

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
August 13, 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, Dan LeClair and Nick Mosher **Absent:** Karen Wheeler

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 7:07 PM.

2. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Facility/Construction Bids: J. Morin presented the list of Facility/Construction bids and who was recommended. Gilsum exterior painting awarded to O’Brien Painting in the amount of \$16,100.00, Troy Roof awarded to Melanson in the amount of \$32,200.00, MRMHS Auditorium Floor awarded to Syd’s in the amount of \$11,176.00, Cutler Cooling/Heating Updates awarded to KPMB in the amount of \$49,000.00 and Gilsum Cooling/Heating Updates awarded to KPMB in the amount of \$47,000.00. Stromgren’s bid of \$66,306.00 for Gilsum was just received today. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to accept all of the awarded bids for the summer work as recommended by J. Morin. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** D. LeClair asked why do this work if we are getting rid of some of the schools in the previous proposed plan J. Morin explained this work was a warrant article. We are not sure that the article in March will pass. We need to maintain our schools. N. Mosher would agree with J. Morin.

VOTE: 12.243/0/0/.757. **Motion passes.**

b. MDEA Health Insurance Litigation: S. Peters explained we had a meeting with legal counsel in regards to the health insurance. **MOVED** to accept the arbitrator’s recommendation for MDEA health insurance pool and to instruct the administration to begin working with the MDEA bargaining unit on a timely payoff process. **SECOND:** B. Tatro.

VOTE: 9.787/0/2.450/.757. **Motion passes.**

c. **Reopening Plan for Sports and ExtraCurricular Activities:** L. Witte explained there is new information in the Board packets. The NHIAA now has Phase 3. Also in the packets is information from the meetings with Dr. Chan and the nurses. She has also included information on what other districts are doing. L. Witte explained the Planning Team made a recommendation. NHIAA is not in line with Dr. Chan's recommendation. E. Stanley said he appreciates the information but he would like to start immediately. Allow sports and extracurricular activities to start up in Phase 2 of NHIAA. Practice together as a team, safely as a team and reevaluate. E. Stanley commented it does not seem like we are playing a NHIAA schedule. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to start Sports and Extracurricular Conditioning Activities immediately (start dates in August TBD by Administration), following the NHIAA Phase 2 recommendation, to reassess on Sept. 1, to instruct Administration to seek alternative, more local schools' clubs to coordinate/compete with. Teams would be allowed to practice as a full team following appropriate social distancing and cleaning tactics. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** W. Wright is not in favor of this. It is a high risk. They can train but no contact. He is not in favor of the motion as written. S. Peters said this is the NHIAA Phase not the return to school phase. This is not in line with Dr. Chan's recommendation. B. Tatro said you should not do more with sports than academics. N. Mosher is not in favor of this. It is a bad idea. He wants to roll it back more. C. McDaniel-Thomas is not in favor of this motion colleges and professional sports are not playing. Some of the players are having heart issues after COVID. B. Bohannon said the State numbers are low enough. He is concerned the athletes will have more injuries without training. E. Stanley and D. LeClair accepted a friendly amendment to add "conditioning" to the motion. E. Stanley commented the kids are playing AAU. We cannot control that but playing for us we can have control. We will not be playing teams in other States. Sports is part of academics. Extracurricular as well, parents have the final say. B. Bohannon wanted to thank the team for the presentation. It gives the coaches direction and a clear understanding. The State says there needs to be a monitor. L. Witte said she would think it would be T. Cote. M. Connor is not happy with the motion. We will have real problems. She does not agree. N. Mosher said safety is our responsibility. This is not a smart move. E. Stanley said we need to take safe steps sooner than later. We had 275 kids participating last year. We are affecting a ton of kids. If the parents say no that is an option. K. Noonan asked why phase 2 in the motion. E. Stanley said because we will be two weeks later. There are some kids that need to learn the game. L. Witte explained the original plan called for allowing skills and drills for contact sports from a safety standpoint. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-abstain, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-no, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, E. Stanley-yes, B. Tatro-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-yes and L. Steadman-yes. 6.476/4.653/1.115/.757. **Motion passes.**

d. **Elementary School Counselor Proposal:** J. Rathbun explained due to the COVID crisis there is a need for additional school counselors. The proposal is for 1.5 additional elementary school counselors. It will be funded with the vacant Reading Specialist funds and possibly funds from CARES. **MOTION:** B. Tatro. **MOVED** to approve the administration's

request to add 1.5 additional elementary school counselors for a period of 1 year only.

SECOND: W. Wright. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/.213/.757. **Motion passes.**

e. **Special Education Tuition Rate:** J. Morin thought the amount was supposed to be proposed by the Policy Committee. K. Noonan thought the Policy Committee was to propose a formula for next year and the tuition rate was coming from the administration for this year. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

f. **Memorandum of Understanding for SRO:** L. Witte explained they are working on finalizing the revision of the MOU and will be presented on Sept. 1, 2020 for a vote.

g. **Review Elementary Student Handbook:** It was explained there is no vote required on the handbooks. This is a review. Information only with possible questions. W. Wright commented that it was put together very well and well done.

h. **Review MRMHS Student Handbook:** It was explained there is no vote required on the handbooks. This is a review. Information only with possible questions. W. Wright commented that it was put together very well and well done.

i. **July 7, 2020 Minutes: MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the July 7, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** S. Peters. **VOTE:** 9.787/0/2.456/.757. **Motion passes.**

j. **August 4, 2020 Minutes: MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to approve the August 4, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 9.794/0/2.450/.757. **Motion passes.**

k. **Manifest: MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,077,773.31 as presented. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 12.243/0/0/.757. **Motion passes.**

l. Policies (2nd Read):

i. **JCA-Change of School or Assignment: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to update Policy JCA with the NHSBA sample policy as written. **SECOND:** E. Stanley. **VOTE:** 12.243/0/0/.757. **Motion passes.**

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Board Goals Review:

i. **Upcoming Committee Meetings:** C. McDaniel-Thomas would like to figure out a time for the CRC to meet, possibly before the Sept. 1, Board Meeting. W. Wright reported the Ed/Tech Committee has not met. J. Rathbun explained he would be ready to go on Sept. 2, 2020. B. Tatro reported the Finance/Facilities was going to meet on August 11 but had to cancel. They will discuss an alternate meeting date. K. Noonan explained the Policy Committee met and is pretty excited that after the next second read there will be no more missing policies required by law. S. Peters would like to encourage all School Board Members to attend the Budget Committee Meetings. S. Peters commented the Board chose Sept. and October Meeting dates in order to present to the Budget Committee in October. If it means the committees may

need an extra meeting to keep the goals and presentations on track, please schedule. We need additional time slots to keep the goals happening.

b. Policies (1st Read)

- i. GCCBC-Family Medical Leave Act:**
- ii. JLC-Student Health Services & School Nurses**
- 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-Administration, Epi-Pen**

and Inhalers: K. Noonan asked the members to review the policies for first read and email her with any questions prior to the next meeting.

N. Mosher asked for a discussion on the next meeting's agenda regarding the future meetings being virtual or face to face.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. VLACS Update and Academic Plan: L. Witte explained there is lots of chatter with VLACS. The update today is the elementary courses are now closed. There are two other options for our elementary students. Most of the high school and middle school courses are open with VLACS. J. Rathbun explained there is no new information on the academic plan. The elementary students have a few options that will work and we do have ideas for the middle and high school if VLACS courses are not available. We are looking at each student individually. The Senior Projects in the past were community service based. We do not feel we can do the Senior Project this year. This will be an elective rather than mandatory due to the placement of the students in the community. This will be an English 12 course and will cover research, public speaking and other areas that were required with the Senior Project. J. Rathbun explained 85% of the students are going hybrid. He said VLACS to elementary students is new but we do not have much control. It is a very successful program. The middle and high school students will have VLACS as an option, if the students do not get the courses they need contact the principals and they will help the students. The State has said we need to monitor all schools. The parents have an option to opt out of the grade 4-8 interim assessment if they want to. L. Witte explained normally in the Spring it is waived. The form only asks for the Fall opt out not the Spring. N. Mosher commented he was on the phone with VLACS for elementary students and they are really not going to be available. He asked what is the interaction with the teacher with the remote only students. J. Rathbun explained VLACS is set up on line and can be more interactive. The classroom teachers are not going to be as interactive as with the hybrid students. The teachers want all students to be prepared for the return in November. We will not be like VLACS. There is no way to have the interaction of remote support. We will do everything possible to be interactive.

ii. Staffing/Hiring Update: L. Witte presented the Board with a list of retirements, resignations and available positions that need to be filled.

iii. **Masks in School:** C. McDaniel-Thomas would suggest masks be worn at all times with possible mask breaks. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to make masks mandatory in the buildings at all times except eating and recess. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** M. Suarez commented The Plan does call for masks to be worn most of the time. If it is changed are they required in PE and music. PE and music will be held in the classrooms and eating will also be done in the classrooms. The Plan is to keep kids in their cohort. It allows students to be seated far apart in order to be able to take off their masks. She said The Plan in place assures that the students are wearing their masks most of the time. K. Noonan agrees with M. Suarez the Plan is well thought out. **W. Wright would withdraw his SECOND. C. Toomey will SECOND the motion.** C. Toomey commented it is a great Plan in place. We are hearing from the top down to wear masks, always. C. McDaniel-Thomas questioned kids singing in the classrooms and said instruments are not a good idea either. She thought those were off the table. B. Tatro is concerned because what if singing spreads, it further. What is the plan for music class? M. Suarez commented on music and gym as something to consider with the masks. M. Connor commented the masks should be worn at all times and she trusts the staff will follow The Plan according to the recommendations. S. Peters commented this should be a motion to reconsider. This is to reconsider and vote on the motion to make masks mandatory in the buildings at all times except for eating and recess and a $\frac{3}{5}$ vote is required. *N. Mosher leaves the meeting.* **VOTE: 3.365/8.66/0/.970. Motion fails.**

iv. **Bus Company Contract Status Update:** J. Morin explained she is continuing to work with the bus company on the contract. It will look a little different. She has sent the details of The Plan. We are still with First Student.

v. **Recap Graduation:** L. Witte explained graduation was held on a beautiful day. It was a little different than years in the past but families enjoyed sitting together. J. Kuhn took photos of the graduates and their families. There were a lot of smiles behind the masks. Graduation was well attended. She was not sure of the number of students in attendance. The Keene Sentinel covered the event.

vi. **Recap of Drive-Thru Celebrations:** L. Witte reported on the Milestone Celebration usually held at Pappagallos. L. Sutton did a fantastic job recruiting colleagues to be there when the retirees received their gifts.

vii. **Homeschooling numbers:** L. Witte explained we are up on our homeschooler numbers this year but not from the normal year before. There are 38 kids with 12 kids from other districts. The requirement for being a homeschool student is for a parent to send a letter of intent to the district and that is it, no other contact. J. Rathbun explained it is the legal responsibility of the parent to sign their kids up for school and homeschool.

4. **SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:**

- a. **Discussion of Face to Face Meetings**
- b. **Town of Swanzey request to move public voting to MRMHS**
- c. **Review of Sports**
- d. **Streaming in the classroom.**

5. Public Comments: M. Divens has a 7th grader in school. She thanked L. Steadman for bringing up the issue for discussion at the next meeting on streaming in the classroom. She has signed up her daughter for VLACS and is on the waiting list. Streaming in the classroom has no additional cost, may have privacy issues but seems like a no brainer.

E. Kelly, teacher at the MRHS thanked the Board and the administration for the hard work on the Plan but disappointment on the failure of the motion of mandatory masks. Why can't we train the students to wear the masks at all times?

M. Szymcik of Swanzey, one of the most recent retirees thanked L. Witte for the retirement celebration.

6. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM.
SECOND: K. Noonan **VOTE:** 12.320/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent