Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
June 5, 2023

Present: Vice-Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Jenna Hardy. Also present was Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell. Also present were Student Representatives Kaitlyn Vadney, and Shaun Evidente.

Not Present: Chair Ken Martin (Excused), Board Member Lori Peters (Excused) & Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Amy Doyle (Excused).

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Rothhaus called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Theresa Yasevich, One Audubon Circle, addressed the Board and she was happy to see how much the arts, music, and drama were valued in the schools. She asked that the Board consider a drama club as one of the focuses of the Board.

3. RECOGNITIONS

a. Poetry Out Loud
   - Jacob Puzzo, Merrimack High School Sophomore, the first Merrimack High School Student to participate in the NH Region Semi-Final Round of Poetry Out Loud held at New England College in Henniker, NH.

b. FIRST Robotics Team Accomplishments
   - Governor's Award at the Governor's Cup
   - District Impact Award at WPI District Event
   - Regional Impact Award at New England District Championships
   - 1st Pick of the 4th See Alliance Captain – Rhode Island District Event
   - 1st Pick of the 3rd Seed Alliance Captain – WPI Event
   - 2nd Pick of the 4th Seed Alliance Captain – New England District Championships
   - 31st place, Johnson Field – FIRST Championships
   - Recipient of a "Woodie Flowers Gracious Professionalism" pin.

c. FIRST Robotics Team (Students)

The following students were recognized:

Angel Feliciano
Ryan Nirk
Christian Page
Nathan Cargile
Nathan MacGregor
Shaun Miksch
Tim Paquin
Trenton Fornier

The following Mentors/Coaches were recognized:

Ben Beauregard
Al Bouressa
Connor McBride
Aidan Cox
Layth Juma
Matthew Soucy
Julia Meisser
Matthew Gage

Joe Janicki
Finn Haddad
Tim Bevis
Shane Gilbert
Dylan Amy
Tristan Collins
Liam Murphy
Lucas Szela
Lucas Allgayer
Hazel Raimundo
Daniel Cruz
Sammy Poirier
Faith Burke
Olivia Diaz
Laura Bevill
Miya Ashland
Helen Saunders
Phoebe Fall
Katie LeGay

Lucas Anderson

d. Recognition of Kaitlyn Vadney

Chief Educational Officer Olsen presented Ms. Katilyn Vadney, Student Representative, with a plaque, on behalf of himself, and the School Board, thanked her for her years of service on the Board, and wished her the very best in her future endeavors.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that 15 track and field athletes qualified for the Meet of Champions against the top athletes in New Hampshire.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the Senior Service Day had taken place on Monday, May 29. He noted 115 high school students participated in the 27th year Senior Service Day. He thanked the American Legion (Auxiliary Unit #98) for hosting a cookout for the student after the event.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the 7th graders at the middle school would be going on a field trip to the Squam Lake Science Center. He also reminded folks that Senior Week was in full swing with graduation on Saturday, June 10th beginning at 10:00 a.m. on the football field.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said that every summer in mid-August the district had the annual audit of the financials. He said the preliminary audits in the month of May were complete. He added the district did very well and they passed with flying colors.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the district had received a grant in the amount of $120,000 from Safe Schools and they were about 60% done with the project. He said the project was an enhanced security measure to secure the schools.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said he had been in contact with VHB, an engineering firm, who were doing some renditions of the master plan. He would review them soon and report back to the Board.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared that they were moving along with the eventual demolition of the red house (the former Brentwood School). He said they had contracted with CSSI, Inc. to terminate the utilities to the building following the demolition.

Regarding the roof at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said Team Craft was the winning bid and they performed a walk-through the previous week.

c. School Board Update

Vice-Chair Rothhaus, on behalf of the entire School Board, congratulated the class of 2023. She also thanked all of the teachers, especially those who would be retiring.

d. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Evidente addressed the Board and said finals would begin on June 13th and the last day of school would be on June 19th with June 20th being a make-up day.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. June Goals Meeting

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said the Board was preparing for the June Goals Meeting and the Board would discuss the Superintendent's Annual Review on June 19.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said each region entered into an agreement with the schools that they participated in over a four-year period. He said the Milford School District's current agreement between Merrimack, Alvirne, Nashua North, and Nashua South would come to an end in the upcoming school year and a new agreement would have to be made. He said the centers partnered with business organizations and the statute that pertained to CTE Centers (RSA-188E 1-A) required that the schools met with careers that had high demand jobs and high-paying jobs. He said the career clusters were as follows:

- Agriculture, General
- Aeronautics/Aviation/Aerospace Science and Technology, General
- Business/Commerce, General
- Computer and Information Sciences, General
- Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General
- Restaurant, Culinary, and Catering Management/Manager
- Digital Communication and Media/Multimedia
- Drafting and Design Technology, General
- Education, General
- Manufacturing Technology/Technician

Board Member Hardy thanked Chief Educational Officer Olsen for the information and said she felt it was important that the Guidance Department be able to answer parents' and students' questions regarding the CTE Program.

b. Review of Human Resources Department

Ms. Melissa Fazlic, Director of Human Resources, addressed the Board and provided the School Board with "A Year in Review":

What the Human Resources Department Does:

- Recruiting & Onboarding
- Employee Benefits (Health, Dental, Disability, Retirement, Leave Benefits, etc.)
- Employment Law Compliance, Collective Bargaining, Employment Contracts
- Workers' Compensation, Unemployment
- Retention Efforts, Offboarding, Retirement

Why Work for the Merrimack School District:

- Excellent Benefits
  - Health, Dental, Flexible Spending Accounts, Life Insurance, Disability, etc.
  - Robust Professional Development Opportunities
  - Great Commuting Location
  - Mentor Program for Educators
  - Longevity – Average of 12 Years of Service
  - 270 Teachers have a Master's Degree or Higher (7 with Ph.D.)
  - Turnover Trends Relatively Low

Ms. Fazlic said the top six reasons staff retired were as follows:

- Retirement
- Closer to Home
- Leaving the Education Field
- More Money (Noting that had not come up in large part due to the MTA contract passing.)
- Looking for a Change.

Exciting Initiatives:

- Initiated a Support Staff Mentor and Onboarding Program
- Streamlined Processes (HR Forms, Employee Contracts, Onboarding)

c. Request to Hire at Will

Chief Educational Officer Olsen requested that the School Board grant administrators the authority to offer conditional contracts to candidates for professional staff openings. He said it would preclude talented individuals from choosing a position in another district and assist the administrative team in the hiring process when there were fewer board meetings during the

summer months. He added that all new hires would be listed on the Consent Agenda for the Board's approval.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to approve the request to Hire at Will. Seconded the motion. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

d. Other

There was no other new business to discuss.

7. POLICIES

a. Approval of Home Education Instruction Policy (IHBG) Reading

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to approve policy (IHBG) Home Education Instruction Policy, as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

b. First Review of Fund Balances (DIA)

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to waive the first reading of policy (DIA) Review of Fund Balances, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

c. First Review of Wellness Policy (JLCF)

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to waive the first reading of policy (JLCF) Review of Wellness, as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. May 15, 2023 – Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2023, public meeting, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Teacher Resignations

- Mr. Mark Tyers, Jr., Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Tabitha Pauley, Language Arts Teacher, Merrimack Middle School

b. Teacher Nominations
   - Ms. Hannah Kierstead, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
   - Ms. Rebecca Leary, Language Arts Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
   - Mr. Rafael Rodriquez, Science Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
   - Ms. Adrienne Vail-Naylor, School Nurse, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
   - Ms. Jennifer Petit, Elementary Education Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
   - Ms. Casey Morin, Elementary Education Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
   - Ms. Amanda Tobin, English Teacher, Merrimack High School

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Board Member Halter shared that she attended a Parks & Recreation Committee meeting and said she would provide an update at the next School Board meeting.

b. Correspondence

Board Member Hardy said she received correspondence from a constituent who asked for additional information regarding the Coaches Handbook.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she received correspondence from someone who requested information about athletics, and she referred that person to Mr. Steve Claire, Principal, Merrimack High School.

c. Comments

Board Member Hardy commented that she agreed that there should be a Drama Club at the high school.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she felt that the district should write a grant to construct a Fine Arts facility.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:15 p.m. Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.