

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

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**Present:** Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Guagliumi, Board Members Schoenfeld, Nunez, and Schneider. Also in attendance were Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, and Student Representative Johanna Koroma.

**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. Rick Foote, 129 Indian Rock Road, referring to the previous weeks' discussion on student parking at the high school, commented he frequently saw multiple open parking spaces in a couple of different parking areas and asked if parking passes were given out for those spaces or if they were used for other purposes. Chair Barnes replied it could have been that students may not have had a car to use on those particular days.

**3. School District Capital Improvement Plan**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the members of the Board each had a copy of the revised Capital Improvement Plan which included an estimated price of \$230,000 to do LED (light-emitting diode) lighting at the James Masticola Elementary School and the James Masticola Upper Elementary School. He said the other items on the plan included the roofing, the Master Plan Study, the SAU campus construction, bleacher upgrades, gymnasium floor replacement, boilers, windows, turf field, and the lighting retrofit.

Chair Barnes pointed out that the School Board reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan at the last meeting and asked if there were members of the Board who wished to make any adjustments.

Board Member Schneider mentioned one of the things that was not on the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) was whether or not the money to take down the Brentwood building in 2021 should be included in the plan.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked how much money it would cost to keep the Brentwood building's minimal operating cost (heat, water, etc.) Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied he did not have that figure in front of him but he was sure it did not exceed \$40,000.

Vice Chair Guagliumi voiced that she had some concerns with taking the Brentwood building down prior to having a committed plan.

Board Member Schneider commented there were some people on the Planning and Building Committee who wanted the building torn down yesterday and, in fact, wanted the School Board to find money in the current year to take it down.

Board Member Schoenfeld supported putting money in the budget to take the building down.

Vice Chair Guagliumi said she too would support putting money in the budget to take down the Brentwood building.

Board Member Nunez commented she was fine with having options but she wanted to know how much it cost to maintain the building and what it would cost to demolish it.

Chair Barnes asked Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell if he felt the razing of the red building would exceed \$100,000. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the estimated cost was approximately \$165,000.

Board Member Schneider motioned (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to add a line to the Capital Improvement Plan that was called the Brentwood building demolition for the budget year 2020 – 2021 in the amount of \$165,000.

**Discussion:**

Board Member Nunez asked if the \$165,000 would include putting grass down after the building was demolished so there was not just a hole where the building used to be. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the \$165,000 would include the complete removal of all of the concrete, everything underground, and the backfill of that space with good, compacted gravel that would leave it as a clean and level site.

Superintendent McLaughlin said the Master Plan Study would include a plan about what to do with the site after the building was removed.

Chair Barnes stated with the approval of the motion it would bring the total 2020 – 2021 line to \$1,290,805 for capital improvements.

**The motion passed 5–0–0.**

Chair Barnes asked if there were any Board members who wished to make further adjustments.

Vice Chair Guagliumi commented she did not know what was going to have to be done about the high school parking lot with regard to safety and lighting. Chair Barnes replied they were going to look at relining the parking lot in the budget and they would be discussing long-term strategies with Keach-Nordstrom. She said she felt it would be addressed during the campus redesign.

Vice Chair Guagliumi asked if it made sense to put a notation somewhere so if anyone was looking at it they would see there would be a campus redesign because it was a big item.

Chair Barnes suggested they link a very simple PowerPoint presentation or the minutes from the last meeting which explained the meaning.

Chair Barnes asked if there were any Board members who wished to make other adjustments. There were no further adjustments.

Vice Chair Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the Capital Improvement Plan, as amended.

**The motion passed 5–0–0.**

#### **4. District Technology Plan: Stage One**

Chair Barnes invited Ms. Nancy Rose, Director of Library & Technological Services to the table.

Ms. Rose mentioned she was there to discuss a more formal technology plan than just the Capital Improvement Plan which was what they had been operating from for the past five years.

Ms. Rose said the first part was focused on building and infrastructure that supported the adequate needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner. She said in the current budget they were looking at on-going work that they had been doing to date which was maintaining the current infrastructure, and trying to maintain the replacement cycle, pointing out they were able to reduce it from about thirteen to fourteen years on a computer to about seven years. She said laptops were in the five to six-year range but they wanted to have more devices for the students.

Ms. Rose stated they were working on improving back-up infrastructures and how they did it over the internet and updating the hardware. She further stated they did a major co-termination of their licensing for the wireless access points and three years prior she did a large project with their re-seller to consolidate all of the licenses and they did a three-year license renewal. She said the renewal was up and they were also researching upgrading the firewall and the licensing that went with it. Ms. Rose said they were going to add a second internet connection at the middle school which would complete a six-year project to build the fiber out to the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School and the Reeds Ferry Elementary School, noting the last part of the project was to build the fiber out to the middle school.

Ms. Rose commented that they continued to look at systems in support of data security and maintaining systems to take care of student privacy and tracking websites and licensing.

Ms. Rose stated she felt it was very important to keep up with the replacement cycle. She noted the demand was not going to go down.

Ms. Rose reviewed the accomplishments over the past ten years as summarized below:

- Reduce the lifecycle of computers.
- Increase in internet bandwidth.
- Added devices for students (2 to 3 students per device range)
- Provide devices that were commensurate with the needs of the learner
- Access to a wide range of on-line services.
- Upgraded the cabling to CAD6 completely at three schools and partially at the other three schools.
- Wireless throughout all of the schools.
- Installation of sound-field systems in a lot of the classrooms and continue with that work.
- A range of ways for the teachers to make the school work more engaging for the student.
- Went from seven phone systems to a single voice over IP system that was managed in-house.
- Overhaul of the core servers, switches, and routers.
- Continue to look at improving content filtering and closely monitor asset management.
- Support STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and MakerEd through support from the Trustees and some Robotics grants from Title 4 funds.
- Four libraries had been renovated.

- Upgraded AV systems at the Smith Gym as well at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.
- APR sound was updated through the support of the Trustees and parent groups but was also looking at what work they could do to support the lower elementary schools with their AV rooms.

Ms. Rose pointed out they were improving the instructional space, improving the infrastructure and were creating the capacity to move forward. She said as they moved forward with the strategic planning process they could look at creating the environment where they could identify what the instructional tools were that could be aligned to meet the needs going forward, especially for Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL).

Ms. Rose also said everything they did to improve operations to move forward meant they would be more innovative and not burdened by out-of-date processes and workflows.

Ms. Rose noted the things she felt should be looked at moving forward was the continued upgrade and addition of the core environment and something to consider was to upgrade one building or a few buildings at a time as opposed to a little bit in every building. She said that approach may have been a fairly big investment but it would allow them to reach their goals across the district. She further said it was important to be proactive and move things forward in a more holistically designed way.

Superintendent McLaughlin commented the systems and district leadership team had all been working on considering morphing from a logic model approach to planning to a strategic approach to planning. He noted there was quite a bit of difference between the two and he would continue that conversation with the School Board in the new year.

Board Member Schoenfeld thanked Ms. Rose for her comprehensive presentation and said she appreciated her hard work behind the scenes.

Vice Chair Guagliumi said she had heard a lot of parents ask what type of computer they should buy for their child and wondered if there was some input they could provide parents which would help their students best align their choice of computers with their educational goals. She also asked if the district did have recommendations would they be able to secure pricing that they could pass on to parents. Ms. Rose replied it would depend on the need. She also said a Chromebook was a very inexpensive way to gain access to some functionality, noting Wi-Fi was needed but a more expensive major brand name would provide more functionality and capability. She further said she could look into what the educational discounts were that would be available for students or their families buying for students but noted there was nothing specific set up with

a certain vendor because it would be difficult to anticipate the volume of the order and the vendor would likely require that number.

Superintendent McLaughlin added one of the things they were working on with teachers was to not just automatically assume a computer would be the tool the student needed to solve their problem, but what was the challenge the student found themselves in and then matching it with the proper tool.

## **5. Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) Update**

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio gave an update regarding the Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) by sharing that the teams had already met for a total of six hours and attended a two-day training program through the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) where they learned more about a deeper dive into the Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) rubric and UDL's look at what an expert learner was.

Superintendent McLaughlin said the School District was dedicated to the Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) and felt it was important to provide the School Board with periodic updates.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio said they had something called "Instructional Rounds" which were led by Mr. Bill Wilmot, Implementation Specialist, Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) who set up a schedule for classroom visits where teams of educators observed each other in an effort to compare the instructional practices to the Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) framework. He further said at the completion of the visits Mr. Wilmot reviewed the data and provided feedback.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio commented after the Instructional Rounds for educators was complete the leadership team did an Instructional Round and reviewed the information gathered from the educator rounds by engagement, representation and, action and expression.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio said going forward they would continue to have monthly meetings and they would do another set of Instructional Rounds in the spring. He said they would receive two additional days of training through the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) and Mr. Wilmot would continue to work with the facilitators to help them move forward.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio had a sense of what system-level changes might be needed in the future to better

support the Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL). Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio replied they were not quite at that point yet, but they had to continue to look at infrastructures that went beyond what they were presently doing.

## **6. School Board Budget Message**

Chair Barnes read the School Board Budget Message aloud as follows:

*“The overreaching message from the Merrimack School Board for the 2020-2021 budget season falls in three interrelated areas: Infrastructure Management, Student Outcomes, and Fiscal Prudence.*

*Having an aging infrastructure, we would like a budget that maintains our buildings so that we are keeping highly functioning facilities that will not put operations in question. We consider recent upgrades to roofing, heating, and electrical infrastructure improvements in portions of the district as examples of items we want to be sure are managed proactively so we can maximize their useful life keeping in mind we would need replacement on some items as they are approaching failure. Within this category, we also look at items that would impact student safety and our commitment to having that be a critical part of our mission in operating the School District. We would not be inclined to "take our chances" on infrastructure items that are in need of maintenance or replacement to get to a bottom line, acknowledging it is nothing more than putting a burden on a future budget with its own needs.*

*We are mindful that all district operations are focused on achieving optimal student outcomes. We are committed to supporting these initiatives such as Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) to give every student instruction that will adapt for their optimal learning, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum, and of course, the refinement of the curriculum from K-12 to prepare students for college and career readiness. We know this also includes the need to improve our district's technology to meet the evolving needs of our students and address increased data security protocols.*

*We ask that fiscal prudence be considered at every turn and that all items are presented with a detail that shows transparency in design of the budget*

*and a clear correlation to the expenditures' impacts to district operations and student outcomes.*

*Finally, we ask that with the budget there is also a communication strategy to afford the community the opportunity to provide input, whether in person, in writing, or by phone. We have heard little to nothing from our constituents and consistently hold budget hearings in an empty room. Deliberative sessions are becoming the new budget hearing and occur at a point in the process where responsible budget adjustments cannot be accomplished.”*

## **7. Approval of November 4, 2019 Minutes**

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to approve the meeting minutes from November 4, 2019.

**The motion passed 5–0–0.**

## **8. Consent Agenda**

- Approval of Distribution and Display of Information at Schools Policy

Vice Chair Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

## **9. Other**

### a) Correspondence

Board Member Schoenfeld mentioned that she had some communications with parents regarding sports transportation but she had not yet had a chance to communicate them onward but she would do so.

Chair Barnes said she received communication from the family of a student who wanted to be able to navigate the district hierarchy to address some concerns.

### b) Comments

There were no comments.



## **10. New Business**

Superintendent McLaughlin said he wanted to mention scheduling of the upcoming School Board Budget Hearings. He suggested the School Board have budget hearings for the technology budget, maintenance budget, and food service budget on December 16<sup>th</sup> as part of the regularly scheduled meeting.

Superintendent McLaughlin also suggested having budget hearings for the three elementary schools as well as the upper elementary school on January 6<sup>th</sup>. He added the possibility of having a budget hearing for the Merrimack High School budget, the Merrimack Middle School, and the School District's office on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **11. Committee Reports**

There were no Committee Reports.

## **12. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Mr. Rick Foote, 129 Indian Rock Road, asked if there were asbestos issues at the other properties located where the Brentwood building was.

## **13. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

## **14. Non-Public Session – RSA:91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – in Training Classroom**

- Staff Welfare

At 8:13 p.m. Board Member Schoenfeld made a motion (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to go into non-public session.

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

At 9:55 p.m. Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Vice Chair Guagliumi) to adjourn the public session.

**The motion passed 5-0-0.**