practicum that serves as a culminating activity incorporating ideas learned from their studies.
- They focused on Response To Instruction (RTI). For their 2014-2015 master schedule, JMUES has incorporated a dedicated Tier 2 time into their schedule. The RTI Tier 2 Instructional Model occurs three times a week for thirty minutes for an eight week session.
- Their question is, "How can we increase educators' knowledge and skill base in the areas of reading fluency, word identification and listening comprehension, using researched based strategies in order to effectively implement RTI, Tier 2 instruction?"

Catherine Goodman, grade 5 classroom educator

- They have been conducting research on best practices to implement within the RTI instructional model.
- Using the surveys they developed, they plan to gather data on the current knowledge and skill base of the educators in their building. The information gathered will guide their instruction for the workshop they will be facilitating for fellow educators who will be implementing the Tier 2 lesson plan.

Approved 10-20-14

- Following the workshop, the participants will be asked to fill out a post-survey. They hope the data will show that the educators have increased knowledge and built their confidence in regards to implementing the Tier 2 instructional lessons.

Lisa Labreche, grade 6 classroom educator

- One of the criteria for the course was to create a Criteria For Success.
 - A workshop for the educators who are responsible for teaching the Tier 2 instruction will be held.
 - Three completed modules, each consisting of twenty-two levels will be implemented using an instructional based protocol in the areas of word identification, fluency and listening comprehension.

Louis Mailloux, grade 5 classroom educator

- His project is math based.
- His project was looking at Habits of Mind and the eight math practices of Common Core instruction. He found that these were very closely related.
- His question: Does teaching the Habits of Mind with the math practices increase fifth grade math students' self-esteem and will that lead to an increase in success at problem solving?
- The survey is meant to be a pre and post assessment
- He noted several research projects that related to student self-esteem and student achievement.

Jenifer Robinson, grade 5 classroom educator

- Her project is math-based, focusing on the vocabulary piece.
- She is focusing on having an interactive "word well" where the students are invested in it.
- The EveryDay Math program that is used in K-6 is very language based and very vocabulary rich. She wanted to do her practicum to see how the students would respond when a heavier emphasis was placed on vocabulary.
- The pre and post surveys are focusing on the first two units of the EveryDay Math program.
- The question: Will the use of a math based word well foster students' self-efficacy which will lead to a deeper comprehension of key content area of vocabulary terms?
- The post survey will show if there is an increase, decrease or no change in students' awareness and ability to confidently identify, use and understand the key math vocabulary terms.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if they would be using a control group to see how that compares to a non-control group.

Ms. Robinson and Mr. Mailloux responded that their projects were not intended to be done with a control group. They are just done with each educator's classroom.

Board Member Guagliumi added that the teachers' enthusiasm was great.

Board Member Powell asked if there is a time constraint on the teachers coming before the board for approval of conducting the surveys.

Mr. Mailloux responded that there is a time constraint. The project has to be wrapped up by October 28, 2014 so they can write their final reflections on the whole process before the course ends on November 9, 2014.

Board Member Powell stated that the typical process is to put it on the Consent Agenda for the October 20, 2014 meeting.

Mr. Mailloux respectfully asked to waive the two-week rule.

Board Member Powell asked if each of the educators had considered going for their Master's Degree at some time in their career and if so, did the opportunity of the collaboration with the district and SNHU speed up that time line.

Mr. Mailloux responded that the collaboration between the district and SNHU made something impossible to be possible.

Ms. Robinson explained that all the educators in their cohorts are from the entire district so they all learned together and learned from each other. That collaboration is very valuable.

Ms. Goodman responded that there was tremendous support within the cohort.

Vice Chairman Barnes asked Mr. Mailloux if he was focusing on this from a Common Core perspective or from the district's existing curriculum perspective as the study is being done.

Mr. Mailloux responded that he is using the curriculum that is provided for them. He is using the Common Core Math practices as a way to help students look at the complex problems within EveryDay Math.

Vice Chair Barnes asked Mr. Mailloux if he would have the insight that he is looking for, since his questions are "yes or no" as compared to scale-based questions.

Mr. Mailloux responded that he wanted a "gut level reaction" to the questions. He did not want to overwhelm the students with scale-based questions.

Vice Chair Barnes asked Mr. Mailloux about the number of questions on the survey.

Mr. Mailloux responded that there is no pressure on the students. He just wants them to tell him what they are thinking in a simple yes or no answer.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would like to hear from the educators after their projects are completed. He asked if the math teachers had any plans to use and correlate formative assessments of the actual results of the surveys to see if a student's perception of themselves and their abilities has increased their understanding of concepts.

Ms. Robinson responded that for right now she is focusing on the practicum. If she finds the students are successful and are responding, are more invested, or are taking more ownership, she will continue throughout the year with the practices that she has been using.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the requests to conduct student and teacher surveys for graduate work for Catherine Goodman, Lisa Labreche, Louis Mailloux, Jenifer Robinson and Colleen Rush, waiving the two-week rule.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

6. Annual Performance Report

John Fabrizio, Director of Special Services, explained that this is a report from the Department of Education, based on the Disabilities Education Act of 2004. There are thirteen criteria that have to be reported on. The four categories of determination are:

- Meets requirements
- Needs assistance in implementing the requirements
- Needs intervention in implementing the requirements
- Needs substantial intervention in implementing the requirements or there is substantial failure to comply with the requirements

He reported that the Merrimack School District has met all the requirements in all thirteen items, with a perfect score of zero. He noted that the district has met all the requirements since 2006.

The criteria that have to be met:

- The district does not have a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity for the suspension of students for ten days. He explained that when kids are suspended, there is not one race that has more suspensions than another.
- The district does not have a disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic group in special education and related services that is a result of inappropriate identification. He explained that there is a balance when special education students are identified.
- The district does not have a disproportionate representation, by disability category, of racial and ethnic groups in special disability categories that is a result of inappropriate identification. He explained that there is equal balance.
- Initial evaluations for special education are completed within state established timelines. He explained that all of the evaluations were completed by October 1st.
- Children referred for Family-Centered Early Support and Services to special education have a determination of eligibility prior to the third birthday. Children who are found eligible have an IEP developed and implemented on or before the third birthday. He explained that Cheryl Demers is in charge of "Child Find" which is a program where they go out into the community to notify people that student with special needs will be identified. There were over seventy referrals last year.
- Compliance with effective transition for students aged sixteen and above. He explained that all the requirements are met in transitioning students.
- General Supervision findings of noncompliance identified in 2011-2012 through monitoring, complaints and due process hearings. He explained that Merrimack had done its due diligence if a complaint was filed.
- Preschool special education child progress data. He explained that data has to be compiled for all children who come through the preschool program.
- Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS). He explained that the rest of the criteria all had been done through collaboration with Business Administrator Shevenell and his office in reporting all the spending.
 - Audit regarding special education funds

Approved 10-20-14

- IDEA Grant Management. All grants must be closed within ninety days of the project end date
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE)
- IDEA Grant Management regarding Federal Assurances

Business Administrator Shevenell added that it takes a tremendous amount of time to submit all the information to the state so the district could receive reimbursements. He thanked Mr. Fabrizio for his time and his consistency.

7. Financial Update

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that last year at the time of the budget cycle there were several challenges. The 4.8 million dollar surplus will partially make up for the shortfall in the adequacy money of around one million dollars. That is comprised equally of an appropriations surplus of approximately 2.4 million dollars and a revenue surplus of 2.4 million dollars. The revenue surplus is a result of the reimbursement from the HealthTrust, as well as increases in Catastrophic Aid and Medicare. Approximately 96% of our budget was spent last year. He explained the line items:

- Professional Salaries: The actual cost of providing new hires for those that left resulted in higher than average savings
- Performance Pay/Retirement Incentive: Retirement estimates and Performance Pay was less than expected.
- Support Staff Salaries: There were savings in the paraprofessional line accounts due to new hires coming in at a lower rate. All Support Staff, regardless of experience, start off at the beginning of the pay scale.
- Benefits: The savings was in the area of health insurance and the NH Retirement System.
- Maintenance: Actual cost for electricity, natural gas and fuel oil was less than estimated. The budgeted roofing project was not done per the school board.
- Special Education: The Special Education Department experienced favorable outcomes in keeping out of district placements lower than anticipated.
- Contracted Services: Legal services were less than expected.
- Equipment Repairs: The amount expended reflects the lowering of repair cost as new equipment cost less to maintain.
- Transportation: Minor savings in Vocational Education Transportation.
- Telephone/Printing/Postage/ Advertising and Property Liability Insurance: Telephone service costs are beginning to decline with the implementation of VoiceOver IP.
- Supplies: Supply budgets were almost fully expended
- Texts: More focus was paced on the use of electronic media and software.
- Software: Software purchases continue to expand as wireless access brings content into the classrooms.
- Equipment: Equipment was ordered and placed as per the plan.
- Meetings/Memberships/Records Check: Membership fees have increased.
- Bonded Debt: A bond was refinanced at a lower rate.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he would be sharing this information with the Budget Committee on October 14, 2014.

8. Board Members' Insight Regarding Development of 2015-2016 Budget

Chairman Ortega stated that it has become a practice for the board to provide the Superintendent with guidance regarding the budget each year. He explained that each board member would have the opportunity to share their own thoughts on the 2015-2016 budget. Then Chairman Ortega will put all the information together and provide guidance to the Superintendent from the collective comments of the school board members.

Board Member Schneider, who was not in attendance, shared his thoughts with Chairman Ortega who presented them to the board. He stated that he wants the board to be frugal with the budgeting process and to stay as close as possible to a level funded budget. He hopes the board will be conservative in terms of staffing. He would like to review the status of the high school track more closely. He added that he continues to support the CIP direction.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she would like to see a level funded budget but not to compromise the education of the students. She also would like to closely look at the CIP and the Technology needs for the district. She also wanted to make sure the district is ready for the assessment testing that needs to be done.

Board Member Powell stated that everything he was going to bring up was already discussed.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the department heads/principals need to be ready to explain the reasons and impact of their budget decisions. She added that projects and investments (books, furniture replacements, etc.) should be looked at to avoid bottlenecks in the future. The goal is not to have spikes and dips in the tax rate. We have to be consistent.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that she would like to see the list of items that were initially cut from the budget by the administration. She felt it was important for the board to know what was given up in order to satisfy the board's expectations of the budget. She would also like to see co-curricular funding in detail in the budget. She added that the track has to be discussed.

Chairman Ortega stated that he agrees with the other board members that they should look to contain the growth of the budget. He would like to see maintenance items such as the roof and the chiller in the Operating Budget. He also looks for the advancement of the technology infrastructure plan. He continues to be interested in the progression of providing parity and funding for the co-curricular clubs as compared to athletics.

9. Board Response to Call for New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) Resolutions

At the September 15, 2014 board meeting, Chairman Ortega was in receipt of the Call for the NHSBA Resolutions, which are due this month. The NHSBA will consolidate the resolutions provided by all the school boards in the state. At a later date the board will vote on those resolutions and instruct Vice Chair Barnes, the Board's liaison to the NHSBA, to vote accordingly at the Delegate Assembly in January. He then asked for any proposed resolutions. There were none.

10. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

b) Comments

Board Member Guagliumi was concerned that the high school track was in very poor condition.

Chairman Ortega addressed a letter that he had read at the meeting with the Town Council on September 29, 2014 regarding the use of JMUES for voting. He had stated at that time that the letter represented the board's concerns. He read the letter at the meeting and then there was discussion. It has come to his attention that some people misinterpreted the letter to mean that everyone posed a threat to the students. He wanted to clarify what was in that letter that only represented the board's position:

- The parent who wrote the letter is a security expert for a national defense contract.
- Opening the school as a change in normal security procedures represents the risk of a threat.
- Just because something has never happened in the past doesn't mean that it won't happen in the future.
- With the police, our staff practiced active shooter drills and the students practiced lockdown procedures with the staff following the incident at Sandy Hook. In times like these, student security must be a concern.
- Something can be done to enhance the security on the days that voting takes place in our schools.

Chairman Ortega announced that Wednesday, October 8, 2014 is National Walk to School Day. This is the day that students are urged to walk to school either alone or with a parent. James Masticola Upper Elementary School is promoting this day/program. Hopefully the weather will cooperate.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced that October 28th is the last day for the Merrimack Cohort to meet. The board is invited for a celebration of this milestone.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he had also taken a walk around the track with Tom Touseau and a representative of Maine Track and Field. All the problem areas were noted. On that following Monday some repairs were done to take care of the safety issues until the spring.

11. New Business

There was no new business.

12. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Barnes reported that she attended the New Hampshire School Board Association Executive Board meeting on September 16, 2014, where she represents the South Central Region of the state. They spoke about the NHIAA as well as legal updates and legislative and retirement updates. They will meet again in November in preparation for the Delegate Assembly in January.

Vice Chair Barnes spoke about South Korean students' visit. There were one hundred thirty five students plus their principal and chaperones. They visited Merrimack High School on

October 2, 2014. Their school is a foreign language school. The students were in this country on an ivy-league school tour. The students toured the school followed by a concert by their percussion troupe. The students were very engaged and the boundary of language was minimal. Hopefully this was the first of many years that they will come back and form a partnership with Merrimack.

Vice Chair Barnes spoke about the Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting on September 17, 2014. They are dealing with the dog park rules. They are looking for sites for the disc golf course. She added that the town had a surplus this year and is funding a number of projects, including upgrades at Wasserman Park. There was dialogue on the budget. The date of the Halloween party should be Friday, October 24, 2014.

Board Member Powell asked about the amount of the town surplus.

Vice Chair Barnes responded that the surplus is about eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000), which was from things like additional car registrations that they were not expecting.

Board Member Powell asked if they planned on using the surplus to off-set the tax rate.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the funds have to be broken down to pay for some maintenance work that has to be done.

Board Member Guagliumi reported that she attended the Health and Physical Education Curriculum Committee on September 25, 2014 to lay the foundation for a series of meetings on work that they have been doing on the curriculum this year.

Board Member Guagliumi reported that on Thursday, October 9, 2014, there will be a Professional Development Committee meeting. There will be a Budget Committee meeting on October 14, 2014 to review two candidates for the open position on the committee as well as to review the most recent budget and to discuss the liaison process.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

14. Manifest

At 9:00 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.