

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2021(corrected 10.5.2021)
MRMHS Library/Zoom, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Michelle Connor, Karen Wheeler via Zoom, Lisa Steadman, Nick Mosher via Zoom, Brian Bohannon, Dan LeClair via Zoom, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas and Betty Tatro. **Absent:** Eric Stanley.

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

Also Present: F. Ashworth via Zoom, Director of Beyond the Bell Program and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

“We collaborate not just to teach, but also to engage and educate every student in our district in an environment that is challenging, caring and safe, while fostering life-long learning.”

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

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

3. **CELEBRATE MRSD:** J. Rathbun sadly mentioned the passing of Deb Morris. He said she was an Interventionist at the Middle School. She loved the kids, loved teaching and was a warm hearted person. She will be missed.

4. **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

a. **Operations/Superintendent’s Report:**

1. **NH SASS (in packet):** L. Witte provided the Board with the NH SASS information in the packet. This information is to review and see if it is the appropriate move for the District. The issue may be the availability of the testing kits. B. Bohannon commented that it is the cold and flu season. We should consider a resource. Could we use the CARES funds? A lot of families will be put in a tough spot. M. Connor does agree with the rapid tests. J. Rathbun explained we can purchase this with the ESSR Funds. He said this program will rule a positive result but not a negative. There would have to be another test. He said the at home antigen test would not require a nurse to administer the test. A person would be trained for each school. S. Peters would like this to come as a recommendation. J. Rathbun explained L. Witte wanted feedback from the Board. S. Peters explained it is the consensus of the Board to request a recommendation from the administration. J. Rathbun explained it is 100% voluntary with parent permission.

2. Substitute Rates (in Packet): The administration presented the current rates of pay for substitutes in the District. The administration is recommending an increase in the substitute pay. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to accept the new substitute increases as presented by the administration which are as follows: Para professionals-\$85.00 a day, Teachers-\$125.00 a day, LTS-\$213.00 a day, BG-\$90.00, Nurse-LPN-\$175.00 and Nurse-RN-\$190.00.

VOTE: 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

3. COVID Parent Notification Process Overview (in packet): The Board will discuss this later in the meeting.

4. District COVID Tracker: L. Witte provided a color coded COVID Tracker to present to the Board. The tracker does not distinguish between students and staff. K. Wheeler appreciates the tracker but would ask that both charts have the same color for each group. The data from DHHS was also provided. J. Rathbun explained we have had 13 cases out of 2000.

5. Beyond the Bell Summer Program Review: F. Ashworth explained the Beyond the Bell Summer Program to the Board. She explained this past summer the summer camp was free to the children. It was funded by the 21st Century Grant. This is the 5th year of the grant and it is time to write the new grant. There were 5 weeks of summer camp. Emerson and MTC were the sites. There were a total of 260 students. Each week the camp provided 6 different themes for the kids. There were field trips based on the themes for the week. They partnered with Camp Takodah and Swanzey Beach to allow the kids to swim this past summer. They also partnered with the Fitzwilliam Rec. Center. The Fitzwilliam Rec. Center gave their budget to the camp to offset the cost. Title One provided tutoring for one hour at a time twice a week to the students who needed it. It was a great summer. We had a parent survey and we received great feedback. M. Connor said her son had attended the program, she can not say enough about it and her son loved it. It was well organized. L. Steadman asked if there were spots for Special Ed. Students. F. Ashworth said the program is separate from the school district. We do not have to have a one on one or additional bodies; we try to make arrangements. The target population are specific children with an academic risk and those students who could not afford the program. L. Steadman asked how many students attended from Troy. F. Ashworth will get that number for L. Steadman. B. Tatro asked if any children were not able to attend because of the number of students. F. Ashworth explained we focused on the student who could attend all 5 weeks. There were 42 staff members, not always at the same time. She said the camp went really well and was very supported by the school and the principals. She explained Gilsum is not eligible because it is not an awarded community. K. Wheeler said Gilsum has the highest poverty. F. Ashworth said it has to be 40% or more reduced or free lunch or Title One. Five years ago when the grant was written Gilsum did not meet the qualifications and had their own recreation program. S. Peters thanks F. Ashworth. F. Ashworth said there are 227 students in the afterschool program and the number is strong. She is also recruiting staff. B. Tatro said it is nice to see all of the activities planned.

b. Board Chair Report:

1. Elementary Renovation Project-Timeline: C. McDaniel-Thomas reported that the CRC had met earlier and are working on a number of things such as updating the website, letters to the selectboards, blurbs to the town newsletters and doing preparation for the upcoming Input Meetings. The Renovation Project Input Meetings are scheduled for Oct. 20, 25, 27 and 28. S. Peters explained the Board had approved the Ed. Specs. The Ed/Tech Committee has been discussing the staff survey to be approved in November. C. McDaniel-Thomas commented that we want to get people to attend the Renovation Project Input Meetings. W. Wright commented that the Fitzwilliam Selectboard had not heard about the Renovation Project Input Meetings. C. McDaniel-Thomas explained the committee was working on the letter earlier this evening. S. Peters mentioned the Sentinel Reporter perhaps doing a story and following us through the journey. The Cutler tour is on Thursday. The tour is to justify the reason to move the children to MTC. The hope is at the last December Meeting to approve the design. B. Tatro commented that K. Barker has ideas but would like to hear first from the public. S. Peters said in December we file the Letter of Intent, we as a Board sign the letter and that will initiate the application process. We will then hire a Project Manager and a Clerk of the Works. The next 9 months would be the design funding process and Building Aid. In November of 2022 we will know what the State will approve.

2. Board Calendar Updates: Cutler Walk-Through-Sept. 24 at 6:30 PM. Legislative Committee-October 5 **Cancelled**. Policy-October 6 at 7:00 PM. ECC-October 7 at 6:00 PM. CRC-October 11 at 5:00 PM. Finance/Facilities-October 12 at 6:00 PM at the Wilcox Building. CRC-October 19 at 5:00 PM. Board Renovation/Consolidation Project Input Meeting at the MRMHS-October 20 at 7:00 PM. Emerson Renovation Project Input Meeting-October 25 at 7:00 PM. Gilsum Renovation Project Input Meeting-October 27 at 7:00 PM. Troy Renovation Project Input Meeting-October 28 at 7:00 PM. Joint Meeting of School Board and Budget Committee-November 13 at 10:00 AM.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Retain \$XXXX of FY21 unassigned fund balance per RSA 198:4-b II: J. Morin explained the forms have been completed and have been sent to the DOE and the DRA. The forms will be used to set the tax rate. This is the earliest this process has been done in a number of years. A warrant on the last ballot allows the Board to retain up to 2.5% of the net assessment. The surplus this year is \$2,280,818.00. The amount of funds allowed is \$987,637.00. If the funds are not used they are returned back to the taxpayers next year. J. Morin explained one benefit is you can flatten out the big spikes and dips in the tax amount. These funds have to be approved by the State to be used and only in an emergency such as a septic failure. These funds have nothing to do with grants. Next year you have another decision to make with a new up to 2.5% to retain. **MOTION:** C. Toomey **MOVED** to retain \$987,637.00 of the FY21 Unassigned Fund Balance per RSA 198:4-b II, which is 2.5% of the net assessment calculated by the NH Dept. of Revenue. **SECOND:** W. Wright. **DISCUSSION:** **MOTION:** K. Wheeler

MOVED to amend the motion and retain \$493,819.00. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** K. Wheeler commented that we had a larger surplus and it feels like there are a lot of communities and families who are struggling. It is an adequate amount. L. Steadman commented half in the pockets of tax holders. S. Peters commented the odds are high that we will return the funds back to the taxpayers next year. The State does not usually approve of the emergency. J. Morin would advise to retain some if you use it all to cut taxes next year you will see spikes. B. Tatro asked about the Emergency Expendable Trust Fund which the District currently has. J. Morin explained the balance in that account is over \$300,000.00. **VOTE on the amendment:** K. Noonan-yes, K. Wheeler-yes, W. Wright-yes, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, B. Tatro-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-yes and L. Steadman-yes. 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes. VOTE on the amended motion:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes.**

b. Budget transfer: MOTION: L. Steadman **MOVED** to approve the transfer in the amount of \$13,400.00 to cover Barker Architect fees for the MRMHS CIP Review as described on 8/17/21, funds to come from the Workman's Comp. Insurance line and moved to the Contracted Services line. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 11.665/0/.213/1.122. **Motion passes.**

c. Manifest: MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,205,174.54. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 11.122/0/.757/1.122. **Motion passes.**

d. September 7, 2021 Minutes: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the September 7, 2021 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** W. Wright **VOTE:** 9.787/0/2.091/1.122. **Motion passes.**

e. Motions to Support 2021/2022 Proposed NHSBA Resolutions: L. Steadman presented Resolution #8 submitted by the Mascoma Valley School Board. Resolution: "The NHSBA shall establish and maintain a scholarship fund for Student Representatives who have served on their district's school board during their high school career." The Board takes no action on this resolution. Resolution #9 submitted by the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board. Resolution: "The NHSBA will advise and confirm all SAU's are paying and segregating dues/payments to the NHSBA in accordance with RSA 15:5." The Board takes no action. Resolution #10 submitted by the Keene School Board. Resolution: "NHSBA support diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects in our schools, is committed to the concept that free and open dialogue around such concepts as racism and sexism is a vital component to education, and opposes any action which limit this free exchange of idea." **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to support Resolution #10 submitted by the Keene School District. **SECOND:** N. Mosher. **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman explained part of the resolution we proposed last year is in this resolution. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-yes, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, B. Tatro-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-yes, L. Steadman-abstain. 9.759/1.122/.998/1.122. **Motion passes.** Resolution #11 submitted by the Merrimack Valley School Board: "The NHSBA calls upon the NH Legislature to fund a Post-Graduation Transition Program for each school district to provide

a continuum of guidance transition from high school to vocation, college and career.” It was commented that this does have merit but believe there are other mechanisms. It is not really their job. The Board takes no action. Resolution #12 submitted by the Hanover and Dresden School Boards: “Whereas the NHSBA supports equity and inclusion in all aspects of education (Continuing resolution #5) and;” The Board takes no action.

f. Motion to adjust COVID notification process: The Board packets provided the letter to the parents or guardian and the process of notification. J. Rathbun reviewed the process of notification step by step. The administration did mark certain words on the letter in **bold** to improve the letter. J. Rathbun explained we are in contact with DHHS. If you are in close contact with someone who tested positive DHHS will contact you. B. Bohannon said it is misleading in the letter. J. Rathbun explained part of the conversation is that DHHS can change the rules. N. Mosher asked how the conversation took place in the school setting. J. Rathbun explained everything in the school setting is described to DHHS. Teachers are attempting to do the 3’. We explain to DHHS the scene at the schools. K. Wheeler is worried about the 3’ with children leaning over at their desks and time on the rug. She asked how many cases of close contact. J. Rathbun explained we had 13 cases but not sure of the number of close contacts. J. Rathbun said there are 6 nurses for 1600 students which is more than the requirement. The State requires 1 nurse for 750 students. There is another side of privacy for staff and the students. People believe because you are out you have COVID, not always. K. Wheeler feels it is better to let everyone know, not just a small group. J. Rathbun commented that if a student is out at the MRMHS we would have to contact 120 students due to class change, lunch and hallways. It is not a small amount. K. Wheeler said you could eliminate the hallway movement. She feels very strongly about this. J. Rathbun said out of 13 cases we had 2 failures, a mistake, human error. If you notify everyone at the MRMHS you open up a can of worms, the students go to the CCC, have sporting events and privileges. J. Rathbun explained when there is a positive case DHHS does the contacting. DHHS will tell us that these people do not need to know. **MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** In the event that the administration becomes aware that a member of the MRSD community tests positive for COVID-19 and that community member was within a classroom with students, the parent or guardian of all students within that classroom will be notified as such within 24 hours. This notification will be in two forms—one electronic (either email or phone) and one physical, such as paper. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **DISCUSSION:** It was commented that it is practical at the elementary schools and the MRMHS. There is the ability to let parents know what is going on by paper notification in order to keep families safe. B. Tatro commented the tracker is also a form of notification. J. Rathbun said paper at the elementary school is okay but at the MRMHS it will be lost. L. Witte has shared her feelings regarding the emergency call to everyone. She feels if used too much parents may not pick up. B. Bohannon 100% understands where K. Wheeler and N. Mosher are coming from. The privacy piece is the big issue. He is okay with what the district is doing now. He does not support the motion. K. Wheeler said to notify the entire classroom and there is more privacy. The system has failed. The MRMHS need to be notified by two means. S. Peters said we are not to speak in regards to our family situations

or advocate for our towns. We are here to do policy. K. Wheeler would like to override DHHS. J. Rathbun explained after we failed it was improved. N. Mosher commented on maintaining cohorts. He does not believe we are doing that and we need to address it. L. Steadman commented you can get sued for making it easy to identify a student. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-no, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-yes, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, B. Tatro-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-no, L. Steadman-no 2.045/9.834/0/1.122. **Motion fails.**

MOTION: K. Wheeler **MOVED** to amend the motion: In the event that the administration becomes aware that a member of the MRSD community tests positive for COVID-19, this notification will be in two forms-one electronic (either email or phone) and one physical, such as paper. **Motion fails for lack of a second.**

The Board asked about the State Test results. J. Rathbun explained there has been no new information on the results. He is not comfortable giving the data that he has. It is incomplete data. He will be bringing Behavioral Data, Classroom Assessments, Report Card Data and now the IReady Data. He will report out at the 2nd meeting in October. He explained there is nothing to compare the data he has to. There were groups who had low participation. Parents could opt them out. J. Rathbun explained the end of semester data is 100% participation and is directly related to what we are doing. The IReady is 100 % participation. The State Test he could explain in broad strokes. The 8th grade had 50% participation. K. Noonan suggested waiting until we have the State Testing Results.

g. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

- 1. Resolutions**
- 2. State Data If and when ready**
- 3. Substitute information**
- 4. Bond Obligation**
- 5. Band numbers**
- 6. Low student number in classes**

6. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

7. 9:45 PM 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 itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Review of Sealed Minutes and personal: 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:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/01.122. **Motion passes. K. Wheeler, D. LeClair and N. Mosher left during non-public session.**

8. Return to Public Session: During Non-Public Session the Board approved 3 sets of Sealed Non-Public Meeting Minutes and approved a personnel issue.

9. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: C. Toomey **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 9.787/0/0/3.213. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent