

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District  
School Administrative District Unit #26  
November 6, 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 and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell.

Student Representative Puzzo was excused for a prior commitment and arrived mid-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**

There was no public participation.

**3. Administration's Response to Maintenance Items in the Board's Budget Message**

**• Response to Water Quality Issues**

Chair Barnes invited Director of Maintenance Touseau and Level III Certified Water Expert Greg Sereni to the table.

Mr. Sereni has worked for Secondwind Water Systems, Inc. for over ten years. The twenty-seven year old company does water filtration and also operates a number of small public water supplies throughout the state of New Hampshire. They also work with numerous schools in the state. Mr. Sereni has been working with the Merrimack School District for the past year.

Mr. Sereni explained the proposal for Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He recommended a granular activated carbon central system that would treat all the water fountains and the kitchen. The carbon filter would need to be changed out when spent. A walk through with a certified plumber to decide where pipes would go needs to be done before the cost can be ascertained.

Director Touseau asked Mr. Sereni to explain the two-tank system.

Mr. Sereni drew a diagram of two side-by-side tanks and explained that as one tank is saturated, the media is pulled out and the second tank takes over. This ensures a zero contaminant output.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell asked if the 16 parts per trillion now showing at Reeds Ferry Elementary School would change to zero with this system and was told yes.

Board Member Guagliumi asked for a cost estimate range.

Mr. Sereni responded that based on a walkthrough he did with Director Touseau at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School the rough estimate for sixteen water fountains would be between \$13,000 and \$18,000. The estimate for doing this at all of the schools would be about \$100,000.

Board Member Thompson would like to get more concrete numbers and move this towards a warrant article for next year.

Board Member Thompson would also like a list of the chemicals that are treated with this system.

Vice Chair Schneider asked Director Touseau is there was enough space to install the dual system and was told yes.

Vice Chair Schneider asked for thorough estimates for each building to cover the important areas.

Director Touseau noted that a central system would also be more cost effective.

Board Member Thompson asked for clarification on including only one of the kitchen sinks in the set-up.

Mr. Sereni responded that this is the norm but plumbing to multiple fixtures is feasible.

Chair Barnes asked about the third floor of the high school and was told it would be connected to the second floor.

Vice Chair Schneider asked about a reverse osmosis system and the cost differential.

Mr. Sereni responded that the cost would double, the maintenance would be higher and the Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) removal would be similar with the reverse osmosis system.

Chair Barnes asked if Secondwind services any schools on public water.

Mr. Sereni responded that they have serviced two daycares but no school districts.

Mr. Sereni asked where the idea of treating the water came from.

Board Member Thompson responded that he led the discussion on the issue of treating the water after reading about negative impacts of PFOA's on children's learning.

Vice Chair Schneider added that there has also been concern throughout the town.

Chair Barnes added that it is the responsibility of the school board to keep the children safe and that the school board is trying to be proactive on this issue.

Mr. Sereni asked if the main concern is safe drinking water by the elimination of all PFC's.

Chair Barnes responded both.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern that state standards keep changing and he would prefer to aim for zero contaminants.

Board Member Schoenfeld stated that she would prefer that the water filtration system be put in place and modifications based on new information can be made in a timelier manner.

Mr. Sereni agreed.

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Members Guagliumi and Schoenfeld) to request administration to receive formal quotes, review locations, and review kitchen needs for all schools in the district.

Once the information is received Board Member Thompson would like to have the School Board invite the Merrimack Village District Water to attend a meeting to discuss the results.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed the need to get this done expeditiously if it is to go on a warrant article.

Board Member Guagliumi would like to include cost sharing discussions with Merrimack Village District and St. Gobain.

Chair Barnes asked how long the installation takes for each building.

Mr. Sereni responded that Secondwind's part would take about one day each and the plumbing would range from one to three days per school.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

- **Response Regarding Hand Dryer Upgrade**

Director Touseau began by sharing that the current procedure is to replace or repair as needed. When considering a replacement he takes into effect the type of hand dryer, speed, sound, cost and durability. Prices range from about \$300 to \$1,500. He noted that all of the elementary schools will continue to use paper towels.

Board Member Thompson noted the hygiene issue behind his request for this information.

Superintendent Chiafery asked the board to be mindful of the budget when considering all of these issues. On this particular item, no administrators had raised this as an issue. If the board chooses to move forward with this item, dollar amounts need to be added to it so that room can be made in the budget for it. It would require cutting something else already in the proposed budget.

Board Member Thompson asked for further discussion on this item.

- **Response to Honeywell Analysis of Building Infrastructure**

Superintendent Chiafery opened her remarks by reminding the board of Jim Lucy's presentation to the board at a recent meeting. She recommended that Honeywell begin drawing up base-line data during the 2017-18 school year.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell spoke about the twelve year relationship and improvements over these years. There has been significant cost savings to the district over the years. Going forward, he would like to look into ventilation in areas of need.

Director Touseau added that compliance is also being addressed.

Vice Chair Schneider would be interested in identifying areas of need before the budget process begins. He would prefer to be proactive rather than reactive.

#### **4. Administration's Response to Board Questions Regarding Full-Day Kindergarten Proposal**

Chair Barnes invited elementary school principals Kimberly Yarlott, Bridey Bellemare and Michelle Romein to the table.

The principals took turns reading and expanding on their PowerPoint presentation on the merits of all-day kindergarten.

The presentation began with a vision statement and then outlined the benefits and expected cost outlays necessary to move from half-day to full-day kindergarten.

Benefits to the students would include increased instructional time, more personalized instruction, fluidity, fewer transitions, access to Unified Arts, and increased opportunities for social/emotional development and learning activities.

Benefits to the community would include the appeal to potential homebuyers, productive citizenship, equal access to education for all families, alignment of current trends, reduced high school drop-out rates, and increased enrollment in higher education.

Instruction time would go from about 440 hours a year to about 920 hours. Students would also experience more gross motor play opportunities.

Currently about 104 New Hampshire school districts offer a full-day kindergarten option.

Seventy eight percent (78%) of children across the USA have full-day kindergarten access.

The adoption of a full-day kindergarten program is the highest priority for all three principals.

The budgetary impacts will be for staff and equipment. Room has been located for the classrooms needed.

The Kindergarten Committee will continue to compile data on the fiscal impacts, sample schedules, curriculum, and population trends and present them to the administration.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Unified Arts can be offered with the existing staff.

Principal Yarlott responded that creative scheduling can make this happen. Times can be shortened for each class.

Board Member Guagliumi asked that the informational packet on this issue be put on the website.

Vice Chair Schneider appreciated the well done presentation and supporting information. His concern was the impact on transportation.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that this issue has been addressed and he has no real concerns.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the additional fifty-five students will be spread across the district.

Board Member Thompson asked for a portal so that all of the information can be shared so that board members can be more fully informed.

Board Member Thompson asked if the daily transitions would change.

Chair Barnes shared her own personal experience.

Vice Chair Schneider added that this would be based on each individual parent's needs. He anticipates the transitions being fewer.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the studies requested by Board Member Thompson are on the website.

Student Representative Puzzo asked if both half and full-day kindergarten would be offered.

Principal Yarlott responded that only full-day kindergarten would be offered.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted that while the transitions might not diminish they would be contained in a smaller environment.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern over offering Unified Arts in smaller time slots and would like more information on the viability of this option.

Chair Barnes asked what the maximum capacity will be for overall class size.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the number 240 was reached after working with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) demographer.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about busing, food service, the arts, and music as areas for more information.

Chair Barnes included before and after school care to the list.

Board Member Thompson noted that this move would make Merrimack the first community off Route 3 to make this move.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that the map is for this year. Many other communities are looking into making this move also.

Chair Barnes stated that the main issues are the quality of the education and the tax impact.

Board Member Guagliumi noted the potential benefits to students on Individual Educational Plans (IEP's).

Vice Chair Schneider noted the recent addition of an afternoon program for kindergarteners on IEP's.

Principal Bellemare welcomed any and all insights from the board members. She invited them to visit the schools to ask questions and provide feedback.

## **5. Update on the Timmons Property**

Board Member Thompson on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Committee asked the School Board for permission to conduct a formal survey that would be at no cost to the School District.

This would be a preliminary survey to see if fields are a possibility.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if the survey was to ascertain the size of the parcel and was told yes.

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) that the School Board approve that the Parks and Recreation Committee, at no cost to the school district, get the land surveyed as to its feasibility for use for playing fields.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed his support of this first step.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Parks and Recreation Committee has brought this before the Town Council. She sees this as a good topic for the joint meeting.

Chair Barnes would also be interested in the Town Council's understanding on the Timmons property.

Board Member Guagliumi commented that at the least it would be wise to put this issue on the Town Council's radar.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

## **6. Board Meeting Dates in January 2018 and Change in Location**

Superintendent Chiafery shared with the board that both January meetings will be held on Tuesdays due to the New Year's Day and Martin Luther King Day holidays. The first meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Memorial Room at the Town Hall. This meeting will be taped but not broadcast live.

The second meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. and the location is to be determined.

Vice Chair Schneider asked about the dates for the January budget meetings. He asked if the high school cafeteria is a possibility.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she needs to consider the media department.

## **7. Guaranteed Maximum Rate for Health Insurance**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell informed the board that the guaranteed maximum rate for health insurance for 2017-2018 is 3.5%.

Chair Barnes acknowledged the valuable work of the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee, the Wellness Committee and the Smart Shopper Program in keeping the rates down.

## **8. Approval of October 16, 2017 Minutes**

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

The motion carried 4-0-1.

Board Member Thompson abstained.

## **9. Consent Agenda**

- **Approval of Food Procurement Procedures and Code of Conduct**
- **Approval of Data Records Retention Policy**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the consent agenda.

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

The motion carried 4-0-1.

Board Member Thompson abstained.

## **10. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

Chair Barnes received correspondence from a parent inquiring about the full-day kindergarten. The parent is now a member of the committee.

Vice Chair Schneider received correspondence from a resident asking about more information in regards to participating in the vocational programs. He was directed to the administrative office.

Board Member Thompson received correspondence from an individual in regards to homework and he was directed to the specific teacher.

Board Member Thompson received correspondence from an individual in regards to the shifting of students from one school to another. He was directed to the principal of the school.

Vice Chair Schneider had a phone conversation with a resident in regards to homework policy and procedures.

### **b) Comments**

Superintendent Chiafery commented that the implementation of full-day kindergarten is her main priority. She is now working on including equipment and staffing in the budget at this point in time. If this goes to a warrant article she will remove it then.

Chair Barnes stated that there will be a joint meeting of the School Board and the Town Council on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> in the Matthew Thornton Room at 7:00 p.m. The agenda will be posted.

Chair Barnes stated that originally the feedback for parents on the homework protocol was scheduled for tonight but was pushed to the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting due to parent conflicts.



Superintendent Chiafery stated that on Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> the School Board will go before the Planning Board and along with architect Paul Marinace to present the options for a new consolidated Superintendent's and Student Services Offices.

### **11. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery shared some of the upcoming agenda items. They include the homework protocol and Director of Student Services John Fabrizio speaking on records retention and the Special Education Procedure Manual. The Physical Education/Health curriculum update will also be presented at this meeting.

Chair Barnes clarified that the homework protocol will be for parents to provide their input.

### **12. Committee Reports**

Board Member Guagliumi attended the Communications Committee meeting. The website has been overhauled and there is now a community link that people can subscribe to for budget related details and other information.

Board Member Guagliumi attended the Merrimack Safeguard Committee meeting. They discussed their role going forward, the school resource officer, community collaboration, the Red Ribbon Week at the Merrimack Middle School, and the drug take back day. Over three hundred and twenty two pounds of drugs were collected.

Board Member Schoenfeld was invited to be the board representative of the Full-Day Kindergarten Task Force.

Board Member Thompson attended the Professional Development meeting. He complimented the district teachers on their participation in professional development opportunities.

Vice Chair Schneider shared an upcoming movie program that will be sponsored by the Wellness Committee on Lyme disease titled "Under your Skin". It will be presented in the high school Little Theater on Tuesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Barnes attended the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee meeting on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. They discussed the staff Wellness Fair that is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup> at the high school.

### **13. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Julie Tomshawk spoke about the PFOA's. She previously resided at 24 Profile Drive. She spoke of her health issues and attributes them to local contaminants. She stated her health issues have affected her personal life and her interactions with school administrators. She wanted to know if protocols were in place for how schools will deal with parents affected by PFOA's.

Chair Barnes stated that this portion of the agenda does not allow for the board to respond. She offered to meet privately after the meeting to further discuss Ms. Tomshawk's concerns.

Brian Stisser of 56 Middlesex Road spoke in favor of the full-day kindergarten program. He spoke as a home owner and expressed concern over property values if the initiative does not go forward.

#### **14. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:25 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II, (a)(b)(c)(d).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0-0.

At 11:02 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.