

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 4, 2025**  
**Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH**

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

**Administration Present:** J. Rathbun, 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:** A special thanks to D. LeClair, H. Blood and B. Tatro for holding a Facebook Live regarding the proposed budget prior to the Board Meeting.

**3. #celebrate MRSD:** J. Rathbun congratulated all winter sports that have finished for the season. Athletes did a great job and represented Monadnock well.

**4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION**

**a. Recap of the fire at Emerson School:** J. Rathbun explained and updated the situation at Emerson regarding the fire. He thanked the fire departments, EMT Dept., Rob Skrocki, K. Mattson, T. Breen, J.Morin and so many others. The State Fire Marshal is investigating the fire and the report should be back in about 2 weeks. All of the damage in the school was water. Primex and Hutter Construction Insurance Companies were at the school. Servpro was called to clean up the water damage from the fire. The administration thought the school would be ready for the kids the Monday after vacation but unfortunately it was not ready until that Wednesday. So many people did everything they could to get the school ready for the kids to come back. It is much appreciated by the administration. J. Rathbun will bring more information to the next meeting if the report from the State Fire Marshal is ready.

**b. Admin Presentation: Cell Phone Policy Considerations for MRMHS:** B. Russell and P.Goodhind via Zoom presented their part in the process of the Cell Phone Policy. They thanked the Education Committee for being part of the committee and giving their input. She explained the effect that the staff is seeing with student cell phone use. They are not focused, distracted and cannot stay focused on problem solving. P. Goodhind said that none of this is new. There is no education value and it affects the mental health of the students. He is very happy to have been a part of the committee. There is a power struggle with cell phones. The Education Committee met with the Behavioral Committee and they all agreed to ban cell phones. They agree with the Cell Phone Policy and how to execute the policy. There are cell phone conversations outside that come into the schools and cause issues. B. Russell explained that there are apps that allow students to cheat on research papers. This can be successful. We want a positive learning environment. There will be parents that do not agree. The administration will

follow a disciplinary process but we have not talked about this in detail. Once the policy is passed we will have to educate the parents. The policy will take effect on July 1, 2025. We do have research to back this up. K. Noonan said that parents are worried about active shooters. B. Russell said the committee has discussed that issue. They are looking at other schools that have this in effect. J. Cesaitis said the policy has to have teeth. He commented on the watches and glasses that also need to be banned. B. Russell explained the committee did address that. J. Cesaitis said he likes the policy but it is not strong enough. Everything in the backpacks. J. Rathbun commented this is for staff and students. The policy is well written. We need to look at all of us. S.Peters would suggest a no cellphone day as a practice day in the Spring. P. Goodhind suggested a transition period, a shift in culture with the entire school community so there will be no surprises. S.Peters thanked B.Russell and P.Goodhind for participating in the process and being here tonight.

**c. Standing agenda:**

**i. School Resource Officer (Status Update):** There is no update.

**ii. Staffing Update:** There is no update.

**d. Annual Board & Superintendent Evaluations:** The Superintendent and the School Board results of the surveys will be available at the March 18,2025 Board Meeting.

**e. Finance/Facilities: Unaffiliated Compensation Study:** S. Peters presented the results of the comp. Study. C. McDaniel-Thomas was the Chair but was un-appointed in order to make a quorum. He created a one sheet information sheet. He explained the background of the process and the staff that were involved. The information of area salaries and hourly pay came from 8 districts. Some of the districts did not have the same positions and some of the information was not available. Also, time on the job, experience and education was not gathered when the information was requested. The sheet is informational only and will be brought back out in the Spring.

**f. Warrant Article One Contingency Follow-up:** The Board again reviewed the items that could be cut if the Proposed Default Budget does not pass. B. Bohannon commented that the presentation needs to be more detailed. S.Peters commented this is a public meeting. J. Rathbun commented the Board has never lined item budget cuts. We need to know how to help without panic. G. Carraro would suggest removing transportation from extra-curricular. K. Noonan commented that education and teachers are more important than sports. S.Peters would suggest the entire item on the list or part of the amount. J.Rathbun would like an amount or percentage. E. Stanley suggested a 40% cut across the board. It was commented to cut the \$500,000 from extra-curricular. It was also suggested to remove the grant funded positions that were recently placed in the budget. G. Carraro commented on Pre-K. She said if you keep it, restructure it for more kids. J.Rathbun commented the Pre-K services is the best model for the regular ed and spec ed students together. Pre-K is not a full day, it is not a daycare. It is to give services. If this goes away we will have no early childhood intervention. S.Peters suggested not cutting teachers at the elementary schools and cutting at the MRMHS. J. Rathbun explained you cannot do that. There has to be equity across the district. G. Carraro commented that the Pre-K Program does not

work for all parents. It is not fair. B. Bohannon commented that Pre-K has only a small number of students. J. Rathbun suggested going back to the administration and to carve out \$600,000 somewhere else in order to save Pre-K. G. Carraro commented that she has received texts from parents saying this program is not accessible to most people. J. Rathbun commented the Pre-K Program is designed for Special Needs Students and the remaining spots are for Reg. Ed. Students. B. Tatro commented this is not required by the State. D. LeClair would suggest the administration create their list that does not include Pre-K. K. Noonan would also agree to keep Pre-K. E. LaPlante talked to people in his town, former teachers and they said to cut student wellness, administration and board expenses. The Board presented suggestions to the administration to use if the proposed default does not pass: Out of District-\$358,000, Unfilled Closeable Positions, SRO-\$42,000, Adm/Board-\$83,000, Materials/Maintenance-\$225,000, Extra-Curricular-\$200,000, SAU/District-\$375,000, Student Wellness-\$310,000, Pre-K-\$600,000, Reg. Ed. personnel-\$500,000, Other-\$60,000 and Special Services-\$450,000.

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

### **a. Policies 2nd Read:**

**i. ACAC: Prohibition of Sexual Harassment: Policy & Grievance Procedures**

**ii. AC: Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment & Anti-Discrimination Plan**

**iii. AC-R(2): Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan - Annual Notice of Contact Information**

**iv. ACA: Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure**

**v. ACN: Accommodation of Lactation Needs**

**vi. GBAM: Accommodation of Pregnancy and Related Medical Conditions: Personnel**

**vii. IHBCA: Accommodation of Pregnancy and Related Medical Conditions:**

**Students: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** on behalf of the Policy Committee to adopt and modify the policies being presented by the committee. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:**

11.166/0/0/1.834. **Motion passes.**

**viii. Motion to adopt policy eff. 3/5/25**

**1. IKL - Academic Honesty & Integrity**

**ix. Motion to update policies eff. 7/1/25**

**1. EEAA - Video And Audio Surveillance On School Property**

**2. EHAA - Computer Security, E-Mail And Internet Communications**

**3. JICL/GBEF - Technology Acceptable Use**

**4. JICJ/JICM/GBEH/GBEBE - Authorized Communication Devices**

**(A.K.A. "The Cell Phone Policy"): MOTION:** J. Cesaitis **MOVED** on behalf of the Education Committee to adopt the policies being presented by the committee: Policy IKL, EEAA, EHAA, JICL/GBEF and JICJ/JICM/GBEH/GBEBE. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon. **VOTE:** 11.166/0/0/1.834. **Motion passes.**

**b. Approve the Agenda:**

- i. February 4, 2025 Non-Public ( c )**
- ii. February 4, 2025 Non-Public SEALED Minutes**
- iii. February 18, 2025 Minutes**
- iv. Manifest: \$ 1,492,663.13. MOTION: K.Noonan MOVED to accept the**

February 4, 2025 Non-Public Meeting Minutes, the February 4, 2025 SEALED Non-Public Meeting Minutes, the February 18, 2025 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes and to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,492,663.13 **SECOND: B. Tatro VOTE: 11.166/0/0/1.834.. Motion passes.**

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

- a. VOTE**
- b. Board Organizational Meeting**
- c. Superintendent Survey Results**
- d. Board Survey Results**

The Ballot Version of the Warrant Articles needs to be pushed out to the public. There was an error and the wrong information was sent out.

D. LeClair explained that there are signs and yard stakes for members to take and display for the upcoming vote.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** D.LeClair of Swanzey informed the Board this is his last meeting. He thanked the Board and commented on how he has grown as an individual. He appreciates the growth he has seen within the Board. This School Board has come a long way. He commented that he appreciates all that the new Superintendent has done. Thank you.

S. Peters appreciates that D. LeClair is open to diversity and willing to learn the facts. Thank you.

L.Steadman informed the Board that her son Noah has earned second in the State in wrestling for his division. Congratulations Noah!

**8. 9:20 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION (i) : MOTION: K. Noonan MOVED 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. Cesaitis. VOTE: 11.166/0/0/1.834. Motion passes.**

**9. 9:30 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION (b) : MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 11.166/0/0/1.834. **Motion passes.**

**10. 9:35 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION ( c ) : MOTION:** K. Noonan **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:** J. Cesaitis **VOTE:** 11.166/0/0/1.834. **Motion passes.**

**11. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the Board Meeting at 9:38 PM. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 11.166/0/0/1.834. **Motion passes.**  
**Respectfully submitted,**

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

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