

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2021 (corrected 6.22.2021)
Zoom Meeting, Swanzey, NH**

Members Present: Dan Coffman, Adam Hopkins, Scott Peters, School Board Rep., Wendy Martel, Ed Sheldon, Megan Foley, Wayne LaCoste, Doug Bersaw, Melissa Diven and Richard HKS Thackston. **Absent:** Phyllis Peterson, Wayne Lechluder, Unassigned seat for Gilsum and Unassigned seat for Roxbury.

Also Present: L. Witte, Superintendent and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary.

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

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**
 - a. **April 27, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION:** D. Coffman **MOVED** to approve the April 27, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. LaCoste. **VOTE:** 4.4425/0/4.439/.9698. **Motion passes.**

3. **Administration Report:**
 - a. **New Report for Budget Tracking:** A. Hopkins explained he had received the reports today. We had asked for a line by line budget each month. L. Witte explained the report being presented. She said there are 50 or so pages. She explained there are transfers and that is part of the normal budget process. A. Hopkins will email the report to the members. D. Coffman commented this is exactly what we asked for. He appreciates the efforts. A. Hopkins explained the Budget Committee can ask for clarification on the budget items but we as a committee cannot tell the School Board where it should be spent. He suggested maybe questions next month. D. Bersaw would like to see the report prior to the meeting. It would be helpful. The committee thanked L. Witte, J. Morin and anyone else for their efforts.
 - b. **Actual dollar amount potential for this year's 2.5% retained funds:** L. Witte explained the amount that is able to be retained by the district is a maximum of \$987,637.00. This amount can be held back by the district for emergencies. L. Witte explained we do not have the fund balance yet. The DOR will figure out the amount.

This is the first year of retaining funds. She said there is no end date. Once we have the final audit number. We have been getting the audits done early. It could be Sept. or Oct.

c. Trust Fund Balances: The committee received a list of the 2020 Trust Income amounts. There are 6 Trust Funds: 2009, Emergency Fund, BASP, MRSD Health, Maintenance and Special Education. The Total is \$517,253.54. L. Witte will look up the 2009 Trust Fund to see what it is. D. Coffman asked about the financial mechanism. L. Witte will ask J. Morin. E. Sheldon felt it might be a Certificate of Deposit. S. Peters asked what is an emergency with the use of the funds. L. Witte explained you have to read each individual article. She explained the Special Ed. Trust can only be used if the entire budget is in a deficit and the cause is Special Education. There is a process to withdraw the funds.

d. School Board budget moves to meet voter's approved budget: L. Witte presented the adjustments made to the budget due to the budget reductions. There is a reduction in 7 FTE, the Troy Preschool will be moved to Emerson, various other teaching positions and the SAU will make reductions in supplies. There was a savings in the GMR and the total reduction will now be \$740,000.00. E. Sheldon asked about the number of cuts and if they are afraid of a surplus. L. Witte said they are not worried. W. LaCoste asked how many positions are vacant. L. Witte said none. L. Witte explained the Troy Preschoolers will be bussed to Emerson. There will be 2 preschools in the district Emerson and MTC.

4. Budget Committee Items:

a. Building Bond:

i. Strategy to inform the public about bond: S. Peters explained the potential bond will be on the 2022/2023 ballot. The Board is trying to think of ways to get the word out. We need to be transparent. We are looking at great ideas. He asked if the committee had any suggestions. E. Sheldon suggested it would be great to have joint meetings with the Board and the Budget Committee to show a united front. Show we support together assuming the Budget Committee supports the project. S. Peters presented the timeline to the committee. S. Peters explained the administration is working with the architect on the education specifications. They will be developed over the summer. The architect will walk through each school with the Finance/Facilities Committee to create a punch list. In 2022 we will submit our intent to the State. He explained the Board will be holding Listening Sessions to inform the voters about the

bond. The Board does not want to surprise the voters with the amounts. The sessions will be conducted in Sept. and Oct. A. Hopkins suggested a dedicated page on the district website. The page would be easy to share photos of the buildings and also have a tour of MTC to show the other towns with the renovations their schools will look like MTC. W. LaCoste said A. Hopkins had a great idea. He also said we need to talk this up. We need to target the parents with emails. We need to get better attendance at the meetings. S. Peters said we have a large group of Preschool parents who should be informed. He said communication is a challenge. M. Diven asked if there were funds for radio ads. S. Peters said we have a small budget which includes some of the funds we used for fliers. We have hired a PR Firm. We need to be aggressive. M. Diven suggested a looping commercial on a radio station. There are enough listeners. W. LaCoste would suggest targeting the parents of younger students. A. Hopkins said this project will not affect his children but the inside of MTC blew him away. He would like the same MTC renovations for the other students. E. Sheldon suggested sponsored social media ads. M. Foley suggested marketing the School District at the same time. What did the district achieve and did they achieve an effort to show the betterment of the district as well as academics? M. Diven suggested a Youtube video. It was mentioned the Troy Community page is very active. S. Peters informed the committee the Board will not have a concrete number from the architect until the 11th hour. D. Bersaw commented that the voters do not look at the articles but the amount. E. Sheldon hopes that the number that will go to the voters is reasonable and they will be able to support. It was mentioned the fire department did not get their fire department because they did not get the word out. M. Foley explained they did get the word out. It was mentioned we need to educate the voters. D. Coffman commented some people do not have a direct impact in the school district but they do in the fire station. We need to inform the people that the delivery of education is improving. A. Hopkins said we need information sent out for those that are not active and do not attend meetings. S. Peters thanked the committee. He said this was a great collaboration. He will share this input with the Board and the CRC. A. Hopkins suggested the Board come up with an elevator pitch. Come up with 5 talking points and be consistent. Give the same information for everyone.

ii. Bond process input from BudCom for School Board:

b. Future Meeting Rules:

i. Space requirements for public attendance if BudCom meets in person: L. Witte informed the committee there has been no information from the Governor. We are still restricting facilities use. She will be presenting a draft to the Board on June 1, 2021.

ii. Location in district buildings with adequate space-other options: D. Bersaw commented that he would like to meet in person. M. Diven suggested meeting under the tent at the school. L. Witte explained the tent will only last until the last day of school. A. Hopkins suggested Whitcomb Hall. L. Witte said the Emergency Order is until the end of the school year. S. Peters said we are going to host live meetings as a Zoom Meeting/hybrid which is a challenge. The Board is still thinking about this. He said with Zoom we have 30-180 participants. W. LaCoste said we need hybrid for a comfort level. D. Coffman said he is not a fan of Zoom, the participants in attendance are employees there are more people but we need the right audience. We need to get back to in person meetings. E. Sheldon will check on Whitcomb Hall regarding seating. R HKS Thackston said the best way to reach people is with multiple platforms, with Zoom you have to look for it. M. Foley informed the committee Whitcomb Hall will seat 100 people upstairs and has a working chair lift. M. Diven said live meetings may not be what people want. People like Zoom Meetings. There are people not vaccinated so hold off on in person for a while.

5. Budget Committee Schedule:

- a. June 22**
- b. July 27**
- c. Aug 24**

6. Superintendent's Comments: There are no Superintendent comments.

7. School Board Liaison Comments: S. Peters explained the Finance/Facilities Committee will dig into the CIP list on June 8. There are 2 project lists, the CIP and the Turner Report. We will walk through every elementary school and figure out what will be passed with the renovation project. As for the voting of E. Sheldon on as a rep. to the School Board it was agreed the voting needs to remain with the Board only. He will have an open microphone in dialogue. D. Coffman said he is surprised we do not hear what we can do to buy back in terms of deficiency within the last 2 years. Students have suffered. We need to have a discussion every meeting on how we can get these kids up with spending money on the delivery of education. S. Peters explained the Board did

publish Education Goals. Grades 3, 7 and 12 are reviewed. We receive reports from the administration. We are keeping on track. W. Martel asked what is the role of the Budget Committee. We are concerned regarding education but is that our role. It is time to define the role of the Budget Committee. A. Hopkins suggested reviewing RSA 32. He said our role is purely financial. W. Martel said we are crossing over territory that is not ours. W. LaCoste appreciates D. Coffman's questions and S. Peters answers. We are parents and do we need to spend more money to help our kids. D. Coffman said the Budget Committee is about spending money and are we getting an adequate education. If the administration says we need to spend funds for education, we need to. We need to have an aggressive discussion and then take action each month.

8. Chairperson Comments:

9. Setting Next Meeting Agenda:

i. Follow up with Facilities Use Draft

10. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

11. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: D. Bersaw **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:34PM. **SECOND:** W. LaCoste. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis

Recording Secretary