

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
January 2, 2012
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman Ortega, Board Members Barnes, Markwell and Thornton, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative Yates.

1. Call To Order

Chairman Vaillancourt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Vaillancourt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of December 12, 2011 Minutes

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2012 Special School Board meeting.

Student Representative Yates requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 1 of 9, paragraph 2 from the bottom, remove the “s” from the word “maps”

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 9, paragraph 1, first sentence should read “...that there wouldn’t be an extra cost ...”

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 9, section James Masticola Elementary School, paragraph 3, remove “Shannon”
- Page 8 of 9, section Budget Discussion, paragraph 4, remove “Shannon”

Board Member Thornton requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 9, paragraph 5, should read “\$75 and \$90 a day

Vice Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 9, paragraph 8, change tense from “question” to “questioned”
- Page 7 of 9, paragraph 4 from the bottom, add “s” to “teacher”
- Page 9 of 9, Section Public Comments on Agenda Items, paragraph 1, last sentence should read “...federal withholding contributions had been calculated into the healthcare savings as reported earlier”

Chairman Vaillancourt requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 9, after the first paragraph add “Board Member Barnes asked about the technology class enrollment number”. (This is followed by Chairman Vaillancourt’s response that “Chairman Vaillancourt clarified....”

The motion passed 5-0-0.

3. Approval of December 19, 2011 Minutes

Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the December 19, 2011 meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 12, section 6, correct the spelling of Town Manager Eileen Cabanel
- Page 8 of 12, paragraph 1, the last sentence should read “She added that perhaps by delaying the project it would give more time to plan for overall improvements comparable to those at Mastricola Elementary School in the library”
- Page 10 of 12, paragraph 3 from the bottom, correct the date of the NHSBA to January 14, 2012

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 12, last paragraph, remove entire paragraph
- Page 6 of 12, change the date of the general election to November 6
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 7 from bottom, change the number of three administrators to four administrators.

Vice Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 12, last paragraph, change the word “survey” to “support group”
- Page 4 of 12, paragraph 3, 2nd sentence should read, “He stated that providing the services of the support group is a much-needed service regarding a very complicated system.”
- Page 12 of 12, Public Comments section, last sentence change “site” to “sight”

Chairman Vaillancourt requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 12, Section 6, paragraph 2, replace “Town Council” with “Town Manager”
- Page 4 of 12, Section 6, paragraph 4, sentence 3 should read “Lynn Christensen, Town Moderator, requested that....”
- Page 7 of 12, last paragraph, 2nd sentence should read “It is currently under review to make it current and efficient.”
- Page 8 of 12, paragraph 7, after “\$313,889” add “with the proposed reductions by the Administration itemized on December 19, 2011.”
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 8, sentence 1 should read “.....below the required number of students per administrators”
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 6 from the bottom, after “.....cut one assistant principal” add “at James Mastricola Elementary School.”
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 5 from the bottom, should read, “....403 students when the board put an operating budget forward without a vice principal at James Mastricola Elementary School. In the school year 2012-13 there will be 446 students at the James Mastricola Elementary School.
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 3 from the bottom, should read “...responded that there are three Kindergarten through grade 4 classes, with two of them having pre-kindergarten”. The last sentence of that paragraph should read “She added that James Mastricola Elementary School and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School are separate.....”
- Page 9 of 12, last paragraph, correct the spelling of Vice Chairman Ortega
- Page 11 of 12, paragraph 4, change the spelling to “recused”
- Page 11 of 12, under Correspondence, paragraph 1 should read, “Board Member Markwell referenced an e-mail from Barbara Publicover regarding the Litchfield....”
- Page 12 of 12, under Public Comments on Agenda Items, sentence 2 should read, “He stated that the first budget committee meeting would take place...”
- Page 12 of 12, change the spelling from “loose” to “lose”

The motion passed 5-0-0.

4. Public Participation- Chairman Vaillancourt

There was no public participation.

5. Focus on District Choral Music Program

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin gave a brief introduction to the Merrimack School District music program, which includes students in kindergarten through grade 12.

Ken Dugal introduced the music teachers from the district, Glenda Aquino, Jennifer Bissonnette, Ken Dugal, Marguerite Knudsen, Brian Moore and Chris Saunders, as well as the students in the audience who are part of the program. He then gave a presentation on the music program of the Merrimack School District. Highlights included:

- A beautiful musical presentation was made by Luisa Forger, High School Chorus President.
- College admissions offices place a high emphasis on students' musical education.
- Students who excel in music are not necessarily top students in the class.
- The music curriculum is currently being revised.
- There is continuity from grade to grade and school to school in the music program.
- There are approximately 500 students in the district-wide choral groups.
- All students in grades one through four sing and play instruments.
- All three elementary schools have a chorus.
- James Masticola Upper Elementary School has a large chorus for all students as well as a smaller chorus of about 60 students, which is auditioned based.
- The middle school includes keyboard playing as part of the music program. The chorus meets every day before school and sometimes after school.
- At Merrimack High School, piano, music appreciation, guitar and music theory are examples of courses given. The chorus has participated in the NH All State Jazz Festival. There is also a Classical Choir.
- Mr. Dugal noted that the Merrimack School District music program's success is based on three things: 1) dedication of the students 2) parent appreciation of the importance of what the students are learning and 3) the excellence of the music staff who put in extra hours to make the program what it is.

Mr. Dugal closed the presentation with the quote "Life is one grand sweet song... so start the music!" and presented a slide show of the successful alumni of the Merrimack district music program.

Board Member Barnes asked if the board could be updated on music competitions.

Mr. Dugal responded that Student Representative Yates would be the liaison for the music department and the school board with updates on competitions.

Board Member Thornton expressed her appreciation for sharing the music program with the board.

Vice Chairman Ortega stated that the dedication of the students is a testament to all of the staff being available before and after school for the students.

Chairman Vaillancourt spoke to the improvement in consistency and the transitional movement from building to building especially with students in the music program.

6. Response to Proposed New Hampshire School Board (NHSBA) Resolutions

Chairman Vaillancourt announced that Board Member Barnes would be attending the meeting of the NHSBA on January 14, 2012 as a representative of the school board. She asked if anyone on the board wanted to discuss any resolutions. No board member was interested in discussing any specific NHSBA resolution.

Board Member Barnes stated that she was comfortable with the resolutions and would bring feedback to the board at the January 17, 2012 meeting.

7. Board Discussion Regarding CACR8 (NH House Constitutional Amendment 8)- Jody

Chairman Vaillancourt explained that she had received several e-mails during the day regarding House Bill CACR8, waving the two week rule. One specific e-mail was received from Roy Swonger to the Merrimack Legislative delegation requesting that they vote against CACR8. He then sent a note to the school board requesting that the board have a formal discussion regarding the amendment. One of the issues, he explained, was that the House will take a vote on the bill on Tuesday, January 3, 2012. Chairman Vaillancourt added that it was not necessary for the school to take a stand.

Chairman Vaillancourt personally wrote to the State Representatives asking them to vote “No” on House Bill CACR8. She received correspondence from Representative Chris Christensen regarding the issue and was asked by him if her note expressed the board decision, to which she replied that it did not.

Board Member Barnes reported that she had received a call from Representative Christensen regarding CACR8. She stated that she would request a “No” vote for the proposed amendment. She explained that the House would vote on January 3, 2012 and then it would go to the Senate and finally to the voters.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Ortega) to show school board support to vote “No” on House Bill CACR8 and waived the two-week rule.

Board Member Barnes spoke to the motion, stating that she was concerned about the exposure the passing of this bill would make for school funding from the state level.

Board Member Markwell stated that school funding comes from the local level and that he supports local control. One of the problems, he felt, was that he did not want money collected by the state used for purposes other than education or for supporting communities other than Merrimack. He also stated that all tax monies are collected in Merrimack and give control to the district and prevents co-mingling of funds to the general fund. Board Member Markwell also felt that he did not have enough time to read through and absorb exactly what the bill means, adding that he did not want to waive the two-week rule.

Vice Chairman Ortega stated that he was concerned about acting too quickly and requested more time to review the material and then the board would be able to make individual recommendations. He added that he was not in support of making a statement as a board at this time.

Board Member Thornton stated that she wanted discussion, not necessarily a formal vote. She also has concerns regarding funding and had questions as to how we get our state funding. Another concern related to funding other schools beside the public schools.

Vice Chairman Ortega asked if there was a sense of timing regarding the legislative process. The House is voting on the bill on Tuesday, January 3rd, but he would like to know when the Senate is voting on it if it passes the House. He added that he is hoping that when the legislative delegation attends the school board meeting in the near future, he would like to have a discussion with them regarding the amendment and then, perhaps, take action as a board.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the normal crossover time is in March. She added that the goal is to put forward to all the electorate in the State of New Hampshire a Constitutional Amendment for November 2012.

Chairman Vaillancourt agreed that more time is needed to review the bill. Knowing that there are concerns about the bill such as timing and very little discussion on it, she would like to make the public aware of House Bill CACR8 and the fact that it is being voted on immediately. She agreed that she is in support of local control, but has great concern about funding as well as eliminating state standards. She also stated that she has an issue with funding going to private/parochial schools. She is in support of voting "No" to House Bill CACR8.

Chairman Vaillancourt encouraged the public to contact their State Representatives regarding the proposal and let them know how they feel about it.

The motion failed 2-2-1 with Board Members Markwell and Vice Chairman Ortega in opposition and Board Member Thornton abstaining.

8. Merrimack School District Budget Committee Meeting Schedule

Superintendent Chiafery presented the school budget committee meeting schedule. All meetings will take place in the Merrimack High School cafeteria at 7:00 p.m.

January 10, 2012	Library/media services, special education, the three elementary schools and the high school.
January 24, 2012	Food services, upper elementary school, middle school, maintenance and district-wide accounts
January 31, 2012	As needed for snow date
February 7, 2012	Warrant Articles
February 14, 2012	Public hearing. Budget recommendations are made and final action is taken
February 21, 2012	As needed for snow date

Chairman Vaillancourt added that on January 17, 2012, a formal vote will be taken by the school board pertaining to any warrant articles on the ballot.

9. Other

a. Correspondence

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that there had been several e-mails regarding House Bill CACR8.

b. Comments

There were no comments.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

12 Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no comments on agenda items.

13. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:30 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a), (b), (c).

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

At 9:03 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.