

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 21, 2025**  
**Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH**

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

**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 at 7:00 PM.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

**3. #celebrate MRSD:** J. Rathbun had given a tour of the new softball field to Tom Stewart, the person who the field is named after. He said T. Stewart could not say enough about the field and how it mirrored the old field. They are using the original bricks. He also reported that activities are up and running in the district. Class of 2027 had a Winter Formal, L. Spencer and J. Rathbun chaperoned and it was a great time. He mentioned that he attended the High School Hockey game.

**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 reported the renovation projects are on budget and on track. The brick veneer on MTC and the windows will be getting done in the first week in February. At Emerson the back framing is complete and the offices will be framed out the first week in April. They are working on the plans for the wells. Water is hard to find. The renovations are moving along and going well. J. Rathbun reminded the Board that tours during the Board Meetings are not safe. The meetings are open to the public. Only individual tours. The evaluation process is going well. L.Spencer has a new evaluation process for next year. The committee is meeting monthly to discuss the administration evaluations. Things are moving along.
- iii. Board Meeting Calendar & Goals:** H.Blood mentioned that the Education Committee will be canceling their meeting on January 22 and will meet during the day with the Behavior Committee on January 23. S.Peters, C.McDaniel-Thomas and K.Noonan will get together on January 29, 2025 to discuss the policy book.
- iv. School Resource Officer (Status Update):** There is no update.

v. **Staffing Update:** J. Rathbun reported that the majority of the vacancies are at the MRMHS. Ron Fabianski started yesterday.

b. **Winchester Process:** J. Rathbun explained the Superintendent from Winchester reached out to him and said that the Winchester Board will be going with Hinsdale as the anchor school and will be discussing negotiations.

c. **First Student Contract Extension:** J. Rathbun reported that there is no extension to the current contract. The transportation will be going out to bid.

d. **Multiage Classroom Overview:** J. Rathbun presented information to the Board regarding Multiage Classrooms. He explained this was very popular in the 70's, 80's and 90's in rural areas. Multiage Classrooms can be treated as 2 separate grades or a 2-year cycle. Teaching Math is the most difficult in this setting. This kind of classroom is very popular in Montessori and Waldorf Schools. He presented the pros and cons of the multiage classroom. He mentioned that there are not a lot of studies. Emerson, Troy and Gilsum all have this style classroom. Looping has also been used and also has benefits. He said he found great success with Looping. Emerson would be able to go with straight classrooms without hiring staff. K. Noonan commented that she heard complaints from parents about the multiage classrooms. She said the comments are that the students are not doing well in that setting. J. Rathbun commented that they could put out a questionnaire. He is frustrated that there is no data to back the complaints and the parents are not contacting the principal. J. Cesaitis said he is only hearing the bad stuff regarding 5 kids. J. Rathbun would encourage the Board to have the parents contact the school principal. K. Noonan said at Emerson grades 5 and 6 do a really good job, it might be a training issue with the other grades. K. Noonan commented that there are a lot of behavior issues. J. Rathbun commented that the behavior issue is no worse in the multiage classroom than in the regular classroom. B.Bohannon asked if there was data regarding academics from the multiage classrooms and the regular classrooms. J.Rathbun explained he can get that information. S.Peters commented that the Board will discuss this issue when the administration brings back the report. C.McDaniel-Thomas commented it would not be good to switch mid-year but for those students struggling things can be done. The parents need to go and speak to the principals.

**e. Policies for 1st Read:**

- i. **EH-Public Access to School District Records:**
- ii. **EH-R (1) Public Access to School District Records "RTK"**
- iii. **EBCA-Crisis Prevention and Emergency Response Plan:**
- iv. **EBCH-Chemical Safety Chemical Hygiene Plan:** K.Noonan reported that the Policy Committee is presenting the four policies as a first read. Nothing out of the ordinary.

**5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:**

a. **MRMHS Program of Studies:** L.Spencer presented the Programs of Studies to the Board. She explained that they have added Holocaust and Advanced Placement Statistics since

the last Board Meeting. Industrial Arts is back and taught by Ron Fabianski. She explained the Dept. Leaders contributed to the process of preparing the Program of Studies. **MOTION:** C.McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the 2025-26 Program of Studies as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

**b. COSSBA Annual Conference:** L. Steadman explained that COSSBA was created by the NH School Boards. This Annual Conference will allow School Board Members to talk to the legislature about School Board matters. This is a national conference to learn best practices and to share with the rest of the Board. The NHSBA is part of COSSBA. S.Peters explained that he has been asked to present at the conference. L.Steadman will be attending. The conference will take place in late March. S.Peters would like to attend and ask if there is someone else who would like to go. He said that the cost is about \$1700 to \$1800 per person. J.Rathbun would like to see if there is a grant for the trip. **MOTION:** B.Tatro **MOVED** to support 2 School Board Members attending the COSSBA Conference in March 2025. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** S.Peters explained the members attending will report back to the Board in the future. **VOTE:** 8.439/0/.995/3.566. **Motion passes.**

**c. Warrant Articles & Preparation for Deliberative: Article One: MOTION:** J. Cesaitis **MOVED** to support Article One the Proposed Budget as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** B.Bohannon. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.** **Article Eight Sale of Cutler:** J.O'Shaughnessy reviewed the suggestions for the word "convey" in Article Eight and the Article has to be presented as written. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to support Article Eight, Authorization to convey the Cutler Building and Land as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** J.Cesaitis. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.** The Board discussed having the budget drivers and the cost per pupil, presented at the Deliberative Session for Article One. The Board will present the comparison chart of the other districts for Article Two, the MDEA Fact Sheet, the number of members in the MDEA and how many steps are in the contract. Article Three the Board will present an aerial of the school building showing the roof sections and the year each was completed. The Board will present the remaining balances in the Expendable Trusts. S.Peters has assigned individual Board Members an Article to move.

**d. Authorize CRC to edit WAIPE post-Deliberative:** L.Steadman will prepare a draft of the WAIPE for the next meeting.

**e. 2nd 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: MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to approve the four policies on behalf of the Policy Committee as presented. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **Motion passes.**

**f. Approve the Agenda:**

**i. January 7, 2025 Minutes:**

ii. **Manifest: \$2,995,973.03**

iii. **Transfers: MOTION:** B.Bohannon **MOVED** to accept the January 7, 2025 Public, the Non-Public Meeting Minutes, to approve the budget transfer requested by J. Morin in the amount of \$41,300 to come from the Troy Special Ed. Salary line and benefits lines to be placed in the DW Salary and Benefits Lines, a budget transfer request from J. Morin in the amount of \$45,000 from the Troy Special Ed. Health Insurance line to the DW Special Ed. Transportation line, a budget transfer request from J.Morin in the amount of \$8000 from the MRMHS Spec. Ed. Health Insurance line to the DW Spec. Ed. Evaluations line and a budget transfer request from J. Morin in the amount of \$5600 from the MRMHS Social Worker Health Ins. line to the DW Contracted Professional Service line and to approve the manifest in the amount \$ 2,995,973.03 **SECOND:** J.Cesaitis **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters asked if anyone had an opinion on raising the threshold on the transfer number. C.McDaniel-Thomas commented that could be a Finance/Facilities issue or a Policy issue. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

**6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:**

- a. **Warrant Articles**
- b. **Policies 1st Read Fin/Fac**
- c. **Donation**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

**8. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION:** J.Cesaitis **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Laura L. Aivaliotis**  
**Recording Secretary**

**VOTING KEY:**Yes/No/Abstain/Absent