

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room  
November 4, 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.

Chairman Ortega stated that Vice Chairman Powell would arrive later in the meeting.

### **2. Approval of the October 21, 2013 Minutes**

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2013 meeting.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Replace the words “Smarter Balance” to “Smarter Balanced” throughout the document
- Page 8 of 13, paragraph 7, change the word “algorism” to “algorithm”

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 8 of 13 asked that the spelling of Chiafery be corrected in the second paragraph from the bottom.

Vice Chairman Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 3 of 13, paragraph 2, change the word “puts” to “put”
- Page 3 of 13, paragraph 7, sentence three, change the word “standard” to “standards”
- Page 6 of 13, last paragraph, second line, change “had seen” to “had not seen”
- Page 13 of 13, paragraph 6, change the spelling of “Courier” to “Correia”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 13, paragraph 5 from the bottom, change the word “literary” to “literacy”
- Page 4 of 13, paragraph 5, line 3, remove the word “”does”
- Page 6 of 13, second bullet, add the words “from Merrimack High School” between the words “applications to”
- Page 9 of 13, paragraph 2 from the bottom, change the word “stated” to “intentioned”
- Page 9 of 13, paragraph 2 from the bottom add the sentence “However he feels that they are separate and distinct schools and based on workloads associated with the new performance evaluation system an administrator should not be cut.”
- Page 11 of 13, second paragraph, correct the spelling of the name Muller
- Page 13 of 13, paragraph 4, change “November 16” to “November 18”.

The motion to accept the minutes of the October 21, 2013 meeting as amended passed 5-0-0.

### **3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

### **4. Consent Agenda**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following item for approval:

- a) Teacher Nomination  
- Danielle Dunn, World Language Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- b) Teacher Resignation  
- Jaclyn Petullo, World Language Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

### **5. Boston College Education Seismology Project Partnership with the Merrimack Public Library**

Chairman Ortega introduced Chair of Library Trustees Wendy Thomas, Library Trustee Rick Barnes and Library Director Yvette Couser.

Wendy Thomas reported an opportunity for the Merrimack Public Library through the Boston College Education Seismology Project to purchase a seismograph that would be housed in the Merrimack Public Library. The Seismograph could measure earthquake and volcano activity around the world. The major purpose of the seismograph would be to measure movement and energy activity in New Hampshire. The Merrimack Library would be the first library in New Hampshire to have a seismograph.

Rick Barnes highlighted a trip to the Weston Observatory and a Public Library in Massachusetts that has a seismograph.

Yvette Couser explained that the Seismology Project Partnership would complement the Public Library's mission. The librarians would be trained to read the seismograph and scientists would present colloquiums throughout the year.

Wendy Thomas reported that the Library Trustees voted to move forward with the Seismology Project Partnership. Funding sources for \$10,000 would include grants, business sponsorships and donations.

Wendy Thomas asked the School Board to provide a letter of support for the Boston College Education Seismology Project Partnership with the Merrimack Public Library. A letter of support is a requirement for the grant application.

Board Member Barnes reported that New Hampshire experienced an earthquake the day after the Library Trustees visited the Weston Observatory. She added, in the future, it could be a seismograph at the Merrimack Public Library reporting earthquake details rather than the Weston Observatory. She highlighted local meteorologists Dr. Norman Phillips, Kevin Skarupa from WMUR and Al Kaprielian from WBIN.

Board Member Barnes expressed her support for a letter of support from the School Board.

Board Member Schneider asked if a seismograph were located at the Merrimack Public Library would traffic noise from D. W. Highway be an issue.

Yvette Couser responded that the seismograph would be calibrated to ignore that type of noise. She also noted that the seismograph could move if the location of the Public Library changed.

Board Member Schneider expressed his support for the project.

Board Member Markwell highlighted the “Geothermal Heating and Cooling for Homes and Businesses in New England” as one of the free colloquium series offered at the Weston Observatory.

Chairman Ortega stated he would write a letter of support on behalf of the School Board for the Boston College Education Seismology Project Partnership with the Merrimack Public Library.

## **6. Update Regarding K-12 Science Curriculum Initiatives**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin introduced Jamie Cordeiro from James Mastricola Elementary School, Ashley Meehan from James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Patrick Scott from Merrimack High School, Jeff Caron from Merrimack Middle School, Assistant Principal Bill Morris from James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Allison McGuire from Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Rebecca VandeBerg from Thorntons Ferry Elementary School and Keith Tanner from James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Assistant Principal Morris and the Science Curriculum Team reviewed the Science Curriculum.

Board Member Barnes acknowledged currently there is no requirement for a Science Common Core and asked where it aligned with the future of curriculum and measurements.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded there is flexibility within the science curriculum. He stated the science curriculum is organized around the “understanding by design” methodology and is aligned with the state standards. The content of the science curriculum will not change. Changes may occur at the grade levels.

Chairman Ortega asked the significance of the words in bold print.

Rebecca VandenBerg replied the words in bold print are vocabulary words students are expected to define.

Chairman Ortega asked for additional conversation from the gap between curriculum and what happens in classroom and the consistency, therein.

Jeff Carron replied effort was placed on the depth of knowledge required. Suggested activities will be added as a supplement to the curriculum. He noted that it is the teacher’s responsibility to receive a curriculum and plan classroom lessons. It is not the function of the curriculum to plan day by day lesson plans.

Assistant Principal Morris added that there are opportunities within each building and at each grade level for conversations between individuals to share best practices.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded the curriculum is presented to teachers as guidelines and benchmarks, not as a script.

Chairman Ortega asked if seismology sparked any interest from science team.

Ashley Meehan responded that her classroom documents earthquakes from around the world. A seismograph at the Merrimack Public Library would enhance the students' experience and make it more meaningful to the students.

Chairman Ortega thanked the science team for the hard work and thought behind the science curriculum.

## **7. Presentation Regarding the Souhegan Trail Easement**

Chairman Ortega introduced Town Center Committee Member Debra Huffman, Town Center Committee Member Tracy Bull and Vice Chairman Powell.

Vice Chairman Powell reported the Souhegan Trail extends from the Twin Bridges through Watson Park through high school property ending at Wild Cat Falls. He noted that he and others had an opportunity to walk the trail last summer and the cross country teams anticipate using the trail to host home meets.

Debra Huffman reported work on the trail has been ongoing for a long time. She displayed a map of the Souhegan Trail.

Board Member Markwell questioned if there were future plans to extend the Souhegan Trail beyond the Twin Bridges and Wild Cat Falls.

Debra Huffman responded that the Souhegan Trail will connect to existing trails within Wild Cat Falls. She noted that the land from Twin Bridges to Kids Kove is private property.

Board Member Schneider asked if the Souhegan Trail will cross the lower field behind the high school.

Debra Huffman responded that the Souhegan Trail is separate from the high school lower field.

Tracy Bull suggested that the School District may want to gate and/or add signage at the entrance to the lower field depending on the use pattern.

Board Member Schneider questioned if the School District would have any obligation or responsibility should the trail flood or wash away.

Debra Huffman responded that per the Agreement the School District would not be liable.

Vice Chairman Powell noted the Agreement defines a 200 foot wide area for the trail to exist which would allow for redirection of the trail, if needed.

Vice Chairman Powell highlighted the fact that the foot bridge crossing the Souhegan River near the Merrill's Marauders Bridge was built from a recycled bridge from Portsmouth.

Vice Chairman Powell and Board Member Barnes expressed their support for the Souhegan Trail Easement.

Chairman Ortega stated that the approval of the Souhegan Trail Easement would appear on the November 18<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda.

## **8. 2012-2013 Budget Year-End Review**

Business Administrator Shevenell reported an appropriation surplus of \$1,363,612.04 for year ending 2012-2013. The surplus was realized from professional salaries, retirement incentive, pay for performance incentive/professional development, support staff benefits and salaries, health insurance premiums, cost savings for oil and electricity, special education out-of-district placements, equipment repairs, transportation, telephone, printing, advertisement, supplies, text and instructional materials, equipment, records checks and bonded debt.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported a \$534,000 revenue surplus as a result of Medicaid and Catastrophic Aid reimbursements.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that the food service program ended the 2012-2013 year with a deficit due to lower participation. He explained that \$20,000 of the \$137,000 food service surplus was used to offset the deficit.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that he would be attending a Budget Committee meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Merrimack High School.

Board Member Schneider reviewed the areas of surplus. He believes that Business Administrator Shevenell already budgets as conservatively as possible; however, he feels it will be discuss during the budget process.

Chairman Ortega noted that the surplus was approximately 2% of the total budget.

Board Member Schneider asked if the transportation budget could be more accurate moving forward.

Business Administrator Shevenell clarified that the transportation budget is expected to be more accurate moving forward.

## **9. Other**

### a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

### b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery stated that she attended the Partners in Education Ceremony in Manchester on October 28<sup>th</sup>. She reported all six schools were recognized.

Chairman Ortega reported that the School Board and the Trustees of the Trust Funds attended a private unveiling of the newly renovated library at Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He stated that the renovations were funded by the Trust Funds. He thanked the Trustees of the Trust Funds for their support.

## **10. New Business**

There was no new business to report.

## **11. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Crowley stated that the support for the Challenge Day fundraising event was overwhelming. The students raised \$1,100 plus an anonymous donor matched that amount to bring the total up to \$2,200. They are now only \$800 away from their goal. She highlighted during the Homecoming Pep Rally Mrs. Brown a math teacher cut her hair for the first time in 36 years in support of the Challenge Day fundraising efforts. Mrs. Pearson a paraeducator shaved her head for breast cancer awareness and Mr. Sabean waxed one leg.

Board Member Barnes reported that the Conservation Commission reactivated the Grater Woods Subcommittee and elected not to have a designated seat for a School Board representative on the subcommittee. Board Member Barnes stated that she submitted an application of interest and was appointed as a member of the Grater Woods Subcommittee. Her representation at the November 5<sup>th</sup> Grater Woods Subcommittee meeting will not be as a School Board liaison but that she will be able to provide the School Board with Grater Woods Subcommittee updates. She added that Business Administrator Shevenell has been extended the invitation to consult for School District interests as the subcommittee moves forward.

Chairman Ortega stated that the School District is an abutter to the Grater Woods property and it provides an easement to the Grater Woods property. For those reasons he would welcome updates from Board Member Barnes.

Vice Chairman Powell asked why the Conservation Commission felt the School Board did not need representation on the Grater Woods Subcommittee.

Board Member Barnes responded that she and Business Administrator Shevenell informed the Conservation Commission that it was in the Conservation Commission's best interest to have School Board representation on the Grater Woods Subcommittee. The Conservation Commission disagreed. Therefore, Mrs. Shannon Barnes applied for a seat on the Grater Woods Subcommittee as a Merrimack Resident who happens to have knowledge about School District interests.

Vice Chairman Powell noted that access to the Grater Woods property is through School District property.

Board Member Barnes clarified that the most efficient and appropriate access for large machinery is through School District property. She noted the Memo of Understanding between the Town Council and School District outlines how to request and receive access school district property.

Vice Chairman Powell felt the School Board representation would have been an appropriate topic for a joint meeting between the Town Council and the School Board.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that there is a Grater Woods project that will require access through the School District property. He anticipates another positive experience using the access road during the school day.

Business Administrator Shevenell questioned why the Conservation Commission did not give the School District formal membership on the Grater Wood Subcommittee.

## **12. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on Agenda items.

### **13. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:28 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to adjourn.

The motion passed 5-0-0.