

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2023
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH

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

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

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM.** S. Peters called the meeting to order.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
3. **#CelebrateMRSD:**
 - a. L. Walker and staff welcomed back the students. It is great to have lots of happy kids. It is great to have everyone back.
 - b. **Library Resource Flier:** L. Willey explained through professional development she attended a resource conference in Philadelphia. Monadnock staff decided to prepare a seasonal newsletter that will come out in the Fall, Winter and Spring. This newsletter will explain how to access the library website, the card catalog, read a book review from a student, from a staff member and easy links are provided to obtain the information.
4. **MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:**
 - a. **August 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the August 22, 2023 School Board Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 9.074/0/2.229/1.697. **Motion passes. L. Steadman arrives.**
 - b. **Manifest: MOTION:** S. Lawlor **MOVED** to approve the FY 24 manifest in the amount of \$1,747,706.42 as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 11.303/0/.995/.702. **Motion passes.** S. Peters explained that Norita sends a copy of the manifest to the Board prior to the meeting for review.
 - c. **Emerson Window Project:** J. Morin explained that there are additional funds needed for the Emerson Window Project. The additional funds of \$3214.00 are for repairs around the windows. She is asking the Board to encumber an additional \$3214.00 for the repairs. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to encumber an additional \$3214.00 from FY 23 to complete the Emerson Window Project. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin read the repairs

that had to be completed. She said the walls needed to be built out. D. LeClair said he felt it is a lot of money for the repair. J. Morin explained the work is completed. We had to have this done to open for the kids. J. Rathbun explained that every part of Emerson was built at a different time. We believe the contractor is doing the right thing for us. **VOTE:** 11.180/0/1.118/.702.

Motion passes.

d. Retain FY 23 Fund Balance: J. Morin explained that the voters voted to allow the School Board to retain part of the fund balance to level out the spikes and dips of the tax rate. These funds can only be used in an emergency situation. J. Morin explained last year the Board did not retain anything and the year before they retained half of the balance allowed. The maximum allowed this year is \$483,948.75. K. Noonan would support retaining some of the funds this year because this year the tax will be lower and next year is the first payment on the bond. J. Morin explained the funds can only be used for an emergency and an example was a failed septic system. You would have to prove this as an emergency to the State. J. Morin does not have a recommendation. The adequacy funds, they will change, they are not the same in every district. The District is allowed to take 2.5% of the budget not including the adequacy. J. Rathbun explained the funds are not actually in an account. If we do not use the funds they go back to the towns. **MOTION:** J. Cesaitis **MOVED** to retain zero unencumbered funds per RSA 198:4b, from FY 23 **SECOND:** G. Carraro. **DISCUSSION:** B. Tatro talked about the impact of the bond on the tax rate. S. Peters said if we give it all back with the bond it will feel like a spike. K. Noonan suggested retaining the funds and next year it will help reduce the bond and the tax impact. D. LeClair asked if anyone knew the tax impact per household. E. Stanley would like to put something aside. **VOTE:** 2.435/9.863/0/.702. **Fails. MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to retain \$240,000.00 of unencumbered funds per RSA 198:4b, FY 23 **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 8.868/3.4/0/.702. **Motion passes.**

e. Softball Field Sponsorship and Branding: E. Stanley would like to look at having a company sponsor a field, a gym or an event. He would like the Board to ask the administration to ask the legal council if the District can say yes or no to a sponsor. He asked if there is a liability? He would like an opinion on this issue for all of the facilities in the district. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to ask the administration to ask legal counsel for guidance in soliciting, selecting and approving sponsorship for the facilities and special events in the district. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** It was explained that Policy KJ Advertising in Schools. S. Peters commented that there is a difference between advertising and sponsorship. He asked if you can say no to certain companies or is it discrimination. The policy is specific to the best interest of the students. **VOTE:** 12.298/0/0/.702. **Motion passes.**

f. Policies for 2nd Read:

- i. ACAB - Harassment & Sexual Harassment School Employees-Retire ACAB-R-Retire**
- ii. ACAC - Harassment & Sexual Harassment of Students/ACAC-R-Retire**
- iii. ACD - Commitment to Religious Neutrality**
- iv. AD - Educational Philosophy/School District Mission**

- v. ADB - Drug Free Workplace & Drug Free Schools
- vi. ADC - Tobacco-Free Schools
- vii. AE -Accountability
- viii. AFA -Evaluation of Board Operational Procedures/AFA-R-Retire
- ix. BDA-R- Catalog of Recurring School Board Policies
- x. BBB- TA -Oath of Office
- xi. JLCJA - Emergency Plan for Sports Related Injuries
- xii. JICC and JICC-R- Student Conduct on School Busses
- xiii. JHC - Student Early Release Precautions
- xiv. JICDD - Student Discipline/Out-of-School Actions: **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on

behalf of the Policy Committee to move and approve the policies for second read as presented in the packet. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan explained ACAB-R and ACAC-R are in another section. They are procedures, by law and the administration uses them. **VOTE:** 12.298/0/0/.702. **Motion passes.**

5. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Staffing Update: L. Witte reported that there is no real change in staffing since the last report. There are some Special Ed. services that we contracted with a service provider. We are not the only District with this amount of positions open. J. Rathbun explained that we are in a much better spot than some. Some districts are going virtual half a day and present half a day. B. Bohannon commented that now school has started it will be more difficult to fill the position. We need to look out of the box. J. Rathbun explained that we are pulling in retired staff and the principals are thinking out of the box. The staff is working very hard on this. B. Bohannon commented that at this point there is no bad idea. Ask the staff for ideas. E. LaPlante suggested a French teacher instead of a Spanish teacher because it is so hard to find a Spanish teacher. S. Peters said we can throw out ideas but we are not professionals. J. Rathbun explained that the district does a lot of advertising and is working with KSC. At times a student teacher will usually come back after graduation to teach. It was suggested to hire teachers through contracted services. J. Rathbun explained there is not a market for that but we are not off the table for anything. J. Cesaitis asked if it was because of lack of interest or not enough qualified. He asked about a relocation bonus. S. Peters said that is not in the Union Contract. G. Carraro suggested reaching out to Spanish speaking people to fill the Spanish position. J. Rathbun explained that there are requirements. It is possible. S. Lawlor suggested a long term para receive long term sub pay. J. Rathbun explained that everyone is working hard to be creative to fill the positions for what is best for the kids. Money is not always the problem. It is how the teachers and staff are being treated. The Board needs to think of the human side not the money side. He said that they do not use recruiters because they charge a lot of money. L. Walker commented that recruiters are not based in NH and are not well versed in education. We have not had success with them. J. Rathbun will check to see if the positions on School Spring are being refreshed.

b. 2023/24 School Board Goals: S. Peters explained that every committee has goals and due dates. He would like the committee to send information to the Chair to have it placed on the agenda. September data review on the cohort, Ready for School in October and for a tour of the Gilsum School with K. Barker please arrive early.

D. LeClair would like a full understanding of the additional encumbered funds for the Emerson windows. J.Rathbun explained we were in a contract, we had to pay the funds and it was not incompetence.

c. Superintendent Search Update: C. McDaniel-Thomas informed the Board that the Superintendent Search is ongoing. The staff have been invited and are aware of the dates and times. The website has been updated as well. The meetings will be held at the Wilcox Building and are open to the public. The next meeting is on Sept. 14, 2023 at 6:30 PM. The School Board and the administration will receive the 14 Box form to see what they are looking for in a superintendent. The committee will decide if the meeting will be Zoom but the Board Member will have to be present.

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Superintendent Search Committee Update**
- b. NHSBA Resolutions**
- c. Ready for School**
- d. DOE 25 MS 25 Signatures**

J. Morin explained the survey for the audit can still be completed in paper form if the remaining members would like to participate. It will not delay the DOE 25 or the MS 25.

7. Public Comments: S. Lawlor said it was a great first week at her children's schools.

8. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor **VOTE:** 12.229/0/0/.702. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent