

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**June 20, 2023**  
**MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

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

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

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM.**
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
3. **#CelebrateMRSD:** Nothing to report tonight.
4. **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:**
  - a. **Overview of Staffing Not Administered by the School Board:** L. Walker explained that it is required by statute that the administration bring the nominations of the certified staff to the School. There is no law that requires the administration to bring the other staff nomination to the Board. The Superintendent will bring the notification of the new staff to the Board. It is up to the individual districts regarding the other employees. Grant funded positions are based on experience and the funds available in the grant. The administrator positions are brought by the Superintendent to the Board. MESSA nominations are notifications. *C. McDaniel-Thomas and G. Carraro arrive.* L. Walker explained that the Nutrition Program is self-funded. It is a program similar to a grant. Who is paid and the pay is based on what is available through the program. There is a policy that allows the Superintendent to hire certified staff during the summer. S.Peters explained that the Board had been discussing vacancies and was curious about this topic. It was asked what if an employee has a complaint. L. Walker explained there is a process even if the employee is not in the Collective Bargaining Unit. S. Lawlor asked when the last time the policy was revised. S. Peters explained that the Board's only employee is the Superintendent. There is a process if the staff has a complaint. J.Rathbun explained that the Whistleblower Law defends the person making the complaint. K. Noonan found the policy regarding this issue. It was commented that if an employee wanted to join a Union

there is a process. It would be a Change in Definition.

**b. NHSBA Call for Resolutions:** It was explained that the Board would need to create a resolution by July 28, 2023 in order to have it discussed on October 14, 2023. S. Peters would like the Board Members to bring a resolution draft if they want to the next Board Meeting. L. Steadman would like to create a resolution regarding voting on inclement weather days. She was not impressed with voting on the snow day. She would support the legislature for voting during inclement weather. Should it be the Moderator who makes the decision for each town? L. Steadman would also support a resolution regarding online voting. C. McDaniel-Thomas said she would need to see it first. S. Peters explained the potential proposals will be proposed by the NHSBA. S. Peters would like to create a resolution for an interstate compact agreement across borders. Candidates would not have to be NH Certified. L. Walker said it is hard and it is being made even harder but also ridiculously easy in some ways. L. Walker explained that we are not losing candidates because they are from other states. S. Peters would like to write a proposal. L. Walker explained she has been asked to speak to the legislature on the shortage of teachers. L. Steadman will present a draft at the next meeting as well as S. Peters regarding their resolution proposals.

**c. Superintendent Search:** It was reported that Barrett Christina of the NHSBA has been notified as well as the Bryan Group. The process will begin soon.

**d. Cutler Principal Search:** The Cutler Principal Search Committee met last week. There are 2 Co-chairs M. Suarez and L. Klowak. The process, screening and interviews will begin. The committee knows the timeline. They will report back to J. Rathbun.

**e. 2024/25 Budget Proposals:** S. Peters would like to include stipends in the 2024/25 Budget proposal. S. Lawlor would like to include social and emotional options. S. Peters explained that the administration will hire the correct people for the support if the proposal passes. S. Peters would like to expand mentoring for new hires. J. Rathbun explained the District has CARES funds for mentoring. S. Peters would like a District wide Curriculum Coordinator. He would like all of the 6th graders to have the same knowledge when entering the 7th grade. All of the elementary schools deliver the same education. C. McDaniel-Thomas commented that she felt that was a proposal and we needed to give the administration time. S. Peters would like to form a committee to study the benefits of non-bargaining employees. J. Morin explained we use the GMR for all the benefits. There is no fixed number; there are 2 different lines in the budget. She explained if there is a decision during the budget process it will go in the budget.

**5. MATTERS THAT BOARD ACTION:**

**a. School Board Stipends:** S. Peters created a chart regarding Board Stipends. The amount of the stipend being proposed for each member is based on attendance to the Board Meetings and committee meetings. The Board would like to forward it to the Policy Committee to review. **MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** Proposed Policy BID as updated to the Policy Committee for review. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** It was asked if we are creating a budget impact. S.Peters explained there is a School Board budget line of \$13,000 which is \$1000 for each member. J. Cesaitis would suggest rotating the location of the Board Meetings. S. Peters explained the Board had done that in order to get out to the towns and have participation but there was no public attendance. S. Peters explained they will discuss it at a future meeting. **VOTE:**7.805/1.098/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

**b. Committee to Study Benefits for Non-Bargaining Employees:** S. Peters asked if the Finance/Facilities Committee could take this on. L. Steadman commented if the Negotiations Committee finished bargaining quickly they may have time to take this on. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to assign the work of studying the non-bargaining employees to the Negotiating Committee. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters asked if the committee would need the resources of a lawyer. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097 **Motion passes.**

**c. 2023/24 School Board Goals:** J. Rathbun explained that this is such a huge question. He does not have the data sorted or available. He would like to bring it to the Education Committee. *C. McDaniel-Thomas leaves the meeting.* The committee reviewed the goals. J. Cesaitis would like to ensure the safety of the students and staff inside and outside the building. L. Walker will point the new members in the direction of the safety work. L.Steadman would suggest taking # 3 out of the goals. B. Tatro asked J. Cesaitis if he had concerns. He said there were minor concerns such as locked doors. G. Carraro also had concerns at MTC. L. Walker will follow up with the concerns at the schools.

**d. Elementary Renovations Bond:** J. Morin announced that the Governor signed the budget today. The next step is the loan agreement. The Board has to agree on the resolutions and sign the agreement tonight. B. Tatro explained that the Finance/Facilities Committee recommended that the Board sign the agreement and begin the loan process rather than waiting until January. J. Morin explained she is not sure what the rates are going to be in January. The current rate is 3.44% and the Bond Bank gave the district an estimate with a 5.5% rate. B.Tatro said we will be saving money by going for the bond now. J.Morin explained that the bond funds are not needed at this time so

they will be invested. L. Steadman commented that the Budget Committee recommended that the Board get the bond sooner than later at the Joint Meeting. J. Morin explained that the Board needs to read the resolutions. She also explained that if the interest rate earned is higher than what the District is paying for the bond even though we are tax exempt, if we do not spend it in 2 years the District may have to pay a rebate, interest over the payment. It will be tracked and it is put into place to make sure that the Districts do not use the funds to make money. J. Morin has been in contact with the NH Public Investment Pool and TD Bank. Both institutions will be able to insure a significant amount of funds. S.Peters read the resolutions that were displaced on the screen tonight.

**MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to accept and adopt the resolutions presented in the loan agreement with the NH Municipal Bond Bank as follows: **RESOLVED:** That under and pursuant to the Municipal Finance Act, Chapter 33, N.H.R.S.A., as amended, the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank Law, Chapter 35-A, N.H.R.S.A., as amended, and other laws in addition thereto, and to votes of the Issuer duly adopted on March 14, 2023 under Article 1 of the Warrant for such annual meeting of the Issuer there be and hereby is authorized the issuance of a \$21,500,000 Bond of the Issuer (the "Bond") which is being issued by the Issuer for the purpose of renovating and consolidating the district elementary schools by constructing an addition to Mt Caesar Elementary School and renovating Troy Elementary, Emerson Elementary and Gilsum STEAM Academy. The Bond shall be dated as of its date of issuance, shall be in such numbers and denominations as the purchaser shall request, shall mature in accordance with the schedule set forth in Exhibit A to a certain Loan Agreement hereinafter described (the "Loan Agreement"), shall bear a net interest cost rate (as defined in the Loan Agreement) of four and one quarter percent (4.25%) per annum or such lesser amount as may be determined by a majority of the Board. The Bond shall be substantially in the form set forth as Exhibit B to the Loan Agreement and otherwise shall be issued in such manner and form as the signatories shall approve by their execution thereof.

**RESOLVED:** That the Bond shall be sold to the Bond Bank at the par value thereof plus any applicable premium.

**RESOLVED:** That in order to evidence the sale of the Bond, the Treasurer of Issuer and a member of the Board are authorized and directed to execute, attest and deliver, in the name and on behalf of the Issuer, a Loan Agreement in substantially the form submitted to this meeting, which is hereby approved, with such changes therein not inconsistent with this vote and approved by the officers executing the same on behalf of the Issuer. The approval of such changes by said officers shall be conclusively evidenced by the execution of the Loan Agreement by such officers.

**RESOLVED:** That all things heretofore done and all action heretofore taken by the Issuer and its officers and agents in its authorization of the project to be financed by the Bond are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk and the signers of the Bond are each hereby authorized to take any and all action necessary and convenient to carry out the provisions of this vote, including delivering the Bond against payment therefor.

**RESOLVED:** That the useful life of the project being financed is in excess of twenty (20) years. I further certify that said meeting was open to the public; the aforesaid vote was not taken by secret ballot nor in executive session; that notice of the time and place of said meeting was posted in at least two (2) appropriate public places within the territorial limits of the Issuer, or published in a newspaper of general circulation in said area, at least twenty-four (24) hours, excluding Sundays

and legal holidays, before said meeting; that no deliberations or actions with respect to the vote were taken in executive session; and that the minutes of said meeting have been promptly recorded and have been or will be made open to inspection within five (5) business days of a request for said minutes, all in accordance with Chapter 91-A, N.H.R.S.A., as amended.

**SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.**

e. **Budget Transfers:** There are no budget transfers.

f. **Manifest: MOTION:** B.Tatro **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$2,543,722.91. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.**

g. **Encumbrances of Unallocated Funds:**

i. **Diligent Modern Governance Seminar:** S.Peters explained that he has been asked to speak at the Seminar. He will receive a free ticket and free hotel. S.Peters presented an information sheet with the cost of the trip for 4 people. J. Morin explained you must know the exact amount of the meals and the plane tickets in order to encumber. It was suggested that the meals could be based on the federal per diem. J. Morin explained you cannot do the airfare. J. Rathbun explained it might be possible to use Title Two funds. He also said that the airfare could come out of the Professional Development line. J. Morin commented that if you do not know the 4 people that are going you cannot do this. S.Lawlor asked how it got to be 4 people attending the Seminar. J. Rathbun said if L. Sutton was attending she would like an administrator and then the 2 Board Members. L. Walker commented that the Board should not tell L. Sutton and the administrator how to use their professional development funds. You should use the encumbered funds. **MOTION:** G. Carraro **MOVED** to encumber 2022/23 budget funds to send 4 people to the Diligent Modern Governance Seminar in the amount of \$5268.00 based on the fixed cost of registration, hotel and the federal per diem rate of meals. **SECOND:** L.Steadman. **VOTE:** 1.2/2.229/4.00/5.229. **Motion fails. MOTION:** S. Lawlor **MOVED** to encumber 2022/23 budget funds to send 2 members of the administration to the Diligent Modern Governance Seminar in the amount of \$3157.00 based on the fixed cost of the registration, hotel and federal per diem rate for meals. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **DISCUSSION:** It was commented that L. Sutton and K. Noonan are the two that mostly log into Board.docs. B. Tatro would like to know the cost to add the funds in order to send S.Peters. S. Lawlor commented that K. Noonan should attend. She is the Chair of the Policy and does the work. **MOTION to amend:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to encumber the cost of the Board Chair or equivalent to in the amount of \$3690.00. **SECOND:** L.Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters commented that this Board has been recognized and asked to speak. K.Noonan commented that there is new training that needs to be done. **VOTE on amendment:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Amendment passes. VOTE on amended motion:** 6.777/.995/0/5.229. **Motion passes.** The Board approved

sending 2 administrators and a Board Member.

**ii. Any other Encumbrances Identified by Administration:**

**MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to encumber 2022/23 budget funds to complete the Gymnasium Upgrade in the amount of \$7639.00. **SECOND:** S.Lawlor. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained that there will be a surplus but she does not want to give an exact number until the auditors do the field work. The amount left has a lot to do with the open vacancies. **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** G. Carraro **MOVED** to encumber 2022/23 budget funds to complete the Emerson window project in the amount of \$46,390.00. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin had checked and because this was a warrant article everything is ok to move forward. **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.**

**h. June 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** B.Tatro **MOVED** to approve the June 6, 2023 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** G.Carraro **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.**

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

- a. Policy Charter and Goals**
- b. Superintendent Goals**
- c. Board Meetings in the Elementary Schools**
- d. Board Goals**
- e. Cutler Principal**
- f. DFA Policy**
- g. Instructional Plan**
- h. External Auditor**

**7. Public Comments:** S.Lawlor wished the staff a great summer.

G. Carraro asked about the funding of the bond. S.Peters explained the Board does not respond to public comments. He will email her to let her know where the information on the Elementary School Renovations Project is and the bond information are.

**8. 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:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.299. **Motion passes.**

**9. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 PM. **SECOND:** S.Lawlor **VOTE:** 7.771/0/0/5.229. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

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