

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
October 21, 2013
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

Chairman Ortega noted that Vice Chairman Powell will arrive late to 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 October 7, 2013 Minutes

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2013 meeting

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 16, under Observation Cycle, remove the comma after “year”
- Page 4 of 16, letter “f” under Observation Cycle, add the word “the” before “District’s focus”
- Page 4 of 16, letter “a” under Probationary Educators, add a period after “year” and a capital “F” for “Four”
- Page 5 of 16, paragraph 9, changed “an” to “and” after the word “Probationary”
- Page 7 of 16, paragraph 2 from the bottom, make “neighboring town” plural
- Page 10 of 16, add Mr. Keach’s firm, Keach, Nordstrom Engineering”

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 8 of 16, paragraph 3 after the bullets, the gas conversion amount should be \$909,000 if spread out over 15 years and would be \$698,000 if paid up front.
- Page 9 of 16, paragraph 7, change \$50,000 to \$350,000
- Page 10 of 16, paragraph 7, change “negative” to “problem”
- Page 11 of 16, paragraph 6, at the end of the last sentence add, “in the original CIP submitted to the Planning Committee.
- Page 13 of 16, top bullet should read, “He would like to see a warrant article about retaining funds concerning the disbursement of LGC funds.”

Board Member Markwell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 13 of 16, bullet number 4 should read, “Mastricola has 1,079 students and four administrators. The high school has three administrators. He would like to see three administrators at Mastricola.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 16, last paragraph, second sentence, should be “outcomes of inter-rator reliability”
- Page 7 of 16, paragraph 7, change “grant process” to “program”

The motion to accept the minutes of the October 7, 2013 meeting as amended passed 4-0-0.

3. Public Participation

Jody Vaillancourt, 35 Greenleaf Street, commented on the budget message delivered to the Superintendent by individual board members at the October 7, 2013 board meeting. She spoke about World Language, Honors and Advanced Placement classes at the high school earmarked for potential cuts in the upcoming budget cycle. She added that eliminating academic offerings is unacceptable and should be avoided whenever possible.

Angela Kazazian, 9 Hansom Drive, commented on the Honors and Advanced Placement classes and World Language classes at the high school and her concern over this. She stated that as a resident of Merrimack, she would not support cutting the Advanced Placement and Honors programs.

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive, commented on the proposed meeting between board and Town Center Committee. She noted that Town Manager Cabanel had recommended to the Town Council members that they postpone the meeting until after the busy budget season since none of the proposed agenda items were compelling enough to warrant a meeting at the present time. She added that she respectfully disagrees with this decision and thinks a meeting should be scheduled every year at a scheduled time.

4. Math Programming in the Merrimack School District

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced the members of the District Math Team. Panel members included Julie Deluca, Assistant Principal at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, Laura Antonucci, Math Facilitator at Thorntons Ferry, Ron Delude, Math Department Chair at Merrimack High School, Helen Fitzgerald, Math Facilitator at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and Cheryl Smith, Math Coordinator at Merrimack Middle School. Members of the team in attendance at the meeting were Lynne Bowie, Math Facilitator at Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Nancy Romero, Math Facilitator at James Mastricola Elementary School, Jay Gratton, Assistant Principal at James Mastricola Elementary School, Bill Morris, Assistant Principal at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and Nick Coler, Assistant Principal at Reeds Ferry Elementary School.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained that the team had come before the board previously to discuss the literacy efforts that are central to the educators' work, but they are only part of the daily efforts to support curriculum and instruction in Merrimack. Tonight they plan on speaking about the math programming in the district and the ways in which the district is moving forward collaboratively to address this important area of curriculum instruction.

The Mission Statement is: Excellence in math is achieved through persistence, effort and practice on the part of the students and through effective instruction in response to student learning needs.

The goals are: K-12 Coherency, Standards Based Instruction, Continuous Improvement and Rigor.

Panel members of the District Math Team spoke about the goals and how they are being achieved.

Assistant Superintendent noted that through PERC (Program Evaluation and Review Committee), the members worked hard to define what RIGOR means for the Merrimack School District, trying to show that it is operational throughout the district:

R: Raising expectations for quality learning
I: Individual growth along the continuum
G: Guarantees meeting the needs of all students
O: Optimizes learning with ongoing assessments
R: Real world applications

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin added that we use standards - they do not use us. He stated that the Common Core shift in mathematics guides us in our efforts to achieve a focused and coherent program.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he appreciated the time and effort the team put into their work. He asked which are more rigorous, current Merrimack standards or the Common Core State Standards.

Mr. Delude responded that Common Core would be more rigorous than what is being done now.

Vice Chairman Powell asked how that is going to affect our students.

Mr. Delude responded that Smarter Balanced is not based on standard reached in the senior year of high school. He added that it seems unreasonable to expect that every standard would be met by every student in every grade.

Board Member Schneider asked if there are any standards in Merrimack today that will continue that are different than Common Core Standards.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that what makes Merrimack different and strong is that we have invested a lot of effort in our intervention and extension model. The standards are very good and very strong. What is different and to our advantage is that we take the standard that seem good and strong. Where they are inefficient, we will extend them. When they are too high, we will remediate. He added that there will always be students above and below the different standard levels.

Board Member Schneider stated that we count on continuity and it is good to see K-12 working together. He asked if there is a general feeling across all the buildings that Common Core combined with what we are already doing is a positive thing.

Ms. Antonucci responded that Common Core is a positive step for the district. It is a tool that helps the instructors and students get what they need.

Mr. Delude responded that at the high school the good RIGOR comes in on the eight standards from the Standards of Mathematical Practices.

Ms. Fitzgerald responded that if fluency facts are down pat, then so are the concepts and problem solving.

Ms. Smith responded that at the middle school, instruction has been changed to meet the needs of the students, such as pre-algebra.

Chairman Ortega thanked all the participants for coming and the work they continue to do. He added that it is good to see the collaboration across the district. It's really all about the students.

5. Response to Board Inquiry on High School Programming

a.) Class Enrollments of Ten Students or Less

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained that on September 3, 2013 the board made a specific request to learn more about class enrollments at the high school of ten students or less. The request was also for more information on the Vocational/Applied Technology Program. He then introduced Mr. Ken Johnson, Principal of Merrimack High School and Vice Principals Rich Zampieri and Peter Bergeron.

Principal Johnson explained that the board had been supplied with the list of classes that have enrollments of ten students or less.

Vice Chairman Powell asked what is projected as the enrollments for the second semester classes.

Mr. Zampieri responded that some of the classes will continue because they are year-long classes and some will end. He assumes the enrollments will look fairly similar for next year, or they could change depending on add-ins and drop-outs and how the first semester goes.

Board Member Barnes explained that the reason she asked for the clarification because of budget deliberations. She felt that last year during the budget process the board did not take enough time on academic reductions. She wants to make sure that decisions are made for the right reasons and not because there is a bottom line in the budget.

Board Member Barnes made note of many things:

- She does not want to consider the special education classes because they are IEP and federally driven and not “optional classwork”.
- The classes she wants to look at are the ones that really show where a student can define their course-work in their course of study, where a combination of classes happened and where they did not, where there was a focus on content for those combinations and what was the impact on education.
- The areas she is looking at are combined classes in World Language and English, where there are a lot of Advanced Placement and Honors students.
- She was surprised by “J” – Data Structure ++ Honors and Introduction to Programming. She wanted to know that when you are combining classes how are the students at the lower level of learning work with students in Honors courses.
- She did not want to water down the product [classes] to meet the “bottom line” budget number. The budget bottom line is not the concern of this discussion, but what are we giving our students when we combine classes or taking away from the instruction and where those decisions came to be.
- The question is, when there is a combination class, how is the student getting a quality education?

Mr. Delude, Math Department Chair at the high school, joined the panel to answer Board Member Barnes’ question. He stated that he is the teacher of the combined Data Structure and Introduction to Programming class at the high school. For these students, there are only so many computers in the computer lab, so the course numbers need to be capped. The Data Structure class is actually the second year of the course and usually has a small enrollment. About half of the class is Data and one half the class is Programming. The students still get the depth of education and he is able to individualize the learning for each student, both for combined and independent work.

Board Member Schneider said that the data prepared for the board discussions when it comes to staffing was very informational. He felt that if reductions are proposed, we have to balance data-driven information with micromanaging. He added that he felt that the whole board should have all the data.

Principal Johnson stated that he is committed to obtaining more data and making it available to the board.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he was interested in knowing more about the combined Arabic/French classes. He wanted to know how the combination is done and if it is being done efficiently. He also asked that if the two classes were split apart would the instruction be more effective.

Principal Johnson asked Vice Chairman Powell if it would be beneficial for Mr. Defaa to come before the board to answer the questions.

Vice Chairman Powell responded that he wanted Mr. Defaa to understand that this is just an overview and he would not want Mr. Defaa to think he is being interrogated.

Board Member Barnes stated that she would love to see Mr. Defaa come before the board to explain how he combines the Arabic and French classes. He has two combined classes and is therefore teaching four classes in two class periods. She added that she would love to see his plan for this year.

Board Member Markwell questioned the numbers of students in Student Health. His concern is that there are four students listed as "E" and four students listed as "F".

Principal Johnson stated that there are actually thirty students in Health. The students taking Health have the option of taking the Health standard or college prep course. When they decide which option to take, then they are added to the general health course.

Board Member Markwell stated that he was opposed to cutting any positions. He wondered if there is some kind of scheduling changes or efficiencies found where the classes could be changed.

There were no further board questions. The agenda moved to Vocational/Applied Technology Programs.

b. Vocational/Applied Technology Programs

Principal Johnson explained that the Vocational/Applied Technology Program is now referred to CTE, Career and Technical Education (CPE). He added that more than 11,000 New Hampshire students participated in CTE programs during the 2010-2011 school year. Ninety-five percent of CTE high school students graduated during that year.

Highlights of Principal Johnson's presentation included:

- Goals of CTE:
 - To help students develop technical skills that meet industry standards.
 - To provide students hands-on learning opportunities to promote student success
 - To provide students with the ability to make connections between classroom instruction by applying knowledge and skills to solve real-world problems.
- Roles of the Guidance Counselors
- The CTE Selection Process
- CTE and scheduling
- CTE in 2013-2014

- For this school year, there were 39 new applications from Merrimack High School to both Alvirne and Nashua.
 - Twenty-six students were accepted into the program.
 - After the initial students' commitments, some have changed their minds and others have moved away.
 - With the returning students we currently have thirty-five attending CTE Programs. There are seventeen students at Nashua North, ten students at Nashua South and eight students at Alvirne.
- Technology standards from the State Department of Education
 - Merrimack High School course offerings
 - Nashua CTE offerings
 - Nashua CTE application
 - Alvirne application
 - CTE promotion plan for 2014-2015

Board Member Barnes asked if the students who were not accepted, was it based on space constrictions.

Mike Soucy, senior member of the Guidance Department, responded that acceptance into the program is not based on space constrictions. There are a variety of reasons why students are not accepted into the program such as their academic standing and strength or weakness in certain areas such as math or science. Some are special education students who do not have the skill sets needed for the courses.

Board Member Barnes asked if acceptance into the program is based on testing, or is it based on their course work and transcripts.

Mr. Soucy stated that it is based on testing and course work in Merrimack.

Board Member Barnes asked if there have been students who not only make an agreement to be in the program but also agree to make up classes through the Evening Academy to get back on track for graduation.

Principal Johnson responded that the goal of the Evening Academy is to get students to stay on track and graduate with their classmates. He added that he would have to look into the statistics to determine the number of students involved with the Evening Academy and CTE.

Board Member Barnes stated that we have a ninety-eight percent graduation rate in Merrimack. She asked if there is a student who needs to attend classes for an extra year to complete their course work, are they in the two percent of the ninety-eight statistics.

Principal Johnson responded they would not be considered in the two percent if they graduate. He added that would be data he would have to ask the board for.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it doesn't affect the rate if they are still enrolled.

Vice Chairman Powell explained that he was the person who asked that the CTE program be put on the agenda for information, adding that in his time on the board he had not seen a presentation on the program. He added that inevitably questions are raised about the program at the time of making up the school calendar. It is important to let the public know about this program and what is available for the students in Merrimack High School.

Vice Chairman Powell asked if there are any students from Nashua or Alvirne who attend CTE classes in Merrimack.

Principal Johnson replied that there were no students from Nashua or Alvirne who attend CTE classes in Merrimack.

Vice Chairman Powell thanked them for the information presented.

Principal Johnson stated that the presentation would not have been possible without the help of Ted Barker, Director of Guidance at the high school, and Mike Soucy.

6. Ongoing Preparation for Development of the 2014-2015 Budget

a. The Budget Message

The budget message to Superintendent Chiafery was read by Chairman Ortega

b. Budget Clarification

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she is taking more time to discuss the budget process rather than the board waiting for her to present the budget to them on December 2, 2013. She added that she wanted to share her thinking as she works with all the principals to put the budget together.

World Language

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the district has a strong program as World Language is offered to upper elementary learners to take exploratory French and Spanish that go into the middle school where French and Spanish are offered again. In the immediate past we have built a strong World Language program at the high school, especially in Mandarin and Arabic. Latin, as well, has been expanded. It would be her intention to put forward those five languages and to say that student interest will guide their thinking by number count. Her asked the board if it was in support of the World Language program that goes from the upper elementary school to the middle school and then the high school.

Chairman Ortega stated that he is fully in support of the World Language program, and very proud of it.

Board Member Markwell stated that he is in support of World Language as a whole. What he was trying to convey is whether or not there is enough demand for that language to justify a teacher. He wants to know if there is a way we can use a distant learning or another resource to provide that same availability of a language. He added that what he said at the last board meeting was taken out of context.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the board has asked for data in the future for what those classes are going to look like. We are trying to base our projections on what they have seen in the past. Over time they have made adjustments. In this case, she thinks the instructors are making a huge impact in the way they work together and that they plan for the future. She added that we always have that distance learning through the Virtual Learning Academy, but she is committed to direct instruction by an instructor.

Board Member Markwell stated that direct instruction would be the optimal choice. He added that we do not have a charter, but we are a public high school, not a World Language high school. His point is that

we have to make sure we offer a good, overall public education. Our specialty is not World Language. Our specialty is good general education.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that World Language is one of many departments at the high school.

Board Member Markwell stated that he does support World Language just as he supported and reinstated field trips. He is not looking to cut anything. He is looking for another way to reduce staff with our efficiencies. We should look at that as a board. It is important for people to understand what he was trying to say, instead of taking it out of context.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it is just as important for her to hear from all the members of the board.

Board Member Barnes stated that she feels that World Language can only go up. The department can continue to grow. It is so good of the district to expose our students to foreign languages they can tangibly understand, such as French and Spanish. In the high school we have some very unique languages. It would be nice to expose the students at the elementary and middle schools to Mandarin and Arabic. They can continue to explore these subjects in their high school years. Exposure to the specialized and marketable global languages would be good for the district. We have the talent in-house right now where we can get to higher levels of Mandarin and Arabic. The teachers need to be at the head of the class for dictation, pronunciation, understanding and culture. It is hard to do remote distance learning.

Board Member Schneider stated that he agrees with the administration's direction.

Class Sizes

Superintendent Chiafery stated that another area they are looking at is class sizes at the high school level which was discussed previously with the administration from the high school. She said that at the elementary level, pre-kindergarten through grade four, the levels are calculated off an algorithm which was done with Business Administrator Shevenell. There has been a reduction in force when it has been prudent. This past year was an anomaly, so rather than change the whole way of doing things, she prefers doing a closer tracking so there will be no surprises. That would mean every second week she would be looking at the enrollments with the idea that if any modification needs to be made, they can be done within district by transferring a person from one building to another.

Board Member Schneider stated that he thought the methodology is okay, but if the board finds something that is a close trade-off in terms of staffing levels, he wants to be totally informed.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she is not at the point of knowing about enrollment yet, but she may say that even though there is a small fluctuation in numbers, she wants to maintain things the way they are and not do anything at this time. Reductions in force have been done for the last five to seven years.

Technology

Superintendent Chiafery stated that her thought is that Nancy Rose has been working with others in the district to come up with a technology plan. The board has been informed about this plan. It is Superintendent Chiafery's intent to include those items that Ms. Rose has put forward over a five year plan which will be addressed in the technology budget.

Consolidating the Mastricola Complex and Changing the Configuration of the Administration

Superintendent Chiafery explained that two years ago she listened very carefully to the board and looked at the demographics and removed an administrative position at the high school. Over time there has been a larger decline in enrollment in the elementary schools. She is not ready to change any positions at this time, unless the board tells her it is something she must do. She does not think this is the time to make any changes. She looks at the schools as completely separate entities. There have not been any discussions about it. She added that she and Board Member Markwell have spoken, but she would like to know what the other board members are thinking.

Board Member Schneider stated that he sees the Mastricola buildings as two independent buildings. As long as the individual schools continue to be sufficient in of themselves, they need to continue to be individual.

Board Member Schneider stated that the middle school is different from the elementary schools. They are different in their objectives and they are different culturally. Fifth and sixth graders have more responsibilities and more options and opportunities. The graduating class will bring the elementary school and the upper elementary school together and create more dynamics. She thinks the administrators of both buildings would be facing more responsibilities and challenges. If the enrollment declines dramatically, the upper elementary school should still be its own entity.

Board Member Markwell addressed Board Member Schneider about his comments regarding cohesive culture. He thought it was interesting that Board Member Schneider sees such a diverse culture within one of the buildings, when he talks about other schools being aligned to what is going on from one school to another on the elementary level.

Board Member Schneider clarified what he had said. The culture across the three elementary schools in the same grades is similar but going from James Mastricola Elementary School to James Mastricola Upper Elementary School is going from one culture to another.

Board Member Markwell stated that he thought there is a culture that a student can go from one school to another and there would not be a vast difference in policies or how the schools are run. On a leadership level he thinks the policies are similar. He added that the district tries to have consistencies from one building to another.

Board Member Schneider stated that, to clarify, his point the issues that are dealt with in grades kindergarten through four are completely different than the issues in grades five through six.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that this discussion should be based on a management level. What the high school has that James Mastricola Elementary School and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School don't have is department heads that help the administration. He added that he would like to see a model of a consolidation such as the one Board Member Markwell is proposing.

Chairman Ortega stated that Board Member Markwell's position is well intentioned and he added that the board needs to look at efficiencies. However he feels that they are separate and distinct schools and based on workloads associated with the new performance evaluation system and administrator should not be cut.

Board Member Markwell stated that there has been a decline in enrollment in the elementary schools. The high school has a larger enrollment than the elementary schools and they are working with three

administrators. He thinks that could work at Mastricola, based on the enrollment numbers. He added that he is looking for guidance from Superintendent Chiafery.

The Budget Calendar

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the Budget Committee has already had its first meeting, with Board Member Schneider as the board representative on the committee. The latter part of the calendar is reflective of what the Budget Committee has developed.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she looked at last year’s calendar and tried to parallel it. The budget will be presented to the board on December 2, 2013. It would be her intent to try and schedule department budget hearings on December 16, 2013 and January 6, 2014, and then the board would have completed their discussions with the department heads. The Budget Committee will be able to have their liaison meetings with those departments. On a given night, a whole other department would be looked at and then the Budget Committee would ask their questions at a follow-up meeting. The dates she is interested in knowing if the board members are available are Wednesday, January 8, 2014 and Monday, January 13, 2014, which are two arbitrary dates. They are predominately front-ended again towards the beginning of January. If these dates are acceptable to the board, she will look for locations for the meetings. Then at the January 21, 2014 board meeting the hope is the budget would be approved. Then on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 all department hearings will be held at 6:30 p.m.

Superintendent Chiafery told the board that she appreciated their input on these budgetary items.

Board Member Schneider stated that the Budget Committee wanted the board to move their meeting from Tuesday, January 21, 2014 to Monday, January 20, 2014. He explained to them that Monday, January 20th is Martin Luther King Day and there is no school. That is the reason the board meeting was moved to the 21st. He added that they realized that if they do their due diligence by attending our meetings, it is realistic to think that all the departments could be done in one night by the Budget Committee.

The Proposed Calendar for 2014-2015 Budget Development:

Monday, December 2, 2013	Overview of proposed budget to school board
Tuesday, December 3, 2013	Budget materials available for Budget Committee
Monday, December 16, 2013	Department Budget Hearing(s) at School Board meeting
Monday, January 6, 2014	Department Budget Hearing(s) at School Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 8, 2014	School Board budget hearing
Monday, January 13	School Board budget hearing
Tuesday, January 21, 2014	Approval of 2014-2015 budget at School Board meeting
Tuesday, January 7, 2014	
Through Friday, January 24, 2014	Budget Committee liaison meetings (after the department’s budget has been reviewed by the School Board
Tuesday, January 28, 2014	Budget Committee meeting review of all department budgets
Tuesday, February 4, 2014	Budget Committee Meeting: Review warrant articles/Work session
Tuesday, February 11, 2014	Budget Committee Meeting Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 5, 2014	Deliberative Session for School Board Budget
Tuesday, April 8, 2014	Voting Day

7. Board Response to Call for NHSB Resolutions

Chairman Ortega noted that at the October 7, 2013 meeting, the proposed resolutions were given to the board members to review. The due date for the resolutions is October 25, 2013. He asked if any board members had any resolutions.

No board members had any resolutions.

8. Other

a) Correspondence

Chairman Ortega noted three e-mails were received from three parents supporting the World Language program at the high school.

Mr. Muller sent a note explaining the class size of the Science Olympiad

b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery noted that she received the Public School Approval Designations and all six schools are fully approved by the Department of Education.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that there will not be a joint meeting between the Town Council and the School Board at this time. She is not sure when a meeting will transpire, but that it will be after the budget process.

Superintendent Chiafery announced that the State Board of Education holds its meetings at different school districts. The James Mastricola Upper Elementary School would host the State Board of Education on October 24, 2013 between 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Board Member Schneider stated that it was shocking to him that the Town Council chose not to have a meeting with the School Board.

Board Member Schneider noted that the board has discussed Literacy and the Common Core and Math and the Common Core. As a board member he is comfortable with the Common Core in the district.

Board Member Schneider felt that the Common Core has been discussed; however, there has not been a focus on Smarter Balanced, the assessment. There are a lot of questions that need to be answered. He would like to take up the topic of assessments as a separate individual topic at a future board meeting.

Superintendent Chiafery assured Board Member Schneider that they have not forgotten about assessments and it is an issue that will be discussed.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that he was dismayed that the Town Council did not want a meeting. He would like to know why. He felt that budget time is the perfect time to have a meeting with the two entities. He will look into the RSA's which are related to municipal bodies meetings at least once a year.

Board Member Barnes was alarmed that there was not a joint meeting with the Town Council. She had hoped to discuss the future of O'Gara Drive with the Council and could not do that because of the meeting cancellation. She reported that the Council has twenty-two percent of the tax bills in their budget. She questioned why they have a high salaried Tax Collector and a high salaried Assistant Tax Collector. She suggested the public call the Town Council members and ask them that question.

9. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the board and the trustees of the trust fund are invited to tour the library at Reeds Ferry Elementary School at 6:30 p.m. on November 4, 2013, prior to the school board meeting. Board Member Barnes stated that she cannot attend the tour of the library, but could call in if necessary. All other board members are able to attend.

10. Committee Reports

Ms. Crowley, Student Representative gave a report from the high school:

- She began with a statement concerning the World Language program at the high school, stating that as a whole, Merrimack students are investing in the World Language program. They take pride in the multi-cultural education and understanding of all our students.
- On October 21st, the Big Paint Volley Ball game was being played to bring awareness to Breast Cancer Month.
- A football game and pep rally for Homecoming will be Friday, October 25th and the Homecoming Dance will be Saturday, October 26th.
- SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) is trying to raise three thousand dollars to bring back Challenge Day to the high school.
- The first quarter ends on Friday, November 1st.

Board Member Schneider attended the Budget Committee meeting on October 15th. The next meeting will be on November 12th when Business Administrator Shevenell will present the end of the year review.

Board Member Barnes reported that the Professional Development Committee met on October 10th. They discussed how IRS calculations should be done to be in compliance. They also went through the old Master Plan and discussed the course work that should be completed. All graduate class reimbursements have been approved for the year. It is a testimonial to the great success of our graduate program with SNU and our teachers' commitment to higher learning.

Board Member Barnes reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on October 16th. There was a lot of discussion including the ice rink on O'Gara Drive. They also talked about sledding issues and safety. The Halloween party will be Friday, October 25th at Wasserman Park. This is the same night as upper elementary school Family Fun Night which raises concern to have two events scheduled for the same night. The committee will work closer with the district in the future to set dates for event. The Holiday Parade will be December 1st and the theme is "Holidays Around the World". The Dog Park was mentioned. Also, she noted that the dining hall at Wasserman Park will be demolished for safety reasons.

Tracy Bull reported that the Town Center Committee met on October 14, 2013. She provided an update on the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan. The next meeting is October 22, 2013.

Tracy Bull reported that the Souhegan River Walk Subcommittee members have met with Town Center Chairman Rothhaus and Town Manager Cabanel. The easement agreement has been to the Town's attorney and will go before the Town Council. At the time of the meeting, the renewal agreement with the National Parks Service for trails assistance program is still pending due to the government's furlough closure

Tracy Bull reported an Eagle Scout project is being developed by high school student James Jolly pertaining to the trails area related to the Department of Transportation land behind the high school.

Tracy Bull reported that Assistant Director of the Department of Public Works, Kyle Fox, has been directed to meet with the Church Street abutters regarding the closure of Church Street.

Tracy Bull reported that the Merrill's Marauders Sign is being worked on by Pat McGrath which includes research through the National Archives for historical images to be integrated into a new sign.

Tracy Bull reported that the Town Center Committee had a very successful day at the Fall Expo.

Tracy Bull reported that the Town Center Committee will meet Monday, November 18, 2013. The agenda should include public presentations of the Safe Routes to School.

11. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Sharon Sernik, 15 Windsor Drive, spoke to the board concerning the possible cuts to the Advanced Placement and Honors courses. She said there were not enough Advanced Placement classes now, and the thought of cutting some is a concern to her. She also talked about the PSAT's in Merrimack. She feels the schools are not very supportive in that there is no preparation for the students, they are held on Saturdays instead of during the school week and the students are not pushed to take them.

Susan Correia, 38 Merrymeeting Drive, was concerned about changing to a single administration for James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and James Mastricola Elementary School. She also spoke about World Language and higher level courses and the possibility of cutting some of the classes. She mentioned distance education courses because Merrimack does not offer enough Advanced Placement courses, and having to pay for some of these classes. She begged the board to consider the needs of all the students in the district.

Rene Jones, 23 Stevens Ave spoke about meeting the needs of higher level students. She had to pay out of pocket for classes that Merrimack did not offer for her child. She also questioned what else is potentially being cut besides Advanced Placement and Honors classes, and would like to have all the data the board has been collecting regarding these cuts.

12. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:30 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) 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 10:50 p.m., Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn.

The motion passed 5-0-0.