

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2025
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

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

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

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: E. LaPlante explained that a member from his town reached out to him regarding a policy on statements against the C. Kirk incident. K. Noonan commented that the Board does not respond to Public Comments but the Board will take this up during the meeting.

3. #celebrateMRSD: J. Rathbun informed the Board that the Guidance Dept. is holding a College Fair on Sept. 17 and Sept. 25. Emerson Construction is coming to an end. It should be complete by Columbus Day.

a. Meet the Administration: F. Ashworth, Director of the Beyond the Bell Program, explained that the program is funded by the 21st Century Federal Grant. This is a 5-year competitive grant that allows students to participate in a summer program and an after-school program for free. During the summer program there were 260 elementary school students and 75 middle school students. There were 180 clubs and 65 camp themes at the program. The program partnered with Title One and helped tutor 141 campers. There were 12 plus community partners as well as Camp Takodah and Swanzey Recreational. There were 62 staff members and 5 United Way interns. The staff need to have background checks as if they are working in the schools. H. Blood said it is a wonderful program, a great reputation and thanked F. Ashworth and her staff. Currently there is a wait list for the after-school program.

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Policies 1st Read:

i. IHCA-Summer Activities:

ii. IJ-Instructional Resources & Instructional Resources Plan:

iii. IK-Earning of High School Credit-Achievement of Competencies:

iv. IKB-Homework:

v. IKFG-Career Exploration, Readiness, Pathways & Credentials: Any questions contact L. Steadman, K. Noonan or C. McDaniel-Thomas.

b. DOE 25 Preview/Optional Motion to Retain Unexpended Funds from FY 25: J. Morin asked if the Board is interested in voting on retaining funds from the unexpended fund balance. The amount remaining is \$86,552.00. The Board is able to retain all of the funds or a lower amount. She would recommend not retaining any of the funds. The RSA has changed the

use of the funds from an emergency to any reason. The attorney has advised the district to put a warrant on the ballot if the Board chooses to withdraw the funds for anything besides an emergency. **MOTION:** L.Steadman **MOVED** to retain zero dollars from the FY 25 Unexpended Fund Balance. **SECOND:** B.Tatro **VOTE:** 9.742/0/0/3.258. **Motion passes.**

c. Finance/Facilities Committee Update: The committee did not meet due to lack of quorum.

d. Board Goals Review: The committee will review the Board Goals when S. Peters is present.

e. FY 26/27 Budget Cycle-Presentation of Proposed Budget Research Items: J. Rathbun explained that the administration had been asked to research the cost of the SAU Building Cost Study and the cost of an ELO Coordinator. The SAU Cost Study would be to condense Wilcox, IT, SAU, building and grounds and maintenance. J. Rathbun said the cost to have the SAU study is \$7500.00 and the cost of the ELO which is the amount they use as a place holder for a certified teacher is \$100,000. Currently someone is in the role of the ELO Coordinator and it is going very well. There is no need to add a position. This was an unfilled position. L. Steadman asked if the administration might research a Life Skills room dedicated to middle school students. J. Rathbun said there is a room. The cost would be \$100,000 for a certified teacher.

f. Meeting Calendar (Oct/Nov): The Board will be meeting at Emerson on November 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

g. Education Report: AP & SAS Testing Results: L.Spencer presented the SAS scores to the Board. She explained that they did see improvement in most areas. She also said that this is not what our kids represent. The Math scores in grades 3-8 all went up. Improvements are being made. The students are in a better mindset. The I-Ready scores are being looked at and interventions are being brought into the test scores. This is one piece of the picture. There has been a lot of work last year, improvements were made but there is room for more. The staff has been reviewing the test to see what the students need help with. If there is a lesson the student did not get but it is on last year's test the teacher will retest them with the previous grade level test. The State also has come to help with great results. L.Spencer ran down the AP scores in multiple courses. The scores used are 1-5. There were improvements in some areas from last year.

h. Tuitioning in Students: J. Rathbun explained that the Superintendent from Winchester has asked if the Board would be able to list Monadnock as a school for Winchester students to attend if they want to. A large number of students will attend Hinsdale. The MRSD policy allows students to tuition into Monadnock. J. Rathbun wanted to give the Board the heads-up about the situation. He asked if Monadnock would like to be listed. A student with an IEP will pay regular tuition and the additional cost is from Winchester. There is no loss; they pay the full rate and there is no obligation from the Board.

i. Response to E. LaPlante's Public Comment: E.LaPlante commented that a councilman from Keene had made distasteful comments regarding C. Kirk. J. Rathbun commented that the Board does have a policy for our teachers and the students. Policy GBEF. The staff are expected to behave in a certain way. There is freedom of speech and if the

comments are made by individuals and may not have anything to do with the schools. There is no easy answer. There are guidelines involved.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Approve the Consent Agenda: September 2, 2025 Minutes, Non-Public Minutes and Manifest: \$ 2,407,172.60 for FY 2026 . MOTION: R. Vogt **MOVED** to accept the September 2, 2025 Public Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented and to approve the manifests in the amount of \$ 2,889,967.76 for FY 2026. **SECOND:** L.Steadman **VOTE:** H. Blood–abstain and all remaining members–yes. **Motion passes.**

b. DOE 25 Signatures: J. Morin is asking the Board for signatures on the DOE 25. K. Noonan commented on a wonderful job J. Morin had done on the DOE 25, on time and the amount of the unexpended fund balance.

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING’S AGENDA:

- a. October 7, 2025**
- b. Board Goals**
- c. Superintendent Goals**
- d. CIP Preview Finance/Facilities**
- e. Legal review of Laws that affect schools**

H. Blood informed the Board that CRC had met this evening to discuss Homecoming as well as how to get all of the students involved. They would like to somehow get all of the elementary school students to come together at the Football Game halftime. They have been discussing a Facebook Live regarding Homecoming and the beginning of school.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There are no public comments.

8. 8:01 PM Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** R. Vogt **VOTE:** 9.742/0/0/3.258. **Motion passes.**

9. 8:05 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION (c) : MOTION: H. Blood **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:** R. Vogt **VOTE:** 9.742/0/0/3.258. **Motion passes.**

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: J.Cesaitis **MOVED** to adjourn the Board Meeting at 8:07 PM. **SECOND:** H. Blood **VOTE:** 9.742/0/0/3.258. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent