

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
June 17, 2013
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

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 the June 3, 2013 Minutes

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2013 meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 7, section 6, first paragraph, correct the spelling of Principal Carter's first name to Emilie.
- Page 2 of 7, section 6, last bullet on page should be Mrs. McGill.
- Page 4 of 7, 2nd paragraph from the bottom, correct the spelling of Assistant Principal Coler's name.
- Page 5 of 7, last paragraph, first sentence should be National Bike to School Day.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 7, first paragraph, first bullet should be, The use of Kidpix
- Page 5 of 7, first paragraph, second bullet correct to PowerPoint

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 7, under Consent Agenda, add that "The motion passed 5-0-0."
- Page 6 of 7, 2nd bullet, remove the 's from Ms. Bull's name.

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

3. Public Participation:

There was no Public Participation.

4. Consent Agenda:

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

- a.) Teacher Nominations and Administrator Nomination
 - Kathleen Barfield, Special Education Teacher at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
 - Tracy Rizano, Speech Teacher at James Mastricola Elementary School
 - Allison Rhodes, Part-Time World Language Teacher at Merrimack High School
 - Nicole Roland, Family and Consumer Science Teacher at Merrimack High School

- Julie DeLuca, Assistant Principal at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

b.) Teacher Resignation:

- Amy Gillam, Computer Technology Educator at James Masticola Elementary School.

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Pay for Performance Report for 2013

JoAnnWegman, chair introduced members of the committee who were present: Kristine Thibault, Reeds Ferry School and Bill Sawyer, James Masticola Upper Elementary School. She also named four new members on the committee for 2012-2013: Kristine Thibault, Collette St. Germain, Thorntons Ferry, Linda Garces, Merrimack Middle School and Emilie Carter, Administration.

- The committee met ten times during the 2012-13 school year. It met in October and December to review proposals and revisions. In early May, the committee began reviewing portfolios.
- In the fall, 261 proposals were submitted to the committee. Of those, 222 were accepted and 39 were sent back for revision. All of the revised portfolios were approved.
- In May, the committee received and evaluated 226 portfolios. All were approved. Of the 226 PFP projects approved, 11 were awarded \$500 for between 20 and 39 hours of work. The other 215 were awarded \$1,000 for 40 hours or more of work.
- The total number of hours spent by the staff on district enriching PFP projects was over 12,000 hours.
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Chairman Ortega asked Ms. Wegman how many years she had been a member of the committee. Ms.Wegman responded that she had been a member of the committee for five years, as had committee member Bill Sawyer.

Chairman Ortega stated that the projects were very comprehensive. He highlighted the work done by the committee to review all portfolios. He added that the Pay for Performance (PFP) program as it relates to the most recent teachers' contract had been greatly modified. PFP as we know it will cease to exist. He thanked Ms. Wegman and the committee members for their time and effort.

6. Focus on Merrimack High School: Year in Review

Principal Ken Johnson introduced staff members in attendance at the meeting. They were Assistant Principal Peter Bergeron, Assistant Principal Rich Zampieri and Technology Coordinator Mark Merrifield.

Principal Johnson gave a PowerPoint presentation about Merrimack High School for 2012-2013. Highlights included:

The Mission Statement of the High School is based on the motto: Believe, Go Forward and Inspire: **Believe:** Stress creative thinkers, competition and the global society; **Go Forward:** Academic expectations; **Inspire:** Civic and social expectations, specifically the global environment.

Mission Statement: *Merrimack High School provides each student with rigorous educational experiences that develop intellectual potential.*

- The drop-out rate continues to decline to an all-time low of 0.4% as compared to 4.6% when Principal Johnson assumed his position at the high school.
- An Advanced Placement Award was given to Merrimack High School. The school was named to the 3rd annual honor roll. More and more students take AP courses and the students are scoring 3 or higher on the AP course exam.
- NH Scholars Program: 132 seniors were awarded the NH Scholar Distinction Award in 2013. Currently 480 students are in the pipeline to be NH Scholars. More students are taking additional math, science and world language courses.
- Running Start gives juniors and seniors the chance to earn college credit while attending high school. This year 21 students were involved in the program.
- Emily Franklin, an MHS student was one of 8300 National Merit Scholarship recipients in the country.
- Merrimack High School students received 18 of 23 gold medals in the Science Olympiad.
- The Environmental Team took 5th place in competition.
- DECA: 29 students competed which was the largest number of participants. Students won 20 medals and 10 plaques and were awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships.
- Two students in English classes had their work published.
- National History Day participants took first and second place in state competition.

Mission Statement: *Merrimack High School provides each student with rigorous educational experiences that develop physical and emotional well-being.*

- Challenge Day: Be the Change: Notice, Choose and Act. This very successful program was the focus of a brief video.
- Athletics: The Student Athlete of the Month Award was started by the new Athletic Director, Eric Sabean.

Mission Statement: *Merrimack High School provides each student with rigorous educational experiences that develop social stewardship.*

- A Student Congress was created to bring leaders of all grade levels together. Participants included members of the Student Council, class officers, homeroom representatives, extra-curricular club presidents and captains of the sports teams.
- Activities included Running Water-Healing for Haiti (a 5K run), Poetry Week, a college essay contest, Hurricane Sandy collection drive, successful theater programs and many more.
- The Merrimack High School Web site provides information to students about available activities.

Mission Statement: *Students graduating from Merrimack High School will be competent, insightful and creative thinkers able to compete in a diverse global society.*

- Events included the International Festival, trips to Quebec, Morocco, and China. Forty-six students participated in the Tour of Italy.
- Students won awards in the Art Bonanza. They made stained glass windows, designed postcards for the troops and painted various murals.
- Students in the music program participated in Concert Band, Chamber Choir, Jazz Band, Marching Band and the All-State Band and Chorus.

Mission Statement: *Through Naviance, the new college and career software program, students are now capable of sending electronic transcripts and letters of recommendation to colleges.*

- Guidance counselors can use Naviance software to track the success of students over the years.

Principal Johnson also noted library activities that included the Poetry Café and participation in National History Day. He stated that six teachers were retiring who had served the Merrimack School system for a total of 164 years. He spoke about graduation, its theme “Living the Dream” and completed his presentation by showing a video about Class Color Days.

Board Member Markwell thanked Principal Johnson for the presentation and stated that he thought the drop-out rate decrease was great news.

Board Member Barnes asked if there was a difference between the drop-out rate and the graduation rate. Principal Johnson responded that 3.1% of students did not graduate. He stated that the formula for determining the graduation rate had changed. This year students who completed their GEDs are not considered drop-outs where they were in the past.

Board Member Barnes asked why 28 students in the Running Start program who would be receiving college credits from actual colleges chose that program as opposed to the Honors program.

Principal Johnson responded that some students opted for Running Start and some kids went into the Honors courses or took AP classes. The decision was the students’ choice.

Board Member Barnes asked if the subject matter is different in the Running Start program as compared to AP courses.

Principal Johnson stated that both programs are rigorous. The Running Start courses are offered by SNHU and Rivier.

Board Member Barnes stated that she would like to have more data in the future to see what the trends are, what the course work is and what is driving students in certain directions.

Principal Johnson responded that the administrators try to provide students with what they want.

Board Member Barnes asked if 37.7% of our students are in the NH Scholars Program, what does that do academically for them when we talk about their future outside Merrimack High School.

Principal Johnson responded that students take more science, math and world language courses. There is the opportunity for students to get a monetary award of \$500 if they choose to go to a New Hampshire college.

Board Member Barnes asked how students are tracked via Naviance once they leave the school system.

Principal Johnson replied that while the students are deciding on colleges they take a personality test which aligns them with colleges they may never have thought of before. That software allows tracking as to what schools they went to, how long they stayed, and what degree the students received when they graduated.

Board Member Barnes asked if there is a game plan to ensure that consistently performing co-curricular teams, such as the Science Olympiad, have sufficient funding.

Principal Johnson replied that over the last two years the administration has supported increasing the funding in the transportation account by \$5,000-\$7,500 to send students to competitions. He added that he hopes there will be even more money available, but said that they do not want to leave other co-curricular teams out of the mix so they try and parcel out funds as best they can.

Vice Chairman Powell asked why fewer students are in the Running Start program and if there was a GPA benefit to taking AP/Honors classes.

Principal Johnson responded that there are weighted grades. He stated that students would have to be surveyed to find out why they chose the different programs. He added that all three are wonderful opportunities.

Assistant Principal Zampieri stated that in the business department there are two different programs: Accounting and Sports Management and Entertainment. Students get college credit from SNHU if they complete these programs. He added that thirteen students took part in these programs in 2013.

Board Member Schneider asked if there were statistics as to how many students from the graduating class went to 2-year schools, 4-year schools and what paths they took after school.

Principal Johnson replied that he doesn't have all that information, but he said traditionally those who go on to post-secondary education is between 86% and 87%. That has been the number for the past 15 years. Approximately 4% would go into the military and 6% go directly into the workforce. The overwhelming amount of the 86% go to 4-year colleges. He added that the numbers have been pretty consistent over the years and that Merrimack is a community that supports education.

Chairman Ortega spoke about how Challenge Day speaks to the culture and environment of the school. He added that it made an impact on so many people in a six-hour period and that it was a life changing experience. He encouraged other members of the board to attend the program if they are invited in the future.

Principal Johnson stated that any member of the board or administration is welcome to attend future Challenge Days.

7. Update on Consolidation of Special Services/SAU Offices

Chairman Ortega introduced Rich Hendricks, Chairman of the School District Planning and Building Committee to discuss the special warrant article regarding the consolidation of the SAU/SPED buildings that failed in the April vote.

Mr. Hendricks stated that the article received a majority of the votes, but since it was a bond issue it did not receive the required 60%. He felt this was the first opportunity to discuss that outcome and any new information that may be available.

Mr. Hendricks stated that there were three things he wanted to discuss: the voting recap, conditions of the existing buildings and where we go from here.

Speaking about the voting, Mr. Hendricks stated that it was very disappointing to read some of the comments people had made about the April vote. He explained that there were numerous meetings held prior to the election when the consolidation of the buildings was discussed. There were school board meetings, budget committee meetings, bond hearings and the deliberative session, as well as newspaper articles. These were all opportunities for people to ask questions, but no one from the public attended any of these meetings. He also wanted to publicly state that he had difficulty finding the article on the ballot. It seems that he was not the only one for it was determined that approximately 100 people did not vote on that specific article.

Mr. Hendricks went on to say that two realtors were contacted to do a market analysis to determine the value of the properties in question. One realtor stated that it was highly unlikely that any value exists from the sale of these two structures based upon the condition of both buildings and that there are significant expenditures that would be required to fit them up for sale. Both the location and condition would restrict the marketability.

Mr. Hendricks continued, saying that the buildings are currently zoned as residential. The probability of the Planning Board to have them rezoned for commercial use is zero.

Mr. Hendricks added that he didn't want the public to think that the buildings were in poor condition due to a lack of attention by the school district's maintenance department. He stressed that these structures were built as residences. They were built to accommodate 4-6 people in a house, not to accommodate 12-14 people in commercial offices for the last 40 years.

Mr. Hendricks went over some of the issues with the two existing buildings:

- The heating systems are old.
- They have concrete block foundations as opposed to poured foundations, which result in cracks, joint leaking and water penetration.
- There is water seeping into the SPED building so that the basement level can no longer be used.
- There are no sprinklers in either building.
- There appears to be asbestos in the lower level of the SPED building.
- Both roof structures have little pitch which require rolled roofing compared to asphalt shingles. The administration building has a 15 year old roof.
- The SPED building exterior is in poor shape which leads to rot and deterioration in areas.
- The SPED building has a handicap entrance that it is in disrepair.

Mr. Hendricks pointed out that former reports focused on the inside of the buildings, i.e. the lack of space, logistics, confidentiality, lack of meeting rooms, etc. However, now he feels it is time to look at the overall structures and share this information with the public. The physical limitations have to be addressed.

Mr. Hendricks reported that one committee member asked both the police and fire departments if they would be interested in using the two buildings for training purposes (controlled burns, drug raids, etc.) They both agreed that they could use the buildings for training.

Mr. Hendricks addressed the question, "Where do we go from here?" He stated that the best building has to be put up. Saving a few square feet here and there will help, but overall it is still the best long term cost solution. He asked the board if the question would be put on the next ballot in 2014. Chairman Ortega thanked Mr. Hendricks for his report and for advocating for the warrant article.

Board Member Barnes stated that the one thing that was not addressed was speculation, because they went with the facts. The understanding was not there. She added that she had read several conversations on Facebook discussing the warrant article.

Mr. Hendricks stated that he did want to thank the people, no matter how they voted, for getting out to vote.

Board Member Schneider stated that there needs to be a more concerted effort to educate the people and get more votes. He stated that we need clarity and consistency, and with 51% of the vote, he felt that we are well on our way. He added that we have nine months to convince the public that a commercial building, not a house that the district got for free and has used for 40 years, is what is needed. He said that he is afraid that if another year goes by, the conditions of the buildings will further deteriorate, and since we have the money in the budget from the roofing projects, these needed repairs can be done. He stated that we need function, stability and the ability to move forward. He would like to plan for the new building, but also to take a step back and decide if it makes sense to do anything to the existing buildings with approximately \$450,000 that is available.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that in the process of discussion, a trust has evolved between the board and the public concerning what is done with the taxpayers' dollars. She said the board was very clear in its intent to consider the \$300,000 for a possible roof, and the board was going to have approximately \$56,000 for repairs that could be utilized if the SPED building needed to be tended to.

Superintendent Chiafery also stated that she was concerned about taking those allotted funds and using them for other purposes. The public could say that the board was not specific about what they were going to use the funds for. Trust would be very hard to recoup.

Superintendent Chiafery added that she had learned from a Planning Board member that it might be beneficial to develop a visual presentation about the consolidation of the offices for the Planning Board in the fall which would play continually on the town's cable station. That effort would help get more coverage about the project.

Board Member Schneider stated that he did not disagree with what Superintendent Chiafery said about the money, but people will ask, since we have the money available in the budget, why that money wasn't used. He added that there are many options on the table that the public can know about before it goes on the ballot next year. The more openly the options are discussed, the more it will benefit the outcome.

Vice Chairman Powell complimented the Planning and Building Committee on all the work it has done in such a short amount of time. He stated that one of the key components was looking at present usage of the buildings and how it can be improved. Utilizing money earmarked for the roof will take away the board's credibility. If the money is not going to be used for the roof, it needs to be returned to the taxpayers.

Vice Chairman Powell continued to state that the board has responsibility to provide a safe working environment for everyone and that is not currently being done. He added that the people who take interest in the district are the people who have children in the school system. He stated that the entire community needed to be educated in all the details because keeping up the school department affects the whole community.

Mr. Hendricks responded that what he needs is some idea of where to go. He stated that a video of the buildings would be done and that he would try to run it on both Merrimack television stations. He added that a presentation was made to senior citizens but it appeared that they had little interest in the project.

Board Member Markwell stated that he wanted to remind people that the plans went from a wood frame building to a concrete building, which saved approximately \$400,000.00 from the original plan. The Planning and Building Committee had hoped that modification would improve the odds of getting the new building completed. He stressed the new building would not be a house, but would be an office building.

Board Member Markwell expressed his disappointment with only 2,300 people showing up to vote, when there are approximately 15,000 actual voters in Merrimack. He noted that the resulting vote was not really a consensus of the Merrimack population. He added that it is sad that people don't seem to care about what goes on in the town, but they are the first to complain about their tax bill.

Board Member Schneider asked if it would make sense to have a booth at the 4th of July celebration and offer tours of the blue building basement so people could be made aware of the need to build another building.

Chairman Ortega stated he spoke to several people at the polls and after the vote. Not one person said there is no need for a new building. One person said the board should finish paying off other projects in the district before starting another project. Other people said that the price tag just seemed too high, but they did agree with the need. He added that the need is the same as it was when the question was put on the ballot in April. This is a long process and there is more that needs to be done. He expects to see it on the ballot at the next election.

Board Member Markwell asked Chairman Ortega if the price were lessened to below one million dollars if he thought the vote would have been different.

Chairman Ortega responded that he really didn't know, but there is a definite need for the building and the price seems too high to some of the people who voted against it.

Board Member Markwell stated that perhaps the goal should be to look at lowering the price, if possible.

Mr. Hendricks responded that it was something to look at. There are compromises that can be made but the committee has been working on the project for two years. He felt that everyone needed to get away from the house concept, since it will be a commercial building. He assured everyone that if cuts needed to be made, they would be made.

Chairman Ortega stated that his remarks were based on a number of data points made after the election by voters. He asked if anything could be done to tighten things up and how, specifically, to make people aware of the importance that it is a commercial building.

Business Administrator Shevenell asked if the board would continue to have meetings in the Town Hall meeting room.

Chairman Ortega answered that the board had not spoken about the issue.

Board Member Markwell stated that the consolidated building would have a conference room for school board meetings and for special education conferences.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the administration could use a conference room for leadership meetings, but thought that maybe the square footage could be modified. He suggested that the board look at the project in a different light without sacrificing quality. He added that he would be willing to meet with Mr. Hendricks to discuss different possibilities.

Chairman Ortega stated that the Town Hall meeting room is good for the board sessions. It accommodates the public, has good lighting and temperature control and allows for the meetings to be broadcasted live. However, for non-public sessions there is no ideal space in the building so the board needs to go elsewhere.

Vice Chairman Powell agreed that the Town Hall meeting room was an excellent space for public forums so perhaps the meeting room for non-public meetings could be smaller than originally planned.

Business Administrator Shevenell suggested that the Town Manager be contacted to see about having a more appropriate space for non-public sessions in the Town Hall building.

Based on the discussion, Chairman Ortega proposed that the board consider a new charge for the Planning and Building Committee at a future meeting. It will be an item on July's meeting agenda.

8. Fourth Review of New/Revised Policy and Policy to be Eliminated

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that over the course of time, he and Nancy Rose have tried to take the board's comments, concerns and suggestions and implement them as best they can. They have tried to provide the board with a policy that provides the use of tools that didn't exist before and to find a way to use the tools in a responsible manner. The policy will be used as a teaching tool to help educators understand what responsible use is to create an environment where they are mindful of the imprint that they leave on the world every time they press "send" or "engage".

Vice Chairman Powell asked why parts of line 146 in the policy were taken out (*i.e. Web 2.0 tools, blogs, Google docs and apps, MS 365, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube etc.*).

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that he had touched base with Board Member Barnes who stated that those apps do not fall into Social Media and therefore requested that they be removed.

Chairman Ortega asked Board Member Barnes about Google Plus which is a social networking application.

Board Member Barnes responded that Google Apps is a document management tool. Social Media has to be defined as an open audience of casual conversation for the sake of this policy.

Board Member Barnes stated that she is opposed to line 161 in the document which reads, "*Employees who use social media for purely personal purposes must create a separate account if connecting with students for school related purposes*". She stated that the district needs to be the administrator of technology. Our teachers are encouraged to use district communication devices such as PowerSchool and the email system. But any third party application out of the district's control needs to have the district as the administrator. The district should have overriding control and total versioning control if

there is a compromise in the security of those sites. Board Member Barnes stated that she would like Social Media to be its own separate entity. The district needs to own it, control it and manage it.

Chairman Ortega asked if Board Member Barnes was saying that she disagreed with all of page 4 of the policy.

Board Member Barnes stated that, in her personal opinion, she wanted social media broken out into its own policy and to have the district monitor it accordingly.

Chairman Ortega asked if there would be no Facebook or Tumbler or Drupel.

Board Member Barnes stated that she did not think that Facebook is right for the district. She added that we need to own it, control it, manage it and be responsible for it.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that line 163 of the policy should be highlighted, as it is new to the policy based on Board Member Barnes' request. He added that it is about capacity. Part of the spirit of the policy is responsible use.

Board Member Schneider stated that if each educator sets up a private media page, they must use "best practices". He is a firm advocate that social media needs to play a role for us to exist in the world. He questioned if our capacity is where we need to be in the 21st century. He added that he would rather the policy involve administration that includes overseeing social media such as Facebook. To do this right, people have to be comfortable. He added that as far as the policy is concerned, the line is blurred. He stated that he would change line 161 to read, "Create a separate account *administrated by the district* if connecting with students for school-related purposes."

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he does not think separate guidelines for social media are needed. The policy seems to be fairly clear cut. He added that he liked the "musts". As far as line 161, he stated that he does not understand why it is included in the policy at all.

Board Member Barnes stated that as a teacher in the district, an educator should want to have a separate identity for personal information and posts.

Vice Chairman Powell asked why even allow contact with students on social media for school-related services. That is what the district email is for. He felt that it is not appropriate. Other than that, he had no problems with the policy revisions. He suggested the board move forward with the policy.

Board Member Schneider said that if, for example, there is a school-sponsored event, there should be a way for it to be publicized and administered on behalf of the teacher/school.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he didn't see why the school has to get into the business of advertising on social media.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied that if an employee of the district has a Facebook account and they opt to use that for school use because that is the only way to reach a student, the employee has to make sure the communication is "clean". He stated that he knows the policy is not perfect.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he was having a problem with not being able to reach a student other than via social media. If that is the case, then social media needs to be used. The student has to be reached.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that the policy does not list things that shouldn't be done. It is more that if you are going to do these things, this is how you have to proceed. He realized that this is not air-tight, but it is trying to do two things: be forward thinking with the tools that are available and try to provide some sort of explanation to employees about what they ought to do when they use these devices. He added that we cannot stop people from using social media, but the policy is saying to stop and think before using it.

Board Member Schneider referenced the Guidelines for Staff Web Sites and Online Digital Content. He stated that it specific to providing online contact through School World. He felt it was a good concept and would like to see one for social media for the district.

Chairman Ortega responded that he thought a template had been used to put the guidelines together. Other than the introduction, it seemed to be pretty generic.

Board Member Schneider stated that he would like to see a more thorough checklist.

Board Member Markwell stated that the guidelines were a great tool. He added that the board cannot police every minute of every day in every person's life. He agreed that the district has great staff with ethics and they will do the right thing. He noted that there will be issues and some revisions will be needed. He thought that this was a good policy for now.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would like to get a sense of where the board was on the policy. It is the 4th reading of the policy. Typically three reviews are done. Other than one board member, he hadn't heard any revisions or changes.

Board Member Schneider stated that there needed to be some checks and balances as well as knowing the cost involved. He added that he thought Nancy Rose should be involved regarding some of the issues and the checks and balances.

Chairman Ortega asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin if someone were to use social media as a non-district resource, would the person need prior approval by the administration.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said that he would add the words "to be approved by the administration" to line 161.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he didn't want the assumption to be made that if we give this tool to our educators, they are going to abuse it. Our teachers have ethics and hopefully we don't have to assume the worst. He added that this policy is a good start.

Board Member Barnes stated that she was not comfortable. If the administrator gives permission, the users need to provide user names and passwords to the administrator. She added that she thought the board should evaluate how important it is to use social media. She added that the policy is not perfect, or even close, but it is something.

Board Member Schneider did not see any "best practices" mentioned as part of the policy. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that they were trying to draw a distinction between policy and procedures, or best practices.

Chairman Ortega stated that a lot of suggestions and revisions have been discussed. He would like to see those changes made and have a fifth reading of the policy at the July 15th board meeting. He mentioned how proud he was of the board and their serious deliberations. He stated that the board needed to find the right balance of risks and benefits.

9. Request to Hire At Will:

Superintendent Chiafery requested that the school board grant administrators authority to offer conditional contracts to candidates to fill professional staff openings. This act will preclude talented individuals from choosing a position in another district.

Superintendent Chiafery added that this act assists the administrative team in the hiring process when there is only one board meeting in July and August.

Vice Chairman Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to grant Superintendent Chiafery's request to hire at will.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. Merrimack School District's Preparations for Common Core Standards: Literacy

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin appeared before the board to talk about how Merrimack has been preparing for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Literacy. These standards have a subtitle, College and Career Readiness, and are designed to support students to enter college or enter the workforce.

There are currently 45 states, plus the District of Columbia that have adopted CCSS as well as Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, US Virgin Islands and Northern Mariana Islands. They have been endorsed by a number of entities including The American Council of Education, the College Board, National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Coalition for a College and Career Ready America (CCRA), Council of Administrators of Special Education, National School Board of Education, and the United States Army.

This year, much time has been spent reminding teachers about some critical points that are germane to CCSS when it comes to literacy. Highlights of Dr. McLaughlin's presentation included:

- Demonstrate: Information related to increased expectations of students in which they must:
- Demonstrate independent thought and use of skills.
- Build strong content knowledge.
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose and discipline.
- Comprehend as well as critique.
- Value evidence.
- Use technology and digital media strategically and capably.
- Understand other perspectives and cultures.

August 28, 2012 Professional Development Day

- The Professional Development theme of the year was Gaining Familiarity with the Common Core State Standards K-12
 - What they are, what they mean and how they relate to current practices

The Elementary Schools prepare for the Common Core:

Writing Curriculum Development

- Rationale: Data analysis of writing prompts and NEAP writing scores indicate a clear need to develop a comprehensive writing curriculum for the Merrimack School District by the end of June, 2014
- Implementation: Administrators, Language Arts Coordinators and teachers will create two writing units for teachers to use during Quarters 1 and 2 of the 2013-14 school year. Using Lucy Calkins' grade-specific units of study as a foundation, grade level teachers will develop the big ideas based on CCSS, unit goals, mini-lessons and assessment tools.
- April 9, 2013 Professional Development Day Gap Analysis
 - The process: Conducted a gap analysis between the district's 20 Essential Standards (CAP, NECAP and CCSS)
 - The goal: To determine what specific CCSS are revealed as requiring more work or training for implementation
 - Conduct gap analysis-Record information for each standard on appropriate forms
 - Report out – what specific standards are revealed as requiring more work or training for implementation
 - CCSS and Implications for instruction
 - Using the ten Anchor Standards for information text and ten for Literature, work together to determine what we are teaching and where there are gaps in training, resources and strategies.

The Middle School Prepares for Common Core.

- The Middle School Prepares for the Common Core – Summer 2012
 - How to best communicate specific performance expectations to students
 - How to best plan lessons so students learn and practice the skills required of them
 - How to best assess student learning in advance, during and at the conclusion of the unit
 - How to best use data from the assessments to guide instruction
- April 9, 2013 Professional Development Day
 - Evaluated curriculum, assessment and instructional practices through independence, content knowledge and purpose

The High School Prepares for the Common Core.

- The yearlong focus
 - Learn the process for creating competencies that both align to the Common Core and meet the needs of students.
 - Build benchmarks and competencies and scaffold them into a scope and sequence.
 - Work in content teams and by program.
 - Develop a work plan that allows teachers to fully implement competency-based learning and assessment.

- Reading to Learn (RtL)
 - Focused on any content teacher who uses complex texts in their classroom
 - A process of developing an objective-driven lesson with a complex text
 - Modeling and Demonstrating RtL in action
 - Modeling and Demonstrating RtL in action-workshops on RtL focusing on analyzing sample lessons, and lesson planning using RtL
 - Guide Practice: Multiple workshops of guided facilitation with teachers from specific departments or interdisciplinary teams. In this workshop, teachers would use an objective-driven lesson planning template to develop lessons using the RtL framework. The intent of these workshops would be to build capacity for teachers to facilitate the co-construction of objective-driven lessons with colleagues without guidance

- April 9, 2013 Professional Development Day
 - Defined literacy – more than simply English Language Arts (ELA)
 - Reviewed the CCSS as well as the Next Generation Sciences standards and CCSS Math Standards to show how they all emphasize literacy
 - Shared released items from math and ELA to point out the sophisticated reading, writing and language use involved
 - Described an instructional cross-content practice approach around text-based material

Towards the Future

- 2013-2014: Pivoting to the instructional implications of Common Core
- August Academy Professional Development Series

Chairman Ortega asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin about the implementation schedule of CCSS.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that this is an evolution. The implementation schedule is that everything will stay the same this year. The following year is when we will morph into Smarter Balanced. The first assessment will take place between late March and mid-April of 2015.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if individual districts within the state have a choice as to whether or not they have to adopt this.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that they do not have a choice.

Board Member Barnes asked where all of New Hampshire fits into the implementation.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that every CCSS state is about at the same level. He added that there was no opting out of the 2014-2015 cycle.

Board Member Barnes asked if students in New Hampshire will be compared to students in other states using CCSS.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that all states will be using the same assessment measures. However, there will be many variants. The same tools will be used to measure these variants, but the conclusions will vary.

Board Member Schneider asked if at the budget sessions in the fall will feature an explanation of any financial needs. He added that as he recalled there are significant costs to implement CCSS.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that if there are added costs, they will be highlighted. JMUES piloted Smarter Balanced in the fall and learned that the testing session is much longer. Calculations have to be made based on the district's capacity. He added that early findings show there will not be a major overhaul in infrastructure.

Board Member Schneider asked if any major changes to the curriculum would be identified in the budget.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that he does not see a major change forthcoming in the budget.

11. Other

a.) Correspondence:

Board Member Markwell received an e-mail and telephone call regarding questions about timely communications regarding athletics as well as fees being charged.

b.) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery announced that she attended the June 8th "Edie" awards ceremony and that Merrimack had won three awards: Primary Special Education Teacher of the Year, Assistant Principal of the Year and The HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Award for Reeds Ferry Elementary School.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she is responsible for reviewing every flyer or poster that comes into the district. She received a copy of a flyer from the Baptist Church promoting Vacation Bible School. The flyer created controversy for some parents. She stated that she had spoken to legal counsel before approving the flyer and thought that the Distribution and Dissemination Policy might need to be modified in the future.

Vice Chairman Powell complimented the seniors on their fantastic graduation. He noted that the speeches were exceptionally good.

Chairman Ortega announced that he would be replacing Tracy Bull as the School Board representative on the Town Center Committee.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

13. Committee Reports

Tracy Bull reported on the Town Center Committee meeting held on June 3rd.

- The Souhegan River Walk trails area grounds walk slated for June 7th was delayed due to rain and will soon be rescheduled.

- There was a previous walk by Town Center Committee (Souhegan River Walk Subcommittee) members Debra Huffman, Andy Powell, Pat McGrath and NPS (National Parks Service) liaison Lelia Mellen.
- A letter will be drafted to NH DOT from Town Manager Cabanel and the Conservation Commission Chair regarding interest in potentially purchasing the DOT parcel of land adjacent to the Turnpike.
- In regards to trails project development, Chairman Flood put forward the names of two landscape architecture firms who have provided competent, affordable services for other town parks/recreation projects. Lelia Mellen will forward the information to the Granite State Landscape Architects Association.
- Committee member McGrath continues his draft work on the Merrill's Marauders Bridge sign and will be seeking input from the Merrill's Marauders Association shortly.
- Committee Member Disco continues his work on the proposed Church Street closure. A letter to the abutters has gone before the Town Council and is ready for distribution. Mr. Disco has also met with the Board of the John O'Leary Senior Center who approve the closure. Conceptual drawings of a resulting turnaround have also been developed.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 1st.

Board Member Schneider reported that he attended the Merrimack Safeguard meeting on June 6th. Websites and communications were discussed as well as the prescription drop off program which continues to be very active. There was also discussion about the July 4th celebration.

Board Member Markwell reported that he attended the Health Cost Containment meeting on June 5th. He reported that the new cost savings program allows members the ability to select their hospital of choice at no extra cost to the district. He added that new members will join the committee next year. Board Member Markwell stated that there was not a Planning and Building Committee in June because it was cancelled due to the lack of a forum.

14. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Tracy Bull stated that in the original draft version of the Town Master Plan, the condition of the SAU/SPED buildings is listed as being in fair condition. In the final draft of the plan, the buildings are listed as being in poor condition.

15. Manifest

At 11:00 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.