

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
April 20, 2015
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman Ortega, Vice Chairman Barnes, Board Members Powell, Guagliumi and Schneider, Student Representative Crowley, 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. School Board Reorganization

Chairman Ortega explained that at the beginning of each School Board session following an election, the board reorganizes and elects a Chairman and a Vice Chairman.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to retain Christopher Ortega as Chairman of the Merrimack School Board.

Board Member Schneider felt Mr. Ortega has done an excellent job in the position of chairman and would like for him to continue in that role.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Chairman Ortega thanked the board for their confidence in him.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to retain Shannon Barnes as Vice Chair of the Merrimack School Board.

Board Member Powell stated that the Board has been functioning well and he supports ongoing continuity.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that Mrs. Barnes has been a strong representative for the School Board, and a strong representative for other stakeholders such as the kids, parent, community and taxpayers and she is supportive of the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

3. Approval of March 16, 2015 Minutes

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2015 meeting.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 line 163 should read “Board Member Schneider suggested the topic of changes to the calendar start during the summer.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 1 line 39, replace the word “accepted” with the word “presented”.
- Page 2 line 75, change the last sentence to read “(Chairman Ortega stated that would be the case without a change in contracts.)”
- Page 3, line 104, add the following sentence “There are nine districts, including Charter Schools, currently using blizzard bags.”
- Page 3, line 139, change the word “Mondays” to “Columbus Day”.
- Page 4, line 184 should read “Chairman Ortega felt blizzard bags are busy work rather than quality instruction time.”
- Page 5, line 219 should read “... which was a blizzard and a declared state of emergency by the Governor.”

The motion passed 5-0-0.

4. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

5. Commitment to Board Code of Ethics

Chairman Ortega explained each year following an election and reorganization, board members commit to a Code of Ethics.

The Merrimack School Board Code of Ethics was read aloud by Chairman Ortega, Vice Chair Barnes and Board Members Powell, Schneider and Guagliumi.

Each member of the board signed the Code of Ethics document and returned it to Superintendent Chiafery.

6. Consent Agenda

- a) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher nominations
 - Lucas Woods, Social Studies Teacher at Merrimack High School
 - The list of professional staff nominations for the 2015-2016 school year.
- b) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher resignations
 - Lisa Chaloner, Science Teacher at Merrimack High School
 - Lisa Frenette, Special Education Coordinator at Merrimack High School
- c) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following administrator resignation
 - Deborah Woelflein, Principal of Merrimack Middle School

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the consent agenda as presented.

The motion passed 4-0-1 with Chairman Ortega abstaining because his wife’s name appears on the list of professional staff nominated for the 2015-2016 school year.

Chairman Ortega stated that Deborah Woelflein began her career with the Merrimack School District in 1979. Mrs. Woelflein served the District as an English teacher, English Department head, Assistant Principal, Instructional Supervisor, Assistant Superintendent and Principal of Merrimack Middle School. She was New Hampshire Teacher of the Year, represented New Hampshire at an international space camp and traveled to Russia as an ambassador for American education. He wished her the best in her retirement.

Chairman Ortega announced Assistant Principal Adam Caragher as the Principal-elect of Merrimack Middle School commencing July 1, 2015.

7. Focus on Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Chairman Ortega introduced Principal Bellemare and Assistant Principal DeLuca.

Principal Bellemare explained the focus of Thorntons Ferry Elementary School featured literacy through arts, music and physical education. She introduced Physical Education Teacher Jennifer Parthum, Music Teacher Anders Benson and Art Teacher Pamela Lewis.

Ms. Parthum introduced students Lily, Chloe, Matthew and Brandon. The students explained in addition to learning skills they learn good sportsmanship and how to work together as a team. The students explained they learn cooperative learning through role playing responsibilities of a coach, a recorder, an equipment manager and a timer/encourager. The students also provided examples of how math, science, social studies, geometry and English language arts have been incorporated in their physical education class.

Ms. Lewis explained she introduced a small group of students to the work of visiting Author and Illustrator Matt Travares through the author's love for drawing and baseball. Students Aiden, Brayden, Kate, Alex and Julianne displayed art projects and explained how the art projects helped them relate to the author's style of illustration and story.

Mr. Benson reported a relationship between music and mathematics, language, history, reading and science. Students Charvi and Jennifer sang a few notes to demonstrated sight singing. Students Akira and Ben performed a song using a recorder to demonstrate what they learned through recorder karate lesson.

The presentation ended with a video performance of the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School Chorus.

8. Honors for Merrimack Education Support Staff Officers

Superintendent Chiafery introduced the honorees.

- Carol Scopa, President of Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association (MESSA) and a paraeducator at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Kathy Martin, Vice President of MESSA and a paraeducator at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Carolyn Belfiore, Grievance Chairman of MESSA and a paraeducator at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Superintendent Chiafery also introduced Thorntons Ferry Elementary School Principal Bellemare, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Principal McGill. She noted that NEA-NH Uniserv Director Lorri Hayes was present in support of the honorees.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that Carol Scopa and Kathy Martin were recognized by the National Education Association (NEA) and NEA-NH for increasing MESSA membership and for treating the MESSA membership with a great deal of respect. She further explained that Carolyn Belfiore was recognized for her long standing affiliation with MESSA and her volunteer work within the community of Merrimack.

Principal Bellemare announced that Carol Scopa and Kathy Martin were both chosen to represent New Hampshire at the National Education Association's Educational Support Personnel Conference in March.

Carol Scopa and Kathy Martin highlighted workshops they attended and shared a few examples of how they have incorporated what they learned into their work as paraeducators and MESSA officers.

Principal McGill introduced Carolyn Belfiore, recipient of the 2015 Jo Campbell Education Support Personnel Award for the State of New Hampshire. She explained Carolyn received the award as a result of her involvement with MESSA membership and recruitment for her affiliation with local and state associations, work on negotiations and grievances and community activities.

Principal McGill announced that Carolyn Belfiore will attend the 2016 National Education Association's Educational Support Personnel Conference as the recipient of the 2015 Jo Campbell Education Support Personnel Award for the State of New Hampshire.

Carolyn Belfiore highlighted her accomplishments as paraeducator for the past 18 years, her participation as a member of the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association her involvement with school committees and community projects.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that Carol Scopa, Kathy Martin and Carolyn Belfiore were excellent examples of ambassadors for the Merrimack School District. She thanked them for their efforts in assisting students and teachers.

Chairman Ortega congratulated the women for receiving their recognitions. He stated he was proud to have them as employees in the Merrimack School District.

9. Approval of School Calendar for 2015-2016

Chairman Ortega recalled at a previous meeting he asked Superintendent Chiafery to reconsider the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar keeping in mind the feedback from parents indicated they would prefer the first day of school occur before Labor Day which falls on September 7th.

Chairman Ortega explained after that school board meeting, it was recognized that the teachers' contract stipulates the five teacher workshop days occur prior to the first day of school. He further explained that the school board met to discuss the possibility of entering a sidebar discussion relative to the school calendar. The Board decided not to pursue a sidebar discussion recognizing that the Merrimack Teachers' Contract is up for discussion in the coming year.

Chairman Ortega noted that the proposed calendar was inclusive of a no school day in February 2016 to accommodate the presidential primary election day which is unknown at this time.

Superintendent Chiafery noted the proposed school calendar before the Board includes one modification. She announced January 18, 2016; Martin Luther King Jr. Day will be a school day. The reason for this modification was to make up the no school day in February for the Presidential primary election day.

Vice Chair Barnes encourages special programming on January 18 to acknowledge the Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Board Member Guagliumi supports classroom discussion regarding Presidents Day.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that the parent feedback relative to the school calendar was important and appreciated. She asked the Board to give consideration to the workshop days when negotiating the next Agreement.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar as presented.

Vice Chair Barnes noted a one day difference in the last day of school, prior to snow days, when she compared the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar with the 2014-2015 school calendar.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. School Board Committee Assignments for 2015-2016

Chairman Ortega asked the board members to provide him with their preferences for the 2015-2016 committee assignments.

11. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

b) Comments

There were no comments to report.

12. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery asked if the Board would be willing to meet at 7:00 p.m. on May 4 to accommodate the preschool and kindergarten students who will be in attendance.

13. Committee Reports

Student Representative Crowley reported James Jolly, Senior Class President had planned to present the School Board with an item during public participation; however, he will not be able to attend the meeting because his lacrosse game ran longer than expected.

Student Representative Crowley reported during spirit week the seniors came in first place, sophomores in second place, and juniors in third place and freshmen in fourth place. She reported this year was the highest participation rate.

Student Representative Crowley reported GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) along with Principal Johnson unveiled the new policy on unisex bathrooms at the high school. The staff bathrooms are now open to students who are not comfortable using the gender specific bathrooms.

Chairman Ortega added the unisex bathrooms are single occupancy with a locking door.

Board Member Guagliumi reported four new Budget Committee members will be sworn in.

Board Member Guagliumi reported that she attend a parks and recreation committee meeting in place of Vice Chair Barnes. She noted the Easter Egg hunt occurred Sunday at Wasserman Park, Camp Naticook registration is ongoing and the skate park is expected to open soon.

Board Member Guagliumi reported Matt Casparius would be drafting a letter for the Town Council to sign and send requesting relief of the Town's obligations for the tennis area on O'Gara Drive. Additional details will follow at upcoming Town Council meetings.

14. Public Participation on Agenda Items

James Jolly shared his desire to have an outdoor classroom at Merrimack High School. An outdoor classroom could be managed through a sign up schedule in the library. He felt it would be an alternative to a hot classroom. He requested to be placed on the next school board agenda to share project details.

Chairman Ortega responded that Mr. Jolly would be added to the next school board meeting agenda. He acknowledged Mr. Jolly's intent to work with the Conservation Commission and the Town Center Committee. He asked that Mr. Jolly communication with the School Administration and Student Congress if he hasn't already done so.

Student Representative Crowley explained that Mr. Jolly's project had been discussed with the student congress but that there was not enough time to request placement on this agenda. She clarified that Mr. Jolly was looking for approval from the school board to find funding for the project during April vacation week.

Superintendent Chiafery asked Mr. Jolly to provide the Board with a plan and/or drawing of his proposed project and suggested that he complete the Request for Designated Use of School Grounds form.

James Jolly reported he had discussions with the Student Congress, the high school administration, the maintenance department and teachers.

15. Manifest

The board signed the manifest.

At 9:10 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.