

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
October 5, 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 21, 2015 Minutes

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2015 meeting.

Board Member Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 8, line 328 change Greater Woods to Grater Woods

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 8, line 151, at end of sentence add “at that location.”
- Page 4 of 8, line 182, change to say “keep the bleachers at the Smith Gym in 2017-2018.”

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 8, line 289, at end of sentence add “and the Board should also have a position related to water safety as it serves students in all buildings.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 8, after line 158 add “There was a survey taken and there will be feedback from it.”

The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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

45
46 Business Administrator Shevenell presented three gifts to the school district. The first is from
47 the Lifetouch National School Studios to the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School in the
48 amount of \$1,186.00. This gift will be used to support the Artist in Residence Program. The
49 James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Arts Committee has commissioned an artist to work
50 with students to design and create a mosaic for the front entrance of the school.

51
52 The second gift is to the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School from USA Track & Field in the
53 form of a \$1,000.00 Run Jump Throw equipment kit grant. The grant money will be used to
54 purchase track & field equipment and to establish an after school track & field club at the
55 elementary school level.

56
57 The third gift is to the Reeds Ferry School from Shaw's Supermarkets in the amount of \$400.00.
58 This is part of the Adopt-A-School program entitled "We Love our Schools," which has been
59 undertaken by the Shaw's Supermarkets Stores.

60
61 Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the donations with
62 gratitude.

63
64 The motion passed 5-0-0.

65
66 Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

67
68 **5. Consent Agenda**

69
70 a) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following educator nominations:

71
72 - Katherine Hedstrom Guidance Counselor Merrimack High School

73
74 Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the consent
75 agenda as presented.

76
77 The motion passed 5-0-0.

78
79 **6. A School System's (Amherst, Mont Vernon, Souhegan) 175 Day Hours-Based**
80 **Calendar**

81
82 Chairman Ortega welcomed Superintendent Peter Warburton and the other esteemed guests to
83 the meeting. He asked that while introducing the group that each person's role in the process be
84 described.

85
86 Superintendent Warburton introduced the members of the group: Gerry St. Amand, Clark
87 Wilkins School Principal; Larry Ballard, President of the Amherst Education Association; Betty
88 Shankel, Business Administrator; Carrie James, Human Resources Director; Porter Dodge,
89 Middle School Principal and Rob Schully, High School Principal.

90
91 Superintendent Warburton opened by clarifying the issue on late starts and stated that this has
92 been around for a long time and is a contractual issue in one of the districts that has nothing to do
93 with the 175 day calendar.

94
95 Superintendent Warburton then stated that Business Administrator Shankel would then read
96 questions that the Merrimack School Board had submitted prior to the meeting and supply
97 responses.

98
99 Business Manager Shankel opened by noting that the process was begun in 2010 and rolled out
100 in 2014. Acceleration would have been difficult for several reasons; three districts were
101 involved, employee agreements were staggered, and busing contracts.

102
103 Chairman Ortega asked what drove the districts to go through this process and then decide to
104 move forward with the 175 day calendar.

105
106 Business Manager Shankel responded that there had been snow and flooding over the years that
107 caused an extension to the school year. One solution was to add time to the school days in May
108 and June which caused difficulties for teachers, students and parents. Graduation dates were
109 changed and had negative impacts on family and friends making travel plans. The average
110 amount of days to be made up was about ten each year.

111
112 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard stressed having a clear vision of the why
113 and the how before making this type of change.

114
115 Superintendent Warburton stated that when he came on board in 2011 the conversation was
116 about a concentrated 10 months school routine for students. The day was increased by 20
117 minutes.

118
119 Business Manager Shankel and Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard spoke to
120 the positive position taken by the bargaining units once the details were explained. The initial
121 skepticism disappeared as the process moved to completion. New contract language allows for a
122 return to a 180 day calendar without having to renegotiate the contract. It can be found as an
123 appendix in the teacher contract.

124
125 Superintendent Warburton shared that right now in the state of New Hampshire there are 32
126 districts at less than 180 days, 6 districts at 175 days, and 134 districts at 180 days.

127
128 On the question of how the change impacted curriculum. Superintendent Warburton asked if
129 each Principal would speak about his specific school. He noted that there had not yet been an in
130 depth discussion but noted that upcoming parent surveys would provide helpful. One of the
131 concerns was the potential for regression among the Special Education population.

132
133 High School Principal Rob Schully noted that initially teachers loved having the extra time. As
134 the year progressed there seemed to be an accordion effect where time became compressed and
135 teachers felt challenged to finish the material. Testing was also an issue. A more proactive

136 approach was used this year to map out progressions and there will be an in depth analysis
137 around the delivery of instruction. He noted that the challenges of moving to a competency based
138 education, curriculum changes, the shorter calendar and testing all need to be considered as part
139 of the start to finish planning.

140
141 Middle School Principal Porter Dodge echoed the sentiments of Principal Schully in teachers
142 feeling rushed at the end of the year. He commented on the importance of teachers using the
143 time efficiently. He stressed that the last few days of school are now active teaching days and
144 that books were not collected a week early.

145
146 Principal St. Amand noted the benefits to the instruction of science, social studies and
147 handwriting. He also noted that upon returning from April vacation teachers felt the challenge to
148 complete the material.

149
150 Business Manager Shankel responded to the question of the impact presentation and if the
151 content was from a previous time. The only difference was a budget change for a Veritime
152 timeclock that was needed and had no bearing on any potential calendar change.

153
154 On the question of contract negotiations, issues and how the process went, Business Manager
155 Shankel noted the many small issues and language changes that were resolved smoothly.

156
157 Principal St. Amand stated that the initial feedback from teachers and families was very
158 favorable. Early winter planning to ward off regression over the 13 week summer break
159 resulting in new enrichment programs using leftover Title I monies. He noted that a problem
160 was many of the local providers were not offering child care when school got out on June 10th.
161 That will be addressed this year.

162
163 Superintendent Warburton stated a goal of notifying outside providers of the end of school date.

164
165 Superintendent Chiafery asked about the extended school year for the special education
166 population.

167
168 Business Manager Shankel noted that one extra week of school was run last year and that could
169 move to two weeks next year. Moving to two weeks would impact any money savings from the
170 175 day calendar.

171
172 Business Manager Shankel spoke on the busing contract change from 180 to 170 days that
173 produced a cost savings.

174
175 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard spoke as a parent and noted that it was
176 easy to plan things once the dates were known. This is due to the fact that a two-year calendar
177 was voted on by the School Boards to assist parents in planning vacations and child care.

178
179 Business Manager Shevenell asked about the initiation of the timeclock system and if it applied
180 to teacher and support staff and was told it only applied to support staff.

181

182 Business Manager Shevenell asked if there had been any thought to a two year budget and was
183 told no. The challenge of managing three districts is enough of a challenge.

184
185 On the question of how to survey parents, the online format in Survey Monkey was used. The
186 SAU Board needed to agree for this to go forward.

187
188 Business Manager Shevenell asked Human Resources Director Carrie James if she noted a
189 reduction in employee absences later in the year and was told that leave was converted to the
190 hours based system. People are paid in 15 minute increments. Employee timecards feed into
191 ASOP. ASOP and Veritime are integrated with Infinite Visions.

192
193 Board Member Powell thanked the guests and asked how many more days there would have
194 been last year on the old calendar and was told 12 days.

195
196 Board Member Schneider asked about the possibility of a year with only one snow day used and
197 was told that there are five extra days in the calendar. The 170 day calendar has about the same
198 amount of hours as the 180 day calendar. The first five snow days would not be made up.

199
200 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard noted that the 170 day calendar and the
201 180 day calendar have almost the same amount of hours in them.

202
203 Student Representative Marcus asked if the extended school day negatively affected teacher
204 availability after school for students' access.

205
206 Middle School Principal Dodge spoke to the willingness of schools to accommodate other
207 schools' schedules.

208
209 High School Principal Schully spoke about the non-compete clause that prevented activities from
210 being scheduled before 3:00 p.m. Students so far seem to be taking more advantage of after
211 school teacher help, the library and other opportunities.

212
213 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard noted that the twenty additional minutes
214 is broken up into five minutes in the morning and fifteen minutes at the end of the day.

215
216 Student Representative Marcus asked how a two hour delay in the winter would be counted and
217 was told it would not be issue.

218
219 Chairman Ortega asked if a combination of two hour delays and snow days increased above the
220 five extended days that then the time would be made up.

221
222 Business Manager Shankel said that the snow days would be made up but not the two hour
223 delays.

224
225 Vice-Chair Barnes asked about "Blizzard Bags" and Superintendent Warburton said they do not
226 use them and he does not think they are affective.

227

228 High School Principal Schully noted that this issue did come up during their process and
229 suggested Merrimack being strategic about this issue and having a response prepared.
230
231 Vice Chair Barnes noted that parents ask about this every year and asked if the question was
232 asked and vetted and found to not be viable and was told yes.
233
234 Chairman Ortega noted that the concept of blizzard bags does not fit with the concept of
235 instructional hours.
236
237 Board Member Guagliumi asked about the initial and ongoing parent feedback.
238
239 Business Manager Shankel spoke about the teacher designed parent survey and noted that
240 parents were not in favor of changing the February and April vacations or having school starting
241 before Labor Day.
242
243 Board Member Guagliumi asked if there were any additional insights or lessons learned that
244 could be shared.
245
246 Business Manager Shankel noted that additional professional development had not been
247 addressed because the focus was on not reducing instructional hours.
248
249 High School Principal Schully noted the exciting changes in education going on and encouraged
250 looking through a long lens and asking the question, “what should be the schedule for a next
251 generation student in a competency based education where there is much more fluidity as to
252 when you might finish?” He also noted that in the ongoing discussions is the idea of an extended
253 school year for an immersion program from June 5th to July 2nd as well as extensions for other
254 small populations such as special education.
255
256 Superintendent Warburton noted that going forward innovative thinking about educational
257 changes will be the next phase of talks.
258
259 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard reiterated the importance of laying out
260 the how to the teachers by showing a sample building schedule.
261
262 Elementary School Principal St. Amand noted that building maintenance needs to be addressed.
263
264 Superintendent Warburton spoke on the parent request to have more time with their children in
265 the summer.
266
267 Board Member Schneider asked how much advance warning was given to parents before
268 implementing this program and was told that contract negotiations were not finalized until
269 March. The information was then put out to the public.
270
271 Board Member Schneider asked what other things were taken into account in the agreements.
272

273 Business Manager Shankel gave some examples as the start and end time bells, sick days, and
274 personal days. The calendar was called a 175 day calendar the first year and will now be
275 referred to as an hours based calendar. She recommends using the new terminology upon
276 inception.

277
278 Amherst Education Association Member Larry Ballard reiterated that there is an appendix at the
279 back of the collective bargaining agreement that addresses all of the changes.

280
281 Board Member Schneider noted that this allows for reverse engineering if there is a return to the
282 180 day calendar.

283
284 Business Administrator Shevenell asked if the late start days are professional development days
285 and if the days are counted as instructional time and was told they are professional development
286 days and that they are not counted as instructional time.

287
288 Student Representative Marcus asked about the issue of classes at the end of the year running out
289 of time.

290
291 High School Principal Schully noted that he moved the schedule from a seven period to eight
292 period day double block schedule and this allowed minutes to be regained. End of year projects,
293 work with the PACE initiative, and imbedded finals also lessened the impact of lost time.

294
295 Chairman Ortega thanked all of the guests for attending and sharing their experiences. He noted
296 that their input was invaluable to discussions that Merrimack has recently begun in concept.

297
298 **7. Approval of Second Board Letter to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**
299 **(FERC) Regarding the Proposed Gas Pipeline**

300
301 Chairman Ortega reminded the Board that at the last meeting Vice Chair Barnes had shared the
302 information that the proposed alternative route is now being considered as the plan and is to be
303 submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and that response time is tight.

304
305 Per direction from the School Board, Chairman Ortega spoke with Town Council Chair Nancy
306 Harrington last week and was informed that there will be an opportunity to attend a special
307 meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. It will be held in the Matthew
308 Thornton Room in Town Hall. The sole agenda item of this meeting is a workshop with Kinder
309 Morgan about the proposed routes.

310
311 According to Town Council Chair Harrington, subsequent to the workshop it is expected that
312 Kinder Morgan might submit a proposed route and it is unclear whether the comment period will
313 be extended past October 12, 2015.

314
315 Chairman Ortega recommended that the Board entertain a letter to FERC about what is known
316 about the proposed route at this point in time and use the meeting on Thursday to speak directly
317 to Kinder Morgan representatives about the facts regarding the proposed route.

318

319 Board Member Guagliumi asked the Board to clarify their position on the route distance of 1,000
320 feet from the schools and where the measurement point begins.

321
322 Chairman Ortega noted that he addressed this more specifically in his second letter.

323
324 Vice Chair Barnes reiterated her concern about the water supply and the proximity of the
325 proposed route to the aquifer. She noted that the Town Council has taken a position against any
326 water contamination and that the School Board should state a position also despite neither body
327 being a governing body over the water supply. The concern is the possibility of bringing
328 contaminated water into the schools.

329
330 Board Member Schneider made the comment that the new proposed route goes through the
331 Pennichuck aquifer and not the primary Merrimack water supply which is well-based. He
332 questioned whether or not the Town has communicated with the Pennichuck Water District
333 about the impact on the Merrimack water supply from the newly proposed route.

334
335 Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to enter the draft letter into the record
336 and that the letter be sent tomorrow. For context, Chairman Ortega read the first letter and then
337 the proposed second letter.

338
339 The first letter was sent to Secretary Kimberley Bose of the Federal Energy Regulatory
340 Commission and reads as follows:

341
342 *July 14, 2015*

343
344 *Secretary Kimberly Bose*
345 *Federal Energy Regulatory Commission*
346 *888 First Street, NE Room 1A*
347 *Washington, DC 20426*

348
349 *Dear Ms. Bose:*

350
351 *The Merrimack School District (SAU #26) opposes, by unanimous vote of the School Board, any route*
352 *that comes within 1,000 feet of a district school building. We hope that proposed route referenced below,*
353 *and future proposed routes, be removed from consideration to avoid impacts to a facility where our*
354 *children and employees congregate.*

355
356 *On Tuesday, June 30, 2015, the Town of Amherst (NH) Pipeline Taskforce held a meeting with*
357 *representatives of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company/Kinder Morgan. The purpose of the meeting was*
358 *to discuss alternative options for the pipeline route through Amherst currently under analysis by Kinder*
359 *Morgan. Please refer to the July 10, 2015 letter to you from Amherst Town Administrator, James*
360 *O'Mara, Jr.*

361
362 *I call to your attention something that was not discussed at that meeting nor in its summarization; the*
363 *Option 1 route proposed and discussed at that meeting, running along Continental Blvd in Merrimack,*
364 *comes within 500 feet of Thorntons Ferry School, located at 134 Camp Sargent Rd, Merrimack, NH.*
365 *Thorntons Ferry School is a K-4 school in our district with a daily population of over 500 students and 85*
366 *staff members.*

367

368 *I respectfully ask that this letter and the accompanying documents be included as part of the public*
369 *record.*

370
371 *Thank you for your consideration of this information.*

372
373 *Sincerely,*

374
375 *Christopher S. Ortega*
376 *Chairman, Merrimack School Board, SAU 26*

377
378 *Chairman Ortega then read the proposed second letter to be dated October 4, 2015.*

379
380 *October 4, 2015*

381
382 *Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary*
383 *Federal Energy Regulatory Commission*
384 *888 First Street, NE Room 1A*
385 *Washington, DC 20426*

386
387 *Re: Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC ("TGP")*
388 *Docket No. PF14-22-000: Proposed Northeast Energy Direct ("NED")*
389

390 *Dear Ms. Bose:*

391
392 *The Merrimack School District (SAU #26) wrote to you on July 14, 2015 in unanimous opposition to a*
393 *proposed alternate route of the Proposed NED pipeline coming within 500 feet of the Thorntons Ferry*
394 *Elementary School. I have attached a copy of that letter for your reference.*

395
396 *It has recently come to our attention that Kinder Morgan will be submitting to you a modified plan to run*
397 *along that referenced route. I call to your attention a few facts:*

- 398
- 399 • *Thorntons Ferry School located at 134 Camp Sargent Rd, Merrimack, NH is a K-4 school in our*
400 *district with a daily population of over 500 students and 85 staff members.*
 - 401 • *The proposed route runs within ~ 500 feet of the Thorntons Ferry School playground which is*
402 *used daily by the school population.*
 - 403 • *The proposed route runs within ~ 1100 feet of the Thorntons Ferry School building.*
 - 404 • *The proposed route runs directly through 13 acres of Merrimack School District property which*
405 *can be found on the attached map roughly between MP 23.4 and MP 23.5.*
- 406

407 ***The Merrimack School District opposes, by unanimous vote of the School Board, any route on or***
408 ***within one thousand (1,000) feet of district school property. We hope that the proposed route***
409 ***referenced below, and future proposed routes, be removed from consideration to avoid safety impacts***
410 ***to a facility where our children and employees congregate.***

411
412 *On Thursday, October 8, 2015 at 7 pm the Merrimack Town Council is holding a meeting in the Matthew*
413 *Thornton Room at Town Hall to conduct a workshop related to the latest proposed alternate pipeline*
414 *route with Kinder Morgan. At this meeting we will share these facts, our concerns, and our opposition to*
415 *the currently planned route.*

416

417 *I respectfully ask that this letter and the accompanying documents be included as part of the public*
418 *record.*

419
420 *Thank you for your consideration of this information.*

421
422 *Sincerely,*

423
424 *Christopher S. Ortega*
425 *Chairman, Merrimack School Board, SAU 26*

426
427 Discussion ensued among the Board Members.

428
429 Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to amend the second
430 bullet point to say “playground and the outdoor instructional area which are currently used daily
431 by the school population”.

432
433 The motion passed 5-0-0.

434
435 Student Representative Marcus voted in Favor.

436
437 Board Member Powell asked for clarification about the upcoming Thursday workshop and if
438 Kinder Morgan representatives would be in attendance.

439
440 Chairman Ortega responded that Kinder Morgan representatives would be in attendance. He
441 understood the workshop to be a forum to clarify issues that may exist with a number of the
442 abutting properties that the route is expected to go through. Also expected to be at the meeting
443 are the Merrimack Village District, the Conservation Commission, and Chairman Ortega as
444 requested by Town Council Chair Harrington. This is not to be a testimony type of meeting.

445
446 Board Member Schneider noted his interest in the meeting and in hearing how Pennichuck
447 participates in the Merrimack water supply.

448
449 Vice Chair Barnes followed up by stating that the Board should take a proactive position on the
450 water issue and moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to include the statement: “The
451 Merrimack School Board also opposes any project that would impact the water supply delivered
452 to district facilities.”

453
454 A lengthy discussion ensued among the Board Members.

455
456 Vice Chair Barnes amended the motion (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to say “would
457 negatively impact.”

458
459 This would be inserted after the first bolded sentence in the proposed letter read by Chairman
460 Ortega.

461
462 The motion passed 5-0-0.

463

464 Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

465

466 Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) based upon input from
467 Student Representative Marcus, to add the statement “In summary, the Merrimack School Board
468 opposes any outcome of this project that would negatively impact the health and well-being of it
469 staff and students.”

470

471 This would be inserted above the paragraph that begins “I respectfully ask that this letter...”

472

473 The motion passed 5-0-0.

474

475 Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

476

477 Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) that the letter be approved as
478 amended.

479

480 The motion passed 5-0-0.

481

482 Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

483

484 **8. Board’s Message to the Superintendent for 2016-2017 Budget Preparation**

485

486 Chairman Ortega read into the minutes his summarization of Board Members messages to the
487 Superintendent for 2016-2017 budget preparation that were presented at the last meeting.

488

489 Chairman Ortega noted that during his tenure the Superintendent and administration have always
490 addressed the message contents. He then read the message into the record.

491

492 **Merrimack School Board’s Budget Message for 2016/2017**

493

494 For the 2016-2017 budget cycle it is the Merrimack School Board’s desire that school district
495 administration budget for a high quality education for our students while keeping the taxpayer in
496 mind.

497

498 *The Board has budgetary expectations which include, but are not limited to, the following:*

499

500 • (First) We will remain committed to the School District Logic Model, which was recently
501 updated. By supporting the long and short-term goals and objectives in the Logic Model we
502 have made continuous progress in the areas of literacy, numeracy, technology, school climate
503 and safety. We look for progress in student-directed learning and the goal of supporting life-
504 long learners.

505

506 • (Second) We will continue to make data driven decisions. Financial support will be applied
507 only to those programs and tools that have been proven successful by data.

508

- 509 • (Third) We will maintain appropriate staffing levels based on enrollments and the needs of
510 our students. In support of this we will use enrollment projections for all grade levels, class
511 offerings, and ongoing district initiatives (e.g. Educator Performance Evaluation,
512 standardized testing) in making decisions.
513
- 514 • (Fourth) We will continue to prioritize projects contained on our Capital Improvement Plan.
515 We will need to consistently plan ahead for various projects so as not to overburden any one
516 particular budget cycle. We take responsibility for our buildings. Required maintenance
517 projects, such as roofing, should be included in the operating budget and not placed on the
518 ballot as warrant articles.
519
- 520 • (Fifth) We will be forward thinking with our support of curriculum and technology. It is the
521 Board's desire that the district continue to look for efficiencies with our use of technology
522 while maintaining, improving, and expanding our infrastructure and staff readiness in an
523 effort to bring our capabilities as current as possible. This will need to include, but is not
524 limited to the ability to support evolving standardized testing requirements.
525
- 526 • (Sixth) We will continue to examine co-curricular programs in an effort to streamline our
527 offerings and strive for equity in per participant funding between academic clubs and
528 athletics and provide supporting historical data on budgetary and booster/individual funding
529 as part of the budget.
530
- 531 • (Seventh) We support administration's efforts to create as close to a level-funded budget (as
532 possible) while appreciating its associated challenges. Any additions or reductions to
533 staffing and/or programs proposed by Administration should clearly include details of the
534 consequences of such actions with the Board and its constituency. In summary, we will
535 remain prudent with our expenditures without sacrificing the high quality of our students'
536 education.
537

538 **9. Yearend Surplus to Reduce Taxes**

539
540 Chairman Ortega invited Business Administrator Shevenell to provide specifics about the
541 surplus.
542

543 Business Administrator Shevenell stated that at year end June 30, 2015 there was a surplus of
544 \$4.4 million dollars to be returned to offset this year's tax rate. He provided a general
545 breakdown of where the surplus came from and stated that he will be providing a more detailed
546 breakdown before he goes before the budget committee in November.
547

548 The HealthTrust unanticipated revenue of \$1.1 million dollars was a large part of the surplus.
549 Additionally, unexpected catastrophic aid and Medicaid brought the revenue to about \$2 million
550 dollars.
551

552 On the budget side about \$2.5 million dollars was underspent as follows:

553

- 554 • One million dollars in the areas of personnel and benefits.
- 555 • \$200,000 in the area of maintenance and utilities, (mostly electricity and natural gas
- 556 conversion).
- 557 • \$1 million dollars in the Special Education department due to a reduction in out of district
- 558 placements. This is mainly due to Brentwood closing. An unfortunate side effect was that
- 559 students dropped out of the system and did not return.

560

561 Business Administrator Shevenell cautioned that the HealthTrust, CAT Aid and Medicaid are not

562 to be expected every year.

563

564 Chairman Ortega asked for a clarification on the HealthTrust refund and if it was a gross or net

565 figure and was told it was the net amount.

566

567 Board Member Guagliumi asked Business Administrator Shevenell to remind the Board what the

568 prior year surplus was and was told it was about \$4.8 million dollars. On average the surplus is

569 about \$2.7 million dollars.

570

571 Board Member Schneider asked if the higher average was due to revenue and budget combined

572 and was told yes. He noted that the district is being more efficient in budgeting and spending.

573

574 Business Administrator Shevenell stated that Merrimack goes on the open market to negotiate

575 deals on energy costs and in other areas.

576

577 **10. Other**

578

579 **a) Correspondence**

580

581 There was no correspondence.

582

583 **b) Comments**

584

585 Board Member Guagliumi requested that a thank you letter be sent to the guests from the

586 Amherst, Mont Vernon, Souhegan combined school districts thanking them for attending and

587 sharing their experiences in moving to an hours-based calendar.

588

589 Chairman Ortega noted that Superintendent Chiafery would send a thank you letter.

590

591 **11. New Business**

592

593 Chairman Ortega noted that two Board Members had recently attended a HealthTrust Summit

594 and then provided the materials to their fellow members. At the next meeting of the School

595 Board, HealthTrust representative Debbie Clayton will attend and speak about health care trends

596 and the issues that can be expected to arise. He asked Board Members to review the material and

597 send questions in advance to the superintendent.

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12. Committee Reports

Board Member Schneider noted that he and Board Member Guagliumi attended the HealthTrust Summit and will hold input for when Debbie Clayton makes her presentation. It was noted that Merrimack was cited as an example of the right way to do things.

Board Member Schneider attended the Merrimack Safeguard Committee meeting on October 1st and an election for chairman was held. The former chairperson Kay Murphy has moved out of the area. Retired Middle School Principal Debbie Woelflein offered her services to serve as interim chair until someone steps forward.

The prescription drug take back was held on September 26th and a total of 41 pounds of drugs was picked up by the police department. Added to the box at the front entrance to the police station this came to 214 total pounds to be turned into the state.

To comply with a grant requirement, Merrimack Safeguard focus groups met with businesses around town to discuss risk management and drug awareness. Some suggestions were to advertise at the movie theatre and to look at the middle school National Outcomes Measure Survey (NOMS).

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

14. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:20 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II, (a), (b), (c).

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

At 10:30 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.