

1 **Merrimack School Board Budget Hearing**
2 **Merrimack School District**
3 **School Administrative District Unit #26**
4 **February 20, 2017**
5 **Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**
6

7 **Present:** Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Schneider, Board Members Guagliumi, Thompson and
8 Schoenfeld, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant
9 Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Student Representative Sernik.

10
11 **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

12
13 Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

14
15 Chair Barnes asked those in attendance to remain standing after the Pledge of Allegiance for a
16 moment of silence in memory of School Board Treasurer Richard Hastings who passed away
17 suddenly on February 7, 2017.

18
19 Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.
20

21 **2. Public Participation**

22
23 Town resident Jennifer DeFelice of 66 Patten Road spoke in favor of bringing the canine into the
24 schools. She spoke of family members in Florida who shared positive outcomes with her within
25 their school district once a drug sniffing dog was introduced into their high school.
26

27 Ms. DeFelice also shared an interaction she had with a local student who has turned to marijuana
28 as an alternative to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) medicine. This is so that other students
29 will no longer approach him to purchase his prescription medicine.
30

31 Town resident Kristin Carrillo of 2 Greatstone Drive voiced concerns about unlocked lockers
32 and would like to see more education within the community on the dangers of drugs. She
33 expressed concern that bringing in the drug sniffing dog will create complacency within the
34 community.
35

36 **3. Discussion Regarding House Bills Pertaining to Education Issues**

37
38 Chair Barnes welcomed to the table State Representatives Chris Christensen and Dan Hynes to
39 speak on some of the 60 house bills pertaining to education.
40

41 Board members had provided advance questions on specific bills.
42

43 HB 276, allowing students and parents to opt out of taking the statewide assessment test, passed
44 the House 203 to 155 and is now on the way to the Senate. There are currently no federal
45 penalties for school districts who opt out.
46

47 HB 413, relative to state contributions to the NH Retirement System, passed the House 267 to 83
48 and is on the way to the Senate.

49
50 School Board members expressed concern over the future impacts to school budgets and
51 welcomed the progress of the bill.
52
53 HB 525, relative to stabilization grants, has been retained in committee.
54
55 HB 491, relative to default budgets, will require districts to hold public hearings on default
56 budgets and any non-recurring items may be removed by public motion.
57
58 Board Member Thompson asked why the language could not be more specific and state that the
59 default budget be presented to the community as it would be if it were to default.
60
61 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell has been involved with the default budget since
62 its inception over 20 years ago. He questioned why the bill only applies to school districts when
63 RSA 40:13 applies to schools and towns. As it is written, the bill is contradictory and its purpose
64 is unclear.
65
66 Vice Chair Schneider shared that during his tenure on the school board there has always been
67 transparency.
68
69 Board Member Thompson asked the representatives to re-consider this bill.
70
71 In regards to SB 43, relative to opt in/opt out on student surveys; as it is written this creates
72 additional burdens on school districts.
73
74 Representative Christensen stated that the purpose of this bill was to cut down on non-
75 educational surveys.
76
77 Vice Chair Schneider noted that the Merrimack School Board has also submitted a resolution to
78 the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) addressing this very issue.
79
80 Chair Barnes asked the representatives where the legislature stands on school choice issues,
81 especially for special education students.
82
83 She expressed additional concern about vouchers and their impact on deliverable education
84 within the district.
85
86 Representative Hynes responded that some tax credit bills have been approved that relate to
87 school choice.
88
89 Representative Christensen referenced Governor Sununu's recent speech in favor of school
90 choice.
91
92 Vice Chair Schneider noted the burden presented when a special education district student
93 attends a charter school. State law requires that all extra services and transportation costs fall
94 back on the district.
95
96 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin asked the representatives to remain cognizant of the fact
97 that they represent all of the public school students in New Hampshire.

98
99 Representative Hynes noted that all day kindergarten is now a topic of discussion at the state
100 level.
101
102 Vice Chair Schneider commented that Merrimack has been pro-active in offering kindergarten
103 and pre-school classes.
104
105 Representative Christensen noted that all day kindergarten and re-instituting school building aid
106 will each cost between fifteen and twenty million dollars. Both issues are being discussed at the
107 state level.
108
109 Representative Christensen spoke briefly about school drinking water which is addressed in HB 485.
110 It creates more stringent rules due in part to the Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) problems of the past
111 year.
112
113 Chair Barnes thanked both representatives for attending and responding to the board's questions.
114
115 **4. James Mastricola Upper Elementary Educators Selected for Honeywell Educators**
116 **at Space Academy**
117
118 Chair Barnes welcomed Principal Marsha McGill, Assistant Principal Morris and James
119 Mastricola Upper Elementary Educators Ashley Meehan and Keith Tanner to the table.
120
121 Principal McGill shared details of the program. Honeywell Educators at Space Academy is an
122 intensive educator program for math and science teachers that provides simulated astronaut
123 training focused on space science and exploration.
124
125 All lessons taught and lesson plans provided align with National Science and Mathematics
126 Standards. Activities are designed for students aged 10-14 and can be adapted for other grade
127 levels.
128
129 Educator Meehan outlined the application process and her eagerness to learn new ways to teach
130 science to her students.
131
132 Educator Tanner is looking forward to the experience and learning new ways to teach some of
133 the specific science concepts in his curriculum.
134
135 Both educators expressed their gratitude to the superintendent and principal for discovering this
136 opportunity and offering it to them.
137
138 Board members wished the educators a good experience and thanked Honeywell representative
139 Jim Lucey for his part in this endeavor.
140
141 Superintendent Chiafery stated that Mr. Lucy was instrumental in the fact that Merrimack School
142 District is able to send two educators to this program. She hopes to invite him to attend with the
143 educators after the program to recount their experience.
144
145 Educator Tanner commented that the program is funded by Honeywell employees.
146

147 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that “Chance favors the prepared mind.” He lauded
148 both educators for their ongoing work on the science curriculum committee.

149
150 Chair Barnes noted the board’s interest in both educators returning and sharing their experiences.

151
152 **5. James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Adequate Public Education Site Visit**
153 **Report**

154
155 Principal McGill and Assistant Principal Morris remained at the table to share the process of
156 preparing for a site visit.

157
158 Principal McGill explained the Input Based Accountable Systems survey (IBAS survey) and the
159 sixteen categories and numerous questions contained within each. The IBAS survey purpose is
160 for districts to compare the state’s expectations against what actually is happening in the school.

161
162 Questions must be answered with specific examples that detail how a standard is met.

163
164 If a standard is not being met, an explanation must be provided as to why it is not being met.

165
166 All of this information was compiled and kept in a large binder and available for review.

167
168 The site visit committee asked questions of individual staff members, students, parents, school
169 board members and then observed classes in session.

170
171 The site visit committee then met with Superintendent Chiafery and school administration. They
172 then took the binder to review.

173
174 Assistant Principal Morris detailed the specifics of the Health and Fire and Safety Inspections.

175
176 This piece required a school-wide self-inspection that ranged from food safety, animals on the
177 property, playgrounds, to general conditions of the facility. Director of Facilities Tom Touseau
178 was involved in this inspection.

179
180 Principal McGill noted that the process involved a lot of reflection which is always healthy.

181
182 The school passed with several commendations and two minor recommendations.

183
184 Chair Barnes noted the strong relationship that the schools maintain with the school board.

185
186 Board Member Guagliumi noted that the newly formed Communications Committee will be
187 available to the schools for promoting activities, events and other information.

188
189 **6. Promotion of School District’s K-12 Art Show at Kahuna’s in March**

190
191 Chair Barnes invited art teachers Carolyn Rordam (HS) and MaryBeth Donovan-Olson (K-6) to
192 the table.

193
194 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that this project is a great manifestation of the
195 district goal to work across grade levels.

196
197 Educator Rordam shared that she had attended a district-wide art show in Concord and how
198 impressive it was to see K-12 work in one setting.
199

200 The Merrimack School District will hold a show at the Big Kahuna's restaurant from March 7th
201 to March 30th in support of national youth art month. The show invites art work from a variety
202 of mediums and from artists of varying abilities.
203

204 An opening reception will be held on March 10th at 4:30 p.m. The young artists and their
205 teachers will be in attendance.
206

207 The purpose of the show is to bring student art work out into the community and bring attention
208 to the importance of art education in the schools.
209

210 Both educators thanked the school board for their continued support of the arts.
211

212 Chair Barnes noted that this is the second meeting in a row where Big Kahuna's has been
213 thanked for their support of the school district.
214

215 **7. Board's Response to Canine in the Schools**

216
217 Chair Barnes opened by noting that board members had received several emails from
218 constituents on this matter, mostly in favor of bringing a canine into the schools.
219

220 Vice Chair Schneider wanted to stress to the community that the canine in the schools is only
221 one piece of a broader plan to address drugs in the schools. He sees the canine as a tool available
222 to the district to be used to keep the schools safe.
223

224 Board Member Guagliumi highlighted the importance of providing services to students when
225 drugs are involved. She thinks this is an important safety net for some at risk students.
226

227 Board Member Thompson expressed some lingering concerns he has with some of the language
228 in this document. He would like the document to say specifically that the document will be
229 reviewed each year.
230

231 Student Representative Sernik shared that he has brought this up to numerous students and only
232 heard positive feedback. Students saw this as a step in the right direction in terms in making the
233 school environment better.
234

235 Board Member Schoenfeld sees this as a tool that will allow the district to remove dangerous
236 substances from the school grounds. The issue of consequences to students is a separate issue.
237 She is in favor of moving forward on allowing the canine in the schools.
238

239 Superintendent Chiafery in response to Board Member Thompson's concern stated that her
240 understanding is that the policy will be reviewed annually.
241

242 Board Member Guagliumi asked to be made aware of any assemblies that will involve the canine
243 as she would like to attend.
244

245 Chair Barnes spoke for the board when noting that Merrimack Safeguard provides many
246 educational opportunities to the community on drug awareness. They are a very important part
247 of the overall process of creating an informed community.
248

249 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked the board for their leadership.
250

251 Board Member Thompson asked that a pre-determined communication be sent out the day the
252 dog was in the school. The notice should include resources such as Merrimack Safeguard's
253 website.
254

255 Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to move this forward.
256

257 The motion carried 5-0-0.
258

259 **8. Preparation for Warrant Presentations for Deliberative Session on March 8, 2017**
260

261 Warrant Article #2 pertains to gifts and property and will be moved by Board Member
262 Schoenfeld and seconded by Board Member Thompson.
263

264 Warrant Article #3 pertains to the paving reconstruction project at Merrimack High School and
265 will be moved by Vice Chair Schneider and seconded by Chair Barnes.
266

267 Warrant Article #4 pertains to the removal of asbestos at Merrimack High School and will be
268 moved by Board Member Guagliumi and seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld.
269

270 Warrant Article #5 pertains to school district repairs and the Capital Reserve Fund. It will be
271 moved by Board Member Thompson and seconded by Chair Barnes.
272

273 Warrant Article #6 pertains to the school district operating budget. It will be moved and
274 seconded by the Budget Committee.
275

276 Chair Barnes will notify Moderator Lynn Christensen.
277

278 **9. Update on Proposed 2017-2018 School Calendar Parent Survey**
279

280 Chair Barnes will gather emails from parents and bundle them to re-send to fellow board members.
281

282 The parent survey is posted on the school district website homepage.
283

284 **10. Second Review: New Policies**
285

286 Superintendent Chiafery reviewed the changes that were made based on general feedback. Both
287 policies have been reconstructed by Attorney Peahl.
288

289 **• Admission of Resident Students**
290

291 In paragraph one the reference to policy JFAB has been removed and sits now in paragraph four.
292

293 As to the question of what happens in different cases; the language in paragraph two has been
294 clarified to address specific situations.

295
296 As to the question of which parent must provide the copy of the divorce decree or parenting plan
297 the language in the last sentence of paragraph two has been clarified and made more specific.
298

299 Superintendent Chiafery noted that the parenting plan is a unique document of the family court
300 system and has only one iteration. It is signed by both parents in the presence of the judge.
301

302 The school Leadership Teams have requested the language that appears in paragraph five.
303

304 • **Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students**
305

306 As to the question of accepting a special education student and who pays for the services; the
307 language in paragraph two clearly states that the sending district is responsible for the cost of any
308 services in accordance with RSA 193:3, IV (c). The language was reviewed and clarified by
309 Attorney Peahl and Dean Eggert.
310

311 As to the question on tuition being specified, Attorney Peahl recommended noting how tuition is
312 set rather than stating a specific amount that might change year to year.
313

314 Vice Chair Schneider asked who decides the district of residency.
315

316 Superintendent Chiafery responded that this is clearly stated in the parenting plan. When in
317 doubt it would go back to the court for the answer.
318

319 Board Member Thompson asked how the rate is set.
320

321 Superintendent Chiafery responded that the rate is for the district but that she would have the
322 language clarified.
323

324 Chair Barnes will put this on the consent agenda for the next meeting.
325

326 **11. Appointment of School Board Chair as Interim Signatory on School District**
327 **Accounts**
328

329 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that due to the recent death of School
330 Board Treasurer Richard Hastings there is a need for a signatory for both payroll and accounts
331 payable. Mr. Hastings was the only authorized signatory recognized by the bank.
332

333 Both TDBank and the audit firm agree that the appropriate individual authorized to fill the
334 vacancy would be the School Board Chair.
335

336 The Merrimack School District's Office of the Superintendent is requesting that School Board
337 Chair Shannon Barnes be authorized as a signatory on behalf of the Merrimack School District.
338

339 Vice Chair Schneider asked if Mr. Hastings was the only authorized signatory.
340

341 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded yes and that it would be a two-year
342 process and require a warrant article to add an additional signatory. The treasurer's signature is
343 pre-printed on the checks at the time they are written.

344
345 Chair Barnes asked if the treasurer is confirmed to be added on the upcoming ballot.

346
347 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded the position is by statute elected. He
348 would need to confer with the attorney for further details.

349
350 Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to approve the request to
351 make Chair of the School Board, Shannon Barnes, interim signatory for all school accounts.

352
353 The motion passed 5-0-0.

354
355 **12. Approval of February 6, 2017 Minutes**

356
357 Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the minutes of
358 the February 6, 2017 meeting.

359
360 Board Member Guagliumi asked for the following change to the minutes: Page 8, line 355, add
361 the word "alternate" in front of "delegate."

362
363 The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

364
365 **13. Acceptance of Gifts/Grants under \$5,000**

366
367 • **Citizens Bank to US First at Merrimack High School for \$3,000**

368
369 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented a \$3,000.00 gift from Citizens Bank
370 to the Merrimack High School US First students for supplies they need to be successful in
371 upcoming competitions.

372
373 Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the donation
374 with sincere gratitude.

375
376 The motion carried 5-0-0.

377
378 **14. Other**

379
380 **a) Correspondence**

381
382 Board Member Guagliumi and Board Member Thompson both received correspondence in
383 regards to the canine in the schools and how snow days will be handled.

384
385 Vice Chair Schneider also received correspondence in regards to the canine and policies
386 regarding high school students who are beyond four years of attendance.

387

388 Chair Barnes received correspondence about extending the school days to make up for snow days.

389

390 Superintendent Chiafery commented that one option is to count up the instructional hours. It is
391 too soon to petition the Commissioner of Education.

392

393 Board Member Guagliumi asked how the decision is made to call a snow day.

394

395 Superintendent Chiafery responded by outlining the process she follows beginning at 4:15 a.m.
396 She must make the decision by 5:00 a.m.

397

398 Chair Barnes noted that the closing/delay information is available in several venues.

399

400 **b) Comments**

401

402 There were no comments.

403

404 **15. New Business**

405

406 There was no new business.

407

408 **16. Committee Reports**

409

410 Board Member Thompson had attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and
411 learned that the 25th Annual Winter Carnival is scheduled for February 25th. A sub-committee
412 will be formed to look at field conditions.

413

414 Board Member Schoenfeld had attended the Budget Committee meeting and everything
415 presented by the school board went forward.

416

417 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell attended the Town Center Committee meeting
418 and learned of plans to construct a granite curb circular sidewalk from Rte. 3 to the bandstand.
419 He informed the committee that there are no current plans for O’Gara Drive. When the School
420 Board takes ownership of the tennis courts in 2017-2018 the site plan will be re-visited.

421

422 **17. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

423

424 There were no public comments.

425

426 **18. Manifest**

427

428 The board signed the manifest.

429

430 Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to adjourn the meeting at
431 9:35 p.m.

432

433 The motion passed 5-0-0.

434