

Merrimack School District Budget Committee
February 14, 2019
Minutes

Present: K. Bobbitt, J. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, A. Hyde-Berger, C. Lang (by phone), G. Savitch,
C. Mower, B. Stisser and School Board member N. Schoenfeld

Excused: D. Illg, M. Murphy and S. Jacoby

Absent: L. French

Also present: Superintendent M. Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent Dr. M. McLaughlin, and
Assistant Superintendent for Business M. Shevenell

S. Heinrich called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

S. Heinrich explained that this meeting date was the snow date for the postponed February 12th meeting.

S. Heinrich reminded the Committee that C. Lang would participate in the meeting via telephone. At this time, Carol joined the meeting via speakerphone. C. Lang said she was in Satellite Beach, Florida and Ginger, the Budget Committee mascot, was with her.

S. Heinrich told those present that the committee would review warrant articles until 7:30 PM, at which time the Committee would recess to hold the public hearing, after which the Committee would reconvene to vote on its recommendations for the warrant and approve prior minutes.

Petitioned Article Review

S. Heinrich told the Committee a petitioned warrant article had been submitted to construct a turf field at the high school at a cost of \$1.2 million dollars. S. Heinrich recognized Carrie Chaissen (Powers Circle) and Brandi Nunez (Powers Circle) to present the warrant article to the Committee.

C. Chaissen told the Committee that the Merrimack High School soccer teams do not have a home field. She said students are bussed to a field in Bedford for games and have to find their own transportation to practices. In addition, she said the grass field at the high school is only available for football games. She said many parents are interested in installing a turf field at the high school. Such a field would increase availability of the field for use by lacrosse, soccer, football and other teams and once installed, a turf field is easy to maintain. She noted there are significant up-front costs, but parents are willing to solicit donations to off-set the cost.

Brandi Nunez told the Committee that the parents have been looking at different organizations for donations and they are working on a process for donations, but there are rules regarding School Board acceptance and usage of donations.

M. Shevenell said that School Board authorized him to get bids and other information about turf fields. He said a site survey has been done by an engineering firm, Tighe and Bond, and he hopes to have design specs by Deliberative Session.

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Discussion included the following:

- School Board has not yet discussed or voted a recommendation on this warrant article.
- Cost:
 - Cost estimate does not include an exterior building for concessions and bathrooms.
 - Cost estimate was reached after consultation with Tighe and Bond as well as with other schools.
 - The cost includes protecting the track during the field installation.
- Donations:
 - The parents behind the petition are hoping to secure \$500,000 in donations.
 - Ways to permanently recognize donors or sponsors were mentioned.
- The turf field would have permanent lines for each sport and can be used for multiple games in a given day.
- A turf field is on the Capital Improvement Plan for a future year.
- The current field has a drainage issue which a new field will address.
- There is \$30,000 in the proposed budget for bus transportation to out-of-town practices and games.
- Annual Field Maintenance Cost:
 - Current field - \$30,000 for supplies to fertilize, mow and stripe plus labor.
 - Turf field – \$20,000 to contract out maintenance.
 - After installation
- The life expectancy of a turf field is 12 – 15 years.
- Replacement cost could be 50 - 70% of the installation cost.
- More games held at the high school might increase school and town attendance at games.

At 7:32 P.M., S. Heinrich recessed the meeting.

At 8:05 P.M., S Heinrich reconvened the meeting.

Warrant Article Recommendations

Teachers Contract

A. Hyde-Berger made a MOTION to recommend the Teachers Contract Warrant Article.
Second: B. Stisser.

S. Heinrich asked if there was any discussion. There was none.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 8 – 1 – 0 (K. Bobbitt opposed.)

Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund

K. Bobbitt made a MOTION to recommend the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article. Second: J. Guagliumi

S. Heinrich asked if there was any discussion.

C. Lang asked if article correctly says "...raise and appropriate..." S. Heinrich said that the term "raise" is needed even though the funds will be coming from surplus.

There was no more discussion.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 9 – 0 – 0.

Mastricola Complex Paving

C. Mower made a MOTION to recommend the MES Paving Warrant Article. Second: G. Savitch.

S. Heinrich asked if there was any discussion. There was none.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 9 – 0 – 0.

Operating Budget

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to recommend an “Operating Budget of \$77,854,036. Second: A. Hyde-Berger.

S. Heinrich asked if there was any discussion.

C. Lang asked if the School Board had discussed the \$200,000 that the Committee had added to the budget. N. Schoenfeld said the Board has not yet met to discuss this issue.

There was no more discussion.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 1 – 1. (C. Lang opposed and N. Schoenfeld abstained.)

Turf field

S. Heinrich called for further discussion which included:

- Possibly this should have been bonded over 10 years.
- The warrant article cannot be amended to make it a bond.
- Without actual donations received, the entire amount will have to be raised on the tax rate.
- Community groups are not charged to use Merrimack School District fields.
- A turf field extends field availability for sports usage to nearly year round.

K. Bobbitt made a MOTION to recommend the Turf Field Warrant Article. Second: J. Guagliumi.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION FAILED: 2 – 6 – 1. (K. Bobbitt and J. Guagliumi in favor. N. Schoenfeld abstained.)

S. Heinrich said the article will be listed on the warrant as “Not Recommended by the Budget Committee: 6 – 2 – 1.”

C. Lang asked if it was too late to revisit the Operating Budget. S. Heinrich said it was.

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Approval of Prior Minutes

K. Bobbitt made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2019. Second: J. Guagliumi. There were no corrections proposed. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 2. (C. Mower and N. Schoenfeld abstained.)

G. Savitch made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of January 29, 2019. Second: K. Bobbitt. There were no corrections proposed. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 9 – 0 – 0.

B. Stisser made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2019. Second: K. Bobbitt. There were no corrections proposed. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 8 – 0 – 1. (Gilliam Savitch abstained.)

Other

S. Heinrich reminded the members that Deliberative Session would be on March 5, 2019 and that the next Budget Committee meeting would be held at the end of the Deliberative Session to reconsider Committee recommendations on any monied articles that have been changed during the Deliberative Session.

S. Heinrich told the Committee that filing period was February 20th to March 1st and reviewed the names of members who whose terms were expiring this spring.

Public Participation

There was none.

C. Lang left the meeting at this time.

C. Mower made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: J. Guagliumi. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

S. Heinrich adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Heinrich