

**Monadnock Regional School District
School Board/Budget Committee Joint Meeting
December 3, 2024
MRMHS Library Swanzey NH**

School Board Member: Lisa Steadman, Gina Carraro, Edmond LaPlante, Jeff Cesaitis, Kristen Noonan, Hannah Blood, Betty Tatro and Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas.

Absent: Dan LeClair, Scott Peters, Jennifer Strimbeck, Brian Bohannon and Eric Stanley,

8:30

Budget Committee Members: Wayne Lechliden, Robert Audette, Ed Sheldon, Anne Marie Osheyack, Doug Bersaw, Jack Gettens, Sarah Burgess and Nancy Carney.

Absent: Jon Hoden, Virginia Doerpholz, Bruce Murphy, Unassigned seats from Roxbury.

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

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

a. **School Board Roll Call:** L. Steadman called the School Board Meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

b. **Budget Committee Roll Call:** E. Sheldon called the Budget Committee Meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

3. MATTERS FOR JOINT MEETING INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. **Building Project Update:** J. Rathbun introduced Andrew the Project Manager and K. Barker is on Zoom. Andrew explained that the steel is up and a lot of the roof is up. K. Barker said the MTC drawings are complete and they are working on the kitchen drawings. The administration, K. Barker and Andrew are working on the interior design which will go out to bid by Christmas. Everything is close to budget and on time. **G. Carraro arrives.** Andrew reported that Emerson is a little different due to the smaller amount of renovations. The final stages of the drawings for the Troy School are being done. They are working out the details. The final bids will go out in January. Gilsum School is the smallest of all the schools. The committee will be meeting tomorrow to discuss the process and timeline. Everyone is working together and it is running smoothly. At Emerson they will be drilling a new well. Hutter will be working around the old well until the new one is done. Andrew explained that the softball field looks great, the field is seeded, paving and the foundation is complete. The slabs are being poured for the steel decking for the second floor. There is radiant heat under the

administration area. More slabs to be poured soon. The electrical is in place and the tents of tarps are up for the cold weather. Everything is going smoothly. Hutter is doing a great job managing the project. The communication between all parties is great. There is a terrific working relationship. At Emerson there is a focus on the addition in the front of the building and the 2 new classrooms in the back. The footings are poured and the walls in the back are to be poured soon and then the framing. Hutter is planning ahead for the HVAC work. It was explained that the contingency for MTC has not been used, MTC is $\frac{1}{3}$ complete and 32.92% of the budget has been spent. J. Rathbun said he could not be happier with Andrew, K. Barker and Hutter. Working together and getting things done. The kids are great, the principals are wonderful and very understanding with help in solving the issues.

b. MDEA Contract Overview: A.M. Osheyack arrives. L.Steadman presented information to the committees regarding the MDEA Contract. She explained it is a 3-year contract and the most expensive they have had but necessary to keep up with the other districts. The Negotiating Committee ran comparisons with area districts. There was an increase in health insurance. L.Steadman explained the steps scale, the career rate, off step employees, professional development, tuition assistance and stipends. She explained that the committee felt this was a good agreement. The teachers were satisfied.

c. Budget Presentation: J. Rathbun explained the important dates that are required by the RSA. February is the Deliberative Session. J. Rathbun explained that the BOY is up in Swanzey and there are decreases in other schools. There were 14 new students from the building by Gomarlos. Cutler is up by 25 students. There are 326 students at Cutler which is the most ever. There are 1598 students and 24 out of district students. The cost per pupil is lower than the State's at \$20,065.87. J. Rathbun explained that the Board gave directions to the administration to keep the proposed budget with an increase of no higher than 1.5%. The administration was set to deliver a flat budget with no initiatives. The slight increase went out the door with the Health Trust in the amount of \$936,000. The second year of the MESSA Contract is in the proposed budget as well as the increase in Out of District tuition, transportation and related services. With the 1.6% million-dollar drivers the proposed budget increase is at 3.84%. The administration worked to reduce the proposed budget by \$200,000 more. The Board had a wish list to hire 2 permanent substitute teachers for the amount of \$120,000 and to increase the coach and advisor stipends by \$25,000. J. Rathbun explained the revenues that come into the district such as adequacy and Medicare reimbursement. W. Lechluder asked if the administration is doing everything possible to keep the Out of District students here. J. Rathbun said that we do not want to send kids out. We want to keep them in the district. It is never the goal. Sending students out is very difficult to do. We are relooking at this. Some Superintendents are looking to team up. We are seeing an influx of kids. We are not different from other districts. We are

confident that we are doing everything. W. Lechliden asked about changing the health insurance. J. Rathbun explained that we can shop next year. We have had this conversation.

J. Rathbun was asked about the conversation with the Winchester School District regarding sending the Winchester high school students to Monadnock or 2 other districts. He said there was an open conversation. He also said that the headline in the paper was incorrect. We are not competing, only talking. There are 136 students in grades 9-12. We do have the space. Bringing the students to Monadnock would require teachers and a school counselor. The tuition would be 2 or 2.5 million for the district.

d. Warrant Articles Under Construction: Article One is the proposed budget in the amount of \$39,199,676 with no default number at this time. **Article Two** is the MDEA Contract. **Article Three** is the renovations to the roof over the boy's locker room and the connecting roof to the girl's locker room. **Article Four** is the Special Education Expendable Trust. **Article Five** is the Vehicle Expendable Trust. **Article Six** is the Building and Grounds Expendable Trust. **Article Seven** is the School Building Maintenance Expendable Trust. It was explained that the Expendable Trusts will only be funded if there is a surplus. W. Lechliden would like to change the amounts of Article Six to \$100,000 and Article Seven to \$100,000. W. Lechliden suggested rearranging the articles and having Article Seven after Article Four. K. Noonan did not agree. E. Sheldon said it is a smoother process if we put in a certain amount in each year. It was explained that there may be an Article Eight regarding the sale of Cutler. O'Shaughnessy gave legal advice and said the School District can not sell Cutler without the vote of the people. The Board would like to have an article regarding the Cutler Building. J. O'Shaughnessy would like to work on the wording of the article. D. Bersaw asked if the funds from the sale of Cutler would go in the general fund. J. Rathbun mentioned that there is a State law which says if the building is vacant it must be offered to a Charter School. We are required to notify the State if there is a vacant building. J. Rathbun explained that they are waiting for a legal opinion. **Article Nine** to receive and approve the reports.

E. Sheldon will take over the Budget Committee Meeting:

4. Budget Committee Meeting:

a. Approval of the August 27, 2024 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: W. Lechliden **MOVED** to approve the August 27, 2024 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** A.M. Osheyack. **VOTE:** N. Carlson-abstain and all remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

b. January Budget Hearing-January 9 or 16 and December Budget Committee Meeting: The committee would like to hold the Public Hearing on January 9, 2025 and the Budget Committee Meeting on December 16, 2024 to discuss the

proposed default number. **MOTION:** D. Bersaw **MOVED** to schedule the Public Hearing for January 9, 2025 and the Budget Committee Meeting for December 16, 2024.

SECOND: N. Carlson. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

5. **L. Steadman takes over the meeting:**

6. **Motion to approve the Consent agenda: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$887,535.86 and the November 19, 2024 School Board Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes with a correction. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

7. **Motion to adjourn the Budget Committee Meeting: MOTION:** D. Bersaw **MOVED** to adjourn the Budget Committee Meeting **SECOND:** A. M.Osheyack **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary