

**Merrimack Special School Board Meeting
December 14, 2010
James Mastricola Elementary School – All Purpose Room**

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman Thornton, Board members Barnes, Ortega, and Student Representative Jacqueline McLavey. Also present were Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, and Business Administrator Shevenell. Budget Committee members in attendance were Andy Schneider, Matthew Publicover, Rod Buckley, Jennifer Burk, George Markwell, Bill Cummings, Michael Beck, and Bill Boyd.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Vaillancourt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Chairman Vaillancourt announced that there would be an opportunity for the public to speak to agenda items at the end of the meeting.

3. Budget Discussions

• **James Mastricola Upper Elementary School**

Principal Marsha McGill and Assistant Principal Bill Morris presented the proposed 2011-2012 budget for James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Mrs. McGill reported the focus of the 2011-2012 budget was to continue the purchase of texts and workbooks to support the district-wide literacy initiative; continue the purchase of resource materials to implement a standards-based math program; an increase in the art supplies to support the art curriculum; and replacement furniture for classrooms.

Board member Ortega asked why the upper elementary school postage rate, per student, was higher than the other elementary schools.

Principal McGill responded that James Mastricola Upper Elementary School has more students than the other elementary schools. She also noted that there are more requests for mailing of student records.

Board member Ortega asked for the number of students in the gifted and talented program. He also inquired about expenses related to the gifted and talented program.

Principal McGill responded that the gifted and talented program consists of about 125 students. She noted one hundred additional students participate in the math gifted and talented program. The gifted and talented budget supports the math resources, the geography bee, the chess club, the stock market unit, the investigation project, the inspiring individual's project, and the Lego robotics club.

- **James Mastricola Elementary School, Reeds Ferry Elementary School and Thorntons Ferry Elementary School**

Principal Kim Yarlott, and Assistant Principal Tim O'Connell from Reeds Ferry Elementary School; Principal John Fabrizio and Assistant Principal Emilie Carter from James Mastricola Elementary School; and Principal Bridey Bellemare and Assistant Principal Sharon Putney from Thorntons Ferry Elementary School presented the proposed 2011-2012 budgets for the three elementary schools.

Principal Fabrizio reported that the three elementary school budgets reflect an increase in the art supply account and requests for furniture replacement. He reported ongoing efforts to purchase a variety of reading texts and materials to implement the standards-based math program.

Principal Fabrizio reported a slight increase in student enrollment at James Mastricola Elementary School for the 2011-2012 school year.

Principal Yarlott reported a slight decrease in student enrollments at Reeds Ferry Elementary School for the 2011-2012 school year. She highlighted a request to replace cafeteria tables at Reeds Ferry Elementary School. She noted that the cost of new cafeteria tables was reflected in the maintenance budget.

Principal Bellemare reported a slight decrease in student enrollments at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School for the 2011-2012 school year. She highlighted a request to replace cafeteria tables at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School. She noted that the cost of new cafeteria tables was reflected in the maintenance budget.

Chair Vaillancourt asked Principal Yarlott if the cafeteria tables at Reeds Ferry Elementary School could be repaired for one more year.

Principal Yarlott responded that her request to purchase new cafeteria tables could be deferred for another year; however, it would be important to replace the cafeteria tables within the next two years.

- **Merrimack High School**

Principal Ken Johnson, Assistant Principals Cheryl Smith, Rich Zampieri and Peter Bergeron presented the proposed 2011-2012 budget for Merrimack High School.

Principal Johnson reported a slight decrease in student enrollment for 2011-2012. Therefore, most high school accounts have been reduced or level funded.

Principal Johnson reported a need to purchase 70 new computers, the need to purchase new Spanish II textbooks, an increase in the co-curricular transportation account, and the ongoing furniture replacement plan.

Principal Johnson stated that the New England Association of Schools and College's (NEASC) visiting committee reported the need for current technology at the high school. Seventy new computers will replace the seven to eight year old computers in the three computer labs.

Board member Barnes asked how the purchase of 70 new computers fit into the Logic Model and the age of the computers that would be replaced.

Principal Johnson stated that the current computers in the three labs are between seven and eight years old. He noted that the purchase of 70 new computers is relevant to the Logic Model because it will update three computer labs at the high school. He stated that replacing the 70 old computers is not consistent with the technology plan, but it is the most fiscally responsible decision with regards to technology at this time.

Vice Chair Thornton asked if the three computer labs were utilized simultaneously during the school day.

Assistant Principal Smith reported that the three computer labs at the high school are utilized all eight periods of the school day.

Vice Chair Thornton asked how many additional computers were utilized by students at the high school, not counting the 70 computers in the three computer labs. She questioned if this was the first of future requests for new computers to replace old computers at the high school.

Assistant Principal Smith responded that there are 480 computers within the high school.

Principal Johnson stated that the reason for the request for 70 new computers is to stay current in the area of technology. He clarified that students do not have access to all 480 computers at the high school.

Business Administrator Shevenell noted that last year 90 ten-year old computers were replaced at the elementary schools and 54 eight-year old computers were replaced at the upper elementary school this year. He stated that there were approximately 1200 computers district wide that need replacement on a rotating basis.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that Library Director Nancy Rose and the technology team were exploring future technology purchases to reduce the cycle of continual computer replacement.

Vice Chair Thornton asked how outdated were the 70 high school computers.

Principal Johnson responded that the 70 computers are significantly slow and that is a significant detriment to student learning.

Student Representative McLavey supported the purchase of 70 new computers. She noted that the current computers are extremely slow.

Principal Johnson clarified that the budget for the gifted and talented programs at the high school reflect programmatic costs rather than a per pupil cost.

Assistant Bergeron clarified that the co-curricular transportation account is new this year. It reflects the administration's desire to assist academic teams as they strive for success in the post season.

- **Merrimack Middle School – Part II**

Principal Debbie Woelflein and Assistant Principal Adam Caragher responded to the Board's request to address the low eighth grade student to teacher ratio in the 2011-2012 budget.

Principal Woelflein presented the elimination of two full-time eighth grade teaching positions from the 2011-2012 budget resulting in three and a half eighth grade teaching teams next year. The half team would consist of a Language Arts coordinator, a math coordinator, a social studies coordinator, and a gateway coordinator with certification in science. The half team would teach half the number of students as a full team leaving the remainder of the day to perform other responsibilities. The average class size of the three and a half team is expected to be 23 students.

Principal Woelflein stated that the gateway support staff position is expected to be an important element in the success of a three and a half teacher team.

- **Central Office**

Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Business Administrator Shevenell presented the proposed 2011-2012 budget for the central office.

Business Administrator Shevenell noted the following significant changes in the budget. A 21% (\$543,903) increase in the employer contribution rate in the New Hampshire Retirement System for both professional staff and classified staff, a 6.7% (\$371,830) increase in health insurance coverage, and a 4% (\$64,301) increase in transportation costs.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported the school district's bonded debt will be \$72,000 less than the budgeted interest payment in the 2010-2011 budget.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that twenty-five teachers applied for the retirement incentive. The budget includes funding for ten of the twenty-five requests.

Board members expressed interest in inviting the State Legislators to a future School Board meeting to discuss the New Hampshire Retirement System.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that the current bus contract is due to expire in 2012-2013. He noted that bus size, number of buses, and ridership would be reviewed prior to the start of a new contract.

- **Warrant Articles**

Superintendent Chiafery reported the need for an election warrant article and an acceptance of gift warrant article and a collective bargaining warrant article. She asked the Board if it had any recommendations for warrant articles.

All board members were in agreement to create a warrant article for the purpose of saving money from surplus funds over the next two years for a new central office and special services building. The amount of the warrant article will be determined at a future meeting.

4. Budget Deliberations

The Board asked Superintendent Chiafery to reduce the 2011-2012 budget by another \$500,000.

Chair Vaillancourt thanked the Budget Committee members for attending the School Board's budget workshops.

5. Public Participation on Agenda Items

George Markwell, 127 Indian Rock Road, questioned why cars have been double parking along Baboosic Lake Road during drop-off times at the Masticola Complex. He stated that it creates a hazard and asked that it be addressed.

Jennifer Calautti spoke, on behalf of her daughter who is a sophomore at Merrimack High School, in support of the purchase of 70 new computers at Merrimack High School.

At 9:55 p.m., Board member Barnes moved (seconded by Vice Chair Thornton) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.