Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2020 (corrected 10.20.20)
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, Brian Bohannon, Karen Wheeler, Dan LeClair and Nick Mosher.

Administration Present: L. Witte, 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: S. Peters opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. Public Comments: E.Sheldon of Swanzey said his child had signed up for VLACS in August and they are still on the waitlist and not getting any assistance or understanding of the curriculum. He asked if there is a new option for those on remote learning. VLACS does not seem to be getting going.

D. Coffman of Swanzey was thankful he was able to attend the football game. He asked if anyone had the head count versus the max. He did comment on the porta potties which were giving some of the older folk trouble with the location. He asked if it is possible to have more people attend.

K. Wheeler had asked for an item to be on the agenda. She would like children in second grade and under to be able to have email with parent permission and she would like to make this a motion. The Board agreed to allow K. Wheeler to make the motion. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to allow children 2nd grade and under to have access to the district email accounts provided the parents sign a permission form. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained there is a Children's Internet Protection Act for students 13 and under. No emails outside of the school. We are held to the CIPA. Email access is limited to keep in compliance with the CIPA. We receive federal funds and erate funds. We agreed to follow the rules of google platform. We take this very seriously. As far as a permission slip it would be all or none and it would be a complete violation. It is the district's account. If something happened regarding a legal issue and a feasibility issue. K. Wheeler said she is not able to send information from her phone to her daughter. She said she should be able to email her daughter. N. Mosher said if the current method does not work it is up to the administration and the IT dept. to resolve it. K. Noonan said she has a child at Emerson and there is no issue simply ask to speak to the teacher. M. Connor had a similar situation. Teachers have a lot to do so it might make it easier. B. Tatro understands the concerns but we would lose the grant and she does not want that to happen. L. Witte said the administration is 95% sure of adding a parent to google classroom. S. Peters said we will have to have a policy we will need to deal with. This feels like a top heavy

administration issue. What is the potential work? L. Witte explained case by case is prohibited, everyone or no one. S. Peters said this feels unsafe to him. L.Witte said she is concerned this is a legal issue in view of the CIPA. The district would be in violation of the law. There are procedures in place to keep kids safe. L. Steadman said this is not the best use of time now. S. Peters understands what it would take to do this but he is not in favor of the motion. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to table the motion until the next meeting. **SECOND:** N. Mosher. **DISCUSSION:** M. Connor is not in favor of the motion as worded previously. **VOTE:** .970/10.909/0/1.122. (B. Tatro missing from vote) **Motion fails. VOTE on original motion:** .757/10.915/.213/0. **Motion fails.**

3. Finance/Facilities Presentation:

a. School Construction Options & Recommendation: B. Tatro explained to the Board that K. Barker has given the committee 2 new Options for the elementary building project. The Fin/Fac. Committee recommended Option 10. Option 10 is for Troy, Emerson and Gilsum to have renovations and MTC will expand to hold the Cutler students. There will also be a new MPR at MTC. The cost is lower than a new building and all of the students stay in their towns. If the district was to receive State Aid the cost would be $14,000,000.00. B. Tatro explained the bond cost in the presentation. The design and blueprints would be a warrant article on the ballot in March. The CRC is discussing how to get the word out to the district. J. Morin explained bond costs are part of the district budget and each town is required to pay their portion.

b. FY'21/22 Capital Improvement Plan: B. Tatro explained the CIP is in the packet. The information contains projects out 10 years. S. Peters explained this information can be revised annually moving forward. The committee has a recommendation for this coming year. The first warrant article will be in the amount of $300,000.00 for design and blueprints the other warrant article will be in the amount of $840,000.00 for UV ventilation for Gilsum and MS/HS. We will move forward on the CIP and apply to the State for funding for the proposed elementary option. N. Mosher is concerned that the assumption is to fix up everything and we will not have any CIP needs in the next few years. We are somehow avoiding 14-16 million in upkeep to the buildings. He said this is a tough time to sell this plan. S. Peters said he is right the pursuit of a bond does not eliminate issues. The timeline was discussed. In 2022 we apply for State Aid and in the fall of 2024 we reopen the buildings. The Board discussed construction and renovations and how not to disrupt the students, that has not been discussed yet. J. Morin explained the $300,000.00 for the design and blueprints which will get the level of design needed for State Aid. N. Mosher commented we are putting up $300,000.00 to see what might or might not happen. It was explained in the CIP that the SAU and the MS/HS would receive the renovations in 2022/2023 then spend $50,000.00 thereafter a year for smaller projects. K. Wheeler asked again if Gilsum was to have a town bond and a school bond are they over their limit. L.Witte said there is a bond line in the individual budgets. B. Tatro said we all share part of the bond payment. N. Mosher commented we are forced to pinch pennies and it may force us into areas we do not want to go. We are all obligated.

4. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Motion to pursue Option 10 for school renovations or construction:

MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to pursue Option 10 for school renovation estimates and planning. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon **DISCUSSION:** K Noonan said that in the meeting with K. Barker, he stated the numbers for renovations were not firm. K. Noonan does not agree with 4.4 million dollars for renovations at Gilsum, especially since Fitzwilliam is only 3.3 million. We were told

that we hold too much real estate. She personally prefers a new Southern school but knows the Fitzwilliam voters want to keep Emerson, so will vote for this plan. **VOTE:** 12.787/.213/0/0. **Motion passes.**

b. Motion to create a warrant article to raise funds for school construction blueprints: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to create a warrant article to raise funds for renovation blueprinting as described in the Fin/Fac Committee presentation of 10-6-2020. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 12.787/.213/0/0. **Motion passes.**

c. Motion to create warrant article to raise funds for FY'21/22 Capital Projects: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to create the warrant article to raise funds for FY 21/22 projects as described in the Fin/Fac Committee presentation on 10-6-2020. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **DISCUSSION:** K. Wheeler has asked for the warrant to say Gilsum STEAM Academy. B. Tatro explained the renovations would be to upgrade UV Ventilators for Gilsum in the amount of $240,000.00 and $600,000.00 for an upgrade to UV Ventilators at the MS/HS. N. Mosher would like to have all of the schools upgraded. He said we are asking for a $300,000.00 warrant article for design and blueprints that may fail. Address the issues more immediate. S. Peters said the committee felt you may not want to do work in Troy if you are going to tear it down the ceilings. S. Peters asked if he thought a 3 plus million-dollar article would pass. N. Mosher said it is very important and we should push it. S. Peters said you are re-discussing what the committee discussed. K. Noonan said she believes they are important but she has faith in the committee. She commented no means no if a warrant article does not pass. No school will receive funds for the UV ventilation if the warrant article fails. B. Tatro said that is a figure the committee felt would pass. S. Peters said an alternative is to increase the budget. K. Wheeler is concerned with the amount of warrant articles. C. Toomey explained the reason for the 2 schools is because of the construction work proposed. MS/HS is not part of the construction list and the others are. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/.213/0. **Motion passes.** ***N. Mosher leaves the meeting.***

d. Public Voting at Troy School: The Town of Troy is requesting the use of the MPR for voting instead of the Community Center. The Board allowed voting at the Gilsum STEAM Academy but not at the MS/HS. L. Witte also mentioned there is a potential for no school if there is voting in the Troy School. She also mentioned the room to be used is shared by the students. She cannot secure the room from the rest of the building. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to approve public voting at Troy School for the fall of 2020, closing Troy School as necessary. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte asked are we closing all schools in the district or only Troy. That is the only way to do it. She would advise against it. **W. Wright and D. LeClair withdrew their motion. MOTION:** D. LeClair **MOVED** to not approve public voting at the Troy School for the fall of 2020. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** There was a friendly motion to "deny the request". **VOTE:** 10.667/1.122/.998/.213. **Motion passes.** It was mentioned to discuss voting issues prior to setting the calendar.

e. Policies (2nd Read)

i. BGB

ii. BGB-R

iii. EB/JLI: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to update Policy BGB, to adopt Policy BGB-R and to update Policy EB/JLI as presented by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

f. September 15, 2020 Minutes: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to accept the September 15, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/.751/.213. **Motion passes.**

g. Anti-Discrimination Procedures Manual: L. Witte explained Policy AGR requires the Superintendent and the administration to develop this manual. It pulls all of the policies in one place with instances of harassment and discrimination. It is required by October 15, 2020 and they made it. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the anti-discrimination manual as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** C. Toomey. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

h. Manifest: MOTION: K. Wheeler **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of $3,052,793.43 as presented. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained the manifest was larger because it contained 2 payrolls and the health insurance, retirement and Primex were paid for the year. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Board Goals Review: The Fin/Fac presented the CIP and Options for the elementary schools.

The CRC has developed a timeline on methods to get the word out. Backwards planning on methods on upcoming events and for the presentation at the Oct 20, 2020 School Board Meeting. The Fin/Fac Committee will be presenting to the Budget Committee on October 27, 2020. S. Peters would encourage the CRC and Fin/Fac members to attend the meeting. The CIP and Option 10 will be discussed. A. Hopkins has asked for a copy of the CIP prior to the meeting. S.Peters hopes the Budget Committee will support the warrant articles in March.

b. Board Chair Report:

i. NHSBA Call for Resolutions: S. Peters explained the process for a new resolution. The district is asked to propose a resolution if they want to. If accepted, it is used in Concord. He asked any new resolutions for discussion at the Board level be brought to the Board prior to the November School Board Meeting.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report

i. SAU/MRSD Employee Manual (updated with revised and/or new policies): L. Witte explained each year the Employee Manual is updated and the employees are required to review it. This is informational only.

ii. Planning for DOE-25/MS-25 Signatures: J. Morin explained the DOE-25 and the MS-25 go to the State to set the tax rate. L. Witte had asked for an extension. The forms have been completed and the administration would ask the Board Members to come in and sign them this week. J. Morin said she needs 7 signatures by the end of this week. She will send an email when the forms are ready to sign.

iii. Reopening Updates:

1. **Hybrid, Remote Support and Homeschool Numbers:** L. Witte explained 85% are hybrid and 15% are remote support. There is very little movement. There are 6 more homeschoolers for a total of 92, over half of those students never were enrolled in the district.

2. **New Normal-Full Return Planning:** B. Tatro asked if the hybrid schedule could be different. L. Witte explained the committee looked at multiple options and we are now looking at reopening. We have discussed tweaks to some of the concerns. The hope is for the hybrid to be fairly short term. L. Witte explained the idea of shifting from the hybrid model into the new normal on November 2, 2020. October 20, 2020 is the last day to make a decision. This past Friday there was a district wide Zoom Meeting with questions and concerns. We were on track for containment in Cheshire County but fell out of track. Other decision points were the Public Health Dept. guidance. The DHHS Covid-19 Dashboard yesterday clarified a positive case in Troy School. She would like to commend DHHS and the response and support of Dr. Stone and Nurse A. Adams. They did an outstanding job. L.Witte asked do we want to shift to the State Matrix or not recommend either. She did work with DHHS. The information gathered from the districtwide Zoom meeting said 85% of the employees are uncomfortable with returning to school. L. Witte explained they want to be able to phase in equipment, start having a combined cohort for recess and staggered arrivals and departures. We have already made some adjustments. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to allow the administration to adjust the current hybrid model to include progressive steps as needed until the Board takes its next vote on hybrid/live education structure. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon said he would support this. He asked if L. Witte felt their model is more conservative. L. Witte said they are pretty similar. B. Bohannon asked if the group would change to the State Matrix in addition to our model. He is concerned we may have to explain ourselves with not saying we went with these criteria. How do we handle that? L. Witte commented we want to honor the work of the committee. K. Noonan commented on the lunch issue. L. Witte explained the district has purchased additional desks, plexiglass etc. for when we return. A lot has already been done. L. Steadman said the administration has a lot on their plates. Use the State Matrix. L. Steadman sat in on the full district Zoom Meeting. **VOTE:** 10.909/0/1.335/.213. **Motion passes. MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to adopt the State of NH's new State Covid-19 dashboard and consider criteria for transitioning the instructional model between remote/hybrid/live education. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte would suggest when making a decision to rely on the State but still track both models. Looking at community transmission, level of school impact and staff capacity. **VOTE:** 10.909/.757/1.122/.213. **Motion passes.**

3. **BOY Count (not certified):** L.Witte explained the unofficial enrollment number is 1644.

4. **Sports and Extracurricular Activities:** L. Witte explained she recently attended a field hockey game. It is going fairly well at Phase 3 but there are concerns... She has had a conversation with L. Spencer. Spectators from other towns are not allowed. Masks are required. Our campus is open and the crowd is difficult to limit access. People from opposing teams were asked to leave. People were asked to wear their masks and there were heated exchanges. The policies are to ensure the safety of athletes and fans. Tickets cannot be increased. Due to the feedback it poses significant concerns. K. Wheeler said people are not social distancing or wearing masks. She is not happy with how this is going. E. Stanley asked if F. DeTurris attended the events. L. Witte explained 2 administrators attend as well as F. DeTurris. E. Stanley commented at the Friday Night Game not a lot of issues, pretty much the rules were

followed. He asked what about hiring an officer. It would help a lot. L. Witte said it is a very difficult situation to manage. B. Bohannon commented so far it is going fairly well. There are some situations. K. Wheeler commented the public is not the problem, the students are the issue. She strongly disagrees with what we are doing. It was asked what about Christmas Concerts and extracurricular events. L. Witte explained the decision to reopen needs to be made by October 20, 2020.

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- **a. Presentation from the CRC**
- **b. Decision on reopening**

7. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

8. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: B. Bohannon **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 PM. **SECOND:** W.Wright **VOTE:** 11.712/0/0/1.288. M. Connor missing from vote) **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent