Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board/Budget Committee Joint Meeting Minutes
November 23, 2019 (Not Yet Approved)
Monadnock Regional MS/HS, Swanzey, NH

Board Members Present: Scott Peters, Colleen Toomey, Neil Moriarty, Lisa Steadman, Betty Tatro and Eric Stanley. **Absent:** Kristie Wilder, Winston Wright, KristenNoonan, Brian Bohannon, Karen Wheeler, Rob Colbert and Nick Mosher

Budget Committee Members Present: Wayne Lechlider, Adam Hopkins, Dan Coffman, Doug Bersaw, Meagan Foley, JoAnne Daris and Jillian Exel.

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent 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. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

2. **Roles of the Budget Committee:** W. Lechlider explained the roles of the Budget Committee. He said the committee's job is to set the proposed budget number, set the default budget number per RSA, support or not support warrant articles and oversight by reviewing what the towns are spending and to keep that in mind when setting the budget numbers.

3. **Administration Review of the proposed budget:** L. Witte explained the surplus is down considerably from the previous year. She explained this is the first year this administration has built the entire budget. J. Morin has built this budget from the ground up. We discovered there were errors in the worksheets, which were completely hand built and we needed to start over. They feel we have identified the area of discrepancies. There may be other discrepancies but we are also getting a new system in January. W. Lechlider commented on the items the Board had voted to take out of the surplus.

L. Witte explained the Adequacy Aid has increased from $3636 to $3708 per student. She also informed the Board and the Budget Committee that the Stabilization Grant has been restored to 100% for 2 years. Also full day kindergarten is fully funded. The BOY is about the same as

reported in October. In FY 21 the District will receive 1.4 million and in FY 22 everything goes away except the $3708. A tremendous jump down is possible in FY22.

L. Witte explained an independent commission has been established. There has been $500,000.00 allocated for the purpose of looking into the way education is being funded. Nothing has happened since the Claremont Suit. She will stay involved.

The GMR we budgeted for the actual but came in less for a savings of $257,000.00. Contractual Services tend to be more. We were unable to fill the positions, so contractual services were used, which tends to cost more.

Primex and the Dental Insurance had a decrease. The transportation contract expired. SAU 93 has joined with SAU 29, Winchester, Hinsdale, Surry and Sullivan to create a regional proposal which might attract another bus company. We are not going to regionalize our routes. We do not have a contract. First Student is having a hard time getting drivers. They are unionized. They are getting raises and we project a 9% increase. Special Education has already seen an increase this year.

Proposed 2020/21 items the School Board has been worked on. These items have not been added to the proposed budget. The Extra-Curricular Committee has been working on the coach and advisor stipends as well as academic stipends. The stipends we offer are the lowest in the area. The stipends, SRO and the 1.5 guidance counselor are not included in the proposed budget. W. Lechlider said the academic stipend increases should be used as leverage during bargaining. L. Witte explained why the increases are important. She will email the Budget Committee the stipend matrix.

L. Witte explained the SRO is a part time position and she is working on the MOU for the cost share. The District will maintain a SSO and have a part-time SRO. The Swanzey Police Department is completely on board. The SRO will work 1300 hours a school year.

A full time and a half time guidance counselor are being asked for. That will allow every school except Gilsum a full time guidance counselor. Gilsum will have a .5 guidance counselor. W. Lechlider asked why not put the SRO on a warrant. S. Peters explained the School Board has spoken about the SRO multiply times. He has not heard any public comments on this issue. We do not know what the public wants. The School Board can see the need for the SRO. We are way behind the curve. We are adding staff for school safety. E. Stanley commented he did not vote for the SRO to be in the proposed budget. L.Steadman explained school safety is one of the Board's goals. A group of law enforcement members from the seacoast commented on the need for more safety. N. Moriarty commented it only takes 25 signatures to have a petitioned warrant article. D. Coffman would like the matrix and have the data. L. Witte explained a big component

of the SRO is about developing positive relationships with the students and the police officer. The proposed budget with everything is $33,125,383.00 which is up 3.79%.

4. Review of Articles: Article One is the proposed budget. Article Two is for the removal of the temporary structures at the MSHS and to rebuild 4 classrooms on another part of the campus. Article Three is for engineering and design as a result of the Feasibility Study. The amount has been reduced to $250,000.00. L. Steadman suggested the members who were not present at the last Board Meeting when K. Barker presented to the Board watch Youtube and any questions email her. B. Tatro commented many of our schools need a lot of work which totals millions of dollars. We will have to spend it either way. The study is telling us what to do. The CRC is getting the word out. Article Four is to maintain the elementary schools. Article Five is the Special Ed. Expendable Trust Fund. Article Six is to close a School Building Capital Reserve Fund as suggested by the Trustees of the Trust Fund. Article Seven is for a District Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund. Article Eight is for a School Grounds Expendable Trust Fund. This will allow the District to put funds aside for items such as the track and tennis courts. N. Moriarty said the sewer was fixed with funds from the Maintenance Building Fund. J. Morin will check to see if these are the same funds. D. Coffman suggested to place this in the budget. He does not like a lot of articles. J. Morin explained the tennis courts were voted down in a previous year. N. Moriarty said if you have a default budget you cannot do it. W. Lechlider said the grounds and vehicle article are tough to swallow. A. Hopkins likes having the expendable trust for both. Keep it level without crazy spikes. M. Foley said the articles total 1.8 million. Article Nine is relatively new. The towns already have this article to retain year-end unassigned general funds but not the District. J. Morin said there are 85 out of 201 Districts in NH that do this. W. Lechlider heard we are the second poorest district in the State and we are putting funds aside. D. Coffman commented if the Adequacy Aid goes away we could use the funds. J. Morin said the State asks her each year if the school has adopted this article. W. Lechlider said we are trying to understand this.

L. Witte said the MDEA insurance was in the salary line. They have moved it to the appropriate lines with the GMR increase.

D. Coffman asked about the vacancies. L. Witte explained there are retirements and it may not reflect they were filled. There are currently 2 or 3 openings and we are down a few paras.

5. Public Comments: John Hoden commented on the stipend increases and the fact that the coaches are underpaid. The kids are suffering. We are building a foundation. The development of the children is important. We need to invest in our children. Research on how to retain coaches, changeover is not good. He commented $120,000.00 is not much money in a $33,000.000.00 budget. S. Peters commented the Extra-Curricular Committee had worked on the matrix for the

past 6-9 months. We provided information to the administration which in turn leveled the field and increased the pay.

Keith Thidault responded to W. Lechlider he explained that NH is the 8th richest State in the country.

N. Moriarty asked if the State has ever turned down an emergency in regards to Article Nine.

6. MOTION to adjourn: W. Wright **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 AM. **SECOND:** S. Peters **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary