

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2024
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH**

Budget Committee Members Present: Adam Hopkins, Wayne Lechliden, Robert Young, Ed Sheldon, Doug Bersaw, Dan Coffman, Jon Hoden, Robert Audette, Nancy Carney and Richard HKS Thackston. **Absent:** Betty Tatro, School Board Liaison, Anne Marie Osheyack, Open Seat for Roxbury and Open Seat for Gilsum.

Also Present: J.Rathbun, Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator

A.Hopkins called the meeting to order at 7:15PM.

1. SUPPORT/NOT SUPPORT WARRANT ARTICLES:

ARTICLE ONE: Shall the Monadnock Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations votes separately, totaling \$37,950,000

(\$970,000 is required for federal grants and nutrition grants that are funded by separate State and Federal revenues)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget will be \$37,112,717 (\$970,000 is required for federal grants and nutrition grants that are funded by separate State and Federal revenues) which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Monadnock

Regional School District by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40: 13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised Operating budget only. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee _____ this article. (Majority vote required) MOTION: J.Hoden MOVED to approve the 2024-25 Default Budget in the amount of \$37,112,717 as presented.

SECOND: R.Young. DISCUSSION: J. Hoden commented with the situation as it is he is concerned that the voters will vote for the Default. It will seem like an easy way out. He is not sure of the effect on the kids. W. Lechliden commented that the School Board reduced the proposed budget number and that reduced the Default number. R.Young feels that the School Board and the Budget Committee should write a joint letter of support explaining the proposed and default budgets. With Special Ed. costs we need to stay ahead. VOTE: Unanimous for those present. Motion passes. MOTION: R. HKS Thackston MOVED to approve the Operating Budget in the amount of \$37,950,000 as approved by the School Board. SECOND: J.Hoden. DISCUSSION: J. Morin explained that since the presentation at the Joint Meeting the proposed operating budget had been reduced by \$600,911.00. L.Steadman explained that the School Board felt it was important to present the proposed operating budget below \$38,000,000. The Superintendent came back with 3 options and the Board approved one. The Board felt the

proposed budget would have a better chance with the voters. J. Rathbun explained that the reductions should not have a significant impact on the students. R. Young asked where could proposed cuts come from without student impact. J. Rathbun said he is not prepared to answer. He said he will have to see what the Budget Committee comes up with. He also explained that the School Board asked the administration to trim the proposed budget and we did. Is there padding? No. We present what we think is important. Understand with the deeper cuts you are talking about staff and children. He will wait for that conversation. D. Coffman asked about the substitute line in the amount of \$145,000. He said if the vacancies are being reduced could the substitute line be reduced. J. Morin explained that the substitutes cover when people are sick and if you have COVID you must stay out for 5 days. J. Rathbun explained there are vacancies in the proposed budget that need to be filled. We need an Earth Science teacher and Reading Specialist. There will be vacancies but the administrators who have done the hiring have done an amazing job. E. Sheldon asked if with the increase in hourly pay have the paraprofessionals found the job more attractive. J. Rathbun commented that he is seeing fewer people turn the job down. It was explained that 1.4 million of the proposed budget is the bond payment, about 1 million for the GMR and an Out of District increase. It is not a 3 million dollar increase. **MOTION:** D. Coffman **MOVED** to amend the motion and change the proposed budget number to \$37,750,000.00. **SECOND:** R. HKS Thackston. **DISCUSSION:** D. Coffman commented that the \$200,000.00 reductions is for open positions. J. Morin explained the unassigned fund balance is not very much if anything at all. W. Lechliders would agree with D. Coffman. He said with a budget this size there is room to cut without letting people go. D. Bersaw commented that it is closer to the default number. E. Sheldon commented once we reduce the number J. Rathbun and his team need to reduce lines to meet the number. R. HKS Thackston asked where could you cut. J. Hoden said it is easier to sell a less than 3 million dollar increase. He is concerned the voters will vote for the default number. W. Lechliders commented that the voters historically vote with the Budget Committee. There is a chance if we do not support the \$37,950,000.00 the voters will go with the default budget. J. Hoden asked if the Board would support the \$37,750,000.00. J. Rathbun said he is not sure. J. Morin explained that the bond is now part of the budget at 1.5 million dollars. It is not a 3 million dollar increase. It was asked if the positions were first come first serve. J. Rathbun explained that is not how it works. English is a required class. By the end of January we have to submit to the State exactly where the cuts are coming from. We have to go back and do the work. D. Coffman commented that the number of vacancies is the \$200,000 that is the number he came up with. He said that was an example and does not want to do that. There is no doubt they will not be drastic cuts. R. Young congratulated the administration for the surplus number but the increase in Special Ed. is unfortunate. R. HKS Thackston said not to fire and to keep the vacancies in the reduction. It was asked if a \$200,000 reduction in the proposed is going to make a difference in the voters mind. J. Hoden commented that we do not know if the School Board will vote for the \$37,750,000.00. **VOTE on the amendment:** 5.507/5.453/0. **Motion passes. VOTE on the amended motion:** 9.829/1.132/0. **Amended Motion passes.** The School Board will

be meeting and will vote to support or not support the proposed operating budget in the amount of \$37,750,000.

ARTICLE TWO: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the 3-year Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Monadnock Regional School District and the Specialists of Monadnock District, SAU 93 for the following increases in wages and benefits at the current staffing level. The estimated increase in the costs for wages and benefits under the collective bargaining agreement are as follows:

Year	Estimated Increase
2024/25	\$28,805 - Salaries
	\$ 7,276 - Wage associated costs
	\$36,081
2025/26	\$27,085 - Salaries
	\$ 6,869 - Wage associated costs
	\$33,854
2026/27	\$25,492 - Salaries
	\$ 6,506 - Wage associated costs
	\$31,998

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$36,081 for the 2024-25 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional cost attributable to the increase in wage and benefits over those of the appropriation at the current staffing level paid in the 2023-24 year. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee ____ this article. (Majority vote required) MOTION: D. Bersaw MOVED to support Article Two as written. SECOND: J. Hoden. VOTE: Unanimous for those present. Motion passes.

ARTICLE THREE: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be added to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2024 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee ____ this article (Majority vote required) W. Lechlinder would like the amount in Article Three to be increased to \$54,000. That will allow the Special Ed. Expendable Trust to be in the amount of \$400,000. D. Coffman would also agree with that amount. The Budget Committee will let the School Board know. J. Morin explained that the Article amount can be changed at the Deliberative Session but not from where the funds are coming from. A. Hopkins will hold a meeting on Wednesday Jan. 17, 2024 to review and support or not support after the Board has finalized the articles.

ARTICLE FOUR: Shall the Monadnock Regional School District receive and approve the reports of the agents, auditors, committees, and officers chosen as printed and distributed in the Annual Report? (Majority vote required) There is no need for a vote there is no money attached.

2. Superintendent Comments: J. Rathbun thanked the Budget Committee.

3. Chair Comments: A. Hopkins had no additional comments.

4. Public Comments: K. Noonan asked why the Budget Committee reduced the proposed operating budget by \$200,000.00 when they voted to add \$54,000 to the Special Ed. Expendable Trust through raising and appropriation.

It was later explained that the funds to be added to the Special Ed. Expendable Trust are coming out of the unassigned funds balance if there is any at the end of the year. The only change on Article Two if approved will be the amount.

Motion to adjourn: MOTION: D.Coffman **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM. **SECOND:** A. Hopkins. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary