

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
December 21, 2022
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

Budget Committee Members Present: Wayne Lechluder, Ed Sheldon, Doug Bersaw, Dan Coffman, Robert Audette, Jon Hoden, Adam Hopkins and Anne Marie Osheyack. **Absent:** Scott Peters, School Board Liaison, Phyllis Peterson, Richard HKS Thackston, Nancy Carney, Open Seat for Roxbury and Open Seat for Gilsum.

Also Present: L. Witte, Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator

1. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

2. **Approval of the November 29, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:**
MOTION: E.Sheldon **MOVED** to approve the November 29, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** J. Hoden **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

3. **Administration Reports:**

a. **Transfers/expenses:** There were no transfers.

b. **Monthly Expense Report/Budget Tracking Report:** J. Morin presented the documents to the committee in their packets.

c. **Warrant Articles:** The Budget Committee was concerned with the proposed amounts in Article 6, 7 and 8. E. Sheldon comments that there was a misunderstanding. There was no motion to add additional funds to Articles 6, 7 and 8. We need to keep the ballot clean in hopes of passing the bond. The Special Ed.Trust for \$1.00 is fine. They also discussed the warrant article for the roof in the amount of \$400,000.00. **MOTION:** E.Sheldon **MOVED** to remove Articles 6, 7 and 8 from the proposed ballot. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **DISCUSSION:** E. Sheldon said there must have been a misunderstanding. The Budget Committee would suggest the roof and the bond on the ballot and next year begin to build up the trusts. D. Coffman agreed. It is a good idea but we need to wait. W. Lechluder commented that it is big money. J. Morin said there was no timeline. It was suggested that the system be set up but not this year. J. Morin explained why she would like to keep Article 7. **Amendment to remove Article 6 and Article 8.** She also commented on Article 8 which was suggested to repair the tennis courts. E. Sheldon said he feels bad for the kids that play. J. Hoden commented that we need to pass the bond. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

d. **Staffing:** L. Witte explained the vacancies that we have currently are only seen since last year. When folks leave the replacements sometimes are at a lower education experience level there is a savings and they may not take the benefits package. We have a higher number of vacancies. She explained that we are an employer of choice. Folks want to be a part of the District. This District has a School Board of the Year and 2 principals over the past 2 years who have been named Principal of the Year. We have certain programs and many other positive things that attract folks from other Districts. The MESSA increase starting pay will help. We are in better shape than other districts. L. Witte explained that she recently had been asked to speak at the State level on why she felt employees were leaving. In the exit interviews employees

would say that they are tired of being beat upon. There is a higher number because they feel devalued by society as a whole as well as the views on education and the role of educators.

4. Review:

a. Elementary school bond/project update: J. Morin read the Bond warrant Article to the committee. This is the language from the State. It was suggested that the bond schedule be available to the public at the Deliberative Session. D. Coffman would encourage the Board to go with the Level Debt bond finance. **MOTION:** D. Bersaw **MOVED** to recommend Level Debt to be used for the bond. The Budget Committee discussed the yearly bond payments and how the voters would perceive it. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **VOTE:** B. Audette-no and the remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

b. MESSA Contract: A. Hopkins commented that this item is on the agenda just in case someone wanted to discuss it.

c. Proposed Roof Warrant Article: The Budget Committee discussed the Roof Warrant Article with J. Morin and L. Witte. W. Lechluder would recommend that the School Board reduce the amount of the proposed Warrant Article Three, Repair and Maintenance to \$385,000.00. It was discussed that \$400,000.00 sounds close to half a million, \$385,000.00 sounds better. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

d. Default Budget: A. Hopkins explained that the methodology was emailed to all of the members. D. Bersaw explained the proposed default to the members. J. Morin explained the RSA which is the law and the proposed default number. W. Lechluder commented that if you want to knock down something, knock down the proposed budget, not the default budget. E. Sheldon commented that this committee should not punish the default budget for the School Board being responsible in the proposed. We have a 1 ½ % increase and 8% inflation. Look at the responsible steps the School Board is taking and reward that. **MOTION:** E. Sheldon **MOVED** to accept the Proposed Default Budget in the amount of \$33,060,189.00 as adjusted by J. Morin from the last meeting. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **VOTE: Motion passes.**

e. Proposed Operating Budget: A. Hopkins commented that the proposed budget from the administration is \$33,402,748.00. He said that is a good starting point. We as a committee have not had time to discuss the proposed budget. D. Coffman said he did not see massive plans to deliver education. Show us what programs that will significantly improve and the committee will be more open to funding it. What programs will show signs of improving the education of the students. E. Sheldon said it is a little late this year but find opportunities to help with education. He said that J. Rathbun is doing cool stuff but what is the pie in the sky budget? L. Witte said she does not believe that it is a dollar and cents issue. The School Board has done a great job asking hard questions. They are asking what resources are necessary. We are all talking the same language. She would encourage the Budget Committee to attend the Board Meetings. D. Coffman commented on the cost per pupil being higher than the State. J. Hoden suggested an incentive to hire teachers. L. Witte explained that is an issue for the School Board to take up.

f. Administration (non-CBA) Raises: There were no questions on this item.

g. Expendable Trust Funding: This was already discussed.

h. Unassigned Fund Balance: This was already discussed.

i. Budget Committee By-Laws: Considering the time, the committee will review the By-Laws at a future meeting.

5. Superintendent's Comments: The Superintendent has no additional comments.

6. **School Board Liaison Comments:** S. Peters is not in attendance.
7. **Chairperson Comments:** A. Hopkins explained that the filing period for the seat on the Budget Committee is January 25 through February 3. The Public Hearing and the Bond Hearing will be on January 12, 2023.
8. **Next Meeting: January 12, 2023 Bond Hearing and Public Hearing Agenda Items:**
9. **Public Comments:** There are no public comments.
10. **Motion to adjourn: MOTION:** E. Sheldon **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:53PM. **SECOND:** D. Coffman **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary