

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall - Matthew Thornton Room
February 15, 2021**

Present: Chair Guagliumi, Vice Chair Barnes, and Rothhaus. Also present were Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio.

Participating via Conference Call: Board Member Schneider and Board Member Hardy

Chair Guagliumi stated the meeting proceedings would follow RSA 91-A:2 which stated that all parties must contemporaneously be able to hear and speak to each other and be audible to the public.

Board Member Schneider – Excused from in-person participation because of a medical requirement.

Board Member Hardy – Excused from in-person participation due to a COVID-19 related quarantine.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Guagliumi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Guagliumi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Guidelines for Public Participation for Remote Meeting

Chair Guagliumi stated public comments could be sent to publiccomment@sau26.org or by going to sau26.org where a meeting link was provided. She said all comments would be read and written into the record but noted the name and address of the speaker had to be provided.

3. Public Participation

Vice Chair Barnes read the following e-mail which was received on February 12, 2021, into the record summarized below:

Ms. Lisa Weatherby, 1 Longa Road

The decision by the School Board to not bring the kids back into school full-time for another month or possibly more is very disappointing. These children need to be in school full time. My son, who struggles with his learning disability and ADHD, and who is on an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) deserves to be in school. I have seen other town's and school district's that have all of their students who are on 504 plans and IEP's are in school full-time. We are doing a huge disservice to our children. Some of these towns include Windham and Londonderry. These are

towns that are just as big as Merrimack. My son has had a very hard time with Zoom calls. I am thankful that he is finally back in hybrid after an entire month of being out for COVID exposure. However, this is now almost a year of having remote and hybrid. This is an entire year of my son having school for only two days per week. The independent practice days are hardly school. My son's team has done a good job of keeping him up by doing remote Zoom calls and the extra two hours on Friday mornings. I am concerned that this is really not enough though. As a parent, I need to be heard on this, especially since we do not get any school/parent surveys. This is another disservice that the School District and/or School Board has opted to not do. Please, as a Merrimack taxpayer, working full-time mother, and parent of a special needs child, listen to the concerns of our parents and children. Send out surveys and get true feedback from your town.

4. Update on System of Care Supports for Students and Staff

Ms. Fern Seiden, System of Care and Learning Support Coordinator, addressed the School Board and said one of the bigger updates was that they wrote a grant called the "Promising Futures Grant" which had brought \$115,000 of special allocated monies toward the District for universal supports as well as looking at what it would mean to adopt an MTSSB (Multi-Tiered System of Support) approach.

Ms. Seiden said there would be a lot of upcoming District and community training. She added Ms. Lynn Lyons would be coming to Merrimack in March. Further, Ms. Seiden said they had put together a team to provide suicide prevention training throughout the District and there was also a Family/Caregiver Training session that would be held on February 18th.

Ms. Seiden commented she was working with the Human Resources Department to bring resources into the District. She also said it was important for all of the schools to team together and not work in silos as well as the implementation of a newsletter and was working on expanding the website.

Ms. Seiden stated the SOCALS (System of Care and Learning Supports) team was made up of a multitude of different professionals as well as two parent representatives who were on the Family/Caregiver support team.

Ms. Melissa Gagne, Human Resources Manager, said she felt it was important to continue the work on Family and Employee Support teams. She said the charge in which they were focused on was to bring awareness and resources to staff. She added there were Wellness Committees at the schools but sometimes the communication needed to be better to bring information forward on a districtwide basis.

Ms. Gagne commented that as part of their goals they wanted to partner with the other schools and committees. She said they wanted to bring awareness to the things they were doing and ask for feedback.

Ms. Gagne shared that the Town of Merrimack had an Employee Assistance Program which was free and confidential and available to anyone in the employee's household.

In closing, Ms. Seiden said the support of district employees was essential. She added student well-being was dependent upon the well-being of the adults who taught and cared for them.

5. Reconsideration of Deliberative Session Date

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Rothhaus) for the Deliberative Session to be held on March 2, 2021, with a snow date of March 4, 2021.

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

6. Warrant Presentations for Deliberative Session

Chair Guagliumi suggested the following School Board members who should move and second the Warrant Articles as summarized below:

- II. Gifts & Property – Chair Guagliumi move/Board Member Rothhaus second.
- III. MESSA Contract – Vice Chair Barnes move/Board Member Hardy second.
- IV. MESSA Contract Trailer – Board Member Hardy move/Vice Chair Barnes second.
- V. Ventilation – Board Member Schneider move/Chair Guagliumi second.

Chair Guagliumi stated that the budget had been reduced by \$5,000 which was the reduction of the facilities costs at the Brentwood building.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Rothhaus) to approve the 2021 – 2022 budget at \$81,870,163 with a default budget of \$81,918,937/

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

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- January 19, 2021

Board Member Rothhaus moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting as presented.

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

- January 25, 2021

Board Member Rothhaus moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting as presented.

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

- February 1, 2021

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Rothhaus) to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2021 meeting as amended.

Page 10, line 471 was changed to: "Chair Guagliumi recommended that administration come up with a parent attestation in an effort to help maintain the safety of the students and the staff."

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

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Educator Nomination
 - Ms. Cheryle Burke, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack High School
- b. Approval of Policy
 - Suicide Prevention and Response Policy (JLDBB)

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Rothhaus) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

9. Other

- a. Correspondence

Chair Guagliumi confirmed that the School Board had received multiple items of correspondence on topics such as concern regarding returning to school, concerning for not returning quickly enough in grades K – 4, requests for fields by MYA (Merrimack Youth Association), as well as a request for a public hearing.

Board Member Schneider commented that he had received an email from a constituent regarding previous budget spends by the District.

Board Member Hardy shared that she had two conversations with constituents who were interested in possibly running for open School District office positions.

10. New Business

Chair Guagliumi asked if the administration could look into providing before and aftercare of students in grades K – 4 in the adult learning center. Superintendent McLaughlin replied he would do that.

11. Committee Reports

Board Member Hardy commented that the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee had met and the focus of the conversation was determining the best way to use the Wellness Funds from the Health Trust.

Board Member Schneider stated a work session of the Budget Advisory Committee had occurred where they reduced \$5,000 of spend for the Brentwood building.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio stated he attended the Professional Development Committee meeting and reported they discussed some technology updates, professional development regarding concurrent learning, and how they could best utilize unused workshop funds.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Vice Chair Barnes stated there were none.

At approximately 8:00 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Rothhaus) to go into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Matthew Thornton Room

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

At approximately 9:42 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board member Schneider) to adjourn the public session.

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