

**APPROVED MINUTES  
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 6:00 PM**

**Present:**

Board: Douglas Korb(Chair), Dan MacArthur (Vice Chair), Lissa Harris (Clerk), David Holzapfel  
*Administration:* Bill Anton (Superintendent), Laurie Garland (Business Manager), Wayne Kermenski (Principal)  
*Faculty:* Rachel Boyden, Gail Greenleaf, Rochelle Garfinkle, Erica Morse, Jaime Schilling  
*Members of the Public:* Judy Robinson (AMP), Peter Barus (Recorder)

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM

**Members of the Public**

Ms. Robinson discussed capital improvements, speaking as “a voice from outside” on the critical importance of compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act; recalling a meeting at another Vermont school discussing investment in dorms and omitting ADA compliance. It was noted that the architects working with MES only do schools and have included this in planning.

**Members of the Faculty/Staff**

Ms. Greenleaf saluted the teachers, all working very hard; and discussed proposed cuts, a letter from Ms. Garfinkle and curriculum changes. Mr. Korb noted that Ms. Garfinkle’s letter was about FTE cuts; that it is expected to be a difficult year; that a 7.7% cost increase is expected; that MES had been just below the penalty marker.

**Changes to the agenda**

**Add Pay Orders, Executive Session**

**Marlboro College/Building Update**

It was noted that Mr. MacArthur and Ms. Romo had walked through with the architects; no word as yet on Marlboro College plans; Mr. MacArthur will update the Board on further developments.

Mr. Kermenski suggested looking at the timeline and bond questions. There was discussion; it was suggested to continue looking into possibilities regarding Marlboro College. Ms. Boyden discussed enrollment changes that could occur if the number of college faculty families should change. There was discussion of possibilities, such as getting the school off Route 9; having a middle school building, more parking, more trails. Mr. Korb discussed CLA, at 100, and the possibility of the housing market remaining unchanged this year or next but changing in 2021 in a positive direction.

**Superintendent’s Report**

Mr. Anton discussed recently completed healthcare negotiations, the 80-20 premium share, the same VEHI plan as most, single to family plan with contribution to HRA, the Silver plan HSA (employee owned, while HRA is employer owned) option; those working more than 17.5 hours a week will be eligible at the 83-17 rate (17 paid by employer). Mr Anton will attend a workshop in January and noted that overall more money will go into the Education Fund; that the 5.5% increase, the base rate for the budget, will also increase again.

Ms. Garland discussed details of the support-staff agreement.

**2020-2021 Budget First Glance/Preparation**

Mr. Kermenski provided copies and discussed differences from other years, reallocations rather than big changes; offered last years sheet for comparison; discussed requested comparisons with Dover, Newbrook and Townshend; and noted that reduction in force can be seen in the Principal’s Report.

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Mr. Kermenski discussed preschool, elementary and JH:

- A Preschool teacher is going on maternity leave, May to January, budgeted for 0.6 FTE, returning at 0.8 FTE; the co-teacher will be lead teacher; PreK-K will be the biggest so far, 32 expected.
- Elementary: no changes, some reduction of para in primary, spending some time in PreK during maternity leave.
- Everything else is the same as last year, not as budgeted but as on hand now; JH stays as is this year.
- Specials: Art reduced by 0.1 from last year's budget; Spanish increased, music reduced.
- Nothing for furniture, renovation is coming; supplies generally level-funded.
- Library went from 1.0 to 0.7 FTE.

Mr. Kermenski noted that the above represent actuals; that any increase in salaries is unknown; that changes in FTE, reductions and additions in salaries, taken together amount to around \$40,000, a 7.07% increase; that the HS rate is budgeted a little low; and that for every \$30,000 increase the budget increases by 1%.

There was discussion of health insurance, HRA; that the budget shows a decrease, but this is a redistribution; that previously MES budgeted conservatively in anticipation of new hires, and is budgeting this year on what is known.

Members of the Faculty were recognized and discussed the process, noting that:

- this is a different process, very top-down; that staff had heard about FTE cuts by email;
- that this was not in Marlboro's tradition;
- it was difficult to hear that these changes would be made without general discussion, especially with Faculty;
- curriculum will change because of staff cuts.

It was suggested that:

- the process as implemented was half of the process that had been discussed;
- MES is not other schools, and Faculty know the school best;
- critical information, a needs-assessment from inside the building, is missing;
- teachers understand what will happen when things are cut, and have the possibility to be creative and innovative;
- just cutting is not the best or only approach;
- the Faculty should be consulted throughout the process.

Mr. MacArthur discussed a Faculty meeting at which Mr. Kermenski had been asked if this was a fait-accomplish or a beginning of the conversation, and responded that this was a beginning, something on the table to discuss, a draft; and that it will be affected by how much money goes into it.

There was a Faculty request that it be made explicit how the conversation will proceed henceforth.

Mr. Korb noted that the Board assumes the Principal is in communication with the staff, that it is not simply about redeployment of personnel.

Mr. Kermenski suggested that these conversations have to happen at board meetings, as this is where the budget is constructed; and noted that finding time for meetings everyone can attend is challenging, and that all need to be in the discussion.

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Ms. Boyden noted that there had been no discussion beyond an email before the Faculty meeting, no chance for a general conversation; and that as a result there will be much that the Principal would not know.

Ms. Garfinkle recalled that there had been an email and meetings with specific people about what the cuts to FTE might be, and that this was the reason for her letter; the impression was that this is where cuts must be made, to stop buying books and make up the 11% increase; and suggested that this was more complicated than it had to be, that there was a process, and that Mr. MacArthur's impression may not have coincided with the Faculty's experience.

Mr. Korb noted that under several new state mandates beyond their control, school boards are left with faculties, programs and pencils, and that student-staff ratios are part of the mix.

There was discussion; it was suggested that when the first news is about jobs being cut, this starts the conversation with everyone on the defensive.

Mr. Korb asked the Faculty to comment on curriculum changes. There was discussion:

- of the Librarian FTE being cut, when both Library and Tech Support responsibilities have been growing, in which case classroom projects cannot continue;
- of cutting paraeducators as untenable and poor practice;
- that the writing curriculum can't continue:
  - that after four years with two teachers, consortium, portfolios, and honors students' writing projects, Faculty are now being told to "re-envision it" while barely able to do that much;
  - that without Ms. Garfinkle and with 24 students, they won't be writing the way they were, and won't have small literature groups;
- that field research will change:
  - that a trip to Costa Rica cannot be planned at that level, last year Gail and Pam did it without Francie, with fourteen students; next year there will be twenty-four students;
- that voters should know that MES will not be the K-8 they had before.

Mr. Korb discussed going before the Town with alternative configurations; there was discussion of presenting the situation, and what had previously been planned; of presenting different versions of a budget, and a plan for how to keep MES a growing school, in view of coming changes.

Ms. Schilling discussed going from two days to 1.5 days for music teacher:

- that this will affect programs;
- that the Strings program is already reduced;
- that it is not possible to schedule the same amount of instruction in the time provided, with curriculum support, project support, less capacity to do projects in addition to what happens in the art room;
- that vocabulary development in PreK and access to specials teachers will be affected;
- that morning recess duties twice a week, and afternoon recess, will fall back on teachers, detracting from prep time and one-on-one time;
- that stepping into those roles and providing that flexibility will impinge on prep time in the classroom;
- that kindergarten to first grade is a very difficult transition with that many students, and classroom support is important.

Mr. Korb asked Mr. Anton about part-time versus full-time assistants. Mr. Anton noted that the SU does not employ any non-special education paras or teaching aids. Mr. Kermenski explained that one para will

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support Kindergarten, Primary and PreK; that needs or numbers are not equal; that MES is the only school that has paras outside special education; that most other schools use the classroom teacher unless there is Title One funding (none at MES); that it would be good to have a full time para all year; that much is level-funded as-is, because specific need is unknown; and that he had no disagreement with what was being said.

A member of Faculty asked, in view of many areas that have been amped-up, what are the best places to cut for the benefit of the students, as declared in the mission statement.

Mr. Korb noted that there had been many discussions about moving resources.

Members of the Faculty, discussing support for little children, noted the increasing need for teachers that are less generalist, and more specialist; and that licensing becomes increasingly specific.

Mr. MacArthur noted two budget meetings in January, with more information coming from the state, and suggested setting a date for the first one, to bring ideas, noting that there will be more financial information, including impacts on the tax rate; in the interim, communicating as much as possible and getting numbers together, convening again with the state numbers on hand; and noting that EQP and needs assessment are not known yet.

A member of the Faculty suggested that during Winter Sports would be a good time to have those conversations with Board members, to look for creative solutions; that this is that perfect storm, the time to look at all the possibilities, such as combining classes, etc.

Mr. Holzapfel suggested the Faculty could get together and present some bulleted ideas. Mr. Kermenski discussed level funding. Mr. Korb discussed the cost of Winter Sports at Mt Snow.

Ms. Garland noted some increases affecting tax rates that work in favor of Marlboro, and explained the calculation for a very rough estimate of education spending per equalized pupil, noting that it is over the threshold; and that, although very preliminary, it indicates that to get below penalty, MES must cut \$154,000.00 out of this budget.

There was discussion; that all districts are facing this kind of conversation and this reality.

Mr. Holzapfel suggested that as many Faculty as possible participate in the conversation. Mr. MacArthur discussed efficiencies and effectiveness

Ms. Robinson asked if \$154,000 definitely must be cut. It was explained that this is not necessarily the case, but the penalty will add an additional \$154,000 to the costs; Ms. Robinson suggested that this is more of a problem than just moving the funds around.

It was noted that with this budget the tax rate will increase.

A member of Faculty inquired about BEL Center costs; and noted that last year Mr. Kermenski had served as a teaching principal (math). Mr. Korb discussed special education and the BEL Center line item. Mr. Kermenski explained that last year it was a pilot project; that previously students went outside for services as there were not the resources to support their needs.

Regarding the BEL Center, Mr. Kermenski explained further that:

- the BEL Center was to bring in expertise, and bring local children back in;
- that financially it was not more expensive;
- out-of-district placements are very expensive and do not bring equity;

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- the BEL Center saves money and brings equity;
- that it is critical to get this highly intensive support to students earlier;
  - that in grades 4-5 the BEL Center isn't appropriate as it is not designed for beyond grade 3;
- that it has increased equity and also brought knowledge into the building;
- that students are doing much better and costing less;

Mr. MacArthur asked Mr. Anton about comparisons. Mr. Anton noted that there are no comparable programs in WCSU; they must out-place. Ms. Garland noted that sped budget is the whole SU, but BEL Center is localized, housed at MES, while special education costs are spread across the ADM line item in the MES budget, and this reduces its share of WCSU special education costs.

Mr. Kermenski will bring more detail as to the costs of BEL Center program.

Mr. Kermenski noted that the BEL Center now serves three students; and expressed discomfort with discussing need comparisons, suggesting that it will be better to return with the data. Ms. Harris noted that the narrative is helpful when presenting the budget.

Mr. Korb discussed the layout of the budget, as to whether it may be confusing to voters, suggesting some educating will be necessary, although it is in a standard format for budgets. There was discussion. Mr. Korb invited suggestions from the board, how to proceed.

There was discussion about cutting out the \$154,000. Ms. Garland explained the (likely) \$1.71 versus \$1.69 tax rate. Mr. Kermenski suggested developing more than one path, and meetings on what the budget should look like. Ms. Garland suggested considering years ahead, as there will be a deficit in FY 2020 that will add to that budget.

Mr. Kermenski recommended a budget freeze, no more PD, supplies; and noted looking at a renovation two years ahead that will add a minimum of \$200,000 to the budget; that this may be offset with PreK and JH revenues; and that programming has to be closely examined.

There was discussion of the deficit, possibly \$50,000; lost tuition revenue, as Marlboro residents don't pay and attend in increasing numbers; of the things that saved the last two years that are no longer present; of insurance crippling everything in the state; of making decisions for years to come; that there was no way to expect the expenses that came this year; that there will be impact on the Principal as well; and of being willing to go into the penalty zone, and present that to the voters.

Mr. Korb explained that the penalty is inescapable, although some of the damage may be mitigated by Winter Sports, etc. Mr. Kermenski suggested that naming things that could be cut, a long list at small numbers. Mr. MacArthur suggested supporting this budget.

Ms. Garland explained that adding two tuition high school students (\$33,000) gets to a tax rate of \$1.96. There was discussion of other towns' tax rates being at least \$1.80; Mr. MacArthur will research this. Mr. Korb noted that at \$1.69 last year there had been sticker shock. There was discussion of impact on home prices; income sensitivity; an FRL effect on tax rates (no FRL at MES). It was noted that a penny on the tax rate is \$20 on a \$200,000 house; and that current numbers predict \$0.27.

There was consensus that cuts matching the size of the anticipated increase are not possible; the example was given that cutting JH involves paying tuition for 24 students.

The Board scheduled a Special Meeting January 8, 2020, at 5:PM.

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There was discussion of assessments versus authentic learning; of the list of things assessments don't assess; the attitude, "then show me"; five honor roll MES grads at an award ceremony; public perceptions.

## **Principal's Report**

(See Appendix)

Mr. Kermenski addressed questions on immunizations; religious exemption forms; compliance now at 75%, low in the state. Mr. Korb noted official support of the state policy on immunizations.

Mr. Kermenski discussed Personalized Learning (PD at the SU); the REAP Grant was filed, AoE and DeE working on this. There was discussion of budget and educational impacts of the proposed freeze on PD, and on the budget; about fund transfers, reserve funds, Board discretion in allocation of those funds, test scores, project-based learning and assessments.

## **Pay Orders**

Mr. Holzapfel moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #10, dated 11/21/19, in the amount of \$169,584.45. Second by Mr. MacArthur. **All in Favor.**

Mr. Holzapfel moved to approve Payroll Warrant #11, dated 12/11/19, in the amount of \$435,387.22. Second by Mr. MacArthur. **All in Favor.**

## **Executive Session**

Mr. Korb moved to enter Executive Session. Second by Ms. Harris. **All in Favor.**  
The Board entered executive session at 8:45 PM.

*The following courtesy of Ms. Harris:*

Came out of exec session at 9:20pm  
Motion to adjourn made by Dan, 2nd David  
Meeting adjourned

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM.

## **Upcoming Meetings & Important Dates**

- Marlboro Winter Concert Wednesday, December 12, 2019 at Marlboro College
- CANCELLED: Marlboro School Board Meeting December 19, 2019
- Marlboro School Winter Break: December 23, 2019 – January 1, 2020
- Special Meeting January 8, 2020, at 5:PM.

*Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, December 16, 2019*

## **Appendix**

**December 2019**

**Principal Report to Board**

**Wayne Kermenski**

### **Academic Proficiency:**

- January 3rd, 2020, Faculty PD Day - We will spend the day discussing Domain 1: Planning of our Supervision and Evaluation System and using our Common Unit Template to plan our Learning Fair unit.
- We began our MAS (Marlboro Assessment System) this month with the Track My Progress online assessment for grades 2-8. After the Winter Break, we will assess students with Words Their Way spelling inventory 1-8, Predictive Assessment of Reading (PAR) K-3 and Advantage Math Recovery (AVMR) K-3.

### **Personalized Learning:**

- WCSU PD before the holiday.
  - Monday, 11/25, PK discussed child development and TS Gold, K-6 Keys to Literacy, JH UPenn, Library PLC
  - Tuesday, 11/26, PK-8 Trauma informed practices and mindfulness

### **High Quality Staffing:**

- Erica has stepped up to be lead teacher. When I am absent, she will help problem solve schedule changes, meet with students during recess and be the point person to call me if there is an emergency.

### **Safe, Healthy Schools:**

- Nurse Sara is working very hard on our immunization report for the state. As it stands right now, the percentage of students fully immunized will be similar to last year. This percentage is one of the lowest in the state.
- The number of students choosing school lunch has increased a little from mid-50s to mid-60s. I contribute this to the amazing food Emily is cooking and her upbeat and positive attitude.

### **Financial Efficiencies:**

- Laurie Garland has been working hard on our REAP grant for this year. Due to some accounting issues and other mis-information with no one to discuss them with, we will be receiving about \$5K. This is down from last year's 20K.

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**FY21 Staffing**

Classroom	# of Students	Teachers
Preschool	20	.6 FTE Teacher 1.0 FTE Teacher 1.0 FTE assistant 0.5 Assistant (until January)
Kindergarten	11	1.0 FTE teacher 0.5 FTE assistant
Primary	17	1.0 FTE teacher 0.5 FTE assistant (after January)
3/4	21	1.0 FTE teacher 1.0 FTE co-teacher
5/6	14	1.0 FTE teacher 0.1 FTE math teacher
JH	24	0.9 FTE teacher 0.9 FTE teacher
Total	107	6.5 FTE teacher 2.0 Assistants
SPED staffing		1.0 FTE teacher .3 FTE BCBA (BELCenter) 1.0 FTE behavior interventionist (BELCenter) 3.0 FTE SPED paras
Specials	107	.3 FTE Art .3 FTE 1-8 Music/Strings .1 FTE PK/K music .14 Rhythms .2 FTE PE .29 FTE Spanish .7 FTE Library/tech
Health	107	.4 FTE Guidance .6 FTE Nurse .8 FTE Interventionist 1.0 FTE Food Director 1.0 FTE Facilities Manager .5 FTE Bus Driver .5 FTE Bus Driver
	Total FTE	FY21 - 19.33 FY20 - 18.17 (budgeted) 20.11 (actual)

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	% Increase in salaries	9.4% from Budgeted
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**Supplies:**

- Each classroom gets \$1500 general. \$500 books/per.
- Interventionist \$2000 under classroom supplies
- NO Furniture funds
- Co-Curricular - Field research and winter sports scholarships

**Overall total:**

Item	Amount
Total budget in efinance	\$2,947,349
Additions 21K Bus assist., 14K bus lease	\$35,000
Total budget	\$2,979,749
Change from FY20 to FY21	\$214,485
FY20 Budget	\$2,767,864
% difference	7.7%*

\* Please plan for an additional 25K while I work some of the kinks out. Adds about 1%