TOWN COUNCIL – AGENDA REQUEST FORM

THIS FORM WILL BECOME PART OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION USED BY THE COUNCIL AND PUBLIC

Please submit Agenda Request Form, **including back up information**, 8 days prior to the requested meeting date. **Public Hearing requests must be submitted 20 days prior to requested meeting date to meet publication deadlines** (exceptions may be authorized by the Town Manager, Chairman/Vice Chair).

MEETING INFORMATION

Date Submitted: October 29, 2015
Submitted by: Town Council Chairman Nancy Harrington and Vice Chair Tom Mahon
Department:
Speakers:

Date of Meeting: November 5, 2015
Time Required: 30 minutes
Background Info. Supplied: Yes: ☒ No: ☐

CATEGORY OF BUSINESS (PLEASE PLACE AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX)

Appointment:	☐	Recognition/Resignation/ Retirement:	☐
Public Hearing:	☐	Old Business:	☐
New Business:	☒	Consent Agenda:	☐
Nonpublic:	☐	Other:	☐

TITLE OF ITEM

Joint Town Council / School Board Meeting

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM

Discussion about the proposed joint meeting and potential topics.

REFERENCE (IF KNOWN)

RSA:		Warrant Article:	
Charter Article:		Town Meeting:	
Other:		N/A	

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED (PLEASE PLACE AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX)

Projector:	☐	Grant Requirements:	☐
Easel:	☐	Joint Meeting:	☐
Special Seating:	☐	Other:	☐
Laptop:	☐	None:	☐

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:	**Nancy Harrington**	Address	
Phone Number		Email Address	nharrington@merrimacknh.gov

APPROVAL

Town Manager: Yes ☐ No: ☐ Chair/Vice Chair: Yes ☒ No: ☐

Hold for Meeting Date: _____

07/06

Joint Town Council / School Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 29, 2014, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Harrington called the joint meeting of the Town Council / School Board to order at 7:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Mahon, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Woods, School Board Chairman Christopher Ortega, School Board Vice Chairman Shannon Barnes, School Board Members Cinda Guagliumi, Davis Powell, and Andy Schneider, Superintendent Marge Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Business Administrator Mark Shevenell, and Acting Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel was excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harrington led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from the Press and Public

Patricia Merchant, 118 Baboosic Lake Road

Stated a concern with an event she witnessed on voting date relative to the safety and security of students. She spoke of having witnessed two of the cafeteria doors open. She stated her belief that the building is secure for a reason. Visitors are required to sign into the building and employees are required to wear badges for identification. She stated she had approached the Assistant Principal, and shortly thereafter both doors were closed. However, in the course of her duties she again visited the area around 11:00 a.m., and was alarmed to find one of the doors opened again. She contacted the office of the Superintendent. About 40 minutes later another call was placed. About an hour and a half later she witnessed the door tied open to the dumpster.

She noted, although police officers were located outside and within the building, the officer posted outdoors was facing Baboosic Lake Road, and would not have seen anyone entering through that side door. She commented, as a school district employee she underwent the process of being fingerprinted and having a background check conducted before being allowed to interact with the students. On voting day students have lunch served in the far reaches of the school building. She stated her understanding that is intended to protect the students from mingling with the public; however, those that do the checklist are allowed to wander down to that area to purchase lunch.

If the intent is to keep the students separate from the public those efforts are thwarted by students entering and exiting through the same door as the public. With the door tied to a dumpster there is also concern for health and safety issues such as bees. She spoke of students and adults in the building being allergic to bees. She requested consideration be given to whether or not schools should be open on voting day and/or an alternative polling location.

Items of Discussion

1. **Merrimack Safeguard Update**
   Deborah Woelflein (Principal MMS), Betsy Houde (Safeguard Director), Officer Prentice, Chief Doyle
   Update on the grant funding received for the MMS School Resource Officer and overall review of the Merrimack Safeguard program.

Detective Thomas Prentice, School Resource Officer/Grant Coordinator, stated the Drug Free Community (DFC) Grant was awarded for a second five-year period ($125,000/year). When the grant first began five years prior there was the need to start a coalition for substance. Already in place was the drug advisory council, which handled Title IV monies. They had the required 12 sectors of the community represented, e.g., police, school, media, etc. The Title IV monies are no longer, and the drug advisory council took over that coalition. It is now known as the Merrimack Safeguard.

The next step was to start on a logic model identifying what was a problem in Merrimack. Reporting for the grant has to be evidence based. Utilized were three surveys; Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS), which is done every other year in all four grades at the high school, the Nashua Outcome Measured Survey (NOMS), which is done every year at the middle school, and the parent survey that has been done for the last two years. Based on that information and the logic model, the two substances chosen were alcohol and prescription drugs.

With an action plan in place the past five years have been spent building and strengthening community relations between organizations in and out of town.
As an example of what he coalition has been doing, Detective Prentice stated the first thing that was done for alcohol was to team up with New Hampshire Liquor Enforcement and their Buyer Beware Program, which places signage in all stores, e.g., warnings about not selling to underage kids, host law for underage partying, etc. They worked with Bellavance Beverages out of Nashua who supplies, at no cost, the under age 21 signs on beer coolers, store walls, etc. They also arranged for speakers to address high school students regarding issues of drug or alcohol abuse. Also conducted was an environmental scan. An intern from Rivier University visited all 43 liquor licensees in Town and conducted a survey of where signs were located, where beer was located, whether it was mixed with kid's drinks, signage at points of sale, etc. There were two very minor instances of signs either placed in the wrong location or obscured. All licensees passed the inspection.

With prescription drugs the big initiative was lock boxes. Any event that was done included either a display or raffle. The boxes allow prescription drugs to be locked up and mounted inside a drawer or to a wall. They paired up with the DEA and their Drug Take Back Program. Events are run every fall and spring. During the most recent event, 71 pounds of prescription drugs were taken in. The norm has been in the area of 150-200 pounds in the fall and spring. They also worked with Beyond Influence and the United Way to get a permanent drug box placed inside the police station. That box is emptied weekly (approximately 8.6 pounds). To date over 1,400 pounds of prescription drugs have been taken in and destroyed.

The Youth Council has a program for court diversion. If a juvenile is arrested for the first time he/she does not have to go through the juvenile justice system. He/she can go to the Youth Council and receive assessment, education, and treatment. Also through the Youth Council, a counselor has been put in the middle school to work with students.

Ms. Betsy Houde, Safeguard Director, Youth Council, Nashua, stated the YRBS is conducted every other year. In 2009 the data for 9th and 10th grade students indicated 17.1% had been drinking more than just a couple of sips of alcohol before they turned 13. Four years later that 17.1% is down to 10.2%. The evaluator has stated that is absolutely statistically significant and can be attributed to the fact that we have had Detective Prentice as a presence in the school promoting safe choices, etc. She stated her opinion it is because there is data that can prove what is being done has been effective that we were successful in the grant application for the next five years.

There are numbers that cause concern, which is part of the reason why the parent survey was implemented. The 7th and 8th grade students were stating their parents haven't really talked to them much about being safe from alcohol and other drugs. While over 96% of parents have been having those conversations with their kids, the kids just aren't hearing them. About 40% of the students recall the conversations they have had. Some of what the coalition wishes to do going forward is help better facilitate communication between parents and their young people, and really talk about being responsible overall.

Ms. Houde remarked many times driving throughout the community or watching television we hear about drinking responsibly, making responsible choices, etc. The coalition began discussing what it actually means to be responsible. All agreed we want people to be responsible on our roads, in our stores, at people's home gatherings, etc. What the coalition has proposed for the next five years is to launch a large scale "Be Responsible Merrimack" campaign where they would engage each of the 12 sectors, which includes the business community, faith leaders, youth, government officials, etc. to really identify among each sector what does it mean for you to be responsible.

In the most recent YRBS, 20% of our young people said they have driven in a car with someone who has been drinking. One might assume that is a peer, but that could also be a parent and a situation where they have been out to dinner and Mom or Dad had a couple of glasses of wine, and based on their size and body type is that being responsible. The natural partners they have talked about working with going forward include doing even more with school nurses and guidance counselors from K-12, talking with different neighborhood groups to connect with Merrimack friends and families so as people are moving into Town they know we have a lock box, etc. One of the data points also learned is of the 122 middle school parents that were surveyed, 27.7% said that they have hosted parties where alcohol was available or even served to underage youth. Over 91% of them realize that there is a social host law, and they could actually be arrested for having hosted that party.

Ms. Deborah Woelflein, Principal, Merrimack Middle School, stated the coalition has worked hard to gather data that helped to undercover root causes in the community. One of the requirements of the grant was for an outside evaluator to look at all of the data and help us to understand where we were effective and what else we could do. The coalition partnered with the Community Health Institute. They were objective, know about substance abuse issues, and were the ones who pointed out that Detective Prentice has had a role, and we can already see results. In fact, they described Detective Prentice as being an agent of environmental change. When the new grant applicant was written he was listed right at the center as that force that will make some change in the community.

The evaluators talked about the goal of having Detective Prentice at the middle school to promote positive school climate and help students make positive choices, and the evaluators pointed out many places in the data that show he is having an impact; not only in the middle school as he also does work in the elementary schools and throughout the community.

Ms. Woelflein noted Julie DeLuca, Assistant Principal, Thornton's Ferry, has become a very active member of the coalition. In fact she accompanied Ms. Houde to Washington and helped to shape the grant. The data sources helped identify some problem areas, and the coalition will now look at those and see where they can get more people involved to help.

The YRBS is done every other year with support from the New Hampshire Department of Education. Jeffrey Metzger, PhD, New Hampshire State Epidemiologist looks at the YRBS results, reports out, and

shares that information with the high school Principal who allows the coalition to review and use it. That information was very helpful in writing the grant. Another name for the NOMS is the Adaptive Youth and Young Adult Survey, and that information has been really helpful.

They made a compelling case through the grant application, and were awarded the next five years of funding. They had to prove that they are using seven strategies for community change (handout provided). Moving forward the coalition will utilize the seven strategies; provide information, enhance skills, provide support, enhance access/reduce barriers (to support and help), change consequences (court diversion program), change physical design, and modify/change policies.

Ms. Woelflein stated the funding was received not only because there is an identified need in the community, but also because they could demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the community to offer resources, support, energy, and creativity that will help make the problem better. Each year, in order to keep the grant and in order to get it in the first place, they have to demonstrate the community of Merrimack gives just as much funding, resources, and energy as the government is providing us. Each year they have no problem at all making a case and showing the many ways that the community provides resources to help with this issue. Chairman Harrington stated this to be one variable as to why Merrimack was chosen as the safest community in New Hampshire.

Councilor Boyd congratulated Merrimack Safeguard. He commented he visited the Office of White House Drug Control website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/Drug-Free-Communities-Support-Program), and noted of the four different hyperlinks, Merrimack was listed under year 6 but not for years 7-10. He questioned if that automatically occurs once completing year 6. Ms. Houde stated her belief the confirmation letter has arrived. She remarked years 1 and 6 are competitive. Years 2-5 and 7-10 are automatically provided as long as we are meeting the goals included in the action plan. Councilor Boyd asked for clarification the criteria that has to be met is submitted to the administrator of the program, and was informed that is accurate.

Councilor Boyd questioned the types of questions included on the YRBS as it relates to behaviors being targeted and if students are allowed to self-identify or is it anonymous. Ms. Houde responded it is strictly anonymous, and the core questions that data needs to be reported on are around 30-day use; whether the young people have used alcohol, marijuana, tobacco or prescription drugs within the last 30 days. They ask questions about their parents' perception of wrongness and their peers' perception of wrongness, and how harmful they think it is.

Councilor Boyd questioned whether the 2014 survey has been administered, and was informed it is done on odd years. The 2015 survey will be conducted in the April timeframe with results available in the December timeframe. Councilor Boyd commented nobody can refute or dispute the presence and value that Detective Prentice has had in the middle school. He questioned if there was any other key factor that contributed to the trend downward from 17% to 10%. Ms. Woelflein responded she believes the community effort, the initiative, and the awareness has really made a difference. There are a lot more conversations taking place around these issues.

School Board Vice Chairman Barnes commented on having enjoyed her time as the School Board Liaison to the coalition, and commented it is enlightening as a parent and a School Board member what the life of a student is really like. She questioned whether contingencies had been discussed had the grant funding not been received. Specifically having a School Resource Officer (SRO) being an agent of environmental change, what was the suggested plan had there not been funding for that position?

Ms. Woelflein responded it was known that would be something that the powers that be would be discussing. They did not believe it their place to think about what would happen in that case. They would have had to go back and look at their plans and perhaps adjust them. School Board Vice Chairman Barnes remarked there was no recommendation as to what the impact would have been had that role not been continued in the middle school. Ms. Woelflein responded the coalition did not have a contingency plan.

Ms. Woelflein questioned, knowing there is no year 11, are there other grant opportunities that can be looked towards to expand the program, and what kind of areas would they cover that would fit into the goals of the coalition? Ms. Woelflein responded she is aware they would not be able to apply for another Federal grant; that is part of what happens when one of these grants is received. Efforts will have to be made towards seeking other options. Ms. Houde remarked one of the requirements for year 7 is the submission of a sustainability plan. They have a year to work with all of the community partners to identify what that might look like.

School Board Member Schneider noted he has been the Liaison from the School Board for the past year and a half, and while they are correct there is no formal contingency plan, he is of the belief they all had in mind if they were not successful in the grant application they were going to work at this with one of the major items being determining what would occur with the SRO. They would have looked to him to bring the issue back to the School Board.

School Board Chairman Ortega added the fact that the second grant has been received is rare and they are all thankful. It was not likely to have come through, and this agenda topic, which was mapped out some months ago, before the outcome was known, would have been to have exactly that conversation. To the points raised about contingency, he stated his hope the two bodies, over the coming years, begin to look at that and determine exactly what they would like to see for Merrimack Safeguard; how to continue to support and fund the efforts whether it is the SRO and/or broader community involvement.

Vice Chairman Mahon stated his impression this effort is centered on the middle school. Ms. Houde responded it is helpful Detective Prentice's office is located within the middle school as that is an incredibly vulnerable age group, but the plan going forward really involves many partners from K-12, and really will impact students at all levels. It was intentionally broadened beyond the middle school level. Chairman Harrington stated her agreement with the need for discussions to occur/agreements to be reached prior to the end of the grant term.

2. James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Security When Used as a Polling Site
Marsha McGill (Principal JMUES), Lynn Christensen (Town Moderator), Diane Trippett (Town Clerk/Tax Collector), Tom Touseau (SAU Director of Maintenance)
School Board to share security concerns regarding use of JMUES during elections while school is in session and to share preliminary options for an alternate entrance for voters.

School Board Chairman Ortega noted the Town recently moved from multiple polling sites to a single polling site. The district has provided the high school gymnasium for the November elections, and has scheduled that as a day off for students. For the September and April elections the polling location is the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School (MUES). School is in session on election days.

The School Board has shared some concerns about opening the doors to the school during the day and public testimony has been provided on the same. Mr. Touseau will provide preliminary estimates

received to make the exterior door at the APR at MUES a secure door such that the room could be stand-alone for the elections.

School Board Chairman Ortega shared with the Board and Council a letter Emilie Carter, Principal, Mastricola Elementary School, received from a parent, Amy Knight, employee of BAE Systems, which he believes sums up the concerns of the Board as well.

"Good morning Emilie, I hope your year is off to a great start. I hate to burden you with e-mails already, but I have a concern. I believe that today is primary voting for the Town of Merrimack. I do realize the school, Upper Elementary, hosts elections every year, but I have a concern about what I witnessed as I dropped off my children this morning. When I pulled up at 6:30 a.m. to drop them off at the only available entrance, there were about 20 people setting up shop. People were going in and out of the facility with the children as they entered to go to the before school program. Because of the people sitting in the parking lot, it was already hard to get around them. I can't imagine how difficult it would be when the buses are dropping kids as well. However, traffic was not my biggest concern although I see a huge safety issue there.

My biggest concern was having people walk in and out of the building as the kids are entering as well. I don't mean to cause issues, but I have a background in law enforcement and counterintelligence. Additionally, I am a survivor of the worst case of child abuse history in my county. Therefore, I am the biggest child advocate and dedicated to keeping kids safe. While I understand the community needs, I think it is dangerous to allow access to the building just for voting. Our kids need to be safe, and that is our number one concern. I think whoever decided to allow this was not thinking, and has a complacent attitude. Because nothing has ever happened does not mean it won't. How do we know that we are not allowing sex offenders, pedophiles, and people of other danger into the school? How do you know the men and women who walked in with my children today were upstanding citizens and therefore safe?

Do we assume just because they are supporters of the community and local politicians that we should trust them? Yes there was an officer there, however, he was very busy moving barriers and chatting with the people about how to set things up. I don't blame him as I have been in his position. It is very hard to multi-task. I don't believe he even noticed the people who slipped in with my children. I know your school does well and cares very deeply for each and every child under your care. The staff is wonderful, and I am very happy to have my children with you. I am not the person who causes trouble as you know. However, I do feel as though I would be doing a great injustice if I did not speak up. This event would be the perfect opportunity for disaster. It really wouldn't be difficult, with all of the commotion, for someone who is bad to slip through the cracks and cause harm to the kids and the staff.

Additionally, we know and have seen how political agendas can cause heated and often dangerous events to transpire. Why are we taking the chance? On a typical day, I can only use one door to pick up and drop off my children. There is someone posted there, and you have to sign in and sign out. Why are we saying that because of political agenda we should open our doors and put our kids at risk? That is very scary to me."

School Board Chairman Ortega stated the Board had requested Mr. Touseau look into options for the exterior door at the APR to see if the main door could be locked and provide an ADA accessible entrance.

Mr. Tom Touseau, SAU Director of Maintenance, stated there to be two ways of approaching the situation. One would be a rough ramp with rails going through the door. When entering the APR, going

along the stage, the door that exits closest to the church is the one chosen to modify the entrance. Without any formal design he questioned the rough cost for a ramp and railing. The estimate provided was $45,000 - $50,000. If taking that a step further to provide for a covered entrance inclusive of a sprinkler system, etc., the cost could run as high as $115,000 - $125,000. He reiterated the figures to be estimates without the benefit of any formal drawings, etc.

School Board Chairman Ortega remarked the concern is raised as the Town sets the polling site. As the providers of the polling site they have issues and concerns they wish to be addressed. To that end, they wished for both bodies to hear the concerns, the estimates, and try to determine how to move forward. Vice Chairman Mahon stated it to be a very important security issue. To put something in that will be reasonable and meet State requirements for access to a polling place will not be inexpensive. He remarked it is incumbent upon the Town to work something out that benefits all involved understanding there is a cost associated with accomplishing that.

Councilor Rothhaus stated his initial thought was that the two doors at the very end would be utilized and the one coming in that Mr. Touseau mentioned. He believed the curb could be adjusted to make a ramp down to the street. He could not have imagined it costing $5,000 to do that. He questioned if there is a requirement for more than the ramp. Mr. Touseau responded for the ramp, railings, ensuring ADA compliance, replacing the doors themselves, the estimate was $45,000 - $50,000. He reiterated the cost is an estimate and the true cost would remain unknown until drawings could be completed.

School Board Vice Chairman Barnes requested clarification the $50,000 estimate is for an uncovered ramp, and was informed that is correct. Mr. Touseau remarked a tarp or temporary covering would be an additional $500, which would be an event driven activity (hiring a tent company each time). The $115,000 - $125,000 estimate would be for a permanent covering that would be blended into the building brick, meet fire codes, etc.

School Board Member Schneider commented this is a topic that has been brought up to the School Board many times, and they have made some progress. He noted the comfort level with the November elections at the high school and the school not being in session for the day. The secure entrance added to JMUES really created this as the Upper Elementary now has a secure entrance. Unfortunately the building that has been traditionally used is attached in a very inconvenient way to that area. He noted there is a straight shot entrance into the Smith gym or both buildings could be isolated to either side and you would have bathrooms and a nice entranceway. That is one possibility. There is the gym on the back side of the Mastricola Elementary, which has its own entrance that is separate from the rest of the school. An entranceway could be made there. Perhaps ADA compliance could be achieved by knocking a curb down, as suggested. He suggested the need for both bodies to look at the issue as a whole; the traffic issues, flow, etc. He stated his opinion the desire would be not to cancel school for the September and April elections; however, creating a secure environment without impacting the secure entrance. He suggested forming a group to review available options.

Business Administrator Mark Shevenell questioned whether Councilor Rothhaus was thinking of the ramp as a straight shot from the threshold into the parking lot. Councilor Rothhaus remarked he thought it was quite simple. He stated he would not wish for the Town to expend a great deal of funds on something like this as there is already access to all of the buildings that are ADA compliant. He remarked it is likely necessary for the button to open the doors, but he is not sure a roof is required or even the rails. He commented he likes being able to utilize the high school; however, understands those conversations have taken place. Ms. Shevenell noted railings are required, and have specific measurement requirements for height, etc. The ramp has to be at a specific pitch, which the current

doorway does not allow for. Mr. Touseau stated the ramp is about 40' long and about 7' wide. Councilor Rothhaus stated what he was envisioning is the current entrance being used as sort of a ramp. It is the parking lot, but it is a ramp too. There are no rails there, and they enter those doors. There are buttons available to open the door. He believed coming off the parking lot, going at that angle alongside the building into that entrance would be acceptable. The comment was made the ramp put in place years prior when the television studio was in place, was constructed of concrete at a cost of approximately $30,000. Although it appears to be an easy fix, there are strict ADA regulations that have to be followed.

School Board Member Powell stated agreement there is much more information that needs to be gathered before a decision could be reached.

MOTION made by Member Powell and seconded by Councilor Boyd to establish a working group to identify the potential for alternate voting sites and possible solutions for addressing security and ADA compliance issues relative to the entrance for the polling location at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School. Any proposed alternative voting locations should be verified by the Town Moderator as meeting all necessary criteria. Members of the working group shall include Superintendent Chiafery, Town Manager Cabanel, representatives from the Fire and Police Departments, and the Finance Director in whatever capacity is deemed necessary.
MOTION CARRIED 10-2-0
Councilors Dwyer and Koenig voted in opposition

It was noted the vote was taken before discussion of the motion occurred. Chairman Harrington apologized and opened the floor for discussion.

Councilor Dwyer remarked he found the letter that was read into the record to be very offensive. We seem to be taking the safety of children and then throwing in the word pedophile as a red flag of the boogie man entering our schools. The letter was filled with who is entering our schools; who are these people, we don't know who they are. He remarked as someone who reads the newspaper every day we know that teachers are pedophiles, coaches are pedophiles, lawyers, doctors, accountants, plumbers, electricians, parents, etc. Now we're so scared that we have to do something to lock down our schools and make them prisons. Now we need to spend money and modify our school buildings where throughout history our school buildings have been Town property, and we need to hold elections. Now these elections are deemed as being inconvenient. He stated he finds the whole subject matter rather offensive. Pretending that our schools are under siege somehow he finds even more offensive.

Councilor Woods questioned if the suggestion was the possibility for sites other than JMUES. School Board Member Powell responded he did say that; however, what he meant was the working group would be tasked with looking at the big picture to see if there are any other sites that might be more viable for the elections, e.g., Smith Gym. Councilor Woods stated that to have been his understanding; we would remain within the bounds of that particular school site.

School Board Vice Chairman Barnes remarked there is a definite need to discuss access points, voting traffic, and the security of the buildings. As a School Board they have been staunch and consistent that they want the voters and the students not to mingle. She stated her belief the biggest problem that came about with the recent election was that the Board was told one thing and another occurred. When she arrived at the school, she witnessed buses backing up on the road because the first access point where the students got off the buses was the same access point where the traffic was coming in to vote. The goal was to have an access point further down into the facility. Students should not be using the same

doorways as voters. On Primary day when students and voters were entering the first thing students ran into was a snack cart. That meant you stopped the students as snacks were being bought, and they were not kept away from the voters. These were things the School Board was not told would happen. The Board was told students would be coming in at what was called the fishbowl, which is a secondary entrance further down where parent pickup used to be. Having witnessed this she contacted the Superintendent and noted what was occurring was not what the Board had been informed of. At the end of the school day, students were picked up at the fishbowl. She reiterated the need for a communication plan for how voting day would be executed.

School Board Member Schneider commented back when he attended school in this district there were no locked doors, students played outdoors without fencing, and he can remember parents dragging their kids out of school whether related to a custody issue, etc., and the school could do nothing about it due to the lack of security. As a School Board member, given what has occurred in this country, it is his responsibility to look after the safety of students. To think that Merrimack is the way it used to be and the world is the way it used to be is something he cannot do. He remarked while sitting in this meeting the Nixle Alert flashed on his phone saying there is a live burglary in progress in Merrimack where suspects are running through the Town being pursued by Police.

School Board Member Guagliumi echoed Member Schneider's comments noting the safety of our children is a priority. She stated her agreement with reviewing available options. She remarked there are a number of citizens that have brought issues to our attention. She thanked the parent that sent in the letter and stated her belief there was no intent to offend anyone, but rather to bring something to the forefront. She stated her appreciation the issue will be explored further noting she shares the concerns expressed both as a School Board member and parent. She spoke of a student in Bedford who was struck by a car during the election. These are all things that have to be considered.

Chairman Harrington stated the Town Council appreciates the security of our children as much as anyone else. There is also frustration with our children having to live a different way than we did and having to isolate them. She questioned if the complaints that were made were followed up on. School Board Vice Chairman Barnes stated they were followed up on during the election noting student pickup was handled different than drop off. When asked if there was a follow up discussion regarding how the events relative to voting took place, she stated there was not.

Lynn Christensen, Town Moderator, spoke of a comment made in the letter regarding a police officer who was moving barricades rather than addressing the security of the children, and stated her desire to disagree with that vehemently. She and the Chief have talked extensively about the security of the students. There are 3 police officers there when students are present; one at the entrance to the hallway beside the Principal's Office and one at the hallway by the doors. No one goes down those hallways without being vetted by a police officer. If they don't have a badge they don't go down those doorways unless they happen to be an election official with a pass. The officer that was moving barricades was the third officer that happened to be outside and placing barricades to keep the campaign officials back from any voters, parents, or children who were coming in.

The Town was very careful to work with the middle school as far as how the school wanted to address the safety of the children coming and going. She remarked she does not know how the school addressed the School Board, but she is aware the Town talked with the school and complied with everything that was requested including additional personnel outdoors and the flow of the students.

Chairman Harrington requested, in the future, if there are major concerns, that they be addressed right after they occur so that they can be resolved prior to the next election.

3. Town and School Capital Improvement Plans

Paul Micali (Acting Town Manager / Finance Director), Matt Shevenell (SAU 26 Business Administrator)

Town Council and School Board to share their respective CIP plans in order to coordinate in what years large ticket items might appear as warrant articles on the Town Meeting ballots.

Chairman Harrington noted the communication received from Acting Town Manager Micali, which stated the Town is in the process of preparing the 2014-2021 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Currently, the Town is looking into a warrant article for the Highway Garage replacement. At its September 11, 2014 meeting, the Council voted to go forward with the Highway Garage on the April Ballot. The Council also established a committee to identify another method of educating the public. Vice Chairman Mahon noted the need to come to a decision by early January in order to comply with notification requirements. When getting nearer to the timeframe for conducting public hearings to meet the requirements of the law for bond issues and deliberative sessions, is when the ultimate decision will be made. Without a budget in front of the Council at this time, it is difficult to discuss $3.2 million and how that might fit in. There is also the need to be cognizant of the fact the Legislature will reconvene in January.

Director Micali noted the need for Public Hearings to be conducted in February, should the Council reach a decision to go forward. He added the CIP will be completed in early November.

School Board Chairman Ortega stated the School Board has moved its CIP. They have a Planning & Building Committee, which takes the CIP and moves it forward to the School Board. The Board then takes it forward to the Planning Board. Year over year they have been getting some pressure from the Planning Board to present the CIP earlier. They approved the CIP at their meeting on September 15, 2014. Looking at 2014-2015, big ticket items are related to the high school roof replacement, which is one of many roofs to be replaced, and at the same time dealing with the air ventilation system. The Superintendent and Special Services consolidated office will be moved forward this year. There is advancement on the technology infrastructure upgrade across the school buildings.

School Board Chairman Ortega stated the reason for bringing the item forward to the level of Planning Board consideration was to recognize that if there are two warrant articles out there for new buildings for substantial amounts of money that might be defeatist for both the Council and the School Board. They wished to get information out as soon as possible so that intent for both bodies is known.

Chairman Harrington stated her understanding the Council had determined to move forward with the Highway Garage, understanding the committee would look into specific issues, and the opportunity would exist to shift gears.

Councilor Rothhaus commented if one of the two projects were put off, it would just delay the impact on the tax rate for a year. He noted in the first year of bonding, repayment is on interest only for half a year. It is the second year when the impact is felt. If another project comes the following year it would be at the time of the larger impact. He remarked it may just be a matter of public perception of the impact.

Business Administrator Matt Shevenell stated you don't want to confuse the CIP with a spending plan. The first year's interest on a bond is relatively minor and the second year is when you typically have the highest year's payment. He suggested a review of terms of the bonded debt for the School District and the Town to identify when certain bonds will expire and look to feather them in to keep the tax rate as flat as possible. He offered to provide Director Micali with a listing of the school bonded debt. Director Micali stated the Town has two outstanding bonds; one will expire in 2018 and the other in 2023.

Councilor Koenig questioned whether the full $3 million identified within the school CIP for next year was intended to be bonded. School Board Chairman Ortega responded the building issues would be looked to be bonded; the roof and ventilation system. If past practice holds with the Board, operational maintenance costs are put into the operating budget, and likewise for the technology infrastructure upgrade. Councilor Koenig remarked what would be proposed for bonding would be $1.5 million. School Board Chairman Ortega stated that to be correct, and added he agreed with everything Councilor Rothhaus stated regarding the impact over time being principal and interest, which would be the case regardless of whether or not a project were postponed. However, he hit the nail on the head when stating voters walking into a ballot booth with two major bond items on the warrant may perceive something very different than what the real and practical impact is year over year.

Councilor Koenig commented he is not considering a $1.5 million or $3 million a major bond. A bond in the area of $8-12 million would be major. He noted it is difficult to get a bond passed regardless. He remarked it appears $4.5 million is a potential offering for a bond this year, and if explained properly, the voters will be able to understand it and work with it, particularly given bonds that will be expiring in the relatively near future.

Councilor Boyd remarked when he sat on the School Budget Committee in 2010 they had a budget item for the high school roof, and questioned the current stage and how close they are to actually having it completed. School Board Chairman Ortega stated his recollection to be there are a number of sections on the roof; almost every one was out of warranty back then, and a roof replacement plan has been put in place that carries out beyond the CIP information provided, and extends beyond the high school. He stated his understanding, after the sections that have been designated on the CIP the high school may have a few additional sections before completion. He reiterated there are acres of roofs at other buildings that are in need of replacement.

Business Administrator Matt Shevenell commented it is likely there will be an expenditure seen for roofing around $400,000 - $500,000, the highest expense is anticipated in 2019-2020 for the middle school. From there everything would go down. There would be a gap of 10 years or so with no roof repairs being completed. The roofs being put on now have a 35 year warranty.

Councilor Dwyer stated the Council is split on whether or not to go back to the ballot in April for the Highway Garage. Once the committee completes its work a recommendation will be brought forward. He stated a firm answer of whether or not the item would be placed on the ballot should be able to be provided within the next several weeks.

School Board Vice Chairman Barnes questioned the last sentence in the memorandum provided by the Acting Town Manager, which reads: "In addition there is $60,000 in the 2014-15 budget to review the Fire Department and make recommendations on the current stations." She noted the South Fire Station vote conducted a few years prior, and questioned if the statement related to revisiting that vote? Director Micali stated the intent is to review all fire stations to determine what is needed and where they might be needed. It could be a rehab of the South Fire Station or a new building, etc. The intent is to

review the Fire Department as a whole, and make recommendations going forward. During the goal setting process undertaken by the Council, the item identified as the first priority was the highway garage. The second priority was fire and the third Wasserman Park. It could be that down the road there may be a bond for a South Fire Station, but it would not be on next year's ballot.

Vice Chairman Mahon remarked there has been a significant change in the operations of the Fire Department as to the mix of the services that they provide. One of the reasons for trying to do this study is to take a look at what that mix is and how it impacts building, staffing, and equipment needs. Some of those changes have been made. We are down one fire truck and one ambulance mainly because the Chief and the department have come together to realign how they are operating.

4. O'Gara Drive Tennis Courts Update

Town Council & Paul Micali (Acting Town Manager / Finance Director)

Town Council to share the results of their investigation of options with the School Board and to identify and discuss any necessary next steps.

It was noted a Memorandum of Understanding (easement) was created between the School and the Town in 1993, which was updated in 2001, and expires in 2018.

On March 13, 2014, School Board Chairman Ortega appeared before the Town Council noting the School Board had requested he make an inquiry of the Town Council relative to the plan for the ultimate repair or replacement of the tennis courts. The tennis courts were inspected and an appraisal provided as to the cost for repair/replacement (inclusive of a three-year warranty). That information has been provided to all parties. The estimates ranged, in 2010, from $29,000 - $166,000. In 2912, the higher end of the estimate had increased to $183,000. The Town Council discussed whether the tennis courts would be repaired/replaced, which resulted in a motion to expend no further monies on the repair of the tennis courts and to explore alternative options. The Town Manager was instructed to explore conversion, which involved collaboration with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) relative to the possibility of an alternative site for recreational use.

Director Micali stated the original court and upgrade was conducted with Federal monies. Rather than repairing the tennis courts, conversion would require some other property in Town to be identified for recreational use, e.g., volleyball courts, walking trails, etc. The Division of Parks and Recreation of DRED was responsible for reviewing every one of the federally funded recreation projects throughout the State. Included were the tennis court, basketball court, and skating rink. An inspection was conducted, which resulted in a determination the skating rink and basketball court were in good shape with minor repairs needed. The State is in the process of completing the write-up on the tennis courts. Director Micali stated he made attempts to contact the representative at the Division of Parks and Recreation; however, has not yet been able to speak with him. He noted Town Manager Cabanel has had conversations with him in the past to begin the discussion of conversion. It appears very possible. What she has been told is there is the need to look at what the Town would be required to do as a conversion, whether it is believed the tennis courts are repairable, etc. That information is anticipated.

School Board Chairman Ortega noted approximately 6 months have passed since the inspection, and questioned the expected timeframe for a response. Director Micali stated his belief a response should be received within the next 5-6 months.

5. Chestnut Hill Development (Old Blood Rd)

Development & their Attorney

Town Council and School Board to share their perspectives on this project and determine possible next steps.

School Board Chairman Ortega stated, at its last meeting, the School Board heard from the developer and their site engineer on the plan for the Chestnut Hill development, which includes the connection of Old Blood Road into Madeline Bennett Drive, which is the entranceway to the Merrimack Middle School. Preliminary plans that had been presented to the Planning Board and others were of some concern to the Board in that they had, at that intersection, a number of stop signs; coming off Old Blood Road as well as down Madeline Bennett. There were some concerns raised both at the School Board level and with the Administration regarding busing routes, delays, and traffic.

At its last meeting, the engineer presented a revised plan that accounts for a rotary in that section to help facilitate traffic flow and a queuing lane for buses on the right hand side of Madeline Bennett. The update, from the Board's perspective, is that there has been some promising dialogue and development in terms of the plans. The item is on the Board's agenda for October 20, 2014 at which point advice from counsel will be received, and the Board will discuss the plan as a whole. An opinion on the plans presented is expected to be reached at that time.

Councilor Rothhaus stated the involvement he has had is from the standpoint of the Highway Safety Committee. The presentation made to the committee was the previous layout, which raised a great deal of concern by the School District in particular with regard to the traffic flow. Madeline Bennett was going to come in and continue curving southerly into the new development, and the entrance to the middle school would have been cutting into Madeline Bennett with a stop sign coming from the school. The District's concerns were safety, the impact on the flow of the buses leaving the facility, and the downstream impact on the Upper Elementary School. The Committee was split. If the School District is more comfortable with the current plans, he believes they would be received more favorably by the Committee.

Councilor Koenig noted revised plans have not come before the Planning Board. He stated concern there are a good many issues that need to be carefully considered, not the least of which is the size of the rotary and how well it will fit in an environment with wetlands on multiple sides. He is concerned with the wetland impact that may result. He commented he had believed the prior plan to be fairly reasonable considering the amount of traffic coming out of Chestnut Hill would be fairly light. A short delay at a stop sign would not impact a lot when there is a light at the end of the street. He stated the need to understand all impacts.

School Board Chairman Ortega stated his understanding, from the engineer's perspective, the School Board was one of many stops to governing bodies on their way back ultimately to the Planning Board. He believes the understanding is what they were looking for was acceptance by the School Board so that they could take the plan back to the Planning Board to address further concerns. Business Administrator Matt Shevenell remarked, having been involved with the engineer, one of the main concerns was the buses and bus traffic. In the afternoon they all queue up around the middle school, and when they leave they leave in mass and go right through the circle. To have each one stop would result in delay. The site distances between Old Blood and Madeline Road require approximately 240' for a car to recognize another car coming in the opposite direction and react to the stop. The revised plan appears to resolve those issues. The School District is looking to perhaps craft a letter stating the district does not object to the design that was presented to the School Board. The project still has to go through NHDES.

He noted the rotary falls within the existing parameters. He does not believe there to be much of a wetland impact.

Councilor Rothhaus questioned whether it had been anticipated representatives from the development would be in attendance. School Board Chairman Ortega stated it had not.

6. Recycling Update

Paul Micali (Acting Town Manager / Finance Director) & Dr. Mark McLaughlin (Asst. Superintendent)

Town Council and School Board to share respective progress in recycling efforts and to determine possible next steps.

Director Micali remarked from calendar year 2012 to calendar year 2013 the single-stream recycling went up about 5%. A good deal of changes occurred in Town; the swap shop was adjusted, signage was posted, etc. The working group was looking at a potential partnership with the school where recycling newsletters could be sent home with students providing information on what single-stream means, what can be recycled in single-stream, and some of the changes that have occurred at the transfer station to make single-stream recycling more advantageous for people. Director Micali stated several questions have been raised about what the school does with its recycling efforts, and if a benefit is being seen.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked the Town for the invitation to partner in this effort. He stated the school's efforts to be three-fold. In the community service mode, which primarily relates to clubs at the high school, e.g., student council, etc., they have established paper recycling places throughout the high school and intentional efforts to engage in that recycling. There has been public outreach around that; discussing how many trees are saved when a certain number of pounds of paper are recycled, etc. When students take that information home it has a big impact when it becomes dinner conversation. In the area of curriculum, in each of the schools there are classroom bins for recycling. In the Social Studies curriculum there are threads of the curriculum that talk about being good citizens; local citizen, State citizen, national citizen, and world citizens, which relates to keeping your planet clean and safe, etc. There are links in Science as well.

A lot of initiatives are underway in the district. As an example the automotive department at the high school recycles its metals, which extends to understanding what occurs with the metal that is recycled.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin remarked anything the Town continues to want to do to partner is something they are excited about including the information that has been offered for distribution. Chairman Harrington questioned whether Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin has had the opportunity to view the video Rick Seymour, Director, Public Works Department, created on recycling, and spoke of its value Director Micali stated a copy would be provided.

Councilor Dwyer commented the signs at the transfer station need to be improved upon. Councilor Boyd noted Ian Robinson, Recycling Attendant, has a certification in recycling, and suggested an opportunity for mentoring of high school students. Beyond that, perhaps the high school students could then take that experience and work with some of the elementary school students. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that is a practical and excellent recommendation and one he will discuss further with Director Micali.

Councilor Woods stated a very good resource would be Michael Durfor, Executive Director, Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA). They have a program they target to schools for encouraging practical and curricular involvement in recycling. Councilor Rothhaus stated his belief services provided by the NRRA are at no cost. He agreed with the recommendation that Mr. Robinson become involved with the students. Councilor Dwyer commented it is the single-stream recycling that has made the effort successful.

Vice Chairman Mahon commented what was found when this effort started several years ago was that it scared the living daylights out of the solid waste disposal business. The fact that we were using single-stream recycling effectively enabled the Town to negotiate a very decent renewal contract for our tipping fees; essentially flattened them out over the life of the contract.

School Board Member Schneider commented on the replacement of all of the bleachers in the gymnasium and remarked efforts were made to ensure the wood and metal is reused either in the schools or sold to help offset the cost of replacement.

Minutes

MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by School Board Vice Chairman Barnes to approve the minutes of the Joint meeting of the Merrimack School Board/Merrimack Town Council conducted on September 16, 2012 as amended

ON THE QUESTION

The following amendments were offered:

In all instances where it appears; replace "Pearce" with "Pierce"
In all instances where it appears; replace "Board Member" with "School Board Member"
Page 1, Line 30; capitalize "Pledge"
Page 1, Line 26; replace "Cabenal" with "Cabanel"
Page 3, Line 116; replace "private property asepsis" with "public/private partnerships"
Page 3, Line 138; replace "Understand" with "Understanding"
Page 5; delete lines 241 and 242
Page 7, Line 340; delete "Ortega" where it appears twice
Page 7, Line 344; delete "of"
Page 10, Line 455; replace "canceled" with "cancelled"

MOTION CARRIED 9-0-3
School Board Member Guagliumi and Councilors Woods and Mahon Abstained

Comments from the Press - None

Comments from the Public - None

Comments from the Council - None

Comments from the School Board - None

MOTION made by Councilor Mahon and seconded by Councilor Boyd to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED 12-0-0

The September 29, 2014 Joint meeting of the Town Council and School Board was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan

DRAFT