

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2025
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

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

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

1. Ribbon-Cutting & Tour: 6:00 pm-7:00 pm: The Board and the public enjoyed refreshments and a tour of the new Emerson School renovations provided by the Emerson staff.

2. 7:00 PM CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER: S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

4. #celebrateMRSD:

a. S. Peters commented that it was great to see former Board Members participating in the ribbon cutting. He thanked Lori Stevens, the Emerson staff, L. Sutton and Beth Cox for a wonderful tour and refreshments. J. Rathbun informed the Board that the Varsity Football team had a great undefeated season but lost in the playoffs. The Varsity Cheerleaders came in second in the State tournament. The entire staff in the district will be receiving lunch provided by the Board and administration during Support Staff Appreciation Week. The administration will be delivering it to the schools.

5. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION: .

a. Principal's Presentation: Emerson School: L. Stevens thanked the Board for coming tonight and for the amazing school they have provided her students and community. The Board had the meeting in the Library which is also used for Maker Space. The students love the couch in this room. For the first time at Emerson they will have a DI team. Mrs. Tommila will be coordinating the students after school program for NHDI. She mentioned that there are 2 kindergartens which is the best ever. Normally there are 24 students in one class but now there are 12 or 13 in each of the 2 classes. The Troy Preschoolers are here and it is fun having them. The Mosaic Room with the Level 3 Autism students is going well. The students are great and are welcomed by all students. We are very happy and hope for a K-2 and a 3-6 grade program. Maybe think about a Middle School Program for those students. It has been a rough year for the students and staff with the construction and the fire but everyone is grateful and so happy with the school. Emerson now has a 20-minute recess at 8:20 AM for K-6 which everyone is enjoying. Students K-6 are involved in committee jobs. There is an application to be filled out and of course this is optional. This helps the students to take care of our community and the school together. The nurse/conference room is great. All of the meetings are in that room.

Emerson is holding a food drive. There are great things going on at Emerson. H. Blood commented on the great space, it looks amazing, welcoming and thank you to the staff.

b. Superintendent and Board Goals:

i. Super-By 6/19/2025 Strengthen the capacity of the district

administrative team: J. Rathbun explained that the district administrators have their goals and about half have had discussions with him. He is learning how to support the team with positive goals.

ii. Super-By 6/19/2025 Promote student success: No report today.

iii. Super- By 6/19/2025 Strengthen relationships with families and community stakeholders: No report today.

iv. Board-By 2/1/2025 Deliver at least 2 quarterly communications to the MRSD Community regarding the District happenings and budget voting information: H. Blood explained that the committee met earlier this evening. They are working toward their goals. They have questions for the administration regarding the Deliberative Session and the budget. J. Rathbun had asked the new Keene Sentinel reporter to attend the ribbon cutting but was not able to be here.

v. Board-By 10/1/2025 Update the CIP of the MRMHS and the SAU Campus: The CIP has been approved.

c. Draft Budget & Budget Drivers Presentation: J. Rathbun reviewed the table of contents in the budget books. He mentioned that Cutler is bigger than in previous years. They have 334 students. MRMHS is up by 35 students. The cost per pupil is below the State average. He explained contractual obligations in the proposed budget, health insurance increase, the second year of the MDEA, increase in transportation, lane changes, insurance premiums up, third year of the Specialists contract and a slight increase in dental. There is an \$85,000 increase in licensing. We are being conservative in Special Ed. We are looking to see if we may need regular ed para positions for Spec. Ed. We are not sure yet. The Board suggested explaining to the Budget Committee the licensing charge, how it was absorbed, and the administration is working hard to get the proposed close to 3%. The Board discussed the apportionment and how to explain it to the voters. The Board had asked for the ELO position which was done this year with a position already in place and the SAU study in which the funds can be found in the current budget. The budget drivers are pushing the 3% plus increase. J. Rathbun explained that they are not sure what the feds are doing regarding the grants but there has never been a concern. There could be with what is currently going on. The mentor coordinator has seen positives in the teachers and students. She is focusing on the newest teachers. We need this position. S Peters suggested a chart of the grant funded roles for the public to see. The most needy kids use Title One. J. Rathbun commented that there is no reason to believe that the federal funds are going away. L. Steadman commented that the NHSBA said that the federal grants should be larger and the State will receive the funds.

6. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Begin Warrant Article Creation: Article One is the proposed operating budget. The Board will wait for the Budget Committee to give the proposed default number and the proposed budget number. Article Two is the MESSA contract. The Board would like to present salaries versus wage cost. Article Three is the roof over the 800s based on the CIP. The article is for \$100,000. There are remaining funds from this year's roof in the amount of \$43,000 will also be used for the 800s roof. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Article Three, 800 roof as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.** Article Four is to repair the upper parking lot as the MRMHS. This is part of the CIP. C. McDaniel-Thomas and H. Blood commented on how dangerous the parking lot is currently. J. Rathbun said it needs to be done. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Article Four, upper parking lot repair as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.** Article Five is the Special Education Expendable Trust in the amount of \$1.00. There are students moving in the district and the costs are increasing. It might be a good idea to put an amount in this Trust. J. Rathbun will come with a recommendation. Article Six is the District Vehicle Expendable Trust. The Fin/Fac is making a recommendation of adding \$25,000 to this fund from the surplus. E. LaPlante commented that vehicles do not last 10 years. They need to be replaced in 3 or 4 years. It was commented that it might be nice to hear from an expert regarding the vehicles. J. Morin commented that there are 2 vehicles that could die at any moment. We run the vehicles into the ground. We use them everyday. If one vehicle goes we have to replace it. The MTC parking lot has doubled in regards to plowing. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to support Article Six, Vehicle Trust in the amount of \$25,000. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.** J. Morin has been asked to bring the Trust Fund balances to the Joint Meeting. Article Seven is the School Grounds Expendable Trust in the amount of \$1.00. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Article Seven School Grounds Expendable Trust in the amount of \$1.00. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.** Article Eight is the School Building Maintenance Trust. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve Article Eight in the amount of \$50,000. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to reverse the order of Article Seven and Article Eight on the ballot. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

b. Approve the Consent Agenda: November 4, 2025 Minutes, Non-Public Minutes and the Manifest: \$ 5,194,518.93 for FY 2026. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the November 4, 2025 School Board Meeting Minutes, Non-Public Meeting Minutes and the manifest in the amount of \$5,194,518.93. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

7. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA: BOARD/Budget Committee Joint Meeting

- a. Construction Project Update**
- d. CIP-SAU Study-Educational Study**
- c. MESSA Overview**

d. Budget Presentation

The slide decks are being asked to be updated for the joint meeting. It was commented that the MESSA slide deck is very important.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There are no public comments.

9. 8:26 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) The hiring of any person as a public. **SECOND:**C.McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

10. 8:28 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:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303 **Motion passes.**

11. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the Board Meeting at 8:29 PM. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.697/0/0/4.303. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent