

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2017
Monadnock Regional MS/HS, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Wayne Lechluder, Dan Coffman, Wendy Martel, Neil Moriarty, Tom Matson, Brian Bohannon, Kristen Goodenough, Tom Parker, Wayne LaCoste, Adam Hopkins and Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, School Board Rep.,

Absent: Bonnie Black, Unassigned Roxbury Rep. and Gilsum Rep.

Also present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Fortson, Business Administrator and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary.

1. Public Comments: The public comments were heard during the Public Hearing.

2. Approval of the December 21, 2016 Budget Committee Minutes: MOTION: N. Moriarty **MOVED** to accept the December 21, 2016 Budget Committee Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** A. Hopkins **VOTE:** 11.779/0/0/2.221. **Motion passes.**

MOTION: N. Moriarty **MOVED** to accept the December 28, 2016 Budget Committee Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** A. Hopkins. **VOTE:** N. Moriarty-abstain, unanimous for the remaining members. **Motion passes.**

3. Adjustments to the Default Budget: It was explained it is not necessary to make any adjustments. **MOTION:** N. Moriarty **MOVED** to accept the Default Budget number in the amount of \$32,746,272 which includes the \$970,000.00 for Food Service. **SECOND:** T. Parker. **VOTE:** 11.779/0/0/2.221. **Motion passes.**

4. Discuss and set the MRSD Operating Budget Warrant Article One: N. Moriarty commented the MRSD cost per pupil is \$17,776.00 and the State average is \$14,902.00. He commented on the lack of online books, Fast Forward and the fact Gilsum is not the best performing school in the District.

T. Parker said we have let the School Board spend the money on what they want. He is not sure what they need. He would suggest a reduction of 1.5 million from the proposed and bring the proposed budget number to \$30,485,301.00 a majority of the cost is in people. Enrollment is down and we have not reduced where we should. Take the funds away and let them find the cuts.

MOTION: T. Parker **MOVED** to accept the proposed budget for 2017-2018 in the amount of \$30,485,301.00 which includes the \$970,000.00 for Food Service. **SECOND:** N. Moriarty **DISCUSSION:** T. Parker commented if we vote for the Default Budget it will increase the taxes by \$700,000.00. The other option should be a lower number and there will be no tax increase. T. Matson would like to change the MTC article. W. Lechluder said at the Deliberative not here. T. Parker explained the motion includes the \$970,000.00. B. Bohannon said with the 1.5 million in cuts we had scenarios but we do not know the additional \$500,000.00 in cuts with this motion. It is irresponsible. W. Lechluder commented they can come up with a proposal, mix and mingle. You can come up with \$750,000.00 if you close Gilsum. B. Bohannon said you cannot tell the Board what to do. He said the vote of the School

Board was for no school closings or reconfiguration of schools. W. Lechlinder said if we cut the Board will have to find the cuts. They should not paint themselves in a corner. T. Matson said D. LaPointe explained by cutting the student to teacher ratio from 11 students per teacher to 13 students per teacher would save money. The cuts are not scary. L. Witte passed out information on the past budgets, enrollment and staff for each year and projections. She explained in 2010-2011 the enrollment went down as well as the amount of teachers. She also explained in 2015-2016 enrollment went down as well as the amount teachers. She said the NESDEC expected a large decline but she has looked at the information and said enrollment will decrease but not as much as in the report. N. Moriarty said this School Board cannot tell the next School Board what to do. B. Bohannon would like to know what the extra \$500,000.00 in cuts would look like. If we say cut \$500,000.00 it will be in teachers. He cannot support the motion not knowing what the cuts look like. D. Coffman said it is not a cut. The Board's recommendations are based on the Saturday wish list from the administration. Keep it in perspective. The 1.5 million in cuts are off the wish list. D. Coffman said we need to work on student ratio. We need to consolidate, we have a low student to teacher ratio in Gilsum and that is not what public school is about. Our job is to shoot for the middle of the road. The public is telling us they cannot support the wish list. Do not feel bad we are cutting the wish list. It is not the first time we have consolidated. The town can take over the Gilsum School and people can pay to send their kids to Gilsum. C. McDaniel-Thomas said the majority of the Board said it was not the Christmas list. She said some scenarios did increase class size. To cut blindly she does not see it as a good education move. W. Lechlinder said he has to pick and choose the articles on the ballot. We have to come in lean on Article One and support Article Two. L. Witte said by closing Gilsum you reduce 3 teachers. T. Parker said we have to be able to help people with their taxes. You may not have a District. He commented on the Elementary Special Ed. Coordinator for \$115,000.00, 1 teacher at Cutler and 1 at Emerson. He said there are small jobs that are not doing the students any good. He commented on staff being related to members on the different committees and said that is not right. He would question some jobs the Board creates. A lady in the audience commented in Gilsum there is one teacher for a combination class of 20-25 students. It was stated the reduction in Gilsum's closing would be 4 certified teachers and 4 non-certified teachers for a total of \$612,000.00. For the proposal being voted on you would take \$175,000.00 from the Extra-curricular Account, late buses would be eliminated, Gilsum would close and a total of 31 positions would be reduced all but 8 certified staff. L. Witte explained how important it is to have the Special Ed. Coordinator Position. It is saved in every scenario. We need to be in compliance. We also need the funds for NEASC and science materials. W. Lechlinder asked if there is a financial penalty without the Spec. Ed. Coordinator. L. Witte said we are out of compliance. She said there is no financial penalty unless someone files against us. J. Fortson explained the cost of Special Ed. in the District and what the District receives for funding. **VOTE:** 4.561/7.218/0/2.221. **Motion fails.**

MOTION: D. Coffman **MOVED** to accept the proposed 2017-2018 budget in the amount of \$31,423,301.00 which includes the \$970,000.00 for Food Service. **SECOND:** N. Moriarty. **DISCUSSION:** D. Coffman explained he is subtracting the \$612,000.00 by consolidating the Gilsum program and adding the benefits for the full time AD. Thirty percent of the students in this District participate in extra-curricular activities. The part time AD failed in the past. We need a well thought out program. This does not mean he supports sports over academics. B. Bahannon said he agrees with the intent but we set the number and we do not tell the Board what to do. He said the cuts will not come from closing a school but from reducing teachers. W. Lechlinder said we do not know that and he is willing to take a chance. W. Martel said she is concerned that there is little incentive to make the changes realistically. Some towns are thinking about pulling out. W. Lechlinder said it is a shame that the Board is not willing to listen to the people. They may not have a choice. It has been too long and not accomplishing a lot. The only option is to force that change. K. Goodenough said she does not disagree however with the scenarios presented we will lose in extra-curricular, late buses and the Board will not do what we want. She cannot support until there is a plan. D. Coffman said we need to be pragmatic and

responsible. We do not have to get where we are having the students roaming the halls. He does not believe it will be irresponsible. W. LaCoste asked about the survey asking opinions on the budget. L. Witte said there were more responses. It was the highest response on a survey since she has been in the District. She has not had time to take the results and compile them. **VOTE:** 9.186/2.594/0/2.221. **Motion passes.** J. Fortson said the Board will vote on Tuesday to support or not support Article One as set by the Budget Committee.

Article Two, Renovations to MTC in the amount of 1.4 million dollars: MOTION: K. Goodenough **MOVED** to support Article Two in the amount of 1.4 million dollars for renovations to MTC. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **DISCUSSION:** N. Moriarty will not agree with this motion. He said they will take 3 years to spend the funds. He said to get the funds when they are needed. J. Fortson explained you need the funds upfront. The bids are due for the next phase on January 19, 2017. The architectural and engineering work is done. We need to order materials. B. Bohannon commented we already have money in this project. If we wait we will have to get more plans. It is never going to be cheaper. It will be irresponsible to wait. T. Parker asked if it will complete the school as it exists. J. Fortson said yes. The plans for next year are a MPR at MTC. She explained the modulars will be replaced with some of the 1.4 million dollars. W. Lechlinder said these buildings were built in the 80's. You would not wait in your own house. **VOTE:** 9.582/2.198/0/2.221. **Motion passes.**

Article Three, for the continued asbestos abatement for flooring at the MSHS and MTC and replacing the boiler at Emerson in the amount of \$193,000.00: MOTION: T. Matson **MOVED** to support Article Three in the amount of \$193,000.00 for the continued asbestos abatement for flooring at the MSHS and MTC and replacing the boiler at Emerson. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 10.721/1.058/0/2.221. **Motion passes.**

Article Four, to add \$75,000.00 to the Before and After Expendable Trust: MOTION: T. Matson **MOVED** to support Article Four in the amount of \$75,000.00 to be added to the 2012 Before and After Expendable Trust. **SECOND:** D. Coffman. **DISCUSSION:** J. Fortson explained the grant for the Swanzy Program will end this year. She is applying for grants. If the grants are not received the individuals will be required to pay more for the program. She did say there are scholarships for those who cannot pay. B. Bohannon commented possibly the towns may want to pick up the cost. D. Coffman explained his positive experience with the program. T. Parker asked how much funding is coming into the District and he would like to hear more at the Deliberative Session. J. Fortson explained every parent pays a fee some more some less depending on the family's situation. K. Goodenough would suggest adding "ACES 93" to the Article wording. W. Martel would like to know the cost without the grants. J. Fortson said Troy does not have any grants and the cost is \$65,000.00-\$70,000.00 a year. **VOTE:** 10.598/0/1.1182/2.221. **Motion passes.**

Article Five to add \$50,000.00 to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund: MOTION: K. Goodenough **MOVED** to support Article Five to add \$50,000.00 to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. **SECOND:** A. Hopkins. **DISCUSSION:** T. Parker explained this is a form of taxation. It is not free money. J. Fortson explained the wording in the article is from the DRA. She explained the amount in the Trust Fund is about \$350,000.00 and was created 8 or more years ago. **VOTE:** 9.458/0/2.231/2.221. **Motion passes.**

Article Six, a 3 year Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the MDEA and School Board: MOTION: T. Matson **MOVED** to support the collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the School Board and the MDEA. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **DISCUSSION:** W. Lechlinder said he reviewed the numbers from this contract with an increase of 2.586 million dollars and the previous contract that did not pass with an increase of 2.2 million dollars. He does not see how the voters will

support this. He commented that social security has not increased. He appreciates the work of the Negotiating Committee and the Board but both did not go down the path they should have. The 6th class stipend was corrected. It is a 2.586 million dollar increase and he does not want to lose the MTC Article. He does not know why the School Board would support this contract and not the renovations to MTC. N. Moriarty said the Health Insurance issue in the amount of \$394,000.00 should have been resolved before the contract. He said this is crazy and he will not vote for it. D. Coffman said he appreciated the presentation by the Negotiating Team. The last contract was voted down and now we have a contract with an increase. He asked why the 13% increase and no performance piece. C. McDaniel-Thomas said she was not part of negotiations but the committee made every effort to try and come to a middle group. The Negotiating Team worked hard. D. Coffman said he cannot see a 13% increase. C. McDaniel-Thomas said she does not know what was discussed. B. Bohannon said the support of the State is not going our way. To make constructive progress we need a contract. B. Bohannon said the insurance money should have been taken out in the other contract but it was not. Are you saying no because of the \$394,000.00? K. Goodenough is disappointed that we are still talking about the \$394,000.00. This issue should have been resolved. W. LaCoste would agree with performance based incentives. C. McDaniel- Thomas said we are giving \$5000.00 of insurance for 5 retirees. We are asking teachers to have larger classes. This is a fair compensation for the teachers. W. Martel said she is frustrated, we are being held hostage. She supports the teachers but why would you increase the contract when the previous contract did not pass at a lower increase. N. Moriarty asked the turnover rate for teachers. L. Witte said it varies year to year. Currently we have one vacancy. W. Lechluder said we are not seeing a mass exit of employees. We treat out teachers fairly. T. Matson said the contract did not pass last year why increase the cost in this contract. He fails to see where negotiations were done on behalf of the taxpayers. D. Coffman commented when the teachers did not have a contract in previous years it effected education because teachers were complaining and the students heard it. W. Lechluder said the staff has matured and he cannot see that happening again. He is not worried about it. **VOTE: 2.594/9.186/0/2.221. Motion fails.**

W. Lechluder explained the public will have an opportunity to change the numbers in the articles at the Deliberative Session on February 4, 2017 at 10:00 AM.

5. Superintendent Comments: There are no comments from the Superintendent

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

7. Budget Committee Schedule: The next meeting is on February 4, 2017, the Deliberative.

8. Public Comments: There were no Public Comments.

9. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: N. Moriarty **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 PM.
SECOND: T. Parker **VOTE:** 11.779/0/0/2.221. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary