

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2023 (corrected 8.22.2023)
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH

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

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

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM.** The meeting was called to order by L.Steadman.

2. **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:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 8.679/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes. C. McDaniel-Thomas arrived during non-public session.**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

4. **#CelebrateMRSD:** J. Rathbun mentioned how huge the Before and After Programs are, how well they are running and an awesome job being done by the staff, maintenance and administration. Thanks to all of the adults involved.

E. Stanley mentioned that a student from Monadnock has been running a lemonade stand each summer for the past 10 years and raising funds for the Keene Community Kitchen.

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

a. **Safety Security Projects Update:** J. Rathbun explained to the Board that there may be certain questions he may not be able to answer in public. He passed information out to the Board. The District works very closely with Homeland Security and the plans are updated each year. The outlines of the plans and the checklist are shared in non-public session. The District has more secured doors. Doors that are propped open are not allowed and there will be a penalty to the student or staff who have done this. To improve school culture the District has hired at risk counselors at the high school. There will be 2 wellness staff that will schedule time on a 6-day rotation. One of the positions is a grant position and there is a person who is showing interest in the position. Safety

during voting was a concern and the District decided to close all schools when the town asked to use MRMHS for voting. There was no way of sealing off the students from the public. There is a total of 39 drills in all of the schools yearly. We have an SSO and a SRO. J. Cesaitis asked if there was an SRO in the elementary schools. J.Rathbun explained there is not and that the issue has not come up. The SSO does go to the elementary schools. He is mostly helping with truancy.

b. Board Meeting Schedule/Meeting at Elementary Schools: S. Peters put this on the agenda because J. Cesaitis had asked about rotating the Board Meetings at the elementary schools. K.Noonan also agreed. S.Peters commented if we go to alternate schools we may be limited regarding technology. C. McDaniel-Thomas suggested a facility tour prior to the Board Meeting and to include Cutler. S.Peters will take this issue under advisement. *J. Morin arrives.*

6. MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:

a. Policies for 1st Read:

i. BID-Payment of Services Rendered by School District Officers:

ii. Memorandum (Bond Issuance):

iii. DCA-(Bond Post Issuance):

iv. JLCF-Wellness: K. Noonan presented the policies for first read on behalf of the Policy Committee. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to waive the first read for the Memorandum, Policy DCA and Policy JLCF. **SECOND:** E. Stanley.

DISCUSSION: K. Noonan explained that the committee would like to vote on the Memorandum and Policy DCA to make sure that the District is in line with the laws regarding the bond. K. Noonan explained that the Food Service will be going through an audit this year. T. Walsh and the Policy Committee have made a few edits to the Wellness Policy. They would like this to be voted on so that the District will be in line moving forward with the Food Service audit. L. Steadman explained that there is no need for a first and second read on the memorandum. **VOTE:** 9.829/0/0/3.171. **Motion passes.**

MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adopt Policy DCA, DCA-R, the Memorandum and update Policy JLCF. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman explained that an addendum or a -R does not need to be voted on. It is procedural.

VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. **Motion passes.** The resolutions included in the Memorandum were read out loud. J. Morin agreed to be the “Coordinator” under the Post-Issuance Tax Compliance Policies and Procedures. There is space on the Memorandum for the Board to sign.

b. Policy Committee Charter & Goals: K. Noonan presented the Policy Committee's Charter to the Board. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to accept the Policy Committee's Charter as presented. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 9.829/0/0/3.171. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to accept the Policy Committee Goals as presented. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **DISCUSSION:** S.Peters asked why the committee voted to update

Policy Book A and Policy Book B. It was explained that they are smaller books and an easier place to start. They seem doable. L. Steadman has already done Book A. K. Noonan thanked L. Steadman for the work she did on Book A prior to the Policy Committee Meeting. **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.**

c. Policy DFA Annual Review & Approval: The Board reviewed Policy DFA. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to mark Policy DFA marked as reviewed by the School Board. **SECOND:** C.McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.**

d. June 20, 2023 Minutes: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the June 20, 2023 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** S.Lawlor. **VOTE: 8.679/0/1.132/3.171. Motion passes.**

e. Manifest: MOTION: C.McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the 2023-24 manifest in the amount of \$ 1,063,520.65. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes. MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the 2022-23 manifest in the amount of \$1,839,033.68. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **DISCUSSION:** The Board had questions on the amount in the manifest. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to table the motion until J. Morin had the information. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.**

f. Student Tuition Rate for FY 23/24: MOTION: S. Lawlor **MOVED** to set the annual tuition rate at \$20,046.00 for the 2023-24 school year. **SECOND:** K.Noonan **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.** J. Morin explained the Board uses the State cost per pupil to set the annual tuition rate. The State tuition rate comes out in December but this District sets it in July. Will the Board change it again in December? J. Morin explained that the Board sets the rate in July and we use that until the following July's vote.

J. Morin explained that the sum of the 2022-23 manifest which the Board had tabled until J. Morin found the information are invoices, grants, nutrition grants and special ed. Costs as well as construction projects. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the 2022-23 manifest in the amount of \$1,839,033.68. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.**

g. Approve Independent Auditor for FY 23 Audit: MOTION: C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Plodzick & Sanderson as the Auditing Firm for the MRSD FY 23 Audit. **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE: 9.829/0/0/3.171. Motion passes.**

h. NHSBA Call for Resolutions: The following proposed resolutions were presented by Board Members:

PROPOSAL 1 - Hiring

PROPOSAL: NHSBA will support any legislation that intends to streamline the recruiting, credentialing, and hiring of certified teachers from other states. This resolution is in support of both the State of NH credentialing laws, as well as the interstate compact and reciprocity between NH and neighboring states.

RATIONALE: Teachers in NH are retiring at a pace that exceeds the in-state candidate pool. Any legislation that will attract teachers from other states who desire to work in NH

will help to improve staffing shortages by attracting qualified teachers. **MOTION:** K. Noonan. **MOVED** to accept the proposed resolution as presented and forward it to the Delegate Assembly. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **DISCUSSION:** It was explained that the State of NH will not accept transfers from other states. They cannot buy into the system. This resolution also supports changes to reduce barriers to teachers from other states who wish to transfer retirement savings from their current retirement program into the NH retirement system. **VOTE:** 9.829/0/0/3.171. **Motion passes.**

PROPOSAL 2 – Parent Accountability for Behaviors

PROPOSAL: NHSBA will support legislation that clarifies the responsibility and accountability of parents/guardians of students who do not conduct themselves according to local laws or school policies. NHSBA will also support legislation that clarifies the protocols for school districts to follow in disciplining students and their parent/guardian(s).

RATIONALE: While behavior challenges with students are at an all-time high, the underlying challenge is lack of accountability for parents and guardians. If a student misbehaves in any way, and the parent/guardian chooses to disregard the written law or policy, then the school district is forced to negotiate, concede, or accept the behavior. This dilutes the purpose of laws and policy with the rest of the student body and local community.

Further, parents and guardians are expected to send students to school who are prepared to learn and are not a disruption (e.g. sit quietly, stand in line, pay attention to adults, respect authority, etc.). When a student does not know how to behave in this way, learning time is lost for all students as the adults must attend to the disruptions.

MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to accept the proposed resolution as presented and forward it to the Delegate Assembly. **SECOND:** S.Lawlor. **DISCUSSION:** J. Cesaitis asked who are we to discipline the parents. He would question the rationale. J.Rathbun commented that some States punish parents by taking their license. **Friendly amendment:** Change “**Holding parents/guardians accountable**” **SECOND:** S. Lawlor. **VOTE:** 7.613/2.216/0/3.171. **Motion passes.**

PROPOSAL 3 – Inclement Weather on Voting Day

PROPOSAL: NHSBA will support legislation that creates flexibility for town moderators and moderators of cooperative school districts to postpone school district elections in the event of inclement weather.

RATIONALE: The current rules requiring all towns in a cooperative school district to vote on the same day leave little flexibility in the event of dangerous weather. A decision to change a voting day must be applied to all towns even if they are geographically distant, and the lead time required to make a decision is very difficult to coordinate at the last minute. Moderators need more leeway to account for safety but also encourage voter participation. **MOTION:** S.Lawlor **MOVED** to accept the proposed resolution presented and to forward to the Delegate Assembly. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **DISCUSSION:** J. Cesaitis said this is not a School Board issue. It is up to the towns. **VOTE:** 8.731/1.189/0/3.171. **Motion passes.**

i. Superintendent Search: S.Peters explained that the Bryan Group is ready for the School Board to get started and we need to know what the Search Committee will look like. He explained that the committee will meet a few times a month, 6-10 hours a month until Christmas. It was suggested to have 3 School Board Members, 1 SAU staff member, 2 principals, 3 teachers and 2 other staff members. Allowing every school to be represented and other committee members at the discretion of the committee. **MOTION:** S.Lawlor **MOVED** to accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon commented that the recommended committee is too big. He would suggest a committee of 5. He said we are asking people to put in a lot of hours. L.Steadman commented that the principal search committee was more robust than what is being suggested for the Superintendent Search. It was commented that the 3 School Board Members would have to be present and everyone else on Zoom. L. Steadman said these meetings do not need to be posted to the public. She commented that the Negotiation Committee Meetings were remote. B. Bohannon said that we do not have a Superintendent Search Policy. If we are not tied to a policy we have the opportunity to figure out what did not work and, in the future, write a policy. We are not tied. Make the process work and use the feedback from the principal's search. **VOTE:** 8.834/0/0/4.166. **Motion passes. (S.Peters missing from vote)** It was explained that S.Lawlor, C.McDaniel-Thomas, B. Bohannon, K. Noonan and L. Steadman have shown interest in being on the Superintendent Search Committee. J. Rathbun explained that Superintendents do not publicly apply for a Superintendent position. These are public meetings until needed. B.Bohannon will remove his name from the list he cannot commit if a quorum is required. *S. Lawlor leaves the meeting.*

j. 2024/25 Budget Proposals: The following are budget proposals from Board Members: Update to Stipend Values, Expansion of the mentoring roles for both employees with an SOE and new hire teachers, District wide Curriculum Coordinators and/or restore the Curriculum Director position and benefits update for Non-Bargaining Employees. **MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to accept the budget proposals except for the Update to Stipend Values. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **DISCUSSION:** S.Peters asked for a friendly amendment to add the Update to Stipend Values to the budget proposals. K. Noonan and J. Cesaitis agreed. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.203. **Motion passes.**

k. 2023/24 School Board Goals: These will be discussed at a future meeting.

l. 2023/24 Superintendent Goals: These will be discussed at a future meeting.

7. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Board Goals**
- b. Superintendent Goals**
- c. Superintendent Search**
- d. State Aid Formula**

J. Morin explained the bond sale happened and the updated rate is 3.75%. She is very

excited about the rate.

8. Public Comments: C. McDaniel-Thomas was very happy to know that T. Walsh is staying. She also mentioned that she has a friend who can earn \$20,000 more at another district as an Art teacher. C. McDaniel-Thomas said that the Board has to take another look at it.

9. 8:42 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:** J. Cesaitis **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

10. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 PM. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent