

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2022
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

Budget Committee Members Present: Wayne Lechluder, Dan Coffman, Adam Hopkins, Ed Sheldon, Meghan Foley, Richard HKS Thackston, Wendy Martel, John Hoden and Doug Bersaw. **Absent:** Wayne LaCoste, Phyllis Peterson, Scott Peters, School Board Rep., Open Seat for Roxbury and Open Seat for Gilsum.

School Board Members Present: M. Connor via Zoom, L. Steadman via Zoom, W. Wright via Zoom, C. Toomey, E. Stanley via Zoom and K. Noonan via Zoom,

Also Present: L. Witte, Superintendent via Zoom, J. Rathbun, Assistant Superintendent, C. Woods, Director of Student Services, J. Morin, Business Administrator and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary.

1. A. Hopkins opened the Budget Committee Meeting at 7:20 PM. J. Rathbun provided A. Hopkins with the new weighted vote information as a result of the most recent census. A. Hopkins thanked J. Rathbun.

2. Approval of the January 5, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION: R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to approve the January 5, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **VOTE:** 8.731/0/1.132/3.333 **Motion passes.**

3. Approve/Adjust MRSD Default Budget:

a. Administration provided Default Budget: \$33,209,787. A. Hopkins explained the administration had provided the Budget Committee with 14 pages of awesome in order to set the proposed default budget. **MOTION:** W. Lechluder **MOVED** to approve the 2022-2023 proposed default budget as presented by the administration in the amount of \$33,209,787. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **DISCUSSION:** A. Hopkins thanked J. Morin for being so thorough with the default number. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

4. Set MRSD Operating Budget:

a. 2022-23 School Board Proposal: \$33,326,507: MOTION: W. Lechluder **MOVED** to approve the 2022-23 proposed budget in the amount of \$33,326,507 as presented by the School Board. **SECOND:** E. Sheldon. **DISCUSSION:** W. Lechluder said that this is a reasonable budget and it makes

sense. We do not have a reason to reduce because of COVID. All of the articles being presented add up to something of a concern. D. Coffman does not object to the 1% increase; it is a pretty flat budget. The adjustments in prior budget cycles are good and effective. He is concerned about approving the proposed budget and the increase in the contract. If we increase 2 ½ % after the second year we are talking about a massive infrastructure and the contract increase. D. Bersaw would agree with D. Coffman. He said there are 2 significant articles that he would like to support over the 3 year contract. The contracts would have a 2 million dollar increase over the 3 years. We are coming to the voters for the bond which is financially smart. D. Bersaw would like to propose a number for the proposed budget. He said the district has not spent over 30 million and the fund balance over the past 5 years has been at least 1 million dollars. Reduce the budget in the amount of the first year of the MDEA contract and reduce the unallocated fund balance by 2% that would equal about \$700,000. J. Morin explained there is a minimal increase in the proposed budget for the items we are responsible for. E. Sheldon said 1% is a solid effort by the School Board. A 1%-2% increase in the budget is a win as things are increasing. Reduce the operating budget in a few years for the contract but there is not a need now. This is a responsible increase. W. Lechluder commented he agrees with D. Coffman, D. Bersaw and respects the comments of E. Sheldon. D. Bersaw asked what the savings would be in Article Two by not redoing the walls again in the 700 and 800 wings. J. Morin explained there is so much fluctuation in construction costs. It was asked if D. Bersaw was making a motion to reduce the proposed operating budget by \$700,000. He was not it was just a suggestion. **VOTE: 5.521/3.244/1.098/3.333. Motion passes.** **MOTION: W. Lechluder MOVED** to support Article One as presented. **SECOND: R. HKS Thackston. DISCUSSION: E. Sheldon** would like to look at the other articles before a support or not support motion on Article One. **W Lechluder and R. HKS Thackston withdrew their motion.**

5. Warrant Article Recommendations:

a. Discuss all fiscal year 2022-23 Warrant Articles with a monetary value, and make a Budget Committee recommendation on said Warrant Articles: Article Two Renovation to the MRMHS: MOTION: J. Hoden MOVED to support Article Two, renovations to the MRMHS in the amount of \$1,193,000 as written. **SECOND: D. Coffman. DISCUSSION: J. Hoden** said this is well worth it. This will allow the district to do all of the work at one time and save. The cost of materials and labor are not going down. We will see dramatic savings doing it with the installation of the heating and ventilation systems. J. Morin commented that she is confident regarding the number. She also explained

the district is in contact for the specs for bid and the hope is to start potentially this summer. **VOTE:** 8.745/1.118/0/3.333. **Motion passes.** J. Morin commented that the district has the okay for the heating and ventilation systems. This will go out to bid. There are federal rules the district will have to follow. The federal government wants the district to use the funds this way.

Article Three MDEA 3 year Contract: MOTION: D. Bersaw **MOVED** to support Article Three the MDEA 3 year Contract as written. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **DISCUSSION:** J. Hoden commented that the total increase over the 3 years of the contract is 6.65%. The committee has received the information provided by L. Steadman and it is displayed on the screen. W. Lechluder said he will not support the MDEA contract. The Budget Committee had asked for the contract by December 1, 2021. We were told that there was give and take in the contract. He does not see mutual gain. He said the Budget Committee should not support this contract. R. HKS Thackston would ask for the emails received from L. Steadman today to be attached to the minutes. D. Coffman commented that he is reasonably frustrated but is happy to get the information from L. Steadman. Regarding the steps he wants to see where the increases are. He knows the increased amounts but he does not have faith in something that has come in late. He will not support but if there is more information before the Deliberative he will support. He would have liked to have the information earlier. E. Sheldon commented that in business the average increase is between 2% and 4%. If the contract fails and we have to have this contract on the warrant next year it might hurt the bond. Based on what D. Coffman has said, can the Budget Committee vote to support or not support the articles on January 25, 2022. A. Hopkins said the date for the articles is January 27, 2022. E. Sheldon asked if we can wait until January 27 to support or not support the contract. J. Morin explained at several meetings the administration mentioned the open positions and it was mentioned by committee members to pay them more. In 2016 a contract and 2017 there was no MDEA contract, in 2018 a one year contract, in 2019 a 2 year contract with an increase of less than a 2% for both years and in 2020 a 2.2% increase. Voting down this contract will not fill the vacant positions. M. Foley asked if when comparing salaries in other districts was the quality of education and the structure of the districts considered. It was commented that the vacancies are for support staff and specialists. J. Morin explained the unfilled positions are elementary positions, specialists who are in the MDEA contract, MDEA and Math. There will be a MESSA contract next year. W. Martel asked about the other benefits. J. Morin explained 81% of the insurance is paid for by the district and 19% paid for by the employee. W. Lechluder asked why the additional information at 6:00 PM tonight. D. Coffman mentioned the 2 ½ % bonus everyone in the district had recently received. J. Rathbun explained the steps

are retroactive but not the money if the contract fails. No retroactive money. E. Sheldon commented we can back off the amount of the second year of the contract and have it come out of the budget. We should not look at the 36 million in 3 years. L. Steadman commented that they realized the Budget Committee wanted the information a month ago, you would not have liked the contract. The additional information asked by the Budget Committee is not our job. The redline in the contract is the information. Do not spite the teachers if you are mad at the School Board. E. Sheldon feels that he has not had time to digest the information provided tonight. He would like to wait until January 27, 2022. Take the additional time. **VOTE:** E. Sheldon would like to table the motion. A. Hopkins explained the vote had begun. L. Steadman commented that Robert's Rules of Order say that tabling a motion overrides everything. A. Hopkins commented that the Budget Committee does not follow Roberts Rules. 2.263/6.502/1.098/3.333. **Motion fails.**

Article Four: To discontinue the MRSD Health and Dental Expendable Trust: MOTION: J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Four as written. **SECOND:** E. Sheldon. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article One: Operating Budget: MOTION: E. Sheldon **MOVED** to support Article One as written. **SECOND:** W. Lechluder **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article Five: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$63,347 to be added to the School Building Expendable Trust: MOTION:R. HKS. Thackston **MOVED** to support Article Five as written. **SECOND:** D. Bersaw. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article Six: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be added to the Special Education Expendable Trust. MOTION: W. Lechluder **MOVED** to support Article Six as written. **SECOND:** R. HKS. Thackston. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article Seven: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 for the Before and After School Program: MOTION: R. HKS. Thackston **MOVED** to support Article Seven as written. **SECOND:** W. Lechluder. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article Eight: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the District Vehicle Expendable Trust: MOTION: R. HKS. Thackston **MOVED** to

support Article Eight as written. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

Article Nine: To raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to be added to the School Grounds Expendable Trust: MOTION:J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Nine as written. **SECOND:** E. Sheldon. **VOTE:** 9.863/0/0/3.333. **Motion passes.**

6. Budget Committee Schedule:

a. Budget Committee Meeting: The committee felt there was not a need for the January 25, 2022 meeting. J. Morin will have the proposed budget and proposed default for the Budget Committee Members to sign by the end of the week. She will email and ask the members to come into the SAU to sign both documents.

b. Deliberative Session Saturday, February 3, at 10:00 AM.

c. Post-deliberative session meeting as needed to act on any articles amended at the Deliberative Session.

d. Budget Committee Meeting 2/22:

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

8. Chairperson Comments: A. Hopkins explained the open spots on the Budget Committee. The time to sign up and run for a seat is January 19-25.

9. Public Comments: D. Coffman asked J. Morin when the Budget Committee had received the last MDEA contract. He would like to find that in his email and compare it from one year to the next. J. Morin commented that you cannot compare the information.

10. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: J. Hoden **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM. **SECOND:** D. Bersaw. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary