

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
December 28, 2016
Monadnock Regional MS/HS, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Wayne Lechliden, Dan Coffman, Wendy Martel, Neil Moriarty, Tom Matson, Brian Bohannon, Kristen Goodenough, Wayne LaCoste and Adam Hopkins.

Absent: Bonnie Black, Tom Parker, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, School Board Rep., Unassigned Roxbury Rep. and Gilsum Rep.

Board Members Present: E. Stanley, W. Wright, N. Mosher, M. Blair, R. Colbert, B. Mitchell, B. Tatro, P. Peterson and K. Wheeler.

Also present: J. Fortson, Business Manager and L. Aivaliotis Recording Secretary.

W. Lechliden explained the purpose of this meeting is for the School Board to give their ideas on the 2017-2018 Budget. It is to hear what they have to say. The purpose of the Budget Committee is to set the Default number and the bottom line. We have no control on what items are cut in the budget. We will not discuss a number. We need to hear from the public on January 12, 2017 and then we will set the number.

1. Public Comments: N. Moriarty asked for a point of order. He would like to hear from the Board regarding the other articles.

A. Bailey, Selectmen from Troy would like the committee to take corrective action regarding the microphones.

P. Bauries reviewed some of the information passed out and there were comments from the Budget Committee regarding a reduction of \$750,000.00 and to close Gilsum. STEAM is a golden star in the District. The principals in the other schools have not embraced the idea of STEAM. Gilsum is the best facility in the District. The school has contributed \$840,000.00 to the District. J. Fortson corrected P. Bauries and said the town of Gilsum has paid \$840,000.00 to the District. P. Bauries said Food Service has not been asked regarding the free breakfast article. It was an unwritten agreement that the District would spend 1 million dollars on renovations each year. The renovations are now 1.4 million for MTC. There is a teacher's contract and she would like to have it pass but the voters will not agree if the teachers receive the funds for the Health Insurance Pool.

2. Discussion on the Warrant Articles: **Article One** is the Proposed 2017-2018 Budget which is not set. **Article Two** is in the amount of 1.4 million dollars for MTC Renovations. The funds for the renovation will be spent over the following summer. J. Fortson explained the cost for the renovations are 1.4 million dollars. She said the

original cost was 1.8 million but D. LaPointe was able to get the price down. J. Fortson passed out the footprint of the building with the areas being highlighted to be repaired. N. Mosher said his daughter will be attending MTC and he appreciates the renovations. J. Fortson said the renovations are designed to have additions built on in the future. B. Mitchell commented the renovations include the removal of the modular classrooms. There are issues of wild life entering those buildings and rot. J. Fortson said they were put in the 1980's. B. Tatro said they are placed on gravel. They shift, they get overheated in the summer and are cold in the winter. It is an issue that needs to be addresses. R. Colbert has been in MTC and knows the deficiencies. He would like to know how this fits into the overall 5 year plan. He would like to hear from D. LaPointe on the inventory of the buildings. Are the renovations to MTC more important than other schools? J. Fortson said we are looking at MTC and than a MPR for MTC. There is a committee to look at the District. This is a repair to MTC. She said Troy is in need of repair but not worth it to fix. The repairs to MTC will help if MTC was ever a K-8 school. We are doing 1.2 million and 1.4 million but we are not doing a bond. Finish MTC than we will begin work on Cutler. D. Coffman commented we need to move forward. There is enough of a vision. T. Matson commented we have an increase in the Default Budget of \$760,971.00 and 1.4 million in renovations. This is why we need to reduce the budget. Fix MTC as long as you cut the budget by 1.4 million. K. Goodenough asked if there was anyone from Facilities here tonight. K. Wheeler has asked for information on MTC but the committee has been working on the budget. She has asked to have someone speak about this. N. Moriarty commented they will not spend \$600,000.00 this summer on the renovations.

Article Three is in the amount of \$193,000.00 for asbestos abatement and replacement of a boiler at Emerson. N. Moriarty said you can cap the asbestos. N. Mosher explained his experience with capping asbestos at his workplace. He said it will fall apart and the kids will play with it. It should be removed. J. Fortson explained D. LaPointe and 3 other custodians have been in training for asbestos removal this week. J. Fortson explained we have in previous years capped the floors with rugs and when we remove the rugs we bring up the tiles. We are doing the asbestos abatement bit by bit.

Article Four is for the Before and After Program in the amount of about \$75,000.00. J. Fortson is waiting for the numbers for the exact amount.

Article Five is the Teacher's Contract. J. Fortson provided the information the Budget Committee had asked for regarding the teacher's health insurance. There are a total of 163 teachers. She explained there will be a small change in the amounts due to lane changes and a 6/10 employee who was marked as a full time employee. W. Martel commented the increase in salaries for the first year is \$223,301.00 and the increase in insurance is a \$161,110.26 increase for a total increase in the first year of \$445,462.00 for 163 staff. T. Matson commented if you go with the Default which is up \$760,971.00, add the 1.4 million for MTC and add the contract increase of \$445,462.00 that is a total increase of 2.5 million dollars totally funded by taxes. B. Tatro commented depending on the budget agreed upon there could be fewer teachers. It was commented the previous

contract did not pass and it was less than this proposed contract. J. Fortson would like to have someone in her department check the figures again.

Article Seven is to fund breakfast for all elementary students. T. Walsh was asked for the cost of the food which is stated in the article but it does not include the extra costs such as staff etc. T. Matson explained this came out of a conversation regarding the cost of breakfast for the students in Troy which was \$13,000.00. L. Witte and J. Fortson do not recommend this article due to not knowing the logistics. N. Mosher would be in support of this article. He said this came from a discussion with Impact Monadnock on how to change the District as the poverty level is increasing. This article should be left to the taxpayers to decide. M. Blair said we cannot have our cake and eat it too. We have big discussions that should have happened years ago regarding the facilities and education. Many of the warrant articles are necessary. The buildings are in disarray. We need to fix them and hope it is in line with the long term vision.

W. Lechluder said the Budget Committee will say support or not support on each article after the Public Hearing on January 12, 2017. M. Blair said on January 3, 2017 the Board will vote yes or no on each article. D. Coffman commented if there are students that need food it is not the School Board's issue but the town's issue. B. Bohannon commented the amount in the article for the free breakfast is way off. The additional money to cover the extra costs will have to come out of the proposed budget unless the amount in the article is changed. This is irresponsible. W. LaCoste commented he does not believe the number is accurate. Once we do this we will be setting precedence. N. Moriarty said all parents with students should not vote. He is referring to the Board Members. N. Mosher said you could solve the problem one way by allowing the students to eat in their classrooms. It was commented there would be additional custodian costs. R. Colbert suggested moving the issue to the individual towns. W. Martel said it is a great idea but not thought out. Work with the communities and towns. It is a great concept.

Article One The proposed budget. W. Lechluder explained the Budget Committee will listen to the School Board regarding the budget. N. Moriarty would challenge the chair. He said employees of the District should not be allowed to speak. N. Moriarty would challenge the Chair. W. Lechluder would like the committee to vote to allow M. Blair to present the proposed budget. **VOTE:** 7.002/1.140/2.24/3.618. **Motion passes.** M. Blair explained the administration proposed a budget at the Saturday all day meeting. Since that time there have been 3 more proposals. The Board asked for more scenarios and now 9 separate proposals were presented. The Board had discussed the proposed scenarios for hours. There was a proposal suggested by the Finance and Facilities Committee. It was then presented to the Board. The Board took no action. Again there were 9 additional scenarios. Two of the scenarios were suggested by the Finance and Facilities. The Board was not in agreement. There was a motion for Level C or Level F. It was not approved by the Board. M. Blair and Superintendent Witte met to come up with a survey. There were 190 people who responded. The questions ranged from consolidating the schools, closing a school, reduce staff, reduce per pupil cost and increase class size among other questions. He reviewed the answers from the survey. W. Lechluder commented there are certain people who do not have access to the internet and those people are hit the hardest.

B. Bohannon commented there were 6% who responded to the survey. The issue at hand is to educate the 1600 students. He asked how the new Ad hoc Committee affects the one decision tonight, the budget. M. Blair said the motion was for the future. The motion was to defer school reconfiguration. D. Coffman asked when will the staff reduce at the same rate as student enrollment. M. Blair said he does not disagree with the logic. Student population goes down but it is also tied to facilities. Our campus is spread out and something has to change. You cannot reduce staff it relates to the facilities. T. Matson asked how the School Board is approaching the drop in State Aide and enrollment. W. Lechluder commented the budget has shrunk and we have to deal with issues from the State. W. Lechluder commented in the current state of the campus you cannot reduce staff. M. Blair said reconfiguration should not be off the table but to look at it in an educational way. W. Wright said Level C and Level F cuts are not all teachers. We as a Board failed to come up with a number for the Budget Committee to challenge or approve. Level C is not a bad budget. J. Fortson has written the CIP and for 6 years we have ignored her. The numbers at the Deliberative Session are open season. N. Mosher said there is a significant divide among the School Board and the Budget Committee. W. Martel commented people will say if you cut the budget you are denying the students education. That is not it. We need to look at consolidation. She would like to look at every single town taking back their elementary school. K. Wheeler said the voters said to leave Gilsum open for 5 years but each year it is suggested to close the school. We will lose the Stabilization Grant. We need to write to the State. Our communities will lose the grant. She would disagree with the majority of the discussion from this group. R. Colbert said something has to go. He will vote for no cuts because he does not know the long term planning. The voters may reject the contract and then we will ask those same teachers to teach multi-grade classes. W. LaCoste said he was personally involved in STEAM and multi-aged classrooms for 1 semester but pulled his child out of Gilsum. Consolidation will help with the task regarding the decrease in enrollment. M. Blair said the NESDEC Study contains lots of information. He would request the School Board look at the recommendations. He would challenge the towns that want to bring the students back into their towns.

3. Budget Committee Schedule: January 12, 2017 Public Hearing, January 24, 2017 Budget Committee Meeting and February 4, 2017 Deliberative Session.

4. Chair Comments: W. Lechluder would like to have the discussion on the idea of consolidation.

5. Adjournment: MOTION: T. Matson **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM. **SECOND:** N. Moriarty. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary