

Monadnock Regional School District

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2019

Monadnock Regional MS/HS Library, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Wayne Lechluder, Dan Coffman, Jillian Exel, Adam Hopkins, Meghan Foley, Douglas Bersaw and Wayne LaCoste. **Absent:** Thomas Parker, Brian Bohannon, School Board Rep., JoAnne Daris, Tom Matson, Open Seat for Swanzey and Open Seat for Gilsum.

Also Present: L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary.

1. Public Comments: L. Steadman, Board Chair and Troy resident is interested in a better relationship between the Board, the administration and the Budget Committee. An open dialogue. She would like to propose a sub-committee of the Budget Committee and the administration. L. Witte and J. Morin will meet with the Budget sub-committee, the School Board will not be involved. W. Lechluder commented that topic is on the agenda tonight. He said the Budget Committee and the School Board need to be separate due to the perception of the voters. L. Steadman commented that mediation could work. **J. Exel arrives.** W. Lechluder asked why the administration is not attending the meetings. He felt the Budget Committee would have to wait too long for an answer to their questions with a sub-committee meeting with the administration. L. Steadman said the School Board does not need to have the Superintendent attend these meetings.

The Board is trying to find a path of communication. D. Coffman is interested in the point of functionality. We cannot undo but we can retake a motion. The Board needs to tell the employee to do her job. Participation is required. L. Steadman said L. Witte felt publically disrespected. Some comments were directed toward staff members that were inappropriate. L. Witte said it was not a good environment to be in at the Budget Committee Meetings. D. Coffman said this is a 6 digit employee. L. Steadman had contacted the BC Chair and members to find out both sides of the story. D. Coffman said he felt uncomfortable with all the weirdness going on. L. Steadman said it is lack of trust. D. Coffman said lack of professionalism. We need to get past that. L. Steadman said we have a spectacular Business Administrator. W. Lechluder said the BC would like to have the Business Administrator in attendance at the meetings. L. Steadman said we cannot tell the Superintendent to have the Business Administrator attend the meetings. L. Witte and J. Morin do not want a confrontation. W. LaCoste said this is blown out of proportion. This is childish. It is easy to see who commented inappropriately. L. Steadman commented the School Board wants to keep a good employee. L. Steadman said she spoke to W. Lechluder and 3 other BC members regarding the situation. W. LaCoste asked who was called. He said this is exaggerated and blown out of proportion. L. Steadman said that is part of the reason L. Witte does not want to attend. L. Witte is a great employee and she has done a great job. W. LaCoste has children in the district and he has issues. L. Steadman said we need to protect our employee. L. Steadman said the Board is not

going to say suck it up and get over it. If she is not comfortable they will not make her attend. L. Steadman commented after the sub-committee meets with L. Witte and J. Morin a few times that they will eventually attend a full meeting of the Budget Committee. J. Exel heard at a School Board Meeting that an employee was attacked at a Budget Committee Meeting. She is very confused and now it has snowballed into a worse situation. L.

Steadman said the School Board voted to have mediation but the BC Chair rejected it. The next step is to have 2 or 3 members meet with the administration. D. Coffman commented the BC has not met and there is no answer in regards to mediation. W. LaCoste commented mediation at the taxpayers expense. How is the administration going to get to the point of raw? D. Bersaw said he seems to be clueless because he does not remember any inappropriate comments or questions. L. Steadman said the real issue is what does the BC do. We have members that do not know what they do except cut what they think is important. M. Fowley said the timing of the petitioned article to disband the BC was wrong. L. Steadman said it is the Board's responsibility to keep employees safe and valued. Lisa Mango sent an email to the BC encouraging them to attend mediation with the Board. D. Coffman said he does not think we have a massive problem with disrespect. L. Steadman said mediation with everyone in non-public and no quorum or a sub-committee and minutes will be taken.

M. Szymcik is concerned with the learning opportunities for the children. It should be a collaboration and understanding for the students needs. It is better to want the same. To be in the same place.

2. Approval of the May 28, 2019 Meeting Minutes: MOTION: D.

Coffman **MOVED** to approve the Budget Committee Meeting minutes of May 28, 2019 as presented. **SECOND:** A. Hopkins. **VOTE:** J. Exel-abstain and yes for remaining members. **Motion passes.**

3. Budget Oversight:

a. MRSD Monthly Expense Report: W. Lechluder explained the monthly expense report and additional information was emailed to the members. D. Coffman commented that he does not have time to review 10 attachments in the amount of time it was received prior to the meeting. W. Lechluder explained it was his fault on the timing. He was waiting to have the agenda and send everything together. He will send out the information when it is available from J. Morin. The information explained there is a surplus of \$937,524.00 as of now but it will be higher with the revenues. It will be close to 1 million dollars.

b. What major transfers occurred since the last meeting?

There was one major transfer contained in the technology lines.

c. What major expenses are anticipated for next month?

There were many improvements done over the summer and were all funded by warrant articles passed by the voters, they include new roofs, fire alarms systems, the final phase of MTC among other things.

The surplus was reduced by items the School Board voted on in the amount of almost \$400,000.00. D. Bersaw would like to have J. Morin in

attendance to answer questions. D. Coffman said typically we will have comments for the administration but they are not here. We usually have the current enrollment at this meeting and the staff numbers. D. Bersaw asked if there are any warrant articles being discussed at the Board level. L. Steadman said the SRO is being discussed. She also commented that K. Barker will be in attendance at the October 1, 2019 School Board Meeting in Gilsum.

4. Mediation: W. Lechluder said it is his personal opinion that the mediation is not necessary. The administration needs to attend the BC Meetings. W. LaCoste does not understand why groups cannot come together in this meeting. Mediation is a waste and he sees no benefit. L. Steadman said a mediator will facilitate and get it all out. M. Fowley said mediation has not stake in this District. You need to get a professional. D. Coffman said either way is okay with him. W. LaCoste is not happy with what has already happened. He struggles to remember anything that happened. D. Bersaw asked either mediation funded by the School District or the sub-committee. **MOTION:** D. Bersaw **MOVED** to accept the offer for mediation from the School Board. **SECOND:** J. Exel commented if it helps J. Morin and L. Witte but she does not want the District to pay for it. L. Steadman said the funds come from the School Board budget. W. Lechluder commented he has never been approached by L. Witte to meet with her. He is willing to sit down with L. Witte and J. Morin and listen to what they have to say. He said it would be one meeting. **VOTE: All members-no. Motion fails.** W. Lechluder and A. Hopkins will meet with L.

Witte and J. Morin. W. LaCoste questioned the phone call after the event. He said it did not happen. The position is a high level professional position.

5. Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee and School Board: It was discussed that the Board would like to hold the joint meeting on a Tuesday. The meeting is usually on a Saturday. **MOTION:** D. Coffman **MOVED** to hold the joint meeting of the School Board and Budget Committee on November 23, 2019 for a productive review of the default and proposed budget. **SECOND:** M. Foley. **VOTE:** J. Exel-abstain and remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

6. Default Committee: W. Lechluder reminded the group that the entire Budget Committee will be reviewing and setting the number for the Default Budget. A. Hopkins had a conversation with the Superintendent regarding the transportation. The NHSBA lawyers referred the question to J. O'Shaughnessey for his opinion. The cost of transportation is included because it was voted on by the School Board not the voters.

7. Budget Committee Schedule: October 22, 2019, November 20, 2019, Joint Meeting on November 23, 2019 and December 18, 2019.

8. Any other items the committee wishes to discuss: D. Coffman is not available on October 22, 2019.

9. Superintendent's Comments: The Superintendent is not present.

10. Chairperson Comments: There were no additional comments.

11. Public Comments: B. Tatro hopes this issue between the Board and the Budget Committee gets resolved.

W. Lechlinder thanked and appreciated L. Steadman, B. Tatro and W. Wright for attending the meeting.

12. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: D. Coffman **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 PM. **SECOND:** W. LaCoste **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis

MRSD Recording Secretary