

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room  
December 17, 2012  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Powell, Board Members Barnes, Markwell and Schneider, Superintendent Chiafery, Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative Crowley. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Chairman Ortega were excused from the meeting.

**1. Call To Order**

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

After Vice Chairman Powell led the Pledge of Allegiance, he requested a moment of silence in memory of the children and teachers in Newtown, CT.

**2. Approval of December 3, 2012 Minutes**

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2012 meeting.

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 10, section 7, first paragraph, change “regular” to “rigorous”.
- Page 7 of 10, paragraph 3, remove the extra “E” in Emergency
- Page 8 of 10, paragraph 4 from the bottom, change “general board agenda items” to “budget wrap-up”
- Page 9 of 10, paragraph 3, change “cafeteria” to “gym”.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 10, section 4, correct the spelling of Barnes and Noble.
- Page 3 of 10, paragraph 2, should be AP Psychology
- Page 3 of 10, paragraph 3, capitalize the word Chemistry (2 times)
- Page 3 of 10, paragraph 5, first sentence should read, “Board Member Barnes stated that there is a broad spectrum of AP success stories ranging from Arts to Science-based disciplines at the collegiate level at Merrimack High School.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 8 of 10, paragraph 4 should read, “Board Member Schneider stated that the Budget Committee is going to request as many members as possible attend the meeting”.

Vice Chairman Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 10, paragraph 4, change “sure up” to “shored up”

The motion passed 4-0-0

**3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

Superintendent Chiafery presented the following nomination for approval:

- Sara Lukkarinen, Grade 1 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

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

The motion passed 4-0-0.

#### **5. Use of Merrimack High School as Sole Polling Site for the General Election 2012**

Town Moderator Lynn Christensen spoke about the high school being the sole polling site for the general election in November. She began by stating the school personnel were very much appreciated for their assistance on Election Day. She stated that it was very organized once the people entered the school, other than having problems with the floor mats remaining stable. However, there was an issue with traffic into and out of the parking lots. There was also an issue with the handicap parking signage that was not visible to many of those who needed it. She thanked the board for allowing the high school to be used as the sole polling place for the November election.

Board Member Barnes commented that the next election is a State election and there probably would not be as much traffic as the scheduled November election. She agreed that there was a problem with the floor mat in the gym. She added that the traffic on Baboosic Lake Road was horrendous. She saw people turning their cars around rather than waiting in traffic, although she was not sure they were all people going to vote.

Board Member Schneider asked if extending the hours of voting would make for an easier flow in the school as well as taking the pressure off the voters to rush before the polls closed.

Ms. Christensen stated that there did not seem to be a problem with the hours, but she will be looked into it. She explained that very few people came to vote after the polls were scheduled to close at 7:00 p.m.

#### **6. Request for School District Development and Implementation of Social Media Policy**

Jody Vaillancourt explained that by coming before the board she hoped that they would talk to the administration and begin the development of a social media policy and its implementation. She was bringing this information to the board as a parent of a student who has been corresponding through Facebook with either the athletic and/or co-curricular departments. Highlights of her presentation were:

- 1) Safety of our students:
  - a. One of the biggest factors in keeping children safe is privacy.
  - b. Facebook is not encouraged, recommended or supported by the administration
  - c. The Booster Club has a "Friends of ..." on Facebook.
  - d. There are laws that need to be followed by the district regarding social media. They are Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Neighborhood Internet Protection Act.
  - e. We already have some policies in place.
  - f. There needs to be training and awareness of the policies.
  - g. There are other media, other than social media, that do not require the disclosure of personal information in order to participate.

- 2) Liability
  - a. Coaches and advisors should be made aware that they are assuming personal liability as well as the liability of the school district by creating facebook pages and “friending” minors.
- 3) When a school district employee uses social media, they are endorsing a particular for-profit business, such as Facebook. They should not be endorsing a social network, email provider or Internet provider.
- 4) The District needs to be sensitive to those students who do not have computers at home and therefore cannot communicate with others after school hours.

Ms. Vaillancourt stated that she was not aware of other districts that have social media policies. She recommended to Superintendent Chiafery to research if there were other districts with a social media policy, what process they used in setting their policy and if legal counsel was involved.

Board Member Markwell stated that he had a concern over mixing a student’s school life with his/her private life. Messages on social media usually occur after school hours. He stated that he would like to know the legality of a policy dealing with social media.

Board Member Barnes spoke about teachers “friending” students. The communication pages referred to by Ms. Vaillancourt are tethered to Merrimack school sports and extra curricular events. She agreed that there is still a lot to talk about regarding this issue.

Board Member Schneider agreed that such a policy is important, but solely the board cannot make a policy on its own. He suggested using some of the memberships such as the New Hampshire School Board Association and SERESC (Southeastern Regional Education Service Center), to leverage their legal expertise and some of the research other people have done to produce a good policy.

Ms. Vaillancourt stated that she was sure Superintendent Chiafery would seek out all avenues for information. As far as “friending” students, she stated that convenience does not necessarily make it the right thing to do. She added that the district has made great gains, and does not want to jeopardize those gains by using social media just because it’s convenient. She added that she would be willing to come before the board again regarding the issue of social media.

## **7. Formal Hearing on the Food Service Budget for 2013-2014**

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that the Food Service budget is designed to be a special revenue fund that is tax neutral. Anything that is in reserve is used to better the program.

David Dziki, Food Service Manager explained that the budget reflects the cost of operating the Food Service program for the six schools in the district. He went on to explain that the significant factors that went into determining the budget were revised nutrition standards (increased usage of whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables) and the purchase of new equipment (steam tables for Reeds Ferry and Thorntons Ferry).

Board Member Schneider asked about the vehicle repair line in the budget.

Mr. Dziki responded that the transmission failed in the department van. It now has a three-year warranty and should be fine for the time being, until such time that a new van has to be purchased.

Board Member Schneider asked what process is used to purchase a new vehicle.

Mr. Dziki replied that the funds for purchasing a new van would be done through the Food Service Budget surplus.

Board Member Barnes asked if there is any equipment that needs to be replaced.

Mr. Dziki replied that right now there is no equipment that needs to be replaced.

Board Member Barnes asked that if there is a surplus, could it cover any expenses needed for the Food Service Department without funding from the operating budget.

Mr. Dziki responded that the surplus would cover the expenses without the money coming from the operating budget.

Board Member Barnes asked how the new food regulations have impacted the Food Service budget.

Mr. Dziki replied that the new regulations address fresh fruits and vegetables, which are more expensive than canned fruit and vegetables.

Board Member Barnes asked, with the cost of the meals increasing, if the surplus would be affected.

Mr. Dziki responded that right now it is pretty close and will probably balance off.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that the equipment repair line in the budget had jumped quite a bit. He asked if there are anticipated problems.

Mr. Dziki responded that some of the equipment has needed repair. The middle school equipment is now past its warranty and may require repairs sometime in the future.

Mr. Dziki provided answers to the following four questions submitted by Budget Committee Member Lisa Mooney.

Question: Why are expenses budgeted to almost double this year and next?

Answer: The middle school equipment is now past its warranty and may require repairs sometime in the future.

Question: Is the reimbursement rate for food service travel at .55/mile? If so, this figure represents about 20 miles per day. Can you elaborate on the travel required on a daily or weekly basis?

Answer: The travel reimbursement is for food service employees that have to use their own vehicles to travel between schools, drive to the bank to make a daily deposit and attend meetings or conferences related to the food service department. Individuals are required to complete a mileage expense form for reimbursement.

Question: How will the recent reprieve from the USDA with regard to meat and grain quantities in school lunches affect the proposed budget?

Answer: The reprieve will not have an impact on the proposed budget.

Question: Are steam tables a new concept at the elementary schools or are they in use today with this budget requesting the purchase of additional tables?

Answer: The steam tables will be new to the elementary schools. The elementary schools are currently using warming ovens. The steam table will keep the temperature of the food consistent.

Board Member Markwell asked if children would be served from the steam tables or would they have to serve themselves.

Mr. Dziki replied that the lunchroom staff would serve the children.

#### **8. Review of Major Items in the Maintenance Budget for 2013-2014 and Special Services Building Needs and Costs**

Building Administrator Shevenell explained that there are four major items in the maintenance budget that need to be addressed. They are the roofs at the high school, the asbestos removal, the Special Services Building, and the secure entrance into the upper elementary school.

## Special Services Budget

Business Administrator Shevenell gave an update on the repairs to the “blue” building. He referred to a handout from Mr. Touseau, which showed the renovations that need attention. The total to make all the repairs and renovations would be \$177,400. However, there are certain items that are essential to make the building livable. Such as the asbestos removal, repairs to the bulkhead and the ramp, the foundation drain and the perimeter drain. The cost of these items would be \$56,700.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the blue building would be ready for occupancy in January.

Mr. Touseau stated that the goal is to have the building inhabitable by the beginning of the year.

Vice Chairman Powell asked for confirmation from the board that the starred items would not be expended from the maintenance budget.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied that the funds would come from the Emergency Repair Reserve Fund. He added that Superintendent Chiafery had previously asked that this fund be replenished by an additional \$50,000.

Vice Chairman Powell asked for clarification that the starred items on Mr. Touseau’s list are not being done by the time Special Services returns to the building, but can wait until June.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that Special Services would be in the blue building for at least another year, even if the warrant article were to pass. As such, he recommended that the drainage issue be taken care of.

Board Member Schneider stated that he thought the plan was not to put more money into the blue building other than what has already been expended. He asked that if the warrant article passes will the starred items on the list still be needed.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she had stated previously that she was requesting that the Emergency Repair Fund be increased by \$50,000 to cover unbudgeted repairs.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that if the drainage becomes a severe problem with a significant amount of water at all times, causing an unhealthy environment, the repairs would have to be done.

Board Member Schneider stated that it sounds like even if the warrant article for the joint building passes and a problem arises with the air quality, for example, repairs would be funded through the Emergency Repair Reserve Fund. He added that the key is that the board has to make a decision. If the warrant article does not pass, there are things to do to make the building more functional for the long term.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that the Emergency Repair Fund would be used as needed.

Board Member Markwell stated that he hoped that more money would not be put into the building.

Board Member Barnes asked if only the top floor was being used by Special Services and the boiler needed to be replaced, for example, could it be replaced with something more cost-effective.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied that he and Mr. Touseau would look at other options that would act as a temporary solution. He added that the figures presented were not put out to bid, but were estimates.

Board Member Schneider asked if the heat in the downstairs of the blue building could be turned down so that the heat consumption would be lower than previously and thus less expensive.

Mr. Touseau responded that the heat could certainly be turned down in the basement area.

### Maintenance Budget

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that there are three major items to look at in the Maintenance Budget. They are roofs, asbestos removal and office upgrades. He added that there might be items that can be deferred until next year in order to reduce the burden of the budget for next year.

Mr. Touseau stated that currently 50% of the roofs in the district are out of warranty. The roofs with the greatest needs have been repaired. Some patching has been done. He added that the high school roof is at a “need” stage but is not critical. It can be deferred to next year.

Business Administrator Shevenell spoke about the asbestos removal. The goal is to have the district asbestos-free by the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Touseau responded that a commitment has been made to remove all the asbestos. If there are other needs, this could be deferred until next year, keeping in mind the 2018-2019 deadline date to have all the asbestos in the district removed.

Business Administrator Shevenell spoke about the secured entrance project at the upper elementary school. He stated that it was an essential piece that needed to remain in the budget.

Board Member Schneider stated that there is a roof repair budget every year in Capital Improvement Plan. He asked that if the roofing project were to be deferred this year, would all the roof repairs costs be moved out one extra year. He added that it seemed like there is a little flexibility, but warned that in the future there could be problem.

Mr. Touseau stated that everything could be moved out one year without causing problems.

Board Member Schneider asked if there are areas, presently, that are at risk from the asbestos.

Mr. Touseau replied that if there were problem areas the asbestos would be removed. But that does not have to be done this year. He added that there are no “hot spots”.

Board Member Barnes asked if there is a “fix” to prevent the roof at the high school from leaking. She added that if the roofing project is put off for a year, there could be a rippling effect on other Capital Improvement Plan projects.

Mr. Touseau answered that the roofing project would be managed so that there would be no leaks.

Board Member Barnes stated that she is on board with the asbestos removal. She added that Mr. Touseau was on top of things with his plan for all asbestos to be removed by 2018-19. She also added that a secured entrance at the upper elementary school is of high importance.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there were any other questions regarding the maintenance budget for Mr. Touseau.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that Mr. Touseau did not come prepared to answer all the items on the maintenance budget to be addressed. He will return to the board on January 19<sup>th</sup>, at which time the entire maintenance budget will be addressed.

## **9. Planning Board Votes on Proposed School District Capital Improvement Projects**

Business Administrator Shevenell and Superintendent Chiafery attended the Town Planning Board on December 4<sup>th</sup> to present the Capital Improvement Projects for the district. The Board had determined categories for the projects. The categories were:

1. Urgent: Project cannot be delayed and/or is needed immediately for health and safety reasons.
2. Necessary: Project is needed to maintain basic level and/or quality of community services.
3. Desirable: Project is needed to improve the quality and/or level of community services.
4. Deferrable: Project can be placed “on hold” until after the six-year Capital Improvement Plan period, but generally supports community development goals.
5. Exploratory: Project needs more research, planning and/or coordination.
6. Inconsistent: Project is contrary to land use planning or community development goals.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the Capital Improvement Plan projects were presented to and approved by the school board. As a result, all priorities were set as “Necessary”. The Town Planning Board made two changes. The paving project was changed to “Desirable” and the Consolidation of the Special Services/SAU Offices was changed to “Urgent”.

Board Member Schneider asked that when the projects were classified, were the classifications for the present year or the year they show up in the six-year Capital Improvement Plan. In other words, he asked if the project classification change as the project is pushed out into the future.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that there was no definitive answer and stated that he would send a note to Tim Thompson, the Community Development Director regarding Board Member Schneider’s question.

## **10. First Reading of Revised Policy on Wellness**

Superintendent Chiafery stated that while putting together the District Wellness Advisory Committee, she realized that probably some of the most significant people on the committee would be educators from each of the six schools. She stated that it would behoove the board to include one person from each school. Therefore in paragraph two of the policy, “an educator from each school” had been added to the policy. She added that the process would be to have a second reading on January 7<sup>th</sup> followed by approval of the policy at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> board meeting.

## **11. Dissemination of Proposed New Hampshire School Board (NHSBA) Resolutions**

Vice Chairman Powell reported that the New Hampshire School Boards Association Delegate Assembly would take place on Saturday, January 12, 2013. Board Member Barnes will represent the Merrimack School Board. He asked the board to review the resolutions. At the January 7, 2013 meeting the Board



will determine its position on each resolution which will suggest how Board Member Barnes should vote at the Delegate Assembly.

## **12. Other**

### **a. Correspondence**

Board Member Barnes received correspondence regarding after-hour access to schools that have secured entrances and offer after-school programs.

Vice Chairman Powell received a phone call from a parent who raised concern over the unsecured entrance at the upper elementary school. He explained that the project is in the school budget for next year.

### **b. Comments**

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she sent out a letter to parents/guardians on Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, which described the events of the day given the tragedy in Newtown, CT. She met with the district and school administration and five members of the police department. They looked at the protocols in place for safety and security. They talked in terms of having more police presence at the beginning and end of the school day during the week. They talked about ongoing drills. The Crisis Team had been gathered to talk to students if they had questions.

Board Member Schneider asked if the administration had heard from any concerned parents.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that two people had conferred with the principal at one school, but the administration did not receive any calls. She added that she has been in touch with the press.

## **13. New Business**

Vice Chairman Powell reported that Chairman Ortega had asked that at the next meeting the board be presented with a list of prioritized cuts to bring in a level funded budget. Vice Chairman Powell then asked for a consensus of the board as to how they would like the administration to prioritize the proposed cuts.

Board Member Barnes stated that knowing there was about \$738,000 that came down from Concord as a downshift of cost to the local level; theoretically, there should be \$738,000 fewer expenses in Concord. She would like to take the number from last year, plus the \$738,000. She added that any reduction in force should be done mindful of the student-teacher ratio. If teacher cuts are being proposed, she would like some subsequent content on supply and demand.

Board Member Schneider stated that he agreed with Board Member Barnes, but was hesitant to request additional instructional teaching cuts because of the ratios.

Board Member Barnes suggested that if board members have any ideas where cuts would be appropriate they should be shared individually with the Superintendent. Superintendent Chiafery could then share with the board the impact of the cuts.

## **14. Committee Reports**

Board Member Schneider attended the Professional Development Committee on December 13<sup>th</sup>. They discussed January 17<sup>th</sup> Professional Development Day. Teachers submitted ideas for the teacher workshops. It was reported that a grant was received for consulting on Apple-based products for the Special Services Department. They also discussed special project ideas for the schools.

Board Member Barnes attended the PERC (Program Evaluation and Review Committee) meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Four courses were approved for their content. Accounting II is being offered at Southern New Hampshire University (for a minimal cost of \$100) and three foreign language curriculum expansions were approved at the high school. They are Latin III, Mandarin III and Arabic III. She noted that Merrimack High School is the only school in New Hampshire that offers Arabic.

Board Member Markwell attended the Planning and Building Committee on November 26<sup>th</sup>. The bulk of the meeting was spent on discussing how to educate the voters in Merrimack on the reasons the SAU/Special Services Building is needed. The committee will be putting forward an infomercial. They also talked about a space utilization survey, which is being put together.

Board Member Markwell also attended the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee meeting. They talked about the Health Assessment survey and the Slice of Life program.

Vice Chairman Powell attended the Teacher Evaluation Committee meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>. He reported that there was a full contingent of committee members at the meeting and that every member is very dedicated to the work on the committee. They delved into some research regarding other evaluations and set some very aggressive goals. He stated that the progress of this committee would be updated monthly on the district website.

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

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive spoke about the Social Media Policy. She stated that she sat on that committee about ten years ago, and as far as she knew, the policy has not been reviewed since then. She suggested the board look at that policy and guidelines when they develop a new policy.

## **16. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:36 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a), (b), (c).

The motion passed 4-0-0 on a roll call vote.

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