

**Merrimack School Budget Hearing  
Merrimack School District  
School Administrative Unit #26  
January 10, 2017 (Tuesday)  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**

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

**Absent:** Student Representative Sernik.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**4. Discussion about a Proposed Budget Reduction**

Chair Barnes invited Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell to speak about the proposed budget reduction.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that he had received bids this week for the roofing project at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School. All of the contractors were vetted and understood the scope of the project. Based on the bids he advised the board that the operating budget can now be reduced by \$35,000.00.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the lowest bid still offered a high quality roof.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that he was very confident in the quality of the vendor.

Chair Barnes asked for the revised budget amount and was told it would be \$73,673,057.00, for a 1.91% increase over last year's budget.

**5. Discussion about Possible Warrant Articles**

Chair Barnes raised the issue of the paving of the Merrimack High School bus loop at a cost of \$196,174.00. The reconstruction and patching of a section of the bus loop, at a cost of \$38,000.00, would be part of the operating budget.

Chair Barnes added the issue of the O’Gara Drive street paving and new sidewalk project; and the issue of the new SAU offices. Because the site has not yet been chosen, the board discussed tabling this project until there is more certainty.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern that delaying the O’Gara paving might allow the road to degrade so severely that it will cost more in the long run.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that even waiting a few years would not result in a total reconstruction of this road.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the sidewalks could be eliminated from the warrant article.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded yes but that the sidewalks are part of the Town Center Committee’s Master Plan and Safe Sidewalks Program. That committee has recently received a state grant to complete a sidewalk as part of the Safe Sidewalks Program.

Vice Chair Schneider would like to see the bus loop at a cost of \$196,174.00 as a separate warrant article; and the O’Gara road paving at a cost of \$186,884.00 as another separate warrant article.

Board Members were in agreement that the sidewalk should be deferred until the SAU Office site and its possible construction are better determined.

Board Member Schoenfeld expressed concern that voters might decide to choose only one warrant article and that the board might want to prioritize the warrant articles for the voters.

Discussion ensued among the board members.

Chair Barnes noted that the Planning and Building Committee has yet to present their final charges to the School Board.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the paving project would involve any area near central office (green building).

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the bus loop paving project would not involve the central office (green building) parking lot. However, the paving needs to begin at the corner of McElwain and Woodbury streets due to a dip in the road that collects water just before the maintenance building.

The board agreed to have Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell create separate warrant articles to address the bus loop and the paving project.

Chair Barnes raised the issue of the asbestos removal. This project also involves removing and replacing the countertops and cabinets in the Family and Consumer Science Room. The asbestos removal would cost \$265,000.00 and the countertops and cabinets portion would cost \$45,000.00. The total project is expected to cost \$310,000.00.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell will create a warrant article to address the asbestos removal project in its entirety for a cost of \$310,000.00.

Chair Barnes raised the issue of the replenishment of the Emergency Capital Reserve Account. She noted that it is now depleted. The warrant article would allow the board to take up to \$75,000.00 from the surplus.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that this account is for emergency repairs of facilities and grounds. Some of the most recent uses of this fund were for the bleacher repairs, Hurricane Sandy deductibles, the lower ball field and the transformer.

Chair Barnes made note of the fact that the town has a surplus fund of about six million dollars while the school board has a specific use fund of \$150,000.00 and a special education fund of \$500,000.00.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell will create a warrant article to address the Emergency Capital Reserve Account.

#### **6. Public Participation on Agenda Items**

There was no public participation.

#### **7. Motion to Adjourn**

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.