

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
January 16, 2013
Merrimack High School – Cafeteria**

PUBLIC SESSION BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES

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

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Ortega led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Revisit Merrimack High School Budget

Principal Johnson, Assistant Principal Zampieri and Assistant Principal Bergeron returned with additional information that was requested by the Board during the January 14, 2013 budget meeting.

Assistant Principal Bergeron explained that many co-curricular teams draw from the co-curricular transportation account such as U.S. FIRST, DECA, Quiz Bowl, Students Against Destructive Decisions, Theater, Interact, and Random Acts of Kindness. He stressed there are more teams that draw upon the co-curricular transportation account than those referenced.

Assistant Principal Bergeron added that many of the co-curricular teams fundraise to supplement the budgeted amount.

Board Member Barnes thanked the high school administrators for responding to the Board's request for additional information. She will look forward to similar information to help the Board make decisions in the future.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin acknowledged the concerns expressed by parents and students and Board members regarding the reduction of one French teaching position at the high school from the 2013-2014 budget. Based on concerns and the need to be fiscally responsible and the desire to meet the needs of the students he recommended the reinstatement of a half-time (.5) French teaching position at the Merrimack High School in the 2013-2014 budget.

On behalf of the high school administration, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the Board with complex details and historical data to support a plan to add a half time (.5) French teaching position into the 2013-2014 budget.

Board Member Barnes expressed her concern that the World Language department head would be overextended in the role of department head if that person was required to teach a class(es). She noted that a half-time (.5) French teaching position is a compromise to the situation. Her preference would be to reinstate one full-time French teaching position.

Board Member Schneider asked for the monetary comparison of a full-time French teaching position compared to a half-time (.5) French teaching position.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that the cost for a full-time teaching position would be approximately \$70,014 inclusive of benefits compared to approximately \$31,274 for a half-time (.5) teaching position inclusive of FICA and performance pay.

Chairman Ortega thanked the administration for the additional information.

5. Proposed Modifications to the 2013-2014 Budget

Chairman Ortega explained that the Board spent the month of December and half of January listening to budget presentations from the various schools and departments. It is now time for the Board to propose its modifications, if any, to the 2013-2014 budget.

Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to reduce the health insurance account (100-2900-00-8211-00) by \$284,560 and reduce dental insurance account (100-2900-00-8212-00) by \$70,386.

Chairman Ortega added that the amount of money in his motion was the amount of the contribution holiday that is due to the district in August 2013 from the Local Government Center.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Powell) to reduce the school psychologist and contracted psychological services accounts by \$218,267 and increase the contracted psychological services account (100-2140-41-8331-10) by \$100,000.

Chairman Ortega explained that the two school psychologists would become contracted services rather than employees which will save the district money.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to reduce the district maintenance repairs account (100-4600-62-8451-08) by \$385,920.

Chairman Ortega recognized it is a difficult budget year. The Capital Improvement Plan has many roof projects throughout future years and that we shouldn't defer this project. He would prefer to replace a larger section of the high school roof.

Board Member Schneider would prefer to replace a smaller portion of the roof in 2013-2014. He stated that he would not support the motion for that reason.

Board Member Barnes and Vice Chairman Powell both stated that they preferred not to spend any money on the high school roof in 2013-2014. They both referenced Maintenance Director Touseau's opinion that he felt the high school roof could be deferred one year.

The motion failed 1-4-0 with Board Members Schneider, Barnes, Markwell, and Vice Chairman Powell in opposition.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to reduce the 2013-2014 budget by \$1,024,300 (the entire amount of the high school roof repairs).

Board Member Markwell stated that he would support the motion because of Maintenance Director Touseau's recommendation that the high school roof repairs could be deferred and the fact that major Capital Improvement Plan projects will be completed in 2018.

Board Member Barnes would like the Board to make it a priority to review the Capital Improvement Plan after the budget process. She stated that the Board asked the Superintendent to do the impossible which was to deliver a level funded budget. The motion is the only way to put forward a level funded budget.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would vote in opposition to the motion. He would rather make some progress on the Capital Improvement Plan than no progress.

The motion passed 4-1-0 with Chairman Ortega in opposition.

Board Member Markwell asked if the Board would be voting on the reinstatement of a half-time (.5) French teaching position at Merrimack High School this evening.

Chairman Ortega stated that it was his objective to move as much of the budget forward as possible this evening knowing that final action can occur on January 22nd.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Powell) to add \$70,014.47 to the high school world language account (100-1106-06-8112-31).

Board Member Barnes stated that she felt the reason the one French teaching position was removed from the high school budget was to meet the Board's request for a level funded budget. She felt the World Language department could utilize a full-time position.

Vice Chairman Powell expressed his desire to vote on the French teaching position motion at the January 22nd meeting.

Board Member Barnes withdrew her motion. Vice Chairman Powell withdrew his second to the motion.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to add \$56,700 to the upkeep of building and repairs account (100-4600-62-8451-08).

Board Member Schneider stated that his reason for adding \$56,700 to the budget was to make sure funds were available to make further repairs to the special services building in the event the warrant article for the construction of a combined special services and SAU offices building did not pass.

Board Member Barnes expressed her support for the motion.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that there are a few Capital Reserve Funds with balances that have passed their usefulness that total approximately \$67,000. He suggested a warrant article to dissolve those Capital Reserve Funds and place \$67,000 in the general fund. A different warrant article could then stipulate that \$67,000 be placed in the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund.

Board Member Barnes appreciated the intent of Business Administrator Shevenell's suggestion. She did not want the repairs to the special services building to be dependent on a warrant article. The repairs need to be done for liability purposes.

Vice Chairman Powell expressed his desire for a warrant that is easy for the voters to follow.

Superintendent Chiafery asked the Board to think about dissolving the unused Capital Reserve Funds and place them in the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund. Voters can relate to emergency fund items.

Business Administrator Shevenell added if the balances of the unused Capital Reserve Funds were placed in the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund the School Board would have direct control over the money.

Board Member Schneider would prefer to put the \$67,000 into the operating budget but doesn't want the money to be combined with other projects that are not emergency related.

Chairman Ortega will support the motion. He fully supports the construction of a combined special services and SAU office building. However, he also feels it is prudent to plan to make special services building habitable and safe if the warrant article does not pass. He agrees that the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund balance also needs to be increased.

The motion passed 3-2-0 with Board Member Markwell and Vice Chairman Powell in opposition.

Vice Chairman Powell asked for clarification on the duties of a half-time Language Arts Coordinator position and a half-time Math Coordinator position at the middle school.

Superintendent Chiafery replied the half-time positions are part of a team and responsible for doing teacher evaluations.

Chairman Ortega stated that the French teaching position motion from this meeting would be addressed on January 22nd, other motions would be entertained as well and the budget would be moved as a whole.

6. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Jody Vaillancourt, 35 Greenleaf Street, thanked the board for requesting data from the high school pertaining to the co-curricular activities and French teaching position. The request for additional information supports the District's Logic Model and data driven decision making. She was appreciative of the compromise to reinstate a half time (.5) French teaching position. She stated that the world language department was different from other departments because not all world language teachers are able to cover all world language classes. She expressed her lack of confidence based on the fact that the inaccurate information was presented to the Board. She hopes there is better due diligence in future.

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 8:59 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.