

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
July 18, 2016
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Schneider, Board Member Guagliumi, Board Member Thompson, Board Member Schoenfeld, Superintendent Chiafery and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell.

Absent: Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Barnes welcomed new interim school board member Dr. Naomi Schoenfeld.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Chair Barnes closed public participation.

3. Update on Town Center Committee

Chair Barnes invited Town Center Committee Chairman Nelson Disco to the table.

Mr. Disco began by sharing that he has lived in Merrimack since 1967 when the population was at about 4,500 residents.

In his research into the evolution of the town he discovered that the town began as clusters of small villages which is the reason there is no traditional New England town center with a recognizable green or common area with a church and a courthouse.

In the late 1980's the Planning Board established a town center study and designated the area between Front St. and Frazier Square, east of the turnpike as the center. The actual geographic center is near the old meeting house on Meetinghouse Road. This study was incorporated into the Master Plan in 1989, 2002 and 2013.

The gift of land known as Watson Park and a now removed dam owned by the state have impacted the town center planning. This spurred the Town Council to engage the National Regional Planning Committee (NRPC) to proceed with an iTRAC study; completed in 2009.

Mr. Disco referred two large maps that he brought to the meeting. They showed the areas of Merrimack that comprise the town center. One map showed the completed projects and projected future projects recommended by the iTRAC study.

They are:

Sidewalks

- 1A Sidewalk from the Courthouse to Route 3 be extended thru Abbie Griffin Park.
- 1B Sidewalk in front of Watson Park (completed)
- 2 Sidewalk on west side of Daniel Webster Highway from Church Street to Wire Road.
- 3 Sidewalk on east side of Daniel Webster Highway from the library to Twin Bridge Road.
- 4 Sidewalk on west side of O’Gara Drive to Baboosic Lake Road.
- 5 Sidewalk on the east side of the Daniel Webster Highway to Railroad Ave (Frazier Square).
- 6 Sidewalk on south side of Woodbury St. from McElwain to Daniel Webster Highway to connect the high school to the downtown.
- 7 Complete sidewalks on both sides of Daniel Webster highway and Baboosic Lake Road.

Trails

- 1 Connect Watson Park to the Fire Station via the sluiceway.
- 2 Develop Souhegan River Trail from Watson Park to Wildcat Falls. This area is used by the cross country and track teams.
- 3 Develop a trail from Watson Park to Twin Bridge Park.

During Mr. Disco’s presentation he shared that below the Merrill’s Marauder’s bridge is a pedestrian bridge the State of New Hampshire obtained from the city of Portsmouth. Additionally, the land at the previous dam was donated to the Town of Merrimack by the Pennichuck Corporation.

Upon completion of the iTRAC study a committee was appointed to implement the recommended changes. Funding was provided by a federal grant from the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) to build trails.

Mr. Disco shared the connection between the Town Center Committee and the School Board. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell accepted the unanimous support of all to be the liaison between the two groups.

Mr. Disco shared some of the ongoing work which includes, a proposal to the dead end Church Street where it intersects Rte. 3, a future sidewalk from the library to the Post Office, bike route discussions with the National Regional Planning Committee (NRPC) to update the regional bike pedestrian plan to accommodate cyclers riding from town to town.

A program encouraged by the Healthy Eating And Living New Hampshire (HEAL NH) called Complete Streets has a goal of creating more walkable cities. This program was approved as part of a ten year study by the state legislature in 2016.

Mr. Disco closed his remarks by highlighting a few points.

1. Be aware of current trends and plans for increased bike/pedestrian highway use.
2. School Board support to mitigate identified risk areas.
3. School Board consideration of bike/pedestrian safety during CIP deliberations.
4. School Board advocate for bicycle/pedestrian improvements

5. Anyone adventurous enough to take a walk from the library to the post office.

Board Member Thompson asked about sidewalk responsibility of businesses.

Mr. Disco shared that some of Rte. 3 is town owned and some is state owned. The requirements are different.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that in other parts of the country sidewalks are replaced by wider roads with painted sidewalk areas. This could help with winter maintenance.

Mr. Disco noted that pedestrians do not get the same feeling of safety with this concept.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the town could be surveyed about the desire for sidewalks.

Mr. Disco responded that there seems to be a nationwide renewed interest in more sidewalks due to lifestyle changes.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if sidewalk clearing is prioritized.

Mr. Disco responded yes. First priority is schools, then town buildings. Gaps in the sidewalks creates inefficiencies.

Mr. Disco noted that TAP project happened due to the cooperation of the School Board.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Disco for the very informative presentation and reinforced the value of the Town Center Committee and the School Board working together.

4. Special Services and Technology Library/Media: A Joint Review

Director Rose framed how the partnership began and evolved. She was looking for a stronger intersection between technology planning, curriculum development and selection of digital content. At the same time Director Fabrizio was looking to create a Response to Intervention (RTI) Committee. Director of Special Education Fabrizio and Director of Technology and Library Media Rose worked with Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin to shape the steering committee for the RTI initiative.

One example of this collaboration was the SOUNDFIELD System, or the REDCAP device. Its main purpose is to assist the hard of hearing. When worn around the neck a child hears what the speaker is saying as clearly as if he or she were right in front of the speaker. There are over 200 of these devices in the district.

At the primary level a data collection program called AB Pathfinder is utilized with children on the autism spectrum. Expensive iPads were replaced at a 7 to 1 ratio with less expensive devices that fit the data collection needs.

The steering committee looks at utilizing technology to do more for all, meet core needs and then expand outward to address additional individual student needs. This creates an ongoing cycle that links assessment, instruction, data collection and data analysis resulting in an individualized RTI for each student.

Director Fabrizio stressed the common goal to design programs for all students. All students with disabilities are legally entitled to the same educational opportunities as their peers as outlined in the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) act.

Director Rose shared the results of the Speak Up survey that was conducted in December 2015. She highlighted some of the parent responses. Four hundred parents responded with 78% responding that there is internet access in their homes. Highlights included:

Percentages stated below are for the Merrimack School District. Response rates under 40% are sometimes omitted from the results below.

Question: What concerns you most about the use of technology at your child’s school?
(Check all that apply)

- Technology use varies from teacher to teacher 47%
- Students don’t have access to technology in every class 41%
- Technology use is not a regular part of the school day 36%
- Class or school websites not updated 33%

Question: Which of these topics would you like to know more about?
(Check all that apply)

- Technology in use at my child’s school 61%
- Apps or software that could help my child with learning at home 59%
- Internet safety in place at my child’s school 45%
- Different types of classroom models that are being implemented at my child’s school 44%
- How data about my child collected through digital products is being used and protected 42%

Question: How important do you think it is for every student to be able to use a mobile device like a laptop, tablet, or Chrome book during the school day to support schoolwork?

- Important 42%*

*This was the only response rate over 40%.

Other responses were very unimportant (8%), unimportant (5%), neither important nor unimportant (22%) and very important (22%)

Question: What would be the benefits of incorporating mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, and Chrome books into daily classroom instruction? (Check all that apply)

- Access to online textbooks 65%
- Increases student engagement in school and learning 63%
- Provides a way for students to review class materials after school 62%
- Improves teacher-parent-students communications 59%
- Extends learning beyond the school day 54%
- Student ownership of learning 50%

Question: If your child's school allowed your child to use a mobile device such as a laptop, tablet, or Chrome book at school for educational purposes, how likely would you be to purchase one for your child to bring to school?

- Very likely 37%*

*This was the highest response rate

Question: Which of these types of classroom models do you think would be best for your child to succeed in school? It's okay if you are not familiar with all of these. We provided you with an explanation of each.

- Blended learning class 58%
A formalized structure where the teacher provides instruction part of the time in a physical classroom with a class of students, and part of the time the students follow an online curriculum at their own pace at home or at a school
- Traditional class 39%
The teacher provides instruction to a class of students in a physical classroom on a regular schedule
- Flipped class 21%
The teacher assigns online videos of lessons, labs, and lectures for students to watch as homework, and then the in-school class period is used for doing projects, in-depth discussions, remediation, and individualized schoolwork help
- Virtual class 2%
The teacher provides instruction to students who are all online

Question:

What is the most effective way for your child's teacher or school to communicate information to you? (Check all that apply)

- Personal emails 89%
- Face-to-face meetings 55%
- School portal that includes information on grades and assignments 48%
- Personal phone calls 47%
- Text message to parent mobile device 44%
- School, classroom, or district informational website 34%

Director Rose shared the outcomes of a professional development opportunity provided to teachers after school let out that involved bringing more STEM activities into the curriculum. Teachers took the initiative to collaborate with each other, take notes on their experiences and explore ways to expand their lessons. Robots DASH and DOT and the MAKEY-MAKEY, snap circuits, programming options and notebooks were provided to the teachers. Other activities utilized 3D printers and stop-motion videos.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how student work and privacy is maintained.

Director Rose responded that the Office 365 environment is maintained on the district servers. Going forward a single sign on application called CLEVER will be implemented. CLEVER is for schools and allows schools to use a website without revealing additional personal data on the website.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if requests for new technology are driven by need or want.

Director Rose responded that requests are driven by planning and the needs of students.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about district technology priorities.

Director Rose responded that they include additional laptops, teacher training, e-textbooks, and replacement parts.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about the grade 7-12 learning management software.

Director Rose responded that Schoology will be incorporated into PowerSchool to allow teachers to create class rosters, post assignments, hold online discussions and tie accounts together.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Speak Up survey results would be posted on the school district website and was told yes.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about online textbooks.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that some textbook publishers provide the e-text when the print copy is purchased.

Director Fabrizio responded that there are resources available for special education students through state and federal channels if needed.

Board Member Thompson asked for clarification between extension and intervention.

Director Fabrizio responded that extension is challenging a student to move further with their learning. Intervention is assistance to learn the subject matter in front of them.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked about the accuracy of the responses in the Speak Up survey. She was concerned that those without internet were unable to access the survey.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked about online texts and noted that recent literature suggests that readers do not absorb the information as well as when reading the print version of the text. Director Fabrizio noted that student issues and needs factor into the decision to offer both print and non-print resources.

Board Member Thompson asked if PC Connection is involved with the school district in any way.

Director Rose responded that PC Connection is an approved vendor and has donated equipment in the past. No formal partnership exists at this time.

Chair Barnes asked if the parent login will be the same for Power School and Schoology.

Director Rose responded that she is not sure at this time. The district was control over the staff and student directories, but not the parent directory.

Chair Barnes asked about the makeup of the RTI team.

Director Fabrizio responded that it is made up of 16 people that includes Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, himself, principals, special education and classroom teachers, library media teachers and counselors.

Chair Barnes asked about the ratio of technology to students.

Director Rose responded that in most buildings it is about one to four.

Chair Barnes asked if there is a goal to log the number of hours a teacher or classroom uses technology.

Director Rose responded that work is ongoing to approach the issue by grade level.

Superintendent Chiafery informed the board that the parent piece will be shared at the August 15, 2016 meeting.

5. Update on Summer Capital Improvement Projects

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented to the board the status of the Merrimack High School track and the Merrimack Middle School roof.

Improvements to the track include widening the track to eight lanes to comply with NHIAA race formats, erecting a retaining wall and resurfacing of the track. A PowerPoint presentation with photos of the ongoing construction work were accompanied by detailed explanations of the various stages of the project. The expected date of completion is mid-September 2016. This has been communicated to the Merrimack High School athletic director.

The Merrimack Middle School roof was originally put out to bid as a partial project, with the second budgeted for in the 2016-2017 capital improvement plan. The entire roof will be completed for the originally budgeted amount for the partial roof. The staging is now being put in place and the project will commence soon and should be completed before school begins in September 2016.

Board Member Guagliumi asked what sports will be impacted because the track will not be completed before school begins.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the project is expected to be completed in late September and that the sports teams will use other fields temporarily.

Board Member Thompson noted that anyone interested in observing the progress of the projects can check the school district website.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how the track will be protected going forward.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that a dedicated set of stairs will be used to enter and exit the field and that a protective mat will be used for egress over the track.

Due to the expanded track a new mat will need to be purchased. During the curing process the field will not be used at all. The entire area will be fenced which will discourage improper entry onto the track.

6. First Reading of Board Policy

Superintendent Chiafery began by stating that per direction from the School Board, policies be reviewed and updated regularly. This proposed policy is based the New Hampshire School Boards Association sample policy and reads as follows:

Board Officers Policy

Board officers will include a chair and vice-chair. Officers will be elected at the board's re-organizational meeting following the school district annual meeting. Board officers will serve a one-year term, concluding at the re-organizational meeting the following year, at which time a new election of officers will occur. Officers will remain in their respective offices until new successors are elected.

If the chair resigns from the school board or resigns from the office of chair, the vice-chair will become chair of the board. If the chair loses his/her election or does not run for re-election, the vice-chair shall serve as chair during the organizational meeting. If the vice-chair resigns from the school board or from the respective office, the board will hold a new election for that office.

The Superintendent is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board.

Chair:

The chair shall preside at all meetings. The chair will have the right to vote on all matters before the board. The chair will consult with the superintendent on the preparation of the agenda for each meeting, shall have authority to sign contracts and other instruments as approved by the board in its name and on its behalf, and shall have such other powers and duties as the board may from time to time determine.

Vice-Chair:

The vice-chair will have the powers and duties of the chair in his/her absence or for the duration of the disability, and such other powers and duties as the board may from time to time determine.

1st Reading: July 18, 2016

2nd Reading:

Adoption:

Superintendent Chiafery noted the modifications she made to the document before presenting it to the board. They are:

1. Change the words chairperson and vice-chairperson to chair and vice-chair.
2. Removal of the language that refers to a secretary. There is no secretary position on the Merrimack School Board.

Superintendent Chiafery noted the most recent updates to the policy. These changes made in 2016 are:

1. The last sentence of the first paragraph.
2. The second sentence of the second paragraph.

Board Member Thompson asked for clarification if the vice-chair has the right to vote.

After a brief discussion, Vice Chair Schneider suggested to change the second sentence under Chair: "As with all members the chair has the right to vote on all matters before the board." The remaining board members agreed.

The policy will be revised and read again at the August 15, 2016 school board meeting.

7. Outcome from Radon Testing at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented the findings of RFP Environmental in regards to radon testing at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School. The entire school was tested over a three day period with the HVAC system running and the entire school passed. Another targeted test will be conducted in the winter months when everything is closed up.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if a facilities request form should note that the HVAC should be turned on and was told that the HVAC automatically turns on when the building is in use.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested future testing be done room by room before the HVAC is turned on.

8. Information Regarding Expense for PFOA Water Filters for Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared the cost of building a central treatment (\$85,000 installed), versus a drinking water fixture treatment (\$28,000 installed). He provided a handout that included a detailed breakdown that included the additional costs for each project.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if new piping is included in the drinking water option and was told yes.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that it is incumbent on the Merrimack School District to operate independently on getting this information.

Board Member Guagliumi would like to see a collaboration between the school board, the Merrimack Village District (MVD) and St. Gobain to address the issue of the water contamination.

Board Member Thompson would like to see all of the schools filtered in some way.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that each school would require a different structural solution and that costs would vary. This step would require a directive from the school board.

Board Member Guagliumi would like to see the other schools tested to provide a comprehensive report.

Chair Barnes noted that the MVD is working with Pennichuck to gather data to be shared on the MVD website.

Chair Barnes asked for an update on the soil testing on playground areas.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reported that all local and state testing shows no issues.

Board Member Thompson clarified his position on the topic by stating that he would like all schools in the district to be tested. He also requested that the school board move forward on installing water filtration systems.

Board Member Guagliumi commented that there is not enough money in the budget at this time to take action and that water filtration for all of the district schools would need to be in a future budget.

Board Member Thompson responded that once the data is shared that other sources should be expected to cover the expenses.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that at this time any available funds would be wiped out just to take care of Reeds Ferry Elementary School. She noted that the MVD is our partner and that the next step should be to bring them back to the table to further the discussion.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared that a peak flow analysis at Reeds Ferry Elementary School would cost between \$3,000.00 and \$4,000.00.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested working closer with the MVD before investing any money on water treatments.

Chair Barnes agreed that it would provide direction to the school board for the MVD to attend the August 15, 2016 meeting to address board members' many questions and concerns.

Board Member Guagliumi also thought that the district as a whole was being addressed in regards to water concerns. She would also like two monthly updates from the MVD.

Board Member Thompson supported working with MVD but would like to have an endgame in place.

Vice Chair Schneider agreed with the concerns but stated that he is more concerned with the next agenda item, lead in the water. He requested that a member of the MVD board be in attendance at the meeting.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested an option would be to craft a warrant article that would address the water concerns.

Chair Barnes agreed that it would be very helpful to have a Merrimack Village District board member also attend the August 15, 2016 meeting. Concerns would include what steps have been

taken, what wells have been tested and what moves have been made to improve the quality of the water.

Chair Barnes asked board members to forward questions for the Merrimack Village District to the Superintendent's Office in preparation for the August 15, 2016 school board meeting.

9. Results from Lead Testing at Six Schools

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell referred to a report produced by RFP Environmental in regards to testing for lead in the water. He then listed the steps in the process to resolve any problems.

Vice Chair Schneider and Board Member Thompson appreciated that the New Hampshire Statute of an acceptable 0-015mpl was used as a guideline and that action was also taken on borderline results.

10. Proposed Composition for the Communications Committee

Superintendent Chiafery framed the goals of the proposed committee as:

1. To improve communication among teachers, parents and students.
2. Advocacy
3. To highlight district work in a meaningful way.

Superintendent Chiafery presented a proposal for the make-up of the new committee. It reads as follows:

Subject: Proposed Composition for the Communications Committee

Listed below is a proposed composition for the Communications Committee. The Leadership Team responded at the end of the school year. Nancy Rose was asked to serve as the chair. The committee would convene in September.

Proposed Communications Committee Composition

- 2 School Board Members
- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
- Director of Special Services
- Director of Technology Library Media (chair)
- Elementary School Administrator (Pre K-6)
- Secondary School Administrator (7-12)
- 6 Teachers (1 per school)
- Elementary School Parent (Pre K-6)
- Secondary School Parent (7-12)
- Community At-Large Member

Board Member Guagliumi asked about including more parents, perhaps one per school. She recommended more representation from parents.

Board Member Guagliumi asked how teachers would be chosen and could they be chosen from a cross-section of disciplines.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested looking at teachers who already have an excellent communication system in place already.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern with too large of a committee.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that Director of Library and Technology Nancy Rose can handle the committee size.

Vice Chair Schneider recommended involving the police department's social media personnel.

Board Member Guagliumi asked how many members were on the last big initiative, the teacher evaluation process and was told 13 people.

Chair Barnes asked the members to discuss what process be taken to select the At-Large members.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested asking people to apply for the At-Large positions by filling out an application and to wait until the August 15, 2016 meeting to further discuss the recruitment method.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if a steering committee of core members begin to meet and build out their structure.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested that she meet with Director of Library and Technology Nancy Rose for an initial discussion on structuring the committee's nucleus.

Chair Barnes expressed her pleasure seeing this new committee take fruition.

11. Approval of June 20, 2016 Minutes

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2016 meeting as presented.

The motion passed 3-0-2. Board Members Guagliumi and Schoenfeld abstained.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the minutes of the June 30, 2016 meeting.

Vice Chair Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Change all cases where Vice Chair Schneider is referred to as Board Member Schneider.

The motion passed as amended 4-0-1. Board Member Schoenfeld abstained.

12. Consent Agenda

Superintendent Chiafery presented the following teacher nominations:

• **Teacher Nominations**

Keith Bike, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
Nicole Delani, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
Adam Jonesinski, English Teacher, Merrimack High School
Erin MacLean, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
Jacqueline Mathis, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
Katie Pena, Grade 2 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
Erin Woods, Math Teacher, Merrimack High School

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to accept the consent agenda.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

b) Comments

There were no comments.

14. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery reminded everyone that the September board meeting will held on Tuesday, September 6, 2016. It will not be held on a Monday due to Labor Day.

15. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

16. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

17. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 p.m.

The motion passed 5-0-0.