

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
SAU Withdrawal Study Committee
Public Hearing
June 23, 2010
Mt. Caesar Elementary School, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Wendy Martel, Norm Dion, Neil Moriarty, James Carnie, Eric Stanley and Dr. David Hodgdon.

Also present: Moderator Hutwelker.

1. PUBLIC HEARING:

W. Martel opened the Public Hearing at 7:07 PM.

Moderator Hutwelker informed the committee that Jane Fortson has resigned from the SAU Withdrawal Study Committee due to the fact she has taken the position as the new SAU Business Manager. Moderator Hutwelker suggested appointing another member after the submission process if additional work is needed.

a. Overview of withdrawal process: W. Martel explained to the public the members on the committee, the officers elected, the sequence of events that needed to happen in order to reach this Public Hearing according to the withdrawal process and RSA 194-C:2. During the process the committee members spoke to other SAUs that withdrew from other Districts and reviewed their documents. In order to keep the public informed the committee placed the information that was gathered on the web site. All meetings were posted and public. Public comments were always welcome.

b. Report Synopsis: W. Martel explained to the public that the 7 member **MRSD SAU Withdrawal Study Committee** unanimously recommended to the voters the withdrawal from SAU 38. The committee believes that a single district SAU would make administrative services more direct and efficient on behalf of the students. The students, the staff and the School Board would receive a more hands on and visible approach. The committee felt that there was no distinct cost disadvantage. Monadnock currently pays 2/3 of the budget but the services are shared disproportionately at times, especially in the Spec. Ed. area. Monadnock's share of would than be totally for the advancement of education for the children in the Monadnock District. The committee also identified a potential savings as a result of the withdrawal.

The committee believes some of the benefits to withdrawal would include as follows:

Educational decisions relating to curriculum and instructions as well as special education and other considerations will be made by SAU personnel completely focused on the needs of Monadnock's students.

Communication about SAU topics will be focused, direct and pertinent to the staff of Monadnock.

The Superintendent will be available on a regular basis in the district's eight schools, resulting in a more personal involvement with the schools and their operations.

Having a full-time Special Service Director would allow for more hands-on involvement of the SAU in working with the schools. Since the special education population is the primary subgroup that has affected schools' and the districts' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status, this closer relationship and oversight should assist the district in addressing the needs of this group of students from pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 with multiple school communities and differing needs across the district.

The geographical size of the Monadnock Regional School District is sizeable, having a single-district SAU would reduce travel time and keep the focus for meeting on the Monadnock Regional School District. It may increase the attendance and participation of board members at SAU meetings, since all would be held in the Monadnock district.

The superintendent would be responsible for only one school district. The impact of this change would enable the superintendent to have a singular focus on the needs of the one district without the distractions or demands of multiple districts.

There would be fewer meetings for the SAU superintendent and staff.

There would be more visibility of the superintendent in the Monadnock schools, allowing him or her more time to have interaction with the communities in the Monadnock Regional School District.

As a single-district SAU, there would be a maximum number of board members of 15 and any weighted vote would be consistent with the population in the school district.

The remaining districts in the SAU would have benefit of their SAU services being more centrally located to their physical location(s) rather than housed off-site in Swanzey.

With fewer students the Monadnock students would benefit from the services of the single-district SAU. The SAU Withdrawal Study Committee would recommend as follows: In accordance with RSA 194-c: 2, the committee recommends that the voters of the Monadnock District support a warrant to be placed on a Special Meeting warrant in the fall of 2010 (date to be determined upon acceptance of the withdrawal plan by the State Board of Education) to withdraw from SAU 38. The committee recommends that Monadnock Regional School District begin operations of its own SAU on July 1, 2011.

PUBLIC HEARING-Public input:

Bruce Barlow asked about the report to the DOE. W. Martel explained that the committee feels it should go smoothly. The other districts are seeking withdrawal as well. E. Stanley

explained that the committee has spoken to personnel at the DOE that feel the report would come back with changes and we are ready for that.

Bruce Tatro asked about the process. W. Martel explained that the next step is for the public to vote after the report is submitted.

Moderator Hutwelker explained that whether the report is approved or not approved by the DOE it will go before the voters. D. Hodgdon agreed. He said that we must meet the requirements of the RSA and then withdraw anytime after that. W. Martel said that other districts that wanted to withdraw could.

Bruce Tatro asked who owns the SAU building in Swanzey. It was explained that the Monadnock School District owns the building.

The committee reported an anticipated SAU budget for Monadnock as a single SAU district to be \$1,902,297.00 rather than the \$3,139,795.00 as a three district.

J. Carnie commented that the figures are pretty much estimates. We felt from the start it would be beneficial to us. We spent much more time on the educational aspect. We own the building. We pay 2/3 of the Assistant Superintendent for Winchester and Hinsdale as well as their Assistant Business Manager. By reducing the services we could expect a fairly decent savings.

E. Stanley commented on Special Ed. we pay 67% and there are times when there is a disproportionate issue regarding the Special Ed. staff.

Betty Tatro asked if there would be the same level of staffing in the Spec. Ed. W. Martel explained that there would be some changes in staffing. They would suggest keeping the Spec. Ed. Director. They looked at the out of district staffing. D. Hodgdon explained that the projection for staffing is one less administrator in the Special Ed. area. They anticipate that would be adequate for Monadnock and eliminate 1 part time person in Special Ed. Services.

J. Carnie explained that Monadnock is paying 67% of the SAU cost for Special Ed. and at times using only 50%. We are paying more but not receiving 67% of the services. Some of the Special Ed. Staff may not be necessary. E. Stanley commented that working for only Monadnock is a direct benefit. W. Martel explained that the travel time out of district is a huge amount.

P. Bauries asked about the savings in the Superintendent area and the Business area. D. Hodgdon explained the savings would be for the Assistant Superintendent for Winchester and Hinsdale, the Administrative Assistant and other related items in the Assistant Superintendent area. D. Hodgdon explained that they would suggest reducing personnel in the Business Office due to Winchester and Hinsdale being gone. It would have a domino effect on the implications with the eliminating of the other districts. J. Carnie explained that the Business Office, technology and the Superintendent areas have a

savings potential of being quite sizeable. W. Martel explained that the technology assets would have to be divided accordingly with the other districts with the withdrawal. E. Stanley explained that the committee has put in for unforeseen expenditures. N. Dion spoke of the benefits of the withdrawal regarding the technology dept. for Monadnock. Bruce Tatro asked about the common equipment and software in the technology area. He asked who gets it if no one agrees. J. Fortson explained that the committee made no provision in the report but possibly leaving a fund balance for a year to cover items such as breaking of a lease etc. D. Hodgdon explained there would be a representative from each district when the dividing of assets is taking place.

Bruce Barlow commended the committee for a lot of good hard work.

E. Stanley commented the committee does have a budget and would be mailing fliers to the voters. W. Martel explained the individual committee members would speak to the select boards of the towns.

It was suggested having one more meeting of this committee to prepare for the sending of the report to Concord. J. Fortson explained the committee has 14 days after this Public Hearing to submit the report. D. Hodgdon explained that DOE would inform us when we are on the docket. They meet once a month.

2. Close Public Hearing: MOTION: N. Moriarty **MOVED** to close the SAU Withdrawal Study Public Hearing. **SECOND:** E. Stanley. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

3. Approve June 10, 2010 Meeting Minutes: MOTION: E. Stanley. **MOVED** to accept the June 10, 2010 Meeting Minutes as amended. **SECOND:** J. Carnie. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

4. Set next meeting date, time, place, agenda: The next SAU Withdrawal Study Committee Meeting will be on July 1, 2010 at 7:00 PM at Mt. Caesar.

The committee made comments on parts of the report that needed to be corrected. The Committee would bring copies of the report to the next School Board Meeting.

MOTION: E. Stanley **MOVED** in accordance with RSA 194-C:2, the committee recommends that the voters of the Monadnock district support a warrant to be placed on a Special Meeting warrant in the fall of 2010 (date to be determined upon acceptance of the withdrawal plan by the state board of education) to withdraw from SAU 38. The committee recommends that Monadnock Regional School District begin operation of its own SAU on July 1, 2011. **SECOND:** J. Carnie. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

MOTION: E. Stanley **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 PM. **SECOND:** N. Moriarty. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary