

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
February 4, 2015
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the **January 7, 2015** meeting.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 1, line 34 to read consisted of a slight increase to per pupil cost
- Page 5, line 251, replace with with “will”
- Page 5, line 263, insert the word “additional” amount needed
- Page 7, line 364, to read “required by law or contract”

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Suggestion to format, suggestion to bullet lines to clarify questions answered from previously submitted questions
- Page 2, line 88, add hyphen up-to-date

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Barnes) to approve the minutes of the **January 12, 2015** meeting.

Vice Chairman Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 100 and 101, add “as it will take furniture plans off schedule” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 3, line 144, add “as it should be addressed with the field project in the CIP” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 4, line 167, add “to account for lack of increase in the 2014-2015 budget” to the end of the sentence.

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 70, add “because it was her understanding it will result in many hours of support staff savings to focus on other tasks” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 2, line 102, add “based on her personal observation of the condition of the lab stools while on a tour at the middle school when on she was a Budget Committee member” to the end of the sentence.
- Page 2, line 89-90, add “because she didn’t believe it was critically needed other than for cosmetic reasons” to the end of the sentence.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 52, change the word “supported” to “support”
- Page 3, line 141, insert “after an expert’s inspection” after the word unsafe.
- Page 4, section 7, paragraph one should read “Chairman Ortega stated that a Warrant Article for the SAU and Special Services Offices was not ready for discussion and that the Planning and Building Committee will provide a report to the Board on January 20, 2015. Additionally Warrant Article for the MESSA (Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association) contract was not ready for discussion due to ongoing negotiations.”
- Page 4, section 7, paragraph two should read “Chairman Ortega noted Warrant Articles would include authorization to accept gifts and grants, discontinuation of the Asbestos Removal Fund, School District Repair Capital Reserve Fund, Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association Contract, the Consolidation of the SAU and Special Services Office and the 2015-2016 Budget.”

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chairman Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the **January 20, 2015** meeting.

Vice Chairman Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 66, add “James Masticola Elementary School” before Principal Emilie Carter’s name.
- Page 2, line 77, change “Principal Costa” to “Mrs. Lois Costa”.
- Page 4, line 153 should read “Vice Chair Barnes stated that the board supported a gated entrance on Old Blood Road and a number of options presented that were not accepted by the Town.”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4, line 158 and 159 should read “Board member Schneider added individuals who are color blind may have trouble determining the color of a single flashing light meant to control the traffic.”

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4, line 151, the sentence should read “Board Member Guagliumi expressed safety concerns over the light solution as well as expressed frustration and couldn’t understand why flashing lights would be a preference over traffic study results of a stop sign and concerned over Madeline Bennett not having the right of way.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Update on the Status of the Intersection of Madeline Bennett Lane and Chestnut Hill Subdivision

Chairman Ortega stated at the January 20, 2015 School Board meeting he and Business Administrator Shevenell provided the Board with an update on a meeting they attended on January 16, 2015 with Town officials, the developer and the developer’s engineer. He noted that a proposed option for the

intersection was reviewed and accepted at the January 16, 2015 meeting. Upon hearing the Board's feedback regarding the proposed option for the intersection, it became clear a vote in the positive from the School Board for that option was not going to occur.

Chairman Ortega noted that the developer was more than willing to accept any option for the intersection.

Chairman Ortega reported that the School Board and the Town of Merrimack continue to have conflicting opinions on the best solution for the intersection.

Chairman Ortega stated that the developer's project continues to be delayed while attempting to gain consensus on the issue and that the project should not continue to be delayed. He stated the School Board does not have the authority to accept a final plan; it is the Planning Board's decision.

Chairman Ortega explained that he suggested that the School Board provide the Chairman of the Planning Board with a position statement containing the School Board's preferred options for the intersection in order of preference.

Vice Chair Barnes read the following proposed options for the intersection.

Option I: Old Blood Road, emergency use only. Gated entry.

Option II: Stop sign at Old Blood Road as per Stephen Pernaw's Traffic Study.

Option III: Traffic Control Officer to direct flow of traffic at peak morning and afternoon hours as is currently in place for Merrimack High School and the Masticola Complex at the Town's expense.

Option IV: Programmable signalized intersection operated by Police Department or preset and managed by the Department of Public Works having the ability to be adjusted due to bus arrivals and dismissals, school functions such as parent night and sporting events.

Option V: Sweeping curve initially proposed with stop sign on school property as per the initial proposal.

Chairman Ortega asked the School Board if it wanted to amend the order of the proposed options above.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) that Option 1 (Old Blood Road, emergency use only. Gated entry) become Option 4.

Board Member Schneider stated that if he were to live in the new development he would like a second access way to the development for emergency purposes.

Vice Chair Barnes disagreed with Board Member Schneider. She felt a gated entry provides for emergency access and that it is the School Board's responsibility to base decisions on what is the best interest for the students.

Vice Chair Barnes supports the order of the options as presented.

The motion failed 1-4-0 with Board Members Guagliumi, Powell, Vice Chair Barnes and Chairman Ortega in opposition.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to add an edited clause stating that the School Board is opposed to Option V (the sweeping curve with stop sign on school property).

Board Member Powell stated that he would not support the motion. He does not support the concept of an editorial clause.

Board Member Schneider noted that the wording of the options that address a Traffic Control Officer to direct flow of traffic at peak hours and a programmable signalized intersection should be prefaced with the words “A sweeping curve” for consistency.

Vice Chair Barnes stated the reason for her motion to add an editorial clause was because the stop sign would be on school district property and we as a board are opposed to it versus less supportive of it as with other options.

Business Administrator Shevenell noted the sweeping curve had been modified to be less of a curve and more squared off.

Chairman Ortega expressed his support for the editorial clause because it defines the School Board’s position.

The motion passed 4-1-0 with Board Member Powell in opposition.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Chairman Ortega) that the wording of the options that address a Traffic Control Officer to direct flow of traffic at peak hours and a programmable signalized intersection be prefaced with the phrase “A sweeping curve, with...”.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) that the wording of the option that addresses the stop sign at Old Blood Road as per the traffic study be prefaced with the phrase “A ‘T’ intersection with a ...”.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Barnes) to modify the end of the programmable signalized intersection option to read “... due to bus arrivals and dismissals plus School and non-school functions outside normal school hours.”

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to add in the body of the memo that the School Board would prefer a “T” intersection over a sweeping curve in any design option.

The motion failed 1-4-0 with Chairman Ortega, Board Members Guagliumi, Schneider and Powell in opposition.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to add a roundabout option before the sweeping curve initially proposed with stop sign on school property as per the initial proposed option.

Board Member Guagliumi felt an expanded roundabout was discussed at length; therefore, it should be represented on the list.

Board Member Schneider stated that his understanding from the Fire Department was that there was not enough room for a roundabout at the intersection.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated he understood the roundabout would need to be larger than represented in the original design and that wetlands would not be impacted.

Chairman Ortega expressed his support to add the expanded roundabout to the list of options, but preferred that it be placed after the option addressing the stop sign at Old Blood Road as per Stephen Pernaw's Traffic Study.

Board Member Guagliumi amended her motion (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to place the roundabout option after the stop sign at Old Blood Road as per Stephen Pernaw's Traffic Study option.

The motion passed 4-1-0 with Board Member Schneider in opposition.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to direct Chairman Ortega to send a copy of the position statement letter to the Planning Board Chairman.

Vice Chair Barnes asked that the Town Manager receive a copy of the letter.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Chairman Ortega expressed his appreciation to the developer and engineer on their efforts to gain consensus on the intersection. He apologized on behalf of the School Board for not being able to come to a consensus and hopes that the process will continue to move forward as unimpeded as possible.

5. Board's Response to Proposed Warrant Articles

Business Administrator Shevenell presented the proposed Warrant articles to the Board.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Barnes) to recommend the original Article 2, Gifts and Grants.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chairman Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recommend the original Article 3, Asbestos Removal Fund.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recommend the original Article 4, School District Repair Capital Reserve Fund.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that the current balance is approximately \$20,000 and felt it was important to increase that amount in the event the goal posts need to be repaired or replaced.

Board Member Schneider suggested an increase to the Warrant Article amount to bring the fund balance to approximately \$100,000.

Board Member Powell supports a fund balance of \$100,000 but would prefer to accomplish that goal from surplus funds, if any.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that she would like to keep the original Article 4 as presented to avoid confusion. She accepted the fact that it may take another year to get to the desired balance of \$100,000.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recommend the original Article 5, MESSA Contract.

Vice Chair Barnes explained that the 2015-2016 increase encompasses 303 individuals and the average current hourly rate for 2015-2016 will be \$15.88.

Board Member Schneider highlighted that the contribution percentage for health insurance premiums by the employee will increase one percent annually over the three year contract.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that the employee contribution percentage for the Blue Choice plan is 15% and 40% for the JY plan.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recommend the original Article 6, MESSA Contract Trailer.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Chairman Ortega) not to add the proposed Article 7 (Special Warrant Article), Special Services and Central Office Consolidated Building to the Warrant.

Board Member Schneider felt it would be more appropriate to put this Article on the Warrant when the bonded debt is less.

Vice Chair Barnes noted that the Town Council decided not to put forward an Article for a town garage this year.

Board Member Powell stated he will not support the motion because he feels a moral legal obligation to the employees working in those buildings.

Board Member Guagliumi supports the article. She acknowledged the deplorable conditions of the buildings. She asked Business Administrator to speak about the impact to the taxpayer if this Article were to pass.

Business Administrator estimated the bond payments to be .18 per \$1,000 for the first year.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Business Administrator Shevenell to clarify the use of the large conference room space.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained the 2,000 square foot meeting space would have a divider in middle and could be used for on-site training that now takes places at the SERESC facility. The space would be appropriate for weekly leadership team meetings and annual collective bargaining negotiations with computer access.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if that space would be able to accommodate a voting site or could it be rented to the public after business hours.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that would be for Moderator Lynn Christensen to decide. A voting site was not part of the consideration when plans were formulated. She stated that the public would be able to rent the space after business hours.

Board Member Guagliumi clarified that she supports Article 7 but does not support the motion.

Board Member Schneider asked Business Administrator Shevenell for bond impact after the first year.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded the second year payment would be approximately \$250,000 for a \$1.7 million bond compared to \$206,000 for a \$1.5 million bond.

Board Member Schneider explained if the Board did not approve his motion and Article 7 were to appear on the Warrant he would make a motion to add an Article 8. Article 8 would read “Should Article 7 fail that the School District raise and appropriate \$250,000 to undertake an initial lease or some solution to Special Services and Central Office housing problem.

Board Member Schneider explained if Article 7 were to be recommended by the School Board, appear on the Warrant and was voted down by the voters, the School Board would then be obligated to take some action regarding the offices.

Chairman Ortega stated he will support the motion even though he firmly believes in the project. He shared the same concerns as Board Member Schneider and would prefer to wait until the bonded debt is lower and he does not view leased space as a long term solution.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that she supports Article 7 but does not feel the voters will support Article 7 this year. She also believes it will take one full year to promote the Article to the voters before it appears on a Warrant. She will support the motion with disappointment.

Board Member Powell expressed his disappointment that the anticipation of voters not supporting the Article 7 would be a reason to remove it from the Warrant. He didn't understand why the lower bonded debt in two years is just entering discussions now. He would expect the lower bonded debt in two years to be part of the promotional information. He asked the board members to reconsider the motion and place Article 7 on the Warrant.

Board Member Schneider explained that his motion to remove Article 7 from the Warrant was a very hard decision. He stated he is familiar with the issues in each of the buildings. He balanced his decision against other large expenses such as the MESSA contract, high school track, the fact that

Administration has not expressed the need to move, the lack of any changes to the buildings in the last couple of years and conversations with voters expressing a concern over the bonded debt.

Board Member Schneider clarified if Article 7 is removed from the Warrant, he will not attempt to add another Article on the Warrant.

Chairman Ortega stated some of the reason a 60% yes vote was not accomplished the last time the consolidated offices appeared on the Warrant was because of the bonded debt and many people did not understand the project.

The motion passed 3-2-0 with Board Members Guagliumi and Powell in opposition.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to recommend the second original Article 7 (which should have been Article 8), Operating Budget.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Chairman Ortega requested that agenda item #7 be addressed next.

7. Board's Response to the Proposed Educator Performance and Evaluation Model

Chairman Ortega requested a roll call vote. He explained his reason for requesting a roll call vote was due to the importance and magnitude of the project. He explained the current model has been in place for over for 30 years.

Chairman Ortega explained that his wife is a teacher in the District and that he has recused himself from votes that might give the appearance of a conflict of interest such as discussion of Merrimack Teachers Association Agreement, discussion about the level of education as a Reduction in Force criteria in addition to tenure. He explained when he was asked if he would vote on this item, he stated that he had never considered not participating in the vote. He considers this to be a model that is system wide, no one can game it, it is a tool to improve all educators' performance and as such he does not see any conflict and will vote on the motion unless there is objection from any Board member.

There were no objections from the Board regarding Chairman Ortega's participation in the vote.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to approve the Proposed Educator Performance and Evaluation Model and requested a roll call vote. He urged the Board to vote in favor of the motion.

Board Member Powell wanted to thank each and every member of the committee for the time they gave from their personal lives to put together this model: Lori Allen, Kevin Bobbitt, Mike Cirelli, Barbara DeFrancisco, John Fabrizio, Ken Johnson, Marsha McGill, Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Patrick Scott, Trisha Swonger, Suzanne Wheeler, and Deborah Woelflein, Jennifer Thornton and Consultant Susan Villani from WestEd.

Roll Call Vote: Board Member Guagliumi voted in favor, Board Member Schneider voted in favor, Board Member Powell voted in favor, Vice Chair Barnes voted in favor, Chairman Ortega voted in favor.

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

Board Member Powell was excused from the meeting.

6. Approval and Formal Signing of the Cop Sync 911 Grant

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin spoke of an opportunity to partner with the Merrimack Police Department and NH Department of Homeland Security to provide schools with software that makes it possible to bypass traditional order of emergency call thereby alerting a cruiser near the site of the emergency call thereby significantly reducing response time. The district applied for and is eligible for reimbursement of 100% of the total cost (\$10,080.00) because the district has demonstrated 100% (in-kind) cost match (\$10,080.00). He asked the Board to waive the two-week rule and to sign the grant agreement for final processing, if approved.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Barnes) to accept the Emergency Management Performance Grant agreement.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

8. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Schneider received emails from constituents regarding the common core.

b) Comments

Chairman Ortega announced that the filing period for school district offices will begin on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. and close on Friday, March 6, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. The following positions are open:

- Two (2) members of school board for a 3 year term
- Two (2) members of the planning and building committee for a 3 year term
- Four (4) members of the school district budget committee for a 3 year term
- One (1) member of the school district budget committee for a 1 year term (a replacement for a resignation)

Residents who are registered voters may file at the Office of the Superintendent at 36 McElwain Street.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Committee Reports

Board Member Guagliumi reported the Budget Committee met on Thursday, January 29th. During that meeting, the committee reviewed the food service, special services, upper elementary, library media services, maintenance and district wide budgets. All of the department leaders were there and received many questions and verifications as the budget committee went through its process.

The Budget Committee met on February 3rd to potentially make any modifications to the budget and approve the budget amount for the public session. The Committee did not make changes to the budget. The budget amount for the public's consideration is \$70,408,119. The Budget Committee will hold a public hearing on February 10th at Merrimack High School at 7:30 p.m. The Budget Committee will meet prior to the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Barnes reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on the January 21st. The Merrimack dog park is looking to compete for a \$25,000 grant for a dog park. The Winter Carnival will be held on February 28th. A summer job fair will be held on February 7th at 10:00 a.m. at the John O'Leary Adult Community Center.

11. Public Participation on Agenda Items

There was no public participation on agenda items.

12. Manifest

The board signed the manifest.

At 9:45 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.