

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
Budget Committee/School Board Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2017
Monadnock Regional MS/HS, Swanzey, NH

Board Members Present: Nicholas Mosher, Betty Tatro, Lisa Steadman, Brian Bohannon, Neil Moriarty, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Winston Wright and Bob Mitchell.

Budget Committee Members Present: Wendy Martel, Chris Fortson, Wayne LaCoste, Wayne Lechluder, Adam Hopkins, Neil Moriarty, Dan Coffman and Kristen Goodenough.

Also present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum, C. Woods, Director of Student Services, J. Fortson, Business Administrator, M. Suarez, A. Salzmann, A. Noel, L. Spencer, K. Stone, J. Griffin, K. Kilburn and L. Aivaliotis, MRSD Recording Secretary.

L. Steadman opened the meeting at 8:30 AM.

L. Witte explained J. Rathbun would be speaking on the most recent assessment scores. C. Woods will then speak about Special Education. J. Fortson will explain the fund balance and review the proposed 2018-2019 budget. J. Fortson informed the committees that each the Board and Budget Committee have a quorum. J. Rathbun explained the Board and the Budget Committee had received the results of the assessments. He explained the DOE has a website which allows individuals to compare results with other districts. J. Rathbun explained where the information could be found on the website. There is a lot of information.

L. Witte explained at the previous Budget Committee Meeting the members were asking for information on Special Education. C. Woods explained this past July the District was given a check mark for being in compliance. It has been sometime since this District had been in compliance. She explained the District is waiting for the DOE to tell us that we passed on indicator 12. This indicator is early intervention to preschool, Special Ed. transition. Students must have an IEP at the age of 3. We were not chosen to be a monitored district. Prior to C. Woods arrival indicator 11, 12 and 13 were in need of attention. The monitoring members were here for 2 years for a process which usually takes 1 year. We were 10 years out of compliance for one or more indicators. In NH students with disabilities IDEA is above the Federal Standards. C. Woods explained the website and where information is available. The DOE is looking at compliance not quality of instruction. We need to look at that piece. C. Woods explained interventionists help so students do not fall behind. Interventionists are regular education teachers. C. Woods explained because we were out of compliance the DOE directed us to use some of the IDEA funds to correct the compliance issue now we will be able to use the funds to help students. L. Steadman commented being out of compliance could result in a

grievance from a parent and staff time as well as a black mark. N. Mosher commented take away student support and it is a black mark on the district's financial impact. W. Lechluder asked about the dropout rate. J. Rathbun explained the dropout rate for 2015-2016 was 4%. This information is on the website and is the most recent information. L. Witte explained there is no accountability for homeschoolers.

The budget timeline was explained. There are 3 contracts still being negotiated and they need to be wrapped up by January or sooner. April is a statutory notification for the staff regarding renewal or non-renewal of employment.

J. Fortson explained the unallocated fund in the amount of 1.5 million dollars and where the amount came from. She explained there are reductions in the lines in the proposed budget where there was a surplus.

L. Witte explained calculating for the Adequacy Aid per town. Adequacy Aid has a big impact on the tax rate. The number presented today will change again. Fitzwilliam will receive more in Adequacy Aid due to the increase in Free and Reduce lunch for the students at Emerson.

L. Witte explained Kenogarten is projected to provide \$1100.00 for each all day kindergarten student in NH with a potential of the amount increasing to \$1818.03 which is the maximum. This amount is not reflected in the proposed budget.

The GMR is .4% for the 2018-2019 school year. We projected 5%. This is good news. This .4% is set by Health Trust. The rate is partly based on the dynamics of the staff and on their health elections. J. Fortson explained employees going to Convenient MD instead of the emergency room might help with the cost. D. Coffman said you do not see this kind of rate in the outside of the school world. He said it is important to keep in mind what we are paying during contract negotiations. Staff does not pay an increase. Hope it is considered. NHRS does not increase for the proposed budget.

L. Witte reviewed the items which will be reduced in the 2018-2019 proposed budget, which are fuel-energy, elementary supplies, substitutes, 3.5 positions, contracted services, unallocated fund balance and decrease in NEASC. J. Fortson explained there has been a 1-million-dollar reduction in energy and fuel costs every year since 2010. W. Lechluder commented when people vote down the MTC project they do not realize there is a savings with the energy and fuel when it is complete.

L. Witte explained the preliminary proposed budget items for the 2018-2019 Budget, a .5 Social Studies teacher, library media specialist, funding for field trips, supplies for MS/HS and increase in professional development. J. Fortson explained we are in a 3 year bussing contract and there will be a 3% increase for the next 2 years and all late buses are in the budget.

L. Witte explained the Budget Committee had asked to look at a \$30,500,000.00 proposed budget. They would like to know what it would look like. She presented the

information she had presented last year explaining what would have to be reduced, class size increased or if buildings would have to be closed or consolidated in order to meet the \$30,500,000.00 budget amount asked for by the Budget Committee. It was asked what amount of Gilsum students are attending the Gilsum School. It was explained about half of the students are from Gilsum and the other students are from other schools in the District. B. Tatro noticed the large first grade classes at Emerson and Troy. The idea of consolidating the schools and having all the first graders in one school was discussed. B. Bohannon said it would not solve the issue. L. Witte said you could have 3 classes not 2. B. Bohannon said we had the Long Range Committee and at the end only 2 people showed up. K. Goodenough said we are here to make these decisions. L. Steadman would like to take a year and inform the community. B. Bohannon said we have talked about this and nothing is getting done. The way things use to be cannot be, it is emotional and financial. We need to take a hard firm look at the District. N. Mosher said we have had the evaluation and assessments on the buildings, if there is no change than we need to maintain the schools, support the MTC project and support the repairs on the schools. K. Stone said one issue is kindergarten registration. All of a sudden we have people signing up. We have had a discussion. W. LaCoste would like to see a proposal for Emerson and Troy. B. Tatro would like to add an aid to each of the classrooms with 26 students in them. B. Tatro will bring it to Education. N. Mosher commented it is Nov. 2017 and we are taking about restructuring. It is too late in the game. We need more bodies. K. Goodenough suggested a conversation now. We need to make the changes now. K. Stone explained there are up to 3 or 4 adults in those classrooms. W. Lechluder mentioned there needs to be a change. He mentioned the fact someone has brought up the idea of Swanzey withdrawing from the District. C. McDaniel-Thomas would like the breakdown enrollment numbers.

W. Lechluder explained the Budget Committee will support reasonable contracts with a reasonable budget. L. Witte passed out 5 years of warrant articles. The School Board will be looking at the articles at the next meeting. W. Lechluder commented there is a concern in the public about the School Board supporting the funding formula article. L. Steadman said it is a petitioned article and the question is out to the attorney. W. Lechluder explained it is public perception.

J. Fortson presented information on the insurance plans and the co-pay in the specific plans.

L. Witte explained the negotiating team is working hard.

L. Witte reported there has been no answer on the \$390,000.00 from the insurance pool.

L. Steadman closed the meeting at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording secretary