

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
Monday, March 18, 2019**

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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**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**

Mr. Finlay Rothhaus, 14 Kittridge Lane, informed the Board on May 18, 2019, there would be a fundraiser for the MYA (Merrimack Youth Association) who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary at Anheuser Busch in the Beer Garden from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. He mentioned the cost was \$30.00 per ticket and predominantly the proceeds would subsidize participation in the MYA for some children as well as a smaller portion for maintenance needs. Mr. Finlay stated the e-mail address to obtain contact information was erin.rothhaus@gmail.com.

**3. Legislative Update**

There was no report.

**4. Initial Presentation Regarding the High School Athletic Turf Field Design**

(Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Mr. Bradlee Mezquita, PE)

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated Mr. Bradlee Mezquita from Tighe & Bond was present to discuss the design of the turf field.

Mr. Mezquita addressed the Board and stated there were a few different types of synthetic fields to chose from. He said the best choice for Merrimack was the kind with rubber infill.

Mr. Mezquita commented that one of the reasons to install a turf field was to comply with concussion protocols because as fields got older, they became harder. He said there were very strict standards and they used something called a GMAX number, which measured the impact of a head colliding and rebounding with the turf.

Mr. Mezquita mentioned there were various types of synthetics used for specialized sports including slit film, which was two blades of grass that trapped the rubber infill within the turf system and monofilament, which was a fiber in which each blade of grass had a little spine to it and it appeared very lifelike. Mr. Mezquita said because Merrimack was using the field for multiple sports, he recommended using a hybrid system which was a combination of slit film and monofilament. He also recommended using a certain brand of shock pad underneath the carpet, noting it would guarantee that over a certain amount of time the GMAX number would never go above a certain value.

Mr. Mezquita shared samples of shock pads, monofilament, slit film and hybrid systems with the Board.

Mr. Mezquita stated the existing material would have to be excavated and then install an underdrain system, a stone layer (which acted as a drainage layer) a shock pad and then the synthetic turf. He pointed out if it rained the synthetic field could be played on 20 minutes after the rain stopped.

Mr. Mezquita noted one option, with regard to the D-zones, was to use a latex which was similar to a track surface and another option was to use synthetic material.

Mr. Mezquita said the Board also had to decide what lines and logos would be on the field and if they would be permanent or painted. He pointed out painting the lines was the cheaper option up front but it had to be done yearly.

Mr. Mezquita said if the proposed field was approved a state permit would be required and the sooner that was submitted the better off they would be.

Chair Barnes asked if there were members of the Board who had questions or comments.

Vice Chair Schneider asked what the cost difference was between the latex and synthetic options in the D-zones. Mr. Mezquita replied latex would be more expensive. He further replied a sport drain would have to be installed on the inside lane line as well as the gravel, the pavement and spraying the latex to match the rest of the track.

Board Member Nunez commented that she felt the turf should extend into the D-zones. She also commented that she felt the lines should be permanent and not painted on the field.

Board Member Nunez asked how long it would take to install the turf field once the permit had been obtained. Mr. Mezquita replied it would take approximately three months but it was somewhat dependent upon the weather.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Warrant Article would cover everything even if the most expensive materials were chosen or if they would be putting themselves at risk by going over the amount that was going to the voters. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied they were comfortable with the \$1.2 million estimated range.

At initial thought Board Member Guagliumi commented that she too felt the lines should be permanent and not painted but wanted input from those closet to it in the district like maintenance and the athletic director.

Mr. Mike Soucy, Athletics Director, addressed the Board and commented that he would not want to have permanent lines for the sport of lacrosse because the field had the potential of being changed in the future.

Board Member Nunez said she was concerned with how long it was going to take to install the turf field. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell agreed that it was going to be challenging. Mr. Soucy commented there were no home games scheduled prior to school starting and they typically did not hold practices on the field.

Chair Barnes asked what the warranty and the expected lifespan was on the field.

Mr. Mezquita replied the typical warranty on the carpet itself was generally eight years and the shock pads typically went for two life cycles or approximately sixteen years. He further replied the life expectancy of the field would be approximately twelve years.

Mr. Mezquita mentioned if the existing pole vault runway in the D-zone were to remain they would have to put a concrete curb around it, and while not impossible, it would be difficult. He asked if the pole vault runway could be relocated outside of the track. Mr. Soucy replied he could not answer that question without first looking at the area in more detail but felt it would be a difficult ask because they were already a bit short of land.

Chair Barnes asked if there were further questions from the Board. There was none.

**5. Board's Response to the School District's Operating Budget (Warrant Article #9)  
as Modified at the Deliberative Session**

(Chair Barnes)

Chair Barnes stated a change was made to the budget at the Deliberative Session. She further stated they currently did not have a favorable position on the operating budget.

Chair Barnes said the new amended operating budget had an amount \$77,654,036.

Vice Chair Schneider made a motion (seconded by Board Member Nunez) in favor of recommending the amended, proposed budget of \$77,654,036.

**Discussion:**

Vice Chair Schneider said he was personally disappointed that the Budget Committee's vote was split because essentially, they were recommending that the town spend more money than what was proposed.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

**6. Second Review of Proposed 2019 – 2020 School Calendar Including Review of  
Parent Responses**

(Chair Barnes & Superintendent Chiafery)

Chair Barnes stated the Board had sent out a school calendar survey to parents and received 825 responses as well as six e-mail responses. She then reported the results of the survey.

Superintendent Chiafery stated the Board had asked her to contact surrounding districts regarding their calendars and specifically, to find out if they operated on a 180-day calendar as well as what their holiday recesses were. She said the districts contacted were Bedford, Derry, Hudson, Nashua, Pelham, Salem and Amherst. She further said that six out of the seven school systems were taking the holiday recess from December 23, 2019, to January 1, 2020. Superintendent Chiafery reported that all seven districts operated on a 180-day schedule.

Vice Chair Schneider pointed out the Presidential Primary would be held in February, 2019 and most of the districts mentioned had a placeholder in for it per the recommendation of the Secretary of State. He asked if the Merrimack School District should be closed on the day of the primary. Superintendent Chiafery replied she had not yet had that conversation with Lynn Christensen.

Chair Barnes asked Superintendent Chiafery to contact Ms. Christensen regarding her expectations for the Presidential Primary.

Board Member Nunez asked if it were possible to set the date of graduation prior to the beginning of the year so it would be on the district's calendar. Superintendent Chiafery replied the date was predicated on the number of days and/or instructional hours the senior class had. She further replied for the first time they announced when the Board would discuss the calendar so it would give parents a good amount of time to plan. She also said if they set the date too far in advance and they did not meet the hours it would become more complicated.

Chair Barnes stated the proposed school calendar would be put on the next meeting's agenda awaiting feedback from Ms. Christensen regarding expectations for the Presidential Primary.

**7. Scheduling the 2019 Graduation Date**

(Superintendent Chiafery)

Superintendent Chiafery requested the 2019 graduation date be Saturday, June 8, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. on the Student Memorial Field.

**8. Third Quarter Curriculum Review**

(Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin)

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared the district had been doing work on the development of an elementary standards-based report card. He said for many years, as they had been adjusting their curriculum and instruction to meet the standards-based goals, they had been increasingly finding that their reporting mechanisms had been somewhat out of step with their instructional practices. He further said their instructional practices were growing and changing but the implication was that they needed to have a reporting system for parents to let them know how it matched what was done in the classroom.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported that he and a group of teachers had been meeting since December of 2016 researching the reporting systems of other districts in New England. He said a lot of their time was spent trying to assess what other districts did as well as trying to evaluate the goals for their own district. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said there was also going to be a parent group convening on the topic in a few weeks.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that one of the things they wanted to do was to use it as a mechanism to report progress; where a typical student would be in comparison with a standard.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that they had seen many reporting systems which had a different report card for every grade. He said they determined that was untenable, especially if a parent had students in multiple grades, with the exception of kindergarten.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented they had identified the reporting standards for each subject noting it was not a small task.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said they had learned that while parents appreciated comments, they did not appreciate comments like “works well with others” as it was very vague. He further said that one of the goals they wanted to achieve was to have better communication between the parents and the teachers.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported the committee was very close to having a first draft of reporting standards for all of the content areas which included unified arts. He pointed out many other districts they looked at did not have reporting standards for art, music and physical education. He said in Merrimack those content areas were treated as seriously as every other content area because the whole child benefited from them.

Vice Chair Schneider requested that when the committee appeared before the Board could they share the research on what the surrounding districts were doing in the area.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared that his predecessor had worked on the development of something called the Collaborative Assessment Project in Literacy (CAP) and it changed the way they instructed students in all of the aspects of literacy. He said it primarily individualized instruction more than it had been in the past and they worked a lot on monitoring progress to make sure the students were moving along a continuum of learning.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated they had since added many other data points. He further stated they added the Lucy Calkins writing program and pointed out the school day had not extended in the past ten years.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said he pulled a team of Language Arts Coordinators together and asked them “how they should guide and support teachers to effectively implement best practices in the literacy district teaching tools assessments and initiatives to foster lifelong readers and writers.” He said they tried to identify some of the issues which

were still areas of need and then to identify some of the challenges which were causing the areas of need.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin further said there was also a “what if” section. He said RTI was loosely developed around three tiers, tier one was all instruction which meant everyone received the same instruction. He further said, however, that even though everyone would receive the same instruction, not every student would hear it in the same way so they needed to continue to work with teachers regarding differentiating instruction. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that they were also thinking about extending the literacy block.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said tier two would be small group instruction based on areas of need that a certain number of students had in common. He said there were some additional options with tier two which included creating a consistent intervention and extension block across all schools. He pointed out that one of the implications of that was special educators who only worked with students who were identified might begin to work with other students as well.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that another area the committee was working on was the integration of content so they were not teaching in a silo.

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

**9. Planning Board Recommendations Based on Review of School District’s 2019  
Capital Improvement Plan  
(Superintendent Chiafery)**

Superintendent Chiafery stated on February 19, 2019, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and herself went before the Planning Board to lay out the Capital Improvements Plan which was revised by the School Board on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

Superintendent Chiafery said Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provided the Planning Board with a lot of detail regarding all of the projects that were forthcoming in 2019-2020, especially the parking lot redo at the James Masticola Elementary School and the James Masticola Upper Elementary School, the boilers at the James Masticola Elementary School as well as discussion regarding the turf field.

Superintendent Chiafery stated the Planning Board was very supportive of the turf field. She further stated the Planning Board was pleased to see a commitment and an outline year to provide a new sidewalk on O’Gara Drive. Superintendent Chiafery mentioned

there was a Town Center Committee and that committee was committed to providing as many sidewalks as possible to encourage people to take advantage of the town's center area.

Superintendent Chiafery shared that the Planning Board made a motion that all items on the district's Capital Improvements Plan were deemed as necessary and there was no debate.

Chair Barnes asked if there were questions or comments from members of the Board.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that one of the reasons they moved the turf field to the current year was largely because the parents brought the matter forward. He asked if the Planning Board felt it was appropriately placed from a timing perspective. Superintendent Chiafery replied the Planning Board understood why it was moved.

**10. Approval of February 15, 2019, Non-Public Minutes and  
February 18, 2019, Public Minutes**

Board Member Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to approve the minutes from the February 15, 2019, non-public meeting and the February 18, 2019, public meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

**11. Acceptance of Gifts/Grants under \$5,000**

(Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell)

- HealthTrust, Inc. to Merrimack School District for \$3,000

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the Merrimack School District was in receipt of \$3,000 from the HealthTrust received by the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee (HCCC) to be used for worksite health and safety activities to benefit district employees. He said the gift was a result of sending six designated Health and Safety Coordinators from the district to attend a full-day training session.

Vice Chair Schneider made a motion (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to accept the gift from the HealthTrust in the amount of \$3,000.

The motion passed 5-0-0.



## **12. Consent Agenda**

(Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin)

- Educator Retirements/Resignation

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated the following staff was retiring/resigning:

- Ms. Barbara DeNutte, Social Studies teacher at the Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Helen Fitzgerald, Technology Integrator at the Merrimack Middle School & the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Kimberly Newcomb, Language Arts Coordinator, the James Mastricola Elementary School

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to accept the consent agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

## **13. Other**

### a) Correspondence

Vice Chair Schneider stated he received several requests from parents regarding the graduation date as well as the tentative date for the last day of school.

Superintendent Chiafery replied the tentative date for the last day of school was Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the last day of school was going to be a full-day or a half-day. Superintendent Chiafery replied that was yet to be determined.

### b) Comments

Chair Barnes reported that the district had netted 28 students since the first day of school.

#### **14. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery stated that Ms. Bridey Bellemare, Principal of the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was named as the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Association of School Principals. She further stated that her position would start on July 1<sup>st</sup> so there was an opening for a principal at that school.

#### **15. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Puzzo announced that the Robotics Team attended their first competition and they came in 15<sup>th</sup> overall. He also notified the Board that the Celebration of Song was going to be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> and the Band's Large Group Festival would be held on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Chair Barnes mentioned the Cavalcade of Bands would be held on Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Board Member Nunez stated that Parks & Recreation did a survey and the results would be posted after the next meeting. She also said summer camps were filling up quickly and children could be registered online.

Vice Chair Schneider commented earlier that day the annual monthly SERESC Board of Directors meeting was held and the note of interest was, aside from the business continuing to move in the positive direction, they were going to advertise for the position of Program Director.

Vice Chair Schneider said the Planning and Building Committee had met and they were actively working on the charge which the School Board gave them surrounding the SAU/SPED consolidation. He said he worked with Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell on seeing what a semi-engineered structure on the Brentwood property would look like, assuming the building was not on the property. He said the committee would meet again the following week and he expected the Planning and Building Committee to come before the School Board to share their research in late April or early May.

Chair Barnes shared that the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee had met on March 6<sup>th</sup> and they discussed maximizing of the benefits of the dental plan. She said they also had a conversation about how to break and form habits. Chair Barnes noted that the Wellness Fair was a great success.

**16. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Mr. Richard Foote, 129 Indian Rock Road, addressed the Board and commented that in his day there were parent/teacher conferences and was curious about the reporting process. Chair Barnes replied report cards were part of students' transcripts, and a parent/teacher conference was a dialogue on how the student could be supported at home to do better.

**17. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

**18. Adjournment**

At 8:32 p.m. Board Member Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c).

The motion passed 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

At 8:50 p.m. Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schonfeld) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.