

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2021
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH**

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

Administration Present: J. Morin, Business Administrator and L. Witte 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 August 24, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:**

MOTION: E. Sheldon **MOVED** to approve the August 24, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** D. Bersaw. **DISCUSSION:** D. Coffman asked if the committee felt the discussion with him and L. Witte was adequately stated in the minutes. The committee did not say differently. He also asked if the email from L. Witte should be part of the minutes and L. Witte explained it cannot be because it did not happen in the August 24, 2021 meeting. She will include it in the next packet **VOTE:** W. Lechliden-abstain, D. Coffman-yes, E. Sheldon-yes, D. Bersaw-yes, J. Hoden-abstain, S.Peters-yes,A. Hopkins-yes. **Motion passes.**

b. **Approval of the September 28, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:** **MOTION:** W. Lechliden **MOVED** to approve the September 28, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** D. Coffman **VOTE:** W. Lechliden-yes, D. Coffman-yes, E. Sheldon-yes, D. Bersaw-abstain, J. Hoden-adstain, S. Peters-yes and A. Hopkins-yes. **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. D. Bersaw thanked J. Morin for getting the information out early and with plenty of time to review.

b. What major transfers occurred since the last meeting? J. Morin explained there were 2 major transfers in Special Education. One transfer was in the amount of \$42,000.00 from Speech and Language to Contracted Services. The other transfer was in the amount of \$84,000.00 from Psychological Services to Contracted Services. Both transfers are due to the district not being able to fill positions and having to use contracted services. These services will be used for the rest of the school year. Contracted Services do not include benefits. J. Morin explained why the amounts are so different. It is the level of expertise with the two positions.

c. What major expenses are anticipated for next month? J. Morin explained the Board approved a purchase of a van for the Food and Nutrition Program. The Program had a fund balance and it is not allowed to exceed more than 3 months balance. The current van is very old and the district does daily runs to other schools in the district. This is not coming from the operating budget and it is not part of the \$970,000.00. *M. Foley arrives via Zoom.*

d. Current Enrollment Numbers: L. Witte presented the student enrollment numbers. She explained it is not the official BOY. She said that she would have that number for the Joint Meeting. Last year the BOY was 1644 students. She is not sure that the number she presented and the BOY include out of district placements. She took these figures straight off of PowerSchool.

e. GMP from Health Trust: J. Morin explained the GMR for the District is at 8.4% for the 2021/22. The GMR for the current year is 2.5%. Health Trust is using the adjusted claims experience to set rates with the return of claims pre COVID.

4. Budget Timeline Review: It was explained that the proposed budget draft would be ready from the administration to the School Board next week. November 13, 2021 is the Joint Meeting of the School Board and Budget Committee. The Budget Committee and the School Board will pick up their budget books at the SAU on Nov. 5, 2021. The Joint Meeting will be in the MRMHS Library. S. Peters explained he would be able to set up the meeting on Zoom as well as in person. In order for the School Board and the Budget Committee to vote they both need to have a physical quorum. The Budget Committee had suggested an earlier time for the Joint Meeting. S. Peters said he will

bring that suggestion back to the Board. J. Morin mentioned she will send out an electronic version of the proposed budget. The Public Hearing is on January 13, 2021, the Deliberative Session is on February 5, 2022 and Voting Day is on March 8, 2021. The Default Budget will be in the budget books to review. It was explained that the default budget and the proposed budget will be voted on by the Budget Committee after the Public Hearing. W. Lechluder asked about the replacement furniture which was purchased due to COVID. J. Morin explained it was purchased with CARES funds. L. Witte explained it was not replacement furniture. We needed to have separate desks. In most cases currently we have gone back to the tables.

5. Superintendent's Comments: L. Witte does not have additional comments. D. Coffman asked L. Witte about the October 5, 2021 Board Minutes when J. O'Shaughnessey was present. L. Witte explained last year there was a concern with enrollment and Free and Reduced numbers. There were some parents who pulled their students to homeschool. The adequacy amount changed and came in late. There were additional funds and the Board decided to use them to offset the tax rate. Unanticipated funds came in late and the Board gave it back to the taxpayers. S. Peters explained the Board could have used the funds for a project but would have had to have a special meeting. The Board agreed to give the funds back to the taxpayers.

6. School Board Liaison to BC Comment: S. Peters presented the CIP Spreadsheet on the screen. For the past 2 years the Board has been going through this process with K. Barker of Barker Associates. The Board agreed on a 4/% inflation rate for the items on the backlog for the next ten years. There is a list of every project that needs attention. There will be collective bargaining agreements, an Elementary Bond in 2023, the SAU needs attention, there is no elevator or ramp and is not ADA compliant. The SAU does not have the space needed. S. Peters explained the Carpenter House people contacted the SAU and informed them that they have denied us the opportunity. K. Barker and his engineers went through this building. S. Peters listed the items that need to be renovated. We will renovate a wing as a single project. We have a fresh list and an understanding of how to break it down. We identified compliance issues, ADA, Homeland and Security and Life Safety. W. Lechluder asked if there was any thought of having the SAU at the MRMHS or an addition to MTC. S. Peters said there was conversation about using Cutler. W. Lechluder said it is not getting rid of the dead horse.

S. Peters said the recommendation from the architect is a stand alone building for the SAU. L. Witte explained there were only 5 employees from the SAU who were at the MRMHS at one point. Not the entire staff. The SAU needs to be separate and isolated. It was commented to attach to either MTC or the MRMHS but to be isolated. The Board is trying to honor the 1-1.2 million dollars a year for a warrant article. The total amount for the MRMHS and SAU projects is \$13,000,000.00 and the Elementary School Renovation Project totals \$22,000,000.00. He explained the CRC held Input Sessions and there were about 20 people in attendance. There were a lot of good questions. He explained by closing Cutler there is an energy savings and consolidating the bus routes. He said K. Barker mentioned selling the building would provide \$25,000.00 in taxes for the town. W. Lechlinder asked about the bond. J. Morin explained it is a 20-year bond for 12 million and the current bond interest is 1.69%. The first payment is 1.2 million with a declining amount with the last payment of \$600,000.00. This amount will come out of the budget line. It was explained the Elementary Schools Renovation Project will cover all of the elementary school CIP issues. W. Lechlinder suggested doing the Elementary School Renovation Project and the MRMHS all at once. S. Peters explained State funding is competitive. Some of the funding is based on life safety issues. MRMHS does not have a lot of life safety issues. There are also bonus points for historical buildings. The CARES Funds will cover the ventilation in the MRMHS. The removal of the temporaries is in the proposed warrant for the MRMHS. There will be 2 warrant articles for renovations being proposed. J. Rathbun has submitted the application for the HVAC and lighting to be covered for the MRMHS. J. Rathbun said it is a 2-week turnaround. M. Foley commented on taking a bond for the Elementary School Renovation Project but not the MRMHS. J. Morin said the life safety issues at the MRMHS are minimal. A ³/₅ bond vote is required. A back up warrant was suggested if the bond fails. E. Sheldon would not suggest a back up article. D. Bersaw commented if the information on the inflation rate was explained this would be a good moment to sell this project. He can see inflation going up. Get this done now. The 1.69% bond rate is very good. W. Lechlinder would suggest putting everything in. It was commented that if we think it is a good idea to bond all, maybe next year a separate bond. To get it all done the bond would be \$27,000,000.00. J. Hoden commented we may not get all of the funding but the rate is great. S. Peters will bring back this suggestion to the Board. S. Peters would ask the Budget Committee about a line in the budget for repairs and renovations. A budget line in the amount of \$250,000.00 to \$500,000.00 for smaller projects. There will

still be work needed on the other buildings with the Elementary School Renovation Project. It was commented that depreciation should be a line item. It is very important. A. Hopkins suggested adding to an Expendable Trust each year. This way it will keep it out of the operating budget. W. Lechluder said if you put \$100,000.00 in that will hit a lot of the smaller items. S. Peters explained his presentation is on the website. J. Morin commented that people in attendance at the Input Sessions asked if the Budget Committee was supportive. S. Peters commented that the Board cannot speak for the Budget Committee but they seem to be supportive. W. Lechluder said the numbers make sense. It was commented that the voters not at the meetings are the people we need to inform. D. Coffman said we need to get the horse in the barn. Someone said they are a fan of getting the SAU in the total bond amount. W. Lechluder suggested using the Keene Sentinel to get the word out.

S. Peters was asked about negotiations. He explained he has recused himself because his wife is a teacher. L. Witte said the negotiations are still going on. E. Sheldon would like to have the Board avoid a contract in the year of the bond vote.

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

8. Setting Next Meeting Agenda: November 13, 2021, Joint Budget Committee and School Board. November 18, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting. December 16, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting.

9. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

10. Motion to Adjourn: MOTION: D. Bersaw **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 PM. **SECOND:** W. Lechluder **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary