

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2023
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH

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

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

Also Present: Owen Higgins, Student Government Representative

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM. S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

3. #CelebrateMRSD:

a. Monadnock Middle School, Monadnock High School, MTC and MTC Kindergarten all won Gold in the Best of Keene.

b. Owen Higgins introduced himself to the Board. Welcome Owen.

4. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. NHSBA Delegate Assembly Recap: S.Peters and L. Steadman attended the Delegate Assembly. Oyster River was named School Board of the Year. Their Superintendent is retiring and has been in education for 50 years. **G. Carraro arrives.** S. Peters explained that the Oyster River School District is building a middle school without State funding. There were about 140 school boards represented. Oyster River School District has a track phone policy which was at the request of the parents in the district. The Oyster River School Board is willing to talk to this Board. They also have a K-12 Tech Program which came from the fact students were being asked to use their devices in class. L. Steadman sent out a recap document for the Board. S. Peters mentioned that the 3 resolutions proposed by the MRSD all passed some with modifications. There were only 7 or 8 School Districts that proposed resolutions out of 180 School Districts.

b. Health Insurance GMR: J. Morin explained that the District has received the GMR. This number will be used to build the budget. The GMR came in at 19.5%. The GMR was 6.6% 2023/24. The new number is a large increase. This is due to a dramatic increase in claims through the insurers of the Health Trust. Also, the Capital Adequacy Fund is being dipped into and that is the reason for the automatic 5% in the increase. The GMR may come in less but to build the budget the 19.5% will be used. Based on the employees on the health plans the increase will be \$939,000.00. J. Morin explained that the District and the employees will both see the increase. In April the actual

rate will arrive.

c. Staffing Update: L. Walker reported that there is not much change in the vacancies. There are now 15 vacancies left. Also, some have been filled with contracted services.

d. 2023/24 School Board Goals:

i. Superintendent Search Update: C. McDaniel-Thomas reported that the committee met this past Thursday. There are 5 people interested in the position so far. The committee members have been asked to do the validation survey, which will show what we are looking for in a new Superintendent. N. Behrens is working on the survey. The committee will vote on the survey after the Policy Committee Meeting. The committee will also discuss the upcoming forums.

ii. Education Committee: Education Strategy Presentation: S. Peters explained that E. LaPlante, S. Lawlor, B. Bohannon and S. Peters have been working with J. Rathbun to come up with a goal of a long-term planning document. S. Peters presented a slideshow to the Board on Educational Philosophy. It explained the long-term strategy and implementations. It contained the annual cycle review, identifying areas of improvement in education, competency, growth and achievement. The 2023/24 Educational Philosophy is to be approved by the Board annually based on the current practices. S. Peters read the Educational Philosophy and read the definition for Ready for School. J. Rathbun explained every nurse's office is stocked with what the students may need. The Title One funds are available to purchase clothing for students that need it. There are programs in place. Winter jackets are available to the elementary students. The staff is also making sure the students have what they need. S. Peters asked if there are initiatives needed. S. Peters read the definition for Nutrition which was taken from the Wellness Policy. Are we doing these things at the schools and activities at recess? E. LaPlante commented on the snacks given to the students and at what time made a big difference. S. Peers read the definition of Work Ethics. C. McDaniel-Thomas said that seems hard to measure. J. Rathbun said the purpose is to have that discussion. Are we motivating the kids and are they engaged? Raising the bar on the teachers and staff. We can not control it all. S. Peters would like to direct the conversation to the Homework Policy. S. Peters read the definition of Attendance. When is the parent responsible? J. Rathbun explained that this is a big conversation. A lot of kids get signed out every day by their parents. Whose fault is it? We need to be a team to make this work. We need the help of the parents. If kids don't like a class they are signed out by their parents. If a student misses a test they are able to have a makeup if the absence is excused. If there are multiple unexcused absences that will go towards truancy. Students' absences are reported to the State. There are consequences for multiple absences but he does not have the information available. Do not punish the kids because the parent kept them home. S. Peters read the definition of Social/Emotional. The administration delivers social and emotional curriculum and has a place for children to go to if they are upset. In the elementary schools there is wellness intervention. The District is working on putting their own program together which will be built on competency and the State. Choose Love is one program. S. Peters read the definition of Behavior. This is not completed. It is hard to say that student conduct is an expression of their home life. J. Rathbun commented that the wording can be worked on. Focus on what we can do. We need to talk to the families. Start there. It is more than a Behavior Policy, we need parents to be part of the conversation. S. Peters would welcome any Board Member to attend the Ed/Tech Meeting and give input. E. LaPlante said we need to set the students up for success when they move on. It was

commented that the emotional needs of the students are always being worked on. L. Steadman commented that it is good that we are looking at the whole child. J. Cesaitis said that the whole child concept is a great thing. C.McDaniel-Thomas asked where the education piece in this philosophy was. Competency, achievement and assessment were then defined and explained. S.Peters said the goal is to have this in print and to make it into a hand out for new students and shared at parent meetings.

5. MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:

a. Approve 2023/24 Education Philosophy: The Education Philosophy was not complete and will not be voted on tonight.

b. Refer Annual Philosophy Review to Policy committee to convert to policy and add to BDA-R: MOTION: S. Peters **MOVED** to refer the new Education Philosophy to the Policy Committee to convert to policy, develop an annual review cycle and add to BDA-R. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** J. Rathbun commented that the work done by the committee is outstanding and it is important that this is the Board's philosophy. He participated but did not develop it. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

c. Policies for 1st Read:

i. EHAB-Data Governance and Security:

ii. JCA-Change of Class of School or Assignment Best Interest and Manifest Hardship:

iii. JKAA-Use of Restraints and Seclusion: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to approve all changes as presented by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan explained that all of the policies presented are required by law. There is a form that will be coming for Policy JKAA. J. Rathbun explained that the information is now being recorded in ALMA following the law as best as possible until they send the form. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

d. Approve 2024/25 Capital Improvement Plan: C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that the committee changed the rate of inflation and moved the dates for many of the projects out a year or so. The SAU and projects at the MRMHS are still on the CIP. Most if not all of the elementary schools' projects will be completed with the Elementary School Renovation Project. There is currently a roof issue at the MRMHS. Also, there was discussion about a generator. There is one at the school which will be able to power more than originally thought but the committee was also discussing having a generator to power more items just in case the school was an emergency shelter. They are looking at grant opportunities. The updates to the CIP were not available for review. The Fin/Fac Committee will present at the next Board Meeting. J. Morin will be presenting the Trusts and their balances at the next meeting.

e. Approve the Consent Agenda:

i. October 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

ii. 2023/24 Manifest in the amount of \$1,812,192.30. MOTION: S. Peters **MOVED** to approve the amended consent agenda with edits to the October 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Superintendent Search**
- b. 2024/25 CIP**
- c. Sponsorship**
- d. Joint Meeting November 18, 2023**
- e. Meeting at Emerson**

7. OTHER BUSINESS: J. Morin explained that there was a meeting with Hutter Construction, K. Barker, T. Breen, J. Rathbun and herself to discuss the Elementary School Renovation Project timeline. She said they are confident that if they break ground on June 12, 2023 that will take the pressure off the issue of the softball field and will allow MTC to have their playground for the students. J. Rathbun and J. Morin explained that the softball field will stay on the MTC side but in another spot. A complete replica inch by inch of what is there currently will be built. S. Peters would like an update on the ongoing communication plan.

8. Public Comments: K. Noonan commented that she is very excited to have a Student Representative in attendance. She thanked Owen for being here. The Board thanked Owen as well.

9. 8:47 PM Motion to Enter Into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee: MOTION: K.Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

10. 8:52 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:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

11. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 PM. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent