

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2025(corrected 2.18.2025)
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

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

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: Lisa Wiley, President of the MDEA thanked the Board for the tremendous support regarding the contract. She would encourage voters to support the contract as well as the budget. She said she is honored to work in the District.

B. Bohannon was asked to read a letter given to him by D. Coffman. D. Coffman said that he is not able to attend this Board Meeting because it was scheduled the same day as the Town's Deliberative Session which he said was not good. He would encourage people to communicate the Default Budget. A 36,000,000 budget is far worse than getting the contract passed.

3. #celebrate MRSD: 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 he had toured the MTC renovations with the reporter and photographer from the Keene Sentinel. Hutter and their crew are working so hard in the cold weather. Emerson is going up fast and Troy will be going out to bid any day.
- iii. Board Meeting Calendar & Goals:** The Policy Committee, Education Committee and the Fin/Fac. Committee will meet next week.
- iv. School Resource Officer (Status Update):** There is no update.
- v. Staffing Update:** There is no update.

b. Annual Board & Superintendent Evaluations (Process Overview): S. Peters explained that the Board will be asked to fill out a survey and also a survey on the performance of the Superintendent. K. Noonan will review the policy to see if the Superintendent's survey will be reviewed in Public or Non-Public Session.

c. 2025-2026 Calendar for First Read: The Board was presented the 2025-2026

School Calendar to review. There were a lot of decisions made due to aligning the calendar with the KHS Career Center. S.Peters asked about Winter break. J. Rathbun explained if the Board would like the 2 weeks for Winter break like last year they would have to add days at the end of the school year. The Board will review and vote at the next meeting.

4. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Donation: The administration presented a donation from Environmental Alternatives in the amount of \$5758.75. The funds will go to cover Kindergarten and First Grade students who have a lunch balance and to credit \$25.00 in each of the student's lunch accounts. This will be for all elementary schools in the District. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to accept the donation in the amount of \$5758.75 from the Environmental Alternative to pay off school lunch balances for Kindergarten and First Grade Students and to place \$25.00 into each of their lunch accounts. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.** The Board would like to ask L. Sutton to send a thank you card on behalf of the Board.

b. NH School Funding Fairness Project: L.Steadman presented a letter which will be sent to the State of NH. The goal is to get as many fellow School Board Members to sign it. **MOTION:** L.Steadman **MOVED** to publicly support the Fairness Project Letter as presented in the packet and to send it to the State of NH. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 6.482/5.181/0.206/4.097. **Motion passes.**

c. Process/Policy to Allow Out of District Students to Participate in Extracurricular Activities: J.Rathbun explained that the Powerlifting Club does not participate in the NHIAA. The student will train, there is no cost and there is room in the weight lifting room. The insurance covers everyone in the building. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the waiving of Policy JJA and to approve the student from Chesterfield to train with the Powerlifting Club for the remainder of the 2024-2025 School Year. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** B. Bohannon commented on community first. If there are no issues and insurance is ok with it he is as well. **VOTE:** 8.697/0.206/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

d. Working Session: Warrant Articles in Plain English: L. Steadman presented the Board with a Warrant Articles in Plain English Draft. It was suggested to make the explanations short and sweet. The Board reviewed each of the articles and gave suggestions. It was suggested to have the balances of the Expendable Trusts in the explanation but a majority of the Board did not agree. The Expendable Trusts will state "no new taxation". There was no motion the Board agreed with all changes that were discussed.

S. Peters asked the administration what might be cut with the \$36,000,000 budget. J. Rathbun commented that we are not there yet. J. Morin explained that we have 20 days to update and all decisions have to be made at the March 18 Meeting. It was commented that there will be a new Board by then. J. Rathbun commented if you start floating out specifics it will hurt morale. We need to talk to the School Board. Seventy-five percent of the budget is personnel. We will not discuss people but positions only. There are some requirements that need to be met. We may look at multi-aged classrooms. Class size will be a conversation. We will bring items. We will do

what is best for the kids and we will make it work. This is a significant amount of money. Thirty positions were mentioned. The cost centers are going line by line, we will have a plan ready to go. S.Peters commented on the pie chart and the OOD students, related services and transportation. He asked that it be reexamined. One student changes the number. J. Rathbun commented that we do not like to send students out. It is very expensive. Some of these students have behavior issues and it is hard to bring them back. E. LaPlante suggested going out to bid for employee health insurance. J. Rathbun explained you can not do this before the vote. It is a year-long process and all of the Unions have to agree. B. Bohannon would like to hear the ideas of J. Rathbun. We need to have an emotional appeal regarding the vote. We need to tell the people what it means if the proposed budget passes. J.Rathbun said that the positions to be cut will affect every dept. at the SAU, the District and all of the schools. They will be noticeable. B. Bohannon would like to know the grant positions that were put into the budget. B. Tatro commented that there are no good suggestions but it will be a deep, deep cut. K. Noonan is very disappointed. She commented we will do our best to have the voters vote on the default budget. Let the voters know what the cuts will mean. L. Steadman commented that OOD Students need a less restrictive environment. They would not be able to come back, with less funds we would not have the proper program. G. Carraro said it is devastating but she is not surprised. We need to watch what we spend along the way. We need to educate our people in our towns. J. Cesaitis said that he hopes there are no regular education cuts. Cut the extras first. E.LaPlante said that he saw this coming. Like everyone else we are in the same boat. Some people are ticked off because of taxes. We need to tighten the reins. Kids deserve better. It was commented to look at athletics first. D.LeClair said that kids come to school because of extracurricular activities. J. Cesaitis discussed “pay to play.” D.LeClair commented that it is a huge can of worms. J. Rathbun commented the budget has 958 lines. If athletics have to be cut it will not make a difference. It is not enough. Programs and positions will get the district to the number. J. Cesaitis discussed cutting 8% from each line. J.Rathbun commented that he has to make sure this works for the kids. He will present a balance of cuts without panic. G.Carraro mentioned bussing the Gilsum students to another school. It was explained that it is not possible Gilsum School is part of the renovation project and the funding. B.Bohannon said it is an emotional story. Everyone will be affected no matter what group. J. Cesaitis commented that the Board needs to reach the taxpayers who do not have children in the schools. J. Rathbun will present to the Board the items and the impact to the District.

e. Policies for 2nd 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: MOTION: K.**

Noonan **MOVED** to accept the four policies presented by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan explained the policies were in the bulletin and required by

law. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

f. Approve the Agenda:

i. January 21, 2025 Minutes:

ii. Manifest: \$ 1,630,884.38

iii. Transfers: MOTION: B.Tatro **MOVED** to accept the January 21, 2025 Public, the Non-Public Meeting Minutes, to approve the budget transfer requested by J. Morin in the amount of \$215,000 to come from the MRMHS Social Worker Salary and benefits lines from the Cutler Reading Improvement Health Ins. line, from the Cutler Spec. Ed. Health Ins. line, from the Emerson Spec. Ed. Teacher salary and health benefit lines and to transfer those funds to the District Wide Spec. Ed. Related Services line and to approve the manifest in the amount \$ 1,630,884.38 **SECOND:** D. LeClair **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

5. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. Administration to present budget cuts

b. Update on Evaluation Process

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

7. 9:12 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION: MOTION: J. Cesaitis **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under 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:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

8. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION: K. Noonan announced that the Board had SEALED Issue #1 of the February 4, 2025, 9:12PM Non-Public Meeting Minutes in Non-Public Session due to the reputation of a student.

9. MOTION TO SEAL MINUTES: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to SEAL Issue #1 of the February 4, 2025, 9:12 PM Non-Public Meeting Minutes until February 4, 2030. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **VOTE:** 8.903/0/0/4.097. **Motion passes.**

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 PM. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent