Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey,NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Brian Bohannon, Lisa Steadman, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Eric Stanley, Betty Tatro, Dan LeClair, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas and Michelle Connor. **Absent:** Karen Wheeler and Nick Mosher.
Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum and Assessment 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 7:01 PM.
2. **MEETING RULES & UPDATES:**
   a. **Clarification of virtual quorum:** S. Peters explained at this current time we are not required to meet in public but we are allowed to have the public in attendance through Zoom.
   b. **Clarification of "calling the question"** S. Peters explained calling the question does not stop discussion on the topic. There is no vote on calling the question but a vote on the motion being discussed.
   c. **Proposed ground rules for virtual meetings:** S. Peters explained the State does not require us to have Public Comments. He will hold Public Comments for the beginning of the meeting only. All votes will be a roll call vote.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Deb Gove would like to recognize the administration for their support during this crazy time. They have given direction, encouragement and resources. The IT Dept. has gone over the top, pulling together information and encouragement. Thank you.

M. Szymcik would like to reiterate what D. Gove had said. She would like to commend L. Witte and the wonderful Food Service program. It is wonderful being a part of the MRSD.

Kris Klein is not a resident but S. Peters is allowing him to speak. He is the President of the Specialists Union and would like to reiterate what everyone else has said. L. Witte and all of the administration have gone above and beyond and are very transparent. There is great connection with the staff, parents and students. I feel the most connected and comfortable. Thank you.

Ed Sheldon, new Budget Committee Member is excited to jump in and be a part of the District.

S. Peters welcomed C. McDaniel-Thomas back to the Board.

4. **MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:**
   a. **Election of School Board Officers:**

i. **SAU Treasurer and Secretary: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to elect W. Wright as the SAU Secretary/Treasurer. **SECOND:** E. Stanley **VOTE:** 10.909/0/0/2.091. **Motion passes.**

b. **Review Policy BCA (Board Ethics)**

i. **Signatures for BCA-R (Ethics Acknowledgement)** S. Peters would ask the Board Member to sign the Ethics Acknowledgement. ***C. McDaniel-Thomas arrives.***

c. **Board Committees:**

i. **Tabled motion to reactivate Education Committee:** The motion being voted on is to reestablish the Education/Technology Committee. B. Tatro moved the motion and K. Noonan seconded it at the last meeting. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

ii. **Committee Appointments: MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to combine the Finance and Facilities Committees as an ad hoc committee for this year and to meet on an as needed basis. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.** The following members are appointed to the Finance/Facilities Committee: W. Wright, E. Stanley, D. LeClair, B. Tatro, C. McDaniel-Thomas and B. Bohannon. **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to apply all of the committee appointments as presented on the screen. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** M. Connor wants to join the committees in the future. She would like to leave it open. S. Peters would encourage M. Connor to attend some meetings and fill in if needed. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970, **Motion passes.** S. Peters mentioned the Policy Committee will be meeting tomorrow and he would encourage the other committees to hold their meetings.

iii. **Calendar of Meetings:** The Board reviewed the calendar. L. Steadman would like to avoid scheduling a meeting on Swanzey's Deliberative Session. K. Noonan would like to change the June 16, 2020 meeting to June 24, 2020. The Board would also like to change the Feb. 2, 2021 meeting to Feb. 4, 2021 and Nov. 3, 2020 to Nov. 5, 2020. S. Peters would also like to have the meetings at the MRMS/HS unless there is something special the elementary schools would like to show us. We also have the same group of people attending the meetings. K. Noonan explained she likes to visit the different schools. **MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** to accept the Board calendar with the edits made by the Board. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan likes to visit the schools. S. Peters explained if there is a purpose. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

d. **National Teacher Appreciation Day (May 5):**

i. **Approve Teacher Appreciation Lunch:** L. Witte explained usually the Board provides a lunch for all of the staff but it does not seem ideal this year. The administration would suggest a token. They would suggest at the cost of $25.00 each for a total of $8700.00. The cost is slightly higher than the price of lunch. B. Tatro would suggest postponing it until the Fall and put an ad in the paper thanking everyone for their efforts. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to allow the administration to spend up to $8700.00 for a token of appreciation for the staff instead of the Staff Appreciation Luncheon. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman suggested the Board Members driving to the staff and handing out the lunches. B. Bohannon suggested a welcome back luncheon. L. Witte also mentioned the luncheon is catered by the Food Service and they are not able to do it now. They are busy with the student lunches. She said the staff is exhausted. It is nice to be recognized in the middle of this. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

e. Policies (2nd Read):

i. Motion to refer:

1. IKFG-Career Readiness-Refer to Education Committee:

MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to refer Policy IKFG to the Education/Technology Committee. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters explained the Education/Tech Committee can send this to the Policy Committee or to the full Board. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

ii. Motions to Update:

1. BDA-R-Recurring Motions:

2. BEDG-Minutes

3. IHCD/LEB-Advanced Coursework:

4. IGD-Co-Curricular & Extracurricular Programs

5. JJE-Student Fundraising Activities: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to accept Policy BDA-R, Policy BEDG, Policy IHCD/LEB, Policy IGD and Policy JJE as presented. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **VOTE:** 12.030 /0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

iii. Motions to Adopt: (New Policies):

1. JLCFA-Feminine Hygiene Products:

2. BBAB-Responsibility of Chair: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to adopt Policy JLCFA and Policy BBAB as presented. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **DISCUSSION:** L. Witte explained Policy JLCFA is required by law and we have already implemented it in each of the schools. **VOTE:** 12.030/0/0/.970. **Motion passes.**

5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Board Goals Review:

i. School Board 2019/2020 Self-Evaluation Results: S. Peters reviewed the self-evaluation results. He said 9 members out of the 13 from last year participated. S. Peters said our goals were not smart. We did not have an exact definition of our goals. They were not black and white. He would suggest crafting goals to measure quarterly. To see if we met our goal or not. Communication to the public was 55% and effective Board meetings were at least 66% regarding the self-evaluation. Policy has been in the clean-up mode. We still have many policies dated 1993 and 1999. The relationship with the superintendent will be discussed tonight preparing for the Superintendent evaluation.

M. Connor asked where the Strategic Plan is. It was explained there is a Capital Improvement Plan. L. Witte explained it is in print and she will send out the link to the members. She has been keeping the information up to date. B. Bohannon asked if we could put the Strategic Plan to a committee. L.Steadman said the Board goals should be more than the Board goals but the District goals. M. Connor said the Strategic Plan should be reviewed annually. She said she would be happy to lead that committee if necessary. S. Peters explained Education/Tech will probably take this on and Facilities/Finance will take the Strategic Plan for the buildings.

1. State Education Funding:

2. Student Growth:

3. Capital Improvement: After looking at last year's Board goals the Board applauded L.Witte for all of the information she brought back from the State and shared with the Board.

ii. 20/21 Board Goal Setting: S.Peters would suggest the Board pick 3 new goals in the area of Education, Capital Improvement and Communication. He explained each of the committees should set goals and bring one in each area back to the Board. The act of craft and maintaining strategic plans in these areas. We are asking these committees to elect a chair, review their charter and bring back the goals to the Board. The Education/Tech will meet on May 5, 2020, Finance/Facilities Ad hoc will meet on April 28, 2020 and CRC will meet on April 21, 2020. S. Peters explained the committee will bring something to the full Board but it will not be a motion. They will be SMART goals.

b. Board Chair Report:

i. Update on open seat (Swanzey): The Swanzey seat has been filled.

ii. Begin Superintendent Evaluation Review Policy CBI: S.Peters explained the Superintendent evaluation process and how the members will take part in it. L. Steadman said this has to be done in a timely manner. We need to look at how L. Witte is working on her goals. L. Witte explained she has enjoyed the self-assessment. At the moment it is now lower on the list with everything going on. S. Peters said the Board will proceed with our approach and you may do your part if you have time. Everyone should participate, even the new Board Members.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. April Vacation and End-of-Year: L. Witte explained this has been a hot topic. A survey regarding April vacation went out to parents, staff, students and others. Overall 57% would like to have an April vacation. There is also no decision from the State regarding the end of the year. It is very unlikely there will be face to face learning again this year. We are very concerned with the social and emotional well-being of the students. The administration is recommending 2 days of remote learning during April vacation and the remaining 3 days are vacation days. L. Witte mentioned the District is using hours and not days and discussed when the end of school would be for this year. L. Witte explained people need a break. A much needed mental break. The teachers need a break. They are exhausted. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to support the administration's recommendation and have 2 days of remote learning during April vacation and the remaining days off. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman would appreciate the lesson plans early. L. Witte explained we want to keep everyone engaged but some folks need a break. We do have families that are struggling. It was asked if we cancel April vacation could we end the year sooner. L. Witte explained if we do not come back after the State reviews the May 4, 2020 date she would highly recommend the last day of school be the Friday before Memorial Day. We will lose families after the Memorial Day weekend. These are discussions. K. Noonan asked if the breakfast and lunches will still continue during April break. L. Witte said yes. C. McDaniel-Thomas supports L. Witte's recommendation. M. Connor asked if the vacation could be pushed out. L. Witte said the next Board meeting is during April vacation, it has to be decided tonight. She is hesitant to end the school year early. L. Witte explained this is not a sustainable model until June, she is not prepared to make a recommendation regarding the last day of school. There are other end dates for other districts because we are hours and they are days. The other districts are having this same conversation. ***B. Tatro leaves the meeting.*** **VOTE:** 9.834/0/1.075/2.091. **Motion passes.**

ii. Education Report:

1. Update on Remote Learning:

a. Special Education Services: C. Woods updated the Board on remote learning involving Special Ed. students. She explained all PT, OT, Speech and Special Ed. providers are continuing to provide services to the students. There are audio and video types of follow up. Some video, some audio instruction, combination but no in person services. The evaluations are not able to be provided. We are not able to do any new referrals at the present time. All of the professionals are contacting the students. We are tracking the kids who are accessing the services and those who are not. Our professionals are strong advocates for these kids.

b. Structure for All Students (by Grade-Level/Span): J. Rathbun explained that what they are doing is totally different from anything we have ever done. We need to look at the skills they need. Every family is different. Many people are struggling. The elementary students receive 2 lessons in each of the 4 courses. There are assignments in the specials as well. They would encourage the parents to cook with the children and read with them. We do not want kids to sit in front of the screen for 5 hours. The high school students get 3 hours of screen time a day and they work on projects offline. We have discussed report cards and they will be going home soon. What will the third trimester look like? Much tougher with remote learning. The MS/HS 3rd quarter report cards will go out next week. The 4th quarter will be a pass or fail system. We are not giving direct instruction so the stakes are not as high. He said the beginning of next year will not look like anything we have seen before. The entire country is doing the same as us. There will be a lot of questions. He said there was a concern about Zoom. He is feeling more comfortable with all the support to make it safe. He explained there are 20 kids who have not engaged at all. We are looking and tracking. We are worried about kids we have not heard from at all. He said they have been using every resource to make sure the kids are safe.

2. Spring 2020 Ecology School: J. Rathbun explained it is a big disappointment that the kids will not be able to go to the Ecology School. We have already prepaid. Possibly we could have a Fall trip or prepay for next year. We have been throwing out ideas. We do not want the 6th graders to not have the experience.

iii. Employee Status During Extended Closure: L.Witte explained the Board Chair wrote a letter to the staff which is in the Board packets. The letter assured the staff it is the intent of the Board is to keep all staff working and no layoffs, no reduction in hours or benefits. This letter will stand until the April 21, 2020 meeting.

iv. Financial Updates:

1. FY21 Insurance Rates: J. Morin explained the GMR came in at 2.7% which is a welcome savings for next year. That is a savings of $85,000.00. The savings will help with the transportation increase.

2. RFP Transportation Update: J. Morin explained the transportation RFP went out to bid together with the other area school districts. There were only 2 bids. Both bids were really high, the lowest bid had an 11% increase. Hopefully there will be adjustments to the lowest bid. Currently, we are paying the bus company. They are paying their drivers and we will have the bus drivers in the Fall.

3. Update on Breakfast and Lunch: J. Morin explained the District was able to open up additional sites for breakfast and lunch. The number of breakfast and lunches has increased significantly due to the extra sites. The District is very excited to offer this to the kids. A huge kudos to the Food Service Staff. T. Walsh saw the crisis coming and was buying food like crazy. We had almost all of this food before the remote learning. J. Morin

explained the District received a new waiver for the 2 new sites and all of the kids receive free breakfast and lunch.

4. Authorize Superintendent Unpaid Leave Requests: MOTION: L. Steadman **MOVED** to authorize the Superintendent to approve unpaid leave requests as they come up. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 9.787/0/0/3.213. (B. Bohannon missing from vote) **Motion passes.**

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. March 14, 2020 Non-Public Minutes: MOTION: C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the March 14, 2020 Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** M. Connor **VOTE:** 7.551/0/2.236/3.213. (B. Bohannon missing from vote) **Motion passes.**

b. March 24, 2019 Minutes: MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to approve the March 24, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as amended and the non-public minutes as presented. **SECOND:** E. Stanley **VOTE:** 7.551/0/2.236/3.213. (B. Bohannon missing from vote) **Motion passes.**

c. Manifest: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** the manifest in the amount of $2,746,597.29 based on Norita's email. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 8.666/0/1.122/3.213. (B. Bohannon missing from vote) **Motion passes.**

It was suggested to change the District from hours to the number of days the students go to school. L. Witte said it would not affect next year. It would be a lot of work outside the Board Meeting. It was suggested to send it to the Education Committee. L. Witte said it is a much bigger than the Education Committee but a good starting point. If that is what the Board wants to do. She has her feelings about the hours versus the days but you also need input from the community. It is a lengthy process. L. Steadman would like to start the discussion when appropriate.

7. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

1. Update Remote Learning

2. End of Year Schedule

8. 10:10 PM NON-PUBLIC SESSION: MOTION: C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to enter into a Non-public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b) Nominations **SECOND:** M. Connor **VOTE:** 10.909/0/0/2.091. **Motion passes.**

9. Return to Public Session.

10. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 10.909/0/0/2.091. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary