

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2025
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

School Board Members Present: Scott Peters, Lisa Steadman, Betty Tatro, Kristen Noonan, Eric Stanley, Jennifer Strimbeck, Gina Carraro, Brian Bohannon and Edmond LaPlante. **Absent:** Hannah Blood, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Dan LeClair and Jeff Cesaitis.

Administration Present: J. Rathbun, Superintendent, L. Spencer, Assistant Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM: S.Peters called the meeting to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: T.J., a student at the Lady of Mercy Academy in Keene who lives in Chesterfield is asking the Board for permission to be a part of the Monadnock Powerlifting Club. Keene High does not offer Powerlifting. He has been in contact with the coach and the coach assures him that he is not taking anyone's spot on the team. He commented that he is a very good student, well behaved and will be a positive representative to the team and the community.

Justin Blood who has 2 children in the district is here to support T.Cote remain in the head baseball coach position. It is hard to find qualified coaches and successful ones. The issue is T. Cote being the full time AD and the coach. Anyone that you hire will probably have a full-time job. Why part ways with a highly recommended coach. Make the right decision. ***B. Bohannon arrives.***

Ben Dean, a former student of Monadnock is here to support T.Cote as the baseball coach. He said it was a privilege to have such a role model as T. Cote as his baseball coach. He said he is one reason he is the player he is today. He commented on the Championships that they have won under T. Cote and the respect that he gives the players. He said he is the best coach ever. ***E. Stanley leaves.***

3. #celebrate MRSD: S.Peters mentioned that the School Board has received thank you cards from the staff regarding the Staff Appreciation luncheon. K. Noonan also mentioned she had received thank you notes from Emerson and she emailed it to the Board Members. J.Rathbun commented that everyone made it through and back from vacation.

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

a. Standing agenda:

- i. Student Government Report:** There is no representative present.
- ii. Superintendent Goals Update: Building Project:** J. Rathbun informed the Board that there is a lot of work going on at Emerson. The work at MTC is incredible,

moving very quickly with updates at the next meeting.

iii. Board Meeting Calendar & Goals: Finance/Facilities will meet on January 15, 2025. The Education Committee will be meeting with the administration during the school day to discuss the Proposed Cell Phone Policy. The Policy Committee will be meeting on January 14, 2025.

iv. School Resource Officer (Status Update): J. Rathbun will be discussing the SRO in Non-Public Session.

v. Staffing Update: J. Rathbun explained they have hired 2 paraprofessionals and that will be coming to the Board in non-public tonight.

b. Budget Committee Update: It was mentioned at a previous Budget Committee a member suggested reducing the School Grounds Expendable Trust to \$100,000 and increasing the Building Maintenance Expendable Trust to \$100,000. Also, to change the order of the Warrant articles as they appear on the ballot, change Article 7 to Article 5 and Article 5 to Article 7. There was no motion from the Budget Committee.

c. 1st Read Policies:

i. IHAM-Health Education and Exemption From Instruction:

ii. IGE-Parental Objections to Specific Course Material:

iii. JJA- Student Activities & Organizations:

iv. JJIB- Interscholastic Athletics: The Policy Committee presented the four policies for a first read.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Warrant Articles: There were no comments on **Article One** and **Article Two**.

MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to adjust the Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Article from \$1.00 to \$100,000 and to reduce the School Grounds Expendable Trust from \$200,000 to \$100,000. **SECOND:** B.Bohannon. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained that the Building and Grounds projects are more than \$100,000 and the Building Maintenance projects have not been identified. S.Peters commented to use the funds to hire a firm to do a study of the MRMHS. The goal of harmony with the Budget Committee. K. Noonan does not agree. J. Morin said it was a discussion but no motion from the Budget Committee. **VOTE:** 0/6.24/1.132/5.628. **Motion fails.**

Article Eight Sale of Cutler: The process to sell Cutler will require an additional Warrant Article on next year's ballot. J.Morin explained that the exact language came from Attorney O'Shaughnessy. S.Peters commented that the Board already said to sell the property. J.Morin will reach out to the attorney after discussion at the Public Hearing. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon. **MOVED** to support Article Eight (Cutler Sale) as written on highlighted text pending feedback from legal counsel. **SECOND:** K.Noonan. **VOTE:** 7.376/0/0/5.628. **Motion passes.**

b. Audio/Visual Upgrade Bid: The Board had asked the administration to get three bids for the audio and visual upgrades, the Fine Arts lighting and sound system. Upstream Sound did not respond, MFI did not respond and AMT, Alex Trembley provided a bid in the amount of \$62,173.00 to be withdrawn from the Trust fund. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve

the bid in the amount of \$62,173 provided by AMT to upgrade the audio/visual to the Fine Arts lighting and sound system at MRMHS. **SECOND:** L.Steadman. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

c. Winchester Process: J.Rathbun explained that the Winchester School Board would like to allow their voters to choose between 2 schools for their high school students. They would like to have one of the schools to be guaranteed to educate 20-25 students through a tuition agreement. The other students if they choose will have individual tuition agreements with another school. He is asking the Board if they would like to consider negotiating to become the anchor school. This vote is only part of the negotiations. The tuition rate will have to be set. All students will be charged regular tuition and the special ed. services will also be charged to the district. B. Bohannon said he has a lot of questions. We do not have almost any information. J. Rathbun explained that the administration might recommend 4 more teachers and a school counselor focusing only on the Winchester students for the transition. B.Bohannon said he will need more information on the cost impact if not this is being reckless. J.Rathbun explained they are asking for a vote to just consider us. This building can handle more kids. The tuition will cover all of the costs. The high school tuition is currently \$20,066 per student. B. Bohannon commented that the District will not breakeven the first year with only one class in attendance. J. Rathbun explained that they will need a decision by January 23, 2024. S. Peters would suggest the administration go deeper with the information. **E. Stanley returns to the meeting.** S.Peters commented no one is making a motion until there is more concrete information. The administration does not feel it is their place to recommend or not. This is a Board decision. He is asking the Board to consider being considered, not to say yes or no. S.Peters would like to see the article language being used on the Winchester Ballot. The Board will relook at this issue on January 21, 2025.

d. First Student Contract Extension: J. Rathbun explained that it is the end of a 5-year contract with First Student. There is no one year extension which had been mutually agreed upon. First Student explained the reason was because labor costs had gone up. First Student has come back with a few offers after discussion about negotiations. They have offered a 2-year extension with the first-year increase of 6.75% and the second year 12% and a 5-year contract with the first-year increase of 4.5% and each of the remaining 4 years at a 7% increase. Keene is out to bid currently. J. Rathbun explained that there is a better relationship with First Student after the driver negotiations but we should have known about their decision not to offer the 1-year extension sooner. He commented that this is a big company and we are a small district. We will not get a better rate. G. Carraro would like to go out to bid. B. Tatro said going out to bid is a waste of time. S.Peters was not happy that they waited until the budget was formed. J. Rathbun explained that he addressed that concern with First Student. L. Steadman commented that this conversation should be in Non-Public. Anyone bidding would love this conversation.

8:18 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (j) Consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure under

RSA 91-A:5,IV in an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to RSA 541 or RSA 541-A: MOTION: B.Bohannon **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (j) Consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5,IV in an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to RSA 541 or RSA 541-A. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION: MOTION: S. Peters **MOVED** to Seal the January 7, 2025 8:18 PM Non-Public Session Meeting Minutes until January 7, 2030. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

e. MRMHS Program of Studies: The Board had received the 2025-26 Program of Studies prior to the Board Meeting. L.Spencer and G.Pickering worked on this. L.Spencer explained that there are a few new courses. **MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to approve the 2025-26 Program of Studies. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **DISCUSSION: MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to table the motion to approve the Program of Studies until the January 21, 2025 Board Meeting. **SECOND:** L.Steadman **VOTE:** 6.278/2.229/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

f. Powerlifting Request: S.Peters explained that the student who had requested to be part of the Powerlifting Club had already received a response from the administration. J.Rathbun said it is possible to be a part of the Club if it is not under NHIAA rules.

g. Approve the Agenda

- i. December 3, 2024 Minutes:**
- ii. Manifest: 5,579,265.64**
- iii. Transfers: MOTION:** J.Strimbeck **MOVED** to accept the December 3, 2024 Public, the Non-Public Meeting Minutes, to approve the budget transfer requested by J. Morin in the amount of \$87,700 to come from the MRMHS Special Ed. Salary line and benefits lines to be placed in the DW Special Ed. Contracted Services, DW OOD tuition and DW Special Ed. Transportation line and to approve the manifest in the amount \$5,579,265.64. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.4.493. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING’S AGENDA:

- a. January 21, 2025 Board Meeting**
 - 1. Overview Conval Funding Case.**
 - 2. Multiage Classrooms**
 - 3. Winchester Process**
 - 4. Second Read Policies**
 - 5. First Student**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

8. 9:05 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (i) Consideration of matters relating to the preparation for and the carrying out of emergency functions, including training to carry out such functions, developed by local or state safety officials that are directly intended to thwart a deliberate act that is intended to result in widespread or severe damage to property or widespread injury or loss of life.

MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (i) Consideration of matters relating to the preparation for and the carrying out of emergency functions, including training to carry out such functions, developed by local or state safety officials that are directly intended to thwart a deliberate act that is intended to result in widespread or severe damage to property or widespread injury or loss of life.

SECOND: J. Strimbeck. **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

9. 9:19 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** J. Strimbeck **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

10. 9:35 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting.

MOTION: B.Bohannon **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

11. 9:39 PM MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 PM. **SECOND:** J.Strimbeck **VOTE:** 8.507/0/0/4.493. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent