

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room  
November 17, 2014  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

**1. Call To Order**

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.  
Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of the November 3, 2014 minutes**

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2014 minutes.

Board Member Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 10 of 14, line 413, change “sight” to “site”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- For clarification on Section 5 on the Merrimack High School Track
  - Page 2 of 14, line 87 should read, “Option 2 is replacing the six lane track and adding two more straight-a-way lanes, making it an eight lane track on the front stretch.
  - Page 3 of 14, last bullet should read, “The NCAA-USA Track and Field recommends that schools run eight person finals, which have to be on an eight lane track for sprint distant events.”
  - Page 4 of 14, line 158 should read, “Vice Chair Barnes asked about the difference between the six lane oval track and the eight lane straight-a-way track”.
- Page 4 of 14, line 145, should be “...hosted its last State track meet.”

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- For clarification on Section 5 on the Merrimack High School Track:
  - Page 2 of 14, lines 86-87, should read “Option 1 is replacing the track as is.”
  - Page 2 of 14, line 90, add that Mr. Cornish is a service provider for the district and a planning expert.
  - Page 3 of 14, line 100, at the end of the sentence “...very risky.” add, “Mr. Cornish recommended laying the asphalt when completing the track.”
  - Page 3 of 14, line 101 should read, “...and adequate drainage for the site should all be carefully planned to protect the track.”
  - Page 3 of 14, line 114, add the end of the sentence, “...should the district select that option.”
  - Page 4 of 14, line 143, add a period after the word “track”.
  - Page 4 of 14, line 178, should read, “messy, but it can be done without significantly disturbing the track.”
  - Page 7 of 14, line 312, in the last sentence, change “is” to “may be”
- Page 11, line 461, at the end of the sentence add, “and other appropriate items that may affect the community.”

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 14, line 150, add at the end, “She added that sales from the Booster Club go back to support the track program, so additional meets will assist in fund raising.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 12 of 14, line 521 should read, “At the school board’s request, Chairman Ortega went before the Council. The Council took action.”

The motion to accept the minutes of the November 3, 2014 meeting as amended passed 5-0-0.

### **3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation

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

Business Administrator Shevenell presented a gift from Scholastic Sports Marketing, Inc. to Merrimack High School in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500) to support the U.S.Army and promote football and our Armed Services.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the generous gift from Scholastic Sports Marketing, Inc. in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500) to Merrimack High School.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

### **5. Recognition of Merrimack High School Girls’ Volleyball Team as Division I State Champions**

Principal Ken Johnson highlighted the accomplishments of the Girls’ Volleyball Team this year:

- The team was undefeated 22-0.
- They were sixty-six and two in sets, establishing a new NHIAA record.
- Jen and Jo Coffey were selected to play in the First Team Division 1 All-State competition.
- Jen Coffey is the Division 1 Player of the Year and a finalist for the Gatorade Women of the Year.
- Coach Tammy Lambrou was selected as the Division 1 Coach of the Year.
- Eric Sabean, Athletic Director of the high school, described the team as “wildly talented, a team of the greatest character who has done Merrimack and Merrimack High School especially proud.”
- Principal Johnson stated that this is a team of historic proportions and may be the greatest women’s volleyball team ever assembled in NHIAA history.

Coach Lambrou spoke about the team and how they vowed to win the playoffs this year. She added that there was tremendous support from the administration and the student body. She announced that Jen Coffey is the first Merrimack High School student to receive a full volleyball scholarship to college.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how many girls on the team were graduating this year and how many were freshman. The girls responded that four seniors are on the team and five students are on the

team for the first time this year. She added that even with the loss of the seniors from the team, there is still great talent for the coming years.

Coach Lambrou added that all the girls on the team have a GPA of at least 3.0. The cumulative average for the team is always over a 3.0. She added that the team has always done a cancer awareness game to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. Last year the team decided to raise funds for a local family that had been financially burdened by cancer. A family received the money last year. This year another family received the money. Funds were raised through the 50/50 raffle and concessions at the game.

## **6. Science Curriculum Update**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced the members of the Science Curriculum team. He added that this was one of the most independent professional groups of people working on behalf of the students who are doing great work to bring the students an updated state of the arts science curriculum.

Bill Morris, Assistant Principal of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School spoke about the team:

- The team meets bi-monthly to work on reviewing the science curriculum, most recently focusing on the Earth and Space Science strand.
- They met for three full days this past summer at the August Academy
- Work sessions were focused, productive and with rich, professional dialogue.
- Work sessions consisted of teacher representatives from all building at all levels.
- They continue to feel that the implementation of this revised curriculum should be supported by the current budget.
- Teachers continue to receive Professional Development to support the new concepts that they have begun to teach or will teach in the future.
- As the Science Curriculum Review Committee continues to progress through a review process of all the strands, Professional Development will focus on such areas as lesson plan design and inquiry.
- The committee continues to follow time frames in science education at the State and National levels.

Keith Tanner, Grade 6 teacher at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, stated that last year the focus of the team was on creating a draft of the Earth and Space Science strand. They followed the same process as had been used in the Life and Physical Science strand. They developed units for grades K-6. Over the summer they also created student friendly language for teachers to post in their classrooms.

Allison MacGuire, Grade 2 teacher at Reeds Ferry Elementary School, stated that the team continues to work towards consistency on the depth of knowledge required at each grade level using their performance indicator terms. Last year they added “research” to all of the strands, as an additional method of science inquiry.

Rebecca Vandenberg, Grade 3 teacher at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, stated that the team tries to give teachers the time to give input on the process and the draft presented to them. This past spring they elicited feedback on the piloting of the Life and Physical Science strand. Using that feedback, revisions were made.

Ashley Meehan, Grade 5 teacher at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, stated that the team continues to keep the administration in all buildings informed of their progress. A few members of the team had the chance to attend training at the Merrimack Library.

Jeff Caron, Science teacher at Merrimack Middle School, stated that this year the focus will be to continue to elicit feedback from the K-6 teachers and make provisions to all the strands as needed. They will compile a list of resources and support materials for teachers to use in each unit.

John Snell, Science Department Head at Merrimack High School, reported that at the high school they have been working on competency initiatives and the teachers have been developing competencies in each course and the assessments that go with them. This is based on the current State requirements.

Joan McMahon, Special Education Teacher at Merrimack Middle School, stated that the team appreciates how supportive the board has been of the science curriculum, instruction and budgets over the years.

Vice Chair Barnes asked to give some examples of common terminology and how that works with the K-6 final curriculum.

Ms. MacGuire responded that at the beginning of the curriculum they have a document where they are able to list the terms that they put into the indicators throughout the document. The teachers can reference exactly what depth of knowledge they are supposed to go through. "Research" was added to get at scientific inquiry.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the State standards are used as guidelines at the high school and that the team has been working on the K-6 curriculum. She asked about the status of them at the middle school.

Mr. Caron responded that at the middle school they are doing their own teacher efforts to focus on curriculum and to make sure it is consistent from teacher to teacher. Now the team has to translate what they have done into the middle school curriculum.

Ms. McMahon stated that part of the work that they have done at the middle school has been similar to work done at the high school, such as making formative assessments.

Chairman Ortega asked that if the board was interested in seeing where the curriculum stands, could the team get some information to them.

Mr. Snell responded that he would put together a packet for the board members.

Chairman Ortega stated that he agreed that the way to move forward is incrementally, beginning with the K-6 curriculum. He added that he believed that the team and the district will have a better product because of the approach the team has taken.

## **7. Summary of Merrimack School District Performance on 2014 NECAP Science Assessment**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained the 2014 NECAP Science scores:

- He stated that science domain sub-scores cannot be directly compared from one year to the next even within a grade level. Unlike achievement levels and scaled scores, these scores are reported as raw scores and have not been linked across years and placed on the same scale.

- There is not sufficient numbers of points within each reporting category to equate these sub-scores from one year to the next.
- The current NECAP science scores are the result of performance on four domains: Physical Science, Earth Space Science, Life Science and Inquiry.
- It is important to know that the Inquiry Domain represents the single greatest influence on the science NECAP results. That is worth 30% of the overall result and all the other three domains represent just over 23% each.
- The achievement level cut scores for science were the result of the standard setting process that was completed in August, 2008, and remains consistent year to year.
- Results of the NECAPS
  - These NECAP results are relatively consistent with the State results.
  - Merrimack's best performance was found at fourth grade.
  - There is a significant dip in performance at the Middle School.
  - There is a significant increase in performance at the two highest categories at the High School.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that in the curriculum the science team is developing, there is a focus on Inquiry. The hope is that as the transition to the new standards is made, there will be an increase in the performance of the students in the Inquiry Domain. He noted that in the other three domains the students' performances are at or above the State level.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if there is an area of science that is not being addressed or not being tested.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that any NECAP is one data point. There is not a lot of consistency at the moment with other results that we have.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if there will be a realistic time line to see improvements in the scores based on the new testing platform starting this year and other data plans that will not be viable in establishing a trend line for growth.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that it is hard to say because NECAP is going away so there will not be a point of comparison. It will be hard to draw comparisons for a while. He added that what it is to know something is different than what it is to understand something.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if the new assessments have more content to them.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that it is not possible to say at the moment.

Board Member Schneider asked if it is possible to look at ways to leverage styles and methodologies of inquiry across all disciplines. He would like to see this done aggressively.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that some of that has already been done at the August Academy. He agreed that the plan could be more aggressive.

Chairman Ortega stated that the board wishes the scores were higher. He added that they understand where they are within the State. As these scores are looked at, it is important to understand what is being taught, what the focus is, and what competencies are being focused on. The message for him is continual improvement and continual rigor in the area of Inquiry.

## **8. Second Review of a New Policy**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that at the last board meeting he and Nancy Rose presented the Student Use of Information Technology. At that time, Vice Chair Barnes had a specific question that warranted the need for legal review. He went through the policy, noting the additions and corrections that were made based on suggestions of counsel.

Board Member Schneider asked how students access the network resources from a personal device.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that it could be through wireless or Wi-Fi.

Board Member Schneider suggested that a “terms of use” should be accepted before the device can be used by a student. This could make students aware of what the terms and conditions are.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) had a resolution from one of the districts which was about encouraging the NH Legislature to pass legislation that establishes a positive and safe media environment for children.

Chairman Ortega noted that the amendments made the policy stronger.

Student Representative Crowley stated that her teachers make sure that the students do the right things on the devices that are provided to them, such as computers. She added that the teachers focus on being safe on the internet and handling themselves appropriately. She added that it is important to stress that this doesn’t just apply to school devices. Students have to bring their responsibility on the internet to their personal devices. She added that she thought the students should have more education on their responsibilities.

Superintendent Chiafery asked if acceptance of this policy should be put on the Consent Agenda for the December 1, 2014 board meeting or if more deliberation is needed.

Chairman Ortega stated that this would be put on the Consent Agenda for the December 1, 2014 board meeting.

## **9. Review of Board’s Charge to the Planning and Building Committee on October 20, 2014**

Chairman Ortega gave background information on the charge given to the Planning and Building Committee at the October 20, 2014 school board meeting. He noted that NESDEC was contacted to do a space utilization report. That report included enrollment projections as well as a space utilization study. The report offered the district some useful information. The report did not include cost estimates of using existing space at either the James Masticola Upper Elementary School (JMUES) or Merrimack Middle School to accommodate the buildings that are looking to be retired and placed into those spaces. He noted that NESDEC did not include what the traffic patterns would be within the schools. .

Chairman Ortega stated that the board asked the Planning and Building Committee to take the work they had previously done, update their existing report, look at the NESDEC report, and look at the proposed projects to come up with a cost. The Planning and Building Committee has met since that meeting, and Chairman Rich Hendricks asked to attend the board meeting to discuss the plans.

Rich Hendricks stated that he hoped this meeting would determine what the board wants from the committee. He added that they are having a realtor explain to them what could be available in terms of leasing or buying a new building and what the current costs are. He added that the

committee is going to look at the two suggestions made by the NESDEC report which were to put Special Services in the middle school and the SAU office in the upper elementary school. Mr. Hendricks added that the Planning and Building Committee has been charged with getting the costs of moving the offices into the existing schools, as well as the impact of moving them. They will discuss what to do with the two existing houses (“blue house” and “green house”). He added that the costs could be for demolition, cautioning that there may be some asbestos in one or both of the buildings.

Mr. Hendricks stated that the committee needs more input from the board. He stated that the committee would like to do a video and an open house, perhaps combining the two. He would like to see the board invited to attend PTO meetings, trying to spread the word to as many people as possible and answer any questions or address any misconceptions. They definitely want to stress visualization. He added that it has to be a joint effort to get the information out to the public.

Chairman Ortega stated that after the warrant article on the consolidation was defeated at the April, 2013 election, the board met to discuss why it failed. The board had been under the impression that it was the responsibility of the Planning and Building Committee to reach out to the public for support of the warrant article and realized that they should have taken more responsibility in support of the warrant article. He added that he thought a visit to the blue and green buildings, whether in person or through video, would be hugely important for the voters.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the board could absolutely advocate the project. She added that there is a District Parent Group which could be informed and then they could share the information with parent groups in each school.

Mr. Hendricks responded that he thought it would be better to reach out to each of the buildings’ parent teacher groups so more people could be reached at one time rather than just the leaders of the parent groups.

Vice Chair Barnes added that the doors of communication could be opened by first working with the District Parent Group. She added that there is a lot the board can do as far as communication and they need to take ownership and work collaboratively with the Planning and Building committee.

She also stated that she thought the board should take the NESDEC report and make some appendices. She stated that the Planning and Building committee should tell the board what they need.

Mr. Hendricks responded that they feel that this is as far as they can go. They can give the board their ideas and then the board should take the responsibility to get the information out to the public.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she thought a video is a great idea to help the voters make educated decisions.

Mr. Hendricks asked the board about Information Technology. He felt that the board and the committee should work together in determining what social media could be used to reach the voters.

Board Member Schneider stated that he is pushing the board to answer the questions that were brought up by voters after the 2013 election. He agreed that social media should be used to

reach out to the voters so they could consume and digest the information. He added that as the liaison to the Planning and Building Committee, he would bring any questions or concerns that board members may have to the committee.

Chairman Ortega added that this topic has been the focus of the Planning and Building Committee for probably twelve years and they are very committed to solving the problems. He added that the board recognizes that the challenge is to get the voters to recognize the needs for this project.

## **10. Review Final Draft of Educator Performance and Evaluation Model**

Board Member Powell explained the final rubric for the Performance and Evaluation Model.

- Feedback was gathered last spring during the pilot from educators and evaluators and EPEC (Educator Performance and Evaluation Committee). The committee met a few times to go over the feedback.
- Training for the evaluators was held last week.
- The presentation of the rubric will be going to the educators in December.
- The plan is to have the board and the Merrimack Teachers' Association (MTA) receive the rubric in February.
- There had been a very productive meeting on November 10, 2014, adding that it has been two years and a couple of days since the committee was formed.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that the committee had put many, many, hours into the revision of the model. He stated that the feedback from educators and evaluators came in three forms:

- 1) In the original rubric, there was a sense that the language in each descriptive was wordy. One of the requests was for the committee to try to streamline the language, which has been done to make it much sharper and concise.
- 2) In the Performance Indicators, between Highly Effective and Effective, there was language that was intended to differentiate between the two. The feedback was that people did not understand the difference between one performance indicator and another.
- 3) Non-classroom educators such as nurses, guidance counselors, art educators and music educators wondered if the rubric sufficiently covered their areas of work. The rubric subcommittee and EPEC went back and made sure that every domain, and all of the components of each of the domains, could logically be seen as connecting to all staff, not just the classroom teacher.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if they will be rolling this out as another pilot.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that there will not be another pilot. If the board were to approve the tool and the process presented in February, and if the MTA would approve it as well, it would constitute a roll out.

Chairman Ortega thanked the committee members, in particular the parent volunteers Kevin Bobbit and Trisha Swonger who signed up for a short commitment and have continued working on this well beyond what they originally thought.

## **11. Ongoing Preparation for Development of the 2015-2016 Budget**



Chairman Ortega stated that, as had been done in the past, he, the Superintendent and the Budget Chair met to try to plan out a calendar and iron out the way things would work in terms of questions, submittals and points of contact. This year Superintendent Chiafery, Chairman Ortega and Budget Committee Chair Stan Heinrich met to line up a calendar for this budget.

Chairman Ortega shared the planned calendar with the board. He noted that Tuesday, January 13, 2015 is a tentative date on the calendar because the Budget Committee felt that they would like to have two nights to meet and review department budgets. This tentative date has to be confirmed with Mr. Heinrich. He also noted that Friday, February 6, 2015 is the last day for petitioned bond articles and Tuesday February 10, 2015 is the last day for petitioned warrant articles.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the Budget Committee had reserved Tuesday, January 20, 2015 as the date of the first Budget Committee Hearing. However, the school board had a meeting scheduled for that night because they cannot meet on January 19, the regular Monday night meeting date because it is Martin Luther King Day and there is no school. Therefore, Tuesday, January 20, 2015 had been scheduled as a formal school board meeting. As a result, Mr. Heinrich has agreed to move their first hearing date to January 13, 2015.

Chairman Ortega spoke about the changes in the budget calendar over the past couple of years that has given the board more time for meetings, especially after the winter holidays.

Board Member Schneider asked about the date the budget has to be given to the State.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it is the last week of February.

## **12. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

### **b) Comments**

There were no comments

## **13. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **14. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Crowley reported that the Chinese exchange students arrived over the weekend and will be staying with host families through Thursday, November 20, 2014. DECA week was being celebrated at the high school. DECA was also featured in the Muscular Dystrophy Association newsletter for their part in the MDA walk at the Mall of New Hampshire in September. DECA is an organization for marketing and business students.

Board Member Schneider reported that the Planning and Building Committee met on November 10, 2014. He did not go into details of the meeting because there had already been a discussion with the Planning and Building Committee earlier in the evening.

Board Member Schneider reported that on November 13, 2014 there was a Merrimack Safeguard meeting. They have to start the process of promoting what they do. They reviewed the brochures they are doing. They are starting a new campaign called Be Responsible Merrimack. They are going to attend the next Chamber of Commerce meeting on December 5, 2015 to promote Be Responsible Merrimack. There is an upcoming survey that is happening. They also want to raise awareness that they received the grant they had applied for.

Vice Chair Barnes reported that on November 7, 2014 the Bus Stop Committee met based on the email the board had received. The committee went on site. The request met everyone's satisfaction.

Vice Chair Barnes reported that on November 11, 2014 the NH School Boards Association Executive Committee met. She learned there is a New Hampshire PTA. They received legislative updates, especially the impact of the November election. Legal updates included new guidelines and laws regarding restraints. The General Assembly will meet on January 10, 2015. There is a new bulletin called New Hampshire School Board Association News Briefs that board members will all be receiving.

Vice Chair Barnes reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on November 12, 2015. They discussed budget planning and forecasting. The Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. with the tree lighting at 3:45 p.m. The Winter Carnival is scheduled for February.

Chairman Ortega noted the concern that Student Representative Crowley had brought up regarding the bleachers and their installation and the negative impact that it had on the number of events held at the school. She added that there seems to be a need for better communication when planning those types of things with the student body and the school. He thanked her for raising the point and for the invitation that the board has received to go to the Student Congress meeting on November 19, 2014 for further discussion. He and Vice Chair Barnes will be attending the meeting along with Business Administrator Shevenell and Director of Maintenance, Tom Touseau.

Board Member Powell asked if other board members could attend the meeting.

Chairman Ortega responded that the invitation was extended to the board, but attendance was limited to himself and the Vice Chair because the bleachers is a district issue and he didn't want to run into problems with quorums and sending out public notices.

## **15. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

## **16. Manifest**

At 9:35 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting,

The motion passed 5-0-0.