

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2020 (corrected 9/15/2020)
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 and Nick Mosher **Absent:** Dan LeClair

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and 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. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Memorandum of Understanding for SRO: L. Witte presented the MOU to the Board. The Board discussed the information presented. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to accept the MOU for the School Resource Officer as presented. **SECOND:** E. Stanley. **VOTE:** 10.00/0/.757/2.243. **Motion passes. (B. Bohannon missing from vote)**

b. Town of Swanzey request to move public voting to MRMHS: L. Witte presented the information to the Board on the request from the Town of Swanzey to use the MRMHS for voting. The Board discussed the issue. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to move the voting for the Town of Swanzey to the MRMHS for November 2020 and beyond. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 4.479/7.399/0/1.122. **Motion fails.**

c. Town of Gilsum expectation to keep public voting at Gilsum School: **MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to stop town voting in the Gilsum School starting in the November vote during student (school) days, and until further notice. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** N. Mosher asked about the HVAC System. The voting in Gilsum has already been posted. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to table the motion until the next meeting to allow time to research the ventilation system, **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained the voting area and the student area have separate HVAC systems. The Gilsum School/Gilsum Community Center was discussed. **K. Wheeler and M. Connor withdrew their motion. VOTE:** 1.335/10.544/0/1.122. **Motion fails.**

d. Retirement: L. Witte explained some folks who are members of the bargaining unit would like to submit their resignation or retirement. There is a required 18 month notice in order to receive their bonus. She would recommend the Board vote to waive the 18 month requirement. She believes there are 4 people who have requested this. J. Morin and L. Witte both

support this. These members are from MESSA and MDEA. **MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to waive the 18 month requirement for advance retirement notice and to pay out retirement benefits, limited to the employees who have made the request to retire this fall (3 MESSA, 1 MDEA).

SECOND: L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** N. Mosher is making sure the district can accommodate the request regarding finances. L. Witte said yes. **VOTE:** 10.757/0/0/2.243.

Motion passes. MOTION: N. Mosher **MOVED** to agree to allow MESSA employees reaching their anniversary between 9-1-2020 and 3-1-2021 to retire with benefits described in the CBA agreement. This motion is specific to this year and does not set precedent for future years.

SECOND: W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte reminded the Board MESSA employees do not collect retirement benefits until they have worked 20 years in the district. **VOTE:**

8.79/0/1.967/1.122. **Motion passes.** The Policy Committee has been asked to look at the 18 month notice as a policy.

e. Policies (1st and 2nd Read)

i. Motion to waive 1st read: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to waive the first read and to consider the following motions regarding policies ACAC, ACAC-R, ACAB and ACAB-R at the full Board Sept. 1, 2020 meeting for implementation. **SECOND:** C. Toomey. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/.213/1.122. **Motion passes.**

ii. ACAB-Harassment (employee)(adopt):

iii. ACAC-Harassment (student) (adopt):

iv. ACAB-R, ACAC-R-Procedures and Timelines for Harassment

Investigations (adopt):

v. Retire GBAA, GBAA-R, JBAA, JBAA-R (previous harassment policies): MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to accept the policy motions related to harassment policies (adopt and retire). **SECOND:** W. Wright.

DISCUSSION: K. Noonan explained these policies came from the attorney and she is very confident with them. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/.213/1.122. **Motion passes.**

f. Policies (2nd Read):

i. GCCBC-Family Medical Leave Act:

ii. JLC-Student Health Services & School Nurse:

iii. JLCE/EBBC-Emergency Care and First Aid:

iv. JLCD/JLCD-R-Administering Medication to Students:

v. JLCD-F1, F2, F3-Medication Forms for Self-Administering, Epi-Pens and Inhalers: MOTION:K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to accept the policy motions related to FMLA and Student Health Services. **SECOND:** C. Toomey.

DISCUSSION: J. Rathbun explained the nurses are registered and through the DOE. They are certified. J. Rathbun commented we cannot force a nurse to do something against their medical judgement. B. Tatro commented that a nurse in the school works under doctors orders. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

g. August 13, 2020 Minutes: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the August 13, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 9.794/0/2.085/1.122. **Motion passes.**

h. Manifest: MOTION: E.Stanley **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$768,725.52 as presented. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. When/How to Resume In-Person Board Meetings: S. Peters is concerned with the expectation of hosting a virtual and live meeting at the sametime. He is concerned with the audio quality. N. Mosher commented that he is not comfortable returning. B. Bohannon said he would encourage in person if we expect the students and staff to return. He would support investing in technology to continue Zoom as well. It was commented there have been more people at the meetings due to Zoom than in years. E. Stanley would agree with B. Bohannon. K. Noonan is concerned with opening the buildings to the public. She has the same concern with the voting. The meeting can go until 11:30PM or later and the staff have to stay and clean for the kids. J. Morin would like to echo K. Noonan's concerns. The staff needs to disinfect, the meetings run late and we are trying to limit the amount of people that come into the buildings. C. Toomey commented we are asking the kids to go but we are not. K. Wheeler would agree with K. Noonan and J. Morin. She also understands what C. Toomey is saying. She is not okay with the cleaning crew having to stay so late. B. Tatro will not attend until there is a vaccine. She is not comfortable with live meetings. M. Connor would echo J. Morin and K. Noonan. She has not seen her family since February. W. Wright is concerned due to his age. He is trying to isolate himself. He will wait for the vaccine. S. Peters commented that with the virtual meetings the Board is well spoken, everyone speaks and technology has made us behave in a professional manner. We should feel good on how we are acting. When we fully return he would like to keep the behaviors and the tools on the screen. N. Mosher would like to discuss this issue with the full Board before returning to a live meeting.

b. Board Goals Review: C. McDaniel-Thomas reported the CRC was not able to meet this evening. There were technical difficulties. We are in pretty good shape to present on September 15, 2020. S. Peters commented this is not the only group falling behind. W. Wright reported Ed/Tech has missed 2 meetings. He does not want to pressure J. Rathbun. He is right out straight. There are members in negotiations that are also on this committee that is the reason for not having a meeting tomorrow. S. Peters is not concerned about the Ed/Tech Committee they were set up as an Ad-hoc Committee. B. Tatro informed the Board the Fin/Fac Committee missed a meeting but has scheduled a meeting for next Wednesday. The committee will meet with K. Barker or work on the CIP. The CIP is really shaping up thanks to D. LaPointe. He has done a ton of work on the long term and short term projects that need to happen. B. Tatro said there is enough information on the CIP or the committee will come to the Board with elementary school options. S. Peters would like the Fin/Fac to present on September 15 and move the CRC presentation to October 6. The CRC will be meeting at 5:00 PM on September 15, 2020. He does not feel the Board is really off track with the goals. K. Noonan explained the Policy Committee is feeling good about the pace the committee is moving in.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. Update on VLACS and Alternatives: J. Rathbun explained the district is in pretty good shape in regards to VLACS and alternatives. The high school VLACS has open classes but the MS and the elementary schools are closed. The high school VLACS program is significantly larger. As far as alternatives if the student is not in VLACS courses the staff will work with the students to get the courses they need. There is also Plateau. He explained there is a team to check in on the remote students. At the elementary level the district is in pretty good

shape most people have a good idea of the remote support. The district is really going to use Title One for our kids at home. We are working with individual families.

ii. Live Streaming in Classrooms: J. Rathbun explained he had spoken to the attorney and it is not impossible to live stream if we follow certain rules. One problem is some teachers are into this and not others. There is a technology concern we do not have enough webcams and teachers do not teach directly on the board. There is a concern regarding audio. If something is over heard there are privacy issues such as foster care and custody issues. We want to protect our kids. There are concerns. It is not impossible. N. Mosher asked about the previous Zoom Meetings with kids and teachers. He said to extend the model of that. J. Rathbun commented that parents could opt out of Zoom at home. There is control at home as a parent. N. Mosher suggested putting a mic on each teacher. It feels like we are a little behind. J. Rathbun commented this was not the path for the Reopening Plan. We have a nice open relationship with the other districts. We are looking for new ideas that are best for our kids. We will learn from other districts. There are 85% of the students returning to school. M. Connor asked if it would be only the teachers being viewed. J. Rathbun explained with live streaming you will not be able to prevent kids from being part of that. Title One is available throughout the week and the classroom teachers are available on Fridays. L. Witte commented the Board charged the administration with a Reopening Plan and on August 4 the Board approved it. It does not say we cannot make changes as we move ahead. We are trying to work in the parameters of the plan. We are looking at other districts. Our goal is to be open 100% in November.

iii. Reopening Plan Update:

1. Opening Days with Staff: L. Witte presented information to the Board regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, FMLA and flexible working requests. She presented the number of teachers that have requested time and the number of staff that had been approved. L. Witte presented the retirements and the new hires. There are still a few positions open, a School Psychologist, Director of Buildings and Grounds and a .5 Elementary School Counselor. L. Witte commented kudos to the employees for the return. It felt like a comfortable opening. The district has an agreement with Camp Takodah. The children of employees will be allowed to attend Camp Takodah while their parents work for the district. There are 29 kids taking advantage of this opportunity. L. Witte would give a shout out to J. Rathbun and volunteers for the robust PD calendar. We are accessing our own internal knowledge. Compliments to J. Rathbun and the volunteers for offering the opportunities. L. Witte commented on the video welcome back letter. She said it is too long to play tonight. She would like to send a shout out to New England Studios for the quick turnaround. The goal of the soft opening is to encourage and support families. L. Witte explained a majority of the FFCRA requests are due to childcare. She said there were no denials. The requests were withdrawn after a conversation. She explained the process to the Board.

2. Sports & Extracurriculars

a. Phase 3 NHIAA: L. Witte explained T. Cote has been working on a local and regional schedule for the sports teams. The Phase 3 document is in the packet. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to move to the NHIAA defined Phase 3 to resume sports activity on Sept. 8, 2020. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained the document explains and clarifies the safety part of the recommendation. She is not sure if Dr. Chan and the NHIAA have come to an agreement. There is still no close contact. **VOTE:**

5.354/6.524/0/1.122. **Motion fails.** It was commented to remain in Phase 2 indefinitely if appropriate and to ask for an update in 2 weeks.

4. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Fin/Fac. Presentation**
- b. Update on Back to School**
- c. Special Ed./IEP Update**
- d. Back to School Activities Update**
- e. Update on ratio, hybrid, homeschool and remote**
- f. Update on Sports Planning**

5. Public Comments: M. Divens explained Hinsdale and Conval both are doing live streaming. Her daughter may not be able to get her online classes until the end of Sept. She would suggest revisiting live streaming.

M. Connor asked about live streaming. N. Mosher would like to pursue a motion for live streaming to be on the agenda.

D. Murray of Swanzey said she has enjoyed the Zoom Meetings and would like them to continue. It is a way for the public to listen remotely.

K. Rauch commented on a personnel issue. S. Peters thanked him for his comments.

6. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 PM. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent