

Monadnock Regional School District
School Board/Budget Committee Joint Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2022
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH

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

School Board Members Present: Lisa Steadman, Kristin Noonan, Colleen Toomey, Jen Strimbeck, Michelle Connor, Eric Stanley, Dan LeClair, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas and Scott Peters. **Absent:** Brian Bohannon, Nick Mosher and Betty Tatro.

Also Present: L. Witte, Superintendent via Zoom, J. Morin, Business Administrator via Zoom, A. Cole Attorney from Drummond and Woodsum via Zoom and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary.

1. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
2. **Approval of the March 22, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to approve the March 22, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. Lechluder **VOTE:** 10.092/0/1.098/2.006 **Motion passes.**
3. **Administration Reports:**
 - a. **Transfers/expenses:** J. Morin reviewed the number of transfers approved by the Board over the past 3 Board Meetings.
 - b. **Budget Tracking Report:** The committee had reviewed the Budget Tracking Report provided by J. Morin and they had no questions for her.
 - c. **Monthly Financial Reports:** J. Morin explained the budget amounts are trending correctly. The purchase orders are slowing down. The salaries and benefits have been encumbered. There will be payouts on the wellness days which are part of the contract and it could be substantial. This report was run on May 10, 2022 and it is down about a couple hundred thousand and it is expected to go down more.
 - d. **Vacancy Numbers (staff):** L. Witte has provided the staff vacancy report to the committee. She said it is self-explanatory. She did mention the School Psychologist and the Interpreter were covered by contracted services. She said that during the month of April there were about 13.5 vacancies and at any point that number could go up or down. Currently there are 13 vacancies.
4. **Review:**
 - a. **MESSA Contract:** S. Peters would like to review the MESSA Contract and get input from the Budget Committee. He did explain that the Board is bound by RSAs and they either discuss the contracts in a Non-Meeting or a Non-Public Meeting. It was asked if a Budget Committee Member could participate in negotiations and the answer from the attorney was no. The Board can collect input but only input. S. Peters said that the MESSA contract expires in 2023. The Board's Negotiating Committee will begin negotiating in Sept. per contract. The

GMR is given in October and is the final piece before wrapping up negotiations in Nov/Dec. and January 10 is the last day to bring anything for the contract. S. Peters explained the Lanes and the Steps of the contract which are based on education and experience of the Union Members. There are 20 people off step. D. Coffman asked what is motivating or not motivating this group. L. Witte said salaries. D. Coffman said \$12.50 an hour yet they stay for 19 years. It probably is the compensation package. J. Hoden asked about the 8 vacancies and asked if they will be filled for next year. L. Witte said this is a Statewide issue. There is a critical shortage list. There is an incredible shortage. People are leaving the profession. She is hopeful to fill the positions. There are applications. J. Hoden asked how we support students with no staff. L. Steadman commented that whatever we propose for suggestions for the MESSA Contract we have to have the Budget Committee's support. E. Sheldon commented at his job they are hiring at a higher rate. It was commented that if a contract does not pass the original will remain in place. D. Coffman commented we need to retain the lower paid staff. The paras are not going anywhere they are here for the benefits. J. Strimbeck asked if you could have a bonus for tenure. S. Peters said not in the current contract. D. Bersaw suggested a hiring bonus. J. Hoden would agree with a sign on bonus. D. Coffman commented the younger staff are getting paid less and are not using as much insurance as the older staff. S. Peters explained with retirement we do need to budget for unused days and if the employee has 20 years of service they will receive \$200.00 a year. **MOTION:** R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to recommend a sign on bonus for new MESSA employees, an opt out payout at a minimum of \$5000.00 and an annual wellness payout. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **DISCUSSION:** D. Bersaw would suggest the Board figure out the amount of the sign on bonus. He would also suggest spreading it over the years of the contract. D. Coffman commented that we need incentives for people to leave other districts. We need to reward sooner than later. A. Osheyak does not believe this is a short term problem. She hopes it is. We want good people. S. Peters commented this is information gathering. The Board is open to input. **VOTE:** 10.994/0/.196/2.006. **Motion passes.** E. Sheldon would like to suggest a minimum of \$14.00 an hour in year one of the contract across the board. This could be used as an attraction. **MOTION:** E. Sheldon **MOVED** to recommend to the negotiating committee as follows: Step one all wage scales a minimum of \$14.00 in this contract. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **DISCUSSION:** D. Bersaw commented that is a big jump. He would suggest increasing each year of the contract until the total is \$14.00 in the 3rd year. E. Sheldon commented that the paras do not get paid over the summer. W. Lechlinder would agree with the increase over the life of the contract. D. Coffman will not support a dollar figure. The negotiating team has to look at the competition. He is also looking for statistics after all is said and done. **VOTE:** 8.868/2.126/.196/2.006. **Motion passes.** S. Peters commented at this meeting we are collecting the Budget Committee's ideas and the School Board is not suggesting anything.

5. Bond Timeline for Elementary School Renovation Project: S. Peters explained each year there are 1 or 2 projects on the warrant and for the past few years MTC has been updated by these approved warrants. There are 137 projects on the project backlog. There is a total of \$35,000,000.00 in projects on the backlog. The Board has taken into consideration a 4% inflation rate. The individual projects are in different categories by priority. **J. Hoden leaves.** S. Peters explained the Board took a look at the backlog and came up with 10 Options for renovating the elementary schools. The MRMHS had been worked on and will continue to be worked on. The Board was focusing on the elementary schools. The Board chose Option 10 which is to renovate Gilsum STEAM Academy, Emerson Elementary, Troy Elementary, close Cutler and expand

MTC to make room for the Cutler students. The Board will be asking for State Funding and a 20-year bond. S. Peters presented the timeline to the committees. He also showed the blueprints and explained that the Board had seen the 3D blueprints recently. The Board is working with Guilfoil PR Firm and the website will be launched this summer. The next step is to hire a construction manager. The Board will be voting on that at the June 7, 2022 Board Meeting and then filing the application which is due by June 30, 2022. The District should know by Dec. 1, 2022 if and what we are awarded for funds. The Budget Committee is welcome to participate in the interview with the construction manager. W. Lechlinder commented that the Board should take care of the interviewing process. **L. Witte and J. Morin leave the meeting.** C. McDaniel-Thomas said the CRC had done roadshows and would like to keep in touch with groups like the PTOs from the schools as well as a list of many groups. She is happy to see us moving in the right direction.

6. Superintendent's Comments: There were no comments from the Superintendent.

7. School Board Liaison Comments: S. Peters informed the Budget committee that the CRC had asked the Board for approval for an Advisory Committee for the Elementary School Renovation Project. The Board did approve. A committee will be formed soon and the Budget Committee is welcome.

8. Chairperson Comments: There were no comments from the Budget Committee Chair.

9. Next Meeting: The next Budget Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2022 at 7:00 PM. The committee will be discussing administration seniority, scale from the offset people and the challenge of the interview. **MOTION:** D. Coffman **MOVED** to request a synopsis of the test scores at a minimum at the next meeting and have it provided by the administration. **SECOND:** R. HKS Thackston. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters commented the administration is repeating themselves. W. Lechlinder said that the Budget Committee has the right to request information. B. Audette asked if the information could go out in written form. S. Peters will ask L. Witte to email the link. **VOTE:** 7.613/0/1.132/4.055. **Motion passes.** E. Sheldon would like to review the Bi-Laws at the next meeting.

10. Public Comments: It was asked where are the links to the School Board Meetings? L. Sutton will email the links to the committees.

11. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: W. Lechlinder **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary