

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2021
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

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

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent via Zoom and J. Morin, Business Administrator via Zoom.

Also Present: L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

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

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**
 - a. **Approval of the November 13, 2021 School Board/Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to approve the November 13, 2021 School Board/Budget Committee Joint Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

 - b. **Approval of the November 18, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to approve the November 18, 2021 Budget Committee Joint Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** M. Foley. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

3. **Administration Report:**
 - a. **Budget Tracking Report Review:** J. Morin had sent out the full budget detail review and summary. She asked if there were any questions. The committee had no questions or comments. She explained the District is where she expected to be. There will be expenditures and we recently filled vacant positions. W. Lechliden asked why the summary says there is 2.8 million remaining and the big sheet says 4 million. J. Morin explained she does not include the \$970,000.00 for Food and Nutrient Grants in her summary because it is a wash. She explained the District hired a Reading Specialist

at Cutler and an Assistant Principal at the Middle School. The assistant principal will not start until January. M. Foley asked if there are any accounts in the budget that are close to the budgeted amount. J. Morin responded she had no concerns.

b. What major transfers occurred since the last meeting? J. Morin explained there were no major transfers since the last meeting.

c. What major expenses are anticipated for next month? J. Morin explained there are no major expenses anticipated for next month. *W. Martel arrives.*

d. Proposed Default Budget: A. Hopkins asked the committee if they had any questions about the Proposed Default Budget. W. Lechlinder is concerned about the furniture bought during COVID which is in storage. J. Morin explained it should not be in the Default Budget. W. Lechlinder asked if we could reduce the replacement furniture. J. Morin said she made a reduction in the replacement furniture line for this year. The MRMHS replaces a few classrooms each year. They have the biggest need. It is reasonable to have that in the budget. There are broken desks. D. Coffman is interested in the total number of replacement furniture in the budget. J. Morin commented this is why she would like to have the questions prior to the meeting. She will have to research the number. The system is not search friendly. She said the replacement furniture was \$25,000.00 before this year. It is now cut to \$10,000.00 in the MRMHS. D. Bersaw commented that there are replacement equipment lines. J. Morin explained those are for technology and custodial items among others. R. HKS Thackston asked if the replacement equipment was due to theft. L. Witte said not that she is aware of. W. Lechlinder said that is a reflection on the staff and W. Martel commented that is a reflection on the students. L. Witte said it is a reflection on the culture, climate and community as a whole. A. Hopkins said if there are any questions for J. Morin please also copy E. Sheldon and himself. We need to be ready with the Default number on January 13, 2021. W. Lechlinder said J. Morin has done a great job putting the spreadsheet together.

e. Proposed Budget: L. Witte explained she had sent out the chart with updated numbers showing key data points. W. Lechlinder asked if the School Board has the proposed articles and amounts. L. Witte said the information is what had already been done. W. Lechlinder asked about the number for State Aid. L. Witte explained we did apply but is there aid not sure. The article that passed last March was to get the application for State Aid. L. Witte said she believes the School Board will vote to move their number forward for the proposed budget. She feels it may be less than the

administration's proposed budget. D. Coffman said he has a personal view on the proposed budget number but will not bring home his final thoughts. Regarding the contract, it is unfortunate. We do not have a lot of requests but we wanted the contract for the final meeting of the year. We do not have a contract. It is a matter of principle. A. Hopkins said L. Steadman will bring a tentative agreement to the School Board Meeting on December 21, 2021. If the contract is approved, it will immediately go to the Budget Committee. He would like to invite a member of the Negotiating Team or a teacher to explain the contract at our next meeting in order to understand the numbers. Do we want a special meeting to review the contract? D. Bersaw said it is important to slip in a meeting. We also do not know the warrant articles being proposed. R. HKS Thackston asked once there is an agreement what if the Board does not agree. What is the recourse? A. Hopkins explained the School Board cannot approve the article. W. Lechluder said if we agree we offset the Board. M. Foley asked about a number regarding the proposed budget that offsets the surplus number but not all because it is partly due to COVID. L. Witte explained the auditors have seen a double in the surplus in many school districts. J. Morin explained we will be running a much tighter budget. The surplus is \$2,033,918.00. She explained from March on in the 2019-2020 budget, the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 budgets were affected by COVID. W. Lechluder worries about cutting too deep. We do not have a good basis. J. Morin explained the School Board voted to retain a portion of last year's surplus in the amount of \$246,900.00. D. Bersaw asked the amount of money in the fuel fund. J. Morin explained \$58,089.00. She also said fuel is allocated in each of the buildings. The Special Ed. Expendable Trust has \$334,792.00 in the account. The funds can only be withdrawn if there is a deficit in the budget due to Special Education. W. Lechluder would like to know the entire ballot before voting on the proposed budget number. There has been no decision from the Board on what to do with the funds in the Health Expendable Trust.

4. **Superintendent's Comments:** L. Witte does not have additional comments.
5. **School Board Liaison to BC Comment:** S. Peters is not in attendance tonight.
6. **Chairperson Comments:** Superintendent Witte has been named Superintendent of the Year in NH by the NHSAA. Congratulations.

7. Setting Next Meeting Agenda: The next Budget Committee Meeting is on January 5, 2021 to discuss the contract and articles, Public Hearing on January 13, 2022. Budget Committee Meeting on January 25, 2022. Deliberative Session February 5, 2022. The Board and the Budget Committee will have their joint meeting prior to the Deliberative Session.

8. Other Business: It was commented to have a short 2023 warrant and hope that the MDEA passes so there are not 2 contracts on the 2023 ballot. W. Martel commented we need to have quality teachers when we are thinking about the contract. W. Lechluder would be curious to see the wages in the other towns. L. Witte explained it is on the website.

9. Public Comments: L. Steadman via Zoom, explained the Negotiations Committee did look at the comps. We also looked at the starting rate for teachers. If the contract is successful with the Board on December 21, 2021 she will send it to the Budget Committee. If there are questions they will answer so this discussion will not happen at the Public Hearing. W. Lechluder asked L. Steadman if she could provide an executive summary regarding the contract. L. Steadman said she would.

10. Motion to Adjourn: MOTION: R. HKS Thackston **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 PM. **SECOND:** W. Martel **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary