

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 3, 2024
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

School Board Members Present: Scott Peters, Edmond LaPlante, Lisa Steadman via Zoom, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Betty Tatro, Eric Stanley, Dan LeClair, Kristen Noonan, Jeff Cesaitis via Zoom, Hannah Blood, Brian Bohannon, Gina Carraro and Jennifer Strimbeck.

Administration Present: J. Rathbun, Superintendent, J. Morin, Business Administrator and L. Spencer, Assistant Superintendent.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM: S. Peters called the meeting to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no Public Comments.

3. #celebrateMRSD

a. Homecoming Plans: The MRMHS has been working on a week of activities for Homecoming week which will include the elementary schools. Some of the events will be a pep rally, powder puff football, a parade, football games, the band will perform, there will be concessions and a lot more. A pamphlet with all of the events was provided.

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

a. Standing agenda: Student Government Report: The Student Government has not met. O.Higgins will be at the next Board Meeting.

b. Standing agenda: Superintendent Goals Update:

i. Elementary Renovations: K. Barker, Architect for the Elementary Renovation Project and Andrew Dey the Owner's Project Manager are here to update the Board on the project. A. Dey introduced himself to the Board and is very happy to be a part of the team. He is a newcomer to the team. He has been in construction and a project manager. He said that this is a very interesting project, fun project and happy to see that the team is very engaged. The project is off to a good start. The playground and the paving are done and we will go vertical in a month or so. K. Barker explained that he has been working with the School District since 2018. He presented the Board with plans for the 4 schools. MTC should take 18 months but there could be changes and it is not finished until construction is complete. The work at MTC continues over the weekend. Hutter Construction was here on the weekends to get everything ready for the safety of the students and staff. K. Barker commented that at the moment we are under budget. The playground was not in the budget and we were able to purchase and construct it. Emerson designs are complete and out to bid. MTC should be on budget and on time. The contingency with Hutter is in tack. Emerson will begin in the Fall. Gilsum is not critical and not sure of the timeline. We need to see Hutter's capability. The design for Gilsum is underway. It could go out to bid at the beginning of the year. Troy is a complicated project. It is historically exciting and scary. It will not be easy but good progress continues. Out to bid at the beginning of the year.

Once the bids are in then we will know the budget. The softball parking lot, 40 parking spots, playground and the high voltage at MTC were in a different budget. MTC should be no problem; some projects may need more work. If there is a supply chain issue Hutter is already on it. A.Dey said that he is very impressed with the professionalism of Hutter Construction. J. Rathbun explained if there are any disruptions K. Barker, A. Dey and Hutter Construction will give plenty of notice. The administration has great communication with the team. The administrative team is very happy to work with the construction team. K. Barker said there is an issue with the well at Emerson but they are working on that. Currently the team is on time with the projects and it is a lot of work.

c. Standing agenda: Board Meeting Calendar & Goals Update: Policy will meet on 9/10, Fin/Fac will meet on 9/11, Ed/Tech will meet on 9/12 and the Budget Committee will meet on 9/24. At the next Board Meeting the committees will go over their goals.

d. CCC Update: J. Rathbun explained that CCC had to cancel courses due to lack of teachers. Currently there are 30 students attending the CCC which is more than last year. Guidance Counselors make the sophomores aware of the opportunity at the CCC. K. Noonan suggested CCC alumni come and speak to the students. J. Rathbun commented that KHS is a receiving school and it would be great if Monadnock was also. His goal is to work on that.

e. School Resource Officer (Status Update): J. Rathbun explained that the District has a MOU with the Swanzey Police Department and if they have enough police officers we are able to have one here in the District. Unfortunately, the issue is they do not have enough. They said maybe in November. If the district were to pick up the entire salary and benefits they may find it easier to fill. J. Morin commented we only need full time when the students are in session. J. Rathbun hopes the Board supports the position until they can fill it. Everyone knows this position is a good thing to have. He will check into the State Trooper and the Sheriff's Department to fill the position.

f. Staff Vacancies: J. Rathbun presented the Board with the list and graph of vacancies and those that have been filled. There were 70 vacancies but that included moves and transfers. Currently the number of vacancies is 12. We do use contracted services to fill some of the spots. The District is looking to see what is best for the students when filling the vacancies. The students are not lacking but the staff is working harder. The District is looking at many avenues to hire staff. We are watching the new construction of apartments and are not worried. K. Barker commented that after doing the study the new people are coming in and there are people leaving. Cutler's numbers are up and the MRMHS is up. S. Peters commented that teachers have pressure to find daycare and in Jaffrey-Rindge they have a daycare to help with that.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. NHSBAResolutions:

i. To support legislation that limits an employee's ability to contact or schedule students to work during school hours: MOTION: S.Peters **MOVED** to support legislation that limits an employee's ability to contact or schedule students to work during school hours. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan said let the parents set the

boundaries, legislation should not limit. D. LeClair said it has nothing to do with school. J. Cesaitis said we are talking about cell phone use and do not believe legislation is the answer. **VOTE:** 4.252/8.748/0/0. **Motion fails**

b. Guardrails for Proposed Budget: S.Peters asked if the Board would like to suggest a percentage to the administration not to exceed when preparing the proposed budget. **MOTION:** D. LeClair. **MOVED** To direct the administration to limit the total proposed operating budget increase to no more than 1.5%. **SECOND:** J. Strimbeck. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan is concerned that there is no safety net. The Board voted not to hold any funds at the end of the year. C. McDaniel-Thomas commented that the administration worked hard to find the funds this year. J. Morin commented that if the Budget Committee were to hear about the 1.5% they would hold the Board to that number. D. LeClair commented if the Board felt it is impossible they could come back to the Board. J. Rathbun said 1.5% gives the administration a little room but nothing big coming forward unless we cut it. S. Peters commented that the Board has never made this kind of motion. What is the Board's tolerance? J. Morin commented 1.5% keeps it flat. There is the health insurance, contractual obligations and transportation increase. There would be no new initiatives but that is fine if that is what the Board wants. S. Peters commented that the Board will be discussing the items they asked the administration to cost out. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

c. STUDENT REQUEST: J. Rathbun explained that there are 3 students who recently moved out of the District and are attending KHS. They have asked to stay in the Marching Band and the Color Guard. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to allow the 3 former MRMHS students who recently moved out of the District and now attend KHS to participate in Marching Band and the Color Guard for the remainder of 2024. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon asked if KHS offered the Marching Band and Color Guard. J. Rathbun explained that they do offer both but the students moved out late in the summer. This is not setting a precedent. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

d. GRANT NOTIFICATIONS: J. Rathbun informed the Board that the MTC Library received a grant in the amount of \$2000.00. Gilsum had received a Garden Grant in the amount of \$3000.00 from Whole Kids. The funds will be used to build a veggie garden. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to accept the grant from Whole Kids in the amount of \$3000.00 to support a vegetable garden construction at Gilsum. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

e. * Approve the Consent Agenda

i. August 20, 2024 Minutes

ii. Manifest:

iii. Budget Transfers: MOTION: B. Bohannon **MOVED** to accept the consent agenda which included the August 20, 2024 School Board Meeting Minutes, the manifest for FY25 in the amount of \$ 2,002,472.47 and a transfer requested by J. Morin in the amount of \$67,000 to come out of Emerson salary and benefits lines and to be transferred to MTC Salary

and benefits line to correct a budget reduction that was made in January. **SECOND:** B. Tatro
VOTE: 11.902/0/1.098/0. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. **Staffing**
- b. **SRO**
- c. **Proposed Budget Item**
- d. **Resolutions and Delegate Assembly Representative**
- e. **Cutler to MTC transition**

Board Members asked J. Rathbun about the current bus issue. He said that there is no other Bus Company. We do not know what will happen. They are negotiating. He is talking to the Education Commissioner. It was asked if Zoom is a possibility. J. Rathbun said no it can not be used for school.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

8. 8:45 PM MOTION TO ENTER NON-PUBLIC SESSION under RSA 91-A:3-II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

9. 8:48 PM MOTION TO ENTER NON-PUBLIC SESSION under RSA 91-A:3-II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: S.Peters **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent