

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
January 4, 2021**

Present: Chair Guagliumi, Vice Chair Rothhaus, Board Member Hardy, Board Member Peters, and Board Member Barnes. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Yarlott, Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and Kaitlyn Vadney, Student Representative.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Guagliumi called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Guagliumi pointed out that the School Board would accept public comment via email and to do that members of the public could send emails to publiccomment@sau26.org.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were none.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Formal Presentation on Student Service Budget

Ms. Heather Barker, Director of Services said she was present along with Ms. Fern Seiden, Director of Student Wellness, as their proposed budget would include some SEL (social & emotional learning) components.

Ms. Barker and Ms. Seiden reviewed questions and answers as summarized below:

Board Member Barnes

Regarding SEL/Intervention & Contracted Services, it is not in the breakout and is a new expenditure of \$104,000, please provide details.

Ms. Seiden

These funds are new to our budget to accommodate the hiring of SEL interventionists and mental health providers who can supplement and support our current building staff in meeting the diverse, complex needs of our students. This funding will be used to support all students across the district. We want to provide support in the form of embedded professional development, co-facilitation of groups, and collaboration to enhance and expand both our Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III SEL supports for students. Through these collaborative relationships, we can offer building-wide and small group evidence-based interventions as we continue to develop our Multitiered System of Support for all students in Merrimack. Through this strategic approach of developing the systems to support the SEL needs of our students, we will provide an aligned, cohesive system of care that is sustainable and efficient.

Board Member Barnes asked if there was a short-term goal to establish programs and long-term goal to have permanent personnel? Ms. Seiden replied in the affirmative.

Board Member Hardy

I do not want to see SEL services contracted out. I think this is a poor use of funds and it does not serve our population best. What contracted services specifically are you envisioning? My other concern comes from the working in the description of SEL being provided for students “identified as highly at-risk.” Obviously, we need to give this population all of the support they need to succeed, however, a ton of resources are generally available to those considered highly at-risk. I would hope that our vision for SEL would be targeted at all students. I would like to see strategic and coordinated Tier I supports adopted in a meaningful way that builds SEL skills from Pre-K through grade 12 supported by part of the full-time positions. I feel that this money, or maybe slightly more money would be better utilized to start building a staff team (part or full-time) to drive SEL initiatives in buildings and provide SEL support to students at the building level. I would like to see the purpose of this line item change and the amount adjusted if necessary.

Ms. Seiden

We are currently in the exploration phase of the districtwide adoption of an Multi-Tier System of Support for Behavior and Wellness Model (MTSS-B) system, working with a consultant from the Bureau of Student Wellness. While we work on constructing and aligning this system, we want to continue using contracted support. Done well, this could evolve into full-time district employees that can meet student SEL needs in the future as an integrated member of the MTSS system of care.

Currently, the vision is to hire SEL support staff who can offer short-term, solution-focused SEL interventionist Tier II or Tier III, integrating this work into the SEL programming within the school setting. This person could also offer professional development to support helper groups or even collaborate with staff to provide needed support. While piloted through Student Services, this could support any student in the building.

Research strongly supports systemically integrated SEL, including Tier I support provided by teachers and support staff within classroom settings and supported by schoolwide Tier I structures. We agree that the vision is for all students, Pre-K through 12 having meaningful SEL experiences that develop the core competencies needed for wellness and success in school and beyond. Through this strategic approach of developing the systems to support the SEL needs of our students we will provide an aligned, cohesive system of care that is sustainable and efficient.

Board Member Barnes

I know we are using Second Step for SEL for students through grade 6. Please advise what programs are running through your departments for middle and high school students and what funding is there to support it. If there are programs of value not in the budget I, for one, would be willing to entertain it considering the impact the pandemic has had on all students, namely those who never had SEL curriculum as is the case in the higher grades since we have only had it in the district for a couple of years.

Ms. Seiden

Our vision for SEL across all levels is consistent with our original proposals to the Board on the adoption of SEL within the district. We are still in the phase of building capacity and innovating ways to ensure full integration of systemic SEL to support the advisory blocks and the extended

homerooms, building on programs that both schools have already begun using grant money from the Promising Futures grant. At the high school, two teachers have led the way by building out a 9 through 12 executive functioning program for use in homerooms, along with extensive professional development materials on this topic. At our middle school, they have built their own advisory program based on Responsive Classroom for Middle School Advisories. Examples of other possible programs to augment the planned universal programs, it could be the Character Strong Program for middle school, as well as other grade-level programs, such as Indiflix programming and an expanded freshman orientation program. The selection would be the result of close collaboration between our school-based leadership teams and the district leadership team.

Board Member Hardy

On page 9 of the special services budget, why are these contracted services, which are far more expensive, as opposed to full or part-time employed district staff?

Ms. Barker

Since being asked this question in my first budget presentation to the Merrimack School District's School Board for the 2020 – 2021 school year, Student Services has been exploring the costs of employed district staff vs. contract services. For many of these positions, we cannot compete with private companies to hire school district employees. Over the past two years, we have not been able to hire district speech pathologists or occupational therapy assistants for open district positions that we have. New Hampshire, like many other states, is experiencing a critical shortage in all areas of education related to special education and related services that support special education. As a result of this shortage, we have had difficulty filling our MTA positions, which we would want to fill if we could. We have had to hire additional contracted services to fill special education roles until we can hire district employees. Legally, we must provide the special education and related services required in student Individual Education Plans (IEP) by any means necessary.

In analyzing the difference between the cost of a district employee vs. a contracted service provider for the same position, we found in working with our business office, that although the district employee's salary may be lower, with the added cost of insurance, payroll taxes, and retirement, there is a marginal difference in cost at best.

Board Member Hardy

Regarding the SEL/Related Services at the high school, I would like to understand why that budget line had doubled. I see the one-line explanation there, but I would like a more detailed explanation.

Ms. Barker

For the 2020 – 2021 Student Services Budget, we moved funding for contracted services from other budget lines to the school level lines in the budget. The amount allocated in the 2020 – 2021 budget was not reflective of the total amount of contracted services for the high school.

Additional contracted services were reflected in other budget lines. We moved the funds from the other lines to this line for transparency and better understanding of what is being spent in the

special education budget. Although it looks like that budget line went from \$125K to \$315K, it did not. The money was reduced in one budget line and placed in this budget line to better reflect the cost of services at each school level.

There is an increase in the budget line of \$10K to ensure that we can meet our obligations for compensatory services and additional services necessary because of the learning loss/gaps created by the pandemic and interrupted school that students have experienced with IEP's.

Board Member Hardy

I would like a specific and detailed explanation for what is covered in this line and why is quadrupled. The explanation is very general, i.e., "support all student's social & emotional well-being across the district."

Ms. Barker

For the 2020 – 2021 Student Services Budget, we moved funding for districtwide contracted services from other budget lines to this budget line in the budget. The amount allocated in the 2020 – 2021 budget was not reflective of the total amount of contracted services, as many of these were embedded in other budget lines. We reduced the funds from the other lines and moved them to this line for transparency, and a better understanding of what is being spent in the special education budget. There was no increase in cost for these services other than the 3% increase for anticipated wage increases.

The funds in this line pay for the school social workers, transition coordinator, transition coaching, IEP mandated mental health counseling, and other student learning support personnel who serve all students, and students with disabilities across the school district.

For 2021 – 2022, we have increased the funds by \$10K to ensure that we can meet our obligations for additional services necessary because of the academic, social emotional, and behavioral challenges created by the pandemic, interrupted school that students have experienced, and the increased needs of supports for families.

Board Member Hardy

What does the summer program look like? What is the vision?

Ms. Seiden

Building out our supports for transitions is a priority of the District System of Care Committee. Building off the limited offerings for SEL last summer, and our regular summer school programs, we have developed a budget here to cover the stipends for educators, counselors, behavior specialists, home school liaison/social workers (HSL), and other professional staff to support a broader array of SEL programs and transition opportunities. Last year, we offered a short camp for self-regulation, which was well-received. Student participation came from parent and school team referrals. Last year, we also provided a mindfulness consultant for the 8.5 program. Furthermore, counselors were available to provide school-based transitional programming for those who required it before starting school. We would like to think through the needs of students in these areas and provide creative and innovative supports.

Board Member Hardy commented that she thought the 8.5 program was very good and felt there should be more transition programs like it.

Chair Guagliumi said parents would also benefit from the transition programs.

Board Member Hardy

I am concerned about purchasing a curriculum that will fall to the teacher to learn, manage, and teach. This is the last thing that teachers need right now. While that curriculum looks great, I would like to see the budget allow for SEL specialists in district to be the ones to learn, master, and teach the curriculum. I would rather invest in staff this year and curriculum next year. (In Hudson, we are creating our own curriculum, it's more than enough for the year!)

Ms. Seiden

2022 – 2023 will be the 3rd year of full implementation as universal SEL program, K-6. This program was strategically rolled out, beginning in 2017. In this way, we successfully built capacity and buy-in, in an incremental fashion. We are at varying stages of system change, from initial implementation to elaboration, and regeneration. To this end, this line item is to replace and maintain materials within the Second Step program, as well as to augment the program. We will identify areas for augmentation and ways to further integrate this program at the universal level. For instance, the Bullying Prevention programming is an area that is ready for expansion. This funding will begin to populate the Tier II and Tier III SEL Interventions, using programs such as Zones of Regulation, Social Thinking, and other evidence-based interventions that can improve programming across the tiers, and address issues related to bullying.

We are in the exploration of MTSS with the support of a Bureau of Wellness consultant. Over the next year to two years, we will be building our universal, secondary, and tertiary teams, and at that time, we will be exploring the staffing of the three tiers. Culture and readiness are critical in the success and implementation of this work.

Board Member Barnes

I see for good reason paraeducator budgets for co-curricular activities. The funds are allocated unutilized. What can be done to increase participation so there is inclusion and fulfillment by those who would be in receipt of these supports? As much as it helps those kids by participating, I am a firm believer it also helps all students having such an inclusive environment in all areas.

Ms. Barker

The funds allocated to the budget line are specifically for the inclusion of students with disabilities in co-curricular, extra-curricular, and after-school sponsored events, so that they can have equal access and participation. The funds are used to remove barriers to participation and offer opportunities to experience the same opportunities as neurotypical peers.

Additionally, it offers all students the benefits of an inclusive community. Building leadership teams and IEP teams can advocate for increased opportunity for participation in our current offers and explore other opportunities that may not be currently offered for neurotypical and neurodiverse students to participate in clubs, sports, and other activities together.

Both special education and civil rights laws require that school districts provide equal access and equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

Board Member Barnes

How are these accounts level-funded considering there is a contractual salary increase with our existing collective bargaining agreement with Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association (MESSA)?

Ms. Barker

The level funding is the result of the MESSA contract's stipulation that new employees come in at the bottom three steps regardless of years of service. As experienced paraeducators have left, we are replacing them with employees whose costs are less. Therefore, no increase is currently necessary.

How are these accounts level-funded considering there is a contractual salary increase with our existing collective bargaining agreement with MESSA?

Board Member Barnes

How are we level funding summer programs for educational gains as we are working to close pandemic-related gaps in learning?

Ms. Barker

For the Student Services Budget in 2020 – 2021, we anticipated the need for extended learning opportunities and programs for students due to the pandemic. We also anticipated the need for compensatory education due to delaying some services. We increased these budget lines by about \$90K to provide Covid related and compensatory education last summer and successfully provided appropriate and necessary specialized instruction and related services to our students throughout the summer and beyond the typical five-week Extended School Year (ESY) period when needed.

Rather than reducing the funding back to pre-pandemic costs, we have chosen to keep the funding at this higher level to accommodate the pandemic related learning gaps, need for increased specialized instruction, and any compensatory education required due to disrupted learning from quarantine, Covid, etc. We will offer extended summer programs again this year using these funds. Therefore, no increase is currently necessary.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

How do you determine the number of paraprofessionals at the different schools, the elementary school, for example?

Ms. Barker

The paraeducators in Merrimack were assigned based on the number of hours for either shared or individualized services in each students' IEP.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

The budget line for specialized training for staff went from \$15K in 2021 to an anticipated \$24K in 2022 – 2023.

Ms. Barker

The reason for this increase has to do with staff and how many staff are trained in CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) each year and what the cost is per staff member.

Chair Guaqliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Are all teachers in schools trained in disabilities like autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) deafness, blindness, etc.?

Ms. Barker

There is a significant rise in cost of the non-violent crisis intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute. The cost per person to have a trainer went from \$700 just a few years prior to \$3,700 and it cost \$1,400 to renew the credentials as long it was in a two-year span. Merrimack had a very robust train the trainer model with each building having two trainers.

Training for educators related to students with disabilities could certainly be explored as an area for us to focus on in the future.

b. Formal Presentation on Merrimack High School Budget

Mr. Stephen Claire, Interim Principal, Merrimack High School, and Mr. Peter Bergeron, Assistant Principal, reviewed questions and answers as summarized below:

Mr. Claire state the proposed budget was overall below level-funded budget with many level-funded line items. He said some of the larger requests included the renewal of the Actively Learn program for the English/Language Department, the Social Studies Department had asked for new criminology books as the existing ones were quite outdated, the Social Studies Department requested a subscription to Actively Learn, and the Science Department requested a renewal of Tech Software for online access which would be active for six years.

Board Member Barnes

The School Board has worked to gain equal funding between athletics and co-curricular funding. This year's budget shows co-curriculars are getting \$20K less.

Mr. Bergeron

In terms of transportation, co-curricular groups have not traveled to a scheduled event or have not been denied transportation. We have level-funded co-curricular to reflect more accurately what we spend.

Board Member Barnes

Athletic supplies are funded at \$91K while co-curricular supplies are funded at \$16K. We are aware of the investments students have to make for their own uniforms, etc. for co-curriculars to wear in competition and the funding required for supplies to participate in programs that would not be possible without corporate sponsors stepping in. Please provide what students are being asked to fund to participate in co-curriculars that may be preventing participation.

Mr. Bergeron

Athletic supplies do not include uniforms. It is for all athletic-related supplies. The majority of the supplies include rentals such as Merrimack 10 Pin, West Side Arena, The Merrimack YMCA, Gymnastics Academy in Manchester, and GPS for Soccer. This totals \$45K to \$50K in rentals alone.

Students are not being asked to fund any co-curricular supplies. Money is not preventing students from participating in co-curricular.

Board Member Barnes

Why are there needed materials listed but no funding allocated for Unified Soccer? I see minimal references to uniforms. How often are they purchased or are students purchasing their own?

Mr. Bergeron

We are not budgeting for Unified Soccer because we do not have enough student interest to field a team. The line item was left in but \$0 was budgeted.

Students do not purchase them on their own. Every three to five years through a rotation system. Every uniform has been replaced once throughout the last five years.

Board Member Barnes

Why do students pay for their own graduation cords? It seems like we are not regarding their dedicated participation in the programs.

Mr. Claire

Over the years there has been an increase in co-curricular clubs and there were currently 27 all of which offer cords for their graduating seniors. Of the 27, 16 were paid for by club funds, 7 were paid for by students, and 4 were unknown.

The stoles for the top 15% of students in the graduating class were paid for by the school and if the graduate wanted to keep the stole he/she would purchase it after graduation.

Board Member Barnes & Chair Guagliumi supported paying for cords for students at graduation, inclusive of the military. It showed school district support and suggested including it in the budget next year, if not the current year.

Chair Guagliumi asked what the cost would be. Mr. Claire replied he would get back to the Board with the information.

Board Member Hardy

On page 5, I see there is \$12,300 budgeted to pay for helmets and shoulder pad repairs. Then on page 32, in line 100-1420-24-8739 there is \$7,000 budgeted for replacing 20 football helmets and 15 shoulder pads. I'm confused why that is budgeted for twice.

Mr. Bergeron

The \$12,300 is for repairing helmets (softball, baseball, football, lacrosse) such as fixing chin straps. Once repaired, helmets have to go through a certification process, which is an additional cost. The equipment is sanitized as well. We must have our football uniforms professionally cleaned to extend their life. The \$7,000 is an additional cost to replace helmets for all sports mentioned above. They need to be replaced because they have failed NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) safety guidelines. This holds true for shoulder pads as well.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Who sets the class sizes?

Mr. Claire

Other than the state class size mandates of 24 inches in science and our own limit of 16 inches in art & technology for safety reasons, we determine class sizes during collaboration meetings with our guidance/department heads and administration to determine class sections that determines class sizes. Student requests drive this as well as specific teacher certification.

Vice Chair Rothhaus asked if there was a specific class that had a fail rate of 20% if they could consider that information when the class size was set. She said she strongly believed that all kids could learn at high levels, and would not want any roadblocks to prevent students from learning at a higher level. She said she would support removing boundaries to allow students to have the opportunity to take higher level courses, even if it is a stretch for them.

Chair Guagliumi stated she agreed with Vice Chair Rothhaus and thought it was a good time to look at creating more opportunities to allow students to perform at a higher level.

Board Member Hardy said when a student took the higher level challenging courses there still needed to be support for the students, rather than expecting the student to figure it out alone.

Board Member Peters said students taking academic honors courses may not be brilliant in all areas and could be in need of support in some areas.

Mr. Claire thanked the Board for their comments and said he would share those thoughts with the department heads.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Does every freshman and senior attend Challenge Day?

Mr. Bergeron

We are going to afford the opportunity to students and feel it is a beneficial, worthwhile experience.

Chair Guagliumi Vice Chair Rothhaus

We notice that in 2021, for the Gifted & Talented program, we budgeted \$14,600, and we only expended \$6,227.03. Is this because of Covid?

Mr. Claire

Yes, the full Gifted & Talented program did not run because our Gifted & Talented teacher picked up three science classes during the pandemic. We are currently running our full Gifted & Talented program.

Chair Guagliumi Vice Chair Rothhaus

How is the money spent?

Mr. Claire

Artist-in-Residence, Granite State Challenge & Quiz Bowl (new question) sets, uniforms, electronic buzzer, etc. – since most of Gifted and Talented was not running. Since the program was not running the former principal approved replacing some of the equipment and updating the question sets for the two clubs so they could practice. It also included trick-or-treat supplies and Advanced Placement (AP) testing supplies.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

There is \$43K in the budget for a 504 Coordinator, but it was our understanding that we added these responsibilities to our newly created position for SEL. How many kids currently have a 504 at the Merrimack High School?

Mr. Claire

We were not aware that the 504 responsibilities were added to the newly create SEL position. I can say that we have 208 students with a 504 and 8 – 10 more in the referral pipeline. Stress, anxiety, and other pandemic-related issues have increased our 504 referrals.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Yarlott said the \$43K was already budgeted for the 504 Coordinator and it only pertained to the high school.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Because Merrimack High School does not have a turf field, how many varsity athletic teams have to pay for field use at other facilities during the pre-season, and is there adequate space for all teams to be at the Merrimack High School Fields? Do kids/Booster Clubs have to pay for any field space?

Mr. Bergeron

None of our teams are required to pay for off-site practice space. On occasion, the Booster Club may pay for turf practice to prepare for a turf game or rent a facility indoors due to poor weather.

Vice Chair Rothhaus said there was a critical need for playing fields in Merrimack.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said there was a study done in 2010 and was presented to the School Board and Town Council regarding the field shortage. Board Member Barnes noted that several of the fields that were available in 2010 did not currently exist.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Regarding workbooks, we are assuming the majority of the expense for this item relates to the workbooks (consumables)? Please confirm, and, also, in which classes are the workbooks used? Do you currently have textbooks for the classes as well, and if so, how do the workbooks support the material?

Mr. Bergeron

Some of the expense goes toward workbooks for Physical Education 1 & Physical Education 2, but expenses such as face shields for students to use while they are learning Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), table tennis balls, basketballs, baseball gloves, floor tape, etc.

There are no textbooks, teachers draw upon a variety of resources to teach the physical education curriculum, and health curriculum.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

In woodworking, it looks like we are spending about \$80.00 per student for supplies. Does this cover all expenses for class projects?

Mr. Bergeron

We do not charge students for supplies for woodworking, we are one of few schools in New Hampshire that does not charge. All the expenses for projects are covered.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Regarding Reading Software, it looks like this budgeted line item continues to decrease. Please explain why?

Mr. Claire

In past years, approximately \$2,000 was dedicated to software and that was in the wrong line item. We have corrected that and move it to the 8650 account which is Reading Software. This is for Remedial Reading Programs.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Please further explain the breakdown of the \$3,500 for baseball. It looks like we offer Unified Soccer and if so, why is there no cost associated with it.

Please explain the family identification (ID) expense.

Mr. Bergeron

Baseball caps are bought every year for approximately \$1,500 and we needed more baseball supplies because we have three teams; freshman, junior varsity, and varsity.

Family ID's is our athletic registration platform we have used over the last four years. It streamlines all paperwork, etc. into electronic documents. Coaches have access to all player information on their mobile devices. Uses by many other schools, very valuable and used districtwide for other reasons.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

What is the cycle of how textbooks are purchased at the high school and how many classes have we done online textbook licensing for?

Are there areas of overlap where we have classes that we buy both online textbooks and hard copy textbooks?

Textbook companies usually make you buy hardcovers to get an online version. Recent revisions to the math and science curriculums include text purchases to support the updates. We have purchased class sets that are shared by students (not one for every student) and added online subscriptions for all students to access. Some online subscriptions last for up to five or six years. We are requesting a renewal for biology this year as the subscription was up.

Actively Learn is an annual subscription. Other reasons to purchase textbooks might be the age, making it difficult to replace, as well as in the case of social studies, the Street Lawbook is from 1999, and contains outdated court cases.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

We are very excited about the English software “Actively Learn.” What kind of professional development has been completed, and will be completed, to ensure that all students have access and that the district is getting the full value of this purchase?

What period is included with the fee, i.e., one year, ten years? Is it subscription-based?

Mr. Claire

“Actively Learn” is a one-year subscription and because it was an English/Language Art software, all students have access to it due to our English Graduation requirements. It does have an annual fee, and I asked our Department Head for some data:

- From September 2021 to January 3, 2022, there have been 1,001 Active Learning students, 4,248 Active Learning hours, and 31,334 reading questions assigned, evaluated, and/or discussed.

c. Formal Presentation on the District Budget

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the district’s budget was composed primarily of contractual obligations that included FICA, Medicare, health insurance which went down by 1.4% resulting in a decrease of approximately \$426,000 to the operating budget. He said most of the other items remained level funded. Further, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the areas that increased were property & liability insurance, and workmen’s compensation.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reviewed questions and answers as summarized below:

Board Member Barnes

Why is transitional academic support not part of the Merrimack High budget?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

This amount is for \$85,000 and the program is for targeted interventions and evening academy administered by the central office.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Yarlott added it was a relatively new line item and was originally to address the middle school transition to the high school.

Board Member Barnes

Regarding the Covid contingency account, what would the \$100K be used for (itemize) and one, is there a likelihood there will be additional federal funding to accommodate this expense or two, if it is not likely to get federal funding, can we look to buy proposed materials in bulk to sustain us through the next school year in this fiscal year?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

We have unspent federal funding in the amount of \$700,000 that can be carried over into September 30, 2024. Given our uncertain everchanging future, this may or may not be enough to carry us if we need to replace disinfectant equipment, (Clorox T-360), wipes, portable sinks, and any other new emerging equipment to combat Covid, hence the contingency fund.

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

Regarding committee work, do we pay an hourly rate for compensation for instruction staff who work on district committees?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

It's a formula not-to-exceed \$26,000 total, based on 15 hours worked on a committee. If one works less than 15 hours, the activity is not counted. There are three levels of participation:

- 15 – 20 hours = Basic
- 21 – 22 hours = Proficient
- 34 or more = Advanced

The rates are established by assigning a formula that will arrive at the complete dispersion of the allotted \$26,000 that can change yearly. For the last year:

- Basic = \$302.77
- Proficient = \$402.77
- Advanced = \$502.77

(37 people were Basic, 28 were proficient, and 7 were advanced.)

Chair Guagliumi & Vice Chair Rothhaus

We see the rate for the professional New Hampshire retirement is 21.02%. Can you tell us how much the rate increased since last year and please further explain the increase.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

The rate was the same for 2021 – 2022 as it is for 2022 – 2023. There is no increase for 2022 – 2023. The rate changes every two years. In 2020 – 2021, the rate was 17.8% which was two budget seasons ago. All rate increases for the New Hampshire Retirement System are calculated by the New Hampshire Retirement System to plan for future viability of the fund using a five-year rate of return lookback period. Rates for police and fire are 34% for comparative purposes. The New Hampshire Retirement System has a goal of being 80% credible.

d. Other

Chair Guagliumi said the School Board would have a work session and Warrant Article discussion on Tuesday, January 11th at 7:00 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room and there would be another meeting on Thursday, January 13th to review the budget, if needed.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

At approximately 9:07 p.m. Vice Chair Rothhaus made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.