

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
June 3, 2013
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 Crowley.

1. Call To Order

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

A very moving moment of silence was led by Student Representative Crowley in memory of her classmate, Arthur "Artie" Dias.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of May 20, 2013 Minutes

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2013 meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 12, Section 3, correct Mr. Swonger's address to Klara Drive.
- Page 2 of 12, the last paragraph, add "The motion passed 5-0-0".
- Page 3 of 12, paragraph 3, should be "...Mrs. Nawrocki was named" (remove 's).
- Page 3 of 12, paragraph 4 change MI-TI-NA to MI-TE-NA.
- Page 6 of 12, paragraph 2, insert commas after Villani and after WestEd.
- Page 6 of 12, paragraph 3, add an "s" to "hour".
- Page 6 of 12, paragraph 4, second sentence, add a comma after "task".
- Page 6 of 12, paragraph 4, add a comma after "During discussions".
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 7, second sentence, change "a specific" to "as specific".
- Page 12 of 12, under Committee Reports, paragraph 5, second sentence should read, "The committee dissolved all subcommittees..."

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 10 of 12, paragraph 5, at the end of the first sentence, add, "should we buy them outright".
- Page 10 of 12, paragraph 5, insert a second sentence to read, "The lease over 4 years would end up costing \$325 for each radio."
- Page 11 of 12, under Comments, the sentence should read, "In response to Mr. Swonger's comments during Public Participation, Mr. Schneider stated that the board made a decision not to do the roofing."

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 12, under Consent Agenda, paragraph after section C), the paragraph should read, "Chairman Ortega stated that the board would agree to a formal vote on the 21 gun salute when a written request is received from the Rotary, which has not yet been received."

- Page 5 of 12, paragraph 5 from the bottom, should be “to own their education”.
- Page 9 of 12, paragraph 7, third sentence change “strong” to “strongly”.
- Page 10 of 12, second sentence add an “s” to the word “teacher”
- Page 11 of 12, paragraph 1, last sentence, remove the word “is” after “process”.
- Page 12 of 12, check and insert the time the meeting ended.

The motion to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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

Business Administrator Shevenell presented the following gift/grant:

- LGC Health Trust LLC for \$250 to support wellness activities for district employees via the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to accept the gift of \$250 from LCG Health Trust.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

Teacher Nominations:

- Jennifer Bergeron, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Nicole Funicella, Grade 5 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Kimberly Hatfield, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Jacquelyn McMahan, Nurse, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Carol Lewis, Education Technology Integrator, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

6. James Mastricola Elementary School: Partnership with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)

Principal Emilie Carter introduced Jay Grattan, Assistant Principal at Mastricola Elementary School (JMES), Cathy Stavenger, Assistant Professor at SNHU and Whitney Freeman, former student teacher at JMES. Maryanne Sabat was not able to attend the meeting.

Principal Carter spoke about the partnership JMES has with SNHU. Highlights included:

- JMES continues to focus on the students and their progression in learning each and every day.

- The program focuses on aspiring educators and encourages professional staff to learn and grow.
- The district partnership with SNHU began in the fall of 2011. It has been centered at the Mastricola complex due to its central location and access to grade levels through grade 6.
- The partnership with SNHU was developed by Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Mrs. McGill, Principal of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School (JMUES), Mr. Fabrizio, former principal of JMES, and Mrs. Carter, former assistant principal of JMES.
- The course, the Inclusive Classroom, consists of SNHU students majoring in education in their junior and senior years. This course is held at the JMUES campus.
- There were approximately 16 juniors and seniors enrolled in this class during the fall and spring semesters.
- Each student who took the class spent one hour in the classrooms at JMES as part of their field experience.
- Students were able to sit in on Professional Learning Team meetings at both schools to observe how the teams of educators discuss student data and growth and their plans for instruction.

Cathy Stavenger, instructor for the course, spoke about her experiences during the program. Highlights included:

- The program gave students the opportunity to put into practice what they were learning in the classroom.
- She had the opportunity to work with some of the 6th grade teachers in a math enrichment program, while SNHU students were in the classrooms.
- This program is partnership at its finest, with the students and teachers learning from each other.

Jay Gratton spoke about the student teaching experience. Highlights included:

- The student teaching process is beneficial to the teachers as well as the SNHU students, as both parties are able to gain new knowledge from each other.
- In the 2012-13 school year, the Mastricola complex placed 4 SNHU student teachers.
- Two students completed their practicum; one in a 5th grade classroom at JMUES and one in 2nd grade at JMES during their first semester at SNHU. During this current semester, one student was placed in 5th grade at JMUES and one student in 3rd grade at JMES.

Whitney Freeman spoke about her student teaching experience at JMES. Highlights included:

- Maryanne Sabat, special education teacher at JMES and Melissa Adams, second grade teacher at JMES were her cooperating teachers.
- Prior to her student teaching, Ms. Freeman had taken part in the Inclusive Classroom course and knew she wanted to do her student teaching in Merrimack.
- She participated in Math Night when parents and students worked together to gain an appreciation of math through games.
- She helped Ms. Adams set up her classroom prior to school opening, recognizing the classroom setting establishes the tone for the whole year.
- Her dual certification in General Education and Special Education allowed her to explore and extend her knowledge of the integration of all students with different learning styles.
- Collaboration between Ms. Sabat, Ms. Adams and Ms. Bess Arnold, SNHU advisor, was consistent.
- She attended Professional Learning Team meetings where she was encouraged to give her input.
- She participated in 2nd grade progress meetings and attended workshops on Common Core Standards.
- She assisted in writing IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and sat in on meetings and parent/teacher conferences.

- Overall, Ms. Freeman's time at Mastricola was more than she could have asked for. From the moment she walked through the door, she felt part of the team.

Ms. Stavenger stated that students who participated in the Inclusive Classroom course wanted to come back to Mastricola for their student teaching practicum and hopefully be hired in the future.

Mr. Gratton spoke about the current cohort of 31 teachers who are working towards their Master's degree at SNHU.

- To date, the teachers have completed courses in Ethics and School Law and Educational Factors of Diversity.
- The current course is Learning Through Technology.
- Cohort members are planning on taking two classes over the summer towards the completion of their degree.

Board Member Barnes asked how far along the teachers are in their graduate studies and if they are all on the same track.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied that they are all on the same track and they are due to complete their studies next summer.

Board Member Barnes asked if the cohort is focused on dual certification in General and Special Education.

Ms. Carter responded that the cohort's focus is on curriculum and instruction.

Chairman Ortega stated that he found the presentation fascinating, noting that this is a partnership at its finest which includes all aspects of education. He thanked the participants for their testimony.

7. Reeds Ferry Elementary School: Highlights on Technology and School Climate

Kimberly Yarlott, Principal of Reeds Ferry Elementary School, explained that the presentations would focus on two segments of the Logic Model: Technology Integration and School Climate. She proudly announced that Reeds Ferry has been given the NH HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) Award.

Principal Yarlott introduced Assistant Principal Nick Coler. He stated that he wanted to recognize the Wellness Committee for their contributions to a positive climate and culture and for their hard work that contributed to Reeds Ferry receiving the HEAL award.

Assistant Principal Coler introduced the presenters: Kathy Hoppa, School Counselor, Karen Astell, Behavior Specialist and Anthony Monty, 4th grade student at Reeds Ferry.

Ms. Hoppa and Ms. Astell explained that they would be highlighting some of the programs that add to a positive school climate. The video spotlighted some of the Reeds Ferry activities that have been a regular part of the ongoing positive school climate, including the Reeds Ferry Safety Patrol, Morning Meetings, the Caring Tree, Zero the Hero, Debugging, Mrs. Hoppa's Lunch Break and Town Meetings. Anthony Monty was the student who provided the tour on the video.

Chairman Ortega commended Anthony on the excellent video and thanked the presenters for their participation.

Assistant Principal Coler introduced Debra McLaughlin, retiring Library Media Specialist, and Carol Lewis, Education Technology Integrator. Their presentation gave an insight into how technology is being integrated into instruction on a daily basis.

Ms. McLaughlin stated that the presentation would showcase the wonderful activities that they have worked on in collaboration with all classroom teachers in different areas of curriculum.

Ms. Lewis explained that the video would show the mimio teaching presentation systems, including the use of Ipads and Nooks used in some student projects. Highlights of the projects the students presented included:

- Grade 1: The use of KidPix software
- Grade 2: The use of PowerPoint software
- Grade 3: The use of Comic Life software
- Grade 4: The use of Graphic Organizers and advanced Power Point software
- Quick Response Codes allowed students to scan bar codes on projects developed by them using computers, Ipads and Nooks to retrieve their video presentations describing the projects.

Chairman Ortega thanked everyone for their presentations.

8. Representation on the Town Center Committee

Chairman Ortega stated that for some time the district has had the benefit of Tracy Bull representing the school board on various committees and that she has served the district extremely well. However, Ms. Bull will no longer be able to serve in that capacity. She will continue her work on the Safe Routes to School for the time being.

Chairman Ortega referenced the description of the responsibilities for members of the Town Center Committee. He asked Board Members to read the material and contact him before June 10th if anyone was interested in serving. He added that if none of the board members were interested in serving on the committee, he would take Ms. Bull's place.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Ortega thanked Ms. Bull for her hard work and dedication.

9. Other

a) Correspondence:

Chairman Ortega reported that the Board has received a number of emails from an individual regarding Common Core Standards.

b) Comments:

There were no comments.

10. New Business

There was no new business.

11. Committee Reports

Tracy Bull stated that she will continue to serve through the early fall on the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Task Force. The committee met on May 28th. Updates were provided to all members, all prior minutes were formally approved, and the committee began planning ahead for working meetings in July and August.

Ms. Bull reported that the National Bike to School Day on May 8th was successful, with approximately two dozen students and four parents participating. They met at O'Gara Drive and were escorted by Merrimack Police Officers Kelleher and Murray. The route extended up towards Merrimack High School, then down McElwain St. and Bishop Street and into the parking lot between JMES and JMUES. Preparatory support was provided by a local Girl Scout Troop including advertising posters and clean up in the bike rack areas.

Highlights of Ms. Bull's presentation on the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan included:

- Since receiving final notice to proceed, the contract has been signed by the school district and the NRPC to conduct travel plan project work in the amount of \$13,200 via the reimbursement grant.
- Since coming before the board to request surveys, Matt Waitkins and Ms. Bull have taken the board's comments under advisement and made adjustments to the survey pieces and prepared the mapping exercise. They have also met with Principals McGill and Carter.
- They have met with the parent/teacher organizations at both JMES and JMUES to inform and invite participation in the project.
- Notices were sent home the prior week regarding the parent survey piece, primarily being done online (Survey Monkey). Additional notification via the parent/teacher groups and on school homepages will be done. Paper surveys are also available.
- The online survey final date is June 7th.
- Student surveys will be conducted in classrooms the week of June 3, 2013. A printed survey will take place in grades 2-6, mapping in grades 4-6, with some modified participation in Grade 3. Data will be collected the following week and compiling of the data will begin.

Student Representative Crowley reported that Student Council officers were elected. She will continue as Student Representative to the School Board. She added that there were 13 days until graduation and 18 days until the end of school.

Chairman Ortega stated that the Board was pleased that Ms. Crowley would continue as its Student Representative.

Board Member Barnes attended the Parent/Teacher group meeting on May 28th. Highlights of the meeting included:

- Discussion of the Food Service Program and an upgraded online payment plan. The new plan will begin in September in all schools.
- Parents had positive comments about the new transportation providers.
- There was discussion on how to get parents involved, especially in fundraising. They also discussed sending out a survey to find out why some parents are not getting involved.

Vice Chairman Powell attended the Souhegan River Walk sub-committee of the Town Center Committee. The river walk will take place on Friday, June 7th, which will provide people with an idea of what the piece of property is that they have been talking about and for him to see the entire walk from end to end.

Vice Chairman Powell also attended the Teacher Evaluation Committee meetings over the past couple of weeks. The next meetings are scheduled for July 1st and 8th and they will be full day meetings, as well as a meeting in August. He thanked the educators, administrators and parents for taking time from their summer vacations to attend the meetings.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive, took the opportunity to announce that the Merrimack High School Jazz Band would be performing Wednesday, June 5th at 6:30 p.m., kicking off the summer concert series at Abbie Griffin Park.

13. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 8:50 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.