



1 **Joint Town Council / School Board Meeting Minutes**
2 Monday, September 29, 2014, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

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

10
11 **Pledge of Allegiance**

12
13 Chairman Harrington led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

14
15 **Comments from the Press and Public**

16
17 Patricia Merchant, 118 Baboosic Lake Road

18
19 Stated a concern with an event she witnessed on voting date relative to the safety and security of
20 students. She spoke of having witnessed two of the cafeteria doors open. She stated her belief that the
21 building is secure for a reason. Visitors are required to sign into the building and employees are
22 required to wear badges for identification. She stated she had approached the Assistant Principal, and
23 shortly thereafter both doors were closed. However, in the course of her duties she again visited the area
24 around 11:00 a.m., and was alarmed to find one of the doors opened again. She contacted the office of
25 the Superintendent. About 40 minutes later another call was placed. About an hour and a half later she
26 witnessed the door tied open to the dumpster.

27
28 She noted, although police officers were located outside and within the building, the officer posted
29 outdoors was facing Baboosic Lake Road, and would not have seen anyone entering through that side
30 door. She commented, as a school district employee she underwent the process of being fingerprinted
31 and having a background check conducted before being allowed to interact with the students. On voting
32 day students have lunch served in the far reaches of the school building. She stated her understanding
33 that is intended to protect the students from mingling with the public; however, those that do the
34 checklist are allowed to wander down to that area to purchase lunch.

35
36 If the intent is to keep the students separate from the public those efforts are thwarted by students
37 entering and exiting through the same door as the public. With the door tied to a dumpster there is also
38 concern for health and safety issues such as bees. She spoke of students and adults in the building being
39 allergic to bees. She requested consideration be given to whether or not schools should be open on
40 voting day and/or an alternative polling location.

41
42 **Items of Discussion**

43
44 **1. Merrimack Safeguard Update**

45 *Deborah Woelflein (Principal MMS), Betsy Houde (Safeguard Director), Officer Prentice, Chief*
46 *Doyle*

47 Update on the grant funding received for the MMS School Resource Officer and overall review of
48 the Merrimack Safeguard program.

1
2 Detective Thomas Prentice, School Resource Officer/Grant Coordinator, stated the Drug Free
3 Community (DFC) Grant was awarded for a second five-year period (\$125,000/year). When the grant
4 first began five years prior there was the need to start a coalition for substance. Already in place was the
5 drug advisory council, which handled Title IV monies. They had the required 12 sectors of the
6 community represented, e.g., police, school, media, etc. The Title IV monies are no longer, and the drug
7 advisory council took over that coalition. It is now known as the Merrimack Safeguard.
8

9 The next step was to start on a logic model identifying what was a problem in Merrimack. Reporting for
10 the grant has to be evidence based. Utilized were three surveys; Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS),
11 which is done every other year in all four grades at the high school, the Nashua Outcome Measured
12 Survey (NOMS), which is done every year at the middle school, and the parent survey that has been
13 done for the last two years. Based on that information and the logic model, the two substances chosen
14 were alcohol and prescription drugs.
15

16 With an action plan in place the past five years have been spent building and strengthening community
17 relations between organizations in and out of town.

18 As an example of what the coalition has been doing, Detective Prentice stated the first thing that was
19 done for alcohol was to team up with New Hampshire Liquor Enforcement and their Buyer Beware
20 Program, which places signage in all stores, e.g., warnings about not selling to underage kids, host law
21 for underage partying, etc. They worked with Bellavance Beverages out of Nashua who supplies, at no
22 cost, the under age 21 signs on beer coolers, store walls, etc. They also arranged for speakers to address
23 high school students regarding issues of drug or alcohol abuse. Also conducted was an environmental
24 scan. An intern from Rivier University visited all 43 liquor licensees in Town and conducted a survey
25 of where signs were located, where beer was located, whether it was mixed with kid's drinks, signage at
26 points of sale, etc. There were two very minor instances of signs either placed in the wrong location or
27 obscured. All licensees passed the inspection.
28

29 With prescription drugs the big initiative was lock boxes. Any event that was done included either a
30 display or raffle. The boxes allow prescription drugs to be locked up and mounted inside a drawer or to
31 a wall. They paired up with the DEA and their Drug Take Back Program. Events are run every fall and
32 spring. During the most recent event, 71 pounds of prescription drugs were taken in. The norm has
33 been in the area of 150-200 pounds in the fall and spring. They also worked with Beyond Influence and
34 the United Way to get a permanent drug box placed inside the police station. That box is emptied
35 weekly (approximately 8.6 pounds). To date over 1,400 pounds of prescription drugs have been taken in
36 and destroyed.
37

38 The Youth Council has a program for court diversion. If a juvenile is arrested for the first time he/she
39 does not have to go through the juvenile justice system. He/she can go to the Youth Council and receive
40 assessment, education, and treatment. Also through the Youth Council, a counselor has been put in the
41 middle school to work with students.
42

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

1
2 There are numbers that cause concern, which is part of the reason why the parent survey was
3 implemented. The 7th and 8th grade students were stating their parents haven't really talked to them
4 much about being safe from alcohol and other drugs. While over 96% of parents have been having
5 those conversations with their kids, the kids just aren't hearing them. About 40% of the students recall
6 the conversations they have had. Some of what the coalition wishes to do going forward is help better
7 facilitate communication between parents and their young people, and really talk about being
8 responsible overall.
9

10 Ms. Houde remarked many times driving throughout the community or watching television we hear
11 about drinking responsibly, making responsible choices, etc. The coalition began discussing what it
12 actually means to be responsible. All agreed we want people to be responsible on our roads, in our
13 stores, at people's home gatherings, etc. What the coalition has proposed for the next five years is to
14 launch a large scale "Be Responsible Merrimack" campaign where they would engage each of the 12
15 sectors, which includes the business community, faith leaders, youth, government officials, etc. to really
16 identify among each sector what does it mean for you to be responsible.
17

18 In the most recent YRBS, 20% of our young people said they have driven in a car with someone who
19 has been drinking. One might assume that is a peer, but that could also be a parent and a situation where
20 they have been out to dinner and Mom or Dad had a couple of glasses of wine, and based on their size
21 and body type is that being responsible. The natural partners they have talked about working with going
22 forward include doing even more with school nurses and guidance counselors from K-12, talking with
23 different neighborhood groups to connect with Merrimack friends and families so as people are moving
24 into Town they know we have a lock box, etc. One of the data points also learned is of the 122 middle
25 school parents that were surveyed, 27.7% said that they have hosted parties where alcohol was available
26 or even served to underage youth. Over 91% of them realize that there is a social host law, and they
27 could actually be arrested for having hosted that party.
28

29 Ms. Deborah Woelflein, Principal, Merrimack Middle School, stated the coalition has worked hard to
30 gather data that helped to undercover root causes in the community. One of the requirements of the
31 grant was for an outside evaluator to look at all of the data and help us to understand where we were
32 effective and what else we could do. The coalition partnered with the Community Health Institute.
33 They were objective, know about substance abuse issues, and were the ones who pointed out that
34 Detective Prentice has had a role, and we can already see results. In fact, they described Detective
35 Prentice as being an agent of environmental change. When the new grant applicant was written he was
36 listed right at the center as that force that will make some change in the community.
37

38 The evaluators talked about the goal of having Detective Prentice at the middle school to promote
39 positive school climate and help students make positive choices, and the evaluators pointed out many
40 places in the data that show he is having an impact; not only in the middle school as he also does work
41 in the elementary schools and throughout the community.
42

43 Ms. Woelflein noted Julie DeLuca, Assistant Principal, Thornton's Ferry, has become a very active
44 member of the coalition. In fact she accompanied Ms. Houde to Washington and helped to shape the
45 grant. The data sources helped identify some problem areas, and the coalition will now look at those
46 and see where they can get more people involved to help.
47

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

1 shares that information with the high school Principal who allows the coalition to review and use it.
2 That information was very helpful in writing the grant. Another name for the NOMS is the Adaptive
3 Youth and Young Adult Survey, and that information has been really helpful.
4

5 They made a compelling case through the grant application, and were awarded the next five years of
6 funding. They had to prove that they are using seven strategies for community change (handout
7 provided). Moving forward the coalition will utilize the seven strategies; provide information, enhance
8 skills, provide support, enhance access/reduce barriers (to support and help), change consequences
9 (court diversion program), change physical design, and modify/change policies.
10

11 Ms. Woelflein stated the funding was received not only because there is an identified need in the
12 community, but also because they could demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the community to
13 offer resources, support, energy, and creativity that will help make the problem better. Each year, in
14 order to keep the grant and in order to get it in the first place, they have to demonstrate the community
15 of Merrimack gives just as much funding, resources, and energy as the government is providing us.
16 Each year they have no problem at all making a case and showing the many ways that the community
17 provides resources to help with this issue. Chairman Harrington stated this to be one variable as to why
18 Merrimack was chosen as the safest community in New Hampshire.
19

20 Councilor Boyd congratulated Merrimack Safeguard. He commented he visited the Office of White
21 House Drug Control website ([http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/Drug-Free-Communities-Support-
22 Program](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
23 years 7-10. He questioned if that automatically occurs once completing year 6. Ms. Houde stated her
24 belief the confirmation letter has arrived. She remarked years 1 and 6 are competitive. Years 2-5 and 7-
25 10 are automatically provided as long as we are meeting the goals included in the action plan. Councilor
26 Boyd asked for clarification the criteria that has to be met is submitted to the administrator of the
27 program, and was informed that is accurate.
28

29 Councilor Boyd questioned the types of questions included on the YRBS as it relates to behaviors being
30 targeted and if students are allowed to self-identify or is it anonymous. Ms. Houde responded it is
31 strictly anonymous, and the core questions that data needs to be reported on are around 30-day use;
32 whether the young people have used alcohol, marijuana, tobacco or prescription drugs within the last 30
33 days. They ask questions about their parents' perception of wrongness and their peers' perception of
34 wrongness, and how harmful they think it is.
35

36 Councilor Boyd questioned whether the 2014 survey has been administered, and was informed it is done
37 on odd years. The 2015 survey will be conducted in the April timeframe with results available in the
38 December timeframe. Councilor Boyd commented nobody can refute or dispute the presence and value
39 that Detective Prentice has had in the middle school. He questioned if there was any other key factor
40 that contributed to the trend downward from 17% to 10%. Ms. Woelflein responded she believes the
41 community effort, the initiative, and the awareness has really made a difference. There are a lot more
42 conversations taking place around these issues.
43

44 School Board Vice Chairman Barnes commented on having enjoyed her time as the School Board
45 Liaison to the coalition, and commented it is enlightening as a parent and a School Board member what
46 the life of a student is really like. She questioned whether contingencies had been discussed had the
47 grant funding not been received. Specifically having a School Resource Officer (SRO) being an agent
48 of environmental change, what was the suggested plan had there not been funding for that position?
49

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

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

15
16 School Board Member Schneider noted he has been the Liaison from the School Board for the past year
17 and a half, and while they are correct there is no formal contingency plan, he is of the belief they all had
18 in mind if they were not successful in the grant application they were going to work at this with one of
19 the major items being determining what would occur with the SRO. They would have looked to him to
20 bring the issue back to the School Board.

21
22 School Board Chairman Ortega added the fact that the second grant has been received is rare and they
23 are all thankful. It was not likely to have come through, and this agenda topic, which was mapped out
24 some months ago, before the outcome was known, would have been to have exactly that conversation.
25 To the points raised about contingency, he stated his hope the two bodies, over the coming years, begin
26 to look at that and determine exactly what they would like to see for Merrimack Safeguard; how to
27 continue to support and fund the efforts whether it is the SRO and/or broader community involvement.

28
29 Vice Chairman Mahon stated his impression this effort is centered on the middle school. Ms. Houde
30 responded it is helpful Detective Prentice's office is located within the middle school as that is an
31 incredibly vulnerable age group, but the plan going forward really involves many partners from K-12,
32 and really will impact students at all levels. It was intentionally broadened beyond the middle school
33 level. Chairman Harrington stated her agreement with the need for discussions to occur/agreements to
34 be reached prior to the end of the grant term.

35
36 **2. James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Security When Used as a Polling Site**

37 *Marsha McGill (Principal JMUES), Lynn Christensen (Town Moderator), Diane Trippett (Town*
38 *Clerk/Tax Collector), Tom Touseau (SAU Director of Maintenance)*

39 School Board to share security concerns regarding use of JMUES during elections while school is
40 in session and to share preliminary options for an alternate entrance for voters.

41
42 School Board Chairman Ortega noted the Town recently moved from multiple polling sites to a single
43 polling site. The district has provided the high school gymnasium for the November elections, and has
44 scheduled that as a day off for students. For the September and April elections the polling location is the
45 James Mastricola Upper Elementary School (MUES). School is in session on election days.

46
47 The School Board has shared some concerns about opening the doors to the school during the day and
48 public testimony has been provided on the same. Mr. Touseau will provide preliminary estimates

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

3
4 School Board Chairman Ortega shared with the Board and Council a letter Emilie Carter, Principal,
5 Mastricola Elementary School, received from a parent, Amy Knight, employee of BAE Systems, which
6 he believes sums up the concerns of the Board as well.

7
8 *“Good morning Emilie, I hope your year is off to a great start. I hate to burden you with e-mails*
9 *already, but I have a concern. I believe that today is primary voting for the Town of Merrimack. I do*
10 *realize the school, Upper Elementary, hosts elections every year, but I have a concern about what I*
11 *witnessed as I dropped off my children this morning. When I pulled up at 6:30 a.m. to drop them off at*
12 *the only available entrance, there were about 20 people setting up shop. People were going in and out*
13 *of the facility with the children as they entered to go to the before school program. Because of the*
14 *people sitting in the parking lot, it was already hard to get around them. I can’t imagine how difficult it*
15 *would be when the buses are dropping kids as well. However, traffic was not my biggest concern*
16 *although I see a huge safety issue there.*

17
18 *My biggest concern was having people walk in and out of the building as the kids are entering as well. I*
19 *don’t mean to cause issues, but I have a background in law enforcement and counterintelligence.*
20 *Additionally, I am a survivor of the worst case of child abuse history in my county. Therefore, I am the*
21 *biggest child advocate and dedicated to keeping kids safe. While I understand the community needs, I*
22 *think it is dangerous to allow access to the building just for voting. Our kids need to be safe, and that is*
23 *our number one concern. I think whoever decided to allow this was not thinking, and has a complacent*
24 *attitude. Because nothing has ever happened does not mean it won’t. How do we know that we are not*
25 *allowing sex offenders, pedophiles, and people of other danger into the school? How do you know the*
26 *men and women who walked in with my children today were upstanding citizens and therefore safe?*

27
28 *Do we assume just because they are supporters of the community and local politicians that we should*
29 *trust them? Yes there was an officer there, however, he was very busy moving barriers and chatting*
30 *with the people about how to set things up. I don’t blame him as I have been in his position. It is very*
31 *hard to multi-task. I don’t believe he even noticed the people who slipped in with my children. I know*
32 *your school does well and cares very deeply for each and every child under your care. The staff is*
33 *wonderful, and I am very happy to have my children with you. I am not the person who causes trouble*
34 *as you know. However, I do feel as though I would be doing a great injustice if I did not speak up. This*
35 *event would be the perfect opportunity for disaster. It really wouldn’t be difficult, with all of the*
36 *commotion, for someone who is bad to slip through the cracks and cause harm to the kids and the staff.*

37
38 *Additionally, we know and have seen how political agendas can cause heated and often dangerous*
39 *events to transpire. Why are we taking the chance? On a typical day, I can only use one door to pick up*
40 *and drop off my children. There is someone posted there, and you have to sign in and sign out. Why are*
41 *we saying that because of political agenda we should open our doors and put our kids at risk? That is*
42 *very scary to me.”*

43
44 School Board Chairman Ortega stated the Board had requested Mr. Touseau look into options for the
45 exterior door at the APR to see if the main door could be locked and provide an ADA accessible
46 entrance.

47
48 Mr. Tom Touseau, SAU Director of Maintenance, stated there to be two ways of approaching the
49 situation. One would be a rough ramp with rails going through the door. When entering the APR, going

1 along the stage, the door that exits closest to the church is the one chosen to modify the entrance.
2 Without any formal design he questioned the rough cost for a ramp and railing. The estimate provided
3 was \$45,000 - \$50,000. If taking that a step further to provide for a covered entrance inclusive of a
4 sprinkler system, etc., the cost could run as high as \$115,000 - \$125,000. He reiterated the figures to be
5 estimates without the benefit of any formal drawings, etc.
6

7 School Board Chairman Ortega remarked the concern is raised as the Town sets the polling site. As the
8 providers of the polling site they have issues and concerns they wish to be addressed. To that end, they
9 wished for both bodies to hear the concerns, the estimates, and try to determine how to move forward.
10 Vice Chairman Mahon stated it to be a very important security issue. To put something in that will be
11 reasonable and meet State requirements for access to a polling place will not be inexpensive. He
12 remarked it is incumbent upon the Town to work something out that benefits all involved understanding
13 there is a cost associated with accomplishing that.
14

15 Councilor Rothhaus stated his initial thought was that the two doors at the very end would be utilized
16 and the one coming in that Mr. Touseau mentioned. He believed the curb could be adjusted to make a
17 ramp down to the street. He could not have imagined it costing \$5,000 to do that. He questioned if
18 there is a requirement for more than the ramp. Mr. Touseau responded for the ramp, railings, ensuring
19 ADA compliance, replacing the doors themselves, the estimate was \$45,000 - \$50,000. He reiterated the
20 cost is an estimate and the true cost would remain unknown until drawings could be completed.
21

22 School Board Vice Chairman Barnes requested clarification the \$50,000 estimate is for an uncovered
23 ramp, and was informed that is correct. Mr. Touseau remarked a tarp or temporary covering would be
24 an additional \$500, which would be an event driven activity (hiring a tent company each time). The
25 \$115,000 - \$125,000 estimate would be for a permanent covering that would be blended into the
26 building brick, meet fire codes, etc.
27

28 School Board Member Schneider commented this is a topic that has been brought up to the School
29 Board many times, and they have made some progress. He noted the comfort level with the November
30 elections at the high school and the school not being in session for the day. The secure entrance added
31 to JMUES really created this as the Upper Elementary now has a secure entrance. Unfortunately the
32 building that has been traditionally used is attached in a very inconvenient way to that area. He noted
33 there is a straight shot entrance into the Smith gym or both buildings could be isolated to either side and
34 you would have bathrooms and a nice entranceway. That is one possibility. There is the gym on the
35 back side of the Masticola Elementary, which has its own entrance that is separate from the rest of the
36 school. An entranceway could be made there. Perhaps ADA compliance could be achieved by
37 knocking a curb down, as suggested. He suggested the need for both bodies to look at the issue as a
38 whole; the traffic issues, flow, etc. He stated his opinion the desire would be not to cancel school for the
39 September and April elections; however, creating a secure environment without impacting the secure
40 entrance. He suggested forming a group to review available options.
41

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

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

9
10 School Board Member Powell stated agreement there is much more information that needs to be
11 gathered before a decision could be reached.

12
13 **MOTION made by Member Powell and seconded by Councilor Boyd to establish a working group**
14 **to identify the potential for alternate voting sites and possible solutions for addressing security**
15 **and ADA compliance issues relative to the entrance for the polling location at the James**
16 **Mastricola Upper Elementary School. Any proposed alternative voting locations should be**
17 **verified by the Town Moderator as meeting all necessary criteria. Members of the working group**
18 **shall include Superintendent Chiafery, Town Manager Cabanel, representatives from the Fire and**
19 **Police Departments, and the Finance Director in whatever capacity is deemed necessary.**

20 **MOTION CARRIED 10-2-0**

21 *Councilors Dwyer and Koenig voted in opposition*

22
23 *It was noted the vote was taken before discussion of the motion occurred. Chairman Harrington*
24 *apologized and opened the floor for discussion.*

25
26 Councilor Dwyer remarked he found the letter that was read into the record to be very offensive. We
27 seem to be taking the safety of children and then throwing in the word pedophile as a red flag of the
28 boogie man entering our schools. The letter was filled with who is entering our schools; who are these
29 people, we don't know who they are. He remarked as someone who reads the newspaper every day we
30 know that teachers are pedophiles, coaches are pedophiles, lawyers, doctors, accountants, plumbers,
31 electricians, parents, etc. Now we're so scared that we have to do something to lock down our schools
32 and make them prisons. Now we need to spend money and modify our school buildings where
33 throughout history our school buildings have been Town property, and we need to hold elections. Now
34 these elections are deemed as being inconvenient. He stated he finds the whole subject matter rather
35 offensive. Pretending that our schools are under siege somehow he finds even more offensive.

36
37 Councilor Woods questioned if the suggestion was the possibility for sites other than JMUES. School
38 Board Member Powell responded he did say that; however, what he meant was the working group
39 would be tasked with looking at the big picture to see if there are any other sites that might be more
40 viable for the elections, e.g., Smith Gym. Councilor Woods stated that to have been his understanding;
41 we would remain within the bounds of that particular school site.

42
43 School Board Vice Chairman Barnes remarked there is a definite need to discuss access points, voting
44 traffic, and the security of the buildings. As a School Board they have been staunch and consistent that
45 they want the voters and the students not to mingle. She stated her belief the biggest problem that came
46 about with the recent election was that the Board was told one thing and another occurred. When she
47 arrived at the school, she witnessed buses backing up on the road because the first access point where
48 the students got off the buses was the same access point where the traffic was coming in to vote. The
49 goal was to have an access point further down into the facility. Students should not be using the same

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

9
10 School Board Member Schneider commented back when he attended school in this district there were no
11 locked doors, students played outdoors without fencing, and he can remember parents dragging their
12 kids out of school whether related to a custody issue, etc., and the school could do nothing about it due
13 to the lack of security. As a School Board member, given what has occurred in this country, it is his
14 responsibility to look after the safety of students. To think that Merrimack is the way it used to be and
15 the world is the way it used to be is something he cannot do. He remarked while sitting in this meeting
16 the Nixle Alert flashed on his phone saying there is a live burglary in progress in Merrimack where
17 suspects are running through the Town being pursued by Police.

18
19 School Board Member Guagliumi echoed Member Schneider's comments noting the safety of our
20 children is a priority. She stated her agreement with reviewing available options. She remarked there
21 are a number of citizens that have brought issues to our attention. She thanked the parent that sent in the
22 letter and stated her belief there was no intent to offend anyone, but rather to bring something to the
23 forefront. She stated her appreciation the issue will be explored further noting she shares the concerns
24 expressed both as a School Board member and parent. She spoke of a student in Bedford who was
25 struck by a car during the election. These are all things that have to be considered.

26
27 Chairman Harrington stated the Town Council appreciates the security of our children as much as
28 anyone else. There is also frustration with our children having to live a different way than we did and
29 having to isolate them. She questioned if the complaints that were made were followed up on. School
30 Board Vice Chairman Barnes stated they were followed up on during the election noting student pickup
31 was handled different than drop off. When asked if there was a follow up discussion regarding how the
32 events relative to voting took place, she stated there was not.

33
34 Lynn Christensen, Town Moderator, spoke of a comment made in the letter regarding a police officer
35 who was moving barricades rather than addressing the security of the children, and stated her desire to
36 disagree with that vehemently. She and the Chief have talked extensively about the security of the
37 students. There are 3 police officers there when students are present; one at the entrance to the hallway
38 beside the Principal's Office and one at the hallway by the doors. No one goes down those hallways
39 without being vetted by a police officer. If they don't have a badge they don't go down those doorways
40 unless they happen to be an election official with a pass. The officer that was moving barricades was the
41 third officer that happened to be outside and placing barricades to keep the campaign officials back from
42 any voters, parents, or children who were coming in.

43
44 The Town was very careful to work with the middle school as far as how the school wanted to address
45 the safety of the children coming and going. She remarked she does not know how the school addressed
46 the School Board, but she is aware the Town talked with the school and complied with everything that
47 was requested including additional personnel outdoors and the flow of the students.

1 Chairman Harrington requested, in the future, if there are major concerns, that they be addressed right
2 after they occur so that they can be resolved prior to the next election.
3

4 **3. Town and School Capital Improvement Plans**

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

7 Town Council and School Board to share their respective CIP plans in order to coordinate in what
8 years large ticket items might appear as warrant articles on the Town Meeting ballots.
9

10 Chairman Harrington noted the communication received from Acting Town Manager Micali, which
11 stated the Town is in the process of preparing the 2014-2021 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
12 Currently, the Town is looking into a warrant article for the Highway Garage replacement. At its
13 September 11, 2014 meeting, the Council voted to go forward with the Highway Garage on the April
14 Ballot. The Council also established a committee to identify another method of educating the public.
15 Vice Chairman Mahon noted the need to come to a decision by early January in order to comply with
16 notification requirements. When getting nearer to the timeframe for conducting public hearings to meet
17 the requirements of the law for bond issues and deliberative sessions, is when the ultimate decision will
18 be made. Without a budget in front of the Council at this time, it is difficult to discuss \$3.2 million and
19 how that might fit in. There is also the need to be cognizant of the fact the Legislature will reconvene in
20 January.
21

22 Director Micali noted the need for Public Hearings to be conducted in February, should the Council
23 reach a decision to go forward. He added the CIP will be completed in early November.
24

25 School Board Chairman Ortega stated the School Board has moved its CIP. They have a Planning &
26 Building Committee, which takes the CIP and moves it forward to the School Board. The Board then
27 takes it forward to the Planning Board. Year over year they have been getting some pressure from the
28 Planning Board to present the CIP earlier. They approved the CIP at their meeting on September 15,
29 2014. Looking at 2014-2015, big ticket items are related to the high school roof replacement, which is
30 one of many roofs to be replaced, and at the same time dealing with the air ventilation system. The
31 Superintendent and Special Services consolidated office will be moved forward this year. There is
32 advancement on the technology infrastructure upgrade across the school buildings.
33

34 School Board Chairman Ortega stated the reason for bringing the item forward to the level of Planning
35 Board consideration was to recognize that if there are two warrant articles out there for new buildings
36 for substantial amounts of money that might be defeatist for both the Council and the School Board.
37 They wished to get information out as soon as possible so that intent for both bodies is known.
38

39 Chairman Harrington stated her understanding the Council had determined to move forward with the
40 Highway Garage, understanding the committee would look into specific issues, and the opportunity
41 would exist to shift gears.
42

43 Councilor Rothhaus commented if one of the two projects were put off, it would just delay the impact on
44 the tax rate for a year. He noted in the first year of bonding, repayment is on interest only for half a
45 year. It is the second year when the impact is felt. If another project comes the following year it would
46 be at the time of the larger impact. He remarked it may just be a matter of public perception of the
47 impact.
48

1 Business Administrator Matt Shevenell stated you don't want to confuse the CIP with a spending plan.
2 The first year's interest on a bond is relatively minor and the second year is when you typically have the
3 highest year's payment. He suggested a review of terms of the bonded debt for the School District and
4 the Town to identify when certain bonds will expire and look to feather them in to keep the tax rate as
5 flat as possible. He offered to provide Director Micali with a listing of the school bonded debt. Director
6 Micali stated the Town has two outstanding bonds; one will expire in 2018 and the other in 2023.
7

8 Councilor Koenig questioned whether the full \$3 million identified within the school CIP for next year
9 was intended to be bonded. School Board Chairman Ortega responded the building issues would be
10 looked to be bonded; the roof and ventilation system. If past practice holds with the Board, operational
11 maintenance costs are put into the operating budget, and likewise for the technology infrastructure
12 upgrade. Councilor Koenig remarked what would be proposed for bonding would be \$1.5 million.
13 School Board Chairman Ortega stated that to be correct, and added he agreed with everything Councilor
14 Rothhaus stated regarding the impact over time being principal and interest, which would be the case
15 regardless of whether or not a project were postponed. However, he hit the nail on the head when
16 stating voters walking into a ballot booth with two major bond items on the warrant may perceive
17 something very different than what the real and practical impact is year over year.
18

19 Councilor Koenig commented he is not considering a \$1.5 million or \$3 million a major bond. A bond
20 in the area of \$8-12 million would be major. He noted it is difficult to get a bond passed regardless. He
21 remarked it appears \$4.5 million is a potential offering for a bond this year, and if explained properly,
22 the voters will be able to understand it and work with it, particularly given bonds that will be expiring in
23 the relatively near future.
24

25 Councilor Boyd remarked when he sat on the School Budget Committee in 2010 they had a budget item
26 for the high school roof, and questioned the current stage and how close they are to actually having it
27 completed. School Board Chairman Ortega stated his recollection to be there are a number of sections
28 on the roof; almost every one was out of warranty back then, and a roof replacement plan has been put
29 in place that carries out beyond the CIP information provided, and extends beyond the high school. He
30 stated his understanding, after the sections that have been designated on the CIP the high school may
31 have a few additional sections before completion. He reiterated there are acres of roofs at other
32 buildings that are in need of replacement.
33

34 Business Administrator Matt Shevenell commented it is likely there will be an expenditure seen for
35 roofing around \$400,000 - \$500,000, the highest expense is anticipated in 2019-2020 for the middle
36 school. From there everything would go down. There would be a gap of 10 years or so with no roof
37 repairs being completed. The roofs being put on now have a 35 year warranty.
38

39 Councilor Dwyer stated the Council is split on whether or not to go back to the ballot in April for the
40 Highway Garage. Once the committee completes its work a recommendation will be brought forward.
41 He stated a firm answer of whether or not the item would be placed on the ballot should be able to be
42 provided within the next several weeks.
43

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

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

5
6 Vice Chairman Mahon remarked there has been a significant change in the operations of the Fire
7 Department as to the mix of the services that they provide. One of the reasons for trying to do this study
8 is to take a look at what that mix is and how it impacts building, staffing, and equipment needs. Some of
9 those changes have been made. We are down one fire truck and one ambulance mainly because the
10 Chief and the department have come together to realign how they are operating.

11 12 **4. O'Gara Drive Tennis Courts Update**

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

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

16
17 It was noted a Memorandum of Understanding (easement) was created between the School and the
18 Town in 1993, which was updated in 2001, and expires in 2018.

19
20 On March 13, 2014, School Board Chairman Ortega appeared before the Town Council noting the
21 School Board had requested he make an inquiry of the Town Council relative to the plan for the ultimate
22 repair or replacement of the tennis courts. The tennis courts were inspected and an appraisal provided as
23 to the cost for repair/replacement (inclusive of a three-year warranty). That information has been
24 provided to all parties. The estimates ranged, in 2010, from \$29,000 - \$166,000. In 2012, the higher
25 end of the estimate had increased to \$183,000. The Town Council discussed whether the tennis courts
26 would be repaired/replaced, which resulted in a motion to expend no further monies on the repair of the
27 tennis courts and to explore alternative options. The Town Manager was instructed to explore
28 conversion, which involved collaboration with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and
29 Economic Development (DRED) relative to the possibility of an alternative site for recreational use.

30
31 Director Micali stated the original court and upgrade was conducted with Federal monies. Rather than
32 repairing the tennis courts, conversion would require some other property in Town to be identified for
33 recreational use, e.g., volleyball courts, walking trails, etc. The Division of Parks and Recreation of
34 DRED was responsible for reviewing every one of the federally funded recreation projects throughout
35 the State. Included were the tennis court, basketball court, and skating rink. An inspection was
36 conducted, which resulted in a determination the skating rink and basketball court were in good shape
37 with minor repairs needed. The State is in the process of completing the write-up on the tennis courts.
38 Director Micali stated he made attempts to contact the representative at the Division of Parks and
39 Recreation; however, has not yet been able to speak with him. He noted Town Manager Cabanel has
40 had conversations with him in the past to begin the discussion of conversion. It appears very possible.
41 What she has been told is there is the need to look at what the Town would be required to do as a
42 conversion, whether it is believed the tennis courts are repairable, etc. That information is anticipated.

43
44 School Board Chairman Ortega noted approximately 6 months have passed since the inspection, and
45 questioned the expected timeframe for a response. Director Micali stated his belief a response should be
46 received within the next 5-6 months.

1 **5. Chestnut Hill Development (Old Blood Rd)**

2 *Development & their Attorney*

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

5
6 School Board Chairman Ortega stated, at its last meeting, the School Board heard from the developer
7 and their site engineer on the plan for the Chestnut Hill development, which includes the connection of
8 Old Blood Road into Madeline Bennett Drive, which is the entranceway to the Merrimack Middle
9 School. Preliminary plans that had been presented to the Planning Board and others were of some
10 concern to the Board in that they had, at that intersection, a number of stop signs; coming off Old Blood
11 Road as well as down Madeline Bennett. There were some concerns raised both at the School Board
12 level and with the Administration regarding busing routes, delays, and traffic.

13
14 At its last meeting, the engineer presented a revised plan that accounts for a rotary in that section to help
15 facilitate traffic flow and a queuing lane for buses on the right hand side of Madeline Bennett. The
16 update, from the Board's perspective, is that there has been some promising dialogue and development
17 in terms of the plans. The item is on the Board's agenda for October 20, 2014 at which point advice
18 from counsel will be received, and the Board will discuss the plan as a whole. An opinion on the plans
19 presented is expected to be reached at that time.

20
21 Councilor Rothhaus stated the involvement he has had is from the standpoint of the Highway Safety
22 Committee. The presentation made to the committee was the previous layout, which raised a great deal
23 of concern by the School District in particular with regard to the traffic flow. Madeline Bennett was
24 going to come in and continue curving southerly into the new development, and the entrance to the
25 middle school would have been cutting into Madeline Bennett with a stop sign coming from the school.
26 The District's concerns were safety, the impact on the flow of the buses leaving the facility, and the
27 downstream impact on the Upper Elementary School. The Committee was split. If the School District
28 is more comfortable with the current plans, he believes they would be received more favorably by the
29 Committee.

30
31 Councilor Koenig noted revised plans have not come before the Planning Board. He stated concern
32 there are a good many issues that need to be carefully considered, not the least of which is the size of the
33 rotary and how well it will fit in an environment with wetlands on multiple sides. He is concerned with
34 the wetland impact that may result. He commented he had believed the prior plan to be fairly reasonable
35 considering the amount of traffic coming out of Chestnut Hill would be fairly light. A short delay at a
36 stop sign would not impact a lot when there is a light at the end of the street. He stated the need to
37 understand all impacts.

38
39 School Board Chairman Ortega stated his understanding, from the engineer's perspective, the School
40 Board was one of many stops to governing bodies on their way back ultimately to the Planning Board.
41 He believes the understanding is what they were looking for was acceptance by the School Board so that
42 they could take the plan back to the Planning Board to address further concerns. Business Administrator
43 Matt Shevenell remarked, having been involved with the engineer, one of the main concerns was the
44 buses and bus traffic. In the afternoon they all queue up around the middle school, and when they leave
45 they leave in mass and go right through the circle. To have each one stop would result in delay. The
46 site distances between Old Blood and Madeline Road require approximately 240' for a car to recognize
47 another car coming in the opposite direction and react to the stop. The revised plan appears to resolve
48 those issues. The School District is looking to perhaps craft a letter stating the district does not object to
49 the design that was presented to the School Board. The project still has to go through NHDES.

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

3
4 Councilor Rothhaus questioned whether it had been anticipated representatives from the development
5 would be in attendance. School Board Chairman Ortega stated it had not.

6 7 **6. Recycling Update**

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

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

12
13 Director Micali remarked from calendar year 2012 to calendar year 2013 the single-stream recycling
14 went up about 5%. A good deal of changes occurred in Town; the swap shop was adjusted, signage was
15 posted, etc. The working group was looking at a potential partnership with the school where recycling
16 newsletters could be sent home with students providing information on what single-stream means, what
17 can be recycled in single-stream, and some of the changes that have occurred at the transfer station to
18 make single-stream recycling more advantageous for people. Director Micali stated several questions
19 have been raised about what the school does with its recycling efforts, and if a benefit is being seen.

20
21 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked the Town for the invitation to partner in this effort. He
22 stated the school's efforts to be three-fold. In the community service mode, which primarily relates to
23 clubs at the high school, e.g., student council, etc., they have established paper recycling places
24 throughout the high school and intentional efforts to engage in that recycling. There has been public
25 outreach around that; discussing how many trees are saved when a certain number of pounds of paper
26 are recycled, etc. When students take that information home it has a big impact when it becomes dinner
27 conversation. In the area of curriculum, in each of the schools there are classroom bins for recycling. In
28 the Social Studies curriculum there are threads of the curriculum that talk about being good citizens;
29 local citizen, State citizen, national citizen, and world citizens, which relates to keeping your planet
30 clean and safe, etc. There are links in Science as well.

31
32 A lot of initiatives are underway in the district. As an example the automotive department at the high
33 school recycles its metals, which extends to understanding what occurs with the metal that is recycled.

34
35 Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin remarked anything the Town continues to want to do to partner is
36 something they are excited about including the information that has been offered for distribution.
37 Chairman Harrington questioned whether Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin has had the opportunity
38 to view the video Rick Seymour, Director, Public Works Department, created on recycling, and spoke of
39 its value. Director Micali stated a copy would be provided.

40
41 Councilor Dwyer commented the signs at the transfer station need to be improved upon. Councilor
42 Boyd noted Ian Robinson, Recycling Attendant, has a certification in recycling, and suggested an
43 opportunity for mentoring of high school students. Beyond that, perhaps the high school students could
44 then take that experience and work with some of the elementary school students. Assistant
45 Superintendent McLaughlin responded that is a practical and excellent recommendation and one he will
46 discuss further with Director Micali.

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

7
8 Vice Chairman Mahon commented what was found when this effort started several years ago was that it
9 scared the living daylights out of the solid waste disposal business. The fact that we were using single-
10 stream recycling effectively enabled the Town to negotiate a very decent renewal contract for our
11 tipping fees; essentially flattened them out over the life of the contract.

12
13 School Board Member Schneider commented on the replacement of all of the bleachers in the
14 gymnasium and remarked efforts were made to ensure the wood and metal is reused either in the schools
15 or sold to help offset the cost of replacement.

16 17 Minutes

18
19 **MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by School Board Vice Chairman Barnes to**
20 **approve the minutes of the Joint meeting of the Merrimack School Board/Merrimack Town**
21 **Council conducted on September 16, 2012 as amended**

22 23 ON THE QUESTION

24
25 *The following amendments were offered:*

26
27 In all instances where it appears; replace "Pearce" with "Pierce"

28 In all instances where it appears; replace "Board Member" with "School Board Member"

29 Page 1, Line 30; capitalize "Pledge"

30 Page 1, Line 26; replace "Cabenal" with "Cabanel"

31 Page 3, Line 116; replace "private property asepsis" with "public/private partnerships"

32 Page 3, Line 138; replace "Understand" with "Understanding"

33 Page 5; delete lines 241 and 242

34 Page 7, Line 340; delete "Ortega" where it appears twice

35 Page 7, Line 344; delete "of"

36 Page 10, Line 455; replace "canceled" with "cancelled"

37 **MOTION CARRIED 9-0-3**

38 *School Board Member Guagliumi and Councilors Woods and Mahon Abstained*

39
40 **Comments from the Press** - None

41
42 **Comments from the Public** - None

43
44 **Comments from the Council** - None

45
46 **Comments from the School Board** - None

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

3

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

6

7

8 Submitted by Dawn MacMillan

DRAFT