



**MARS Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 13, 2022**  
**9:30 AM – 11 AM**  
**Zoom Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**Present (Remote):** Deb Boyd, Laura Chesson, Ellen Holmes, Ernie Houle, Margaret Hughes, Mindy Kempner, Denise Pigeon, Beth Regulbuto, Ms. Ryan, Avi Urbas

**Also Present:** Christine Johnson, Maureen Marshall

**Absent:** Michael Fitzpatrick, Mark Morris

**Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order by Lynn Ryan, Vice-Chairperson, at 9:31 AM.

**Approval of Minutes from BOD June 28, 2022** (Vote to approve)

Motion to approve the minutes made by Ms. Kemper, seconded by Ms. Holmes. The motion carries unanimously.

**Appointment of New Board Members (Vote to approve)**

Dr. Marshall updated the Board on the four positions open on the Board due to end-of-year retirements, movement in positions from regional to non-regional systems, and lack of individuals seeking re-appointment. She stated that it was not necessary to convene the Nominations Board according to the by-laws, and each vacancy could be filled as a “one-year appointment” pending the annual election of the slate of officers by the MARS membership in May of 2023. Discussion took place regarding the role of the Nominations Committee in this process, the appointment of Board member positions based on regional and geographic distribution, and the composition of the Board. Ms. Ryan stated that a full board of directors is needed and recommended the appointments of the nominees at this time and for the Board to review the process at a later date.

*Motion made by Denise Pigeon “To approve the slate of officers as discussed and appoint Charlie Ellis, Paul Haughey, Bill Haggerty, to the Board of Directors and to appoint Shelia Muir, as an Associate Member. Seconded by Laura Chesson. The motion carries unanimously.*

**Rural Schools Report – Update**

Ms. Ryan invites Ms. Holmes and Dr. Marshall to update the Board on the status of the rural schools report. Dr. Marshall informs the committee that we are working closely with Melissa King as she continues to review the Rural Schools Report and contact others to gather input in creating a white paper. Ms. Holmes added that MASC and MASS had distributed the report to their members. She stated that Tom Consolati and Senator Hinds state that this report should not include regional schools in the conversations nor reduce regional school transportation and regional aid in a rural schools commission report. Regional schools often have had to give back to support other programs. Ms. Holmes emphasized many benefits to moving forward and not getting stuck on other non-rural issues. Mr. Urbas applauds the work to support rural school districts but stated that MARS is obligated to its broader membership and that any proposal on the rural side that jeopardizes other members must be carefully scrutinized. Ms. Marshall said she would keep the Board posted.

### **Recognition of Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson**

MARS Board voted to recognize the leadership of the Regional Caucus for its many years of support for regional schools.

A Recognition ceremony will be held on October 13 at 10 AM in the Wachusett Regional District. The only district that is in common by both legislators. Board members were invited to attend the ceremony. They are taking care of their publicity. Dr. Marshall will keep the Board posted on the details of the event.

### **Professional Development – Update**

Ms. Johnson provided an overview of the PD planned for FY 23 and the importance of consistently reviewing and refreshing our offerings to meet the needs of our members. Two new presentations are planned: an Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) conceptual presentation provided by a former MTA representative familiar with regional school districts and a presentation on the importance of student information management systems (SIMS) data on Chapter 70 funding. The workshops will be free to members and fee-based for non-members and scheduled based on the availability of the presenters. A third workshop, *Special Education: Policies, Best Practices, and Budgeting* will be a collaborative effort with MARS and Manchester Essex presenters Avi Urbas and SPED Director Allison Collins. The current format for the *Back to Basics Leadership Series* is being reviewed.

We will offer the MARS Annual Legislative Breakfast and provide updates on the budgeting process as information becomes available. Discussions regarding the feasibility of in-person or Zoom formats, the introduction of MARS Connects (roundtable), and forming a consultancy group were presented by Ms. Pigeon, Ms. Regulbuto, and Ms. Boyd. Ms. Pigeon suggested looking at the MASC Roundtable model and having a regional meeting after the roundtables to discuss regional issues as a void in information and opportunities for sharing best practices exists for regional districts' leadership. Ms. Johnson thanked the Board for its input, support, and continued participation in the PD offerings. There was a consensus that we should include more in-person events.

### **MASC Conference – Update**

Ms. Marshall provided an overview of the current status of the MARS participation in this event scheduled for November 2 -5. The MARS leadership will work with MASBO to organize one or more workshops. Ms. Hughes is working with Margaret Driscoll, MASBO Director, and will provide more information as details are finalized. Details will be finalized and shared. Ms. Marshall stated that we generally receive follow-up calls after the session, and the conference is a good opportunity to interact with School Committee members. A link to the MASC website was provided to the Board. Ms. Marshall confirmed that there would be no general meeting membership meeting at the Conference as previous attempts to attract attendees have resulted in poor participation, primarily due to conflicts with scheduled workshops and MASC events.

### **Financial and Membership Summary FY 23 Budget – Update**

Christine provides a general update on the memberships and FY22 budget and final year-end statements, including a projected carryover of unexpended funds. She reviewed the process of collecting dues and stated that early in the process, 40% of dues were collected. She reviewed this year's budget based on actuals of FY 22's (77) paid member districts. Ms. Ryan asks how many regional school districts are members. Ms. Johnson identified (86) regional districts and stated that some of these districts are small rural regional districts regionalized at PreK-6. The membership includes vocational and agricultural regional districts. Ms. Holmes asks for clarification on the member directory info sheet, which is included in the invoicing and is sent via email and US mail (as necessary) to Superintendents, Executive Assistants, and Business Managers.

Ms. Johnson informs the committee that Gail Stanton, Treasurer, has completed the necessary files to begin the FY22 process. Ms. Johnson will email the Audit Subcommittee to set a time and place to begin the annual review process.

### **Other Items**

A review of the *FY 23 Calendar of Events* and a discussion regarding the events and meeting format followed whether the events would be offered on ZOOM or in person. Dr. Marshall adds that the Board can decide which meetings should be via ZOOM or in person. Ms. Pigeon suggests a hybrid format for general membership meetings to accommodate all members and to allow opportunities to build relationships. Ms. Ryan suggests that the April meeting be offered in a hybrid form. Ms. Johnson states that the general membership meeting dates have not yet been shared as the effort is underway. These meetings have tended to be combined with the professional development of topical interest. Ms. Boyd and Dr. Houle would like to move the Board's last meeting up a week.

*Motion to amend the calendar made by Deb Boyd, "To move the last meeting of FY23 from Tuesday, June 20, 2023, to Tuesday, June 27, 2023". Seconded by Dr. Houle. The motion carries unanimously.*

### **Summary of Meeting Items for Follow-up:**

1. Provide a roster of the new Board of Directors to members to review and edit as necessary
2. Collaborate with MASBO to identify school business administrators to serve on the Board
3. Convene Audit Subcommittee to begin the FY22 review
4. Continue collection of dues
5. Identify and firm up meeting dates, topics, and formats. Mr. Urbas confirms that people come to meetings because of the offerings and topics and suggests we finalize the dates until a topic and guest speakers are aligned.

*Motion made by Lynn Ryan "To approve the request to provide the Assistant Executive Director with the flexibility of scheduling based on the availability of a headliner, seconded by Ellen Holmes. The motion carries unanimously.*

- Work towards scheduling an in-person spring meeting similar to the MAVA end-of-year format. Ms. Pigeon and Dr. Houle will take the lead on this event. Ms. Ryan offers to assist, and Dr. Marshall recommends we involve Dr. Fitzpatrick. Assabet and Nashoba Tech are identified as possible sites.
- Schedule a meeting to discuss MARS connects with Ms. Johnson, Ms. Pigeon, Ms. Regulbuto, and Dr. Boyd.
- Finalize details for the Senator Gobi & Representative Ferguson Recognition Ceremony.
- Consider establishing a process for annual recognition of students, staff, and MARS partners similar to MAVA. Ms. Pigeon offers to take the lead on planning.

*(11:15) Move to Adjourn moved by Ms. Holmes. Seconded by Ms. Kempner*