

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
December 15, 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 7:30 p.m.
Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of the December 1, 2014 minutes

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2014 minutes.

Board Member Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page one, section 6, add the names of the student officers.
- Page two, line 105 add the word “always” between the words “...is one ...”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page two, line 80, the sentence should read “Chairman Ortega asked if there are any male students involved in SADD, as all of the students in attendance happened to be female.
- Page two, line 152, change the name “Mr. Watkin” to “Mr. Watkins”.
- Page two, line 154, add “through harvesting” to the end of the sentence.

The motion to accept the minutes of the December 1, 2014 meeting as amended passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Recognition of Southern New Hampshire University Master’s Degree Graduates who are District Educators

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained three years ago Mary Heath who, at the time, was Dean of the School of Southern New Hampshire University approached Superintendent Chiafery about building a genuine multifaceted K-12 higher education partnership that would benefit both the University and the District.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced State Representative Mary Heath, Assistant Professor Audrey Rogers of Southern New Hampshire University and Merrimack Educators Jill Silano, Deb Belanger, Anne Graves, Adam French, and Crystalyn Shea.

Deb Belanger reported that educators earned an average of 30 credits each through this program.

Jill Silano highlighted the many opportunities for the educators in the cohort to collaborate across all grade levels.

Crystalyn Shea explained that the specialized course schedule and the reduced monetary burden made it possible to manage.

Anne Graves stated that her Master's Degree learning experience was relevant, current and affordable.

Adam French added that his teaching experience prior to pursuing a Master's Degree was beneficial in many ways.

Audrey Rogers thanked the School Board, teachers who taught the courses and the teachers who were the recipients. She stated as a member of the Merrimack community she was proud of the entire cohort. She saw amazing growth in the educators and witnessed the direct benefit to their students.

Mary Heath noted that the Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) benefited from being able to bring the learning into the environment where the learning is taking place. She thanked Dr. Paul LeBlanc, president for SNHU, for his support of the program.

Audrey Rogers stated that Dean Ray McNulty is very interested in continuing the work that Mary Health started.

It was noted that 28 teachers received a Master's Degree through the partnership between SNHU and the Merrimack School District.

Chairman Ortega congratulated the graduates and asked the graduates who were in the room to stand and be recognized.

Vice Chairman Barnes asked if individuals who were not able to complete the program would have an opportunity to make up the courses missed.

Audrey Rogers explained that the courses were embedded with District initiative and goals. Individuals who were not able to complete the program would have to participate in future cohort effort.

Vice Chairman Barnes expressed her desire for recipients of the Master's Degree program through SNHU participate on curriculum development committees in the future.

Vice Chairman Barnes asked if there would be a similar opportunity for another cohort of Merrimack Educators.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied there is interest in offering the experience to a new cohort.

Board Member Powell expressed his appreciation to the members of the cohort and asked that they encourage other educators to participate in the next cohort.

Board Member Powell questioned if the District should rethink how and when advanced degrees are obtained.

Board Member Schneider suggested adding customization to the next Master's Degree cohort. He felt it would be beneficial to have a couple of specializations, such as technology and/or curriculum development based, in addition to the core courses.

Audrey Rogers emphasized that district goals were incorporated into each course syllabi. Customization is a key component of the cohort.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that learning as an adult is beneficial and noted the benefit of networking within a cohort.

Chairman Ortega congratulated the graduates and thanked Audrey Rogers and the instructors who delivered the courses.

5. Reconsideration of Merrimack Middle School Intersection

Chair Ortega introduced Ken Clinton, the engineer for Chestnut Hill Developers, Fire Chief Mike Currier, Fire Marshall John Manuele, Police Chief Mark Doyle, Kyle Fox from the Department of Public Works, and Business Administrator Matt Shevenell.

Chair Ortega reported that a design for a proposed intersection on Madeline Bennett Lane was presented and approved by the School Board. The proposed intersection is scheduled to go before the Planning Board on December 16, 2014. The Board learned last week that Police Chief Doyle, Fire Chief Currier and the Department of Public Works had concerns with the design of the proposed intersection as a round-a-bout.

Chair Ortega stated that it was his intent to have all concerns presented to the School Board. His hope is that all parties could agree on a design that would meet all requirements for the intersection on Madeline Bennett Lane.

Fire Chief Currier explained how the reorganization of a few departments improved the communication and application process for developers wanting to build in Merrimack.

Kyle Fox from the Public Works Department explained the Chestnut Hill Developer presented nine different concepts for an intersection on Madeline Bennett Lane. A curved intersection was presented to the Highway Safety Committee. The Highway Safety Committee endorsed the curved intersection and involvement of the Merrimack School District, the bus company and the Department of Public Works to evaluate if the intersection would cause potential delays to the school buses as well as build delays. He noted that a report was submitted which contains the best information possible given the intersection does not currently exist.

Mr. Fox stated the only intersection known to the Public works Department, until last week, was the curved intersection that was presented to the Highway Safety Committee in June 2014.

Mr. Fox stated that after reviewing the plans for a round-a-bout the Department of Public Works determined that it would not be the best solution for the intersection. The Department of Public Works determined that the intersection meets the requirements for a stop sign.

Captain John Manuele identified two areas of concern with the round-a-bout. The first concern was that it would be difficult for the ladder fire trucks to maneuver. The second concern was the safety of pedestrians crossing the round-a-bout.

Police Chief Doyle expressed his concern that a round-a-bout would allow traffic to continue to flow in a school zone rather than slow down or stop. He also expressed his concern over the possibility of traffic congestion at the round-a-bout during an emergency vehicle response. Other concerns of Chief Doyle's was relative to ingress and egress, large evening events at the school at night and driver behavior during low traffic times.

Fire Chief Manuele expressed his concern over the possibility that cars would travel around the round-a-bout at the same time the school buses are traveling through the round-a-bout in route to the middle school. He is not supportive of a round-a-bout on Madeline Bennett Lane.

Chair Ortega spoke to the high traffic volume times. He reported a stop sign would add about five minutes to each bus route.

Chair Ortega asked for suggestions on the best solution to keep bus traffic moving safely during peak traffic times at the middle school.

Mr. Fox stated that a yield sign could replace a stop sign if there was a proper sight line to the right.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he was concerned that the size of the round-a-bout would be too small. He stated that he did not like the placement of a stop sign that would stop each bus. He suggested additional research by a certified traffic engineer.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that the bus company prefers a round-a-bout concept rather than a stop sign.

Vice Chair Barnes expressed her opinion that the discussion about the intersection should have continued when it was realized that the multiple representatives from the school district voted against the intersection during the Highway Safety Committee meeting.

Chief Doyle and Chief Currier both reported the vote was presented in a way that the members of the Highway Safety Committee were voting on the endorsement of a safe intersection design.

Board Member Powell asked why the need for an open through road on Madeline Bennett Lane rather than a gated access road.

The response was that the Planning Board required it years ago for the safety of the development.

Fire Chief Currier expressed his support for a traffic study.

Board Member Schneider suggested a traffic light, with intelligence during peak times, rather than a stop sign or round-a-bout.

Board Member Guagliumi acknowledged the desire by everyone to make the correct decision. She questioned the cost benefit of having a gated throughway intersection for the safety concerns for the citizens and children.

Chair Ortega asked Mr. Clinton how he would proceed before the Planning Board following this evening's meeting.

Mr. Clinton represents the design consultant for the developer. He supports the curve design for the intersection. He felt from a design standpoint a round-a-bout cannot be justified. He felt the safety difference between a round-a-bout and the curve design is very small. He does not feel there is a need for a traffic study.

Mr. Clinton stated that without any direction from this meeting, he anticipates asking the Planning Board what they should do.

Vice Chair Barnes asked why the stop sign was not placed at Old Blood Road rather than Madeline Bennett Lane.

Chief Doyle expressed his supported for a traffic study.

Chair Ortega summarized that a traffic study would be the responsible way to go.

Attorney Greg Michael came to the table. He stated that there was effort to communicate with the School Board about the intersection. He referenced the eight concepts for an intersection submitted by Mr. Clinton. He noted that the Planning Board instructed the developer to develop a concept for the intersection. He asked for a consensus from the School Board and representatives from the various groups so that the developer can proceed soon. To that end, Attorney Greg Michael committed to having a traffic study done in the next two weeks.

The representatives will meet and present a summary at the January 5, 2015 School Board meeting.

6. Formal Hearing on Food Service Budget for 2015-2016

Food Service Director Dziki presented the proposed 2015-2016 budget for food service. He highlighted the need to replace one steam table at James Masticola Upper Elementary School.

Director Dziki provided answers to the Board's prepared questions about the food service budget.

Chairman Ortega highlighted the cost increase due to the selection of whole grain food, fresh fruits, and vegetables. He noted that the costs have been trending down. He asked if the downward trend was related to the purchasing collaborative, declining enrollments, offerings, pricing or something else.

Director Dziki reported a savings of approximately \$50,000 as a result of the collaborative purchasing group. The downward trend in participation is due partly because of the decrease in enrollment and the fact that fewer snacks are being offered as a result of new regulations.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how much of an increase was a result of the new regulations compared to previous standards and can the District opt out of the Federal program. If the District were to opt out, what are the consequences and benefits from a nutritional and monetary perspective?

Director Dziki explained the purpose of the Federal guidelines is to provide nutritional food to students in an effort to reduce childhood obesity. The guidelines were introduced in 2010 with the expectation that they would be phased in over a five year period. Mr. Dziki explained that the fifth year of the phase stipulates use of 100% whole grain items and a reduction in sodium. As a result, some lunches are not as favorable to the students and therefore lunch sales are down.

Mr. Dziki explained that Congress will be reviewing the guidelines and may provide the schools with relief in some areas.

Director Dziki reported if the District were to opt out of the Federal food service program it would lose funding for students who qualify for free and reduced lunches, monthly surplus commodity foods and \$70,000 from the Federal food distribution program.

Board Member Schneider asked for a summary of the revenue flow and whether the new healthy lunch/snack initiatives have had an impact. He asked for an overview of the districts that are opting out of the Federal funding (even having to provide the reduced/free lunches on their own) due to what they say are bad government guidelines.

Director Dziki explained that healthy snacks have had an impact in the revenue flow. If Congress can provide some relief in the guidelines for school lunches then changes could be made and lunch sales would most likely increase. He also noted that some districts that are opting out of the Federal funding program are doing so on a temporary basis.

Board Member Powell asked for clarification on the \$12,000 technology service contract in the budget.

Director Dziki reported that a switch in technology vendors and a three year warranty on the hardware resulted in a cost savings. The technology service contract is expected to cost approximately \$12,000 in 2015-2016.

7. Formal Hearing on Maintenance Budget Including Discussion Regarding Merrimack High School Track Replacement

Director Touseau presented the proposed 2015-2016 maintenance budget. He highlighted the replacement of a 36,430 square foot section of roof at Merrimack High School (\$856,000), replacement of the cafeteria HVAC unit at Merrimack High School (\$500,000), replacement of a 2003 pickup truck with plow for the maintenance department and additional costs for gas conversion retrofit.

Director Touseau acknowledged the purchase of a new truck in July 2014 and reinforced the need to replace another older pickup truck next year. He anticipates replacing a 15 year old van in the near future.

Board Member Schneider asked if leasing a pickup truck had been explored.

Director Touseau responded he had not explored the option of leasing.

Board Member Powell asked what types of repairs had been performed to the pickup truck in the last two years.

Director Touseau responded power steering, exhaust manifold, axle shaft, ball joint, brake pads, rotators and a sway bar. He also explained that each vehicle is assigned to one person.

Director Touseau explained the difference between the Honeywell retrofit and the Honeywell maintenance agreement.

Director Touseau reported a typographical error on page 12 of the maintenance budget. The 2015-2016 proposed amount for electricity for the Superintendent's office should have read \$3,418. The difference was reflected in the bottom line of the budget.

Board Member Schneider recommended adding the previous oil budget amounts to the natural gas line item in the maintenance budget for easy comparison in the future.

Chair Ortega stated that a savings of \$200,000 is recorded in the object section of the budget book.

Director Touseau reported that the replacement of a 36,430 square section of roof at Merrimack High School was a high priority in his budget. The replacement of the HVAC unit at Merrimack High School could be postponed one year.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if there would be additional costs incurred if the roof repair and the HVAC unit were done in separate years.

Director Touseau explained that the roof repair and the HVAC unit are two separate projects unrelated to each other. He stated it is hard to know if the project will cost a little more in a later year. He reiterated that they are unrelated projects.

Board Member Schneider stated that the HVAC project would involve cutting the roof to add two additional vents. He asked if that would be problematic if done after the roof replacement project.

Director Touseau felt the roof replacement project could include design accommodations for the HVAC project.

Chair Ortega reported that a number of items did not make the proposed 2015-2016 budget. The items on the budget cut list from the maintenance department totaled \$405,417.

Director Touseau spoke to the items listed on the 2015-2016 maintenance budget cut list.

Director Touseau felt the replacement of countertops and cabinets in the high school Family and Consumer Science room could be combined with a future asbestos abatement project.

Director Touseau stated that his desire to replace 56 windows in E-Section of the high school could be deferred.

Director Touseau explained that new cafeteria tables at James Mastricola Elementary School had been removed from his budget.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that James Mastricola Elementary School needed to replace combination sinks in classrooms as well as replace the cafeteria tables. The replacement sinks are in the proposed 2015-2016 budget; however, new cafeteria tables will wait another year.

Director Touseau stated another item removed from the proposed 2015-2016 budget was the purchase of 300 folding chairs and caddy for events at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School.

Director Touseau highlighted the need to repair the sidewalk at Merrimack Middle School next year.

Director Touseau felt the ventilation update to the boys' locker room at the high school could wait till next year.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the ventilation issue in the boys' locker room was noted in the NEASC review. It is her intent to improve the ventilation in the boys' locker room within the next few years.

Director Touseau reported the ongoing need for a new maintenance position; however, he did not include a new position in the 2015-2016 maintenance budget.

Director Touseau suggested increasing the grounds line item by \$10,000 to accommodate extensive repairs to the track in 2015-2016 in the spring.

Board Member Schneider asked why the support to replace the whole track over the HVAC project at the high school.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that the proposed 2015-2016 budget was built off the Capital Improvement Plan for 2015-2016 which consisted of the replacement of a section of roof and the HVAC project at the high school. The track repairs were not discussed when the administration built the proposed 2015-2016 budget.

Director Touseau presented two track repair plans for the Board's consideration. He explained option 1 would be the resurfacing of the existing six lane straight-a-way track and address drainage issues. Option 2 would include all of option 1 plus building a retaining wall between the straight-a-way and bleachers and the construction of two additional lanes in the straight-a-way.

Board Member Powell stated that he would like to know the impact to the students if the track remained a six lane straight-a-way rather than increase to eight lanes.

Superintendent Chiafery will ask Mr. John Snell, the track coach to attend a future meeting to provide that information to the Board.

Vice Chair Barnes believes the track repair belongs in the operating budget and should be done correctly the first time.

Board Member Schneider requested as much data as possible with regards to repairing the track to assist the Board during the budget process.

8. Dissemination of Proposed New Hampshire School Board (NHSBA) Resolutions

Chairman Ortega noted that the 2015 New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) Delegate Assembly will take place on Saturday, January 10, 2015. Vice Chair Barnes is an executive member of the NHSBA and will be Merrimack School Board's liaison at the Assembly.

Chairman Ortega asked that the board members review the Proposed Resolutions of the NHSBA. All exceptions to the NHSBA recommendations will be raised at the January 5, 2015 School Board meeting. The Chairman will ask for a motion and a second followed by discussion and a vote. Vice Chair Barnes' vote will be representative of the School Board's vote.

9. Other

a) Correspondence

Chairman Ortega received correspondence from the President of the Booster Club expressing disappointment that the track was not included in the operating budget. The president also asked for information about the Advise and Confer Agreement.

b) Comments

Chairman Ortega noted that, after the December 1, 2014 meeting, he asked the board members for their opinion of the 2015-2016 budget. The consensus of the Board was a reduction in the proposed budget.

Chairman Ortega asked the administration to reduce the proposed 2015-2016 budget from the amounts of \$750,000 to \$1,500,000. He stated that the administration is closest to the budget and has an understanding of the implications to proposed cuts. He asked Superintendent Chiafery to organize the proposed budget cuts in tiers for the January 5, 2015 meeting.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Committee Reports

Student Representative Crowley reported that members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) have been selling MHS themed sun glasses and colored headbands to fund the annual Mr. Merrimack High School competition. She noted that the winter sports games and meets have begun. The Science Olympiad Team brought home many prizes from a recent competition. Jennifer Coffey was selected as the 2014 Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year.

Board Member Guagliumi reported that the Budget Committee offered a training session for Budget Committee members. Presenters at the training session were Budget Committee Chairman Stan Heinrich, Budget Committee Secretary Pat Heinrich and Business Administrator Shevenell.

Board Member Guagliumi reported there was a Professional Development Committee meeting on December 11, 2014.

Board Member Schneider reported the focus of the December 8th Planning and Building Committee meeting was consideration of relocating central office to the upper elementary school. The focus of the December 22nd Planning and building Committee meeting will be to consider relocating the special services offices to the middle school. The Planning and Building Committee will provide a report to the School Board on January 20.

Board Member Schneider reported that Merrimack Safeguard met on December 4. Kay Murphy, a former Merrimack High School guidance counselor, was elected Chair. He also reported that Merrimack Safeguard was highlighted at the December 5th Chamber of Commerce morning meeting. Merrimack Safeguard has a Facebook page that is owned and moderated by Mack the Moose.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

13. Manifest

The Board signed the Manifest.

At 11:10 p.m., Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Barnes) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a), (b), (c).

The motion passed 5-0-0 on a roll call vote.

At 12:06 a.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.