

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 22, 2023**  
**MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

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

**Administration Present:** L. Walker, Superintendent, 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 welcomed back the staff today. There were about 30 students in attendance at the Superintendent's picnic. **S. Lawlor arrives.** L.Walker mentioned the great job F. Ashworth and her staff did running the Beyond the Bell summer program. It was well attended by over 300 students in the two schools and it was a very popular program.
4. **MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:**
  - a. **2024/25 Budget Proposals:** S.Peters explained that the School Board had asked the administration to bring information to the Board on the following 2024/25 budget proposals: update to stipend values, expansion of the mentoring roles for both employees with an SOE and new hire teachers, District wide Curriculum Coordinator and/or restore the Curriculum Director position and benefits update for non-bargaining employees. The administration will bring the information at a future meeting.
  - b. **July 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the July 18, 2023 School Board Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 9.434/0/1.132/2.435. **Motion passes.**
  - c. **Softball Field Sponsorship & Branding:** E.Stanley asked to put this on the agenda and he is not present tonight. This will be on a future agenda.
  - d. **Policies for 2nd Read:**
    - i. **BID-Payment of Services Rendered by School Officials: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to update Policy BID-Payment of Services Rendered by School Officials with committee edits. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435. **Motion passes.**
    - e. **Manifest: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the FY 24 manifest in the amount of \$3,068,243.79 as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas

**VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the FY 23 manifest in the amount of \$626,385.35. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435. **Motion passes.** J. Morin explained that the District is currently in the middle of the audit and does not have a number for the surplus yet.

**f. Budget Transfer:** J. Morin presented the following transfers to the Board for approval: A request from C. Woods in the amount of \$258,063 to contract for 2.5 Psychological Services positions that were not able to be filled and the funds to come from Psychological Services Salaries and benefits lines, a request from C. Woods in the amount of \$83,878 to contract for a social worker position that we were not able to fill and cover some of OOD Tuition budget reduction and the funds to come from Social Worker Salaries and benefits lines, a request from J. Rathbun in the amount of \$65,363 to move money from vacant Troy position to cover new Wellness Teacher at MTC and Cutler and the funds to come from Regular Instruction Salaries and benefits lines and a request from L. Spencer in the amount of \$13,026 to purchase 3 year digital licenses for World History and Economics and the funds to come from World Language Info Access line, Regular instruction Salaries line and Social Studies Subscription line. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the 4 budget transfers as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435

**g. Transfer from Carlton Fund for Stage Curtain and Rigging Repair:** **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to request a transfer from the Carlton Fund in the amount of \$43,496.00 for 2 new stage curtains and repair to the rigging. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin will bring additional information on the Carlton Fund but she does know that Sadie and Mark Carlton left an amount of money for the music and performing arts at the school. The interest can be used but not the principal. The funds are kept with the Trustees of the Town of Swanzy. **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435. **Motion passes.**

**h. Diligent Conference:** K. Noonan affirmed that 4 people would be attending the Diligent Conference with encumbered funds and professional development funds.

**i. 2023/24 School Board Goals:** The Board was presented the 2023/24 School Board Goals.

By the final meeting of this board (3/5/2024), interview, select, and hire a new Superintendent to begin employment with the district on or before 7/1/2024

2. By 10/31/2023, document the School Board's educational philosophy and first long-term educational strategy, to be included in the FY2024/25 proposed budget: This is the work of the Educational Committee.

3. By 10/31/2023, complete the annual Capital Improvement Plan. Present recommendations for the next wave of SAU or MRMHS capital projects to be included in the proposed budget, a warrant article, or a specific strategy to fund either of the related trust funds via warrant article: If anything, this should be brought up for discussion.

4. At the second monthly board meeting from September through February, the board will receive a report and then study a specific cohort of students. On or before the end of this school board's term (3/11/2024), combine these studies with the work of this year's Education committee, and craft one or more continuous improvement initiatives for the cohort and/or the next generation of students

a. Proposed cohort

i. Grade 5 (class of 2031)

ii. Grade 8 (class of 2028)

iii. Grade 11 (class of 2025): The Board will ask J. Rathbun to discuss this data.

There will not always be a data report. There may be information to share and updated information from the cohorts. By the end of November hopefully have the States data.

b. Areas of study: Aligned with the Education Committee's defined measurement categories:

i. Ready for School

ii. Competency

iii. Growth

iv. Achievement

v. Work Ethic

vi. Behavior

vii. Attendance

viii. Nutrition

ix. Ready to Launch: The Superintendent and J. Rathbun will dive into Ready for School and Competency. In December discuss wellness and attendance. In January focus on the high school students, Ready to Launch and the Program of Studies. S. Lawlor commented that we need to focus on the whole child. **MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to approve the 2023/24 School Board Goals as presented. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435.

**Motion passes.**

**5. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:**

**a. Staffing Update:** L. Walker reported that there had been additional hires since the email and they are making good progress. S. Peters asked if the MESSA contract has helped. L. Walker said she is not sure but there are less people turning the positions down after they know the pay. If there is no staff to fill a position we will reallocate and look at how we move kids around in the schools. Principals know what has to be done in their individual schools. At this time there are no compliance concerns.

L. Walker explained over the summer there was an opportunity for the District to host 2 exchange students. L. Spencer, J. Rathbun and L. Walker accepted the students. It was unfortunate timing and she was not able to bring it to the Board. B. Tatro commented that the Board had authorized the Superintendent to hire staff over the summer and that is a similar situation. One student is from France and the other from Spain. This is a great opportunity. The host families are in Richmond and Swanzey.

**b. Policies for 1st 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: K. Noonan thanked L. Steadman for

all the work on the review of Book A. There were a lot of policies in Book A which the committee reviewed and updated with the appropriate dates. The J policies are regarding students and the B policies were a request by the chair or a technical advisory.

**c. Superintendent Search:** C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that the committee met with M. Munson of the Bryan Group. The meeting was effective and a lot of the ground work was done. On Sept. 14 the committee will conduct a survey to see what the Board is looking for in a new Superintendent. What we think is a good fit and develop criteria. Invitations from the committee to the Search Committee members will go out soon. School Board Members who attend the meeting will be asked to sign a confidentiality contract. The committee has not established a venue for either Zoom or present meetings. Non-Public Meetings will happen.

**d. Board Education Goal: Baseline Data:** J. Rathbun presented baseline data to the Board. He presented the results of the SAT and PSAT tests. These results are for the current Senior Class. The team has not discussed the summary of the SAT results. The PSAT is for the 8th and 9th graders as a practice. The English scores are average but there is a concern about the Math results. He also presented the report card grades. The results are not the same as the State test results. J. Rathbun will be joining the Math dept. to review the results. They are not apples to apples. The 2 tests do not compare. We will dig into Math. The students are doing better in the classrooms than on the test. J. Rathbun commented that you should be able to see growth. He said the Math teachers are certified and experienced. The teachers are focused on one thing and the State on another. It was asked if we were teaching to the test. L. Walker said we are not having that conversation but may have to. B. Bohannon commented that his frustration is that we are stuck in a cycle and do not know what to do. J. Rathbun explained that his message is heard loud and clear. That is why he is joining the team to break things down. E. LaPlante mentioned that private schools have higher test scores. It was mentioned that the test for private schools and public schools are not the same. L. Walker commented that it is not fair to compare the results. J. Rathbun explained that the SAT is the same everywhere. The SAT is aligned with the National Competencies. The PSAT and SAT are on a set date here at the school. The 8th, 9th and 10th graders take the PSAT at the same time. It is a testing environment for everyone. We should see improvements in Math. He will try to establish a way to do this report and also the classroom data and attendance data. He mentioned that there are more students taking AP classes. J. Rathbun also presented information on attendance, monthly and daily. It is interesting to look at the Seniors. There is a dip at the end of their Senior year. It was asked what happens if a student skips class. L. Walker said that there is an internal process. S. Lawlor asked if students miss

classes if they stay back. J. Rathbun explained if a student were to miss a class they do not receive credit. It is rare to fail and stay back in middle or high school. There is a focus on tardiness and attendance. Dismissals are an issue. At the elementary schools there are not the same problems, tardiness is not their fault.

**e. MRMHS & Elementary Student Handbook:** The Student Handbooks were presented to the Board to pick up. The Handbooks are approved by the administration.

**f. Board Meetings: Elementary Travel & Tour Schedule:**

**i. 10/3 Gilsum:**

**ii. 11/7 Emerson:**

**iii. 12/5 Troy:** S.Peters explained that he has scheduled the Board Meetings at the 3 elementary schools with a tour and architect walk through prior to the meeting.

**g. Update on Resolutions:** It was reported that the second proposed resolution regarding holding parents accountable was not well received by the Board of Directors. There was proposed language from the NHSBA but the group said no that it defeats the purpose of the intent. The other resolutions will go to the Delegate Assembly to be voted on.

**h. ALMA Concerns:** B. Bohannon commented that ALMA is very confusing to parents. It is not user friendly. Parental engagement is a very big roadblock. There is a level of frustration. J. Rathbun explained that he has had no parent feedback. There is a little feedback from the staff. Maybe this should be a Board conversation. B. Bohannon would like to discuss this. Maybe ask the parents at the Parent Teacher Conference in October. J. Rathbun explained that the elementary schools do not use ALMA. He explained that this is a million times easier. K. Noonan said this is not a Board discussion. B. Bohannon would like to have this conversation. He is not clear why we made the change. J. Rathbun explained that we changed from Powerschool due to the cost, not being able to get help and nothing but problems. ALMA handles data better on the administration end and is significantly better. B. Bohannon did not have this frustration with Powerschool J.Rathbun would like to have a conversation with parents.

**6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:**

**a. Superintendent Search Committee Update**

**b. Policies for a Second Read**

**c. Softball Field Sponsorship and Branding**

**7. Public Comments:** S. Peters thanked L. Steadman for chairing the last Board Meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 PM. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 10.565/0/0/2.435. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Laura L. Aivaliotis**  
**Recording Secretary**

**VOTING KEY:**Yes/No/Abstain/Absent