

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2023 (corrected 10.17.2023)
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH

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

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

1. Tour of the Gilsum School 6:30 PM.

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: B. Tatro commented that she had heard feedback about Homecoming. E. Stanley said he heard grumbling as well. The Extra-Curricular Committee set up a meeting with the administration. There is a lack of volunteers and chaperones for the events. The committee would like to discuss the staff as chaperones at these events. The administration will look at this and bring a recommendation back to the committee. Taylene Givetz, teaching principal at Gilsum STEAM Academy welcomed the Board and administration to Gilsum. The students are celebrating growing together. They are growing gardens, healthy hearts and healthy minds. She thanked everyone for coming.

4. #CelebrateMRSD:

a. L. Walker explained that the Parent/Teacher Conferences are coming up. Tomorrow is National Walk to School Day.

b. S.Peters mentioned people had moved into the District and had a positive perspective of the District after speaking to a Budget Committee Member about the Building Plan.

c. Update on the Elementary Renovation Project: K. Barker updated the Board on the progress with the Elementary Renovation Project. He explained that he would like to be as transparent as possible. There are 4 projects that will be done but not all at the same time. He handed out the working drawings for the MTC Project. There is a site plan and a floor plan. He explained the plans will not be posted online in full detail due to security. They will begin soon to move the softball field from the MTC side to the high school side. K. Barker, J. Morin and J. Rathbun have been meeting with the principals and the administration regarding the needs and plans of the individual schools. There are meetings every Wednesday. K. Barker will have a new

set of plans for MTC in order to have an opinion of cost from Hutter Construction on Friday. The goal is to go out to bid on MTC in January and begin in the Spring. He is not sure of the rest of the schedule. Possibly Troy, Emerson and then Gilsum. The Board had concerns regarding the courtyard at MTC and the baseball and softball fields being so close. K. Barker said this is the only solution and it will be a great softball field with parking. S. Peters would like to notify the public 2 weeks before construction is to begin and any other changes to keep the public up to date. B. Bohannon commented that this needs to be clearly communicated to the public. K. Barker wants to be as transparent as possible.

5. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. 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: K. Noonan explained that the Policy Committee is presenting 3 policies for a first read. The committee has sent 2 other policies to the administration for review. The policies being presented were in the Fall Bulletin and required by law.

b. Recap of Modern Governance Seminar: K. Noonan, S. Peters, L. Sutton and J. Rathbun attended the Modern Governance Conference. The members commented on what they took away from the conference. J. Rathbun explained that he has been going over the Board Minutes for the past 60 years. The new program is able to do a much better job with the archives. It was a big takeaway to move forward and to look into the past. S. Peters commented that they will follow up with the company.

c. Staffing Update: L. Walker reported that the District has possibly hired a para since the last report.

d. 2023/24 School Board Goals:

i. Superintendent Search Update: C. McDaniel-Thomas commented that at the last meeting the Board asked C. McDaniel-Thomas to make changes on behalf of the Board regarding the representative from the Bryan Group and the timeline for the Superintendent posting. N. Behrens is the representative working with the committee from the Bryan Group. L. Steadman did fabulous work on the job posting for the superintendent. The Bryan Group has been in contact with C. McDaniel-Thomas and has made 7 suggestions to the job posting. The committee suggested not having the candidate prepare 3 philosophy statements with the application. The Bryan Group would suggest that the committee have this in the application. S. Peters suggested not having this up front. L. Steadman would agree. This may discourage the candidate. B. Bohannon commented that it should not be more than 2 pages. J. Rathbun said 6 pages could take hours. L. Walker said it is more genuine if they bring writing samples with them. B. Bohannon would support bringing a sample. K. Noonan said it is frustrating that the 3 members on the committee can not discuss anything outside of the meeting. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to empower the Bryan Group to add wording to the job posting that indicates a writing sample will be required during the candidate process. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to ask the Bryan

Group to add the sentence “diverse and nontraditional applicants are encouraged to apply to additional information section of the job posting “ **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** L. Walker explained that it is clear about the required NH credentials. B. Bohannon does not agree and will not vote for this will not vote for this either. C. McDaniel-Thomas is concerned that there are not enough people for the pool. J. Strimbeck said to make the statement simpler. J. Rathbun said that a Superintendent has to hold a leadership position for 3 years as a principal or administrator. L. Steadman explained at the Search Committee Meeting the entire committee had discussed this and agreed with 10 years of experience in public schools. **VOTE:** 5.487/7.183/0/0. **Motion fails.** The Bryan Group is suggesting reducing the 10-year experience requirement. **MOTION:** D.LeClair **MOVED** to accept the Bryan Group’s recommendation to reduce the 10 year experience requirement to match the 3 years of required experience for licensure. **SECOND:** J.Strimbeck. **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon would vote no. The discussion at the committee level was passionate. J. Strimbeck would not agree with the 10 years. L. Steadman would vote no. The Board entrusted the committee to make these recommendations and it is not polite to disregard their opinion. K. Noonan will vote no. Private Schools do not need to follow Special Ed. laws, it is a different animal. J. Rathbun commented that candidates do not pay attention to the requirements. To be a superintendent you need 5 years of leadership experience and so many years of teaching. It is impossible to be a superintendent after only 3 years. J. Rathbun regardless of what you put down. There are requirements. **D. LeClair and J. Strimbeck agreed on a Friendly amendment to change the 3 year requirement to 5 years. VOTE:** 9.673/3.327/0/0. **Motion passes. MOTION:** J. Strimbeck **MOVED** to remove the 24/7 availability clause from the job posting. **SECOND:** J.Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** The Bryan Group suggested adding a description of what makes the MRSD unique and the geographical area. C. McDaniel-Thomas had prepared a paragraph and read it to the Board. The Board gave a few suggestions. **MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to empower C. McDaniel-Thomas to add a paragraph describing the accolades of the District and to describe the local region. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** The Bryan Group is recommending that the District add the salary information to the posting. J. Rathbun commented that the DOE has that information which is public. Candidates do the research. S. Peters commented that the candidate will ask the salary at the first interview. L. Steadman explained that the consultant will usually ask the candidate what they make and what they expect. **VOTE:** 11.868/0/1.132/0. **Motion passes.** The Bryan Group suggested the closing date for the application to be November 10, 2023. **MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to change the candidate application closing date to November 10, 2023. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that the proposal for the ad is under \$3000.00. K. Noonan asked about members being able to contact each other outside of a meeting. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to seek legal counsel on input of the structure of the Superintendent Search Committee. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** L. Walker had received information from legal counsel and it stated that members can not share google doc. as a means to communicate. **L. Steadman and K. Noonan withdrew their motion.** J. Rathbun asked if the committee will seal the information regarding candidates who apply. He would not want that information to leak out to their employers. S. Peters explained the candidates will be discussed and

interviewed in non-public session. C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that the members of the committee are required to sign a confidentiality clause.

e. **Definitions: Consent Agenda:** The Board will now be asked to vote on the entire consent agenda instead of each individual item.

6. MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:

a. Approve the Consent Agenda:

i. **September 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes:**

ii. **2023/24 Manifest in the amount of \$1,7804,922.75**

iii. **Budget Transfers: #1** A request from C. Woods in the amount of \$59,296 from the Speech Services Salaries Line to the Contracted Services Line (additional days, of service from the last meeting) **#2** A request from C. Woods in the amount of \$87,699 from the Special Educator Salaries and Benefits Lines to the OOD Private Tuition Line (unfilled MS Life Skills position, choosing not to fill at this time) **#3** A request from C. Woods in the amount of \$96,029 from the Special Educator Salaries and Benefits Lines to the OOD Private Tuition Line (unfilled Cutler Special Educator position, choosing not to fill at this time). **MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda as presented except for 6.a.iv. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

iv. **Building & Grounds Truck w/Plow Bids:** The administration had received 3 bids for the new truck and the Board would like to support the recommendation of the administration. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to support the recommendation of the administration and to accept the bid from Fairfields of Keene for the purchase of a 2024 GMC 2500HD Sierra with Plow in the amount of \$62,867. **SECOND:** K.Noonan **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

b. **Approve Appreciation Lunch or Swag for Education Support Professionals Day (11/15):** **MOTION:** J. Strimbeck **MOVED** to support an appreciation luncheon or swag for Education Support Professionals Day on Nov. 15, 2023. **SECOND:** Noonan **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

c. **Student Government Representative:** J. Rathbun informed the Board that there is a Student Government representative who will be attending Board Meetings.

7. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. **Superintendent Search**

b. **Policies for second read**

c. **NHSBA Delegate Assembly Recap**

d. **2024/25 CIP**

e. **Work Ethic and Behavior (2nd Cohort Review)**

f. **Ed/Tech Presentation**

8. Public Comments: S.Peters thanked L. Steadman for chairing the last Board Meeting in his absence.

9. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM. **SECOND:** S.Lawlor **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent