



Sunday, March 23, 2008

## Where blame lies

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To The Sentinel:

Well, highly regarded reporter Steve Gilbert (Sentinel March 16) got sucked in with typical Monadnock Leadership spin.

Observation:

The Taxpayers of the Monadnock Regional School District have funded every maintenance warrant article since 2001; the maintenance of the high school auditorium has never been on any of those warrants.

The voters of Monadnock pay for facility maintenance via building maintenance warrant articles. Without exception, the voters have continually approved facility maintenance articles back to about 2001 — including about \$1 million last year alone.

The Monadnock leadership (Ms. Dreyfuss and Mr. Felton are both on the school board's facilities committee), with input from Ken Dassau, selects the items to be accomplished, sets the priority, and sets the maintenance dollar amounts (special warrants, such as maintenance, belong to the school board, not the budget committee). The taxpayers only fund it; again and again .

The "400-lb. stage rod weight" problem, once discovered, was given top priority, and was fixed as fast as the maintenance process could move (I believe Ms. Dreyfuss was facilities chair in that time frame). No one had pre-determined that there was a problem before it was discovered — or the "stage rod" would have been on a warrant. Again, the people you were talking to (Dassau, Dreyfuss and Felton) knew the situation exactly as it happened, but they elected to spin the story.

Additionally, Mr. Gilbert, the school district has a \$60,000 emergency maintenance fund that would have more that covered the stage rod fix (I could be corrected, but, I believe the problem was fixed for about \$10,000). Funds for the stage rod fix were always available.

Oh, by the way, Mr. Gilbert, did the Monadnock leadership tell you that they don't have the auditorium on their list of tasks from this year's maintenance warrant articles passed (87 percent average voter approval) by the voters on March 13? We all will be looking at the same auditorium next year!

I am a taxpayer, and a member of the Monadnock Taxpayers Association (who have supported all but one maintenance warrant article in seven years). I don't have to go to the play to know what is on the warrant. I attend 95 percent of the board meetings — unfortunately, more of the board meetings than The Sentinel does. I am proud to say I played a role in both the creation of the emergency maintenance fund, and separating maintenance articles form the operating budget; no brag just fact.

The Monadnock Budget Committee has not taken a position on the auditorium.

Mr. Gilbert, you talked directly to the Monadnock leadership in putting

your article together — did you get any of the above information from them?

Given, it's ugly, Mr. Gilbert, you were talking to the people who could fix it, and they will not; don't try to push the blame on the Monadnock Taxpayers Association or the voters.

NEIL MORIARTY

782 Old Homestead Highway

Richmond