

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2023
Emerson Elementary School, Fitzwilliam, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Jeff Cesaitis, Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Lisa Steadman, Eric Stanley, Edmond LaPlante, Scott Peters, Gina Carraro, Brian Bohannon, Stephanie Lawlor, Dan LeClair and Jennifer Strimbeck.

Administration Present: J. Rathbun, Assistant Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator.

Also Present: Owen Higgins, Student Government Representative

1. Tour of the Emerson School

2. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:10 PM. S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Principal L. Stevens welcomed the Board to Emerson. She said the staff and the students are happy the Board Members are here. There are a number of amazing things going on at the school. The school holds Learning Showcases and they are well attended by the families. There were so many people in attendance. The walk to school event was also well attended. Pumpkins were donated by area businesses and families and the students carved with a buddy. Harvest Night had a great turnout and is one of the favorite events. The students and staff love their school and are proud of their work.

J. Cesaitis presented a flag which had been flown in Iraq while he was stationed there to Principal Stevens. It was presented to the staff and faculty at Emerson for the care his child received while he was deployed.

Prior to this meeting K. Barker did a walkthrough of the school with the Board pointing out the areas for the new renovations. He said that Emerson has issues but is in good shape. A lot of pride came through and that is why the town of Troy and Fitzwilliam wanted to keep their individual schools. Some of the schools do not need much work because they have been well taken care of. He explained that 50% of the completed plans for MTC have gone to Hutter Construction for pricing. We need to see if we are on target and if not revisit the plans. We will take one school at a time. The drawings for MTC will be completed by the end of the year, they will go out to bid and the MTC project will begin in June.

4. #CelebrateMRSD:

a. The MRSD Varsity Cheerleading Team has won the State Championship. Congratulations!!! **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to award swag to the MRSD Varsity Cheerleading Team. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** The standard swag is \$100.00 each. **VOTE:** 13/0/0. **Motion passes.**

b. Gilsom STEAM Academy will be celebrating Veterans Day with a celebration. Emerson will be holding their Annual Thanksgiving Celebration on November 15, 2023. The MRMHS Marching Band participated in the Keene Fireman's Parade. They also participated in the Dover Band Show which they had not done since 2019.

5. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Staffing Update: J. Rathbun explained that they are still working to fill the vacancies. There were 2 interviews for nurses but nothing to share.

b. Policies for 1st Read:

i. ACN-Nursing Mothers Accommodations

ii. BEDG-Meeting Minutes

iii. BEDC-Quorum/Voting for Full School Board Meetings

iv. EBCC-False Alarms, Bombs, Active Shooter and Other Such Threats: K.

Noonan said that she can be emailed with any questions.

c. Draft 2024/25 Budget: S. Peters explained that the proposed budget will be explained at the Joint Meeting but tonight is a preview. It was explained that the bond is part of the operating budget. The information on the proposed budget was presented. The items suggested by the Board for the 2024/25 proposed budget were an additional SOE/new mentorship which was explained could be done with Title 2 Funds, Curriculum Coordinator/Director which needs more conversation due to the large cost, revisit the stipends and conversation on the non-affiliated salary and benefits is still being discussed by the Finance/Facilities Committee. S.Peters asked when the items need to be locked into the proposed budget. J. Morin said prior to the Public Hearing. The administration would like to hear from the Board regarding the budget. This is not the administration's budget. They would like to have Board interaction.

d. Joint Session Planning: The Joint Meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2023 at 9:00 AM. The Board would like to ask the administration to discuss in detail the budget drivers. S. Peters would suggest the Budget Committee make a motion not to have individual requests. Any motion would just give the Board direction.

e. Feedback from Legal Counsel on Sports Field signage & sponsorships: S. Peters explained that he had been copied on an email to the Superintendent from the NHSBA. They said it is a legal risk to say no to certain businesses and yes to others. Not a lot of school districts do it. It is not easy but they will stay on it.

f. 2023/24 School Board Goals

i. Superintendent Search Update: C. McDaniel-Thomas reported at the last

Superintendent Search Committee Meeting the committee reviewed the timeline and decided it might be tough over the holidays to hold a meeting. The first round of interviews are in January and on Thursday the committee will review the full applications and decide who will go forward. N. Behrens recommended that the posting stay open until November 22, 2023 to increase the pool. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to extend the closing date of the posting from November 10, 2023 to November 22, 2023. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that this will not slow the process down.

ii. **Cohort Review: “Work Ethic & Behavior”:** J. Rathbun explained that he would like to split up Work Ethic and Behavior. Both are a big conversation. He will be discussing Behavior next week. Work Ethics has a lot to do with attendance and participation. Excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness and dismissals all affect the student’s work. J. Rathbun passed out information on attendance in different grades. He explained the ADM and ADA. In NH if a student attends school for any part of the day they are marked as in school. In the high school and middle school students should make sure they are at school on time but in the elementary schools it is not their fault. Dismissals are also an issue. The only way to get dismissed is by the parents. Kids call their parents to get dismissed if they don’t want to go to a certain class. J. Rathbun presented the administration Tardy Policy which was discussed with the students and will be enforced. B. Bohannon asked if a student can go back to school after being absent and redo their missed work. J. Rathbun said yes. He said it is a fine line. At a job people are given the opportunity to make up work. We do not want an environment that is not in the real world but we do not want to take away from other students. The principals would like a stronger excuse and attendance policy. The School Board reviewed the proposed policy. K. Noonan disagreed and said changing the policy will not change what is happening now. J. Rathbun said that we cannot force kids to attend school. Changing the policy is sending a stronger message. E. LaPlante commented that we need to send a message. J. Rathbun said we are talking about the kids who really do not want to be in school. B. Bohannon asked what the administration wants of the School Board. J. Rathbun commented on tardiness, skipping and reinforcing the policies to show the parents. It would be great to have the principals in attendance while reviewing the policy. **MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to refer the attendance policy with proposed changes by the administration to the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 11.092/1.908/0/0. **Motion passes.**

6. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. **Approve 2023/24 Education Philosophy:** The Education Committee presented the completed 2023/24 Education Philosophy. **MOTION:** S.Lawlor **MOVED** to approve the 2023/24 Education Philosophy on behalf of the Education Committee. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

b. **Approve 2024/25 Capital Improvement Plan:** The committee will need to review the CIP before it is presented to the Board for approval.

c. **Approve the Consent Agenda:**

- i. **October 17, 2023 School Board Meeting Minutes:**
- ii. **2023/24 Manifest in the amount of \$ 2,136,144.66.**

iii. **Budget Transfers: MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda which includes the October 17, 2023 School Board Meeting Minutes, the 2023/24 Manifest in the amount of \$2,136,144.66 and two budget transfers, a budget transfer from Teacher Salaries and benefit lines to OOD Private Tuition in the amount of \$83,948 and a budget transfer from Spec Ed. Para Salaries and benefit lines to OOD Private Tuition in the amount of \$37,497. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

7. **SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:**
- a. **Superintendent Search**
 - b. **2024/25 CIP**
 - c. **Policies for Second Read**
 - d. **Debrief Joint Meeting November 18, 2023**
 - e. **Warrant Articles**
 - f. **J. Rathbun-Report-Behavior**

It would be great to have a Student Government Report at the next Board Meeting.

8. **Public Comments:** J. Morin would like to celebrate Payton Joslyn one of 6 males who has qualified for the Cross-Country Competition in Belfast, Maine this Saturday. Congratulations!!!

9. **8:43 PM Motion to Enter Into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

10. **ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent