

Merrimack School District Budget Committee  
Minutes  
February 18, 2020

Present: L. French, J. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, A. Hunter (by phone at 7:30 PM), C. Lang (by phone at 7:00 PM), C. Mower, G. Savitch, and School Board liaison A. Schneider  
Excused: A. Hyde-Berger, D. Illg, S. Jacoby, B. Stisser and M. Murphy  
Also present: Superintendent Dr. M. McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum J. Fabrizio, and Assistant Superintendent for Business M. Shevenell

At 7:01 PM, S. Heinrich led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that a physical quorum was not reasonably practical and that immediate action by the Budget Committee was imperative since that this was the last date on which the Budget Committee could hold a Public Hearing on the budget and warrant articles. Accordingly, he stated that he had determined that an emergency existed under RSA 91-a:2,III and that he would be calling C. Lang to attain a quorum.

At this time, C. Lang joined the meeting via speakerphone. She said she was in Satellite Beach, Florida and there was no one in the room with her.

At 7:05 PM, S. Heinrich called the meeting to order and reminded members that all votes taken during the meeting would be roll call votes.

**Petitioned Warrant Article**

S. Heinrich said the District had received a Petitioned Warrant Article, which has been certified as having at least 25 signatures, to appropriate \$125,000 to demolish the Brentwood Building and return the land to usable condition. He said Lee French, who was also a Budget Committee member, was the primary sponsor of the article and asked him to speak to the article.

L. French told the Committee that when the warrant article to purchase the Brentwood property was presented at School District Meeting, the School Board explained it wanted to purchase the property, mostly for the land. He said the District is paying at least \$23,000 a year to keep the building running until a future time when a master plan is in place. He indicated that the space could be used immediately for temporary parking if the building was torn down.

Discussion included the following:

- The Building has no educational use.
- It could take 2 – 3 years before a master plan is in place.
- It is possible that the District will have paid \$125,000 to maintain the building by the time a master plan is in place.
- The town is willing to help reduce the cost of the project by providing trucks to remove the building debris.
- The Planning and Building Committee has recommended the building be demolished now.

- The Budget Committee added funds to the operating budget to demolish the building last year. Those funds were cut from the operating budget at Deliberative Session.
- The funds in the warrant article can only be used on demolition of the Brentwood Building. If the article passes, the funds will still be raised by taxes but the School Board could decide not to spend the money.
- The effect of \$125,000 on the tax rate is 3¢ per thousand dollars of valuation.

A. Schneider told the Committee that the School Board was split on this article largely, due to the impact on taxes. He said if the article passes, he would be in favor of spending the money to demolish the building.

L. French made a MOTION to recommend the petitioned Warrant Article 8. Second: C. Mower.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 6 – 1 – 0. (A. Schneider opposed.)

A. Schneider asked for a POINT OF ORDER. He asked what the Committee needed to do about the motion on the table to add funds to the operating budget to demolish the Brentwood Building.

S. Heinrich said if no one makes a motion to remove the article from the table, the motion dies on the table and the committee doesn't have to take a vote on it.

### **Operating Budget Recommendation**

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to bring a proposed operating budget of \$80,111,563 to the Public Hearing. Second: L. French.

There was no discussion.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 0.

S. Heinrich told members after the Public Hearing, the Committee would revisit the Operating Budget to make any final adjustments and take a final vote on its recommendation.

### **Warrant Article Recommendations**

#### **Article 3: Emergency Repair CRF**

J. Guagliumi made a MOTION to recommend Article 3. Second: L. French.

J. Guagliumi asked if the requested funds were to replace money used for bat remediation.

A. Schneider said that the purpose of this request is to increase the repair fund to \$500,000 which the School Board has determined would be the amount needed to deal with a “worst case” catastrophe.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 0.

**Article 4: MHS Windows**

C. Mower made a MOTION to recommend Article 4. Second: G. Savitch.

There was no discussion.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 0.

**Article 5: Smith Gym Bleachers**

J. Guagliumi made a MOTION to recommend Article 5. Second: G. Savitch.

There was no discussion.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 0.

**Article 6: Master Plan**

L. French made a MOTION to recommend Article 6. Second: C. Mower.

C. Mower stated he was disappointed the funds for this article were not folded in the operations. He said he felt a master plan was critical for continued growth and development of the District.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 0 – 0.

At this time, A. Hunter joined the meeting by speakerphone. He said he was in a waiting area at Detroit International Airport.

S. Heinrich recessed the meeting for the Public Hearing at 7:35 PM.

The meeting resumed at 8:30 PM

**Operating Budget Recommendation II**

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to recommend an operating budget of \$80,111,563. Second: C. Mower.

A. Hunter said he had the same concerns he had voiced during Budget discussions but would support the motion.

C. Lang said she was concerned about the perception that assessments are being arbitrarily raised.

A. Schneider asked for a POINT OF ORDER. He asked if the Committee would be re-voting its recommendations on warrant articles.

S. Heinrich said the Committee would not.

A. Hunter asked about the tabled motion to add funds to the Budget for demolition of Brentwood.

S. Heinrich said that a petitioned warrant article had been received and voted on which covered that issue so the motion would simply die on the table, unless someone moves to take it off the table.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 8 – 0 – 0.

**Approval of Prior Minutes**

C. Mower made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2020. Second: L. French. No corrections were suggested. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 1 – 0. (G. Savitch abstained.)

L. French made a MOTION to approve the Public Minutes of February 4, 2020. Second: C. Mower. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 1 – 0. (J. Guagliumi abstained.)

L. French made a MOTION to approve the Non-Public Minutes of February 4, 2020. Second: C. Mower. No corrections were suggested. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 7 – 1 – 0. (J. Guagliumi abstained.)

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to seal the Non-Public Minutes of February 4, 2020. Second: C. Mower. A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 8 – 0 – 0.

S. Heinrich said the Information Session held on January 28, 2020 was not a meeting so the Committee did not need to approve the Summary Notes that members received.

C. Lang asked that the Summary Notes be corrected to include the amount of the guaranteed maximum health insurance increase.

**Other**

**Signing the MS 27**

S. Heinrich told the Committee that at least 7 members need to sign the MS-27 budget document by next Monday in order for the District to post the budget within statutory timelines. He said that a signature did not mean that the member had voted in favor of the budget. A signature means that the amounts posted were correct.

M. Shevenell said the MS-27 would be ready by noon tomorrow at the Administration offices during regular business hours.

**Deliberative Session**

S. Heinrich told the Committee that Deliberative Session is on March 3, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the upper elementary school all-purpose room. He reminded the members that the Committee has reserved seating at a table in the front of the room.

S. Heinrich said the next posted Committee meeting will be immediately following Deliberative Session in the all-purpose room. He said the purpose of the meeting is to approve minutes from

tonight's meeting and Public Hearing as well as revisit its recommendations if any monied warrant article is amended during Deliberative Session.

**Filing Period**

S. Heinrich told the Committee that filing period for the April elections starts February 26, 2020 at 8 AM and ends March 6, 2020 at 5:00 PM. He said that the members whose terms are up for election are A. Hunter, S. Jacoby, C. Mower and B. Stisser. He asked them to let him know if they were not going to run for re-election.

**Committee Comments**

S. Heinrich thanked everyone for participating in what turned out to be a difficult year. He said it was the first time in 34 years that the Committee has had quorum issues.

C. Lang asked that people attend Deliberative Session because there are a lot of things on the warrant and changes can be made during Deliberative Session.

S. Heinrich suggested that people check the facts and verify the source of any information they receive regarding the issues on the ballot.

C. Mower made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: L. French. A roll call vote was held.  
MOTION PASSED: 8 – 0 – 0.

S. Heinrich adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Heinrich