

**Monadnock Regional School District  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2022 (corrected 1.13.2022)  
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

**Members Present:** Adam Hopkins, Scott Peters, School Board liaison via Zoom, Dan Coffman, Wayne Lechliden, Richard HKS Thackston, Doug Bersaw, Ed Sheldon, John Hoden and Wendy Martel **Absent:** Meghan Foley, Wayne LaCoste, Phyllis Peterson, Unassigned seats for Gilsum and Roxbury.

**Administration Present:** J. Morin, Business Administrator via Zoom.

**Also Present:** L. Steadman, School Board Member, B. Tatro, School Board Member via Zoom and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

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

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

a. **Approval of the December 16, 2021 School Board/Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to approve the December 16, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. Lechliden **DISCUSSION:** W. Lechliden wanted to make sure that everyone knew the comments on the default he and W.Martel discussed were positive comments. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

3. **MDEA Contract Review:** L. Steadman, the Chair of the Negotiation Committee was present to explain and answer questions the Budget Committee Members may have. L. Steadman explained the process and the number of members from the Board and the members from the MDEA. The Board at times would have L. Witte and or J. Morin in attendance along with their lawyer and the MDEA would have any number of members and their attorney. After there is an agreement the Negotiation Committee presents to the Board for approval. L. Steadman explained we are not able to discuss changes that had not been adopted. The goal is for a competitive contract that is reasonable and fair to the taxpayers. The School Board told the Negotiation Committee

the number cap, to propose a 3 year contract and a goal which was not reached was the insurance. The MDEA insurance is 19%-81%. L. Steadman said insurance was not brought up in the first 3 meetings because we had a lot going on. L. Steadman said Article 5 of the contract has many changes including the employee evaluation which is a big win for the School District. Attendance is addressed in 11.3. In the contract it states that days in which the MDEA cannot take off. L. Steadman explained the increases in the salaries over the next three years. Article 6.2 was mentioned. The Budget Committee commented on the \$30, \$35 and \$40 to cover classes in addition to their pay. L. Steadman was not sure if the committee had looked at comparables. W. Lechluder felt the \$30 was reasonable but not the other increases. L. Steadman said the increase in salary is 3.28% for the first year. Not everyone receives the same increase. The increase for the three years of the contract is 2.2 million. If the contract passes the 2.2 million includes the step increase and salary. J. Morin explained if the contract warrant fails there are no step increases but there are lane changes. D. Bersaw asked if the contract is approved and the funds raised by the passing of the warrant article will automatically fund the following 2 years. J. Morin agreed. J. Hoden commented the increase on the salaries for the MDEA will be 12.8% by the end of the contract. W. Lechluder commented that MDEA salaries will be over 10 million dollars at the end of the contract. W. Martel asked if there was a time of no increases and is this a pattern of making that up. W. Lechluder commented that the only time the contract did not pass was years ago. L. Steadman explained the committee did not look at the cost of living when discussing the numbers. J. Hoden asked if this contract will make the spots filled and help the kids. L. Steadman explained 5.7 of the contract goes a long way over the 3% increase and it keeps us competitive. R. HKS Thackston asked how the Board is going to sell this. L. Steadman commented that this contract helps us keep our teachers. W. Lechluder commented that the teachers make a decent income. L. Steadman said the salary schedules are made public and we are low at the entry level. She also said the low steps get a bigger increase. The ones at the higher steps get more because they already make more. D. Bersaw asked if there were any significant changes in the lane changes. L. Steadman said no. D. Coffman asked about the opt out option. L. Steadman said it is a buyout and in section 9.11 of the contract. J. Morin explained there are 36 people who took the buyout. The newer teachers are still on their parent's insurance. D. Coffman said that saves the district 3 times that amount. D. Coffman said that the Budget Committee had asked for an executive summary and it was of dire

importance. It is a disappointment. These teachers are the most important employees and he does not like not supporting them because of the timing of the contract which sets a bad example. He does not have a summary and now has to go through the 50 page contract on his own and ask L. Steadman or J. Morin for answers. He does not feel it is fair without going through the contract. He does not know the reason for the increases because there is no summary. He hopes to have a summary document before the next meeting on Thursday. L. Steadman said that she understood that the deadline for the contract was before the Budget Hearing and she is here tonight to answer questions. There is nothing about negotiation's strategy anywhere. We can not and will not comment. We might have had to give something but cannot give that information. D. Coffman would like the grade summary. L. Steadman said S. Peters has the formula and did present in the past. W. Lechluder said the Budget Committee asked for the contract before December 1, 2021. L. Steadman said negotiations were tough, we went to mediation and could not come with the contract any sooner. W. Lechluder would suggest taking the amount of the contract out of the budget. A. Hopkins explained what we vote at the Budget Hearing can not change at the Deliberative except for the dollar amount on other warrant articles. The contract cannot change. W. Lechluder said if the committee feels strongly than reduce the budget by \$384,000.00 and do the same next year. L. Steadman said one good benefit for the students is when the teachers can not take days off on professional development days, not after a long weekend and not after vacation. L. Steadman explained the number of sick days has increased. D. Coffman said it is a huge increase but he likes it. J. Hoden would like a template to go by. D. Coffman said to get the information from S. Peters and the timeline. A. Hopkins explained the State Law says they have up to the Budget Hearing to provide the contract but we can ask. L. Steadman will get the information on the increases in the current contract and the information from S. Peters. E. Sheldon would suggest the Budget Committee provide a list to the Negotiations Team in July or August. **L. Steadman leaves.**

**4. Discussion on Warrant Articles:** S. Peters explained Article One is the proposed budget in the amount of \$33,326,507.

Article Two is for renovations to the MRMHS in the amount of \$1,193,000. The District was able to use the CARES funds in the amount of \$1,215,000 for heating and

ventilation. K. Barker advised the Board to do the other work on the CIP regarding the 700 and 800 wings at the MRMHS at the same time. These items are not covered by the CARES funds. It does not make sense to redo the work. If Article Two does not pass we will still do the heating and ventilation. The warrant article will cover 18 rooms, 2 new and 2 new bathrooms. J. Hoden explained there is a cost savings doing it all together. E. Sheldon commented next year there is a bond and after that it will be hard to pass. It was commented that the renovations are for 18 rooms, 2 new and 2 new bathrooms is a great deal. J. Hoden asked if there were drawings. S. Peters said the cost for the drawings are in the warrant. E. Sheldon commented that the value is efficiency. S. Peters commented there will be a savings with replacing the windows that are not commercial grade. W. Lechluder commented that the District has realized that there is a cost savings with replacing the windows. S. Peters explained the warrant articles in Plain English will be able to explain the article. J. Hoden would like to have selling points. D. Coffman asked if there was any building aid. S. Peters explained there may be a reimbursement for lighting but not a grant.

S. Peters explained the Board had originally proposed a warrant article in the amount of \$325,000 for a fire panel upgrade at Emerson, removal of temporary classrooms at the MRMHS and the MRMHS roof repair. The Board had decided to use the Health Insurance Refund. The refund will pay to remove the temporary classrooms, an infrared study on the MRMHS roof, the upgrade of the fire panel at Emerson and to repair the roof after the study. The Board took the article off the table.

Article Three is the MDEA Contract which was discussed earlier.

Article Four is to dissolve the Health Insurance Expendable Trust. The current balance is \$63,347.

Article Five is the Maintenance Expendable Trust in the amount of \$63,347. The Board suggested using unallocated funds. This article will knock off some of the small items on the CIP.

Article Six is the Special Education Expendable Trust in the amount of \$1. This will allow a change at the Deliberative Session just in case there is a need.

Article Seven is the Before and After School Article in the amount of \$1. This will allow a change at the Deliberative Session if there is a need.

Article Eight is the Vehicle Expendable Trust in the amount of \$50,000. The administration is currently discussing replacing a vehicle and the cost of vehicles currently are at a premium. J. Morin explained this is for vehicles not tractors. She is not sure how many vehicles the District currently owns. She again explained these articles if passed will be funded by the unallocated fund balance.

Article Nine is the Building and Grounds Expendable Trust in the amount of \$40,000. E. Sheldon would suggest information given out on the impact on the taxes.

J. Hoden asked if there was anything done about the coach's stipends as discussed at the Joint Meeting. S. Peters explained the Board did not have time to work on that and it is not in the proposed budget.

5. **Superintendent Report:** There is no Superintendent Report.
6. **School Board Liaison Report:** S. Peters did not have any additional comments.
7. **Budget Committee Chair Report:** A. Hopkins reminded the committee the next meeting is the Budget Hearing on Thursday January 13, 2022 and then the committee will meet for the business meeting. The filing period to run for the Budget Committee is January 19-28. M. Foley will not be running. J. Hoden and W. Martel are up for re-election.

D. Coffman would like proper IT in the Library for the Budget Hearing. A. Hopkins will email L. Witte about the arrangements.

8. **Setting Next Meeting Agenda:** The Budget Hearing will be on January 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM.
9. **Public Comments:** There were no Public Comments.

**10. Motion to Adjourn: MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM. **SECOND:** D. Coffman **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Laura L. Aivaliotis**  
**Recording Secretary**