

**School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
September 21, 2015
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Chairman Ortega, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Guagliumi, Schneider and Powell, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell, Student Representative Jacob (Jake) Marcus.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of September 8, 2015 Minutes

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2015 meeting.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 11, line 146 put Rti in all capital letters
- Page 4 of 11, line 167 put Rti in all capital letters
- Page 5 of 11, line 203 change classrooms to departments
- Page 10 of 11, line 472 after meeting add "...the afternoon of September 8th"

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 11, lines 317 and 318, after bus loop add "...and the front of the school"
- Page 9 of 11, line 406 after Board Member add Schneider
- Page 10 of 11, line 442 change thank you emails to "...emails from parents thanking her"
- Page 10 of 11, line 481 change was given a last minute notice to "...had a last minute conflict and was therefore unable to attend the Merrimack Safeguard Meeting."

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 9 of 11, line 399 insert "consent" between next and agenda
- Page 10 of 11, line 435 change council to school

The motion passed as amended 4-0-1.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Consent Agenda

a) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following nurse and educator nominations:

- Pattie Chouinard Part Time Nurse Merrimack High School
- Mark Tyers Special Education Teacher James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

b) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the 2015-2020 Merrimack School District Logic Model for approval.

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

5. August Academy Focus and Outcome

Chairman Ortega turned the microphone over to Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin who introduced John Fabrizio, Director of Special Services, Nancy Rose, Director of Library Technology, Media and Information and Mark Merrifield, technician at Merrimack High School.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked the School Board for the opportunity to have August Academy. He provided an overview of the August Academy goals and philosophies. "Ask Why First" is a new focus on inquiry that has become transformational in the district. This year's August Academy leveraged the past, celebrated the past ten years and recognized the work that lies ahead.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin praised Nancy Rose for guiding the district in recognizing that technology is a resource to be used as an answer to a problem rather than as a tool to be used for its own sake.

There were three guiding philosophies around this year's August Academy. First was the philosophy of desirable difficulties in which the basic idea is to provide just enough of a challenge in a question to move from a sense of knowing versus one of understanding. Secondly, from the book "A More Beautiful Question" by Warren Berger which posits framing a challenge or a problem in a way that encourages a student to be challenged by a question that then leads to a more beautiful understanding. Thirdly, from the book "Mindset" by Carol Dweck, a philosophy which acknowledges that we all begin with a mindset, viewpoint, perspective.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin gave praise to Director Fabrizio and Director Rose for their outstanding forward thinking work on August Academy and throughout the year.

Director Rose showed a slide show of the three day August Academy which was held at the Nashua Radisson Hotel and attended by all of the 530 district educators. She explained the structure behind the format that the coordinators had put in place for the three days. Day one began with a keynote speech by Steve Garton and was devoted to gathering big ideas. Day two focused on how to turn these ideas into tangibles. The theme for day three was captioned your turn to learn. Break-out sessions were facilitated by district educators on two of the three days.

Some unexpected outcomes were that educators expressed a very high regard for their peers, enjoyed working together and asked for more opportunities to work together throughout the year across disciplines and grade levels. Educators also enjoyed experiencing familiar content in new ways.

Director Fabrizio spoke about the deliberate focus on pre-arranged seating. He noted that Merrimack is one big family and that the August Academy provided the opportunity for new connections to be made, that educators learned not to be afraid of asking questions and that they should take the risk of failing forward.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared that he and Director Rose were attendees at the Future Ready Summit that was held in Providence, Rhode Island in April 2015. The Summit is a national effort to get districts to innovate. There they met keynote speaker Steve Garton and were able to encourage him to give the keynote for August Academy.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced Mark Merrifield and acknowledged his contributions to the success of August Academy. Mr. Merrifield was asked to create a video or short film that would be shown at the opening and closing of August Academy. The film was shown to the School Board and the first annual August Academy of filmmaking award, the Augie, was awarded to Mark Merrifield.

Mr. Merrifield noted that the voice overs were provided by his niece, a professional voice over artist, and her daughter.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if the NECAP and other assessment results informed the focus of the August Academy around inquiry and Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied yes.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if there is a way to measure the success of August Academy and was told that the intention is that the outcome will be that students will be asked to engage more deeply in their work.

Board Member Powell shared that he stopped by day two of August Academy and his intended short visit lasted over three hours. He noted the energy level was intense and that there was a high level of engagement that was very noticeable. He observed interaction across grade levels that would not have happened without this type of forum. The sense of pride from the creators, presenters and participants was obvious. He encouraged the other Board members to attend next year.

Board Member Guagliumi thanked the creators and noted the enormity of the work involved down to the details like table seating arrangements.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that the idea for an August Academy came from Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and spoke to the importance and value of gathering all 530 educators together. She noted the impact is beyond assessments and outcomes and that the ripple effect has just begun.

Board Member Schneider noted the similarities to the industry concept of team building. He noted that the location was ideal for this type of valuable experience but thought it might not be feasible to do this every year at that location.

Board Member Guagliumi commented on the value of teachers sharing their own expertise in teacher training situations.

Chairman Ortega made the observation that the August Academy focused on some of the major areas outlined in the District Logic Model. He then asked if there would be formal feedback from the participants of the August Academy.

There was a survey taken and there will be feedback from it.

Chairman Ortega complimented the professional quality of the movie that Mr. Merrifield created. He thanked everyone for all the hard work.

6. Second Review of Capital Improvement Plan for 2016-2022

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to split the O’Gara Drive paving out from the front of the school and the bus loop paving from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

Business Manager Shevenell noted the amount was approximately \$250,000.

Discussion ensued among the Board Members.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to move the bleachers in the Smith Gym to 2019-2020 and to move the bleachers at the high school to 2018-2019.

Discussion ensued among the Board Members.

Board Member Powell amended his motion (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to keep the bleachers at the Smith Gym in 2017-2018 and to move the bleachers at the high school to 2017-2018.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to move the window replacement at the high school to 2017-2018.

Discussion ensued among the Board Members.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Board Member Schneider provided a tally of the dollar amount of the changes and proposed that the ventilation system not be moved.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to change the track at the high school from priority to urgent.

Discussion ensued among the Board Members.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as amended.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

7. Board Members' Responses Regarding 2016-2017 Budget Priorities

Chairman Ortega began by framing the process and then opened the floor to input from the board members.

Vice Chair Barnes stressed:

1. the importance of submitting a budget that did not result in a spike in the tax rate
2. that investments and initiatives should lead to quantifiable improvements
3. the importance of maintaining facilities
4. a continued investment in technology on a consistent basis in order to avoid large overhauls later
5. to look at the financial impacts of the Logic Model and fund accordingly
6. that there be more information on items that make the cut list and the consequences of the cuts
7. a commitment to the growth of co-curricular funding
8. funding of sports programs and access to the information on financial funding and support from booster clubs and fundraising groups
9. student/teacher ratios at all levels.

Board Member Powell stated the need to have the data to make data driven decisions, and to take a hard look at the food service program and look at the consequences of not accepting federal funding.

Board Member Schneider opened by stating:

1. that the budget remain as close to last year's as possible with the exceptions being the incremental urgent CIP items
2. that the Town Council work cooperatively with the School Board to prepare a phased in CIP that balances needs versus wants
3. a careful review of each building's staffing, carefully look at spending programs
4. insure that the infrastructure funding is properly forecasted.

Board Member Guagliumi agreed that there should be no spike to the tax rate. She referred to last year's budgeting process and found the tiered approach very helpful and preferred seeing the line items broken out in more detail.

Chairman Ortega noted:

1. that the sizeable amount of necessary money that will be requested for capital improvements in the coming year override his concerns on a budget spike
2. to continue to invest in technology
3. continued increases and more data on non-athletic co-curricular activities.

Chairman Ortega noted that there were common themes expressed by the board members and he would reflect on them when summarizing them into a draft to be shared at the next meeting.

8. Options for Sharing and Discussing Curriculum Information

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin referred to the document he had provided that was mailed with the packets prior to the meeting. He noted the two options were to continue with assigned liaisons or to discontinue the assigned liaisons.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to select Option two, the no liaison model.

Discussion ensued among the board members.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

9. Request for New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) Resolutions

Chairman Ortega asked for resolutions. There were none.

10. Other

a) Correspondence

Vice Chair Barnes shared that she had received an email from Judy Vaillancourt of the Town Council in regards to the School Board's position on the proposed pipeline. In it she shared that the Amherst plan that puts the pipeline closer to Thorntons Ferry School is the one now being

put forward by Kinder Morgan. There will be an impact to the Merrimack water source if there is a break in the pipeline and the Board should also have a position related to water safety as it serves students in all buildings.

Chairman Ortega noted that when he reached out to the Town Council he was told it was too soon for a coordinated effort. Chairman Ortega stated that this development might suggest that now is the time to be working together.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that all of the alternate routes appear to go by Thorntons Ferry School. She received a mailing as a citizen that there might be an extension. She suggested a call to the Kinder Morgan office to clarify the 1,000 feet measurement.

Chairman Ortega asked if the Board would like him to contact Kinder Morgan and invite them to send a representative to explain the route.

Board Member Schneider recommended requesting accurate information from the Town Council. He was concerned that too much of the information to date has come from secondary sources.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that Kinder Morgan has set up a local regional office in Amherst.

Chairman Ortega stated that he will contact Chairwoman Harrington and Kinder Morgan.

In other correspondence, Chairman Ortega heard from a middle school parent in regards to the handbook and he responded to the sender.

b) Comments

Vice Chair Barnes shared that she learned of the damage to the skate park from watching WMUR and reiterated her prior position that the Board learn about incidents such as this more directly and that the conversation about installing cameras be revisited. She encouraged the public to notify the police with any information on this situation.

Board Member Schneider shared that he is a member of the Merrimack High School class of 1975 and that he recently attended the 40th reunion. Out of over 175 alumni, about 50 were in attendance. He saw this as a positive reflection on the district.

11. New Business

Vice Chair Barnes brought up the issue of Camp Sargent which was new this year. There was no use of Grater Woods. She suggested that this be a future agenda item.

12. Committee Reports

Board Member Guagliumi shared that she had attended the Parks and Recreation meeting and spoke about the vandalism to the skate park and porta-potties. Additionally, the Town Council

has approved funding for water at Wasserman Park which opens the venue to income generating uses.

Board Member Schneider will be attending the Planning and Building Committee meeting that will be held in October. There was no meeting in September because the School Board had not taken any action at the September 8th meeting.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

14. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:16 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

At 10:25 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.