

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**Joint Meeting of the School Board and the Budget Committee**  
**May 16, 2023 (corrected 6.6.2023)**  
**MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

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

**Budget Committee Members:** Jon Hoden, Adam Hopkins, Dan Coffman, Ann Marie Osheyack, Robert Audette, Betty Tatro, School Board Liaison and Robert Young. **Absent:** Nancy Carney, Edward Sheldon, Wayne Lechluder, Richie HKS Thackston, Douglas Bersaw and Unassigned Seats from Roxbury and Gilsum.

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

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:** S.Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
3. **#CelebrateMRSD:** S. Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting.
  - a. L. Walker mentioned the many activities that are being done in the district. The students are going to Boston, The Freedom Trail, attend a court trial, plant pumpkins, visit the Friendly Farm, participate in NHDI and ice cream socials to name a few. Gilsum students did a walk challenge in which the whole school walked what is equal to NH 3 times.
  - b. The Milestone/Award Ceremony was held at Pappagallos.
  - c. The staff received stainless steel water bottles for Staff Appreciation.
  - d. Graduation is June 3, 2023 at 10:00 AM. If the Board would like to attend contact L.Sutton.
  - e. L. Walker had attended and updated the Board and Budget Committee on the School Funding Suit. She explained that there are 18 districts in the Suit. She had testified last week. She said it was interesting and a learning experience. She mentioned that Special Ed. is not part of the Suit.
4. **MATTERS FOR JOINT MEETING INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:**
  - a. **Superintendent Search:** S. Peters explained that L. Walker will be leaving the district at the end of June 2024. The Board will conduct a search for a new superintendent. The Board has received 2 statements of work, one from the NHSBA and one from NESDEC which we will discuss at the June meeting. An advisory committee has been established. They will

define requirements.

**b. Specialist Contract Overview:** The Budget Committee was provided with the current Specialist Contract. L. Walker reviewed the contract. There are 10 members in the Union. They work 188 days a year, 7 ½ hours a day and have a 25-minute lunch. There are wellness days and staff development. L. Walker explained the insurance and the retirement benefits. This is informational only.

**c. Renovation Project Update:** J. Morin explained that the 700s and 800s renovations will begin the day after school gets out. A moving company will be helping to remove the contents of the rooms. Hutter Construction is ready to go with the project. The repair of the roof at the MRMHS will be done over the summer. Melanson Roofing will be doing the project. She explained that there are funds for the engineering and design for the Elementary School Renovations. We will be moving ahead with the conversation about the softball field moving and the septic project at MTC. J. Rathbun explained he has been working with K. Barker, T. Cote and L. Spencer about where to put the softball field. It was suggested to put the softball field on the MRMHS campus. Another idea is to move the field hockey to the MTC site. E. Stanley suggested a turf field to fix all of the problems. It was explained that the turf field will cost \$800,000.00 and the new softball field is \$400,000.00. J. Morin explained that the softball field needs to get done and seeded. We want to get that work done this summer. J. Hoden would like to deforest the area near the MRMHS campus fields. It would be feasible for all of the teams. The trees are a safety concern. He said that he loves the idea of moving the softball field to the MRMHS campus. J. Morin explained that the district is waiting for the State to announce their budget. If there is no Building Aid we will not move ahead with the project. The Bond application is done and needs to be submitted June 16, 2023 which is likely before the announcement of the Building Aid. She is not sure about the Bond Sale. The District may have to wait until January.

**d. Capital Improvement & Warrant Ideas for March 2024:** S. Peters is asking for the opinion of the Budget Committee. He said if the district does not get the bond and there is a potential delay on the interest payment should the Board introduce a warrant for work to be done at the high school. There is a CIP list. There are things that need to be done. K. Barker will get the accurate list but he is busy at the moment. There are a few million dollars in open projects. J. Hoden would like the list before a decision. What is the Budget Committee's opinion on the timing of the bond and the opinion on how and when to introduce the backlog? J. Hoden suggested waiting until next year, D. Coffman commented if we put the bond off and there is no payment this may be the right time. If there is no payment in the first year he does not want to wait. K. Noonan commented even if there is no payment on the bond we need to communicate it to the public. J. Hoden commented on the safety needs not must haves. E. Stanley commented on the taxes if you take a year off there will be a bigger drop than an increase the next year. K. Noonan suggested the unallocated funds for the projects. S. Peters said that the backlog today is always revolving. Eventually there will be work to be done at the elementary schools. R. Young likes the idea of an expendable trust. He suggested giving the public a 10-year plan. J. Morin

responded to a comment about the district procrastinating on work in the schools. The voters have always supported the maintenance warrant. The State has commended us for the maintenance of the schools. We have done well with what the taxpayers are willing to give us. E. Stanley likes the idea of an expendable trust. S.Peters would appreciate a motion regarding a dollar amount for an expendable trust. There will be a warrant article for the budget and the Specialists Contract so far. D. Coffman commented that we are discussing the CIP and we need to focus on the delivery of education. He does not see it on the agenda. It was commented that the Budget Committee will place surplus and the expendable trust on their next agenda.

**e. Education Reporting Overview:** A.Hopkins had asked the administration at multiple meetings to give an education report to the Budget Committee. S.Peters said we as a Board are not asking the administration to redeliver the same report to the Budget Committee the School Board receives . A. Hopkins explained that the RSA states that the administration must provide information when asked by the Budget Committee. J.Rathbun reviewed and discussed the data from the test results that he has provided. He explained the main assessment tools and expectations district wide for each grade level. He mentioned that parents can have their kids opt out of the testing. It is difficult to look at the students over the 2 to 3 years with COVID and different assessments. Look at our kids for 2 years and ok at the growth over proficiency. A measure does not tell us if what we are doing is working. Growth models let us see and the proficiency models did not do anything. From April 2021 to April 2022 there was growth and something was working. Proficiency was decent. D. Coffman commented that we did see growth and some of the students were below proficiency. J. Rathbun asked what is the definition of proficiency. Culture of the town and a typical family contribute to high levels of proficiency. D. Coffman would like an executive summary. S. Peters asked for the question and the administration will give feedback. J. Rathbun commented that when the State changes the test, proficiency changes. Proficiency is a lot more than the test. J. Rathbun explained in the Spring the PSAT and the SAT are given. This is a hands-off test by the teacher. Again, the students can opt out of the test with parents' permission. We do not promote this but it is a bit of an issue. The forms are available on the website. We do not hide it. The high school was at 83% because 20 of our students opted out. D. Coffman asked if he had a summary of statistics for the SAT and PSAT. J. Rathbun said that he does have a summary that he presents to the Board. Behavior, absence and opt out are reasons for low results. Our top students opted out and we did poorly in Math. The PSAT is given to the 9th and 10th graders as a way to collect data, get the students comfortable with the test and let them go through the experience. IReady is for K-8. He explained the program. The cost of the program is paid for through the CARES funds. Proficiency is explained and growth is shown on the report. The IReady tool provides good reports and good analysis on what the students need. Not all of the teachers were on board but this is a tool we are using and can see where the students need help. A. Hopkins asked if the curriculum costs of 3-5 years have worked and asked if there were favorable results. L. Walker explained that the administration has provided the data. We cannot correlate test scores. J. Rathbun explained we purchase programs based on the student's needs. A. Hopkins would like a

list of the purchased item, if it had results, to which group and the cost. Come and sell us on what you need. L. Walker commented that the Budget Committee and the School Board need to communicate. J. Hoden would like to have a student speak. He needs facts and bullets. People want to hear what we are investing in. J. Rathbun mentioned that we need more social workers and guidance counselors. If it is not safe and comfortable at home the student will not learn. The world is not the same as it was 50 years ago. D. Coffman would like a static summary, boil down the results and what are the corrections. J. Rathbun explained there is a 6-page document. D. Coffman wants a summary. J. Rathbun said it does not work that way. D. Coffman would like him to figure it out. R. Young reviewed the test results on the website and compared them to KHS and the State. Our test scores are not good. L. Walker explained the results are because the parents opt out. K. Noonan commented that it would be helpful for the Budget Committee members to receive the packets and attend the School Board Meetings to get the summarized information, it is public. It was commented that it is hard to attend another meeting but think of the administration. It was suggested for J. Rathbun and the Superintendent attend the Budget Committee Meeting. D. LeClair commented on the hour and a half on this issue. ***D. LeClair leaves the meeting.***

**f. Overview of Critical Staffing Shortage:** L. Walker reviewed the vacancy list provided. She said there were 36 vacancies last year, 45 vacancies this year because of the number of retirements. We have vacancies filled with contracted services. L. Walker had done a survey with 78 SAUs in the State regarding the number and type of vacancies. She had shared the survey with a Legislative Study Committee. The State revamped the survey but she has not seen the results. She explained that the certified staff are hired first but there are options to hire staff without credentials. The hire is assigned a person and mentor and there are classes to help with their professional development. We are investing in our future. The list for the critical survey is not out. There are 14 staff on an alternative plan and some have finished. J. Rathbun explained if a teacher is moving from one subject to another they are on a plan and are included in the 14 staff. They coordinate to work with the teachers. J. Rathbun explained they are working with KSC for options. We want to go after the young teachers, give them professional development and the mentor program.

**5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BUDGET COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**a. April 25, 2023 Minutes:** The Budget Committee will approve their minutes at their next meeting.

**6. BUDGET COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT:** A. Hopkins adjourned the Budget Committee Meeting at 10:20 PM.

**7. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:**

**a. May 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes:** The Board will approve the May 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes at their next meeting.

**b. Manifest: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,301,053.66 presented by the administration. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:**

7.566/0/0/5.534. **Motion passes.**

**c. Budget Transfer:** The following transfers as presented by J. Morin: a budget transfer as requested by L.Spencer in the amount of \$5,937.00 from the Science Supplies line and the Substitute line to the Replacement Furn./Equip. Line for magnetic whiteboard replacement for 700s/800s wing renovation, a budget transfer as requested by L.Spencer in the amount of \$7,637.00 from the Library Para Salary line to the Athletic Equipment line to replace Gym Audio System, a budget transfer as requested by L. Spencer in the amount of \$40,000.00 from the Nurse Health Benefits line and the Regular Instruction line to the Technology Equipment line to purchase additional Chromebooks and a Chromebook cart for MRMHS to ensure students have them when needed for testing and general classroom use and a budget transfer as requested by L. Spencer in the amount of \$38,778.00 from the Regular Instruction Retirement line, the B &G Health Insurance line and the Business Studies Textbooks line to the Replacement Furn/Equipment line to purchase replacement furniture for 5 classrooms in the 700s/800s wing renovation. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the budget transfers as presented by J. Morin. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 7.566/0/0/5.534. **Motion passes.**

**d. Charter & Goals: Finance/Facilities:** The Finance/Facilities Committee Charter and Goals were not in the packet.

**e. Board Goals:** The Board will place this on their next agenda.

**f. Superintendent Goals:** The Board will place this on their next agenda.

**8. Setting Next Meeting's Agenda:**

- 1. Policy Committee and Fin/Fac Committee Charter and Goals**
- 2. Authorize Manifest Signature**
- 3. Non-Meeting to collect Board Input for Negotiations**
- 4. Encumbrances if any**
- 5. Board Member Stipends**
- 6. Non-Certified Staff Nominations**
- 7. Non-Certified Staff Pay Increases**

**9. Public Comments:** There were no Public Comments.

**10. 10:30 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:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 7.566/0/0/5.534. **Motion passes.**

**11. 10:34 PM: 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: J. Cesaitis VOTE: 7.566/0/0/5.534. Motion passes.**

**12. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 PM. SECOND: J. Cesaitis VOTE: 7.566/0/0/5.534. Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Laura L. Aivaliotis  
Recording Secretary**

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