

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
October 7, 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.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Ortega noted that Student Representative Crowley would be leaving the meeting early in preparation of the NECAPs at the high school on Tuesday morning.

2. Approval of the September 16, 2013 Minutes

Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2013 board meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 14, last paragraph before the bullets, should be “research-based” by adding a hyphen
- Page 3 of 14, paragraph 9 from the bottom, “Ms. Macon stated that she had received written feedback...”
- Page 9 of 14, paragraph 6 from the bottom, add a sentence at the end to read, “The concern is that it will create a dip and spike in the tax rate”.
- Page 13 of 14, paragraph 2 above section 12, add a sentence at the end that reads, “It was written consistently with the spirit and intent of both bargaining teams in negotiations.”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 14, first paragraph replace “gave a presentation regarding” to “provided comments on”

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 8 of 14, section 9, paragraph 2, sentence 2, should be “They also felt the SPED/SAU consolidation should be moved forward ...”

Vice Chairman Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 14, first sentence under section 8 should be Souhegan River Walk.
- Page 7 of 14, second sentence should read, “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.”
- Page 7 of 14, second paragraph section 8, should read, “Board Member Schneider asked to include any changes made to the document when it is presented to the board.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 14, paragraph 2, change “considering” to “considered”.
- Page 9 of 14, third bullet, change “caballing” to “cabling”.
- Page 11 of 14, third paragraph from the bottom, delete the last sentence and replace it with “The questions not pertaining to high level items should be asked during the full budget hearings.”
- Page 14 of 14, under Committee Reports, Tracy Bull’s title is “School Board Liaison to the Town Center Committee and chair of the Safe Routes to School sub-committee.

The motion to accept the minutes of the September 16, 2013 meeting as amended passed 5-0-0.

3. Public Participation

Barbara Publicover, 75 Amherst Road, announced that on October 15, 2013 in the Merrimack Middle School Library, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the Merrimack Special Education Parents Support Group and the Merrimack School District will be hosting “Autism and Early Intervention”. The public is encouraged to attend.

Ms. Publicover added that on October 1, 2013 the NH Parent Involvement Recognition Ceremony which was held in conjunction with October being Parent Involvement Month. Merrimack was recognized twice. First was Kathleen Walzak, Special Education Teacher at Merrimack High School and second was Merrimack Safeguard.

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive, announced that the Merrimack First Robotics “Chop Shop” Team 166 invites the public to join them at their fundraiser on Friday, October 18, 2013 at the Merrimack High School cafeteria from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. followed by the movie, “Robots”. Advanced ticket sales are recommended. The e-mail for the group is 166.First@gmail.com.

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

Business Administrator Shevenell presented a gift from Target – Take Care of Education to Merrimack Middle School. This money will be used it for additional classroom supplies in the amount of \$216.90

Vice Chairman Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to accept the gift from Target for \$216.90.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

- a) Approval of After the Bell: Merrimack Middle School After School Program
- b) Approval of Sidebar Agreement for Article III of MTA Master Agreement 2013-2016

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

The motion passed 4-0-1 with Chairman Ortega abstaining.

6. Summary of Work Completed – Teacher Performance and Evaluation Committee Members

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced the members of the committee who were in attendance at the board meeting: John Fabrizio, Marsha McGill, Barbara DeFrancisco, Mike Cirelli, Trisha Swonger, Debbie Woelflein and Laurie Allen. Committee members not able to attend the meeting were: Kevin Bobbit, Jennifer Thornton, Patrick Scott, Suzanne Wheeler and Ken Johnson. He stated that it was an important milestone in that the model is the completion of a year's work. He explained that the current system of evaluation was not broken, but as educators the district felt the process needed to be updated, since it was in place for well over thirty years.

The Merrimack Educator Performance and Evaluation Committee's charge was to identify a contemporary process and tool for educator evaluation that is consistent with state accountability goals and best research practices.

The Purpose of the committee was to develop a tool, consisting of multiple measures, and a process to evaluate the performance of educators in the Merrimack School District.

Each of the committee members presented information on the Teacher Performance and Evaluation.

There were fourteen members of the committee consisting of administration from all the schools, four teachers, three parents, one MTA representative, one school board representative and the Superintendent. Their first meeting was held on November 8, 2012. Other meetings included eight evening meetings and six formal all-day meetings. There were to be two more meetings but they had to be cancelled. All together there were ninety-five meeting hours plus Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin attending meetings in Concord, research done by all the member and extensive sub-committee work.

The rubric will be the basis for educator evaluation and professional development. It consists of five domains:

- Planning and Preparation
- Educational Environment
- Instruction
- Monitoring Assessment and Follow-Up
- Professional Responsibilities.

There are four levels of performance:

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Basic
- Does Not Meet Standard

Observation Cycle

- Continuing Contract Educators
 - a) At least one observation per school year will be scheduled within an announced two-week period of time.
 - b) Professional Dialogue between educator and evaluator (suggested time is twenty minutes) will occur as soon as possible and within five school days.
 - c) Written record sign-off-by educator and evaluator will occur within five school days of the dialogue.

- d) If more observations are needed, educators will be advised that there will be follow-up observations regarding specified issue(s).
- e) Summative write-up completed in March, date determined by the Superintendent.
- f) Between March and June, the educator will select two Domain Focus Areas (DFA's). (It is helpful to know the District's focus for the following year as educators select DFA's.)
- g) Throughout the school year, conversations include discussion of the above two DFA's.

- Probationary Educators

- a) At least six observations per school year. Four will be unannounced and two will be scheduled within an announced two-week period of time.
- b) A total of five observations will be completed by February, with a minimum of two observations completed by November.
- c) One additional observation between March and June.
- d) Professional Dialogue between educators and evaluator (suggested time is twenty minutes) will occur as soon as possible and within five school days.
- e) Written record sign-off by educator and evaluator will occur within five school days of the dialogue.
- f) If more observations are needed, educators will be advised that there will be follow-up observations regarding specified issue(s).
- g) Summative write-up will be completed in March, date determined by the Superintendent.
- h) Between March and June, the educator will select two Domain Focus Areas (DFA's). (It is helpful to know the District's focus for the following year as educators select DFA's.)
- i) Throughout the school year, conversations include discussions of the above two DFA's.
- j) By March, educator reflects on progress made in chosen DFA's.

- Student Growth Measures (TBD)

- a) Student growth measures will be counted as twenty per cent in the Merrimack Educator Evaluation Model

- Consider student surveys as one part of a multiple measure of the twenty per cent student growth

- a) Questions relate to the five domains on the rubric
- b) Implement a survey pilot after the Educator Performance and Evaluation pilot year, and before a final decision is made to use student surveys.
- c) Student surveys will vary depending on age of students.

- Remediation: The current remediation process should be maintained, with adjustments to fit the proposed model.

- Evaluators:

- a) Principals
- b) Assistant Principals
- c) Director of Special Services and Director of Library Media/Technology Services
- d) High School Department Heads (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language, Technology, Special Education, Health/PE, Guidance)
- e) Elementary and Middle School Language Arts Coordinators
- f) Middle School Math Coordinator
- g) Elementary and Middle School Special Education Coordinators

There may be staffing and budgetary implications in the above recommendations for evaluators. For example, the Special Education Coordinators currently perform different functions in different schools, with different supports. Elementary Language Arts Coordinators also currently perform different functions in different schools.

Initial and on-going professional development will be provided for all evaluators, to develop inter-rater reliability and validity.

Board Member Barnes asked if the committee had thought about prepping the educators on the scheduling of the evaluations so that they would be prepared in advance.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that they have tilted towards not doing that in this system. Of the six evaluations in the course of a year, four are not scheduled for probationary educators.

Board Member Barnes asked if the continuing contracted educators are always going to have prescheduled appointments.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained that the schedule is actually a window of time that has been scheduled as opposed to an exact time.

Board Member Barnes asked that with the continuing contract educators, how one observation would collect enough information to conclude their effectiveness, knowing that there are so many rubrics.

Principal Woelflein responded that the rubrics cover more than just the classroom observations. It includes involvement in committee work, and professional responsibility. The classroom observation is just part of the evaluation.

Board Member Barnes stated that the one thing that was alarming has nothing to do with the committee's work, but has to do with the structure, which is based on the proposed time for observations for Probationary and Contract educators. She did ratios of teachers in both statuses: Thorntons Ferry Elementary School has 14.6 per cent of teachers that are in probation status, James Mastricola Elementary School has 10.5 per cent in probation status, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School has 15.6 per cent and Reeds Ferry Elementary School as 33 per cent. The number of evaluators are equal across all schools in the district. Her question was how they are going to distribute the ratios of probation and contract teachers so that ample time and attention is made to both the evaluation process and the job of running a school as a department head. She repeated that Reeds Ferry Elementary School status was very alarming to her.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that what School Board Member Barnes highlighted was absolutely true and accurate and it would be true of any system in place. It is out of everyone's control to determine if someone chooses to retire or when someone retires or relocates.

Board Member Barnes asked if there was any consideration of using evaluators from schools other than the schools they are in. For example, an evaluator from Thorntons Ferry Elementary School would evaluate the teachers at Reeds Ferry Elementary School so they would be objective in their evaluations.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that was something the committee discussed a lot. The short term goal is to get the system up and running. One of the primary outcomes of inter-rater reliability is the ability for that exchange to happen much more readily than it is currently. It is an aspiration, but cannot be achieved quickly.

Board Member Schneider stated that one of his concerns is how students would be approached to be surveyed and how those surveys would be filtered.

Ms. Tricia Swonger explained that this is something that was discussed at length and depth. They did a lot of research about studies that have been done and pilot programs and current programs that are being used and have acquired a great deal of data. For the last four or five years a lot of work has been done around student surveys and parent surveys and surveys in general. With proper survey techniques, you can get the best indicators of predicting student performance. There were a number of studies done the committee looked at that found that there is a closer relationship between student survey results and student performance results than any other measure.

Ms. Swonger continued, stating that how the questions are asked is very important. What the students write down is not going to make or break anything. The questions are not about personality or what the student learns specifically in the classroom. They are much more objective.

Board Member Schneider stated that under the observation cycle the probationary period is now five years, which means that there are thirty observations over the five-year period. He asked if the group considered a scale of the amount of the observations.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that particular point was not discussed exactly. The committee spent a lot of time talking about what would be value-added time with educators and evaluators. What they concluded was is that whether a teacher is in their first or fifth year, the value of multiple, frequent observations outweighs the desire to drop that as the teacher gets closer to being a contract educator. He added that they wanted to give the probationary educators as much quality time in the fifth year as in the first year, because the goal is always to support our educators.

Chairman Ortega stated that it is not the amount of money spent or the size of the classroom, but the effectiveness of the teacher that makes the positive correlation between student survey results and student performance. Any tool that takes good teachers and makes them excellent and fair teachers and makes them better is going to have a direct result on student growth in the district. He thanked the committee members for being dedicated enough to give such a large amount of time and effort. He added that the make-up of the committee was unique and the school board was concerned, but they have worked tremendously hard and deserve a tremendous amount of credit for what they have done.

7. Merrimack Safeguard Update

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced four members of the Merrimack Safeguard Committee; Barbara Publicover, parent representative, Betsy Houde, Director of the Youth Council, Officer Prentice and Principal Debbie Woelflein. He then explained that currently we are in the fifth year of a five year grant. An application will be filed for the next five years. Debbie Woelflein wrote the first grant and will be writing the second grant.

Ms. Woelflein explained the grant process. The present grant was awarded to Merrimack in 2009 for \$125,000 over a five-year period. The proposed new grant will be awarded for the same amount. The criteria for the grant is that each year they have to show that they receive “in kind” donations equal to the amount of the grant on an annual basis. There must be twelve community sectors who take an active part. They have to come up with an action plan and evidence. The mission has to be youth substance addiction. They must show that their strategies are environmental strategies, i.e. that they are really working to change the community of Merrimack so there will be fewer of these issues.

Recently, two areas of concern have been identified from data collected. There are fewer middle school students who think it is wrong to have one or two drinks of alcohol at that age and there are fewer students who talk to their parents about alcohol and drugs. That is something they will focus on when they write the new grant.

Betsy Houde was one of the original people involved in establishing Merrimack Safeguard in the community. The Prescription Drop Box, which is located at the police station, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is very successful as well as the police "Take Back Event" which netted two hundred forty-two pounds of unneeded medicine.

They have been working with Sarah Short of the Community Health Center in Bow, New Hampshire to attempt multiple ways to determine multiple ways to determine their effectiveness. Surveys were used as well as having Officer Prentice complete a two week time study. This study showed that Officer Prentice had an average of 4.5 conferences per day with students. The study involved forty-nine students and sixteen parents for the two week period. The feedback was that he is highly effective.

Ms. Houde also mentioned the work with local limousine companies during prom season to help teens make good choices.

Barbara Publicover explained that she is one of the many parents on the committee. She stated that there has been a tremendous amount of work and collaboration by the committee members. She noted that Merrimack Safeguard was recognized at the Parent Involvement Recognition Ceremony.

Officer Prentice stated that the focus is on the parents not talking to their kids and kids not talking to their parents about drug and alcohol abuse. He explained that his work is not only having a presence in the school, but working with kids who are absent or tardy and finding out if there are things going on in the home that would cause poor behavior. Sometimes he has woken up and brought kids to school. He noted that the Merrimack Police Department allows him to move his schedule around to accommodate families in need of help. There will be a new parent survey that will be going out that will give more data.

Chairman Ortega stated, on behalf of the Board and District, he wanted to congratulate Merrimack Safeguard for receiving their honor. He also wanted to clarify that the new grant would cover years six through ten of the program.

Board Member Barnes added that the committee has also looked into the community to see where alcohol is being sold and to whom, where game pieces for drinking games are sold, and more. She added that the committee members speak with some of the businesses to make alcohol less accessible to the youth.

Ms. Woelflein reported that there was an environmental scan of businesses that sell alcohol in Merrimack. Also, students surveyed stated that it is more difficult to purchase alcohol in Merrimack than in neighboring towns. It shows that Merrimack Safeguard is much more than the presence of a police officer in the middle school. She also mentioned that the committee meets the first Thursday of the month at Saint James Methodist Church.

8. Response to Proposed Capital Improvement Plan

Business Administrator Shevenell gave an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He referred to the board's packet which showed an array of the lease/purchasing options:

- the roofing project at the high school for fifteen years
- the natural gas conversion for fifteen years
- replacing the high school chiller over fifteen years
- an energy cost savings
- a cash savings with refinancing the existing Honeywell contract that has another six years to go.

There is Option A which refers doing the high school roof, the gas conversion and the chiller. Option B refers to doing the high school roof, the gas conversion and moving the chiller out for one year, another section of roof out one year and the heat wheel out one year. This all shows the permutations that can be done. It is basically taking the big projects the board has been talking about which are about replacing the chiller at the high school, the gas conversion, two separate roofs, the heat wheel and financing them through a lease/purchase over a fifteen year period to spread the costs out over those years as to not cause any spike in the tax rate.

Board Member Schneider asked about the incremental costs of doing these projects over a fifteen year period.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that Option A has the high school roof 2014-15 cost of spreading that out over fifteen years would be \$976,000 versus \$750,000 if we pay for it up front. So it adds an extra \$200,000 in payments. The gas conversion would be \$090,000 over fifteen years, versus \$698,000 if paid up front. Replacing the chiller would cost \$248,000 if financed as compared to \$190,000 if paid up front. These are rates that are fairly conservative.

Chairman Ortega stated that if we look at the CIP for addressing our capital issues independent of how we will finance them (whether we pay up front or not) that will help the board get a first level prioritization of projects and then things can be broken down as far as payments.

Board Member Schneider stated that his point was that using this as a method could cause us to make different decisions based on where things are moved in CIP. He added that if you spread something out over multiple years, you are more likely to move something in earlier than previously planned.

Board Member Markwell stated that he would be against financing the roofs. He would support the consolidation of the offices, but that maintenance should not be bonded.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that the roof is not really a lease/purchase with a non-appropriation clause that would need to have a simple majority. It is more of a capital item. Leases are more for equipment like the chiller, heat wheel and gas conversion. If you are looking to spread out the roofing projects over a period of time, a bond would be more appropriate. It is all part of an energy savings plan. In his opinion, what Board Member Markwell stated has a lot of merit.

Board Member Barnes stated that in looking at the track and field, she would like to make a motion to move the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School drainage out to 2015-16 and move the track and field as a combined effort to 2016-17.

Chairman Ortega stated that he would like to get foundational questions out of the way prior to entertaining any motions.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School drainage was purposely put together with the paving of the upper elementary school and Mastricola Elementary School together so they would have to be moved together.

Board Member Barnes stated that she would be comfortable with those two moves being made together. The difference is \$125,000.

Chairman Ortega asked if Board Member Barnes would consider keeping the paving project at the high school bus loop to 2015-16 as well as the Thorntons Ferry project to 2015-16.

Board Member Barnes stated that she would consider moving the high school bus loop down to equalize the costs.

Board Member Schneider asked about refinancing with Honeywell.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that refinancing a bond is something that is done in order to get lower interest rates and lower payments. He clarified that this would be refinancing the existing account. He added that the original lease was done six years ago and rates have gone down.

Chairman Ortega explained that the Honeywell bond has six more years on it, roughly \$400,000 per year, including principle and interest. The high school addition has seven years left on it for \$350,000 on average and then three years later the middle school will be paid off with payments declining from 1.1 million dollars next year down to \$790,000 the final year.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider for discussion purposes) to move the track and field project for \$225,000 to 2016-17, making the total for 2016-17 \$1,425,000. In addition the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School draining project in the amount of \$150,000 would be moved from 2016-17 to 2015-16. Also, the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School entrance parking lot and School Street lot for \$200,000 would be moved to 2015-16. Finally, the high school bus loop would be moved from 2015-16 to 2016-17 in the amount of \$25,000.

Board Member Barnes explained that the biggest thing she is looking at is making the projects in focus areas and getting one area done before the next. For the track and field, we would rather not have to drive over a new track in order to redo the field, and so they should be done as one project. The James Mastricola Upper Elementary School drainage adjustment was made based on administration feedback to move the entrance parking lot and School Street lot paving so they are tethered one year up. A lot of the focus will be on the high school the following year.

Board Member Schneider asked if the bus loop at the high school is more critical than the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School lot.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that in talking with Maintenance Director Tom Touseau, he agreed it would be good to do the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and the James Mastricola Elementary School lots along with the drainage project because they are in poor condition. We could live another year with the condition of the high school bus loop. Thorntons Ferry Elementary School is holding together nicely. Completion of the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and James Mastricola Elementary School parking lots and the drainage project complete would complete the entrance at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Board Member Barnes state that there was such success at Reeds Ferry Elementary School, she would like to see it done at the high school. She added that we could do better than just fixing the problem there.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that if there was time and money, he would ask Mr. Keach's firm, Keach, Nordstrom Engineering to work with us, since he had done such a great job at Reeds Ferry Elementary School.

Board Member Schneider asked if there are any downsides in moving the track to 2016-17.

Board Member Markwell, speaking from the Planning and Building Committee, the track is more urgent than the field.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that putting the track and field together as one project unifies all the engineering on the projects, which is more efficient.

Board Member Markwell stated that the concern is that if we put the track and field together on the ballot and the community votes it down, we lose the track as well as the field projects. His thought is to still have them as two projects. He would support the track but not the field.

Board Member Schneider asked that if the track is moved one year, is there a problem in keeping it viable for another year.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he didn't think it would be problematic.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he needed some clarification on the reasons of bringing the track and field to 2015-16.

Board Member Barnes responded that she is bringing the 2015-16 money over to 2016-17 with the track and field being done together. Then she is taking the 2016-17 James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and James Mastricola Elementary School parking lots and drainage and moving it to 2015-16. That will be balancing the money back one year. She would also be taking the bus loop from 2015-16 and the paving and moving it to 2016-17.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if the paving project at the high school included the parking lot.

Business Administrator Shevenell responded that the bus loop has nothing to with the parking lot.

Superintendent Chiafery asked Board Member Barnes if she is leaving the Thorntons Ferry circle and lower lot in 2015-16.

Board Member Barnes replied that the Thorntons Ferry circle and lower lot will be left for 2015-16.

The motion was put to a vote.

The motion passed 4-1-0 with Board Member Markwell in opposition.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes for discussion purposes) to move the consolidation of the SAU/SPED building out to 2015-16.

Board Member Schneider explained that he is concerned about the warrant article being placed on the ballot again because of some of the expensive items on Capital Improvement Plan being so high. He is concerned about the operating budget as well as the surplus from Local Government Center.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that we owe it to the district and the employees to have a safe environment to work in and presently that is not the case. He stated that he would be voting against the motion.

Board Member Barnes stated that she would be voting against the motion, feeling that we are putting good money after bad into the blue building. We are not maximizing efficiencies by having inefficient facilities.

Board Member Markwell stated that we need to look at the timing of the gas conversion in relation to having a new building, making sure that both can be done together.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that the gas conversion is planned for the Masticola complex, the high school and the maintenance building. The SAU/SPED buildings were purposely left out in case a new building is constructed.

Board Member Schneider stated that by moving the gas into the high school the lines will be there if a new building is constructed. He asked Superintendent Chiafery why the administration moved the consolidation out two years in the original CIP submitted to the Planning Committee.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that they looked to prioritize and what the public would want to do. First was the gas conversion and then the high school roofing project which is an immediate need. The chiller and heat wheel are both necessary items. The consolidation is wanted, but there is concern about how much the public can bear. There is still the question if a new building should be located elsewhere. It is in the budget to have a formal demographic study by an outside source.

Board Member Schneider asked about the conditions of blue building.

Business Administrator Shevenell replied that there are a lot of areas that were done with insurance money and the repair fund in the operating budget. The building is in pretty solid condition. The basement level is off-limits and is used for keeping records.

Board Member Barnes added that the building does not comply with IDEA.

Board Member Markwell stated that his concern was that if we are going to upgrade the heating systems at the blue and green buildings, in a few years a new building may be built and we would have wasted a lot of money for a short fix.

Vice Chairman Powell asked Superintendent Chiafery about the study to be done and if it is doing the work of the Planning and Building Committee as far as identifying new space within the district.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that a demographic study was done eight to ten years ago. It seems to be helpful to the cause. The Planning and Building Committee has done a tremendous job yet the community still questions the viability of the space. There is a need to look into the future. She added that we have learned that if you put too much out there, you get nothing and if you put things together they are hard to explain, you get nothing. It has to be kept simple.

Vice Chairman Powell expressed that he thinks it is a good idea for a demographic study to be done, and was pleased to hear that the blue building is not in as bad a shape as he thought. It gives him cause to agree with moving the project out to 2015-16.

Chairman Ortega stated that he appreciated the discussion. He totally understands the need for the consolidation. He agreed that putting too much on the ballot could be detrimental. He supports the motion.

He called for the motion of those in favor of moving the \$1,512,996 slated for the consolidation of the SAU/SPED buildings from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

The motion passed 3-2-0 with Board Members Barnes and Markwell in opposition.

Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as a whole, not how it is funded.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

9. School Visitations

Chairman Ortega spoke about his visits to each of the six school buildings where he spent a day at each to get the sense of “a day in the life of a student”. In some schools there were guided tours. At James Mastricola Upper Elementary School he visited every classroom. At James Mastricola Elementary School he visited with the fourth grade classes and the library. At Merrimack Middle School he shadowed a student. Students were all well behaved and engaged. He saw the consistency of all the levels and the collaboration. He was energized by all the visits. Other school board members are welcome to visit the schools.

10. Update on Proposed Joint Meeting with Town Council

Superintendent Chiafery met with the chair of the Town Council on September 28, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to plan a future joint meeting. A tentative meeting date is set for Wednesday, October 30, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. Town Council will host this meeting. Topics of discussion were mentioned but not set in stone.

11. Board Members’ Insights Regarding Development of 2014-2015 Budget

Chairman Ortega explained that as the administration prepares the budget for next year, the practice is for each board member to provide insight. Then he will consolidate all their messages and present them to the administration:

Board Member Schneider gave his insight:

- The administration should be as prudent as they can based on all the items in the budget.
- He would be against cuts in staffing especially in the elementary level since the enrollment numbers are growing there.
- As far as the higher levels, he didn’t think the board was previously provided with details about the programs and whether or not there was a proposed cut in staffing.
- He would like to know incrementally if there are costs we can attribute to supporting the Common Core and the Smarter Balance assessments that we are currently discussing and we have already

discussed. He does not want that incremental cost to include things that they were going to replace anyway. He wants true incremental costs on top of our normal run rate.

- He would like to see a warrant article about retaining funds concerning the disbursement of Local Government funds.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that Common Core has not been an issue regarding costs since it has been a work in progress since 2005. If there needs to be a text book change, it is because it is time to replace the text, not because the Common Core is driving it. She added that if they see an expenditure that leans another way, they will report it.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that the warrant article would read such that to see if the school board would vote to authorize indefinitely until rescinded to retain unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed in any fiscal year 2.5% of the current fiscal year net assessment. The net assessment is the school board budget less all revenues less all our adequacy monies (around 45 million dollars). So in any particular year we could look at pulling over one million dollars. He is not sure it would pass this year if it is put on the ballot this year. The question that he has not received the answer to is if we could pull it from the 2013-2014 fund balance.

Chairman Ortega stated that the question of the warrant article does not need to be answered at this point. There will be further discussions at a later time.

Board Member Barnes gave her insight:

- The board should be able to back up a decision whether it will increase or decrease spending. She wants to know the impact on education and on operations and the long term goals. If she does not given the consequences she is not going to support the proposal. She wants to know all the data before any decisions are made, especially at the high school level.
- There are some new business items that have to be discussed that drive the budget, such as enrollment issues for math, English electives and some advanced classes, etc.
- There needs to be discussion on the surplus from Local Government Center situation.
- There are a lot of maintenance issues because we have asked for a level funded budget. The budget currently has \$300,000+ set for the roofing projects that has not been spent. She would like to know what is being done with that \$300,000+. She added that if the money is given back to the taxpayers, we would have to ask for it back for a plethora of other projects. That will create a dip and a spike in the tax rate. She added that the board was hired to help the administration with funding. If we don't want to impact education, our facilities will be impacted. It is the board's job to take care of some of the Capital Improvement Plan projects.

Board Member Markwell gave his insight:

- He stated that he completely disagrees with Board Member Barnes.
- He wants the administration to show the board why the money is being spent. He wants them to work on a very tight budget. He doesn't think we should withhold taxpayer money that does not have a purpose.
- The class sizes need to be looked at. He thinks that any class with fifteen or less students has to be examined.
- The Mastricola has 1,079 students and four administrators. The high school has three administrators. He would like to see three administrators at Mastricola.
- He would like to see the surplus tightened up. By the return of less surplus, the budget could be reduced.

Vice Chairman Powell added his insights:

- He would like to see the belt tightened a little more.
- It is time to take a good look at why we have such a large surplus.
- Instead of budgeting for the worse-case scenario, we should look at the budget history to see where we came in at.
- We should look for more opportunities to work with town to leverage some contracts.
- We need have more details as to why monies are needed.
- He said that decisions cannot be made without providing data. We should not have to ask for it data. It should automatically be provided.
- It gets tougher each year and people will be looking to us to make some good fiscal decisions for them.

Vice Chairman Ortega provided his insights:

- He wants to see quality education provided by the district.
- He expects the administration to provide counsel to the board on the impact of any adjustments made to the budget.
- Staffing levels need to be adjusted to reflect enrollments at all levels. At the high school, it is a more difficult job to forecast the enrollment.
- He would like to continue the advancement of technology, for example by expanding Wi-Fi and upgrading computers etc.
- He would like to continue the trend of allocating additional money for academic clubs, such as First Robotics, the history club and the Science Olympiad, etc. These groups may need extra funding for travel and shipping expenses. They continue to do fundraise on their own.
- He added that he will find a common theme conveyed by the board and present a consolidated report to the administration.

12. Request for New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) Resolutions

Chairman Ortega noted the document that the board members received entitled the “Call” for NHSBA (New Hampshire School Board Association) Resolutions. The NHSBA, which is made up of school boards around the state, provide training, education and resources and promote certain resolutions. After board members review the resolutions, if any board member would like to consider any resolutions or seek changes or additions, they will be discussed at the next board meeting on October 21, 2013. The deadline to submit the resolutions is October 25, 2013.

13. Other

a) Correspondence

Vice Chairman Powell received an e-mail about his comments at the September 16th board meeting regarding Common Core State Standards. The e-mail stated that Vice Chairman Powell had been incorrect and he should therefore amend the meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Powell did not feel the minutes were incorrect and did not amend the minutes.

Board Member Schneider stated that board members received correspondence relating to Common Core and Smarter Balance.

b) Comments

Chairman Ortega stated that the school board and central office staff were invited to a presentation and question and answer period relating to the No Child Left Behind waiver and Common Core on September 30th. Four school board members attended.

Superintendent Chiafery attended the annual Emergency Management meeting. She stated that she continues to be impressed by fire and police departments and commended them for their service to our district.

14. New Business

There was no new business

15. Committee Reports

Tracy Bull gave a report on the Safe Routes to School Committee meeting.

- There was no August Meeting due to continued finalization of Round 6 infrastructure grant funding awards.
- The opening of the Round 7 funding announcement is still pending. The quarterly meeting of the committee which oversees those decisions occurs Wednesday, October 9th. Our project partner from NRPC, Matt Waitkins is a member of that committee.

Tracy Bull gave a report on The Travel Plan Task Force

- They last met on Tuesday, September 13, 2014.
- The committee reviewed the travel plan draft to date and discussed committee members' feedback and recommendations:
 - Extensive documents complete with data outcomes from surveys, maps, etc. Matt Waitkins is now integrating that into a final report.
 - Redistribution to committee members to follow in preparation for the next meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2013. Final travel plan review is expected then. Public presentations will follow. They anticipate public presentations to follow. They would anticipate 4-6 infrastructure recommendations and a variety of non-infrastructure recommendations within the action plan.
- Monthly activity reports continue to be issued to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT)
- She stated that she believes that Business Administrator Shevenell has begun receiving invoices from NRPC for payment and subsequent reimbursement from the NH DOT.
- She also stated that Rick Greenier, Physical Education teacher at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School has planned an annual "National Walk to School Day" event, which is Wednesday, October 9, 2013.
- Tracy added that Shawn Croteau, Physical Education teacher at James Mastricola Elementary School has undertaken a new initiative entitled "Walking Wednesdays"
 - This program is hugely popular and successful thus far.
 - This program includes students and staff walking the field before school.
 - She noted that accumulated walking miles translate into how far efforts stretch across America. The first week, there were approximately 85 walkers, achieving 54 total miles. The second week, there were approximately 99 participants, achieving 65 miles.

Board Member Barnes reported that she attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on September 19th. They discussed the Halloween party scheduled for October 25th at Wasserman Park from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. They also discussed the theme for the Christmas party which is “Christmas Around the World”. They also had a visitor who spoke about the sports area at the end of O’Gara Drive and what an eye-sore it is.

Board Member Schneider attended the District Wellness Committee meeting on September 30th. All schools were represented. They talked about general wellness, smart snacks and lunches. They will meet again in the spring.

Chairman Ortega spoke about the Town Council Committee meeting. They discussed Safe Routes to School, and the closure of Church Street as well as the Souhegan River Walk easement. The next meeting will be October 14th.

16. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on the agenda items.

17. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 11:05 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a), (b), (c).

The motion passed 5-0-0 on a roll call vote.

At 11:15 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.