

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #38 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Maranacook Community High School
January 16, 2019
Minutes of Meeting

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

Members Absent: Scott Lyons, Crystal Sullivan

Administrators: Superintendent James Charette, Principals Dwayne Conway, Janet Delmar, Abbie Hartford, and Kristen Levesque, Assistant Principal Tina Brackley, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction Nancy Harriman, Technology Director Diane MacGregor, Special Education Director Ryan Meserve, Finance Manager Brigette Williams, Adult and Community Education Director Steve Vose

1. Call to order: Chair Carr called the meeting to order at 6:32.
Chair Carr thanked everyone for their hard work on the bond.
2. Citizens Comments:
John Harker, Mt. Vernon resident, addressed the Board regarding the School Resource Officer request that is included in the draft budget proposal (to be reviewed later in the agenda). Mr. Harker asked what the district has done since the February shooting in Parkland, Florida in terms of safety for students and staff. He shared portions of a report entitled "Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission Initial Report." He asked the Board take a look at the report, especially the recommendations to the state and school district to improve situations. He hopes the safety committee review the points of this document to see if our schools are doing these things, and, if not, should they be doing these things. He read 6 statements they saw as issues in Florida. He also noted a recent Maine Public Radio Morning Edition report entitled, "Researchers Say More Than Half of Maine's School Resource Officers Lack Basic Training" by Robbie Feinberg (09/24/18).
3. Additions/adjustments to the Agenda:
A. Wright noted that yesterday was elementary teacher appreciate day; he thanked all the elementary school teachers.
4. Action/Discussion/Informational Items:
 - a. Approval of Minutes of January 2, 2019
MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright to approve the minutes of January 2, 2019 as presented. **Motion Carried:** 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstained (Jacobs, Roderick, Twitchell)
 - b. Consideration of out-of-state field trip, All-Eastern Choir, Pittsburg, PA, April 4-7, 2019
MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright to approve the out-of-state field trip to attend the All-Eastern Choir competition in Pittsburgh, PA, April 4-7, 2019 as presented.
Motion Carried: unanimous
 - c. Computation and Declaration of Votes dated January 8, 2019
MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Jacobs that the Computation and Declaration of Votes dated January 8, 2019 and attached hereto be approved.
Motion Carried: unanimous
MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright that the Computation and Declaration of Votes be entered upon the records of Regional School Unit No. 38.
Motion Carried: unanimous

MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright that a certified copy of the Computation and Declaration of Votes be sent to each of the municipal clerks within the RSU.

Motion Carried: unanimous.

d. Appointment of first probationary contract teacher – Kelli Corrigan, MS

MOTION by Brotherlin, second by Wright to approve the appointment of first probationary contract teacher, Kelli Corrigan as presented. **Motion Carried:** unanimous

5. Budget Workshop:

Superintendent Charette reported that Principal Jeff Boston will start the budget presentations. He noted that Board members have the following information in their folders: current enrollment figures, a graph depicting the enrollment history, a graph depicting the budget and subsidy history, pie charts showing the budget history over the last 3 years, and a table depicting the yearly comparison of state valuations.

a. Elementary Schools

Readfield Elementary Principal Jeff Boston thanked the Board for their support last year, which allowed for the purchase of the OWLS program for the Pre-K students in all 3 elementary schools. The budget also allowed the purchase of classroom library text.

The increases being proposed by Principal Boston are in the form of staffing – increase the guidance counselor from 50% to full time, due to increased enrollment as well as an increase in student social and emotional needs. Having a guidance counselor at school 2.5 days a week is not allowing the support students need. Another staffing increase is a teacher at the 5th grade level. The current 4th grade class has been juggling from 24-22. This class was broken down into 2 classrooms in early grades; currently it is one class with ed tech support. There are several students in this grade that require math and reading interventions as well as additional emotional support. Mr. Boston is hoping that with the addition of a second teacher, allowing for smaller class size will help to provide them with the support they need to prepare for middle school. His request is to keep the current ed tech position assigned to the kindergarten class (29 students), and move that position forward to first grade.

Question – What would be the total number of Ed Techs be if these requests are approved? If this proposal was support, they would move the current Ed Tech in Grade 4 to Kindergarten. The Kindergarten Ed Tech would move to Grade 1. The number of Ed Techs would remain the same since one of this year’s Ed Techs is a one-year position.

Principal Boston added that every year since third grade he has asked for a second teacher to help with the current fourth grade. It’s not just that there are 21 students in the classroom; there are students that need a lot more support than 21 shows you.

Question - is the classroom teacher a top priority? Yes.

Question - what would your ideal classroom size be? Principal Boston responded that typically the range is 14-17 students; when you get to the lower levels it needs to be closer to 15. Principal Hartford added that studies of younger grades state 15; in higher grades 18. She added that the Project STAR report states that funding early saves money later.

Principal Boston added that other requests include equipment and regular supplies for classrooms; some of these items have been reduced over time. They also require a computer for the school office (Manchester, Mt. Vernon and the Middle School also require a new computer in each office).

Question – regarding the guidance counselor request; the middle school has the behavioral component; is a strict guidance counselor what you are looking for? Principal Boston responded that the guidance counselor currently goes into classrooms to teach social skills as well as pull outs for individual sessions; she has lunch with groups of students; and works with parents. At this time they are looking for consistent emotional/behavioral support.

Mt. Vernon and Wayne Elementary Principal Janet Delmar thanked the Board for their work and past support. In addition to the new OWL curriculum for Pre-K throughout the district, the additional support for supplies continues to support the science curriculum, and the math interventionists also have new curriculum support.

Principal Delmar reported that they have spent a lot of time working on the budget. There are three requests that she is making to support student need. Mt. Vernon and Wayne currently share an 80% guidance counselor; she would like to increase that position to 100% for the 2 schools to share. Mt. Vernon and Wayne are both Title I schools, which correlates with the economically disadvantaged needs of the families. She is also recommending that the general music teacher position be increased from 50% to 60%. At this time Mt. Vernon Pre-K students do not participate in general music. This increase would allow for equitable access to the music program for all students.

The budget also includes the replacement of the computer in the office at Mt. Vernon.

Question – what is the breakdown in guidance? Principal Delmar responded that currently 60/40 3 days and 2 days, but she would like input from the counselor as it fluctuates addressing the needs that arise. She added that she often reaches out to the counselor on her day off.

Manchester Elementary Principal Abbie Hartford shared stories about feedback she receives from teachers and children daily about having a full time principal in the building. It has helped to provide stability and the continuity, and is an asset for the students.

The Manchester Elementary budget includes a proposal for an additional classroom teacher. One of the smaller groups will be moving on to the middle school. Technically they would hire a grade 3 teacher. Unlike the situation at Readfield Elementary, they do have an Ed Tech who was hired last year to support the children and teacher in Grade 2, so if the teacher is approved, they would eliminate the Ed Tech position. The budget also includes a new computer from the front office.

Question – regarding the Mt. Vernon kindergarten class next year; will there be one class? Principal Delmar responded that she believes they will only need one class. Concern was raised, that if, as a Board, they are going to split classrooms that we treat schools equally even if it's painful.

b. Middle School

Middle School Principal Kristen Levesque provided a few highlights – the Alternative Education program students have been involved in many hands-on industrial arts work including wood burnings, students made passes for the school, as well as building corn hole games. With the assistance of the GearUp grant they were able to use some of the industrial arts activities that have been used with students in other programs that have an interest. Through the MEA program – students are taking part in a national competition entitled “Genius Squad.”

Budget requests for the Middle School include the creation of a part time dean of students/behavior specialist resulting in an increase of \$5,000. This request includes 10 days of summer work, and includes the reduction of a .5FTE teacher. Other requests include an increase in the Wellness Center Administrative Assistant position, bringing the position up from 12.5 hrs. to 16 hrs. week; the addition of one team leader position for World Language teachers; and a computer for the front office. There is also a request for the Middle School's portion of the Student Resource Officer (SRO), which is estimated at \$14,000 for 20% of the position costs. An increase in the furniture line of \$1,600, includes a membership to the ShareCenter. A membership to the ShareCenter will allow us to obtain reused furniture for free, and at times to purchase school supplies at a substantially reduced price. The final request is to purchase software for the RtI program for math and reading. All but \$500 of this request was in the previous budget, but has been moved to a new line.

Question – the Dean and teacher position, would this take away from the teacher position? Principal Levesque responded that they wouldn't need to fill the teacher position, this combined position would take care of their needs.

c. High School

Principal Dwayne Conway provided highlights on the programming at the high school. Budget requests include new equipment for the IA program totaling \$15,000. Several pieces of equipment are

43 years old and have reached the end of their service life. Also, parts are no longer available and the safety of the equipment is a concern. The high school is also requesting books for AP History, which serve 40 students in 5 different sections; 80% of a SRO; and a Jobs For Maine Graduates (JMG) program coach. Principal Conway added that he sent out a survey regarding the SRO, and he received under 100 responses back. Of those responses 75% of community responses, and 66% of staff responses support the SRO at Maranacook. The JMG job coach works with at-risk students. The program may cost \$18,000, but there is a possibility it could be free.

C.Jacobs commented that the JMG program is an awesome program, but asked how would it fit in with the current alternative education program? Principal Conway responded that it is another support; it is not just for alternative education students, they would work with a much larger array of students.

Question - have you explored federal grants for the SRO? Most grants are tied to school improvement grants; Principal Conway hasn't found any.

Question – Doesn't the College Board support access to online books? Our books are not tied in to that anymore; the preferred method is textbooks supported by online resources.

Question regarding the SRO MS survey - will you redo the survey? Principal Levesque stated she has run it twice, and although the response rate has been low, it is consistent with the responses the high school as received.

D.Twitchell cautioned that SRO is a very broad term and title; be very careful that the position and duties are carefully delineated so that everyone knows exactly what is expected.

Chair Carr asked if the MS has talked about using the facility downstairs. Principal Levesque replied that the Bike Club uses the space, and the Sebago Team uses it during period 4 each day for some sort of IA and hands on work.

Chair Carr asked when do you expect to come up with an IA program. Principal Levesque responded that they would need to do major upgrades to the whole room, hire staff, and change the students' schedules. It is estimated that it would cost \$50,000 for program updates and then the cost of a teacher.

Question – is this a staff priority? Principal Levesque responded not right now. Right now they are working on academics - working on getting students math scores up and also working on intervention strategies. They also hesitate because she is not sure where they would take the time from in the school day.

A.Woodford commented that there is always an administrator present and he wanted to say that it doesn't go unnoticed.

d. Board questions – asked during presentations

e. Citizens comments regarding budget – one comment at the start of the meeting.

f. Board discussion

A.Wright noted a recent Kennebec Journal article regarding S. Portland changing proficiency based at their High School, noting the incurred expense of having this new grading system go through; it is interesting since we continue to have this discussion of going from A-F to 1-4, especially since the legislature is not mandated it anymore. Superintendent Charette responded that we have a committee of MS and HS teachers that met yesterday. The committee will be to address things such as grading, multiple pathways, the reporting system (Jump Rope is a reporting issue not a grading issue). South Portland's issues are different than what we do here. There are a lot of other things going on there that we don't see. This will be brought back to the Board once some of the issues are hammered out.

Question – are you trying to change the grading system? Superintendent Charette responded that we won't do anything that will harm the students. He would rather present information to the Board when he is prepared for the discussion.

Request was made to have this topic added to a future agenda.

P. Gordon added that there is also a Curriculum Sub-committee that is discussing this.

C.Jacobs asked that in thinking of all the needs of the elementary schools, she would like the Board to think about looking across the whole district, having all K-5 being together, would we have enough teachers? She asked that the administrators look at that and dig into what it would look like and how much it would save. It doesn't have to be a 10 year path using the buildings we have.

A.Woodford - with the current RSU we have are there legal issues that mandates us to have a school in each town?

Finance Manager Brigitte Williams responded she would need to review the plan. The plan talks about if we are closing a school, it is a 2 year process; even if this Board votes to close a school, the town could still vote to keep the school open. The only difference in Wayne, is that there is something in the deed, that if it isn't a school, the building reverts back to the heirs.

A.Woodford would like to hear the staffs' view on the benefits or cons of the side effects of consolidating.

S.Roderick requested that students in all schools have the same opportunities.

6. Adjournment: **MOTION** and second to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

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