

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #38 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Maranacook Community High School
March 27, 2019
Minutes of Meeting

Members Present: Chair Gary Carr, Vice Chair Wendy Brotherlin, Patty Gordon, Cathy Jacobs, Betty Morrell, Jeremy Pare, Kaleb Pushard, Shawn Roderick, Crystal Sullivan, Melissa Tobin, David Twitchell, Alexander Wright, Adam Woodford

Administrators: Superintendent James Charette, Principals Janet Delmar, Abbie Hartford, and Kristen Levesque, Assistant Principal Tina Brackley, Technology Director Diane MacGregor, Special Education Director Ryan Meserve, Finance Manager Brigette Williams

1. Call to Order: Chair Carr called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Additions/adjustments to the Agenda by Board and/or Superintendent: none
3. Citizens Comments (items not on the budget): none
4. Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2019
MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright to approve the minutes of March 20, 2019 as presented. **Motion Carried:** 12 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (Woodford)
5. Budget Workshop:

Superintendent Charette reported that the health insurance increase range was received with a projected maximum of 7%. Due to this information, the health insurance increase in the draft budget was reduced from 10% to 7%, which is a reduction of \$62,459 from the previous draft. Final numbers for health insurance are expected by April 5th. Due to this change, the general fund summary budget increase from FY19 is now at \$790,826.49, or a 4.41%. The revenue sheets have also been updated to reflect this change.

As requested at the last meeting, Superintendent Charette provided the board with projected elementary class configurations for next year. Three scenarios were provided: #1 denotes the class configurations with no changes in class structure from the current year. This scenario would require the addition of \$72,000 to the draft budget. Scenario #2 shows the class configurations as proposed at last week's meeting with combined classes at Wayne Elementary School for grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Scenario #2a shows the same structure for Wayne Elementary School as #2, but also denotes Mt. Vernon Elementary as possibly combining Grades 1-2, which are projected to have enrollments of 11 for each grade. Readfield Elementary Grade 5 is also shadowed due to the request to split that class to 2 classes for enrollment of 11 each. The Mt. Vernon and Readfield Elementary classes are shown only as a point of reference due to the request for more class equity across the district. These changes are not reflected in the draft budget. Pre-K class numbers are estimates at this time. Screenings are being scheduled for May.

Discussion ensued regarding items proposed for the FY20 budget including the new High School Behavior Program; parent request for additional Grade 5 teacher at Readfield

Elementary; the ramifications of combined classes, especially at the Grades K-1 level; equity of class sizes throughout the district; and assessment scores for students.

Request was made to look at other items that can be cut either from the current budget or the proposed budget so that the 2 teaching positions at the elementary level can remain.

Director of Maintenance and Transportation Shaun Drinkwater addressed the board on the maintenance department requests for an additional .5FTE custodian and the keyless entry for the high school. Mr. Drinkwater spoke about the shortage of custodial help, especially when people are out. Mr. Drinkwater is filling in for custodians more and more causing other things not getting done. He reported that they can get by one day here and there, but schools are not being cleaned the way they should. Regarding the keyless entry, Mr. Drinkwater or a custodian are called in weekly because people with keys are setting off alarms and instead of calling it in and reporting it, they just leave. There are signs posted for people to call a number if they accidentally set an alarm off, but they are not doing that. Having keyless entry would identify who is setting the alarm off.

Suggestion was made to provide training for staff with keys.

D.Twitchell addressed the 3 proposed double classes at Wayne Elementary, stating Wayne contributes more per student than any other town and Wayne has consistently voted for the bonds and the budgets. Having Wayne shoulder the burden of most of the teacher cuts is difficult; he is particularly concerned about the K/1 combination. Feedback he has received from educators outside the district is that this is a scary situation and will not likely be good for either grade.

W.Brotherlin asked administration to look at what can be practically cut to help offset the cost of the 2 teachers.

Superintendent Charette clarified that the additional \$72,000 represents keeping everything as is; if the Readfield Elementary Grade 5 teacher is added that will be another \$58,000, for a total of \$130,000.

G.Carr asked if class configurations were looked at for the Middle and High Schools. Supt. Charette responded they are being looked at and there may be some potential there, but they are in the middle of scheduling at this time.

D.Twitchell reemphasized that he is very willing to listen to administrators and teachers to what they feel will work in Wayne and the other schools; his biggest concern is the K/1 grade at Wayne and asked if they can keep at least one of the teachers there. B.Morrell agreed.

J.Pare, asked, from a curriculum perspective, what is lost by combining these grades? Supt. Charette responded that when you go to combined classrooms you have to look at the classroom structure differently. You go through a loop structure curriculum. It is definitely different and you need to commit to it to make sure students are learning all the curriculum.

P.Gordon commented, in looking at taking a teacher away from Mt. Vernon, in Scenario 2, does this mean the next year those kids would need to be a multi-grade class for 2-3. Does this mean teachers will move with the class; how will that work? Supt. Charette responded having combined classes is really about who the teachers are and if they have the capacity to do that, but that proposal has not been worked out yet. It was noted that this scenario was configured based on looking at equity of class sizes.

Question was asked about whether the district needs full time coaches for literacy and math. Supt. Charette responded that for this year, both Sarah Caban and Barbara Bourgoine

are doing consulting work with staff to help keep our heads above water, but it is a struggle for the interventionists in the schools. Not having these positions in place has been hard on the interventionists and principals. The positions remain in the proposed budget.

C.Jacobs added, that in her experience working with math coaches, people having one school have a hard time and we have 6 schools. If they don't have interventionists they work with the classroom teachers directly.

Further discussion ensued about the High School Behavioral program and the age span of the students in the program. Superintendent Charette responded that there are current high school students who could benefit from this program. The age span is 15-20 years old. Director of Special Education Ryan Meserve added that these are needs that have to be addressed in some fashion. There are also caseload caps for these programs.

Superintendent Charette reiterated the points the Board would like further reviewed: class configurations and the impact to students with those configurations; other cuts going into the next year; look at other co-curricular coaching positions and whether they are needed for one or two students; and data surrounding multi-age classes in the lower elementary grades.

A.Woodford commented that he doesn't want the administrators to have regrets after the budget is passed wishing they had gotten what they asked for. He doesn't mind going to voters and select boards for items needed. He asked that they not compromise for the sake of compromising.

C.Jacobs agreed, but the town of Mt. Vernon has said we don't need any more teachers in the district. Really worried if we don't look at something to cut to offset the cost that the budget won't pass.

B.Morrell added that to have a budget voted down we will have increased costs every time we go to referendum. Also, you never know exactly what the public is rejecting; you may cut and it may not be the cuts the people want.

K.Pushard thanked the Superintendent and administrators for bringing the budget down from 8.8% to a 4.4% increase and applauded them for the work they are doing.

Citizen Comment regarding budget:

Resident Jessica Gurney addressed the Board regarding the recommendation for a multi-age class for Grades K- 1 at Wayne Elementary School. As a citizen, 22 kids in a multi-age class, the board should consider the amount of money that will need to be spent for Rtl or the cost of retaining one student. Putting an Ed Tech in classroom is not a teacher; the students need a solid foundation when they start school. The best education we can provide our kids is to go back and look at the role of a teacher.

6. Adjournment: Chair Carr adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James Charette, Superintendent/Secretary
D. Foster, Recorder