

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
September 16, 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 7:35 p.m.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of the September 3, 2013 Minutes

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

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 12, paragraph 6, insert the word “enrollment” before the word “number”.
- Page 5 and 6 of 12, change IDA to IDEA. There are several instances on page 6 where IDA has to be changed to IDEA.
- Page 7 of 12, first paragraph add a second sentence, “The new entrance and the APR give the Merrimack School District the option of locking down the voting area at JMUES.”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 12, paragraph 4 from the bottom, add “and daycare centers in town” to the end of the sentence
- Page 5 of 12, insert a heading to differentiate Mr. Fabrizio’s report from Ms. Demers. It should be “Determination Report”
- Page 6 of 12, first bullet should read, “Are we under identifying or over identifying students with special needs?”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 12, paragraph 2, add the following sentence, “Chairman Ortega noted that the moderator and the district have always worked successfully together and he is confident that they will do so regarding using the school for elections.”
- Page 10 of 12, last paragraph before section 12(Other), first sentence, change Capital Improvement Plan to “Capital Reserve Fund.”
- Page 10 of 12, last paragraph before section 12 (Other), second sentence should read, “Setting up an escrow account is probably not legal.”
- Page 12 of 12, section 16, remove the second paragraph and replace with “At 9:52 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Powell) to adjourn the meeting.
- Page 12 of 12, section 16, last line, delete “on a roll call vote.”

The motion to accept the minutes of the September 3, 2013 as amended passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

Mr. Gary Krupp, 3 Ministerial Drive, provided comments on the Common Core State Standards which is being rolled out this year in Merrimack. He announced that there would be a public forum on this subject on Tuesday, September 17 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Anslems Institute of Politics. He invited the board and the public to attend.

4. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following item for approval:

- Approval of the revised Distribution and Display of Information Policy

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Presentation of the District Elementary Writing Program

Diane Macon of Reeds Ferry Elementary School gave an introduction to the District Writing Program. She explained that in keeping with No Child Left Behind, the major emphasis has been on reading with little emphasis on writing. The Common Core State Standards give equal attention to reading and writing.

The initiative is:

- A continuation of Merrimack's existing initiatives in the field of literacy.
- A renewed call for the integration of reading and writing
- Research based
- Teacher driven and supported
- Aligned to the Common Core State Standards
- Consistent across all K-6 buildings in the district

Nikki Rheault of John Masticola Upper Elementary School, spoke about the program being research-based. The principles are:

- There are fundamental qualities of all good writing and students write well when they learn these qualities as well as the specific qualities of different genres, or types, of writing.
- Using a writing process to teach the complex task of writing increases student achievement.
- Students benefit from teaching that offers different instruction, guided practices and independent practices.
- To write well, writers need ample time to write every day, with clear expectations for stamina and volume.
- Successful writing instruction provides differentiation for students of all ability levels and support for English language learners.
- Writing and reading are joined processes, and students learn best when writing and reading instruction are coordinated.
- Children need clear goals and frequent feedback. They need to hear ways their writing is getting better and to know what their next steps might be.

Michelle Romein of Mastricola Elementary School explained that the program is teacher driven and supported.

- A focus group met at least once a month last year to discuss the initiative.
- This summer two teachers from each grade level from each school came together. Each grade level unpacked two units of study for this year.
- August Academy: The entire teaching staff attended teacher led workshops. There were two groups: grades K-2 and grades 3-6.
- Expectations for 2013-2014: Teachers will be teaching the two units of study they unpacked during the summer. Every student will be working on narrative and informational units. The goal is that two more units will be completed for next year's curriculum.

Sydney Conti of Thorntons Ferry Elementary School spoke about the evidence of how this program is working and showed examples of:

- The Writer's Workshop
- Student chosen topics
- Teachers as writers
- An environment that supports writing
- Anchor Charts
- Mentor texts-integration of reading and writing

Vice Chairman Powell asked how the initiative was received by the teachers at the August Academy.

Ms. Macon stated that she had written received the feedback, but she heard that it was overwhelmingly positive.

Ms. Rheault stated that she did see the results of the feedback from the teachers at the August Academy and it was exceptionally wonderful.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the teachers would, at this point in the initiative, be where they are now if instead of the three days at the August Academy there would have been several smaller teacher workshops during the year.

Ms. Macon replied that all the teachers were grateful to have one and a half days devoted to writing.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the pictures from the "Evidence" slides were from last year.

Ms. Conti replied that all the pictures were from the last few days. She added that teachers love to collaborate across the buildings.

Vice Chairman Powell asked how the initiative fell into the middle school and the high curriculum.

Ms. Rheault replied that the program is actually designed for grades K-8.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin added that the middle school and the high school are working on a parallel project (SCALES). There is a close alignment between the elementary schools and the middle school.

Board Member Schneider asked about the use of technology in this initiative.

Ms. Rheault responded that it is something that is being looked at and considered. She added that the Common Core State Standards address reading and writing standards and the integration of technology. She also stated that the students do read diverse media and publish their work through various media.

Board Member Barnes stated that cross functional lesson plans are always discussed. She asked if this initiative is designed to cover the whole gamut of the educational curriculum.

Ms. Rheault responded that they are integrating all subject matter in reading as well as writing. Informational writing will be a focus, which runs the gamut of all subject matter.

Board Member Schneider asked how the concepts are differentiated.

Ms. Conti replied that the units of study will start as mini lessons and then the students will work on their own, whether it is individual or in groups. The teacher can go around the room and help groups or individuals. Students who need to be enriched will also receive individual or group instruction.

Ms. Rheault added that this is a very structured program that is clear and precise. It gives teachers the opportunity to work with all students.

Chairman Ortega noted that during the Public Participation section of the agenda, it was stated that there is some debate over the Common Core State Standards. He asked if this initiative is radically different because it is a part of the CCSS.

Ms. Rheault responded that they have used Grade Level Expectations and Collaborative Assessment Projects in the past. The Common Core standards are aligned to reading, writing, listening and foundation skills.

Chairman Ortega asked if this initiative is different in instructional programs from what they have done in the past.

Ms. Romein stated that the initiative is about good instruction and is more integrated. There are more resources to look at and utilize. It is still about strong teaching.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughin stated that Common Core causes people to think about how individual teachers and individual schools can be more aligned in their instruction. More than just the literacy teacher is responsible to teach writing. The Common Core is providing the opportunity for district to have good conversations about aligning and integrating the instruction so it is more “common”.

6. Recognition of Educator for Published Article

Chairman Ortega introduced Dr. Garth McKinney, English and Language Arts teacher at Merrimack Middle School and congratulated him on his published article, “Building Common Knowledge” in the JSD, The Learning Forward Journal in August, 2013. This article focused on the Common Core. He also congratulated him on being chosen the Teacher of the Year by the New Hampshire Teachers of English.

Chairman Ortega presented Dr. McKinney with a certificate from the NH Teachers of English.

Dr. McKinney stated that he is proud of what is happening in the middle school, looking at the standards and aligning the standards. He added that the article is about what they have been doing over the last two years.

Vice Chairman Powell commented that the article contained many business-world meaning and terms, which is an integration of real world concepts and the ABC's of learning. He added that the article is very well written and congratulated Dr. McKinney.

Chairman Ortega stated that the article is very well organized. He asked Dr. McKinney how he decided to write the article and how long did it take to write it.

Dr. McKinney stated that he had a story in mind regarding the journey they have traveled over the last couple of years regarding Common Core State Standards. He added that it was an enjoyable experience to write it.

7. After the Bell: Merrimack Middle School After School Program

Debbie Woelflein, Principal of Merrimack Middle School, explained that she had been working with the YMCA to develop a program to meet the needs of students and families looking for supervision and opportunities for positive, engaging, valuable activities in the hours right after school. She is seeking board approval of the pilot program, "After the Bell".

Adam Caragher, Assistant Principal, explained that there are three program goals:

- Create a safe, secure environment for youth and teens to spend their after school hours.
- Help youth and teens develop an interest in science, technology, and the arts through interactive and experiential-based programming.
- Build relationships that foster academic and social achievement.

Josh Schupack, Sports and Teen Director of the YMCA, explained that the intent of the program is to give middle school students options in choosing electives during an after school program. It would be based at the middle school library (the "base") and hours of operation will be 2:15 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. The elective sessions will run until 3:50 p.m. at which time the student would return to the base from their electives for homework help or to interact with other students who remain at the base.

The students can choose to remain at the base to receive homework help.

Mr. Schupack continued his presentation by stating that the students would register through the YMCA. The pilot would run for eight to ten weeks at the middle school, Monday through Thursday. The students would sign up for two electives; one elective on Monday and Wednesday and one elective on Tuesday and Thursday.

Board Member Barnes asked about the late bus. Her concern was that if students take the late bus and do not stay until the end of the day, they may fall behind in the elective. Also, she asked if the student attends only one of the two days of the elective, would they fall behind.

Ms. Woelflein responded that the late bus leaves around 3:40 p.m.

Mr. Schupack added that the electives run for an hour and ten minutes, so that they would have time to work on their electives even if they take the late bus home. Each student will work at their own pace.

They will have their “social” time, for either help with homework or hang out, cut short if they take the late bus. They will not fall behind in either case.

Ms. Woelflein stated that the electives are not traditional electives. These are enrichment classes and the students will not receive any credit for them. She added that they are seeking a pilot program so they can work out some of the issues.

Board Member Barnes asked about the cost estimate.

Vice Principal Caragher stated that the cost of the program is \$15 per week per student and that amount would not change after the pilot program.

Joe Manzoli, Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of Greater Nashua, explained that a cost analysis was done to see how much they would have to charge in order to break even. The pilot would help to determine how many families are interested in the program.

Board Member Barnes asked how much notice the families would get if the program ceases after December.

Mr. Manzoli stated that they will know within the first couple of weeks if the pilot is successful. They will be doing satisfaction surveys so they will officially know by the end of November if this is an acceptable program.

Board Member Barnes asked if there is a limit on the number of students attending the program.

Assistant Principal Caragher replied that the library in the middle school will be the home base. They have not discussed the limit of the number of students, but if there is an increase in the interest, they will look for other space within the school.

Board Member Schneider was concerned that if students do not take the late bus, sometimes they cannot be picked up by the parents until 6:00 p.m. He also asked why the program is not going to be held on Fridays. He asked if they would be expanding the hours to meet the parent’s needs.

Mr. Manzoli stated that is why this is a pilot program to see about these needs. He added that the time and days can be adjusted.

Principal Woelflein emphasized that this is not a day care. It is designed to meet the needs of students in the middle school, which are different needs than students at the elementary level. In some cases if there are sporting events in the late afternoon this program will give the students a safe place to be prior to the games.

Mr. Manzoli added that it is a good mix so parents know their children are in a nurturing and safe environment.

Board Member Schneider asked if people need to be members of the YMCA to be involved in the program.

Mr. Manzoli replied that people do not have to be members of the YMCA to take part in this program.

Board Member Markwell asked about the activities. He also wanted to know where else this program is being done.

Mr. Schupack responded that the activities would include the use of computers for graphic design, the use of computers for all kinds of technology, nature-based programs involving environmental education and the arts which may include drawing and sketching, making a cartoon or comic books or storytelling. These electives would be facilitated by staff members of the YMCA.

Mr. Manzoli stated that they are not doing this program anywhere else, but there are similar programs out there that they can learn from and model after.

Student Representative Crowley stated that she thought this is a great program. She added that it is a good idea to give choices to the students even though they are in a controlled environment. She also stated that she thought it would be a good way to have the high school students volunteer to work with the middle school students.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there were a minimum number of students needed to have the program be successful.

Mr. Schupack replied that they would need to have nine students enrolled in order to break even.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there is any cost to the district.

Mr. Schupack responded that there would be no cost to the district.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the program is open to non-Merrimack residents.

Mr. Manzoli replied that the program is only open for Merrimack Middle School students.

Vice Chairman Powell mentioned that Principal Woelflein authored an article in the JAD journal entitled "Forging a Path to Student Learning". He wanted to congratulate and recognize her for being published.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would put the approval of the YMCA "After the Bell" pilot program on the Consent Agenda for the October 7th board meeting. He added that this pilot shows wonderful collaboration between the community and the district. This insures a safe place for the middle school students to go after school. He also stated that he would be very interested in the feedback received after the pilot program.

8. Souhegan River Walk Easement

Vice Chairman Powell gave an update on the Souhegan River Walk Easement. He had suggested to the committee that they put together a document and give it to the school board to review and then make any necessary changes. What they gave the board was a fill-in-the-blank document. He added that the district's legal team filled in the blanks with terms that would protect the school's interest. That was the document to be presented at this meeting. However, today at the Town Center Committee meeting some concerns were raised. He therefore did not think it was appropriate to present the document to the board and therefore had asked that the presentation be removed from the agenda.

Board Member Schneider asked to include any changes made to the document when it is presented to the board.

Chairman Ortega stated that the points that were raised will change the document but nothing that was raised by the Town Center Committee was difficult or challenging. He commended Vice Chairman Powell, Ms. Huffman and the administration for their expedited work on this.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that if anyone had question or concerns about the document, they should let him know.

9. Presentation of Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-2019

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he, Superintendent Chiafery and Board Member Markwell (who is the board representative on the committee) attended the Planning and Building Committee meeting on September 9, 2013. First on the priority list of the committee was the Natural Gas conversion of the high school, the James Masticola complex and the maintenance building because of the short payback on it and the propensity of the burners to fail in the next couple of years.

Board Member Markwell stated that there was urgency by the Planning and Building Committee to do the conversion to natural gas. They also felt the SPED/SAU consolidation should be moved forward one year. Redoing the track was moved back one year, and it is also important to look into artificial turf for the field when it is scheduled to be done in 2014-2015.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that in addition to the actual project of the consolidation there was talk at length about how the projects would be funded/financed. She asked if they will be bonded or part of the operating budget.

Board Member Markwell responded that the SPED/SAU consolidation will have to be bonded.

Superintendent Chiafery asked if other items, such as the conversion to natural gas and replacing the HVAC systems, would be rolled into a bigger project or will they be separate projects.

Board Member Markwell responded that the board may consider the conversion to natural gas and the chiller be done together for a cost of 1.3 million dollars. He added that might be something that would have to be financed.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied that a lease/purchase on those projects could definitely be done. There is always the opportunity to refinance the existing debt with Honeywell and then roll this in. He stated that Jim Lucy from Honeywell is working on this.

Board Member Markwell stated that the chiller could be added after the roofing project for a cost of \$200,000. He felt that if the board is going to finance the upgrades, it makes sense to do it as one project.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that a lot depends on the size of the new chiller. There are a lot of variables and a lot of projects discussed at the meeting. He added that the roofing project was pushed out until 2018-2019. They are doing a lot of work to pin down some different numbers and strategies. He added that tonight's presentation was informational only and that no decisions would be made.

Business Administrator Shevenell highlighted some of the other projects on the CIP:

- Asbestos removal: Each building would be done at one time. By 2018 there will be no more asbestos known to us in any building in the district.

- Paving: In 2015-2016 the bus loop at the high school will be done as well as Thorntons Ferry circle and lower lot. They will talk to the town to see if the district could work with the DPW as a combined project.
- Drainage: The upper elementary school needs new drainage put in to prevent icing during the winter. A five hundred gallon dry well will also be installed. There will also be some striping done.
- Track and Field: Redoing the track is the first priority. The field upgrade would be nice to have and was pushed back one year to 2014-2015.
- Technology infrastructure upgrade: This includes a two year lease at the middle school, including server upgrading and cabling in the classrooms, electrical upgrades in some of the schools, and the cost of voice-over IP, which is up and running at the high school.

Chairman Ortega stated that the information presented at this meeting is for information only. There will be a separate work session on a future agenda to make any adjustments. He added that the knowledge of budget costs versus capital costs is critical. He asked if there was discussion at the Planning and Building Committee meeting regarding the balancing of projects, It seems to him that the CIP is being front-loaded by bringing some things forward, such as the SPED/SAU consolidation and the track and field projects.

Board Member Markwell responded that he did not recall any discussions about planning to space out the payments so they are more even. The goal was these projects are needed and have to be done. The conversion to natural gas is brand new, but it pays for itself in around three years as well as being an ongoing savings.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the paving project for 2016-2017 would include the church parking lot.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied that the paving project would not include the church parking lot.

Board Member Barnes stated that just as the board had discussed CIP and the tax rate, she felt the board needs to discuss the Local Government Center surplus and its distribution. She is concerned that the surplus money would be given back to the taxpayers and then the board would have to ask for it back after the litigation. The concern is that it will create a dip and spike in the tax rate.

Chairman Ortega stated that the 2011 surplus funds from Local Government Center are uncontested and will be divided amongst those who contributed to the fund.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained the disbursement of the Local Government Center funds. For the first allotment the intent is to hold onto the district's share and distribute the employees' share. The distribution method has to be agreed on by the administration and the employees. The district's surplus can be used to reduce the tax rate, but must be used prior to June 30th.

Board Member Barnes stated that she wants to have discussion regarding what projects to use the surplus funds for, if they are to be used for a project.

Vice Chairman Powell asked how other districts were distributing their share of the Local Government Center surplus funds.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that there are a minimal number of districts in our region who have made decisions about the surplus funds. Our district did not want to be one of the first districts to make any decisions.

Vice Chairman Powell asked Business Administrator Shevenell to bring the RSA that allows the district to recover funds before June 30th to the next board meeting. He added that he does not feel comfortable holding on to the surplus money or using the funds for projects.

Board Member Schneider asked, when looking at bonding something, what is the minimum term of bonding to make it worthwhile.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied ten years is the minimum term and is standard.

Board Member Schneider asked for clarification as to when the consolidation of the SPED/SAU building was pushed out to.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that they were not considering how things would be funded. Instead they looked at the bottom line for all the projects. They felt that the natural gas conversion and the two major roofing projects at the high school needed to be done this year. The consolidation is important, but it does not seem that it could be done at the same time as the other two projects.

Board Member Markwell stated that the roofing and natural gas projects increased the CIP by quite a lot. That is why the consolidation of the SPED/SAU building was pushed out two years.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that there is a difference between CIP and a spending plan. A spending plan is a listing of how assets will increase or decrease in any particular year.

Board Member Schneider stated that as a board they are the responsible party to promote the consolidation to the public, even though it has been pushed out. It has to be kept in the minds of the public so when it comes time to put it on the ballot all the information is current and valid.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that during the Planning and Building Committee meeting there was talk about the momentum continuing on the consolidation. The Town Planning Board is in favor of this project and classified it as urgent.

Board Member Schneider stated that the information the public received on the consolidation for the last election was not widespread or current. He stressed the importance of the board being totally prepared for putting this on the ballot.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that they have asked some resources for an update on accurate enrollments to help with the budgetary decisions.

10. Board's Comments Regarding 2014-2015 Budget Preparation

Chairman Ortega stated the Chair and Vice Chair of the Budget Committee attended a prior board meeting to present their feedback on the budget process and changes for the upcoming deliberations. Even though the board felt having the extra time to review and work on the budget was a major benefit, there were some Budget Committee members who felt their window was too tight. They felt having the ability to ask questions up front and having them addressed at the board meetings was useful. Their proposal suggested starting their work one to two weeks earlier than last year. They also proposed

engaging with the administration and having liaison meetings prior to the time the board finished and moved their budget. They would like a board response to their proposals prior to October 8, 2013.

Board Member Barnes was concerned that the Budget Committee would start their meetings before the board completed their budget because we discussed our budget cycle after they presented their ideas. She suggested we push it out a couple of days.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he didn't know how comfortable he felt about the committee members having conversations with the liaisons before the board completes the budget.

Board Member Schneider stated that he thought if there is an opportunity for the Budget Committee members to meet with the liaisons just to share some of their questions, it's not a bad thing. He does not support the committee having their meetings approving a portion of the budget with the liaisons in front of the whole Budget Committee until the board is done with their budget. He is trying to optimize the time so that the flow is right.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that what he was referring to was the liaisons not meeting with department heads or administration until after they come before the board. The committee members may be talking about items that may be cut or items that may be added in if the board has not completed their budget.

Board Member Schneider stated that if the board wants to have all the liaison meetings to occur after the board completes its budget, then the time that the committee can do the initial discussions will be tight. He added that last year the committee tried to have all their liaison meetings in a two week period and that was difficult. He agreed that the liaison meetings should be held after the board has at least its initial discussion on the budget, but he does not agree that the committee has their formal meetings with the liaisons until the board is done.

Chairman Ortega stated that he had some concerns about that as well. He agreed that having the Budget Committee participate in the early budget process by reviewing it, by submitting questions to the department heads and having their responses vetted at school board meetings as the budget is crafted, has greatly accelerated the process. He added that he is concerned with the how the Administration feels. They have been at the board's disposal while the board works on the budget. Any information the board may request is provided by them. The questions not pertaining to high level items should be asked during the full budget hearings.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the Administration would like to serve both the Budget Committee and the school board, but their first obligation is to the board. It is the board's budget that gets turned over to the Budget Committee. Based on last year, the board will get their budget on December 2, 2013 and they will have December to process it. The first time they will talk about it will be at the December 16, 2013 board meeting. How the questions are dealt with is a concern because last year there were times partial questions were asked and partial answers were given.

The board will have completed their budget and passed it over to the Budget Committee on January 21, 2014. Superintendent Chiafery added that the Budget Committee wanted to schedule a hearing on January 21, 2014, not realizing that is the night of a board meeting since that Monday is Martin Luther King Day and the board meeting had to be moved to Tuesday. Therefore January 21st would not be a good night for the hearing.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the board would process their budget during the first two weeks of January and the Budget Committee would process their budget during the last two weeks of January. It is the questions in between that she needs help with:

1. If the board hearings are the first two weeks in January, will there be liaison meetings at that time as well?
2. After hearings with the board, do the department heads go into liaison meetings?
3. Should the board's meetings and questions come first with a close follow up with the Budget Committee?

Board Member Schneider explained that there is a culture on the Budget Committee of face-to-face liaison meetings at the appropriate school. With the new schedule of budget meetings it is extremely difficult to have those meetings. He explained that he was attempting to think creatively how to let the committee keep that culture.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would attempt to encapsulate the board's thoughts:

- The board found value from having the Budget Committee questions earlier in the process,
- The board struggled with questions that were asked by the Committee during the high level reviews that did not pertain to the items scheduled to be discussed.
- The board feels that the questions not pertaining to high level items should be asked during full budget review hearings.

Chairman Ortega acknowledged that there are difficulties with the scheduling. The average number of liaison meetings for a Budget Committee member is two. By December the committee will know who is on what committee and the schedule of the meetings.

Board Member Schneider said that the board needs to make sure what the open and available dates are for these meetings.

Chairman Ortega responded that they will look at the calendar and see what dates are available.

Board Member Schneider stated that the only potential risk the board faces is if deliberations go longer than expected.

Board Member Markwell stated that the Budget Committee will get the copy of the budget on January 22, 2014. Then they will have two weeks for deliberations. He added that this is actually more time than the board has for their deliberations. He felt that perhaps more meetings could be added if necessary.

11. Board's Consideration of Sidebar Agreement for Article III of MTA Master

Chairman Ortega abstained from any voting on this subject as his wife is employed by the district.

Superintendent Chiafery noted two items the board had before them, which were Article III of the negotiated Master Agreement and the Memorandum of Agreement that she and Attorney Peahl put together in collaboration with the Merrimack Teachers' Association (MTA).

Superintendent Chiafery explained that she brought the information to the board because she was requesting the sidebar agreement. Her responsibility (Article 3.2) in the agreement states that the board agrees to appropriate up to one hundred fifty thousand (\$150,000) dollars for each year of the agreement

and for her to oversee the specialized training for the professional staff as determined by her to meet specific goals and objectives.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that as she began to work with the MTA, they realized they wanted to not only go beyond training, but also include the area of services. Services are projects that have been done in the immediate past that have moved the district forward. These services include, but are not limited to the mentoring program, academic assistance and before and/or after school programs for students. She added that those programs should move forward because they have been very successful in the past. They have been in service of teaching, learning, teachers and students or in some cases to meet compliance areas such as anti-bullying efforts.

Superintendent Chiafery is requesting that Article 3.2 be expanded. The changes include having it read "Training and/or Render Service" and then ask for a designated committee, instead of just her being responsible. The committee would be made up of an administrator from each building who would make sure that staff is notified about what they want to do in service of district goals and objective and to make sure there is equity and that every school in the district is represented.

Superintendent Chiafery added that it is also important to spell out that Article 3.2 is different than Article 3.1 which has to do with the Professional Development Committee which oversees the Professional Development Master Plan. Items 3.1 A through D specifically speak to their work, but the Professional Development Committee has nothing to do with specialized training and/or services.

A statement was created that deals with reimbursement for training and/or costs associated with providing services.

Superintendent Chiafery thought that it would be in everyone's best interest if the Article was re-crafted. To that end she asked the President of the MTA to meet with her so he would understand her intent. They have worked together on the language. He asked if she would spell out the allotment of money per contract year for three years.

Superintendent Chiafery and Attorney Peahl crafted the sidebar agreement which they shared with the leadership of the MTA. It is now being brought before this board for their consideration with the hope that it would be approved at the October 7, 2013 board meeting. Then it would go before the MTA to be explained and voted on by mid-October.

Board Member Barnes stated that this sidebar agreement gives every teacher the opportunity to grow professionally and have the resources they need to do this in all buildings in the district. It gives clarity to the staff. It was written consistently with the spirit and intent of both bargaining teams in negotiations.

Chairman Ortega stated that this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for the October 7, 2013 board meeting.

12. Other

a. Correspondence

Board Member Markwell received two e-mails regarding lunch program balances. The issue has been resolved.

Business Administrator Shevenell added that he wanted to thank the public for being vigilant and giving the administration the opportunity to correct the errors. He especially thanked Lisa Mooney for her input and guidance.

b. Comments

Vice Chairman Powell commented on the presentation by Mr. Krupp regarding the Common Core State Standards. He stated that CCSS is a state mandated program and the district must be in compliance. He added that Merrimack is in line with the State.

Chairman Ortega attended the Rotary Club breakfast on September 12, 2013. The breakfast was in recognition of those persons/organizations who contributed to the success of the July Fourth Family Day. He presented the certificate he received on behalf of the district to Superintendent Chiafery. He thanked the Rotary for putting on the wonderful Family Day program.

13. New Business

There was no new business to report.

14. Committee Reports

Tracy Bull, School Board Liaison to the Town Center Committee and Chair of the Safe Routes to School sub-committee, explained that the rough draft of the travel plan of the Safe Routes to School will soon be released. Committee members will review the rough draft and then it will be discussed at their next meeting on October 24, 2013.

School Representative Crowley reported on events at the high school. The Student Council is planning the Homecoming Dance and they are starting to plan their volunteer work in the community. The first Student Congress meeting will be held on October 18th. Freshman elections are going to be held and the Student Council will work with the freshmen to make them feel comfortable in the high school. Lastly Ms. Crowley announced that the football team has a 2-0 record. The next game is Friday night at 6:30 p.m. in Merrimack.

Board Member Barnes reported on the Merrimack Safeguard Committee, which she attended in Board Member Schneider's place, on September 5th. They discussed being in compliance with their grant, Red Ribbon week and their website. They also discussed whether or not they would participate in the Fall Festival.

Board Member Markwell reported on the September 11th meeting of the Health Care Cost Containment Committee. They discussed the Onlife Health Assessment survey completion rates. They also discussed an executive summary which showed areas that need improvement as well as the demographics in the district.

15. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on Agenda Items.

16. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:15 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Vice Chairman Powell) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.