

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
August 4 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Lisa Steadman, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Eric Stanley, Karen Wheeler, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Michelle Connor, Brian Bohannon, Dan LeClair and Nick Mosher **Absent:** Betty Tatro

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. Approve Plans for Reopening School: S. Peters explained there is a change in the agenda. The administration will present the plan for the reopening. The Board will ask the administration questions and then there will be time for the public comments. The public will be limited to 2 minutes per person. There will be no vote until after public comments. L. Witte began her presentation by informing the Board that the meals to the students through the summer have been extended through August 21, 2020. The district is serving about 400 meals a day. L. Witte thanked and acknowledged the 27 members on the Reopening Team. A lot of work and time went into this recommendation. She presented a list on the screen of items and renovations needed to make the schools safe for the students. The District will receive \$423,834.00 from the CARES ACT and there will be a remaining \$517,429.00 in expenditures to be covered by the district. There are items on the screen that the cost is still unknown. She explained the Governor has given 1.5 million dollars to private, religious and homeschoolers. The Governor has left it up to the local districts on classroom face masks. Social distancing is ok at 3' but recommended at 6'. There are benefits of in person learning opposed to remote. The district will have a soft opening from Sept. 8-11. It will be a phased in approach. L. Witte explained. Sept. 14 will be opening day with a hybrid model. Monday and Wednesday for half of the students and Tuesday and Thursday for the other half. The students not in school on their scheduled days will be engaged in activities on line. Friday will be a remote support day. Masks will be required when entering the school, moving around the class and traveling through the building. Masks may be removed when learning and teaching. The other options are remote learning, remote support or homeschool. Those to be excluded from school are those with symptoms, have left New England and anyone who has been in contact with someone with COVID. If someone has come in contact with a student or teacher who has COVID for 10 minutes or more must be quarantined. It is recommended that a health screen off site be done prior to arrival to school. The students and

staff will take their temperatures prior to coming to school and visitors will be screened at the site. If everything goes well students will return to school 100% on November 2, 2020 which is the end of the 1st quarter. L. Witte explained they are taking the advice of Dr. Chan and for extra-curricular there is no close and physical contact. The NHIAA guidelines are different. Dr. Chan is very clear; he does not recommend physical contact sports. L. Witte said it is a hard recommendation but she would agree with Dr. Chan. There will be a survey for parents and guardians regarding students returning to school. We are working on the informational videos at a glance regarding procedure. They will be easy to read. S. Peters explained he sat in on a Board Meeting in Massachusetts and it was a single slide with 3 recommendations. He is pleased to work with an administration looking out for our kids. M. Connor felt it would be confusing for the kids regarding when it is okay to wear masks. L. Witte said it is learning the new normal. It will be a lot to get used to. M. Connor said it will cause confusion with the kids. B. Bohannon asked if the desks will be 6' apart. L. Witte explained that with the hybrid we can achieve it. L. Witte explained we will work with the State regarding confirmed cases in the district. N. Mosher asked what the district will do about 20 students sniffing and coughing. L. Witte explained the nurses will take care of that and we are hiring a permanent sub. They will use their professional judgement and recommendations from the State. L. Witte explained the HVAC is not an issue. We want to make it better. L. Steadman asked if the windows open in all the classrooms. Witte said yes. There was a discussion about taking the temperatures at the school entrance or at the student's homes prior to arrival. L. Witte said many people who have had COVID did not have a temperature. She does recommend the employee's temperature being taken at the school every day. C. Toomey would like masks to be worn at all times except eating and drinking. L. Witte explained Dr. Chan recommends parents doing the temperature screening. L. Witte explained the masks recommendation can be modified by the Board if they want too. L. Witte explained First Student recommends masks on the buses. **Amendment:** C. Toomey would recommend mandatory masks and M. Connor would agree. **Amendment:** K. Noonan would recommend temperature checks will be required of all students and employees as they enter the building at the beginning of the school day. C. Toomey would agree. L. Witte explained the first group of students will attend school on Monday and Wednesday with Tuesday and Thursday remote learning. Friday will be support day. Remote learning will look like it did in the Spring. The teachers will be very involved. The teachers will help monitor through programs on line and contact the students on Fridays. **Amendment:** K. Noonan would recommend students will attend M-T or Th-F with Wednesday being the remote support day. D. LeClair would agree. D. LeClair asked if it is possible for students who do not want to go to class to follow through the computer. J. Rathbun explained we are working with the legal counsel on that. L. Witte explained there is no time frame for this. It will not be before the students return. L. Steadman said another option is all student full time remote learning. J. Rathbun explained we have paras assigned to Special Ed. students. L. Witte said family schedules need to go through the principals regarding students on the same learning days. J. Rathbun said Beyond the Bell is a federally funded program he will see if we could have that program for the days off for those children most in need and the staff children as well. We are going to see if it is legal and within the guidelines. K. Wheeler asked if the school buildings are available for before and after school. It was explained no outside organizations are allowed in the buildings. **Amendment:** K. Wheeler would recommend external party use of the Gilsum Building is approved for Gilsum's town funded before and after school program service. W. Wright would agree. L. Witte explained students who miss 10 ½ days are truant. Students not engaged or not attending will be considered truant. There will be a VLACS

option for students. All IEPs will be implemented remote or in person if possible. The 504s will be reviewed. J. Rathbun explained it is a struggle in some areas for remote learning due to the internet availability. C. Woods explained compensatory education and regression education. She explained they will collect and compare the data from pre remote learning. We may have to collect from some students but we have enough for others. We will see if regression has occurred and what services are needed to get the help. Progress monitoring can be done on each student. All students with disabilities will be individually bused. We will look at each student to see if any additional services are needed. All students regress. We will make a determination by the end of October. N. Mosher asked if the remote support was one to one. J. Rathbun said yes. There are opportunities to interact more with students. We do not want the students with remote support to be separate. It was mentioned the students who require therapy will not have it on their learning days. L. Witte explained gym is encouraged by outside activities. Music and Art as well as gym there may be a need to be creative. L. Witte explained the DOE is promoting VLACS as an option. We are working to identify another option. Sports and Extra-Curricular: **Amendment:** E. Stanley would recommend Sports and Extra-Curricular Plan as written is not approved and will be addressed in a separate motion at a Board Meeting to be scheduled prior to September 1, 2020. L. Steadman would agree. E. Stanley would like to allow Phase One now. Allow all of the teams in their entirety to practice together.

S. Peters called a Recess:

i. Pause for Public Comments: Adam Hopkins of Troy asked if the students can take VLACS classes and classes in person. N. Tommila of Fitzwilliam said the amendment to the class schedule will be challenging. She also wanted to thank everyone on the Team for all of the hard work. Deb Murray of Swanzey said she did not have a good experience from Cutler regarding teacher support through remote learning. She would like to see students attend school 4 days a week, follow the NHIAA guidelines and full Fall sports. E. Sheldon of Swanzey would vote down the amendment on sports and thank the committee for all the work done on this presentation. D. Coffman of Swanzey would applaud the efforts of L. Witte and the team. He commented the guidance by the State are not hardened mandates. Do not lower education expectations. K. Rukstela is concerned with the number of days of instruction. Commented on either open or full remote. Payton, a senior at Monadnock, is concerned VLACS is the only option. She is also concerned about the AP classes. E. Kaplan of Gilsum explained it would take well over an hour to take the temperatures of all the students entering school. The form is adequate. Diane Davis Young is concerned about the masks. It is necessary to get right down close with the students. Some of the students will not keep their masks on. Either all or nothing. She is concerned about the staff. M. Walters of Swanzey commented on COVID testing. Lena-Doubleday will not be sending her children to school. Her husband works outside of NE. She asked why some other schools have video classes and not us.

ii. Motion to Approve: MOTION: C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the Reopening Plan as written with the following 5 areas to be looked at separately. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **DISCUSSION: MOTION:** D. LeClair **MOVED** to amend the motion and open the schools 100% and masks will be required. **SECOND:** E. Stanley. **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon is not in support of this amendment. There are too many children in the schools and it is a space issue. N. Mosher said he does not see the hybrid as a solution. He is not in favor of opening up

100%. D. LeClair wanted to let the public know why it was not a good idea. **D. LeClair and E. Stanley withdrew the amendment. MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to amend the motion and reopen the schools with 100% remote learning. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon commented his children need to get back to school. NH is the lowest State per COVID. M. Connor would agree 100% kids need to get back to school. **VOTE on amendment:** K. Noonan-no, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-abstain, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, E. Stanley-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-no. **VOTE:** .213/10.909/.757/1.122. **Amendment fails. MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to amend and recommend Sports and Extra-Curricular Plan as written is not approved and will be addressed in a separate motion at a Board Meeting to be scheduled prior to September 1, 2020. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas asked why not accept what is there for the guidelines for the time being. S. Peters said the administration is going to adjust and flex the plan as they hear advice from the State. E. Stanley would like to see Extra-Curricular and Sports start on Phase 1. Other schools are already doing this. Let's look at other schools to see what they are doing before we say no. Already the NHIAA is saying Sept. 8. There are kids playing all over NE. They are even playing out of State. Kids are playing baseball now. L. Witte said we are following the guidance of the Division of Public Health, no physical contact. L. Witte said sports with the guidelines from the Division of Public Health she would agree but not the guidelines of the NHIAA. It was commented that the needs of the kids outweigh the guidelines. L. Witte said no contact or competition but they can train. It was asked if the Board wants to follow the guidance of the Division of Public Health or the NHIAA. S. Peters would like to put this off for a while to see if Dr. Chan and the NHIAA could be unified. L. Witte commented Sept. 8 is the first practice. She said Phase 1 is part of the NHIAA. It was suggested to table and see what guidance the School Board would like to follow. E. Stanley said we need to start now. L. Witte said no summer programs. L. Steadman would like to wait and see how other schools unfold. E. Stanley said we do not have a COVID case in our district. These kids are seeing each other now. Let the kids get together. N. Mosher said to set an example. Not proper to add to something we are trying to prevent. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-no, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-no, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-yes, E. Stanley-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-yes and L. Steadman-yes. 6.476/5.403/0/1.122. **Amendment passes. MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to make masks mandatory. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** K. Wheeler said it is very difficult to get young kids to wear masks. It was commented that masks should be worn. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-no, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-no, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-no, E. Stanley-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-no. 4.653/7.226/0/1.122. **Amendment fails. MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to amend the motion and recommend temperature checks will be required of all students and employees as they enter the building at the beginning of the school day **SECOND:** C. Toomey **DISCUSSION:** N. Mosher would agree with the amendment. C. McDaniel-Thomas is not sure this is a good investment in time. C. Toomey suggested having them checked before entering the classrooms. K. Wheeler commented it is not accurate unless in the mouth. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-no, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-no, E. Stanley-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-no. 5.814/6.065/0/1.122. **Amendment fails. MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to amend the motion and recommend students will attend M-T or Th-F with Wednesday being the remote support day. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters commented 5 days off for the students defeats the purpose.

N. Mosher agrees with the amendment. K. Noonan said some families are concerned with work issues. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-no, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-yes, E. Stanley-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-abstain. 3.525/7.356/.998/1.122. **Motion fails. MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to amend the motion and recommend external party use of the Gilsum Building is approved for Gilsum's town funded before and after school program service. **SECOND:** W. Wright **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon would agree. L. Witte said there is no additional hardship money wise. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-yes, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-abstain, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-yes, E. Stanley-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-yes and L. Steadman-yes. 11.665/0/.213/1.122. **Motion passes. MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the Reopening Plan as written with the 2 additional amendments. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-yes, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-no, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-yes, E. Stanley-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-yes and L. Steadman-yes. 11.665/.213/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

- b. **Special Education Tuition:** Future agenda item.
- c. **Memorandum of Understanding for SRO:** Future agenda item.
- d. **July 7, 2020 Board Minutes:** Future agenda item.
- e. **Manifest: MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to approve the 19/20 Manifest in the amount of \$330,780.82 and the 20/21 Manifest in the amount of \$1,138,607.09. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **VOTE:** 11.122/0/.757/1.122. **Motion passes.**

3. **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:**

- a. **Board Goals Review:**
 - i. **Upcoming Committee Meetings:** K. Barker will be in attendance at the Fin/Fac Meeting on August 11, 2020.
- b. **Policies (1st Read)**
 - i. **JCA-Change of School or Assignment:** In the Board packets for a first read.
- c. **Operations/Superintendent's Report:**
 - i. **Staffing/Hiring Update:** Future agenda item.
 - ii. **MDEAHealth Insurance Litigation:** Future agenda item.
 - iii. **Bus Company Contract Status Update:** Future agenda item.
 - iv. **Emergency Fund (Warrant Article 9 Update):** J. Morin explained the voters passed this article for a 2 1/2 reserve. It does not go into effect until July 2021.
 - v. **Recap Graduation:** Future agenda item.
 - vi. **Homeschooling numbers:** Future agenda item.

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

- a. **September 1, 2020**
- b. **Town of Swanzey request to move public voting to MRMHS**
- c. **Review Elementary Student Handbook**
- d. **Review MRMHS Student Handbook**

e. Update on VLACS

5. Public Comments: B. Bohannon of Swanzey thanked S. Peters for an efficient meeting. He thanked the members of the committee for a well-organized thought out plan.

K. Noonan of Fitzwilliam would like to commend the group for a great plan. It was a great forum for people to ask questions. Thank you for all of the transparency, well done.

6. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 11:06 PM. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent