

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

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

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum 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 called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

3. **MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:**

a. **Authorization of Healthcare Insurance Provider:** J. Morin explained she has the authority to sign the annual agreement for Health Trust. There is no action needed. The Policy Committee will be informed that this recurring motion is not necessary.

b. **Status of BCA-R Form Collection:** S. Peters explained some of the members have signed this form. He would like to wrap this up. ***B. Bohannon arrives.***

c. **End of Year School Calendar:** The administration is recommending to reduce April vacation by 2 days and the last day of school for the kids will be May 29, 2020. L. Witte explained the students will have enough hours to have the last day on May 29, 2020. Remote Learning is not sustainable at this time. N. Mosher asked why it is better to end school early. L. Witte explained she had received feedback from families and students. The families are very stressed. Parents are working, wondering if they (the parents) are doing it right and students are overwhelmed. We are losing kids and families. L. Witte said the last day for kids will be May 29, 2020. M. Connor commented that N. Mosher’s comments are spot on. The kids are not getting the same number of hours each day. She feels the remote learning is finally kicking in. It is not fair to the students. We are losing kids but what about the kids that are doing the remote learning and the Special Ed. students. K. Noonan asked about the meal program after the last day of school. She also wants to make sure the employees do not get a cut in pay and are being paid. L. Witte explained there will be a meals program at Cutler and Troy due to their socio-economic status. The meals are paid through The Seamless Summer Option. If the waiver continues due to the State of Emergency, all sites will be provided if not we will have The Seamless Summer Option. J. Morin explained the waiver will end at the end of the school year. We have staff committed to work under The Seamless Summer Option to provide meals for the kids. She cannot say enough about the Food Service Staff. L. Steadman asked about the Special Ed. L.

Wittes explained we have been advised to plan for remote ESY for the summer. C. Woods explained we will keep the timeline for July and add 12 hours to ESY from 36 to 48 hours. K. Wheeler asked if it is possible for someone to pick up meals at the Troy or Cutler locations and deliver to the more rural areas. J. Morin explained it is not possible, we had asked it is not an option. L. Steadman commented that taking off June and August and only the ESY in July is too much time off. C. Woods explained remote learning isn't as effective as in person instruction. The students make more progress in the schools. This is true for all children. L. Steadman said the students are barely keeping up and with June and August off. What if at least one day a week? K. Wheeler asked about the Sheriff's Dept. delivering the meals. J. Morin explained Seamless Summer is for the socio-economic schools, Troy and Cutler. They are qualifying schools. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to support the administration's recommendation for the last day of school to be on May 29, 2020. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **DISCUSSION:** M. Connor agrees with L. Steadman 100% regarding Special Ed. L. Witte explained this model of Remote Learning is not sustainable at this time. It is overwhelming for everyone. This whole way of living on top of a whole new shift of education. There are teachers in tears trying to balance school and their children. She is hearing their concerns. She is very worried about the students socially and emotionally. To take one thing off is the right thing to do. N. Mosher commented it seems that we are giving up. The students want to see or hear from their teacher. He is concerned with completely eliminating this. He will not vote in favor of this motion. **VOTE:** 9.469/1.288/0/2.243. **Motion passes.**

The last day of school for the MDEA, Specialists and MESSA will be June 9th, 2020. There will be a MOU for each unit. L. Witte explained she had been in contact with the leadership of each bargaining unit. It is 3 less days than the MESSA contract. But because of the contribution by the staff they have earned this. The administration has been working on the MOU with the attorney. **MOTION:** W. Wright. **MOVED** the last day of school for the MDEA, Specialists and MESSA, school year employees will be June 9, 2020. (There is a MOU for each bargaining unit). **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan would like to commend the staff for an excellent job. B. Bohannon asked about taking the remaining days as PD days. What if we start with Remote Learning again? L. Witte explained we are using the time for planning ahead. There is no doubt the staff will rise to the occasion. **VOTE:** 10.544/0/.213/2.243. **Motion passes.**

L. Witte explained the administration would like to recommend that the District be closed the 3rd week of June, June 15-19. This is a mandatory shut-down and all regularly scheduled employees will be paid during this shut-down without impacting accrued leave time. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to close the District the 3rd week of June, June 10-19. This is a mandatory shut-down and all regularly scheduled employees will be paid during this shut-down without impacting accrued leave time. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 8.424/0/2.333/2.243. **Motion passes.** S. Peters thanked L. Witte for all of her efforts and bringing this to the Board.

d. BCBA Position: The administration is proposing a BCBA position versus the contractual services we have been receiving. This will give the District more control over the services and more efficiency. C. Woods explained the funds are already in the budget in the contractual service line. She will also see if there is grant money to help fund this position. She explained having our own person will give efficiency and services Districtwide. **MOTION:** W. Wright. **MOVED** to support the recommendation of the administration to hire a BCBA as an in

house position and to post the position. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **VOTE:** 10.757/0/0/2.243.

Motion passes.

e. **Cheshire Medical Donation:** J. Morin explained the sports program was in need of a new utility vehicle. T. Cote suggested using the gate receipts. Cheshire Medical Center's Sports Medicine Center is making a donation for half of the cost for the new vehicle. The cost of the utility vehicle is \$8775.00. The district will use \$4412.50 from the gate receipts and the other is a \$4412.50 donation from Cheshire Medical Center's Sports Medicine Center. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to accept the donation in the amount of \$4412.50 from the Sports Medicine Center at Cheshire Medical Center to be used towards a new utility vehicle. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 10.757/0/0/2.243. **Motion passes.**

f. **Policy Committee Charter:**

i. **Review of 19/20:** K. Noonan informed the Board she had been elected chair of the Policy Committee. She thanked S. Peters, former Chair of the Policy Committee for the powerpoint presentation. She explained the Policy Committee started their work in December of 2016 due to an audit done by the NHSBA. This committee also reviews the Fall and Spring Bulletins from the NHSBA. The committee has finished the NHSBA audit policies and have reduced the list of policies to be reviewed from 140 to 10. This year the committee was able to get 77 policies passed by the Board. The committee would like to update the oldest policies and to look at the NHSBA database. We want to see if there are any missing policies. We hope to continue this momentum.

ii. **Goals for 20/21:** The committee also discussed committee goals and to create a document for a method of reviewing policies. The committee would also like to transition the prep work of this committee to the administration. We will create a schedule of priority for reviewing policies oldest reviewed first. M. Connor commented that the slide show was very easy to follow. K. Noonan credited S. Peters for the charts. S. Peters thanked the committee for all of their input. He said the committee is in great hands.

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. **Negotiations Committee:**

i. **Overview of Committee Process and Authority:** L. Steadman was asked by S. Peters to prepare a power point presentation, an overview of the committee process and authority. L. Steadman explained there are 3 contracts for negotiations. What the negotiations committee and the units agree on the administration has to live with. There is an RSA that states the Board is involved in negotiations. The Letter of Intent will come from the Unions in May. There will be a lot of hours with 3 contracts. She explained the number of members from the District and the Unions that will be present at the negotiations. She explained the process. S. Peters would suggest a facts sheet for each Union. The negotiations process will go from August to November. The Budget Committee is a big piece in this process. They will either support or not support. January 12, 2021 is the drop dead date to prepare the Article for the contracts. K. Wheeler is worried about the January 12, 2021 date. L. Steadman will try to have it done by November or December. L. Steadman said the January 12 date is statutory. K. Noonan commented this is very helpful and asked if she could have the slideshow sent to her.

ii. **Explanation of Non-Meetings:** L. Steadman explained the difference between a non-meeting and a non-public meeting. K. Wheeler is concerned about getting the budget books early. L. Steadman explained the committee will have to meet in a non-meeting

soon. K. Wheeler is very concerned with waiting until the last minute for the contracts. She would suggest 2 weeks before the drop dead date to receive the budget books. S. Peters would suggest bringing the negotiation committee together to discuss the goals for negotiations as a School Board non-meeting. K. Wheeler has received the document the day it is due. She really wants it 2 to 3 weeks ahead of time. L. Steadman said everyone wants that. There is a better chance of it getting passed. N. Mosher commented if we cannot keep to the dates have an impasse or mediation. S. Peters said we hear you loud and clear that is why we are starting tonight. K. Wheeler is concerned with the late dates in Policy BDA-R. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to refer Policy BDA-R to the Policy Committee asking to review the timeline for the budget book presentation to the Board. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte commented this was about negotiations not the budget books. L. Witte explained if the books go out too early we do not have all of the information or the GMR. The budget books have nothing to do with negotiations. The books are given out 1-2 weeks before the joint meeting with the Budget Committee with accurate budget numbers for all parties. S. Peters commented the budget process has its own process. It may not be appropriate to be in the policy. **K. Wheeler and M. Connor withdrew the motion and will bring it back at another meeting.**

iii. **Attorney Selection:** L. Steadman would like to discuss having Anna Cole as the attorney for the District while negotiating the 3 contracts. K. Wheeler would like to have a discussion regarding the attorney. It was commented the selection of an attorney should take place in non-public.

b. **Policies for 1st Read:**

i. **NEW: GDB-Employment of Non-Certified Staff:**

ii. **NEW: DGD-School District Credit Cards:**

iii. **UPDATE: JICK-Pupil Safety and Violence (Bullying):** K. Noonan explained the policies are for first read. There is information in the packet regarding the rationale for each policy. The committee has also included other information on other policies not up for first read in the packet.

c. **Board Goals Progress Review:** S. Peters explained each committee is asked to present a committee goal for each of the following categories: Capital Improvement, Education and Communication. He would encourage the committees to look at the District's goals and objectives. Look at the Superintendent's goals. They are all interconnected. At the Board Meeting on May 5, 2020 each committee will present. N. Mosher commented some goals in the past have not been smart goals. They need to be in context of what the community feels. S. Peters said the Mission, Vision, Goals and school presentations are a good place to look. K. Wheeler is concerned with the number of warrant articles, especially with remote learning. S. Peters asked how is the number of articles part of the Goals process. K. Wheeler commented they need to be out early. S. Peters will ask CRC to take this issue as a possible goal. K. Wheeler is concerned with the flow chart being presented mentioning the 5-year STEAM Plan. S. Peters said we are not here to discuss each line but as a School Board to get informed.

d. **Carpenter Home Update:** J. Rathbun reported the administration heard from the Town of Swanzy and the District is the top choice to move in if the Board votes in favor of this. The State is checking the criteria in the Trust. It is still happening if the Board agrees. The administration will send an email to M. Connor and D. LaClair on how we got to the Carpenter House issue.

e. **Superintendent Evaluation, Review Policy CBI:** S. Peters reported half of the Board Members have filled out the Superintendent evaluation. He would like to have the

remaining members send in their evaluations by May 1, 2020. He will gather the information over that weekend and present at the May 5, 2020 meeting.

f. Board Chair Report:

i. NHSBA Webinar: S. Peters explained L. Steadman had attended many NHSBA workshops and brought the information back to the Board. The webinars are a great opportunity for us. It is easier than taking a trip to Concord. It would be great if each member would watch a webinar over the year and bring the information back to the Board to share. **(B. Tatro arrives)**

g. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. Financial Reports:

1. District Treasurer: J. Morin explained Nancy Carlson is retiring on June 30, 2020. Her deputy Jen Gomarlo is willing to take her position and Nancy will take the deputy position. **MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to accept Jen Gomarlo as the District Treasurer and Nancy Carlson as the Deputy Treasurer. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 10.575/0/0/2.243. **Motion passes. (B. Bohannon missing from vote)**

2. FY19 Audit: J. Morin explained the FY19 Audit is finalized and in the email Board packets. J. Morin will send a hard copy to any member who would like it. W. Wright and K. Wheeler both said they would like a hard copy. C. McDaniel-Thomas commented J. Morin has been here for 2 years and has gotten us caught up for 3 years worth of audits due to her hard work. We are now in a good place.

ii. Education Report, Update on Remote Learning:

1. Special Education Services: C. Woods said there is no update, we are continuing with what we are doing for all the students. We are trying to increase progress in this difficult situation.

2. Structure for All Students (by Grade-Level/Span): J. Rathbun explained we are entering a month of remote learning and we have figured out a lot of things. We are staying in touch with kids. Our responsibilities are more than remote learning. We are checking on kids. There are families that do not support this process. There are kids that are attending and kids that do not attend. We are planning for the next school year with the 7 days after the students end their year. We need to have an ending process for this year. We need clear objectives. Next year will not look like any other year. We are discussing how to deal with graduation, 6th grade Step up Day, Prom, Academic Awards among others. They want the students to have the experience. There are no updates and no decisions. We want our kids to get what they deserve. N. Mosher commented regardless we need to plan for both scenarios. What is working now and what is not. J. Rathbun said we are planning. M. Connor commented no matter what kids are slipping. J. Rathbun explained no one wants this model. Our focus is to meet all of the student's needs. K. Wheeler asked if we are reaching all of the kids. J. Rathbun explained we are using all of our resources to reach the kids. There are 2%-3% of the students missing. L. Steadman mentioned S. Peters had sent out information from the Dept. of Ed. that stated the number of hours each grade level should have for learning. It was sent on April 7, 2020 regarding elementary students. J. Rathbun explained we are having a conversation about AP courses. We are not lowering standards but adjusting the expectations.

3. Ecology School Update: J. Rathbun explained he met with the 6th and 7th grade teams. There is a strong urge to make sure the Ecology Trip happens. It is a rite of passage for the 6th grade. They are suggesting a 7th grade trip. The deposit already paid will go

toward the trip next year. They will be asking the families about this plan. **MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to support J. Rathbun and the administration to find out information on having the Ecology Trip in the Fall and making sure all are safe. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **VOTE:** 10.757/0/0/2.243. **Motion passes. (B. Bohannon had left the meeting).**

iii. **Employee Status During Extended Closure:** Already discussed this evening.

iv. **Follow-Up on Teacher Appreciation Plans:** L. Witte reported that they have placed the order for the staff appreciation gifts. J. Rathbun explained they are very nice and the School Board will love it. L. Witte explained we are trying to figure out the distribution time. We are working with a local business for the appreciation gifts.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. **April 7, 2020 Public Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes:**

MOTION: C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the April 7, 2020 Public Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** M. Connor **VOTE:** 7.551/0/2.236/3.213. **Motion passes.**

b. **Manifest:** **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** the manifest in the amount of \$ 1,080,017.90 as presented by J. Morin. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 9.422/0/1.335/2.243. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

1. **BDA-R Timeline Budget Setting**
2. **Remote Learning/Special Ed.**
3. **CRC, Fin/Fac and Ed/Tech Charters and Goals**
4. **Review Superintendent's Evaluation**
5. **Ecology School**

7. **ADJOURNMENT:** **MOTION:** C. McDaniels-Thomas **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 PM. **SECOND:** C. Toomey **VOTE:** 10.757/0/0/2.243. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent