

**Monadnock Regional School District
PUBLIC HEARING
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2025
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH**

Budget Committee Members Present: Ed Sheldon, Wayne Lechliden, Doug Bersaw, Jon Hoden, Robert Audette, Nancy Carney, Betty Tatro, School Board Liaison, Anne Marie Osheyack, Sarah Burgess and Jack Gettens. **Absent:** Virginia Doerpholz, Bruce Murphy and Open Seats for Roxbury and Troy.

Also Present: J.Rathbun, Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator

E. Sheldon opened the Public Hearing at 7:05 PM. MRSD Warrant Articles for 2025-26

E. Sheldon read ARTICLE ONE: Shall the Monadnock Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations votes separately, totaling \$39,199,676 (\$970,000 is required for federal grants and nutrition grants that are funded by separate State and Federal revenues)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget will be \$38,819,434 (\$970,000 is required for federal grants and nutrition grants that are funded by separate State and Federal revenues) which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Monadnock Regional School District by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. The School Board _____ this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required). D.Coffman of Swanzey commented that he was disturbed regarding a comment he had heard at the Joint Meeting. He said it is the Budget Committee's responsibility to consider the proposed budget presented by the School Board and ask questions. See if it will work with the voters. You should second guess and reconsider. Lisa Trager of Richmond commented that this committee has to look at every line. This is a 20% increase. Tell us why you rubber stamp it. It is ridiculous. Kim Damasco of Richmond took the budget, divided it by the number of students and came up with \$24,000 per student. She asked the committee to try and get the budget down. She is concerned with the increase. Antoinette Sincotta of Richmond commented on the recent tax bill she had received. We need to be mindful of the people that have to pay this. R.Audette asked what is the 20% that they are referring to. It was explained that the proposed budget has an increase of 3.84%.

E. Sheldon read ARTICLE TWO: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the 3-year Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Monadnock Regional School Board and the Monadnock District Educators Association of SAU 93 for the following increases in wages and benefits at the current staffing level. The estimated increase in the costs for wages and benefits under the collective bargaining agreement are as follows:

Year	Estimated Increase
2025/26	\$524,604 - Salaries
	\$141,118 - Wage associated costs
	<u>\$ 59,500</u> - Increases in various stipends and professional development

	\$725,222
2026/27	\$365,602 - Salaries
	<u>\$ 98,273</u> - Wage associated costs
	\$463,875
2027/28	\$362,333 - Salaries
	<u>\$ 97,395</u> - Wage associated costs
	\$459,728

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$725,222 for the 2025-26 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional cost attributable to the increase in wage and benefits over those of the appropriation at the current staffing level paid in the 2024-25 year. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required) Lisa Trager felt that the increases were outrageous. Antoinette Sincotta commented that there are 12.5 students per teacher and with the paraprofessionals it changes to 9 students per teacher. Maybe there are too many teachers. D.Coffman explained that at the Deliberative Session he will ask for academic results. What are our kids getting? Lisa Trager read the proficiency results of the district. Why give raises to people who are not accomplishing goals?

E.Sheldon read ARTICLE THREE: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000 to renovate a portion of the roof at the Monadnock Regional Middle High School. This is a Special Warrant Article in accordance with RSA 32:3 VI. This will be a non-lapsing warrant article per RSA 32:7 VI and will not lapse until the renovation projects are complete, or June 30, 2028, whichever is earlier. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required) K. Damasco asked about the roof and if there is a roof repair each year. A. Sincotta asked if there were any bids for the roof repair.

E.Sheldon read ARTICLE FOUR: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be added to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2025 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article (Majority vote required) There were no comments on Article Four.

E. Sheldon read ARTICLE FIVE: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the District Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2025 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2025, to fund this appropriation and the appropriation in Article Four, then Article Four will be funded first, with any additional unassigned fund balance to be applied to this warrant article. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article (Majority vote required) A. Sincotta asked about the unassigned fund balance.

E.Sheldon read ARTICLE SIX: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 to be added to the School Grounds Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2025 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2025, to fund this appropriation and the appropriations in Articles Four and Five, Four and Five will be funded first, with any additional unassigned fund balance to be applied to this warrant article. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article (Majority vote required) L.Trager suggested that the unassigned fund balance goes back to the taxpayers.

E.Sheldon read ARTICLE SEVEN: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be added to the School Bldg. Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2025 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2025, to fund this appropriation and the appropriations in Articles Four, Five, and Six, then Four, Five, and Six will be funded first, with any additional unassigned fund balance to be applied to this warrant article. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article (Majority vote required) There were no comments on Article Seven.

E. Sheldon read ARTICLE EIGHT: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to authorize the School Board to convey the parcel of land with the buildings thereon located at 31 South Winchester Street in West Swanzey, as identified on the Town of Swanzey's tax records as Tax Map 109, Lot 22 (current location of the Cutler School), and to further authorize the School Board to take such additional action as necessary to facilitate and/or consummate such conveyance, including securing the necessary approvals and the execution of any documents necessary or attendant thereto. The School Board _____ this article. The Budget Committee supports this article (Majority vote required) A. Sincotta commented on the wording that the Board had suggested "donate". She would hope that the Cutler Building is not donated. Give it to the highest bidder. These funds will help with the tax bills. K. Damasca asked who makes the decisions about the funds.

E. Sheldon read ARTICLE NINE: Shall the Monadnock Regional School District receive and approve the reports of the agents, auditors, committees, and officers chosen as printed and distributed in the Annual Report? (Majority vote required)

E. Sheldon CLOSED the Public Hearing at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary**