

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Lisa Steadman, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Eric Stanley, Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Michelle Connor, Karen Wheeler, Brin 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.”

1. SUPERINTENDENT OPENS THE MEETING: L. Witte opened the meeting at 7:12 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

a. Welcome New Board Members: S. Peters congratulated the same 13 Board Members.

E. Kelly of Swanzey, a staff member, is concerned about going back to school in full capacity. She is not comfortable without everyone being vaccinated. She is concerned about the space between the students. The ventilation is an issue. She does not support the full return to school until it is safe. She said the staff is working hard and diligently. The decision to return should be based on the data not the Board’s opinions. She would like the motion for a full return tabled until all are vaccinated.

L. Mango of Swanzey, a staff member, would encourage maintaining the current model. She would send the kids to school when it is safe. Her child was doing VLACS and 100% remote, it is not ideal but it is safe. Currently, her child is doing hybrid and it is going well. At the schools we have social distancing, masks and hybrid which are safe.

D. Coffman of Swanzey would like the Board to consider a full return schedule. He would respectfully disagree about not returning to school. The staff and administration have been trained about the masks. He has spoken to paras and staff and they say the classrooms are the best place for the kids. We had a year of kids not being in the classrooms. What would it take to get these kids back in the classrooms? Get these kids back into school.

J. Desrosiers of Swanzey has 2 students in the district. She explained kids are getting together outside of school. This is a huge hardship for parents. It is time to get the kids back to school.

Jenna Condap, a student at the school would like to continue with hybrid. She has a schedule outside of school. She said it would be crowded and a number of people do not wear the masks.

Mia Tatro, a student is struggling with the hybrid model. She started the year strong and motivated and now she is struggling. It is a struggle to reach teachers. She feels safe at school. She fully supports returning to full time.

3. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Election of School Officers:

i. Board Chair and Vice Chair: MOTION: L. Steadman **MOVED** to nominate S. Peters as Board Chair. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 10.880/0/.998/1.122. **Motion passes. MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to nominate L. Steadman as Board Vice Chair. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

ii. Board Treasurer and Secretary: MOTION: L. Steadman **MOVED** to nominate W. Wright as Board Treasurer. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 10.763/0/1.115/1.122. **passes. MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to combine the Treasurer and the Secretary roles for the SAU on a permanent basis. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 9.834/0/2.045/1.122. **Motion passes.**

iii. Update on Recount: L. Sutton and B. Hutwelker oversaw the recount process. K. Noonan, C. Toomey, C. McDaniel-Thomas, D. LeCLair, S. Peters and A. Hopkins helped with the recount. The unofficial recount numbers are as follows: Yes-1111, No-1117 and blank-77. Article Two, the updating of the ventilation systems at Gilsum and the MRMHS still fails. S. Peters thanked everyone for the effort and said this was the best thing to do. ***D. LeClair arrives.***

b. March 2, 2021 Minutes and Non-Public Minutes: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the March 2, 2021 Non-Public and Public Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 11.672/0/1.328/0. **Motion passes.**

c. Manifest: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,220,894.04. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

d. Board Member Documentation:

i. Contact Sheet: S. Peters asked Board Members to check the contact sheet for accuracy.

ii. BCA/BCA-R (Ethics Commitment Form): S. Peters explained Policy BCA/BCA-R is not required each year. Once the oath is taken and the form signed it is not required as long as the service to the Board continues. If there is a break in service it will again be required. The Board's policy says to sign annually. He would ask the Policy Committee to put Policy BCA/BCA-R on their backlog. S. Peters said those who need to sign can do so electronically. There is no option not to sign it. There will be no Board orientation due to no new members.

e. Evaluation Standing Committees (Policy BDE): The Board went over the committee assignments. Some members had shown interest in certain committees.

f. Committee Assignments and Schedule (White Board): Negotiations: L. Steadman, W. Wright and M. Connor. Policy: K. Noonan, W. Wright and C. Toomey. Ed/Tech: B. Bohannon, W. Wright and B. Tatro. Fin/Fac: W. Wright, D. LeClair, B. Tatro and C. Toomey. CRC: D. LeCLair, B. Tatro and C. McDaniel-Thomas. Legislative: L. Steadman, C. McDaniel-Thomas, M. Connor. Extra-Curricular: E. Stanley, D. LeClair, B. Bohannon. Budget Committee-

S. Peters, Wellness-K. Wheeler. CCC-W. Wright. S. Peters explained when the committees should meet and ask the current committee chairs to schedule the first meeting. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to form a Legislative Ad hoc Committee. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 12.787/0.213/0. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to reactivate the Extra-Curricular Committee. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters reviewed Policy BDE. E. Stanley is concerned kids are staying away. They need to get involved in all aspects. **VOTE:** 12.030/0.970/0. **Motion passes.** S. Peters explained Policy BDE states that the Board will review the appointments and vote at the next meeting. S. Peters would ask the Board to vote tonight on the appointments. **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to invoke Policy BGF and suspend Policy BDE allowing for the committee appointments to be voted on this evening. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 12.787/0.213/0. **Motion passes.** S. Peters reviewed the members on each committee and explained when he would like them to meet. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the committee appointments made by the Board Chair. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **VOTE:** 12.787/0.213/0. **Motion passes.**

g. Budget Committee Meetings: S. Peters prepared a draft which he would like the Board to approve and to be sent to the Budget Committee at their organizational meeting. The draft is asking the Budget Committee to weigh in on a number of topics by a specific date. The draft is also asking a Budget Committee Member to join the Board Meetings and participate in dialogue. C. McDaniel-Thomas said the document looks good. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to approve the letter of requests to the Budget Committee. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 12.030/0.970/0/0. **Motion passes.**

h. Proposed Board Meeting Time/Dates/Standard Snow Dates: **MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the School Board Meeting Calendar as presented. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 12.787/0.213/0. **Motion passes.** **N. Mosher leaves the meeting.**

i. Bids for MRMHS Tech-Ed Construction: J. Morin explained the District had received one bid last year for the Tech-Ed project and it was over \$500,000.00. Construction costs had increased and the timeline was an issue. This year D. LaPointe reached out to companies and she is presenting 3 bids tonight. The lowest bid is from D.E.W. Construction in the amount of \$927,485.00 and that is the recommendation of the administration. The project will be \$195,667.32 over budget. She has identified the additional funds from the Health Trust Surplus. These funds can be used only by the vote of the Board. It is in the best interest of the District to use these funds and move forward. There is no budget transfer. The Board will have to accept the bid and approve the surplus funds to be used toward the Tech-Ed Project. J. Morin suggested accepting the bid and approving the surplus in the same motion. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to accept the Tech Ed construction bid from D.E.W. Construction and to approve the use of the Health Trust Surplus to complete the Tech-Ed construction project. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained D.E.W. Construction did all of the work at MTC. The dust collection purchase will have no middle man. D. LeClair asked if the funds from the Health Trust Surplus could go back to the voters. J. Morin said yes. D. LeClair said the voters voted on the original amount not the additional Health Trust surplus funds. E. Stanley asked if the dust collection could be under the CARES Funds. L. Witte explained the cost of everything skyrocketed as well as building materials. She explained we do not have any information on the anticipated funds. She explained the funds had been received by the State yesterday. At this point we are not sure of the use of the grant funds. K. Wheeler asked if we could vote at the next meeting. J. Morin said breaking ground would happen in April and the warrant article funds need to be spent by

June 2022. D.E.W. will be delivering the steel ASAP. K. Noonan said she appreciates what D. LeClair is saying but we are in charge of the budget and use the funds to complete the project. It was estimated correctly but all projects went up. It was the will of the taxpayers to do the project. B. Tatro said to do the project. She feels we will jeopardize other projects if we do not do this one. B. Bohannon said to move forward on this. **VOTE: 11.665/1.122/0/.213. Motion passes.**

j. Girls Ice-Hockey Co-op (Monadnock, Fall Mtn., Conval): MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the dissolving of the current Girl's Hockey Coop and to approve the forming of the newer and larger coop. **SECOND: C. Toomey. VOTE: 11.712/0/1.175/.213. Motion passes.**

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. Hybrid Remote Count Updates: L. Witte updated the Board on the hybrid/remote percentages. Hybrid 84.40% and Remote 15.60%.

ii. Full Return Considerations: L. Witte explained it is not a staffing issue it is a space issue to fully return. We are currently using all of the space. There are recommendations in the packet. We will consider the comfort levels of all involved. She asked input from principals. Social distancing on buses is not possible. We may be able to stagger the arrivals. The rooms are difficult but we have solutions. Face masks are mandatory. We have plexiglass available to use. A return of 4 days will warrant additional staff and 5 days' staff and paras are needed. Five-day return is not a recommendation. There are 213 staff that need to get vaccinated and about 70 have been so far. M. Connor commented that the document is easy to read. She thanked L. Witte. It was asked about a timeline. J. Rathbun explained it would take 2 full days to get in the trailers to get the furniture. C. McDaniel-Thomas does not believe all staff should get vaccinated all at once. She is concerned about mass absences. L. Witte explained that is the reason for the Krif Road site. They will go in small groups. B. Bohannon thanked L. Witte for the document. He does not see the benefit of going to school for 4 weeks and blowing up what we have done. S. Peter said we want to get the kids back to somewhat normal but shuffling is not normal. A different model, not sure, our buildings are challenged. B. Tatro asked how many more days of school. L. Witte explained there are 67 days left. B. Tatro said that is still a big chunk. C. Toomey would agree with B. Bohannon. She is not sure about rushing it. L. Witte met with L. Spencer and the Prom Advisors. We are not sure what it will look like but we all agree those things need to happen. D. LeClair would suggest returning 4 days by the beginning of May.

iii. 2021/22 Proposed Budget Reductions: L. Witte began at the beginning of the budget process and explained how we got to this point. She explained there are 1000+ lines in the budget. There was a reduction in the budget of \$855,000.00 and we need to identify it in the individual lines. She was very proud of the proposed budget the administration came in with. She said J. Morin does a fantastic job working with the principals. The budget process begins 18 months prior. She explained the GMR and the previous year's numbers. The reduction was a recommendation from the Budget Committee and the voters agreed. The administration looked at the budgets of each of the schools. L. Witte explained there are risks with the reductions. J. Morin explained the GMR was 4.5% in the Fall and came in at 2.5% for a savings of \$150,000.00. She explained she had received that percentage this afternoon. L. Witte explained on April 6 the Superintendent will be nominating certified staff. They will look at the GMR and the recommended cuts. L. Witte explained she did talk to J. Morin regarding where we are in the budget. The administration spoke to the Union leaders and all

agreed there is an interest for offering early retirement based on seniority. J. Morin identified \$400,000.00 regarding early retirement for staff. This year they would like to offer it to the unaffiliated staff as well. It is suggested to waive the 18-month notice and they will not have the ability to rescind. Those who have already shown interest in retiring will go to the top of the list. L. Witte would like the Policy Committee to review Policy DPA. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to extend the Early Retirement package proposed by the Administration. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

B. Tatro asked if there is a point to vote to open the schools full time. S. Peters said that would be a motion on the next agenda.

5. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Motion for full return of 4 days starting May 3**
- b. Committee Reports at the Board Meeting**
- c. SMART Goals**
- d. Nominations**

6. Public Comments: A. Hopkins thanked the recount team and the process. It went well and it was fair. He thanked L. Sutton and B. Hutwelker. He said he appreciated the Letter to the Budget Committee. He mentioned the Budget Committee's agenda has been set. S. Peters said he would be attending the meeting. S. Peters would like to have the Budget Committee go line by line making cuts to equal the reduction in the budget. A. Hopkins said the Budget Committee is responsible for the bottom line only. He commented on the Tech-Ed Project and the fact there is an increase of 23%, that is more than the voters said.

M. Divens is a new Budget Committee Member from Swanzey and thanked the Board for allowing the voting to take place in the MRMHS. She would hope that the Board will consider this again for future voting.

J. Mercier thanked the Board, teachers and staff for their work over the past year. There is a little light at the end of the school year.

7. 10:09 PM Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-A:3-II (c): MOTION: C. Toomey **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:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

8. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 12.757/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent