

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
December 16, 2019**

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.

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

2. Public Participation

Mr. Scott Adler, 3 Deerwood Drive, addressed the Board and commented he was growing increasingly concerned with the proposed increase in the budget and wanted to have a better understanding of the budget process.

3. Update on Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) from the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Ms. Marsha McGill, Principal, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, introduced Dr. Nicole Rheault, Language Arts Coordinator; Ms. Nancy Romero, Special Ed Coordinator; Ms. Cathy Goodman, Grade 5 Teacher; Ms. Courtney MacDonald, Grade 6 Teacher; Mr. Bill Morris, Assistant Principal; Mr. Louis Mailloux, Grade 5 Teacher; and Ms. Lisa Hargreaves, Special Educator.

Ms. McGill said they spent the past year diving into the information and learning about what Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) was. She further said they were presently focusing on design for expert learning.

Ms. Goodman addressed the Board and commented their goal was to create expert learners that were purposeful, motivated, strategic, and goal-directed. She said she had asked her students to put together portfolios with the expectation that at the end of the year

the students would have a collection of work that would show their growth over the course of the year.

Ms. MacDonald shared that she encouraged flexibility in her classroom that allowed students to be the best learners they possibly could be. She said her students learned that student choice during independent work as well as different seating options in their learning space were two ways that allowed them to feel successful.

Vice Chair Guagliumi asked what role data played with regard to Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) at the James Masticola Upper Elementary School.

Ms. MacDonald replied she used both formal and informal data in math.

Board Member Schneider asked how it was determined if the use of Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) had a positive effect in the long-term. Dr. Rheault replied Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) gave them a framework but that their goals did not change and the goal was to always see a positive impact in the area of reading, math as well as all of the content areas they taught. She said they were also looking for improvement in the quantitative data as well as the qualitative data. Board Member Schneider commented he felt it was important to prove to people that Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) had a positive effect over a period of time.

Superintendent McLaughlin commented the term “college and career ready” acknowledged that not every student was going to graduate from kindergarten through grade 12 and then go to college. He further commented that businesses wanted people who could problem-solve and who were not just content-driven.

Chair Barnes commented Universal Design for Learning Program (UDL) provided for intervention and extensions which were above and beyond what could have been provided in classrooms in the past.

4. Premiere of What’s Up Merrimack: A production of Merrimack High School Videography Program

Chair Barnes welcomed Mr. Michael Shaughnessey, Videography Teacher, as well as Ms. Jan Moynihan-Cooney, English Department Head to the table where they shared Episode #1 of “What’s up Merrimack.”

Chair Barnes thanked the team for coming up with new and innovative ideas.

5. **Formal Hearing on Technology Library Media Budget**

Ms. Nancy Rose, Director of Library Media and Technology, addressed the Board and said the budget reflected an on-going commitment that supported the technology and library programs. She said there were multiple increases in the software line for the renewal of infrastructure services as well as the renewal of some wireless licensing. She further said the budget also included the addition of some data security tracking.

Ms. Rose commented they were also planning to replenish devices and sustain the library program.

Questions Regarding Technology/Media Services:

From: Chair Barnes

Question: Please add unit price/quantities to items such as projectors and computers:

Answer: Ms. Rose explained It cost approximately \$2,150 to install a projector in a classroom.

Question: Please provide more details around STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics)

Answer: Ms. Rose shared that they were able to purchase a 360° camera and the hope was to integrate it with the Google Expedition set. Ms. Rose also said they were able to upgrade some of the LEGO core robotic pieces as well as the replacement of the technology education machines in the STEAM room at the middle school.

From: Board Member Schneider

Question: Item #6 – Expand/update on the \$260,000 for computers.

Answer: Ms. Rose said the \$260,000 was a reflection of the multi-year lease payments that were made. She said it was an aggregate number of payments that covered payments starting from 2017 – 2018 through 2019 – 2020 plus an expected additional \$60,000 to go forward to the next year. She also mentioned that there was an approximate \$20,000 payoff from the 2016 – 2017 year.

From: Board Member Schoenfeld

Question: Has anything been under-funded because the software line went up.

Answer: Ms. Rose explained in 2017 – 2018 she did several multi-year renewal licenses for the storage system and the services that ran on the firewall.

Question: Are there any other library media costs that might be decreased that would offset some of these needs?

Answer: Ms. Rose said the Library Program budget had been stable for quite a few years and the only two areas in the budget that had room were the book line and the additional equipment line.

Question: Understanding that a high-quality technology infrastructure is a moving target, do you predict that this budget line will continue to increase yearly at the levels it has been or do you think it will level out at some point?

Answer: Ms. Rose replied in the past the Technology Infrastructure account had [sort of] served as the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) She explained the need for technology continued to grow and they were at a point where many of their core systems were hosted and, therefore, they did not own them on-premise. She further said technology was becoming more and more critical and it may plateau if they went through a major refresh but at some point, they would have to look at it again.

From: Vice Chair Guagliumi

Question: Please explain the paging system upgrades. How does the system work now and what will the upgrades do? Are there alternative solutions that we should consider for the future?

Answer: Ms. Rose explained the current paging systems were quite old aside from the high school. She further explained they wanted to be prepared for the next system that may need to be replaced which was located at the James Masticola Elementary School/James Masticola Upper Elementary School complex.

Ms. Rose said there was a lot of new technology in the area but they were big ticket items and they were trying to keep the budget as low as possible.

Vice Chair Guagliumi asked Ms. Rose to provide an overview of what her department was responsible for.

Ms. Rose replied she oversaw the technology infrastructure, the classroom technology as well as library and technology and instruction. She said there was one Network Administrator and, three technicians on staff. She further said there were approximately 3,500 devices district-wide. Ms. Rose added there was also frontline support for technology educators with two coordinators who worked with them from grade 5 through grade 12.

6. Formal Hearing on Food Service Budget for 2020 – 2021

Mr. Dave Dziki, Food Service Director, addressed the Board and summarized the food service budget for the District.

Mr. Dziki said the point of sales service for student meals had been upgraded. He said the amount of money budgeted for the upgrade included the software, the professional training, and the set-up.

Mr. Dziki reviewed questions from School Board members summarized as follows:

Questions Regarding Food Service Budget:

From: Chair Barnes

Question: We had a presentation from Girl Scouts that addressed the environmental impact and health concerns caused the Styrofoam trays used at lunchtime. The School Board was very supportive of the shift to the better product.

Answer: Mr. Dziki explained he had the opportunity to see the presentation from the Girl Scouts and was very impressed. He said one of the obstacles of using the better product was that it had come to his attention that another District wanted to use the environmentally friendly trays and then realized the trays had a chemical additive in them called PFAS (Perfluorooctanoic Acid) so they could not use them. He further said the exact tray the Girl Scouts recommended was almost impossible to obtain. Mr. Dziki said they were waiting for the industry to catch up.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated he did not think the Food Service Department could support the increase for the Styrofoam trays and still break even. He further said they were going to keep an eye on what the neighboring Districts chose to try.

Question: Are purchases of school lunches on the increase or decline? Either way, would we consider surveying families to see what we can do to improve usage and garner feedback on what types of foods we are able to offer and meet guidelines that are more appealing to our students?

Answer: Mr. Dziki replied overall purchases of school lunches were on the increase over the prior year.

Mr. Dziki commented that surveys were provided in the spring and they did ask for feedback but added he was going to speak with Superintendent McLaughlin about putting something on the School District's website as well.

From: Vice Chair Guagliumi

Question: Do you feel you have the right equipment, layouts etc., to support kids in the District who have food allergies?

Answer: Mr. Dziki replied if a student had an allergy the cashiers would see a notation or flag. He also replied he had alternate options available for students with allergies such as dairy, peanuts, and gluten.

Question: Please explain the nutritional requirements to which we have to adhere?

Answer: Mr. Dziki explained the National School Lunch Program had strict requirements in terms of what they had to supply pertaining to grain, protein, fruits, vegetables, and milk.

7. Formal Hearing on the Maintenance Budget for 2020 – 2021

Mr. Tom Touseau, Director, Maintenance Department said a few of the highlights of his proposed budget was the replacement of a portion of the windows at the Merrimack High School, replacement of 41-year-old chorus risers at the Merrimack High School, mediation of drainage issue at the Merrimack Middle School's upper field, and the replacement of 19 boiler pressure relief valves.

Questions Regarding the Maintenance Budget:

From: Chair Barnes

Question: Please provide details on the Merrimack Middle School field drainage. The book states it is an ongoing issue, but this is the first time it has been addressed in the budget.

Answer: Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the drainage at the middle school had been an issue ever since the school was built.

Superintendent McLaughlin commented the field was not suitable for spring activities which were a big part of the school year.

Question: Electric: Looking at the 2018 - 2019 budget expenditures, we anticipated costs far lower than the actuals.

Answer: Mr. Touseau replied the increased cost in the delivery of electricity went up a great deal and they remedied it by going back three years and then took the highest expenditures and added 5%.

From: Board Member Schneider

Question: There is a \$125,000 line item in the initial Capital Improvement Plan to take down the Brentwood building but there is also the assumption that in other places of the budget there is another \$40,000 which was the estimated dollar amount of what it would cost to keep the building “functional” which brought the total to \$165,000.

Board Member Schneider asked aside from the propane, oil, electricity and the water and sewer costs if there were any additional costs to keep the Brentwood building “functional.”

Answer: Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied there were no additional costs and added the Brentwood building could be demolished for approximately \$143,000.

From: Vice Chair Guagliumi

Question: Can you please provide the amount of money the District has spent on rubbish removal for the last seven years? In 2018 – 2019, we spent approximately \$14,000 more than expected. Also, when was the last time we switched vendors or went out to bid?

Answer: Mr. Touseau replied they went out to bid every year to ensure that the District received the best price but the cost had increased in part because their long-time vendor (who was from Merrimack) no longer provided their services.

Question: Do you feel we have enough cameras and/or security systems to support the District?

Answer: Mr. Touseau replied he felt the District was in a good place with regard to security.

Question: Can you please provide a further breakdown of the \$379,837 allocated to the Mechanical/Energy Management/Maintenance Agreement.

Answer: Mr. Touseau explained the District purchased a service from a vendor and the vendor maintained the boilers, hot water heaters, pumps, valves, compressor’s, condensers, exhaust fans, etc. He further explained the maintenance the vendor provided covered anything that could move, spin, or be greased. He noted any solid piping or relief valves were excluded.

8. Confirmation of School Board Budget Hearing Dates

Chair Barnes stated the current School Board meeting covered the Technology Library Media, Food Services and Maintenance proposed budgets.

Budget Hearing Dates:

Monday, January 6, 2020 – James Mastricola Elementary School, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, and the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Tuesday, January 7, 2020 – Merrimack Middle School, Merrimack High School, Student Services, and Districtwide budgets.

Tuesday, January 14, 2020 – Additional meetings if necessary and review of potential Warrant Articles.

9. 2020 NHSBA (New Hampshire School Boards Association) Delegate Assembly

Chair Barnes stated she was the immediate and past President of the New Hampshire School Boards Association and recused herself from participating in the discussion. She then turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Guagliumi.

Vice Chair Guagliumi stated the 2020 New Hampshire School Boards Association Delegate Assembly was scheduled for Saturday, January 25, 2020, and Board Member Schoenfeld was the School Board's representative.

Vice Chair Guagliumi suggested if members of the Board had feedback on any of the resolutions for the meeting to please provide them to Board Member Schoenfeld.

Board Member Schoenfeld commented the usual process was for the School Board to express its viewpoint on each of the items and she committed to vote as such. She said, however, the problem was that sometimes there were amendments made at the actual Assembly which could change the item substantially. She further said in that case, she would abstain from the vote. Board Member Schoenfeld said she wanted to know if that was the School Board's preferred approach or if they would like there to be some flexibility in her representation of what she understood the Board's positions to be.

Vice Chair Guagliumi stated she was fine with Board Member Schoenfeld representing the School Board. Board Member Schneider said he agreed with Vice Chair Guagliumi.

10. Approval of November 18, 2019, and December 4, 2019 Minutes

• **November 18, 2019**

Board Member Vice Chair Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2019.

The motion passed 5–0–0.

• **December 4, 2019**

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

The motion passed 3–0–2. (Abstained – Guagliumi, and Schoenfeld)

11. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Graduate Students' Mary Quigley's Request to Conduct Research in Merrimack Schools

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5–0–0.

12. Other

a) Correspondence

Vice Chair Guagliumi commented all of the members of the School Board received correspondence from State Representative Rosemary Rung regarding upcoming potential Bills.

Chair Barnes commented she received correspondence from a constituent who inquired about the discretionary spending in the budget. She said a list was compiled and verified by Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and was then provided to the constituent.

b) Comments

Board Member Schoenfeld suggested that the budget process be put on the District's website.

Board Member Nunez suggested adding the budget process schedule to the website in addition to other school outlets.

13. New Business

There was no new business.

14. Committee Reports

Ms. Koroma shared that the Student Council's suggestion regarding the parking issue at the high school was to have assigned parking spots.

Board Member Schneider commented the previous Tuesday a Budget Committee was held and pointed out a member had resignation that left an open seat available.

Board Member Schneider also commented that Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented the results of the previous years' budget and what money had been returned to taxpayers and the details behind it. He suggested Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provide the same presentation to the School Board as he felt it was quite insightful.

Chair Barnes commented the Parks and Recreation Committee participated in the holiday parade which occurred on December 8th, noting twenty organizations participated and the community enjoyed the Christmas tree lighting.

15. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. Charles Lafond, 7 Linden Way, commented he was very concerned about the middle school as it was built on a wetland. He further commented he was concerned about the proposed new field at that location. Additionally, he said he felt the District should not keep the Brentwood building.

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and commented he felt public education in Merrimack was a juggernaut. He further said the cost of education would continue to go up but the property taxes could not sustain the growth.

16. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

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

- Student Welfare

At 10:45 p.m. Board Member Nunez moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to go into non-public session.

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

At 11:46 p.m. Board member Schneider moved (seconded by Board member Nunez) to adjourn the public session.

The motion passed 5 -0-0.