

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
Monday, October 1, 2018**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Schneider, Board Members Guagliumi, Schoenfeld and Nunez. Also in attendance were Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Student Representative Puzzo.

1. Call to Order/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 none.

3. Conversation with Board Regarding 1:1 Student to Device Proposal for the 2019-2020 Budget (Ms. Nancy Rose)

Ms. Nancy Rose, Director of Technology and Library Media, addressed the Board and said that as part of the Capital Improvement Plan, every year they added mobile devices for students at a palatable rate for the budget.

Ms. Rose said she asked the administration if they might be ready for 1:1, which was one laptop or device per student.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that it would help her to have some research regarding the pros and cons. She noted that she was aware that other school districts were implementing 1:1 but she did know what their experience had been.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that one of the things they talked about was “blizzard bags” which was the idea of being able to create an environment where they did not need to cancel school when there was a snow day. He said one of the questions he had for Ms. Rose as she researched the subject, was if schools that had 1:1 utilized them for that purpose.

Board Member Schoenfeld commented that she was interested in knowing what type of device(s) would serve the purpose.

Board Member Nunez said she would like to see a cost benefit analysis relative to not only the financial impact but also from an educational perspective. She said she would also be interested to see what improvements could be made if they were to implement the 1:1 with streamlining communication between teacher/student and teacher/parent. Ms. Nunez commented that the “blizzard bag” was something she was interested in learning more about blizzard bags relative to the district impact and wanted to know at what age utilizing one to one technology would be beneficial. She also said she would like to know what the responsibilities would be for the student, district and the family.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she would like to know what the intended or unintended impacts could be, for example, if there would be an increased cost for on-line library services and perhaps a decrease for some of the periodicals that were ordered.

Vice Chair Schneider said different devices had different timelines and lifespans in that there was how long a device had to be replaced because of use versus how often a device had to be replaced because the technology became outdated.

Chair Barnes asked if a technology plan could be provided which showed a comprehensive cost, recycling, rollout and the need for additional Wi-Fi infrastructure to support it.

Ms. Rose stated that she had a survey done and discovered different districts had done 2:10, 6:12 and 5:8 so it was all over the place. She said there were a lot of Chromebooks, iPads and Windows laptops depending on what level the student was at. She further said the range of when devices were allowed to go home varied from students in fourth, fifth and sixth grades to only in high school.

Ms. Rose said there was also the management for damage, if they were insured, if extra devices were purchased and the repairs were done in-house, how the district would ensure there were parts and someone qualified to repair them.

Ms. Rose commented that training would be important because if teachers were not comfortable using the devices then they would not get used. She said they would also have to make sure that teachers had the same devices that the students had.

Ms. Rose asked the Board what they thought would be a reasonable process. She said she could put together the results of the research done at both the national level and the state level. She further said it would include what some of the cost benefits would be and where there could be areas of potential savings.

Board Member Schoenfeld said she felt that would be a great start and it would provide a lot of helpful information. She said they would first have to establish that it would be beneficial. She further said the research regarding device use was ongoing and there was very little evidence that shifting to textbooks which were entirely electronic was necessarily beneficial in its own right. She noted that she would like to know where it would fall and why and therefore, why they would pursue it.

Board Member Nunez asked when Ms. Rose was doing the research if there was a negative effect on certain age groups and a positive effect on a certain age group.

Board Member Nunez also asked when districts did the 1:1 if it was fully funded by the school or if there was certain criteria where a parent could provide their child with whatever the district chose for the device. Ms. Rose replied that Bedford was the only town with that type of a model. She said the parents bought the device and they had the option of buying into a maintenance program so if something happened to the device the school would help with the repair. She further said that model had been in place for approximately three or four years and it went through a process in which the community was involved. Ms. Rose said the Technology Director in Bedford reported that by the time the students got to twelfth grade, they stopped trying to determine what devices would be good because by that time, seniors wanted what they wanted. She said the funding mostly came out of the operational budget but it varied.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that Merrimack is a very different community than Bedford. Other considerations such as FAPE (Free And Public Education) also exists and should be considered.

Ms. Rose stated the other thing she felt was useful to note was that several districts mentioned they had wireless hot spots that they would lend out so if a device was going home with a student and they did not have internet access, there was a device they could check out.

Chair Barnes asked if the plan would be to implement the model in one budget year or over a number of years with a lease but to put the technology in within a year.

Chair Barnes stated if the Board had any questions regarding the possible implementation of 1:1 prior to the next meeting they should e-mail Superintendent Chiafery and copy her.

4. School Board Approval of Request for Payment for Security Cameras from the Public School Infrastructure Fund (Superintendent Chiafery)

Superintendent Chiafery stated they applied for the grant in October of 2017, from the Public School Infrastructure Trust Fund which was established by Governor Sununu because at the end of the year, there was \$19 million left over in state surplus. She said districts could apply for grants for security issues, high-speed internet service or life and safety issues.

Superintendent Chiafery said the district applied for two grants; one for bat mitigation for which they were granted \$180,000 and the second grant they received had to do with reimbursement for new security cameras. She further said they were not able to ask for the reimbursement until the project was complete. Superintendent Chiafery said 18 cameras were purchased over the summer, specifically, three internal cameras at the middle school, twelve internal cameras at the high school, one external camera at the high school and two cameras on the lower baseball field. She noted the paperwork for a request for payment was currently before the Board and had to be submitted to the Department of Education, specifically the Commissioner of Education.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the award was for 80% of the actual expenditure and the actual request for payment was for \$38,185.60. She said she was hopeful they would receive the reimbursement by the end of October.

Superintendent Chiafery thanked Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell for his work on submitting the grants.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the grant and authorize the Board to sign the request for payment for 80% of the reimbursement in the amount of \$38,185.60.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Utilization of Brentwood Property for 2019-2019 (Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Superintendent Chiafery)

- **Outcome from Fire Marshal's Inspection**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that Tom Touseau, Facilities Director and he had invited John Manuele, Fire Marshall, who brought the Building

Inspector as well as the new Health Inspector to tour the Brentwood building and advised the administration as to how they wanted us to proceed with the potential utilization of the building in a limited capacity. He mentioned that Ms. Nancy Rose was also there to look at using the facility for possible STEM activities. He said Mr. Manuele's last recommendation was for them to get a Certified Fire Engineer to walk the site and provide a detailed report. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell went on to say that, he was told because they did not have a full sprinkler system, they could never use the facility as a school and it could only be used on a limited basis for office use. He said to get to that point, which would be verified by the Certified Fire Engineer, the fire alarm panel was old, out of date and needed replacement. He further said that all of the smoke alarms needed to be replaced, there were some holes in the sheet rock which needed to be repaired, there were missing ceiling tiles that needed to be replaced and also the ramps on the side of the building needed to be replaced. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said after those repairs were complete, they could begin using it in a limited capacity for an office type of situation.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked about the circumstances surrounding the pre-purchase inspection and other inspections that were done. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the inspection, which was done by Brian Hansen of Team Engineering, as well as the last two pages of the inspection report listed all of the items, noting that the fire alarm panel replacement would be approximately \$64,000. He said the report was available on-line.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if SERESC had continued functioning in the building and leasing it to Nashua, were they at risk for the Fire Marshall to tell them they had to stop their function in the building. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that was correct.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that based on the steps they had taken, they could not use the building for anything unless they made the stated changes. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied those were the changes so far, however, the Fire Engineer could modify the suggested changes based on how they chose to use the building.

Vice Chair Schneider said the intent of doing the walk through was because they were going to try to do the right thing by the property to be able to use it as a combined SAU/SPED space for the district. He said his personal opinion was that they would put as little as they had to into the building during the short term. He asked if the cost of a Fire Engineer was known. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the cost was approximately \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if some of the requirements were based on if there were students in the building versus adult education. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that adult education was different from having school-aged children in the building but they would still have to make the initial repairs mentioned above.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she did not recall the board publicly vetting the long term use of the building that although they had discussed it, she did not think the Board vetted the long-term use of the building for the SAU Office/Student Services Building. Superintendent Chiafery replied that was correct and they had a general first discussion with a member of the Planning & Building Committee, Mr. Gage Perry and the Board. She said the Board decided that it was interested in seeing if they could use the building on a short-term basis while they explored a long-term use. She further said that was the prompt to involve the fire department.

- **Administration's Initial Thoughts Regarding Utilization**

Superintendent Chiafery commented that she had met with the leadership team and the initial thought was the Adult Education Program. She also said that Ms. Nancy Rose also attended the tour because she intended on having a number of Lego Leagues from all of the schools and one of the things they kept hearing was that it was very difficult for kids to be in the process of building something and then having to take it down if the space had to be utilized for something else the next day. She said there could be designated rooms in the Brentwood building.

Superintendent Chiafery said the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts utilized all four elementary school buildings and the thought was it might be great if the scouts had a room designated for their needs.

Superintendent Chiafery stated another thought was to have educator training in one of the smaller rooms. She also mentioned having a district art show and lastly, in the small gym, there may be a possibility of a team who needed to utilize it for a particular type of practice.

Chair Barnes asked how an office use versus a classroom use would be defined by the Fire Marshall or a Certified Fire Engineer because one of the things they could no longer do since Superstorm Sandy hit was to use the basement space to perform student services evaluations. She said she felt the small gym in the Brentwood building could replace the basement. Superintendent Chiafery replied that the overseer of Student Services had not expressed interest in the short-term and she did not think they

would be able to utilize the space until the second semester given that there are probably things they would have to do prior to utilizing the space.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that he wanted the School Board to put a stake in the ground which indicated their intent was to use the facility to address the SAU/SPED building. He said there was some pushback by people who thought they purchased the building without even knowing what they were going to do with it. He further said what they paid for the building was what the land was worth in of itself minus the building.

Board Member Guagliumi commented that she was not sure whether or not they should wait for some feedback from the Planning and Building Committee. Chair Barnes replied that the School Board was the governing body and they needed to decide what they wanted the property to be. She agreed that she was leaning in the same direction as Vice Chair Schneider but asked if the Board wanted to use the existing building or the existing site, as they were two very different charges. She said when they gave that charge, it should not have been worded such that it would be concluded what they wanted to do but inform them of what the options were. Chair Barnes noted that it was important to her that they do it right the first time and not create a series of band-aides.

Board Member Schoenfeld commented that she had no problem with restating that in the entire process they were looking for a place to meet the needs of the SAU/SPED and the Brentwood building was a very strong possibility.

Board Member Guagliumi stated the she was in agreement with Board Member Schoenfeld but she was not sure she was willing to make the charge to say that they should definitely use the property and negate other options.

Board Member Nunez stated that she struggled with it and erred on the side of understanding how much it would cost to remove the building, build a new building based on their current need versus fixing the building up. She said that before she made any decision, she wanted to know what the cost associated with both scenarios. Board Member Nunez agreed that it should be done right the first time and not just put a band aid on it and felt they needed to take a good look at how their money could be best used.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that he wanted the Board to authorize bringing the Fire Engineer in to get the information they needed and to see what the cost would be to make the building usable. He said there were multiple proposals made in the past with regard to alternate locations for the SAU/SPED building and he felt the Board should authorize the Planning and Building Committee to the Brentwood building to their list.

Board Member Guagliumi commented that she thought the Planning and Building Committee were already looking the building but she was in favor of Vice Chair Schneider's motion so they could come up with the best plan possible.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Chair Barnes) to authorize Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell to bring in a Certified Fire Engineer to evaluate the Brentwood property and provide information on what would be required, at a minimal, to occupy it in its current state.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Chair Barnes) to authorize the Planning and Building Committee to return by the first meeting after the election in April with what the viable plans were to address the SAU/SPED building needs with refreshed information based on the districts needs as well as a cost analysis which included the Brentwood property to the list of viable options.

Board Member Schoenfeld suggested moving the timeline to April 15th if the Planning and Building Committee did not have enough time to obtain the information.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

6. Individual Board Member's Thoughts Regarding 2019-2020 Budget (Chair Barnes)

Board Member Schoenfeld:

- Liked the focus there had been in recent years on maintenance and upkeep and would like to see that type of effort continue.
- Continued support for the tools and curriculum for differentiated learning.
- Continued fiscal prudence.

Board Member Guagliumi:

- Budgeting that preserves and improves the quality of education offered while being sensitive to the burden the taxpayers face. Is open to and encourages innovative and creative approaches to accomplish the district goals.
- Continued focus on Capital Improvement Plan and attention to the maintenance of existing facilities.

- Continue to avoid kicking the can down the road as much as possible.
- Focused and concerned on items such as student and staff safety, communications and IT infrastructure.
- Administration remain focused on the facts throughout the process and encourage as many details as possible regarding budget expenditures.
 - For example, include the breakouts in the budget line items, particularly in the more complex areas such as the high school.
- Continue to explore a couple of items for this year or the near future.
 - Turf field (which was on the CIP)
 - Building temperatures with regard to the potential Honeywell initiative. Temperatures, particularly on the second level of the brick buildings, need to be improved.
- Options for the Brentwood building and any associated costs.
- Significant safety concerns regarding transportation for out-of-town athletics such as home games and practices.

Vice Chair Schneider:

- Continue to put things on separate warrant articles when operating budget was completed for added transparency.
- As part of the evaluation, administration to present what a truly flat budget would be on the operating budget based on the previous year, including incorporating the cost of increased teacher's pay.
- When the teacher's contract was completed, they indicated what the additional cost would be for the first year and estimated cost for the next two years based on the increases. As part of the Boards discussion around the budget, to have an idea of what the actual increase would be.
- Transportation to athletic and non-athletic events outside of Merrimack. Look at expanding what was budgeted for in terms of transportation to include off-site events.
- Attended Wellness Committee meeting and discussion was around helping with mental health and the opportunities available to students. The Committee started to include support for staff as well using some of the same initiatives and opportunities. Include teacher wellness initiatives in the budget.

Chair Barnes:

- Maintain a productive and safe learning environment.
- Propose a budget which would maintain infrastructure and facilities.

- Expand technology to meet student demand.
- Correlate the expenditures with the goal of continually improving student performance.
- Be mindful of the tax burden of the expenditures and the size of the student population being served.
- All items that affect the safety of students, staff and the community should be included in the operating budget.
- Important but not imperative projects should be identified and considered for warrant articles so the taxpayers could have input into its adoption.
- The budget should have a detail of expenditures so it presents the request for funds in a transparent way.
- The cut list is as important as the budget and for those items that do not make the budget, to provide a list and the plan to compensate for not having it. Be prepared to discuss the consequences of the proposed cuts to the operational and educational outcomes.
- The budget should be accompanied by a detailed communication plan which enables those who choose to weigh in on the process had the means to do so through productive channels. (To include press releases.)

Board Member Nunez:

- What could be provided academically that budget constraints had not yet allowed.
- Short and long-term implications for students in the long-term budget.
- If implications exist, provide a cost benefit analysis from both a monetary and an academic perspective.
- Is there additional technology sources needed and/or how to better leverage the existing technology to better communicate and teach.
- Costs associated with updating existing technology versus adding resources.
- Communication tools to help streamline internal and external communications. Identify tools as well as the cost associated with them.
- Where weakness is in the current safety action plan and resources needed to ensure children's safety. Increase budget to be prepared for the worst. Additional training measures in place, additional Resource Officers in each school and a safety action plan for students, administration and parents to ensure the school community was prepared.
- Review current safety measures and provide clarity on how much would be needed to take the existing action safety plan to the next level.

- List of items that will not make the budget as others would and should take priority.
- Wish list of items from each school so the community is aware of items that did not make it in the budget, as well as a date stamp of when it was presented as a wish list item and why the item was requested.
- Need for community to understand the Board's job to provide excellent education while being mindful of any and all tax implications.
- Revisit any areas in the budget where they may be able to save or reduce spending without ramification to the student body or the education that they receive.

Chair Barnes noted that the Board would come up with a single combined message and provide it to the administration at the next meeting for the leadership team.

7. New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) 2019 Call for Resolutions (Chair Barnes)

Chair Barnes stated that if the Board felt there was a platform item they wanted to address at a statewide level, there was a window to do that which was outlined in the their packets. She further stated when the resolutions passed; it would become a platform on which the NHSBA had the authorization to represent them as a state. Chair Barnes asked if members of the Board had any such resolutions, they were welcome to bring it up at the next meeting.

8. Approval of September 17, 2018, Minutes (Chair Barnes)

Chair Barnes asked the members of the Board if there were any emendations to the minutes before them.

Page 1, Board Member Guagliumi asked that the record reflect that Student Representative Puzzo and she were "excused" from the meeting rather than "not present."

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to accept the minutes from the September 17, 2018, as amended.

The motion passed 4-0-1 (Board Member Guagliumi abstained).

9. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she received a couple of inquiries from parents regarding transportation as it related to sports, particularly to the GPS fields for soccer.

Chair Barnes stated that she received notification that there was an event on October 20th by a New Hampshire based organization regarding budgets.

b) Comments

There was none.

10. New Business

There was none.

11. Committee Reports

Student Representative Puzzo commented that the homecoming dance, pep rally and football game all occurred the previous week. He said the football team beat BG and the pep rally and the dance went without issue. He also said they would have a visit from the Korean Delegation on October 18th and the band would be playing for them.

Board Member Guagliumi said she attended a Communications Committee meeting and it was pretty straightforward. She said they reviewed some of the efforts and things that were done around the district for the past two years. She also said they discussed other needs such as social media as well as some next steps which included managing the school activity calendars.

Board Member Guagliumi indicated that they had done a survey two years ago which provided them with a lot of information and they were thinking about doing another one. She said they acknowledged that the survey results could be very different because technology continued to change and people may be more open to some on-line options.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that the first meeting of the District Wellness Committee was held and a presentation was given regarding what the Mental Health Committee had done and they started brainstorming some opportunities to be able to have a partnership between the two committees.

Chair Barnes said that the Grater Woods Subcommittee met on September 25th and there was new outlook off of the school loop trail that one of the community Eagle Scouts built. She also said the outdoor classroom was about to begin construction and another scout was doing a series of benches throughout the property. Chair Barnes commented there was a fall walk which was being planned on the property.

Chair Barnes noted that the New Hampshire School Board Association's Board of Directors meeting on September 19th and the New Hampshire School Administrator's Association would be attending the meetings going forward. Chair Barnes said the first robotics group from the State of New Hampshire also attended the meeting.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There was none.

13. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

14. Adjournment

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.