



Joint Town Council / School Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday September 20, 2018 at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Rothhaus called the joint meeting of the Town Council and School Board to order at 7:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Koenig, Councilor Albert, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Harrington, Councilor Healey, School Board Chairman Shannon Barnes, School Board Vice Chairman, Andy Schneider, School Board Members Cinda Guagliumi and Brandi Nunez, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali. Councilor Thornton, School Board Member Naomi Schoenfeld, and Town Manager Eileen Cabanel were excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Rothhaus led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from the Press and Public - None

Items of Discussion

1. School Resource Officer (SRO) Discussion

Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Tom Koenig
Town Council to discuss their desires pertaining to the Merrimack Middle School's SRO due to the expiration of the grant funding.

The Council discussed this item at its last meeting and concluded, unanimously, that the position is a Town/Police Department position and would be run through the Town's budget relative to personnel costs; however, would be the School's Resource Officer.

School Board Chairman Barnes thanked the Council for the continued collaboration the funding provides the District and Town.

Councilor Albert stated his support commenting having the SROs in the middle and high schools has been a valuable tool for the community, school, and Police Department.

School Board Vice Chairman Schneider noted Merrimack Safeguard prepared and submitted the proposal for the original five-year grant for the SRO position. A renewal had to be requested for the additional five years. That avenue is no longer available. A requirement of the grant was a show that the community entity would continue to fund the position after the expiration of the grant. He stated appreciation for the Council's position on the continued funding of the position noting the value gain.

Councilor Boyd commended the SROs for the work they do on a daily basis building the relationships and the trust not only with the teachers and administrators, but with the parents and students of the schools.

2. Merrimack Skateboard Park

Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Tom Koenig
A discussion will be held between the School Board and the Town Council to define the maintenance roles pertaining to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Merrimack Skateboard Park.

1
2 Chairman Rothhaus spoke of the prior arrangement with the school district having come to conclusion
3 as the tennis courts became obsolete. Matt Casparius, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, has
4 been working to identify a location for the skateboard park. In the meantime, the desire is for it to
5 remain on school district property. While the Town could not be identified as owners, there is
6 agreement with regard to the maintenance of the property.
7
8 School Board Chairman Barnes stated the School Board has discussed this and it is an issue that is
9 regularly addressed by the Parks and Recreation Commission as it directly impacts their operations and
10 planning.
11
12 The School Board has known, for the past two years, that the agreement was coming to an end;
13 however, has not understood the long-range goal of the Town. She questioned if there is intent, in the
14 long-term, to have a skateboard park on a Parks and Recreation managed facility. The School Board is
15 looking to ensure there is no void in having that resource available to the youth of Merrimack. In
16 terms of long-term that is not something they were expecting to have to host on district property.
17
18 Chairman Rothhaus stated his understanding the elements of the park cannot be moved. With the way
19 repairs have occurred over time, removing the pieces would be a virtual impossibility. While the
20 Council has not had any deep discussions about the future, Director Casparius has been asked to look
21 for alternative locations. He stated his belief it is likely the Town would have to have a location
22 constructed for it. He has not considered cost, etc. at this point.
23
24 Councilor Albert stated the cost of the Nashua Skateboard Park ran over \$530,000. That is a pretty
25 comprehensive skateboard park. He believes that would be cost prohibitive for Merrimack. He was
26 hopeful changes made to the MOU would address any misgivings the School Board might have.
27
28 School Board Member Guagliumi stated her interest was in learning the wishes of the Council. Once
29 known, the School Board would have the opportunity to consider the matter further.
30
31 Councilor Harrington questioned if the desire of the School Board is to not have the skateboard park
32 on district property (dismantled whether at this time or in the future). Understanding their position
33 would influence the direction of the Council.
34
35 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider responded, as a School Board, they have not taken a formal
36 position. He personally does not care if it remains in its current location or is moved. The concern he
37 has is around the ongoing monitoring of the situation. He spoke of the decision of the Council to no
38 longer fund the monitor that was present during open hours. He intentionally drove by O’Gara Drive
39 on his way to the meeting. There are signs on Baboosic Lake Road, O’Gara Drive, and McElwain
40 Street that say school zone, drug free, alcohol free zone. As we move forward, there is the
41 requirement to ensure the integrity of that is maintained.
42
43 Information provided showed the number of police calls to the skateboard park as not being
44 significant, however, there are reports of things that have happened there that may not have been
45 reported to the police.
46

1 He stated the desire for more rigorous monitoring whether in the form of reinstating the monitor
2 position, installing surveillance cameras, etc. He does not want to get rid of the park, but he believes
3 there needs to be more invested in the monitoring.

4
5 Chairman Rothhaus commented when the Council made the decision to no longer fund the monitor, it
6 was after checking with all other communities having skateboard parks and learning not a single one
7 had monitors. Video Surveillance is an option he has discussed with Assistant Town Manager/Finance
8 Director Micali, and that is attainable.

9
10 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider stated understanding other communities don't utilize a
11 monitor; however, commented on the uniqueness of a skateboard park being located on school
12 property so close to an elementary school. Now that the lease has come to an end, it is on school
13 owned, operated, managed property. The current agreement they reached as a board was to allow the
14 Town to continue to use it and maintain it until these discussions could be had.

15
16 School Board Member Guagliumi stated agreement with Member Schneider's remarks, and indicated
17 her support of video surveillance. She spoke of the value of having the skateboard park in the
18 community. We are one community, and it does not make sense to destroy something that is
19 functional because of which piece of property it is located on. She does not believe the requirement is
20 for a live person to monitor the facility given the expense of that, but she does have concerns with
21 safety. She would like to see the facility secured during off hours. She is pleased with its proximity to
22 the Police Department. She would like to see a maintenance schedule in place. She suggested some
23 kind of a lease agreement laying out the terms and a period of time after which it could be revisited.

24
25 Chairman Rothhaus remarked the suggestion had been made that Primex conduct annual inspections of
26 the facility. The Parks and Recreation Director ensures it is reviewed on a regular basis. However, it
27 would be scrutinized by the Town's liability carrier. He is uncertain with how the Town could address
28 locking the facility daily or if that would be a practical move.

29
30 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated it would not be beneficial for the users. Users
31 visit the facility on weekends, and during the summer months, after business hours. He had questioned
32 how the police patrol that area and was informed it is on the patrol of the schools. When they come
33 through at night they monitor the park. The facility has not been locked. There have not been many
34 issues. The hours are dawn to dusk. The hours do need to be updated, which was captured in the
35 report provided.

36
37 Signage indicates the hours to be dawn to dusk, that the park will be monitored by the Merrimack
38 Police Department, there is no attendant on duty, and the Town of Merrimack is not responsible for
39 lost or stolen items or any injury or accident incurred during the use of the skate park. It also
40 references NH RSA 507-b:11. It goes on to state, the skateboard park will be open daily from dawn to
41 dusk and will be monitored by the Merrimack Police Department. In case of injury, emergency, or to
42 report unlawful acts, call 911 or 603-424-3774.

43
44 Chairman Rothhaus stated his desire for the skateboard park to remain in its current location. The
45 proximity to the Police Department is good. When agreeing with the skateboard park at the onset, he
46 did so with the belief it addressed a segment of the population who may not be as involved in other
47 youth activities. Annual inspections by the Town's liability insurance carrier, regular inspection by the
48 Director of Parks and Recreation, maintenance schedule, video surveillance, that is of a quality that

1 could be utilized as a tool when needed, are all things he would fully embrace. With regard to a
2 monitor, he does not believe that necessary or something he would support. With regard to periodic
3 review of the arrangement with the School Board, he was supportive of that occurring at any time.
4

5 Councilor Harrington stated agreement. She stated her understanding and agreement with the concerns
6 discussed regarding the area being school land. She concurred the two bodies could meet to discuss
7 any issues that warranted discussion at any time. Should there be specific instances/items that
8 necessitate more explicit language to be included in an MOU, that could occur. However, that would
9 be based upon actual happenings not fears. She suggested the approach has to be a measured one.
10

11 Councilor Albert questioned costs associated with video surveillance, and was informed security
12 recently purchased for a Town facility was at a cost of less than \$2,500. There would be the need to
13 meet with the vendor to determine if the video would have to be wired. The camera(s) would be
14 looped into the Police Department and recorded. Councilor Albert noted the cameras could be motion
15 activated. He stated his support for adding video surveillance.
16

17 School Board Member Nunez commented she was hearing the Council and Board would revisit this on
18 an annual basis and be reactive to certain situations that may arise. She would like there to be an
19 understanding if there are situations that occur that are illegally based and occurring in a school zone,
20 both parties will come together to address them quickly and work to be proactive.
21

22 Chairman Rothhaus commented he believed the suggestion of a year timeframe to be for a relatively
23 simply review. He agrees if a situation should arise that requires attention, it be addressed as quickly
24 as possible. Councilor Harrington remarked with cameras in place, if something occurs, an immediate
25 investigation should begin.
26

27 Councilor Boyd spoke of the Council's history of quick and definitive action when faced with
28 concerns impacting the Town. The Council has been very proactive as it relates to public safety issues
29 in the community.
30

31 Councilor Healey stated concern with allocating funds towards video surveillance, etc. without a
32 commitment from the School Board that extends beyond a single year. She is not supportive of
33 incurring any expenses relative to a monitor. She wishes for this to be viewed as an ongoing project
34 both bodies are involved with.
35

36 School Board Member Guagliumi remarked, for the School Board, this is the first year, and because of
37 that she would want a year window. That does not mean that both bodies have to come together every
38 year. An agreement could be worked out that unless provided with 60/90 days' notice there would be
39 an automatic renewal. She personally would like for the agreement to be a yearly one. There are
40 unknowns in the District right now as it relates to the school and ultimately around a new SAU
41 building, and she would not want to lock the District out of options until they have received
42 recommendations from the Planning & Building Committee, etc. It would not be her intent for it to be
43 a year, but if there are problems she would want it out.
44

45 School Board Chairman Barnes echoed the remarks of Member Guagliumi. The School Board wants a
46 plan and to be clear about its plan, and they want collaborative communication. The goal for both
47 bodies is to serve the people of Merrimack. That is the common thread, but there are different
48 responsibilities in doing so. We will always look out for our core responsibilities first. To that end,

1 she believes, in the past, when things have happened at the skateboard park the District learned of it
2 through newsprint. She wanted to be certain the School Board would be notified of incidents being
3 investigated. That information sharing needs to be very timely.

4
5 Video surveillance is something the School District has wanted from the start. Responding to the
6 remarks made concerning expending the funds to purchase video surveillance equipment, she noted the
7 portability of that equipment. She stated her desire for a yearly review. The School Board does not
8 see itself making a change, but they want to preserve the right to do so. She spoke of being cognizant
9 that the Flara family was instrumental in getting this in place. Whatever is done regarding the
10 skateboard park, knowing it is a very valuable and important facility to them, they should be kept in
11 the communication loop as well out of respect for their gift to the Town.

12
13 Regarding the issue of short-term/long-term, the skateboard park is there, wanted, and utilized. The
14 desire is to ensure it is done with the expectations the District has and the way it conducts its business.
15 Long-term if there is a better opportunity for a better location for better facilities for a skateboard park
16 it is on the Council to determine where that is and how it would be constructed. The facilities were
17 designed with elements originally intended for indoor use but are being maintained aggressively to be
18 able to continue to be utilized in an outdoor facility. The equipment will not last forever, and when
19 that time comes they are happy to help vet that publicly as well.

20
21 Referring to the memorandum from Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali dated
22 September 18, 2018, he noted the questions identified as requiring answers in order to complete the
23 MOU. He noted the issues of land and equipment ownership have been addressed as have
24 maintenance and responsibilities. Regarding a timeframe, he believes each party may need to discuss
25 that and the resolution can be facilitated by the Town Manager or her proxy and School
26 Administration. With regard to termination provisions, he would like to see specific language relative
27 to timeframe and automatic renewal. He suggested, with open communication between both parties,
28 something could be presented for consideration within 60-90 days.

29
30 **MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey that the Town Council
31 and School Board each direct its own body to begin preparations for a Memorandum of
32 Understanding, provide a sample to each other's respective staff, and work off of annotated
33 copies to develop a final document that would reflect the desired direction of the skateboard
34 park**

35
36 **ON THE QUESTION**

37
38 When asked to clarify his intent, Councilor Boyd suggested the Town Council place the matter on its
39 agenda. He is hopeful both parties will put together their own MOU and the respective staffs can
40 marry the two and provide an annotated copy the bodies can work with.

41
42 Councilor Albert commented there are many in Town concerned with the future of the skateboard
43 park. He stated his support of the motion and the desire to be able to leave the meeting with some
44 definitive direction he could relay to the public. He requested the School Board ask the same of their
45 staff so that work could begin.

46

1 School Board Chairman Barnes responded there is another common bond, the insurer; Primex. She
2 stated her belief Primex will provide guidance and the two bodies can absolutely collaborate with its
3 collective insurance agent to get the right answers and develop an MOU that is mutually agreeable.
4

5 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted he has been in contact with Primex. Primex
6 has indicated a willingness to write the MOU. The 7 bullet points came from them.
7

8 School Board Member Guagliumi spoke of the desire to provide that public assurance and questioned
9 if there were any Council or School Board members who were not in agreement with the direction
10 being discussed or if there were certain terms that could be vetted together at this time.
11

12 Councilor Boyd stated the opinion it is favorable to have an initial foundation (language) to build
13 upon. It is noble to try and reach agreement on some of that language at this time. Whether or not that
14 is feasible is uncertain.
15

16 Chairman Rothhaus agreed but suggested the seven bullet points Primex has noted appear to be very
17 broad points that would be easily answered. Councilor Boyd stated, for the purpose of discussion, he
18 would like to see the timeframe for the agreement at five years. Chairman Rothhaus commented he
19 has been thinking when the School District wants the park removed it would be removed. Councilor
20 Boyd spoke of the concern raised relative to the Town expending funds on repairs, which he supports.
21 There needs to be some assurance that it will be in place for some period of time. Chairman Rothhaus
22 commented on the information provided on the cost of maintenance for the past five years (\$9,583)
23 noting the investment is not that great. He would support it if the desire of his colleagues but does not
24 feel it is necessary.
25

26 School Board Member Nunez remarked from a School Board position, her biggest concern is safety of
27 the students. She is appreciative of the collaborative effort to address all of the different elements that
28 go into the placement of the skateboard park. She stated her desire to understand if there would be any
29 action/occurrence that would cause an agreement to become null and void, e.g., if the term is 5 years
30 and illegal activity is consistently seen on school property, would that cause the agreement to become
31 null and void. She would like to know what would occur in such an instance.
32

33 Councilor Harrington commented the nuance is in the definition of the terms, e.g., “consistently”. She
34 is of the opinion that needs to be done by the individual bodies. Primex will provide a framework that
35 should be taken advantage of, but there should be perhaps a member from each body that meets to
36 discuss the possibilities and relay information to and from their collective group.
37

38 School Board Chairman Barnes noted a member of each group serves as a Liaison to the Parks and
39 Recreation Committee. She stated a preference for a two-year agreement with two-year renewals. She
40 used an example of the need to discuss the life expectancy of the indoor equipment, which is being
41 utilized as outdoor equipment. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the indoor
42 equipment was replaced in 2002. The equipment that is currently in place is outdoor equipment.
43

44 School Board Member Nunez remarked if the respective boards conduct their own discussion/review,
45 she would like to be able to provide the public with a date at which point this will be looked to be
46 resolved.
47

1 School Board Chairman Barnes stated in an earlier Board meeting once the sun set, the Board said,
2 unless given reason not to, based on the feedback received from the Town on maintenance that is being
3 addressed, that they would keep it open for the rest of the season as is. An MOU could be made for the
4 opening of the next season.
5

6 **AMENDED MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey that the**
7 **Town Council and School Board utilize their deliberative times over the next 6 weeks, coordinate**
8 **through their respective staff, and each appoint a designee to communicate collaboratively to**
9 **work towards a final draft document being prepared by November 19, 2018**
10 **MOTION CARRIED 10-0-0**

11
12 Councilor Koenig commented he is uncertain what has changed except for the fact that the lease
13 terminated. It seems the School Board has an almost fear of the safety of the students and surrounding
14 buildings. He questioned if that existed all along because there was a skateboard park on school
15 property or if something has changed that is not blatantly obvious.
16

17 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider responded nothing has changed; it is a concern the School
18 Board has had all along. With the loss of the monitor it became more relevant. He stated his belief, at
19 one of the joint meetings (4 or 5 years prior), they expressed concern around the monitoring. Nothing
20 was really done, but they were also a little handcuffed because of the agreement that was there between
21 the bodies. In many cases, they could not proactively discuss any actions with the Council until the
22 agreement came to an end.
23

24 School Board Chairman Barnes remarked now that they are the owner of the land underneath the
25 elements and don't have a MOU, they now have liability that is kind of foggy. Primex also had
26 concerns that they have the liability as the landowners with no lease agreement in place to define
27 responsibilities. This MOU is imperative to the long-term operation of it. There is no definition of
28 who is responsible if someone gets hurt on the land. It could be the Town, the District or both. That is
29 why they had to take a proactive move to find out what the exposure was. They had Primex at a
30 meeting about 6 weeks ago.
31

32 Councilor Koenig commented one of the questions in the seven bullet points is the ownership of the
33 land, and the assumption is that the District wants to maintain it. He has not heard anything clearly as
34 to exactly where the Board wishes to go, e.g., lease it back to the Town and let the Town manage and
35 own the property, keep the land, etc. Chairman Rothhaus stated the Town cannot do that. Councilor
36 Koenig disagreed. He is of the opinion the Town can do anything it wants now that that lease is done.
37 Councilor Boyd stated agreement. Councilor Harrington stated it was also her understanding the Town
38 could not. Chairman Rothhaus stated the desire to have those conversations when going over the
39 language as individual bodies.
40

41 Councilor Albert commented both bodies appear to agree. There is the need to dot Is and cross Ts. He
42 believes the community has been told the desire is not to see the skateboard park go away right now.
43 That is important. He noted comments made regarding the potential for illegal activity suggesting
44 what needs to occur is communication. If concerns are raised there is the need to be proactive.
45

46 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the repairs have been done. The Town is
47 waiting on the okay to unlock the gates and open the skateboard park. He questioned if that is what the
48 School Board would like to occur.

1
2 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider commented when he drove down O’Gara Drive on his way to
3 the meeting, he noted people in the park. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated they
4 finished the repairs today and must have unlocked the gate. He asked if it is okay to leave it open.
5 School Board Chairman Barnes restated the Board voted, with the repairs, members are comfortable
6 leaving it open until the parties could meet and come up with a plan for a long-term strategy. She
7 confirmed, that was their intention at a Board meeting held 6 weeks ago.

8
9 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider commented we are all on the same page; want to keep it open.
10 We all have different concerns about the nuances, which the MOU will get to.

11
12 Councilor Albert commented Captain Levesque is present and has heard the discussion. He is certain
13 the Police will give it the necessary attention.

14 15 **3. Cable Television Franchise Renewal**

16 Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Tom Koenig
17 The Town Council to receive input from the School District on their cable television future needs
18 and expectations.

19
20 Chairman Rothhaus stated the Council is in the beginning of working out the Cable Television
21 Franchise Agreement. There was question of what, if anything, the School District might be needing
22 when it comes to that agreement.

23
24 School Board Chairman Barnes stated the School Board would like to have a more thorough
25 conversation about the terms of the agreement. There is always more that can be done, e.g., drops,
26 wires, video service. The Town’s department was previously housed at the high school and when the
27 separation occurred the Town got some equipment and the school got some equipment. There are a lot
28 of elements of the agreement where there is mutual benefit. When the department moved to Town
29 Hall the collaboration probably separated a little. She believes it would be appropriate to give the
30 School Administration time to go over what rights come from that agreement, what needs could be
31 achieved, and where the District could provide feedback. She requested a timeline of the renewal
32 process and when a needs assessment should be provided by the District.

33
34 It was stated the renewal is up in January. The open comment period ends on October 10th. That can
35 be extended further for the School District (mid to late October). The current agreement is a ten-year
36 agreement.

37
38 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider questioned if it is fair to say that anything the District has
39 planned, such as a combined SAU Special Education building, during the next few years should be
40 brought into the discussion as part of the agreement. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali
41 noted the language currently proposed would include future buildings.

42 43 **4. Upcoming Budget Considerations**

44 Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Tom Koenig
45 A discussion will be held between the School Board and the Town Council regarding the following
46 upcoming budgetary considerations.

- 1 - Capital Projects
- 2 - Collective Bargaining Agreements

3
4 School Board Chairman Barnes commented the bodies don't always meet jointly at this time of year
5 (prior to the start of budget season). She believes it would be beneficial to do so into the future to
6 avoid working in silos. She spoke of being able to understand the impact of each of the budgets on the
7 taxpayer.

8
9 She stated the desire to make the Council aware of the large items in the District's FY19 budget. With
10 Collective Bargain Agreements (CBAs), there are many warrant articles that address staffing, etc.
11 They want to ensure the contracts are communicated to the point where if they are good for the
12 community they are passed, and it is not just the number that gets communicated.

13
14 From the District's perspective when it comes to CBAs, they have one coming up with their largest
15 collective group, the MTA. They will be going into negotiations in the coming weeks with the
16 expectation an agreement will be achieved and be on the Warrant in April.

17
18 Chairman Rothhaus noted the potential for five (5) CBAs in the coming year. There could be an
19 additional one 1-3 years out. In addition, potential bonding to address space needs at both the safety
20 complex and the Library. Sewer line extensions are a possibility.

21
22 It was noted construction for the Bedford Road Bridge will begin next year. The Town's 20% match
23 has already been set aside. Councilor Albert stated his recollection budget discussion will include
24 Pearson Road reconstruction. It was noted the necessary funds have already been set aside in a Capital
25 Reserve Fund.

26
27 School Board Chairman Barnes identified the large projects before the School District to be roofing,
28 paving and draining at the Masticola complex.

29
30 Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business, stated Tom Touseau, School District Facilities
31 Director, and Kyle Fox, Director, Public Works Department, do a tremendous job working together on
32 paving projects. The Town has greater buying power in terms of asphalt. The District piggybacking
33 onto the Town's contract provides the same per ton cost, which represents a tremendous savings. The
34 District was able to, this summer, complete nearly all of Thorntons Ferry School where they were just
35 going to do the circle and lower parking lot. The economies of scale provided the better price. The
36 two individuals work exceedingly well together.

37
38 What is upcoming is the paving in the circle at Masticola Elementary School in the area where you
39 enter into the Smith Gym. He would like to discuss with Director Fox looking at Bishop Street as
40 there seem to be drainage issues there. It is possible projects could be coordinated.

41
42 School Board Chairman Barnes spoke of the desire to be able to communicate effectively the needs of
43 the District and the Town and be able to plan in such a way as to minimize the impact on the taxpayers
44 from year to year.

45
46 Chairman Rothhaus commented on the potential for it to be a dicey budget season with some of the
47 changes, e.g., SRO cost coming solely to the Town, CBAs, etc.

1 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider stated the desire for the two bodies to engage in discussions
2 around healthcare noting that to be the biggest part of contract negotiations. He is uncertain if there
3 are savings that could be gained but noted the School District has the larger group of employees.
4 Councilor Albert stated support for the idea and asked for clarification he was suggesting the
5 possibility of economies of scale that could be gained through joining the District in purchasing.

6
7 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider responded the administration has a lot of experience in dealing
8 with these larger healthcare scenarios, e.g., different plans of service. They have a lot invested in it,
9 and he believes there may be an opportunity to leverage some of that with the Town side to look to
10 pick up either a better carrier or cost rates, etc. Councilor Albert reiterated he is in favor of that if able
11 to experience cost savings while keeping good quality healthcare.

12
13 Councilor Boyd commented pooling those groups of employees together would create a larger pool.
14 With a larger pool, there is the potential for the risk to be lowered. Whether or not it is feasible he is
15 uncertain. School Board Vice Chairman Schneider commented there is also the issue that there are
16 high risk employees on the Town side.

17
18 Chairman Rothhaus suggested Assistant Superintendent Shevenell and Assistant Town Manager /
19 Finance Director Micali could give that consideration and return to the different bodies with
20 information gained. School Board Member Guagliumi spoke of a Cost Care Containment Committee
21 and questioned if there is a way to leverage that group. It was decided Assistant Superintendent
22 Shevenell and Assistant Town Manager / Finance Director Micali would be asked to conduct an initial
23 review to ascertain whether they believe it could be feasible.

24 25 **5. Athletic Fields Discussion**

26 Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Tom Koenig

27 A discussion will be held between the School Board and the Town Council to consider potential
28 District-owned land that can be used as new athletic fields.

29
30 Councilor Albert spoke of this issue having been discussed last year. Also a member of the Parks and
31 Recreation Committee, he is aware there has been no forward movement in this regard. The MYA
32 continues to have the need for a basketball court and 3-4 fields. On the school side, he believes there
33 to be a need for at least a varsity soccer field. He is of the opinion there remains a need and questioned
34 the desire of the bodies.

35
36 School Board Chairman Barnes stated the minutes of the last joint meeting indicate they discussed the
37 appropriateness of taking the 2010 Fields Needs Assessment and updating it for current
38 usage/enrollments. She believes that to be the first appropriate step. The assessment viewed /
39 considered District properties as well as properties throughout the community (some of which are not
40 Town owned). She stated there to be tangible changes in the report, e.g., the Town no longer uses
41 Anheuser Busch facilities. The assessment includes short and long-term projections, needs by sport,
42 etc. She spoke of changes in participation level in certain sports. She believes an updated assessment
43 would provide what is needed for good short and long-term strategies.

44
45 She spoke of the conclusion of the assessment, which was the thought of creating a sports complex
46 type environment where we would take some of the properties and develop a batch using a bond (at the
47 time it was \$2 million).

1 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider commented the School Board has engaged in discussion of
2 some of the opportunities of school owned land, e.g., Timmons property at the end of South Baboosic,
3 which is challenging to say the least. It is not unusable, but probably relatively expensive to consider.
4 There is also the possibility of land between Thorntons Ferry School and Continental Boulevard,
5 which is a little less challenging, but has wetlands involved.
6

7 They have talked about and had in the Capital Improvement Plan for the school side, the turf field at
8 the high school. There has been a lot of talk of how the entire Town could benefit from having a turf
9 field in terms of longevity. It is difficult for the school as an entity to look at it as a budgeted item as
10 the cost exceeds \$1 million. It would be good to have a conversation about what it means for the
11 Merrimack community as a whole to consider the turf field in terms of funding and other opportunities.
12

13 Chairman Rothhaus commented when the Planning and Building Committee looked into it, the actual
14 delta, the added cost from having a turf field versus maintaining the current field was \$20,000 -
15 \$25,000. Regarding the financing of it, it would be nice if we could come up with another mechanism,
16 but as far as the annual cost in excess of what we currently experience, it was not a great difference.
17 School Board Chairman Barnes commented the \$25,000 could then be looked at in the way fields are
18 getting rented. She reiterated revisiting the data with current numbers would be useful.
19

20 School Board Vice Chairman Schneider commented the good news is that the school invested in the
21 track. The plans for this year include addressing the bleachers that are to the highway side. They will
22 be of similar structure to the ones on the other side and more accessible. The infrastructure will be in
23 place. All it really needs is the field in the middle to sort of cap it off and we would have a really nice
24 facility that Merrimack could be even more proud of.
25

26 School Board Member Guagliumi commented she believes it worthwhile to review this issue and is
27 time for forward movement. As long as she has been on the School Board they have had conversations
28 around the shortage of these kinds of facilities. She commented on the varsity soccer field and how
29 they pay rent to GPS. They have safety issues in regard to getting students to home games in Bedford.
30 She has been receiving complaints from parents. When she was on the Parks and Recreation
31 Committee the shortage of facilities was discussed. There has got to be something that we can start to
32 plan for. What that is she is uncertain. However, getting the data update as a foundation for making
33 those types of decisions is a good starting point.
34

35 Chairman Rothhaus remarked the Town has a couple of parcels that could be utilized. There is a
36 segment of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve that was called out. He believes the cost might be a little
37 higher at this point in time. There is also a parcel (6-7 acres) near the Highway Garage.
38

39 School Board Chairman Barnes commented she spoke with the Town Manager earlier in the week
40 about school owned property and mentioned the desire to do research if the Town is going to pursue a
41 public safety facility utilizing the property that was being discussed for the South Fire Station, which is
42 school owned and would be deeded over for the fire station. If that needs more land, they should
43 probably look to have some discussion of what that request would be. Councilor Harrington stated that
44 would be part of what the Needs Assessment would involve as it would determine what kind of facility
45 would need to be proposed, e.g., size, etc. School Board Chairman Barnes commented right now we
46 are looking at 3 acres, but she believes the Town Manager may have indicated a little more might be
47 needed. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted the Needs Assessment will not be
48 completed in time for this budget season.

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Minutes

November 14, 2017

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 1, Line 12; replace “Vaillancourt” with “Albert”
- Page 1, Lines 12 and 13; delete “Town Finance Director Paul Micali”
- Page 5, Lines 218 and 219; add “and asked MVD to keep this in mind in their negotiations”
- Page 9, Line 408; replace “Mass River Road” with “Mast Road parcel”
- Page 9, Line 421; replace “Public Works” with ‘Parks and Recreation”
- Page 10, Line 427; replace “\$4,000” with “\$400,000”

MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Member Barnes to accept the minutes of the joint meeting of the Town Council and School Board conducted on November 14, 2017, as amended. MOTION CARRIED 9-0-1

Chairman Rothhaus Abstained

Comments from the Press - None

Comments from the Public - None

Comments from the Council

Councilor Albert spoke of being pleased with the open communication between the two bodies.

Comments from the School Board - None

Adjourn

MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Member Schneider to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED 10-0-0

The September 20, 2018 joint meeting of the Town Council and School Board was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan