Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021 (Not Yet Approved)
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, Dan LeClair **Absent:** Nick Mosher and B.Bohannon

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum and Student Assessment, C. Woods, Director of Student Services 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: S. Peters opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: S. Peters informed the Board K. Noonan has been named one of the 10 Trend Setters of 2021. Congratulations Kristen.

Jessica Jones, a preschool teacher at MTC explained the social and emotional learning curriculum at the school. She explained the activities in which the children work on. The MTC community would like to thank the School Board and the administration for keeping our schools open. The children worked on a quilt with the staff. Each square represents what the children have learned.

Amanda Grinstead is having trouble with getting connected. S.Peters asked her to email him her comments.

3. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Policies: (2nd Read)

i. IKE/IKE-R

ii. BHA

iii. BHE

iv. BEAB: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to approve Policy IKE/IKE-R, BHA, BHE and BEAB with the policy edits recommended by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** C. Toomey. **VOTE:** 9.429/0/0/3.571. **Motion passes. W. Wright arrives.**

b. Architect Bids for MRMHS Classroom Addition: J. Morin presented the 3 bids for architect and engineering design for the classroom additions. She would like to recommend

Barker Architect. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to accept the MRMHS classroom architecture bid from Barker Architect. ***SECOND:*** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 9.422/1.122/0/2.456.**Motion passes.**

c. January 19, 2021 Minutes and Non-Public Minutes: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the January 19, 2021 Non-Public and Public Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 10.544/0/0/2.456. **Motion passes.**

d. Manifest: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of $1,748,883.78. **SECOND:** C.Toomey. **VOTE:** 10.544/0/0/2.456. **Motion passes.**

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Debrief from NHSBA Delegate Assembly: L.Steadman had attended the NHSBA Delegate Assembly on behalf of the Board. She explained she voted as instructed by the Board. Our two resolutions went through as anticipated. S.Peters would like to suggest a Legislative Committee when the new Board forms. He would like to see how the Board feels about it. L. Steadman explained the Delegate Assembly may change the time of the assembly to be earlier in the year. She spoke of specific resolutions. The minutes and the summary of the meeting will be available. S. Peters thanked L. Steadman for attending the assembly on behalf of the Board.

b. Board Goals Review:

i. Debrief from Deliberative Session: S. Peters commented on an excellent job done by the tech team, the hired tech team and the administration involved. He said the day was handled well although the meeting started late. L. Witte explained the situation regarding the voters in the Annex and also the audio issue. It was explained the day before there were no problems with the audio and video. M. Connor said she had no idea anything was going on. B. Tatro asked if there was back up. C. Toomey said she came in the middle of the incident and it was handled well. S. Peters commented on future in person Board Meetings and that he would prefer as is or until the vaccine is rolled out. E. Stanley said he would like to have an option. The attendance with the Zoom Meetings has increased. S. Peters would agree with E. Stanley but either remote or in person. K. Noonan would like to have an option with the hybrid. S. Peters would like to give kudos to the Superintendent and her team. You acted professionally. We did not know what was going on.

ii. ESSR Grant Funds: There were comments on the Press Release from the DOE regarding the federal grant funds due to COVID. NH will be receiving 156 million dollars. The draft states Monadnock will be receiving 1.76 million which is great news. **D. LeClair arrives.** This issue was brought up on Saturday and the administration said it was speculation. The administration decided not to disclose. S. Peters said he took a phone call from DOE and his guidance was that it would be unwise to raise this topic up at the Deliberative Session. We do not know how the funds would affect the ballot and the articles on the ballot cannot be taken off. There is potential that if Article Two passes we could use the ESSR funds. D. LeClair asked if we get the COVID funds will it go back to the voters. If we receive the grant the $840,000.00 needs to go back to the voters. S. Peters said if Article Two fails no means no. We need to wait to see how we receive the funds. These funds were awarded

under the Trump administration. We should expect a delay. It might drift into Spring and Summer. The process takes time. E. Stanley commented the use of the funds are more broad than the last grant. It sounds like the HVAC is included. It is a lot easier than the last amount of funding. It was commented that this needs to be looked at in a realistic view. E. Stanley said this should have been mentioned. We knew that was happening. A direct question was asked. We need to say there is a possibility. K. Wheeler said it was handled well, it is a draft. We are not guaranteed and we are discussing it now. E. Stanley said the 156 million needs to be set by the State, approved and awarded. C. Toomey said it was handled well and agrees with K. Wheeler. She does remember the administration saying if we receive funds they will go back to the taxpayers. K. Noonan said L. Witte said the administration would investigate and it was up to the Board to spend the funds. We did not know much about the funds. She said there are too many questions regarding the funds. B. Tatro said there is an undertone of criticizing the administration. This is the most honest administration she has worked with. This is not a time to finger point. S. Peters said the Board will have to figure out where funds will be spent. We will look toward the administration to recommend.

iii. Edit Approval of Warrant Articles in Plain English: The CRC presented the Warrant Articles in Plain English (draft form). S. Peters explained the Board will review each article and make changes where necessary. Article One states the restructuring of positions. K. Noonan suggested stating if the default passes and continue to explain the restructuring. L. Witte offered a suggestion to say if the proposed budget fails. More suggestions were made by members. D. LeClair commented we are persuading and not explaining. The Board made edits to Article One. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Article One in plain english as proposed at the Board Meeting. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **VOTE:** 9.429/2.236/0/1.335.**Motion passes. Article Two in Plain English:** L. Steadman said to possibly mention the grant. L. Witte said we can not mention the grant funds. They are potential funds and may not allow us to do the UV Ventilators. L. Witte said we could jeopardize the funds. L. Steadman said to let them know no means no. B. Tatro said we are crossing the bridge before we get to it regarding the funds. The Board continued to make some edits on the remaining Articles in Plain English. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to approve Warrant Articles 2-9 in plain english as proposed during the Board Meeting.**SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

iv. Policy BAA-School Board Self-Evaluation: S. Peters reviewed the performance as a Board survey. He would like to pass the feedback to the incoming Board.This is a guidance for the School Board. The goal is to have all School Board Members participate.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. New DHHS Guidance: L. Witte reported the information in the Board packet is the guidance from the DHHS. The information from January 26, 2021 was not known in advance. The School Board does not need to take action. This is guidance for when to return to school. The new model for the end of January says we should be back to school in person. She

explained this change makes people very uneasy. We have had schools and classrooms close. The new guidance is due to the vaccine lobby. Political or not, we are not there yet. We have had our kids in school more than other districts. There has to be a vote by the Board on when to open up. She said the Union Rep. said this is not a time to loosen guidance. L.Witte said she would recommend current status and no change at this time. D. LeClair said we should follow the recommendation of the State. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to endorse the recommendation from the Administration to continue to follow the State's September 1, 2020 guidance on transitioning between school and instructional models. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

ii. Hybrid/Remote Update: L. Witte updated the Board on the amount of students in hybrid vs. remote. She put the information by school on the screen. She will continue to update at future meetings.

iii. 2021/22 District Calendar (1st Read): J. Rathbun presented the 2021-2022 calendar to the Board. He explained it to the new members. The Board will have time to look at the calendar and vote at the next meeting.

5. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. Number of school days for Cohort A and Cohort B
b. Mask Restrictions
c. What will gradual back to school look like
d. Quarter 2 Data Report-MRMHS Progress Check
e. Board Self-Assessment

6. Public Comments: A. Hopkins of Troy is disappointed in the administration because of the COVID funding information. He said it was a press release and an email. He said he had a brief discussion with another administrator about the funding. In the email you will find a list of ways to use the funds. He said #14 says to improve air quality. This information could have been shared. The ESSER II Funds should have been disclosed. We prepare the budget with estimates. The Board's job is to question the administration, not rubber stamp. We cannot change what happened but his hope is to have transparency as a new goal for the administration.

Amanda Grinstead of Richmond commented on the Saturday Deliberative Session in which she and her grandmother sat in the Annex. She said her grandmother could not stand up in the hallway. She had no idea where to go. Her family was told they could not use the facilities because they were not wearing a mask. She would like an explanation and who authorized the notice. She said when she asked on Saturday no one would answer.

S. Peters thanked A. Grinstead for her comments.

W. Lechlider said he was not aware there was an issue with the members in the Annex for the delay of the Deliberative Session. He is feeling uncomfortable about the grant. L. Witte should have shared the information.

D. Coffman commented that he is reiterating the concerns. He said there is no need to be accusatory. It is more than an insinuation. The willfulness of holding information which was necessary to the article and to think the body was not smart enough to know there is other information is unacceptable and dismissive. The information was disappointing. There was an opportunity to applaud but chose to be dismissive. We must be transparent by not trying to sway the comments in Plain English.

7. 9:25 PM Motion to enter into a Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person. **SECOND:** C. Toomey **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

8. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 PM. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent