

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
May 21, 2012**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

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

1. Call To Order

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

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes of the May 7, 2012 meeting

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2012 meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 1, add comma after “...that a year ago”
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 1, last sentence to read, “Next year there will be a seventh grade teaching team (7-4) and this team will fluctuate between the two grades to meet student population needs going forward.
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 3 should read “SCALES, which stands for”
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 6 from the bottom should read, “Board Member Schneider asked if the grade alternating teaching team starts from scratch....”
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 4, last bullet, should read “Follow-up”
- Page 5 of 7, bullet 3, insert “Merrimack” before “students who have pledged....”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 5, second sentence should read, “It is a white board display device along with a tablet....”
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 6 from the bottom, the sentence should read “Board Member Schneider asked if the grade alternating teaching team starts from scratch and if there are lesson plans in place that they can leverage within each grade level”.
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 2 from the bottom, insert “of curriculum development” after “...cross-pollination”
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 5, insert “industry career” after “.....high-tech”
- Page 6 of 7, paragraph 3, add “...education, given the new focus on educational development as part of the future work-force reduction.

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 6 of 7, add the names of Helen Fitzgerald and Shelly Lefebvre as part of the presentation.
- It was noted that all presenters should be named and referenced when questions are asked.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 3, remove the letter “y” from the second sentence. Should be “the”.
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 3, add, “...for students and teachers regardless of who is instructing the class.”
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 7, after “careers” add “, such as”.

The motion passed 4-0-1, with Vice Chairman Powell in abstention.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation

4. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

- a) Teacher Nominations:
 - Sally Angel, Science Teacher at Merrimack Middle School
 - Amy Deese, Grade 1 Teacher at Mastricola Elementary School
 - Deborah Fournier, Grade 2 Teacher at Mastricola Elementary School
 - Kathleen Hoppa, Guidance Counselor at Reeds Ferry Elementary School
 - Donna Johnson, Grade 1 Teacher at Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- b) Teacher Resignations
 - Shalae Mays, Nurse at Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- c) Approval of the Professional Development Plan for 2012-2017

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Merrimack Rotary July 4th Family Day

Mr. Steve Russell, Chair of the Merrimack July 4th Family Day, and Mr. Peter Giacapuzzi, Rotary President, introduced themselves to the board.

Mr. Russell thanked Superintendent Chiafery and Maintenance Director Tom Touseau for allowing the midway to be held on the Mastricola fields. He explained that the Town of Merrimack approached the Rotary in December about managing the day’s events. Highlights include:

- Committee Chairs
- The Midway Venues
- Entertainment
- Kids Entertainment
- Demonstrations
- Other festivities include arts and crafts competition, baking competition, garage band stage, family entertainment, kid’s crafts tent, chalk art competition and a balloon artist.

- There will be a Princess Bounce House Obstacle Course, Club House Combo and a giant slide- wet or dry.
- Food vendors
- Other vendors include elaborate face painting, toys and novelties, Instant Ambition, Interstate Batteries, Outlet Mall stores, First Robotics Club, New England Parkinson's Association, Merrimack Senior Citizens Club, Merrimack Youth Association, Dollars for Dancers and Merrimack Lions Club.

Peter Giacapuzzi added that some food vendors would be gluten free.

Steve Russell explained that set-up will take place the day before and break down would be the day after.

Board Member Schneider asked if there would be tents and tables and chairs set up in the food area.

Mr. Russell responded that there would be tents set up in the food area with tables and chairs.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the new 20 Amp service is a permanent or temporary source of power.

Mr. Russell explained that the power, which is permanent, would be brought up from Baboosic Lake Road onto O'Gara Drive.

Vice Chairman Powell asked who would be paying for the electricity.

Mr. Russell replied that Rotary would be paying for the electricity.

Board Member Barnes asked if there is a limit for the number of vendors.

Mr. Russell stated that they are not limiting the number of vendors, but if there were duplicates such as ice cream or cotton candy, they would be spread out throughout the entire area. He added that they are also trying to give service clubs the opportunity to do some fundraising.

Student Representative Yates asked how people could let Rotary know they want to be a vendor.

Mr. Russell gave his e-mail address as SRussell@Kollsman.com and Mr. Giacapuzzi gave his email as PGiacapuzzi@gmail.com.

Mr. Russell added that every student in the school district receives notice about the 4th of July Family Day. Other promotional material will be distributed. He also stated that Rotary is still looking for sponsors and volunteers for the event.

6. Formal Signing of the Master Agreement Between the Merrimack Support Staff Association and Merrimack School Board

Donna Scadova, on behalf of the Merrimack Support Staff Association (MESSA), thanked former Board Member Thornton and present Board Member Barnes, Human Resource Director Linda Hastings and Business Administrator Shevenell for negotiating with them, as well as the citizens of Merrimack for showing their support.

Chairman Ortega, Superintendent Chiafery and MESSA representatives Donna Scadova, Rene Beaulieu and Carol Scopa signed the Master Agreement.

Chairman Ortega, on behalf of the board, thanked MESSA for negotiating in good faith.

7. James Mastricola Elementary School, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School: A Year in Review

Marsha McGill, Principal of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, introduced the members of the schools' administration present at the board meeting. They were Bill Morris, Assistant Principal of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School; Bridey Bellemare, Principal of Thorntons Ferry Elementary School; Kim Yarlott, Principal of Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Nick Coler, Assistant Principal of Reeds Ferry Elementary School, John Fabrizio, Principal of James Mastricola Elementary School, Emilie Carter, Assistant Principal and Principal-Elect of James Mastricola Elementary School and Amy Gillam, Computer Technology Educator at Mastricola Elementary School. Sharon Putney, Assistant Principal of Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was not able to attend the meeting.

Principal McGill explained that the areas to be discussed were Literacy, Private Learning Environment, Mathematics and Technology.

Principal Yarlott gave a presentation on Literacy, which includes curriculum, assessment and instruction. Two areas of focus were refinement and capacity. Refinements have taken place over the past year in the four schools. The focus has been to stay the course as well as making improvements. Capacity refers to increasing teachers' capacity to raise student performance. One example was the teacher workshop on the first day of school. Another was the use of data sweeps conducted by Nick Hardy, consultant at WestEd, and how teachers in each of the four schools used the information from these sweeps.

Principal Bellemare gave a presentation on the Positive Learning Environment, which fosters an environment that is built on the principles of caring, responsibility, respect and safety. Social and emotional and developmental needs are discussed. The district wellness policy is encouraged, stressing the wellness of body and mind.

Principal McGill gave a presentation on math. Students have a minimum of 60 minutes a day for math. Teachers use student friendly language. Common formative assessments have been developed. Math fact fluency is a two-year focus with 15 minutes daily for flash cards and other activities to enrich this effort.

Amy Gillam from Mastricola Elementary School gave a slide presentation on technology. Highlights included:

- Big Universe is the online subscription service, which allows students to have their own account to read books, write books, create a bookshelf, and add friends and teachers.
- Calendars are shared through e-mails and allows teachers to share their calendars with other teachers so they can see what is happening in the other schools.
- In the area of Professional Development, monthly technology workshops are held which focus on how to use technology in the classroom and using the mimeo boards.
- iPads are being used in special education.
- Digital technologies such as IP touch, document cameras and mimeo interactive boards and response systems are being used in the schools. School websites are managed and updated on the schools' websites.
- Technology meetings for teachers in each school and district wide are held monthly. Digital portfolios, usually for grades five through eight, have been developed for students in grades one through four. There is cross-school collaboration, where students in each grade work on the same projects.
- Wireless is up and running in MSD-SPED and MSD-Curriculum.

The future of technology in the elementary schools was presented by Assistant Principal Carter.

Shared documents for data collection will be developed and there will be increased usage of PowerSchool at the Elementary level, as well as the integration of iPads.

Board Member Barnes asked Principal Yarlott about the data sweeps that were done. She wanted to know what they were looking for.

Principal Yarlott responded that the checklists, which are research based, are used. Some examples are student engagement and whether there are enough books in the classroom. There are about 30 items on the checklist.

Board Member Barnes asked Principal McGill if the common formative assessments, analyzing data, making instruction decisions is for now or for the future in math.

Principal McGill responded that each unit of study is looked at individually. They are looked at for trends, developing some assignments or developing core instruction. Redevelopment is being done to improve test scores.

Board Member Barnes stated that the tools used are helpful so student status can be known. She asked why iPads are being used instead of Android tablets.

Principal Fabrizio responded that iPads are being used because they are user friendly. Also, Apple computers are used in the labs at the elementary schools.

Board Member Barnes asked why the technology mentoring program is no longer being used.

Ms. Gillam responded that the mentoring program is being used at different levels in different elementary schools.

Board Member Schneider noted that there are monthly meetings of all technology instructors. He suggested that when they get together as a whole district they should talk about consistencies on school web sites such as consistency with the way calendars are used and populated between the schools.

Ms. Gillam stated that she would take the suggestion to the technology team.

Principal Bridey stated that she wanted to recognize partnerships with local businesses and the fire and police departments for help with math, science and robotics.

Chairman Ortega stated that the presentations show collaboration across all the schools in terms of consistency. He thanked the participants for attending the meeting.

8. Request to Extend the Contract of the Latin Teacher from Part-Time to Full-Time for 2012-2013

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained that the demand for Latin courses has dramatically increased, especially in Latin III. Merrimack is one of the few districts in the state to have such a diverse World Language department including Arabic, Mandarin/Chinese, French and Spanish. He requested to extend the contract of the Latin teacher from part time to full time.

Board Member Schneider asked for an explanation of why Latin studies are increasing and if the increase would continue.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that it is hard to speculate into the long future. The Latin course has morphed into something far more relevant than just Latin. There is a component that is historical, structural and cultural. He added that some of the English teachers are encouraging taking the Latin course. He explained that there seems to be no reason to suspect it will drop off.

Board Member Barnes explained that she attended a Program Evaluation and Review Committee (PERC) meeting on May 17th. It was pointed out that 21 students have shown interest in taking Latin III next year. The total number of students taking Latin next year will be 114, which means 5-6 classes. She also stated that colleges are looking at three years of a foreign language, which may generate more interest in Latin III and Latin in general, with a three year tract offering.. She added that Latin helps students in other foreign language classes.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if Latin IV would be offered the following year.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained that the immediate needs are being looked at now. Therefore, time will tell regarding the future of Latin IV.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he was glad the process was in place, and hopefully more students would be excited about the Latin courses being offered. He asked about the cost of extending this position to full-time.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that since we already have the materials for Latin III there would not be an increase on any extra expenses, other than an increase in the teacher's salary.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the extra cost would probably be \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Vice Chairman Powell asked Business Administrator Shevenell how comfortable he felt that the cost would be fully covered by the savings in attrition.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that Linda Hastings is working on a schedule that shows there is currently about \$80,000 in personnel savings, and that amount will probably increase.

Chairman Ortega stated that this item would be put on the consent agenda for the next meeting.

9. Schedule Summer Board Meeting Dates

Superintendent Chiafery presented the proposed dates of the summer board meetings. They will be on July 16, 2012 and August 13, 2012. The board members agreed with the proposed dates of the summer board meetings.

10. Representation on the Town Master Plan Committee

Chairman Ortega gave an explanation of the Town Master Plan Committee. A little over a year ago, the Town Master Plan Committee was chartered by the Planning Board to complete a master plan for Merrimack. It will be completed by the end of this year. The Master Plan is reviewed every ten years. Jody Vaillancourt, the past chair of the school board, and Tracy Bull, citizen representative, have been on this committee since its inception, and would like to continue representing the school board. He added that the Master Plan Committee expects continued involvement by all the people presently on the committee.

Chairman Ortega looked to the board for their nomination of Jody Vaillancourt and Tracy Bull to represent the board on the Town Master Planning Committee.

Board Member Markwell stated that he thought it should be a current board member who is on the committee.

Vice Chairman Powell asked about the make up of the committee.

Tracy Bull explained that there are more than thirty representatives on the committee.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there was a “member at large” constituent on the committee and if so, is it a fixed number.

Ms. Bull explained that reviewing the master plan and rewriting it must be done every 10 years. There is really broad representation on the committee. The committee is led by representatives from a contracted firm, BHB, who conducts the meetings and break down the plan chapter by chapter. There is open dialogue on each issue. She added that both she and Ms. Vaillancourt co-shared the representation of the school board.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there was a possibility of keeping Ms. Vaillancourt as an “at large” member of the committee. He agreed that there should be “official representation” from the school board. He suggested that Chairman Ortega reach out and have a discussion with the head of the Town Master Plan Committee.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would contact the head of the committee. He added that a great working model has been established in terms membership on the Town Master Plan Committee, especially in the continuity of members. This is what he thought the committee was looking for.

Ms. Bull stated that both she and Ms. Vaillancourt understand that they represent the board on the committee and that reports will continue to be presented to the board about what is happening at the committee meetings.

Board Member Barnes stated that there were some difficulties with continuity when she replaced a former school board member on the Field Needs Committee. She therefore would be in favor of nominating Tracy Bull and Jody Vaillancourt to the Town Master Plan Committee.

Ms. Bull agreed that there would be much “catch-up work” for a new person on the committee. She explained that the project was divided into three phases, two of which have already been completed. She added that this is not a standing committee and will end when the task is complete.

Board Member Schneider stated that if Ms. Vaillancourt and Ms. Bull continue to represent the board at the meetings, the board needs to formalize a regular report on the agenda when the board meets so that questions can be asked and input can be made. He added that he understands that Ms. Vaillancourt and Ms. Bull would represent the best interests of the board, but it would be better to have a board member there to hear all the requests.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would reach out to the chair of the Town Master Plan Committee and ask about the constitution and how the continuity can continue.

Board Member Schneider stated that if the right things are not done by this committee, they would not come up again for another ten years, making the risks potentially higher. He added that the board has to walk into this with their eyes open.

Chairman Ortega stated that the committee's next meeting would be June 12th and the board's meeting is on June 4th, at which time the representation to the Town Master Plan Committee would be put on the agenda to be voted upon.

11. Other

a. Correspondence

The board received an e-mail from a parent regarding the release of the junior class on the day of the prom.

The board received an anonymous e-mail from a parent regarding personnel at the high school.

b. Comments

Student Representative Yates announced the results of 2012 National Science Olympiad Tournament held at the University Central of Florida on May 19, 2012 where the top 61 teams in the Nation competed. The Merrimack team came in 31st overall. Highlights of Merrimack's placements include:

- Chem Lab: placed 19th; last year placed 30th
- Experimental Design: placed 4th; last year placed 19th
- Gravity Vehicles: placed 25th; last year placed 46th
- Write It/Do It: placed 26th; last year placed 40th
- Glider: out of approximately 50 teams, placed 10th
- New categories for Merrimack include:
 - Fermi: placed 18th
 - Forestry: placed 13th
 - Rocks and Minerals: placed 29th
 - Thermodynamics: placed 25th

Student Representative Yates announced upcoming events at the high school:

- May 23rd – Night at the Improv
- May 24th – Spring Concert

Superintendent Chiafery announced the date of the emergency evacuation drill was changed to Thursday, May 24th at around 9:15 a.m.

Chairman Ortega spoke about the list of committee assignments for the school board. He explained that members got at least five of their requests. He reported of the 29 requests received, 25 were satisfied.

12. New Business

Board Member Markwell stated that in March the reduction in force issue was discussed, noting that at some point academic performance would be looked at. He added that he would like to know where the discussion stands and if it could be put back on the agenda of future meetings.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it is a process and not something that will be done at the board's table. She stated that Vice Chairman Powell will serve on the Teacher Performance and Evaluation Committee and he will, along with the administration, keep the board apprised.

13. Committee Reports

Board Member Barnes attended the Program and Evaluation Review Committee (PERC) meeting on May 17th. The Latin curriculum was discussed. The PERC committee also met on May 8th, to discuss the Life Sciences curriculum.

Board Member Markwell attended the Professional Development Committee meeting on May 10th. Along with the usual items addressed, the keynote was a celebration for Helen Fitzgerald and her work on the Master Plan.

14. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive, announced that the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Task Force would hold its next meeting on May 29th. A representative from the NH Department of Transportation will be making a presentation at the meeting.

15. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:25 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Powell) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a), (b), (c) and adjourn the public meeting.

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

At 10:20 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.