

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
August 17, 2015  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Ortega, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Schneider and Powell, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell.

Chairman Ortega noted that Board Member Guagliumi was excused from the meeting.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of July 13, 2015 Minutes**

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2015 meeting.

Board Member Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 13, line 150, change to say "...School Committee was previously headed up by Tracy Bull."
- Page 4 of 13, line 153, remove "...jurisdiction was noted" and replace with "...some projects were within School District control others under the town or the state, for example the O'Gara sidewalks is a project that the school could oversee and will be scoped as part of the O'Gara repaving."

The motion passed as amended 4-0-0.

**3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

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

Business Manager Shevenell presented a gift from the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA)-Bureau of Drugs and Alcohol Services to the Merrimack High School for \$636.00. This gift is to be used to support the continued implementation of "Life of an Athlete" a program whose stated goal is to assist athletes in making good decisions in regards to drugs and alcohol. It will be used to provide training for parents, coaches and people in the community to keep student athletes from making bad decisions in regards to drugs and alcohol.

Business Manager Shevenell also presented a gift from the Target Corporation for Teacher Appreciation.

to the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School entitled “Thanks a Billion.” This \$100.00 gift will be used to purchase teachers’ classroom supplies.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the donations.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

## 5. Consent Agenda

a) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher nominations:

- |                       |                              |  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| - Kevin Beaudoin      | Special Education Teacher    | Merrimack High School                    |
| - Lindsay Caban       | Grade 3 Teacher              | Reeds Ferry Elementary School            |
| - Meaghan Donegan     | Kindergarten Teacher         | James Mastricola Elementary School       |
| - Andrew Gagne        | Science Teacher              | Merrimack High School                    |
| - Kelly Grassini      | Nurse                        | Reeds Ferry Elementary School            |
| - Douglas Pauly       | Technology Education Teacher | Merrick High School                      |
| - Connor Phelps       | Science Teacher              | Merrimack High School                    |
| - Aaron Regis         | Special Education Teacher    | Merrimack High School                    |
| - Rachel Shaughnessey | Pre-School Teacher           | James Mastricola Elementary School       |
| - Daniel Varela       | Special Education Teacher    | James Mastricola Upper Elementary School |

b) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher resignations:

- |                |                              |                         |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Brian Tesini | Technology Education Teacher | Merrimack Middle School |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|

c) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented for approval the Restraint and Seclusion Policy.

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

Board Member Powell expressed appreciation and noted that teacher nominees Douglas Pauly and Daniel Varela are Merrimack High School alumni.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

## 6. Food Service Program Highlights

Chairman Ortega welcomed Dave Dziki, Food Service Director

Director Dziki expressed appreciation to the Board for welcoming him to the meeting.

Director Dziki noted that the Merrimack School District is part of the whole School Nutrition Association of New Hampshire. This year the School Nutrition Association Employee of the

Year Award was given to Harriet Brunelle of the Merrimack Middle School. The award criteria includes a dedication to child nutrition, and a commitment to future education. Harriet was nominated by one of her peers and has worked here for ten years with minimal absences. She was honored at the national conference this past April which was held in Manchester. There she met the national president of the association.

Chairman Ortega, on behalf of the Board, thanked Harriet for her dedicated service and in being recognized with the award and noted the award's significance. He expressed his appreciation of how Harriet meets the award criteria of customer service skills, creativity, dedication to education, and dedication to nutrition in her day to day service.

Vice Chair Barnes noted that when parents and students attend the orientation for new sixth grade students, one of the highlights is the great food service program; which includes the options and the staffing. It is a great first impression. She expressed thanks for the quality of the program and the great work of the staff.

Director Dziki noted that this was the first year he could apply for a Department of Education equipment grant for which we were previously ineligible. Due to excess funds left over from the 2014 grant the criteria were lifted. After conferring with Superintendent Chiafery the application was sent and accepted within a week. The grant will cover at least fifty percent of the replacement cost of a needed piece of equipment that had been budgeted for.

Director Dziki spoke on the new Food Nutritional Guidelines to be put out by the federal government. They are re-authorized every five years, the last time in 2010. Some of the changes suggested for 2015 include 100% whole grains foods for all foods served, salt and sodium reductions, and increased fresh foods. While attending the national conference in Washington D.C. for Student Nutrition, Director Dziki spoke with legislators about making some changes to the re-authorization to allow for more flexibility. His concern focused on losing student participation due to the use of less palatable foods.

Chairman Ortega noted that Director Dziki was at the conference because he is the President of the New Hampshire Student Nutrition Association delegation. He thanked Director Dziki for his leadership.

Board Member Powell thanked Director Dziki for his leadership role and representation. He referred back to the equipment grant from the Department of Education and asked if there are strings attached to the grant and was told no, there were extra funds that needed to be utilized.

Board Member Powell asked if the national nutrition guidelines are mandatory for all schools or just those receiving federal funds and was told they apply only for those receiving federal monies. He asked if we opted out of the federal program, could we create our own program.

Director Dziki replied yes we could opt out, but we would lose out on federal money and commodity foods. There are setbacks to going out on our own.

Board Member Schneider asked Director Dziki if he had spoken with other districts that had opted out. Director Dziki noted that Salem opted out midway last year but that it is too soon to have that data.

Chairman Ortega noted that Londonderry High School opted out this past Spring.

Chairman Ortega noted that a possible relaxing of federal directives might give us time to look at the results of the data from Salem and Londonderry.

Discussion ensued in regards to raising the price of school lunches and federal mandates on lunch pricing.

Chairman Ortega thanked Director Dziki for the comprehensive report and also once again congratulated Ms. Brunelle on her award.

## **7. Presentation of the 2015-2020 Merrimack School District Logic Model**

Chairman Ortega recognized Superintendent Chiafery and Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin.

Superintendent Chiafery spoke of the need for the existence of a logic model. She stated that this has become a very important document to the school culture. It sets forth guidelines in what we want to attempt in our future for our students both short-term and long-term. It is called a road map for success. The idea for a logic model came from working with Learning Innovations West Ed in 2005. It is as important as a Strategic Plan but more evolving. This logic model should prove helpful to the district and can be used as a tool in grant writing.

When putting the model together the School Board and a leadership team for a total of 24 people worked together to look at where we have been and where we want to go. The logic model is comprised of five elements, the most important being the Impacts, what we want to achieve. In order to reach these impacts we need Goals, Objectives, Strategies (activities), and Inputs (beginnings). Inputs include plans such as the Technology Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Professional Development Plan, and policies, procedures, regulations, budgets, and parent support to help in realizing the goals. The ultimate goal focuses on student growth in the major content areas of reading, writing, math and social studies. Measures will be in place to chart student growth and success and make adjustments when necessary. Additionally students will learn to discern when and what types of technology to utilize in different circumstances with the goal to create self-directed learners.

This document has already been heavily edited. The District and School In Need of Improvement Plans have been eliminated because they were tied to the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessment which is no longer in place. The Smarter Balance Assessment is now in place. Competencies have been added because they are now relevant.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin added that the use of data is very important. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a comprehensive strategy used in regular education in Merrimack to address the needs of all students. It encourages students to take ownership over their own learning. Students become partners in knowledge with teachers rather than passive receivers of the knowledge and are encouraged to make connections with what they learned in other classes and grades. Students should then be able to show an understanding of the learning by applying what they have learned.

Vice Chair Barnes asked where parents fall in the logic model. She noted that past Board meetings have addressed parents as stakeholders. She suggested that surveys and teacher websites be created and/or updated to provide parents a better understanding of teacher expectations for students. Teacher websites might be made more consistent and include information such as important things happening in the classroom, projects, assignments, field trips, homework, tests and the guidelines with PowerSchool. Surveys might be added to Input, teacher websites under Strategies, regular website updates would be a Goal, and improved communication would be seen under Objectives. The Impact would be a better informed parent.

Chairman Ortega noted that one of the sought after long term results of the Logic Model is students, parents and staff promoting an environment that fosters self-directed lifelong learners. He agreed that the parent piece appeared to be missing.

Chairman Ortega noted that the logic model as presented, including the amendment recommended by Vice Chair Barnes, was a good representation of the long term goals discussed at the workshop. He noted that Board Member Guagliumi was in attendance at that workshop and that he would like to re-visit this discussion at the next meeting to allow for her input.

Superintendent Chiafery asked that this be a separate agenda item at the next meeting when the full Board will be present.

## **8. Curriculum Overview Process Revisited**

Chairman Ortega referenced Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin's presentation at the last meeting. A discussion had ensued in regards to liaison assignments and some of the challenges Board Members face in trying to participate on curriculum committees.

Board Member Guagliumi's comments were para-phrased by Chairman Ortega who supported Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, or another professional representative from a curriculum committee, providing meaningful periodic updates; and revising the role of the liaison to one of being a sounding board for the different curriculum committees. He recognized the role of educators in creating curriculum and the role of the School Board as a local control.

Board Member Schneider noted that he had just received an e-mail invitation from Assistant Principal Morris to attend 3 days of Science Curriculum meetings. Board Member Schneider responded to Mr. Morris that he was unable to attend and that he thought his role was to be more of a resource than a participant in curriculum meetings.

Vice Chair Barnes questioned what constitutes liaison assignments. An assignment means there is work involved beyond reading email summations from curriculum committees.

Board Member Schneider noted that liaison assignments were spotty some years and heavy in others. He asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin to make committees aware that they have School Board liaisons and to make use of their availability to assist them with any questions they might have.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that the absence of questions does not show that committees are uncomfortable or unwilling to approach the School Board liaisons.

Board Member Schneider asked that committees acknowledge their liaisons with at least a one-time contact or even through periodic status updates.

Chairman Ortega asked if Board Member Schneider was suggesting that the committees not move from research and meetings to a finished binder without some interaction with their liaison, who would then be able to share that committee's status with the entire School Board.

Board Member Schneider responded yes. He then noted that it was not the role of the Board Member to be checking the binder and make a judgment on the content. The Board should be more operational in their roles.

Vice Chair Barnes noted that if committees are meeting monthly then Board Members should be provided monthly emails before and after the meetings.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted during his tenure in Merrimack that no finished product binder had been presented to the School Board without periodic updates to the Board. He asked if the model began under Art and was refined under Science was it still acceptable to the Board.

Vice Chair Barnes asked that School Board Members be included in correspondence regarding agendas and meetings.

Board Member Powell noted that in his seven years on the School Board, he has never been contacted by any committee. He asked if the purpose of this discussion was to continue and streamline the liaison process or to get rid of liaison assignments.

Chairman Ortega commented that the purpose was to streamline the process. An additional objective might be to add input and perspective to committee meetings. Mr. Ortega stated that the challenge is how to find a way to stay in the loop and provide guidance so as to end with a final product that is developed by the staff and informed by the Board so that it can be approved by the Board when it appears as a final product.

Board Member Powell suggested that Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and his curricula team create a pro's/con's list on the advantages/disadvantages of dedicated liaisons vs. periodic updates.

He suggested that this be set as a separate agenda item.

Both Board Member Powell and Chairman Ortega noted the value of getting input from Board Member Guagliumi who was absent due to illness.

Chairman Ortega noted that while there have been periodic updates, a broader sense of what was going on within each track would be of value to the Board.

Board Member Schneider noted that he was most concerned that the committees get their needs met and not how that is accomplished whether thru liaison assignments or some other way. He would also like more frequent updates.

Chairman Ortega noted the goal would be to produce the best curriculum possible and Board Member Schneider agreed.

Chairman Ortega noted that the liaison role would be added to the September agenda.

### **9. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Gas Pipeline Scoping Meeting Outcome**

Chairman Ortega invited Vice Chair Barnes to provide an update and thanked her for bringing this issue before the Board and for attending the July 29<sup>th</sup> Scoping Meeting in Nashua.

Vice Chair Barnes shared all of the documents made available by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The documents had been included in Board Members packets mailed out prior to the meeting. She noted that eighteen elected officials from Southern New Hampshire spoke at the Scoping Meeting and all spoke negatively about the project.

Vice Chair Barnes noted two relevant items from the meeting. 1) The Town of Merrimack was told they would not be welcome to attend FERC surveys done within the Town of Merrimack. 2) The aquifer will be within the proposed pipeline route and therefore all schools drinking water could potentially be impacted.

Vice Chair Barnes referred to a letter by United States Senator Kelly Ayotte in which she cited the position taken by the Merrimack School Board at the July 13, 2015 meeting in regards to the proposed pipeline. Senator Ayotte's remarks were made on the floor of the Senate in Washington, D.C. during a Commerce Committee hearing. Vice Chair Barnes noted that it was the vote taken by the School Board that got national attention and that the Board remain vigilant.

Vice Chair Barnes recommended the Board take a position expressing concern over possible water contamination and the impact of that on the schools.

Vice Chair Barnes asked members to refer to the packets she had provided and note when future FERC meetings will be held. She noted that the process is ongoing and that the Board needed to remain cognizant of proposed routes.

Chairman Ortega shared that on July 14, 2015 he had a conversation with Town Council Chair Harrington and was told that counsel had been retained and that they were looking at alternatives and agreed to work together with the School Board for the Town's best interest.

Chairman Ortega stated his intention to remain in contact with Town Council Chair Harrington and look to her for guidance on the appropriate timeframe on this matter.

### **10. New Hampshire Department of Transportation Planned Improvements to Route 101-A**

Chairman Ortega had attended a meeting held by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation on July 27, 2015. The meeting was to present a plan for proposed improvements on Continental Boulevard from the St. John Neumann intersection up to the Craftsman Road Intersection. There are also preliminary plans for crosswalks at Continental Boulevard, increased sidewalks on different sides of the street and closing down Craftsman Road which requires an easement from the Baptist Church.

Chairman Ortega asked the project manager when the project was slated to begin and noted concern about re-routing school buses. He was told that this project was from a plan based on a ten year survey done in 2004. The survey was done eleven years ago and the project was slated to begin in 2024.

Irony was noted.

## **11. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

Chairman Ortega shared an acknowledgement note from Senator Kelly Ayotte stating the actions she has taken in opposition to the proposed pipeline.

Chairman Ortega shared a letter from Barbara Publicover who is the head of the District Special Education Parent Support Group. She asked that the Board promote that on September 29<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in the Little Theater at the high school, Bedford author and licensed social worker Lynn Lyons will give a talk on “Seven Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle.”

Chairman Ortega noted that the School Board had received an email from a parent referencing a new law going into effect regarding social media policy and privacy issues. The parent asked the Board to revisit the Social Media Policy.

Vice Chair Barnes added that the New Hampshire School Board Association would be available to provide guidance.

### **b) Comments**

Vice Chair Barnes noted the Town of Merrimack’s partnership with a school in Tianjin, China. She noted the recent explosion there and the impact on the school Merrimack students partnership with and attend every year. She expressed hope that none had been harmed.

Chairman Ortega added that his daughter had reached out to her friends there as well and was told they were all fine.

Both Chairman Ortega and Vice Chair Barnes expressed keeping the people in their thoughts.

## **12. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery noted that the next meeting will not be on a Monday. It will be on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 due to Labor Day. The time will revert back to 7:30 p.m.

Board Member Powell asked why the meeting time cannot remain at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Ortega responded that the shift was made to accommodate student groups who attended the meetings and also that Board members were not all in agreement on the time change.

Board Member Schneider spoke to the time of the Non-Public meetings.



Vice Chair Barnes recommended holding the Non-Public sessions both before and after the Public meeting.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested setting the next meeting for the normally expected time of 7:30 p.m. and re-assess the issue when Board Member Guagliumi is in attendance. She also found it more advantageous to not have a Non-Public at 10:00 p.m.

Meeting times will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

### **13. Committee Reports**

Board Member Schneider stated that on August 6<sup>th</sup> the Merrimack Safeguard met and reviewed the heroin forum. The Medical Marijuana Dispensary was discussed and its potential impact on the Town. Police Chief Doyle will gather data from a Connecticut community with a new dispensary. The coalition is interested in hearing from Chief Doyle on negative impacts to the Town since the dispensary came into town. He hopes to provide some information at the September meeting of Merrimack Safeguard. A formal drug take-back event will be held on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Barnes attended the Greater Woods subcommittee meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup>. They looked at a TO DO list. Instead of an August meeting a Trail Cleanup working day will be held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Volunteers are welcome to participate.

Board Member Schneider noted that the Planning and Building Committee has attempted to meet to review the Capital Improvement Plan. Attempts will continue to be made.

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

There were no public comments.

### **15. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:35 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Member Powell) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.