

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2021
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Winston Wright, Scott Peters, Michelle Connor via Zoom Karen Wheeler via Zoom, Lisa Steadman, Nick Mosher via Zoom, Dan LeClair, Betty Tatro, Eric Stanley and Kristin Noonan. **Absent:** Brian Bohannon, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas and Colleen Toomey.

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

Also Present: L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

“We collaborate not just to teach, but also to engage and educate every student in our district in an environment that is challenging, caring and safe, while fostering life-long learning.”

1. CALL TO ORDER & PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

2. Celebrate MRSD: Troy School has been selected Silver Medalist in the Region. Congratulations!!! The PAWSS Program at MRMHS has received recognition.

a. Middle School Cross Country: The Boy’s Middle School Cross Country Team are State Champions in their division. Congratulations!!!. Summer Bentley and Peyton Joslyn have won the Cross Country State Individuals. Congratulations!!! **MOTION:** to award each member of the Boy’s Middle School Cross Country Team and Individual State Champion Winners a jacket or equivalent garb or bling of their choice not to exceed \$100.00. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **VOTE:** 9.636/0/0/3.365. **Motion passes.**

b. Congratulations Jeanine LeClerc for receiving the Excellence in Leadership Award from the DEA. Congratulations!!!

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. CRC Review:

1. Recap of Community Input Sessions: S. Peters explained C. McDaniel-Thomas is not feeling well tonight and will not be in attendance. He will review the Input Sessions. He explained there were 4 Input Sessions one for MTC/Cutler, Troy, Emerson and Gilsum STEAM Academy. There were some community members and Board Members in attendance. He appreciated K. Barker came and helped with the presentation. He had supportive information on the bond and on the buildings. One comment shared by all was that the Board needs to get the word out regarding this project. L. Steadman said she attended the Input Session for Troy and it was an excellent presentation.

b. Board Chair Report:

1. Board Calendar: Policy, November 3, 2021, SAU. Extra-Curricular, November 4, 2021, SAU. Finance/Facilities, November 9, 2021, SAU. Board/Budget Committee Joint Meeting, November 13, 2021, SAU. The Budget Committee had asked to have the Joint Meeting earlier. He said he would ask the Board. The Board would like the meeting at 10:00 AM as scheduled. CRC, November 16, 2021, SAU. School Board, November 16, 2021, MRMHS Library. The Budget Committee has moved their next two meetings due to the holidays. Budget Committee, November 18, 2021, MRMHS Library and December 16, 2021, MRMHS Library. S.Peters mentioned that there must be members physically present for both the Board and the Budget Committees to have a quorum.

2. Budget Committee Update: S.Peters explained the Budget Committee went through the routine monthly reports presented by the Business Administrator. They reviewed the project backlog and suggested grouping all of the district projects together for a bond, Elementary Renovation Project, the SAU and MRMHS renovations. It would be an additional 13 million. The cost of the 800s and 700s at the MRMHS are not included in the blueprint cost. He did comment to the committee not to jam it all in one bond. Overall the Budget Committee seemed favorably to the approach. They asked about warrant articles for this year. S. Peters asked the Budget Committee how they felt about a line in the budget to fix some of these smaller projects on the list. The Budget Committee suggested putting unallocated funds in a trust.

B. Tatro would suggest letting the public know the process in regards to speaking at a Board Meeting. She would not mind allowing the man in the public to speak at this time. The question he had was what is ECC and Ed/Tech on the Board Calendar. S. Peters explained.

c. Budget:

1. Review Budget Timeline: The Board reviewed the budget timeline. The Board had already received the GMR from Healthtrust. He reported on the dates for the budget books to be picked up, the Joint Meeting, the warrant articles to be approved, the filing for the new candidates, the Public Hearing is on January 13, 2022 and the Deliberative Session is on February 5, 2022 and the Vote is on March 8, 2022. Monadnock Education Matters will be going out prior to the vote and that is an opportunity to get the word out on the Elementary School Renovation Projects as well as the budget and warrant articles. The information for the Monadnock Education Matters should be to the SAU office by February 9, 2022.

2. Review First Draft of 2022/23 Proposed Budget: The Board was given the first draft of the budget. L. Witte presented the proposals to the budget as follows: Reduce one teacher at Troy Elementary, \$88,138.00, add a Special Education Teacher at MRMHS, \$88,138.00, a cost sharing change with MESSA from 81% to 80% with a savings of \$21,070.00, GMR at 8.4%, \$384,714.00, Contractual Lane Changes, TBA, Transportation Contractual obligations, \$41,258.00 for a total of \$404,092.00 plus Lane Changes. The 21/22 budget is \$31,922,436.00 and the proposed administration 22/23 budget is \$32,339,039.00 which is an increase of 1.31%. The amount on the warrant will include the Food and Nutrition for the

administration's proposed budget and total \$33,309,039.00.

4. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. October 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to accept the Public and Non-Public School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. Wright.

VOTE: 8.66/0/.970/3.365. **Motion passes.**

b. Budget Transfers: There are no budget transfers.

c. Motion on the Manifest: MOTION: L. Steadman **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$2,062,038.35 as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** B. Tatro

VOTE: 9.636/0/0/3.365. **Motion passes.**

d. Revisit Retainage of Unallocated FundBalance-new info from DRA: J. Morin explained the information provided from DRA regarding the amount the district is able to retain was incorrect. At the time the Board was advised that they were able to retain \$ 987,637.15. The Board voted to retain only half and return the rest to the taxpayers. She explained the District was only able to retain 2.5% which was half of the amount the Board thought they could retain. With this new information it is up to the Board to decide if they want to keep the amount voted on or retain half of the authorized amount. S. Peters commented this is the first year we have done this. We have to have an emergency and it has to be approved by the State. He would suggest returning as much as possible. **MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to adjust the emergency fund retention value to \$246,900.00 **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained there was a mistake because there are other districts who can retain 5%. **VOTE:** 9.636/0/0/3.365.

Motion passes.

e. Covid Symptomatic Testing Proposal: L. Witte has reached out to UNH, a vendor and the SASS Program for symptomatic testing. The district has hired M. Szymcik to take on a majority of this task. L. Witte explained she has completed the waiver. She has also identified folks who want to administer the tests. She will work on training and consent forms. Let people know it is available to obtain a test. Things are moving quickly and the next steps are the training, getting the word out and consent forms. S. Peters commented that the Board did not actually vote on this. There were concerns. L. Witte explained we will have people to do the testing and not take teachers away from their classes. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to authorize the administration to implement a symptomatic COVID testing program. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained the testing will be in the nurse's office or principal's office. J. Rathbun explained it will be in a private office. L. Witte explained there are volunteers in every school. E. Stanley is concerned with sending sick kids into the schools. L. Witte explained there are people that come to school sick. She would eventually like to have the kids go to school just to get checked. K. Noonan said to keep

kids home but bring them for testing. She does not want the kids to go to school sick just so the parents can go to work. L. Witte explained reality is that it happens. She explained the SASS Program is for the students while in school. Once the program is in place then have them come in. The loophole is if there have symptoms at school we can test. This is not a medical facility to test. D. LeClair commented the protocol is if you are sick stay home. L. Witte commented if there are symptoms you come back with a negative test or you are out for 10 days. This test will help alleviate this. N. Mosher said he is not comfortable being a testing location if you are sick. L. Witte explained eventually when up and running it will be by appointment only. M. Connor commented that the students and staff will go to school not feeling well and they will get the test. L. Witte explained we cannot start that way we need to follow the protocol of the program. K. Noonan commented at the last meeting the administration said it would be difficult to get the tests. S. Peters is not comfortable with the principals, paras and teachers being taken away to do the testing. We are strapped for staff. K. Wheeler commented that this should help with staffing. **VOTE: 9.636/0/0/3.365. Motion passes.** B. Tatro asked if using the internal people is not working, let us know. L. Witte said the numbers are coming down in the district.

f. Warrant Article Review and Approval: The Board reviewed the proposed warrant articles for FY 22/23. Article One is the proposed budget. Article Two is for renovations for the fire panel at Gilsum, removal of the temporary classrooms at the MRMHS and roof repair at the MRMHS. Article Three is in the amount of \$500,000.00 for renovations at MRMHS, renovating the 700s and/or 800s. The ventilation in the wings will be grant funded. J. Rathbun explained the ESSR Funds are in the amount of 2.8 million and will cover the ventilation systems. He suggested not putting that amount in the article. It fully meets the grant requirements. J. Morin explained the windows are different but could be covered under CARES. The windows need to be non-functioning. There is also funding for lighting under Eversource but not sure how much. S. Peters asked if we raise and appropriate and we find out it is grant funded does the balance go back to the voters. J. Morin explained the articles are usually to be completed in up to 3 years. It absolutely can go back to the voters. S. Peters said the intent is to rationalize. K. Barker says if you tear down a wall you may need to address something else. K. Wheeler asked what if this gets voted down and we get the grant. S. Peters said we will get the ventilation but not the work on the wing. J. Rathbun explained the grant is for repair or new equipment. The warrant item covers items not covered by the grant. L. Steadman commented if we get the \$500,000.00 and do the 800s but not enough for the 700s due to grant funding that is ok. She would prefer to go with the \$500,000.00 and hope for the grant. S. Peters said we do not have official bids. The number is from K. Barker Architect

and Engineering team. S. Peters would not get bids until the warrant has passed. J. Morin commented that with the lighting we would receive monetary rebates but no upfront costs. D. LeClair suggested \$647,000.00 and do it all and see if we get the grants. That will keep it under 1 million or 1.2 million. L. Steadman said to put the \$500,000.00 on the warrant and see if we get the grants. It was commented that we can use the grants and be efficient by doing the entire 800 and 700 wings. J. Rathbun commented there are 3.9 million in ESSR funds and a large chunk is for ventilation and air quality. It is a done deal. We have until September 2021 to use every cent. He said it would be smart to use the grant funds before the Elementary School Renovation Project and not at the same time as the bond vote. They have to be separate. It was commented do not let MRMHS be part of the bond conversation. We need to do the ventilation and wings separate. J. Rathbun explained if the heating and ventilation is the same system it is covered. He put that in the grant because it is air quality. K. Wheeler would like the Finance/Facilities Committee to discuss the project and the ESSR grant funds at their next meeting. Article Four is the MDEA Contract. Article Five is the Special Education Expendable Trust. Article Six is the District Vehicle Expendable Trust. Article Seven is the Building Maintenance Expendable Trust. Article Eight is to fund Article 5, Article 6 and Article 7 if there is only enough for those articles. Article Nine is a Repairs Expendable Trust. J. Morin reported on the dollar amounts remaining in the expendable trusts as follows: Emergency Fuel Trust, \$58,089.28, BASP Trust, \$27.68, MRSD Health Trust, \$63,346.93, School Building Maintenance Trust, \$38,441.35, Special Education Trust, \$334,792.34, 2020 MRSD Vehicle Trust, \$50,077.87 and 2020 MRSD School Grounds Trust, \$60,093.45. L. Steadman suggested that if the MRSD Health Expendable Trust has no purpose then dissolve it. J. Morin will research it first before doing something different. K. Wheeler would like to add this to the Finance/Facilities Committee agenda. S. Peters commented the warrant is getting very long and he would suggest picking a few articles.

5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

J. Morin explained the district has 2 milling machines that are really old, they do not want to use them and they do not fit in with the new renovations. Ron Fabianski did his homework and has received 4 bids for the 2 machines. J. Morin would like the Board to accept the highest bid in the amount of \$2500.00. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the sale of the 2 milling machines to the highest bidder in the amount of \$2500.00. **SECOND:** W. Wright.

DISCUSSION: They have been replaced with more modern equipment. **VOTE:**

9.636/0/0/3.364. **Motion passes.**

1. Employee Health and Wellness: L. Witte explained that there

was discussion on where we are with staff and subs. This is taking a toll on the staff. L. Steadman explained that there are districts around the country who are giving their staff November 12, 2021 off. That would give the district staff a long weekend. L. Steadman feels it is a really good idea. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to adjust the district calendar and to make Friday November 12, 2021 a day of no school. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** D. LeClair commented that we recently gave the staff a lot of money. K. Noonan had asked for this topic on the agenda. All of the staff are burnt out. Many people thought this year was going to be different but it is exhausting. We are also short on subs. There is no planning time and so many of the teachers are working hard. Let everyone know that we see that and give them a Mental Health Day. It is a great idea and the staff deserves it. E. Stanley said to be careful. He does not feel this is the time with the holiday breaks coming up. K. Wheeler is all for Mental Health Day but her concern is babysitters and Veteran Events and activities. L. Witte explained after school activities can still go on. M. Connor commented that this motion will affect families. They need to be in the thought process. Businesses do not allow for mental health days. L. Witte commented the time would not have to be made up. L. Witte suggested thinking about Monday or Tuesday before Christmas vacation. B. Tatro explained it is very stressful for the teachers to try and get the students who have been out up to the same level as the rest of the students who are in class. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to amend the motion and make December 20 and December 21, 2021 days of no school. **SECOND:** S. Peters. **DISCUSSION:** It was commented how this will impact the kids' education. There will be a lot of time off shortly. Maybe a good time between February and March. The kids just recently had 3-4 days off. It does not make sense. L. Witte explained it would not have to be made up because we are on an hour's calendar. M. Connor suggested a survey to see what days are best. There are a lot of days off coming up. Parents do not get bonus days off. Survey the parents. This is not the right time nor is it fair. S. Peters said a survey would give a weird mix of results. L. Witte would agree. S. Peters explained those two days the kids are bonkers and excited. If approved, we back up the holiday events a week. L. Steadman said November 12 is a treat but will vote against December 20 and 21. S. Peters said give them a break but a great point about parents having to scramble. Too soon and disruptive. Wait and there will be no surprises and keep it on the agenda. **VOTE on amendment:** 2.870/5.431/1.335/3/365. **Motion fails.** **VOTE on original motion:** 5.348/3.318/1.917/3.365. **Motion passes.** B. Tatro would like to know how we can help with the stress of the teachers. She would like to keep this on the agenda. **E. Stanley leaves and the Board does not have a quorum.**

2. Education Progress Report:

- a. IReady Grades 3-8:** Discussion for the next meeting.
- b. NH State Assessments:** Discussion for the next meeting.

b. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

- 1. Education Progress Report**
- 2. Employee Health and Wellness**

3. **Warrant Articles**
4. **Opportunity for vaccination clinics**
5. **Review prior motion regarding timing of vaccine.**

6. **Public Comments:** Steve of Swanzey commented on the number of used masks on the playground.

Curtis Hopkins, Selectman of Troy commented that he is against symptomatic testing. If the student is sick, go to the clinic. He also commented that he would ask for a discussion on the use of roller skates to be considered for the Troy School. He would ask the School Board to reconsider allowing the roller skating in the MPR. He did mention that picture retake is November 12, 2021 at Troy School.

D. Coffman commented on the lack of time spent on the delivery of education. A lot of time on COVID, discussion on warrant articles, appropriate and education for kids near szro. You are not looking into or discussing education. To give another day off. It is stressful and it is the job. These kids are behind, let's spend money to help with education resources. Cannot imagine giving an extra day off. No other job would consider that. You are not talking about the kids only staff. He does appreciate the CIP which has taken a lot out of the agenda.

7. **ADJOURNMENT:** E. Stanley left the meeting. There was no quorum. There was no motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent