

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative District Unit #26
March 6, 2017
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**

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

Absent: Board Member Schoenfeld was excused from the meeting.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Approval of 2017 – 2018 School Calendar Based on Parent Survey Outcomes

Chair Barnes noted that the board was in receipt of two emails both of which aligned very closely with the draft calendar.

Chair Barnes shared the results of the parent survey that 1,426 parents took online.

Question #1: Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Columbus Day (10/9/2017)?

Yes: 54% No: 46%

Question #2: Do you support having NO SCHOOL the Wednesday before Thanksgiving?

Yes: 73% No: 27%

Question #3: Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1/15/2018)?

Yes: 52% No: 48%

Question #4: Do you support having NO SCHOOL on President's Day (2/19/2018) recognizing the following week is February vacation?

Yes: 27% No: 73%

Question #5: With Teacher workshops being held prior to the first day of school per our contract with the MTA, we have scheduled the first day of school to be the day after Labor Day. Are you in support of continuing this scheduling structure?

Yes: 80% No: 20%

Board Member Thompson asked if the day before Thanksgiving could become a half day. His concern was for working parents needing to arrange child care.

Chair Barnes responded that a half day needed to include lunch but that it could be done.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that it has been done in the past.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it has been done in the past and attendance has been poor. So that from an instructional point of view it is not an optimal day to be in session.

Vice Chair Schneider noted how close the feedback was on questions one and three and suggested that if in the future the last day of school is very late into June, that these two days could be reconsidered.

Chair Barnes noted that there are other activities during Columbus Day weekend such as college visits, PSAT prep classes and soccer travel tournaments that impact this day.

Chair Barnes noted that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is one of cultural significance that people like to take the time to honor. Board Member Thompson asked how other districts communicate their last day of school.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that most of the area districts add make-up days at the end.

Chair Barnes noted that in the past parents have misread the calendar and made plans for the summer months pre-maturely.

Board Member Guagliumi was very pleased with the high number of respondents.

Chair Barnes noted that the response rate tripled over that from last year.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the draft calendar as posted for the survey and presented tonight for 2017-2018.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

4. First Reading of New Policy

- **Elected/Appointed School District Officials**

Superintendent Chiafery read aloud the proposed new policy.

1. Clerk of the District

The Clerk of the School District shall be elected to a three-year term during the town elections and shall not be a member of the School Board. The clerk shall receive such remuneration as the district may determine. The Clerk shall keep a true record of each district meeting and make any reports to the State of New Hampshire as may be required, and shall carry out duties as described in applicable statutes.

2. Treasurer

The Treasurer of the School District shall be elected to a three-year term during the town elections and shall not be a member of the School Board. The Treasurer shall receive such remuneration as the district may determine and perform such duties pertaining to the fiscal affairs of the School District as outlined in the New Hampshire statutes relating to public schools.

3. Moderator

The Moderator of the School District shall be elected to a three-year term during the town elections and shall not be a member of the School Board. The Moderator shall receive such remuneration as the district may determine and perform such duties as outlined in New Hampshire statutes relating to public schools.

Legal Reference:

- RSA 179:19, School Meetings and Officers: Moderator
- RSA 179:20, School Meetings and Officers: Clerk Duties
- RSA 179:22, School Meetings and Officers: Treasurer's Bond
- RSA 179:23-a, School Meetings and Officers: Treasurer's Duties
- RSA 179:24-a, School Meetings and Officers: Deputy Treasurer's Duties
- RSA 671:6, School District Elections: Other Officers
- RSA 671:31, School District Elections: Reports by Clerk

Vice Chair Schneider would like the document to specify that a deputy treasurer should be named, not may be named.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the wording is from the statute and that any deputy treasurer named by the treasurer needed the approval of the school board.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell had the RSA's with him and noted that the legal references are not from RSA 179 but from RSA 197.

Board Member Thompson asked why there was the need for a policy when the RSA already addresses the topic.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the untimely death of the treasurer spurred the creation of this policy. It is based on model school board policies. She noted that it is more common to look up a policy than go to the RSA's.

Board Member Thompson asked if the question of a death should be addressed here or if it requires another policy. He asked what the process would be in the case of the death of a newly elected official.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that RSA 197:24 addresses the issue and allows the school board to appoint a replacement for the duration of the term.

Board members were in agreement that all three positions should have deputies.

Chair Barnes noted that the Merrimack School District already has deputies and assistants that are appointed as needed for the moderator and clerk positions.

Chair Barnes noted that the RSA states what can be done and policies state what is wanted to be done.

Board Member Thompson asked how policies affect future boards.

Vice Chair Schneider responded that when boards make policy it is hoped that they stand the test of time and if not that future boards can modify those policies.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested that the proposed policy have a number four that addresses the issue of a deputy.

Superintendent Chiafery will ask Attorney Peahl to review the proposed policy changes.

Board Member Thompson reiterated his concern that the proposed policy is redundant in that it repeats what is already in the RSA and instead should be more specific and define the grey areas. He sees no need for numbers one, two and three as they are proposed.

Chair Barnes noted that unexpected vacancies allow the board the right to appoint an interim clerk, treasurer or moderator to fill the position for the remainder of the election year.

Board Member Thompson recommended that the policy not reiterate the RSA but rather that the policy define what the school board would do with a deputy treasurer and define what would be done in the absence of one of the three positions.

Chair Barnes observed that the position of treasurer stands out above the rest due to the \$73 million dollar budget and that there needs to be a Plan B to address any disruptive circumstances.

Board Member Thompson agreed to a Plan B but not numbers one, two and three on the proposed policy.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested that she speak with Attorney Peahl on the proposed policy and members concerns. She noted that policies sometimes come into effect when prompted by circumstances.

Board Member Thompson noted that if he wanted to know about elected officials he would look at the RSA and not a policy. He expressed concern about the possibility of future changes to an RSA and the impact on policies that refer to it.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that Attorney Peahl's input would be very helpful in clarifying what might go into the policy.

Chair Barnes noted the staggered school board terms that provide the board continuity and asked Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell to explain what happens when a school board member resigns or when the seat unexpectedly becomes vacant.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that replacements are appointed for the remainder of the term.

5. Approval of the February 20, 2017 Minutes

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the minutes of the February 20, 2017 meeting.

Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

Page 3, line 118: change "...Science..." to "...James Masticola Upper Elementary..."

Page 8, line 345: change "...appointed or elected..." to "...confirmed to be added on the upcoming ballot."

The motion passed as amended 4-0-0.

6. Consent Agenda

- **Admission of Resident Student Policy**
- **Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students Policy**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the consent agenda to the board.

Chair Barnes noted a minor word change on the second policy found in the first sentence of paragraph four. It did not materially change the policy.

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

The motion carried as presented 4-0-0.

7. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

b) Comments

Vice Chair Schneider asked if there will be PowerPoint demonstrations or displays available for the March 8, 2017 Deliberative Session.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the room set up in the James Masticola Upper Elementary School All Purpose Room makes it awkward for the presenters and board members. Instead he will include the relevant pictures with the handouts for each warrant article.

The pictures are already available on the school district website.

Superintendent Chiafery thanked the town for the flashing sign announcing the deliberative session. It is located across from Buckley's restaurant.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reminded the community that the district Art Show being held at Big Kahuna's will open tomorrow. The official opening will be on Friday, March 10th and the show will continue throughout the month.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Schneider had attended the February 23rd SERESC Board of Directors meeting. The management of the events portion of SERESC has been outsourced to the company Tidewater. The process to sell to building was also discussed.

10. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

Chair Barnes reminded the community that March 8th is the School District Deliberative Session. It will be held at the James Masticola Upper Elementary School at 7:00 p.m. The warrant will be reviewed at this time.

11. Manifest

The board signed the manifest.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

The motion passed 4-0-0.