

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
Monday, November 19, 2018**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

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

Excused: Superintendent Chiafery
Board Member Nunez
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. Board's Response to the High School's Request to Conduct Student, Family and Staff Opinion Surveys as Part of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)'s Accreditation Process

(Ms. Eileen Banfield, Mr. Mark Merrifield and Ms. Marcy Pope)

Ms. Banfield addressed the Board and stated that NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) is the ten-year accreditation process which is done to ensure that school districts are aligned with NEASC standards for accreditation. She said the Merrimack School district was up for re-accreditation in the spring of 2021 and noted the process had changed slightly in that it was less evaluative and more about identifying priority areas and acknowledging what was done well. Ms. Banfield said the Collaborative Conference, which was a small visit by NEASC, would occur in the spring of 2019, but before the conference could be held, self-reflection reports had to be written.

Ms. Banfield noted that in order to get the data needed to write the reports, surveys from families, staff and students had to be completed.

Ms. Pope addressed the Board and said the NEASC visit was tentatively scheduled for May of 2019. She further said prior to that visit they needed the data from the survey as well as from their own data gathering process.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked who would have access to the data and whether or not it would be individually identifiable. Mr. Merrifield replied the survey data would go directly back to NEASC and the district would not see any of the individual data but would receive a document which would report the number of responses to each question as well as how the questions were answered.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if NEASC would be able to know whether or not a particular student had completed the survey. Mr. Merrifield replied they would not.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if taking the survey was optional for the students. Mr. Merrifield replied it was optional but they were encouraging as much participation as possible.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how people would be notified that the survey existed. Mr. Merrifield replied they would offer students the surveys during English classes. He noted it was an on-line survey and Mrs. Putney would notify the parents before the survey was distributed.

Ms. Banfield pointed out they had to have 25% of parents in grades nine through twelve respond to the survey.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested that the words "results are anonymous" should be added to the introduction of the survey.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to approve the administration of the surveys and to waive the two-week rule.

The motion passed 4-0-0

4. Presentation of Capital Improvement Plan for 2019-2025

(Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Mr. Tom Touseau and Mr. Rich Hendricks)

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the first item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was to replace the roofing as summarized below:

- James Mastricola Upper Elementary School/James Mastricola Elementary School for a total of \$655,805 in 2019 – 2020
- Thorntons Ferry School - \$1,195,701 in 2020 – 2021
- James Mastricola Elementary School/James Mastricola Upper Elementary School - \$1,039,988 in 2021 – 2022
- James Mastricola Elementary School/James Mastricola Upper Elementary School - \$765,328 in 2022 – 2023
- James Mastricola Middle School/James Mastricola Upper Elementary School - \$477,090 in 2023 – 2024
- Merrimack High School \$1,046,463 in 2024 – 2025

Chair Barnes noted that all of the roofing had a 35-year warranty. She also pointed out that she felt it was important for the public to know they had a proposed roofing plan through 2050 and the Board was looking at the long-term in an effort to stabilize the tax rate whenever it was possible.

Chair Barnes asked if there were questions with regard to the proposed roofing project. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the second item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was for the replacement of paving/sidewalks as summarized below:

- O’Gara Drive - \$186,844 in 2020 – 2021
- Sidewalk on O’Gara Drive - \$88,580 in 2020 – 2021

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the third item was for the replacement of paving/drainage as summarized below:

- James Mastricola Elementary School Entrance and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School next to School Street - \$325,076 in 2019 – 2020
- Merrimack High School – O’Gara/McElwain Parking Lots - \$250,000 in 2021 – 2022
- Merrimack High School – Parking lots on O’Gara Drive - \$275,000 in 2023 – 2024

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the next item was with regard to the Brentwood building. He further stated he had spoken with the Planning and Building Committee and while the scale, scope and cost had yet to be defined, the recommendation was to remove the existing building and replace it with a new central office in 2020 – 2021.

Mr. Rich Hendricks, Chairman, School District Planning & Building Committee, addressed the Board and stated that while he knew the Planning & Building Committee had no final authority on the Brentwood building. He wanted the Board to know that something needed to be done soon. He expressed surprise that anyone was let in the building the previous year and there was very little which was salvageable. He further said the building was not handicapped accessible.

Mr. Hendricks pointed out the main reason the district purchased the property was because of the land.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that the School Board had not yet made a decision on the disposition of the Brentwood building. He said Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell was investigating whether or not they could utilize the building for some level of function until the Board decided what would be done with building. He further said he did not want anyone to jump to the conclusion that there was no use for the building in the interim. Vice Chair Schneider stated that he felt putting the words "DEMO/BUILD" on the Capital Expenditure Summary Plan was misleading because they did not yet know what the definition of build meant.

Chair Barnes stated that it was a public document and it was not meant for statement purposes as much it was for transparency purposes to share with the community what the Board's responsibilities were regarding the infrastructure and how the Board planned for it. Chair Barnes agreed the words "DEMO/BUILD" should be removed from the document.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that one of the difficulties was that they just did not know exactly how much a proposed new or renovated building might cost.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she felt the Board could establish a price range for the CIP.

Board Member Schoenfeld commented that the Board had not yet decided where the SAU consolidation would be located. Mr. Hendricks said there were multiple options concerning SPED reconsolidation and he was not sure how to assign a price range to it because there were multiple options.

Chair Barnes said numbers could change based on market value and said she would be satisfied with a current estimate because it would be an educated guess and would not be legally binding. She further said she felt it would be appropriate to come up with a moderate number to use as a placeholder.

Board Member Guagliumi commented that she was fine with that approach and they could place an asterisk next to the number and include an explanation as to what that number represented.

Vice Chair Schneider said it was important to point out that the land which the Brentwood building sat on was the driving force behind the purchase, as it was a one-time opportunity and could provide many uses which would benefit the district as well as the town.

Chair Barnes asked if there were any other questions regarding the SAU consolidation. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the next item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was for the bleacher upgrade as summarized below:

- James Mastricola Upper Elementary School - \$100,000 – Bleachers in the all-purpose room in 2020 - 2021
- James Mastricola Upper Elementary School - \$155,000 – Bleachers in Smith Gym in 2020 - 2021

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the existing bleachers were made of wood and not ADA compliant.

Chair Barnes asked if there were questions regarding the bleachers. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the next item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was for the boilers as summarized below:

- James Mastricola Elementary School – 3 units - \$350,000 in 2019 -2020
- Merrimack High School – 4 units - \$500,000 in 2022 – 2023
- James Mastricola Upper Elementary School – 2 units - \$300,000 in 2024 – 2025

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that some of the boilers were 30 plus years old and it was time to plan for their replacements as opposed to being surprised if they failed on a -10 degree January day.

Mr. Touseau stated it was most important to replace the boilers at the James Mastricola Elementary School first and noted they would be replaced with incandescent boilers which provide greater efficiency.

Chair Barnes asked how the boilers were at the Thorntons Ferry and the Reeds Ferry schools. Mr. Touseau replied they were also approaching 30 years old.

Chair Barnes requested that Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell add a line item to the Bonded Debt Schedule for the boilers. She pointed out that the totals on the form did not include the boilers.

Chair Barnes asked if there were any other questions regarding the boilers. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the next item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was for the window replacement as summarized below:

- Merrimack High School - \$265,000 in 2021 - 2022
- Merrimack High School - \$316,500 in 2023 - 2024

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the windows had lost their thermal insulation and some of them did not lock properly. He further stated the dollar amounts included the amount for the caulking compound but did not include mitigation for any potential asbestos found in the caulking.

Chair Barnes asked what percentage of the windows would be covered in the 2021 - 2022 project, and the 2023 - 2024 project. Mr. Touseau replied 52 windows were proposed to be replaced at the high school in 2021 - 2022. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that he would get back to the Board with actual percentages for the replacement windows.

Chair Barnes asked what the average age of the windows was at the Reeds Ferry, Thorntons Ferry, James Mastricola Elementary School and the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School. Mr. Touseau replied they all needed to be assessed but the windows along the ball field side of the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School probably needed some attention. He further replied the windows at the Reeds Ferry and Thorntons Ferry were generally okay but they would be addressed in the upcoming budget. Chair Barnes clarified those would be done as smaller, under \$150,000 projects, and would not part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Chair Barnes asked if there were any other questions regarding the window replacements. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the next item on the Capital Expenditure Summary Form was for the field upgrade as summarized below:

- Merrimack High School - \$1,000,000 in 2019 - 2020

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the line item pertained to the proposed artificial surface. He said it was originally slated to be done in 2022 - 2023 but the Planning and Building Committee moved it up to 2019 - 2020. He further said the proposed amount to complete the project was \$1,000,000, which was a placeholder.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the district would receive an updated quote for the project from two companies.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she supported moving the project up for a few reasons. For example, there were bussing issues, they were paying GPS (Global Premier Soccer) to use their field and the real estate was limited. She said she felt they could maximize the space in an area that was secure by going with an artificial surface.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that he felt it was important to understand that the approach was not to just simply put it on the Capital Improvement Plan but to work proactively with the community to find ways to fund the project without completely looking at taxation.

Chair Barnes said she had mixed emotions regarding the proposed turf field. She said she definitely felt it needed funding but it could not be all left to the taxpayers. She further said they also had to look at budgeting for its replacement with something like a Capital Reserve Fund.

Chair Barnes said the one thing that alarmed her was that they had no plan for engaging community support.

Chair Barnes said the total bonded debt with capital improvements with the proposed field in place, including the additional \$350,000 for boilers would be \$4.534 million. She said those were debt payments they were legally required to do and capital improvements they were choosing to do. She further said the original placement of the turf field (2022 - 2023) was something very valuable to the district because of the stabilization of the tax rate.

Chair Barnes noted when there was a heavy load in one year the tax rate would spike and there was no way around it. She said she was more concerned about schools not

having heat than she was about having a muddy field. She further said she really did want the new turf field but she did not want to see the bonded debt and capital improvements go to \$5.6 million and then back down to \$2.6 million which was a \$3 million difference within two years.

Board Member Guagliumi commented she felt it should be on a Warrant Article and not in the operating budget. She said she felt it would get support from the high school community as well as from the community at large.

Mr. Hendricks said there were many parents who had communicated that they wanted the turf field and pointed out every time it was delayed the cost would go up. He also said part of having a home team advantage was having people in the crowd to cheer the kids on and there were no crowds at fields that were located far away. Mr. Hendricks pointed out that it would benefit hundreds of athletes and that the drum and bugle corp. could use it as well.

Chair Barnes commented that she also felt it should be on a Warrant Article. She said she felt they needed a little more time for fundraisers and people who could organize to offset the cost. She further said it would be ideal if they could get organized quickly but the Warrant Article had to be ready in February and if it were not, the taxpayers would be asked for \$1 million. Board Member Guagliumi pointed out that the district would save some money on transportation to other fields as well as rental fees for out-of-district fields.

Chair Barnes asked if there were anyone else who had questions or comments with regard to the field. There were none.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the next item was for the technology infrastructure upgrade.

- \$332,170 – 2019 – 2020
- \$257,920 – 2020 – 2021
- \$222,670 – 2021 – 2022

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said that technology was initially placed in the Capital Improvements Plan to give it some visibility and allow people to see that technology had to be replaced and upgrades needed to be made every year. He further said the technology would drop off the Capital Improvements Plan and become a regular budgeted item.

Chair Barnes asked if there were questions regarding the technology infrastructure line item. There were none.

Chair Barnes stated that in the past the Board had a workshop after the Capital Improvement Plan was presented. She said one of the benefits to that was the Board had already publicly vetted it and it would provide an opportunity to get feedback from the community.

Vice Chair Schneider commented he wanted to be clear about what the nature of the SAU/SPED consolidation was.

Chair Barnes asked that the proposed plan, as presented, be placed on the website with a watermark which read "Under Consideration." She said the Board would make adjustments to the Capital Improvement Plan at the next meeting.

Chair Barnes declared a point of order and re-opened the public comments portion of the agenda.

Ms. Maureen Mooney, a resident, addressed the Board and said her nephew David, who was a seventh grader at Merrimack Middle School, was currently working on his Citizenship badge for the Boy Scouts. She said they decided which governing board they would visit, and they chose the School District.

Chair Barnes thanked Ms. Mooney for all of her work with the Boys Scouts and wished David well at the Merrimack Middle School.

5. First Quarter Curriculum Review
(Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin)

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said the Health and Physical Education team would be presenting its summative work to the Board in the spring. He said prior to that, the team would go before PERC (Program Evaluation Review Committee.) He said the team had spent approximately one-year gathering research regarding curriculum standards and expectations, national trends and health in physical education as well as trying to stay current around issues like mental health, opioid abuse, vaping and the like.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that the team was presently wrapping up some details like creating a glossary to ensure the presentation was readable and understandable. He said they were also working on written directions for fitness

tracking techniques, for example, devices that they were seeking to incorporate into the program which would allow students to track their fitness. He noted the importance for the students, parents and the community to understand how to use those tools.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that the district was currently evaluating two social/emotional learning curriculums; one of which was PATHs and the other Second Step. Both are being piloted in the three elementary schools. He further stated the reason the upper elementary school was not part of it was because the social/emotional curriculum was primarily for kindergarten through grade four and then grade five to grade eight and presently their focus was exclusively on the elementary level. He said if things went effectively and efficiently they may look at moving to grade five through grade eight the following year or if need be, the year after.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin pointed out that the Mental Health Committee developed a very strong rubric to evaluate the materials as well as to get feedback from teachers. He said there was no rush to complete the evaluation process because it is a very important and serious issue. He further said that they were educators and not mental health counselors but they did need to support students' emotional learning so they could access the curriculum.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said the third active current curriculum initiative was a grade 5 through grade twelve World Language curriculum, referencing a recent presentation to the Board. He said they were doing a lot of research, discovery and making a plan as to how they would proceed. He further said they would begin the process of drafting units in January.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented the teachers were grateful that they had the time to do it right and not be rushed.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said in January of 2019, they were going to commence a Social Studies kindergarten through grade twelve curriculum team. He said he had already met with a lot of the people who would be involved including department heads. He also said the existing curriculum was ten years old and needed to be revised although it was a strong curriculum as it was written.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that they were in the second year of the implementation of the math curriculum, the second year of the elementary program implementation and the first year of the Algebra I, Algebra 2 and Geometry program implementation. He said they were focusing on professional development which started

at the August Academy and was on-going. He reiterated the curriculum was the driving instrument for math instruction in Merrimack and the programs that they acquired were in support of the curriculum. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that they were working with the staff to ensure they understood how to use the tools in support of the curriculum.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin pointed out that the Science curriculum was in the second full year of implementation and they were working on making professional development available for teachers, particularly in the area of inquiry. He said they planned to send some key players to training and in turn, having them share the knowledge that they learned.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that ELA curriculum review (English Language Arts) was on-going and he met regularly with the elementary Language Arts coordinators and, since the district now has a full-time Language Arts coordinator at the middle school, that person was part of the monthly meeting as well.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said they recently had a PERC (Program Evaluation Review Committee) meeting at the high school and five courses were proposed. He said he was pleased to announce the courses which were proposed, in all five cases, were the result of student surveys that were conducted. He said Sports Literature was very popular and the course being developed would include autobiographies of athletes as well as stories about mountain climbing, treks across the Antarctic, and Himalayan expeditions. He also said true crime was quite popular and they were talking about crossing it with Social Studies and having some type of a forensics course.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that Technical Math was being proposed because there was an increasing awareness that not every student who graduated from Merrimack High School planned on going to college. He said it could be applied to woodworking and auto mechanics among other applications, all of which require high levels of math proficiency.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin also said a course entitled the Origins of Math was being proposed for students who had an interest in the history of math.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that Running Start Philosophy was the last course and PERC (Program Evaluation Review Committee) had previously approved it but it was being proposed as a half year course.

Chair Barnes stated that she unintentionally omitted the Board's support to fund social and emotional learning in the board's budget message. Chair Barnes acknowledged it was an extremely important thing that was being addressed and extended her sincere apologies for the omission.

Chair Barnes said she wanted to state for the record that the operating budget would include any funding necessary for social and emotional learning and asked that the Board's budget message be reposted on the website and include the updated language.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked Chair Barnes and added that the Mental Health Committee had never doubted the Board's support.

6. Revised School Board Policy

- **Second Reading: Tobacco Products Ban Use and Possession in and on School Facilities and Grounds** (Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin)

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin made the following changes to the policy:

- Page 1 – Under Definitions - "RSA 126-K2" was changed to "RSA 126-K:2"
- Page 2 – Under D. All other Persons – "the principal site supervisor" was changed to "the principal, site supervisor"
- Page 2 – Under D. All other Persons – the word "contract" was changed to "contact"

Chair Barnes asked if there were questions or comments from members of the Board. There were none.

Chair Barnes stated that it would be on the Consent Agenda for the first meeting in December.

7. Approval of November 5, 2018 Minutes

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2018, minutes.

- Page 6, line #239 – "Board Member Guagliumi suggested" was changed to "inquired regarding." – Guagliumi

- Page 11, line #446 – “and controlling the taxpayer impact” was added to the end of the sentence.

The motion passed 4-0-0

8. Other

a) Correspondence

Vice Chair Schneider stated that a resident had contacted him with some clarifying questions regarding the background of the Brentwood property.

Chair Barnes stated that a resident had contacted her regarding the walkways as they pertained to the latest snowstorm. She said McElwain Street had many sidewalks which were owned by the town but used by students, and they were not being well-maintained after storms and students were walking in the road along side of the traffic. She further said she contacted Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and he would follow-up with the town.

Chair Barnes said a parent had contacted her with follow-up questions regarding transportation for athletes.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that many of the sidewalks in the main area of the town were not addressed for a couple of days after a storm.

Board Member Guagliumi said she received correspondence from a parent regarding the athletic transportation.

b) Comments

Board Member Schoenfeld commented that many of the surveys which were coming before the Board were waiving the two-week rule and while each one of them had a solid reason for doing so, she asked if some thought should be given as to why it was happening so frequently.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that there was a presentation on the dangers of vaping at Merrimack High School and it was an outstanding example of student galvanization and said he was very proud of the students.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she attended the presentation on the dangers of vaping as well and there was a really good turn out and she was very impressed with the students.

Chair Barnes commented that year to date the Merrimack School District had gained twenty students since the first day of school, noting that enrollment rates were not declining.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the administration could provide the Board with a document that would show the enrollment numbers over the past five years. She said the question of enrollment numbers came up frequently and she would like to provide the information to the public.

9. New Business

There was none.

10. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Schneider said the Planning and Building Committee had met and most of the discussion was around the proposed new field but there was some discussion surrounding the SAU/SPED building. He further said there was a full quorum of the Planning and Building Committee and there was a very active conversation.

Chair Barnes said the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee met and she wrote an e-mail on the effectiveness of various forms of communication between teachers, parents and peers. She said they also discussed biometric and healthcare screening data and they wanted to re-energize their efforts to increase the screenings because it helped in stemming healthcare costs.

Chair Barnes also commented that she had attended the NHSBA (New Hampshire School Boards Association) meeting and they were getting ready for a delegate assembly in January. She said they reviewed the proposed resolutions and talked about topics which would be presented in January.

11. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There was none.

12. Manifest

The Board members signed the manifest.

9:00 P.M. – Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c) – In-Training Classroom

- **Student Welfare**
- **Negotiations**

At 8:55 p.m. Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to enter a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c).

The motion passed 4-0-0 by roll call vote.

13. Adjournment

At 9:47p.m. Board member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to adjourn the public session.

The motion passed 4-0-0.