

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District  
School Administrative District Unit #26  
October 16, 2017  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

**Absent:** Board Member Thompson was excused from the meeting.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Public Participation**

Parent Bob Bevill of 12 Blair Road came to the microphone and spoke on the issue of homework. He asked the administration to issue a clear concise letter of clarification allowing teachers the option to choose to grade homework from now forward until the board establishes a new policy or protocol.

Secondly, Mr. Bevill asked for a future agenda item that would allow for parent discussion and input to the board on homework grades for high school students cumulative GPA, and for anyone else who wants to participate in the discussion.

**3. Food Service Procurement Procedures and Code of Conduct**

Chair Barnes invited Director of Food Services Dave Dziki to the table.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provided background to the board. He noted that there are often added changes to general practices that must be attended to in order to be compliant with various federal and state policies.

As a requirement of the National School Lunch Program, as administered through the State of New Hampshire Bureau of Nutrition, the district is required to have in place a Procurement Procedure Plan.

Director Dziki stated that the template he had shared with the board members is one take from the state website. Once it has been filled out, submitted to the school board for approval, and approved; it will then be submitted to the Department of Education Bureau of Nutrition for their approval.

Vice Chair Schneider raised the question of continued participation in the program and its cost effectiveness.

Director Dziki responded that after reviewing the numbers it is still very cost effective to participate in the program. He cited the additional receipt of commodity foods the district receives from the USDA.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if there have been any complaints from students or parents he would like to address and was told no.

Chair Barnes noted that most of the form is common sense. She expressed concern that the amount of documentation will add considerable work for Director Dziki and asked if it was optional.

Director Dziki responded that it will be more work, but most of the requirements are practices he already adheres to and the changes will not be drastic. The documentation is not optional.

Chair Barnes asked if there are concerns with meeting any of the requirements and was told no.

Chair Barnes will put the item on the next consent agenda.

#### **4. Board's Message to the Superintendent for 2018-2019 Budget Preparation**

Chair Barnes read the message into the record.

##### **Budget Message from the Merrimack School Board for Budget Year 2018-2019**

To meet our mission of maintaining a productive and safe learning environment, we need to budget to expenditures with the goal of continually improving student performance and meets the needs of diverse learners. While achieving these goals, we need to be mindful of the tax burden of these expenditures and the size of the student population we are serving year over year (are we in an incline or decline in number of students served and are we staffing to the current and projected student population appropriately?).

All items impacting safety of students, staff and the community should be included in the operating budget. All projects that are important but not imperative should be identified and considered for warrant articles so that the taxpayer can have input into its adoption. Initiatives the Board acknowledges as valuable and are encouraged to be included for budgetary consideration are technology investment, mental health support resources, and full day kindergarten. The full-day kindergarten proposal should have a comprehensive plan—showing detail of the current cost of the ½ day program and the proposed cost of full-day, space needs, operational impact to existing school programs, etc.

The budget should have detail in expenditure so it presents the request for funds in a transparent way for the board and our taxpayer base to better understand the level of required funding it takes to operate the district. Please be sure to notate those items in the operating budget that are included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Areas that have been specifically identified as

needing detail are: building infrastructure (such as heating systems) in light of the analysis by Honeywell as to the aging systems we have in place, co-curricular transportation (how is it being utilized?/are we budgeting enough/too much/too little to meet student demand?), and enhanced materials for the new math and science curricula. We also ask if you can present information on costs to upgrade hand dryers to higher performing units to improve hygiene and water fountain units with water bottle filters that include filtration functionality in light of our concerns for water quality in the last 18 months.

Finally, the cut list is as important to us as the budget. For those items that did not make the budget, please provide us a list and the plan to compensate for not having it. If the district leadership has items of interest that were not proposed for the budget, the Board would find value in knowing what is of value to enhance the educational experience that was not requested in the spirit of financial responsibility. When cuts are proposed by administration of the Board, please be ready to discuss the consequences of these cuts to operation and educational outcomes.

The budget should be accompanied by a detailed communication plan so that those who want to weigh in on the process have the means to do so through productive channels. This communication plan should include press releases so that we can get media coverage of the opportunities for our community to weigh in throughout the budget season-up to and including the deliberative session.

## **5. Yearend Surplus to Reduce Taxes**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provided details on the surplus. This year the surplus amounts to 3.2 million dollars. This is a combination of personnel savings, health insurance savings, additional catastrophic aid and Medicaid reimbursement. Last year the surplus was 1.7 million dollars higher. This amounts to a tax burden change of about fifty-five cents on the tax rate.

Chair Barnes noted that while the school district legally cannot retain the surplus, a portion of the surplus can be made available through a warrant article if the board chooses to go in that direction.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that he has been advocating for a while about the School Department obtaining the ability to retain and grow all or part of the annual surplus in order to level out the tax rate when necessary.

Vice Chair Schneider agreed and noted that this might be a suggestion for a warrant article. He further recommended better explaining the budget to the voters.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the majority of the difference is in the area of personnel and the ten to twelve percent fluctuation is difficult to predict.

Board Member Guagliumi suggested a pie graph that presents the surplus breakdown for the past three to five years.

## **6. Preparation for Joint Meeting Between Merrimack School Board and Merrimack Town Council**

Chair Barnes stated on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. both boards will meet at a location to be determined.

Chair Barnes listed three items of interest for the discussion. They are the O’Gara Drive land return and the plan for the skate park, the issue of field needs, and concerns over water safety.

Vice Chair Schneider added the issue of full-day kindergarten. He asked if this would be the time to bring up the issue of Keno to offset the costs.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that starting this year there will be an additional \$1,100.00 per child available from the state regardless of Keno. She expressed concern the Keno issue could bog down and halt the implementation of the full-day kindergarten program. She sees this as two separate discussions.

Board Member Guagliumi raised the issue of polling stations.

Superintendent Chiafery raised the issue of the Merrimack Safeguard grant and the continued funding of the School Resource Officer (SRO) as required in the grant.

Vice Chair Schneider added that at a recent Merrimack Safeguard meeting the grant was discussed and that this point was raised.

Superintendent Chiafery asked Chair Barnes to remind the Town Council that they are to provide the scribe for the meeting.

## **7. Second Review of New Board Policy**

- **Data/Records Retention**

Superintendent Chiafery read aloud the proposed change. Under the section headed Special Education Records, the first sentence will now read: “The district shall retain a student’s special education records until at least the student’s 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, unless written consent or written request to destroy the records is received from the parent, or where applicable, the adult student.”

Chair Barnes will put the policy on the next consent agenda.

## **8. Approval of October 2, 2017 Minutes**

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to accept the minutes of the October 2, 2017 meeting.

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following change to the minutes:

Page 2, line 63: Change from “...regular testing...” to “...testing to create a baseline...”

The motion carried as amended 4-0-0.

**9. Consent Agenda**

• **Approval of Health Education and Exemption from Instruction Policy**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the consent agenda.

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

The motion carried 4-0-0.

**10. Other**

**a) Correspondence**

Vice Chair Schneider received correspondence from a resident on the homework protocol.

Chair Barnes received correspondence in regards to water safety in the schools and the cost of the testing.

**b) Comments**

There were no comments.

**11. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery stated that Family and Consumer Sciences teacher Nicole Rollend invited the Board to visit the newly renovated site on November 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. where light snacks will be provided.

**12. Committee Reports**

Vice Chair Schneider reported that when the District Wellness Committee met there was a decision to sponsor a lyme awareness event on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in the high school Little Theater.

Vice Chair Schneider reported that the Merrimack Safeguard Committee met on Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> and discussed the grant. He asked if someone from that committee should attend the joint meeting to provide added information.

Superintendent Chiafery responded yes. It would be helpful when discussing freeing up funds for other projects.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that the SERESC building has been sold. The future of the organization going forward was also discussed at this meeting.

**13. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

**14. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 7:39 p.m. Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to enter non-public session per RSA A 91-A:3, II, (a), (d).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 4-0-0.

At 8:35 p.m. Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Chair Barnes) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.