

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

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

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum and Student Assessment 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.”

Non-Public Session: MOTION: E. Stanley **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:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 10.764/0/0/2.235. **Motion passes.**

1. S. Peters called to recess the meeting until 7:00 PM: S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: E. Stanley reported on the Boys State Championship Track Team, Delaney Swanson Track Champion and the Middle School Boys CDL Title Track Winners. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to award the Spring Track Championship Winners with traditional swag including the Middle School CDL Title Winners. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** The Board agreed to vote on this later in the meeting. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

Shana Thompson of Troy asked what action is taken if a teacher were to go against Board policy. There was a book being read by her child which was titled This Book is Anti-Racist. She asked her child about it and spoke to the teacher, L. Witte and emailed the entire Board. The book is no longer being read. She would like to know what action would be taken so that this is not a problem in the future.

3. **CELEBRATE MRSD:** L. Witte showed photos of the construction area being fenced in for the new Tech/Ed expansion. It is underway and very exciting.

4. **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

a. **Operations/Superintendent's Report:**

i. **Summer Programs Update:** J. Rathbun explained the Summer Programs are up and running and ready to go. There will be Summer School at the high school, Title One tutoring which is 100% free, one on one 2 times a week, Beyond the Bell which has hundreds of students signed up and ESY which also has a huge amount of students signed up. ESY is for grades K-12. All of the summer programs will start July 1, 2021. J. Rathbun explained each program to the Board. He said the pavilion at Wilcox and MTC will be used for summer school. This will allow the students outside space for learning.

ii. **Draft Fall 2021 Plan and Timeline Review:** L. Witte explained the draft today being presented is a federal requirement condition of the CARES grant which is to create a Fall Plan. There is a small time frame. This plan is due June 23, 2021. L. Witte explained a survey was conducted and input was received from various groups. The key points from the survey were to follow DHHS or make masks optional. This draft is a first read. The Board will have the second draft at the June 15, 2021 Board Meeting but will be given prior to the meeting. It was rushed but we were given a late notice. A survey would have been a helpful tool to move forward.

iii. **ESSER III Program Assurance:** L. Witte provided the Board with a copy of the ESSER assurance which they reviewed. This document is a list of things we agree to do and not to do while accepting the funds.

b. **Budget Committee Update:**

i. **Summer Meeting Schedule:** S. Peters explained the Budget Committee will be meeting through the summer.

ii. **Budget Tracking Report:** The committee received a line by line budget from J. Morin as requested.

iii. **Bond Strategy:** The committee gave a great deal of input for the strategy of the elementary bond. We will send that information to the CRC. The hottest item was a suggestion of a set of talking points. Everyone will have the same information to give to the voters. It was suggested no more than 5 talking points.

c. **Full Board Summer Meeting Schedule:** S. Peters explained the Board usually meets only once in July and August. The calendar for the Board has 2 meetings scheduled for July and August. July 6 and August 6 will be tentative.

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

a. **May 18, 2021 Minutes: MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the May 18,

2021 School Board Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 10.915/0/2.0850. **Motion passes.**

b. Budget Transfers: J. Morin explained there is a change order for the Tech/Ed Expansion. She explained the increase is due to a fire retardant spray for the ceiling tiles. The Fire Marshal would not allow exposed ceilings. The additional amount is \$77,125.90. J. Morin suggested the use of the unallocated fund balance. L. Witte explained we have an actual estimate. S. Peters would be looking for a motion. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the spending of the FY21 unallocated funds to pay for a change order in the amount of \$77,126.00 to pay for the fire proofing of the ceiling in the Tech/Ed addition. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained the administration does not have a final number regarding the unallocated fund balance until the final audit is complete. We still have expenses but there will be a sufficient amount of money to cover this. D. LeClair commented the amount is now \$200,000.00 more than the article. L. Witte explained yes they were estimates of pre COVID. **VOTE:** 11.879/1.122/0/0. **Motion passes.**

c. Manifest: **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,192,976.64. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

d. Authorize Weekly AP Check & Manifest Signatures: **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to authorize the Business Administrator to issue weekly Accounts Payable checks as needed until the Board meets in August without waiting for a Board Meeting approval. **SECOND:** N. Mosher. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to authorize B. Tatro, C. McDaniel-Thomas, C. Toomey, M. Connor and E. Stanley to sign the manifest weekly. (2 signatures are required weekly). **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

e. Authorize Superintendent to Hire Certified Staff Through Sept.7, 2021: **MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to authorize the Superintendent to hire certified staff until Sept. 7, 2021 without waiting for a Board Meeting to nominate. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes. (E. Stanley missing from vote)**

f. 2021/22 School Calendar (June 2022 Graduation Adjustment): S. Peters explained graduation 2022 is scheduled for June 4, 2021 at 10:00 AM. L. Witte explained she and T. Cote have been in communication with other Athletic Directors and the athletic event start times are not at 10:00 but she is not sure of the schedules. She has been successful with the other ADs and the NHIAA. The Meet of Champions is a different beast. It is hard to change the schedule. T. Cote had made every effort to change it. There is no change to the schedule for the Meet of Champions. It is very problematic. It is at a college and not feasible. The day and time of graduation can change. L. Witte noted that NHIAA does have Sunday events. L. Spencer would

suggest graduation on Friday night. C. Toomey asked if there were any other students besides the athletes that had asked for the change. L. Witte said there was no survey of the junior class.

MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to move graduation to Friday evening June 3, 2022.

SECOND: M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan would like to hear from the community. N. Mosher would like feedback. K. Wheeler agrees with both K. Noonan and N. Mosher.

MOTION: K. Wheeler **MOVED** to table the motion until we can conduct a survey to confirm the change. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 11.925/1.075/0/0. **Motion passes.** E. Stanley understands there may be issues with people traveling but what about what the seniors and the kids have to say. S. Peters will ask the administration to conduct a survey which probably will not be ready for the next meeting. We will put this on a future agenda when the administration feels it is appropriate.

g. 2021/22 Opportunities for COVID Alumni: L. Witte spoke to L. Spencer about this issue and there were a number of concerns which would make the administration not recommend a formal invitation. We would not want the alumni to displace current students and there is a concern with the students being older that is why NHIAA has rules. S. Peters summarized by saying the alumni would have to be volunteers, go through a background check and the principals would have to agree. L. Witte explained the background check is very easy. We have our own system in house. *N. Mosher leaves meeting.*

h. 2021/22 Superintendent Goals: S. Peters explained he has met with L. Witte to discuss her goals for the 2021/2022 school year. **Goal #1** Board Educational Goal is an academic growth goal. L. Witte explained the growth goal of 5% is comparing it to us. She can present the growth with the cohort and non-cohort. The State testing is the most public testing. We use the data to see what we do. Looking not at the outcomes. This is a data point to ensure we take it seriously. How we take the test in regards to the students. B. Bohannon would like to see how this works out. Would like to see the results next year and would like to see a focus. **Goal #2** Formalize District Responsiveness. L. Witte explained we have a process in place. We have policies. There are a lot of opportunities and it is difficult to know who to contact and address your concerns such as a help desk or maintenance. A tool for parents to guide them through the process. Create a pilot run. This will be summer work and review the data. L. Witte explained if there are concerns and they are solved at the school level there is no reason for the Superintendent to get involved. S. Peters asked what if the concern does not get addressed. L. Witte explained the process will be if a parent calls the school the administrative assistant will ask them to log into the process. **Goal #3** Leadership and Development. L. Witte attends the National Certification Program and National Conference (AASA). Her capstone project is on the building project of the elementary schools. She has and will be tracking the entire project. She is on track to graduate in February of 2022. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to adopt the 2021/2022 Superintendent Goals as presented. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

i. Policies for First Read:

i. BDA-R-update:

ii. IFE-retire:

iii. IFC-retire:

iv. IGAF, IHAM-recode IGAF to IHAM

v. IFD, IGD-recode IFD to IGD

vi. IGAF, IHAE-recode IGAF to IHAE: MOTION: K. Noonan MOVED

on behalf of the Policy Committee to adopt the policy changes as presented. **SECOND: C**
Toomey. **VOTE: 12.787/0/0/.213. Motion passes.**

6. Facebook Post: S. Peters presented D. LeClair's Facebook Post to the Board. It was in regards to books in the school that children were able to read. S. Peters reminded the Board that there is a Board Member Behavior Policy. The Facebook Post is disturbing. He reviewed the policy on screen with the Board. L. Witte explained she was made aware of this book being read by a parent on May 4, 2021. She agreed with the parent's concerns. The books are no longer in the school or ever have been in the other schools. This book was never approved and was used as a read aloud. The concerns were resolved by the principal. S. Peters asked D. LeClair at what point did he contact the principal or the Superintendent. D. LeClair said he addressed a concern at the last Board Meeting but did not contact the principal or Superintendent. The Board Members need to contact the administration before bringing it to the Board Meeting. **MOTION: S. Peters MOVED** to censure Board Member D. LeClair for his approach to raising criticism of how the administration handled a sensitive matter. **SECOND: M. Connor. DISCUSSION: M. Connor** thanked S. Peters for this motion. B. Tatro asked if we had a new Board orientation this year. S. Peters said no but each Board Member signed the Ethics Policy. D. LeClair said he never said he was acting as a School Board Member in the post. He was acting as a parent and a community member. He said he can express his feelings as he sees fit. S. Peters said not in a leadership position. We are held at a higher level. It was irresponsible. D. LeClair said it was being taught in the schools. K. Noonan said the post is misleading and irresponsible. **VOTE: 10.544/1.122/1.122/.213. Motion passes.** L. Steadman asked what if a member did not sign the policy. S. Peters commented whether or not we sign it we are obligated to follow policy.

7. Superintendent's Response to Public Comments: L. Witte explained at the last meeting D. LeClair had 5 concerns at the MRMHS as well as comments in the Keene Sentinel. The concerns were an assignment given by a teacher, research topics that fit the teacher's ideology, complaints about the CNN 10 Program and students not giving their opinion because of peer harassment. She explained she has not heard any of this. S. Peters commented that the Board conducts their business on facts, truth, ethics and policy.

8. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. Committee Meetings-Live

9. Public Comments: S. Thompson commented that she is disgusted with the Board and L. Witte. You are a member of the public and work for us. It is factional information that the books were being read and you are sweeping this under the rug. L. Witte should have said she was not aware of those specific instances but other complaints. It is absolutely disgusting and you do not have our children's best interest at heart. If circumstances continue she will pull her children out of public school.

M. Diven said that L. Witte is the absolute best superintendent we have had in a long time. She will take care of whatever is put on her desk. The Board and the Superintendent have taken care of this issue. She also explained her daughter had missed the trip to Ferry Beach in 6th grade and now is an 8th grader and asked if the administration had thought about something else to help replace the trip that did not happen due to COVID.

10. 9:08 PM 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:** C. Toomey **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0.213. **Motion passes.**

11. 9:18 PM Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-A:3-II (a) Compensation of any public employee: MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II (a) **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0.213. **Motion passes.**

12. Return to Public Session and Sealing of Minutes: MOTION: K. Wheeler **MOVED** to seal the 9:18 PM June 1, 2021 Non-Public Meeting Minutes until June 17, 2021. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 10.54/0/0/2.45

13. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 11:09 PM. **SECOND:** W. Wright **VOTE:** 10.54/0/0/2.45. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent