

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
May 21, 2018
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.

Absent: Student Representative Puzzo was excused from the meeting.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Formal Acceptance of Board Member Thompson's Resignation from the Board and the Process Utilized to Fill the Position

Chair Barnes informed School Board Members that she was in receipt of an e-mail from Board Member Thompson notifying her of his resignation from the school board, effective immediately. The letter was sent on Tuesday, May 10th.

Board Member Thompson decided to step aside now so that the position could be filled in a timely manner. He and his family will be moving out of the district.

Chapter 197 of Title XV regarding school meetings and officers explains the process invoked to fill the vacancy.

Chair Barnes stated that the position will last until the April 2019 election. Interested candidates should send a letter of intent to Chair Barnes by June 4, 2018. Interviews will be conducted on June 12th.

Vice Chair Schneider asked that this information be posted on the district website.

Chair Barnes stated that in addition the information would be put in the newspaper.

Letters must be postmarked/dropped off at the Superintendent's Office by June 4, 2018.

Board Members had received in their packets the email from Board Member Thompson, the RSA and the formal process for interviews and selection.

4. Focus on Merrimack High School: National Science Olympiad Competition and Benefits Derived from the Interdisciplinary Courses

Principal Ken Johnson shared that the Science Olympiad Team made the Nationals. He then invited Science Department Chair James Davis, Science Olympiad Coach and former Merrimack student Tyler Golemo, and students to the table.

Science Department Chair Davis opened by noting that Science Olympiad began in 1984 in the mid-west and is now in all 50 states. It is open to middle and high school students.

Each team has up to seven seniors and up to eight other students. Nationwide over 7,600 teams compete. Teams of two to three compete in twenty-three events and are guided by a formal set of protocols. Areas of competition include physics, chemistry, biology, engineering and building events.

Students begin by choosing their events in September and work on them throughout the year. The team competed in invitational tournaments at the University of Philadelphia, MIT, and Dartmouth College and then went on to win the New Hampshire state competition.

Merrimack has had a team since 2008; started by Sean Muller. Over the years there have been from one to four teams from the Merrimack School District. The national competition has over 60 teams participate.

Merrimack has made it to the finals eight of the last nine years. Early on the trips were funded by the students. A booster club was formed and the school district has helped fund the travel expenses.

Science Olympiad Coach Tyler Golemo shared his story which evolved from starting in eighth grade as a member to an engineering degree at WPI.

As a coach he brought back some of the earlier traditions and encourages students to have fun with science. Going forward he would like to see more crossover between the middle and high school teams and will be encouraging more alumni from the program to return and give back.

Student testimonials stressed how building skills and strategies crossed over into science classwork and has helped them with career decisions.

The team had just returned from the national competition where they placed 50th and the two alternates placed first in the country in their WI-FI event.

Coach Tyler Golemo won the national coaches award.

The students thanked Mr. Davis, Coach Golemo and all of the support they have received from everyone who has helped them throughout their time with Science Olympiad.

Superintendent Chiafery thanked Tyler for returning to help with the program and also for wanting to bridge the middle and high schools.

Chair Barnes thanked the students for being such excellent ambassadors for the school district.

Principal Johnson then introduced some of the teachers and students who engaged in the interdisciplinary courses.

Educators Seibert and Johnson shared highlights from their freshmen honors World Civilizations and Literature course. Three years ago they began with 44 students, 32 this year and 44 again next year. The course focus is inquiry based.

Students Chloe and Rohan spoke about learning group work skills as they marketed a medieval amusement park and how valuable it was to have 90 minutes of class time.

Educators Halvorson and Woods taught *The American Experience*, which combined American Literature and U.S. History to honors level juniors. They shared two of the units that taught this year.

In the first unit students were asked to read *The Devil in the White City* and then construct their own World's Fair which was then attended by district school students.

Student Nick aspires to be a roller coaster engineer and was excited to find the first Ferris wheel was showcased at the World's Fair. He identified with the inventor in the book as he created his own nine foot Ferris wheel.

Student Nick thanked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin for his support and the engaging questions he asked about the Ferris wheel.

The second unit covered World War I, the Roaring 20's and the Great Depression. Students read *The Harlem Hellfighters*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Of Mice and Men*; and then were asked to create a graphic novel on the history of 1920's America.

Educator Woods appreciated the opportunity to construct this inquiry-based experience for students.

Educators Higgins and O'Brien also taught *The American Experience*. They taught from a graphic novel that put superheroes on opposite sides of a conflict that remained unresolved. They emphasized using dialogue to resolve conflicts.

Students Katherine and Bryce learned the important lesson of working together and the meaning of what it means to be a citizen in a civilized society.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin lauded the teachers for challenging the status quo and use a new method to teach their students.

Educators Piccolo and Muller will introduce a new course next year called Experimental Photography which will combine chemistry and art. They forged relationships with people from MIT and Lesley College as they shaped the course.

Students CJ and Joanne spoke about what they hope to get out of this class. They appreciated the creative ways the class will engage them with subjects they have less interest in taking.

Educator Muller noted that after teaching the same subject for 20 years this encourages him to look at things with a new perspective. He passed out a common toy called an orbie to each board member and conducted a brief experiment for them on inverted images.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the teachers had written some grants and asked the educators to speak about this.

Educator Muller stated that they expected about 15 students and have 30 enrolled. They needed more equipment and wrote four grants.

The Lions Club grant of \$4,000 will be used to build a camera 6x8 foot obscure trailer which will double as a darkroom. Other classes that will help with the construction are product design, automotive, woodshop, photography and painting and drawing.

Another grant came from the New Hampshire Art Educators Association that will be used for supplies.

The third grant was very detailed and competitive and culminated in a \$28,000 grant.

A fourth grant will be decided in June.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that when he graduated from Merrimack High School over 40 years ago he had been in photography classes and was excited about this class.

Chair Barnes shared this enthusiasm for the inter-disciplinary classes.

Educator Rordam spoke about the *Art of Science* class. She began by sharing a letter from former student Kim Ortega in which she shared that she will be beginning a career as an art conservator. She cited the inter-disciplinary courses she took at Merrimack High School as invaluable to her development.

She explained that the creative process is a circular process of success and failure. She noted that artists and scientists both use this process to solve process. Both use cross-research in their disciplines.

She used the example of the Crisper gene research that will need creative minds to complete this research.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that the district is never happy with the status quo, but always looking to innovate and bring new and fresher ways of teaching to the district.

Superintendent Chiafery spoke about the importance of authentic student voice.

Principal Johnson thanked the school board for supporting these classes and that this was only a small sample of the great inter-disciplinary work going on at the high school.

Chair Barnes thanked Principal Johnson for his 20 years of service to the district, 16 as Merrimack High School principal and noted that this was his last presentation to the board before he retires at the end of this school year.

Principal Johnson was greeted with applause as he returned to his seat.

5. A-OK Campaign

Merrimack High School junior Sarah Heimberg presented her A-OK video for the board members. Before she began, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin noted that this presentation earned Sarah the Girl Scouts highest award; the Gold Award and came out of a Merrimack Safeguard campaign entitled Be Responsible Merrimack. The entire project took Sarah over 80 hours to complete.

Chair Barnes noted the board's pride in all of Sarah's accomplishments and contributions and congratulated her for generously sharing her talents with the community.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin shared that earlier in the evening Sarah had competed and won in the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition.

6. James Masticola Upper Elementary Career Day Student Interest Survey

Chair Barnes invited Principal Marsha McGill and Louis Mailloux to the table.

The school is hosting a Career Day on Tuesday, June 12th. It is in place of the sixth grade trip to Enterprise City, as this program has now closed.

The Career Day focus will be to help students learn about the world they will be moving into and includes presenters, activities and the survey. Gender was taken into account when considering presenters.

This survey is student friendly and was chosen by staff from a varied selection of options. The information generated on the survey will not be collected or used by school personnel. The students will use the knowledge gained about careers to decide which presentations they would like to attend.

Principal McGill asked the board to approve the survey for grade six students and to waive the two week rule as they would like to administer the survey during the week of May 29th.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to approve the survey and waive the two week rule.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that the survey will not be gathering sensitive information, rather it will be used to guide students towards careers they might find interesting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if there will be any type of interviewing during the Career Day.

Principal McGill responded that it might be done in the future.

Mr. Mailloux added that presenters will be questioned by students after the individual presentations.

7. Authorization for School Board Chair, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Business to Sign Public School Infrastructure Project Completion and Request for Payment

Superintendent Chiafery began by stating that this item requires two authorizations; one for the bat mitigation project and one for the request for payment.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that the bat mitigation project also included funds to install cameras and asked about the status of this piece.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the next budget provides funds for the cameras at the middle and high schools. The entire project must be completed by June 2019.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to authorize the school board chair, superintendent and assistant superintendent for business to sign the public school infrastructure project completion and the request for payment.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell addressed the new bat infestation at the James Masticola Elementary School. The previous project addressed the specific area of infestation, not the entire building. Currently, the entire school is being checked and sealed. One-way bat tubes have been installed to keep out further problems.

The high school has already been sealed and had bat tubes installed. Reeds Ferry Elementary School and the Merrimack Middle School will undergo this preventative process. This will cost about \$60,000.

There was discussion on the possibility of a future study on the bat issue.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that due to all of the press coverage on this issue, all of the other districts will most likely call her if they have any bat problems.

8. Affirmation of School Board Committee Assignments for 2018-2019

Chair Barnes noted the delay in confirming the assignments for the 2018-2019 school year. Those assigned to Board Member Thompson will be re-distributed once the new school board member is in place.

Superintendent Chiafery commented that she used the word affirmation in the agenda item as there needs to be a school board vote on the out-of-district committee assignments.

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the out-of-district committee assignments.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

9. Approval of School Board Minutes for May 7, 2018

Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2018 meeting.

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following change to the minutes:

Page 3, line 102: Change the sentence to read: "Board Member Guagliumi asked if the vendor contract could document penalties if PFOAs are identified, or detected."

The motion passed 4-0-0.

11. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin presented the consent agenda for approval.

• Educator Nominations for 2018-2019

Hillary Burkush, Kindergarten Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Christine Koss, Grade 4 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Conner Lane, Physical Education Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

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

The motion passed 4-0-0.

11. Other

a) Correspondence

Chair Barnes shared a newspaper article in the Nashua Telegraph stating that Merrimack fourth grade teacher Alice Donahue has been nominated for New Hampshire Teacher of the Year. She wished her good luck from all of the school board.

b) Comments

Chair Barnes commented that the student enrollment has increased slightly since September.

12. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery outlined some items on the next agenda. The three elementary schools will present on their math work. The Brentwood property status will be updated and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin will present on the homework protocol.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the meeting will be held earlier to accommodate the elementary school students.

Superintendent Chiafery will discuss this with the principals.

13. Committee Reports

Chair Barnes attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and learned that there are still a few openings for Camp Naticook. She noted that the 2018 summer events schedule is posted on the website. The first movie, *Murder on the Orient Express*, will be shown on Friday, June 8th.

14. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

15. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

The motion passed 4-0-0.