

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2021
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

Members Present: Adam Hopkins, Dan Coffman, Wayne Lechliger, Megan Foley, Ed Sheldon, John Hoden, Doug Bersaw and Phyllis Peterson via Zoom. **Absent:** Wendy Martel, Wayne LaCoste, Richard HKS Thackston, Scott Peters, School Board liaison, 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 October 26, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting**

Minutes: **MOTION:** W. Lechliger **MOVED** to approve the October 26, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **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.

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.

d. **Proposed Default Budget:** J. Morin had sent the information on the Proposed Default Budget to the committee. The committee would like time to review the information. Any questions regarding the proposed default budget could be emailed to

J. Morin. D. Coffman would like to understand the budgetary number in regards to the vacancies. She explained the existing position that is vacant can be in the default. D. Coffman explained he has counted 8 vacant positions. He would ask the administration to track the open positions and share that information at the next meeting if possible. E. Sheldon asked if the positions cannot be filled are they filled with contracted services. J. Morin explained the goal is to hire people. There is a vacant psychologist position covered by contracted services and we plan for the salary and benefits of that person within the proposed budget.

e. Unallocated Fund Balance: D. Coffman asked for the breakdown in savings for transportation. L. Witte explained we pay by the run in extra-curricular and athletics. There were a number of runs that did not happen due to COVID. There was also special education transportation savings all due to COVID. J. Morin explained the bus company gave the district credit for the fuel portion because the buses did not run on Fridays.

f. Proposed Budget: A. Hopkins asked the committee if anyone had come up with a number to present to the voters. W. Lechluder would like to digest the information they received at the Board/Budget Committee joint meeting. He would also like to hear from the voters at the Public Hearing. M. Foley would like to look at the warrant articles being proposed. D. Coffman hopes the Board will approve a budget to improve the delivery of education. There has been a deficiency for 2 years.

g. Preliminary Budget Summary: It was explained that the proposed budget is \$32,239,787 plus the \$970,000 for Food and Nutrition. A. Hopkins explained the Board did not meet on Tuesday due to lack of physical quorum. There are no updates on the expendable trusts, warrant articles or negotiations. A. Hopkins hopes that the negotiations with the MDEA ends shortly and the contracts will be sent to the Budget Committee for review in December.

4. Superintendent's Comments: L. Witte does not have additional comments. J. Morin has no additional comments.

5. School Board Liaison to BC Comment: S. Peters is not in attendance tonight.

6. Chairperson Comments: There were no comments from the Chair.

7. Setting Next Meeting Agenda: The next Budget Committee Meeting is on December 16, 2021. 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: W. Lechluder commented we need to look at the budget and consider the entire warrant. We need to consider everything coming up regarding the bond and we need to be sensitive to the voters. J. Hoden commented it is another million in warrant articles. We need to break them out. E. Sheldon commented regarding the cuts last year and the fact the discussion was that nothing would happen with the cuts. He said it did. Personnel and programs were cut and we still had a surplus. We should not say there will be no cuts. M. Foley asked why a surplus. E. Sheldon commented the budget is written assuming the worst case scenario. He said cutting because there is a surplus is not good. D. Coffman said the point is good but the operational issues are not the Budget Committee's responsibility. There were choices made and we could have made different choices. He does not believe the Budget Committee inflicted that decision. We are currently spending under the budget and we have the CARES money. The School Board made a smart choice and gave the \$800,000.00 back to the taxpayers. He does not envision a cut of 1 million dollars due to the surplus. For the past 5 years the district has had a surplus of 1 to 1 ½ million dollars a year, which is excessive. E. Sheldon commented that the district budgets for the worst case scenario. L. Witte explained the GMR is part of it. The actual has come close. We are not sure and cannot predict the GMR. The positions that are vacant are required and necessary. Folks are thin. Psychological Services are required by law. Special Education positions are vacant. We need these positions and we are struggling to provide services. There is an extreme shortage across the industry. We are covering but it is not easy or ideal. W. Lechluder commented the vacancies are part of running the district and part of the plan. E. Sheldon commented that he is worried about cutting the budget to pass the warrant articles. W. Lechluder commented that the Swanzey Fire Dept. has tried to pass a bond for 3 years. Historically this district does not vote in favor of a bond. We need to sell this. He commented that the 1 million dollars a year warrant article was not financially good but it did get passed. M. Foley commented that the Swanzey school portion of the tax rate dropped. A. Hopkins mentioned that the

valuation in Troy went up. J. Morin explained the district will receive the GMR and the NH Retirement amount in the Fall of each year.

9. Next Meeting's Agenda: School Board Review, Default Budget, November 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes and November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

10. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

11. Motion to Adjourn: MOTION: E. Sheldon **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM. **SECOND:** D. Coffman **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary