

**Monadnock Regional School District
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2026 (Not Yet Approved)
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH**

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

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

E. Sheldon opened the Budget Committee Meeting at 7:43 PM.

1. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2025 MEETING MINUTES: The committee will wait until their next meeting to vote on the December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

2. ARTICLE ONE: DEFAULT BUDGET: 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 \$40,874,456 (\$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 \$41,106,512 (\$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 supports / does not support this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required): Discussion:** W.Lechluder asked J. Morin if it is the same process to come up with the proposed Default Budget. J. Morin said it is a formula in the RSA. Most of Cutler's costs are at MTC. We still need funds to cover the expenses for Cutler. J. Morin commented that the district is hoping to sell Cutler but we need to maintain the building. J. Rathbun explained that the Charter Schools will have the right of refusal after the bid from someone else. J. Gettens asked about an increase in Private Tuition by \$400,000.00. J. Morin explained it is the start of a new Autism Program at Emerson. We have brought the students back to the district. E.Sheldon commented that the Board and the administration did their due diligence. **MOTION:** W. Lechluder **MOVED** to support the Default number in the amount of \$41,106,512. **SECOND:** J. Hoden. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

3. PROPOSED BUDGET: It was explained that the proposed budget amount for 2026/27 is \$40,874,456 which is a 3.36% increase over this year's budget. J. Gettens provided the Budget Committee and administration with his information on salary and benefits, trends, the budgets and the actuals. The committee asked about vacancies which are not completely filled but better. J. Rathbun explained that the vacancies when needed are moved to contracted services. The district would always rather have permanent employees. It is much better for the students. Contracted services are more expensive. **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support the Proposed Budget in the amount of \$40,874,456. **SECOND:** A.M.Osheyack. **DISCUSSION:** J. Gettens said the proposed budget is tight but there was a

\$800,000 surplus. He would recommend a reduction of \$400,000. He commented that the vacancies are going down. J. Rathbun commented that if the vacancies are not funded he can not post the position. That would be irresponsible. E.Sheldon commented you can not reduce by \$400,000 and rely on the vacancies. The reductions could come from somewhere else. J. Morin commented that there are real issues in having a tight budget. If we do not have a surplus we are struggling in November and December when the towns are not paying on time. We need to make payroll. Troy, Fitzwilliam and Richmond are late in setting their tax rates. J. Morin explained that the district ended with an unfunded balance of a little over \$80,000. There was a revenue shortfall last year. J. Hoden is happy with the work on the vacancies but struggling with the \$400,000 proposed reduction. A.M. Osheyack commented that we are trending to fill positions and now we are cutting the budget. People may not want to come to this district. It was asked if the State will be reducing funding to the district. J. Rathbun commented that the Adequacy Aid is up slightly. J. Morin is hoping that the revenues in the proposed budget come in at that amount. W. Lechluder said he is here to represent taxpayers. People do not have cash flow. A. M. Osheyack commented that we are not here to help the taxpayers. Our job is to make sure the School is fiscally responsible. We are all taxpayers. J. Morin explained that expenses can not exceed the revenues. Medicaid came in at a lot less. There was a \$461,000 shortfall. **VOTE:** W.Lechlider-no, J.Gettens-no and remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.** **MOTION TO SUPPORT ARTICLE ONE: MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article One as presented. **SECOND:** R.Audette. **VOTE:** W.Lechlider-no and remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

4. ARTICLE TWO, THREE YEAR CONTRACT: 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 Education Support Staff Association (MESSA) 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
2026/27	\$250,238 - Salaries <u>\$ 51,049</u> - Wage associated costs \$301,287
2027/28	\$202,411 - Salaries <u>\$ 41,292</u> - Wage associated costs \$243,703
2028/29	\$160,093 - Salaries <u>\$ 32,659</u> - Wage associated costs \$192,752

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$301,287 for the 2026-27 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 2025-26 year. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required) DISCUSSION: The Budget Committee asked what happens if the contract fails. J. Rathbun explained that the salaries are frozen but they will receive the step increases. The contract is voted on by the voters. E. Sheldon commented that when the new MESSA contract was approved the vacancies started to decrease. It was

commented to double up on the para professionals. J. Rathbun explained that the para comes from an IEP. We work really hard on the process. The administration explained that it is a 7% increase in the first year but it is a \$1.36 increase for some. J. Rathbun commented that this district is always behind in wages. **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Two as presented. **SECOND:** N. Carney. **VOTE:** W. Lechluder-no and remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

5. OTHER WARRANT ARTICLES:

a. ARTICLE THREE: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 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, 2029, whichever is earlier. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required) **DISCUSSION:** **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Three as presented. **SECOND:** A. M. Osheyack. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

b. ARTICLE FOUR: To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$85,000 to repave a portion of the parking lot 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, 2029, whichever is earlier. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required) **DISCUSSION:** **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Four as presented. **SECOND:** N. Carney. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin explained that the Board wanted to keep the warrant minimal due to the bond. W. Lechluder mentioned the “pay to park” comment during the Public Hearing. J. Rathbun will mention it to the Board but parents will say they pay taxes for the parking lot and the students can park there free. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

c. ARTICLE FIVE: 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, 2026 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No new amount will be raised from taxation. The School Board supports this article. The Budget Committee supports (Majority vote required) **DISCUSSION:** **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Five as presented. **SECOND:** A. M. Osheyack. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

d. ARTICLE SIX: 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, 2026 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2026, to fund this appropriation and the appropriation in Article Five, then Article 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 article (Majority vote required) **DISCUSSION:** **MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Six as presented. **SECOND:** A.M. Osheyack. **DISCUSSION:** J. Morin

explained that the staff need the 2500 model truck for the plowing. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

e. **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 Grounds Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2026, to fund this appropriation and the appropriations in Articles Five and Six, then 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) **DISCUSSION: MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Seven as presented. **SECOND:** A.M.Osheyack. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

f. **ARTICLE EIGHT:** To see if the Monadnock Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the School Bldg. Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026. If there is an insufficient, unassigned fund balance as of June 30, 2026, to fund this appropriation and the appropriations in Articles Five, Six, and Seven, then Five, Six, and Seven 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) **DISCUSSION: MOTION:** J. Hoden **MOVED** to support Article Eight as presented. **SECOND:** A.M.Osheyack. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.** It was asked what would be a good amount in that account. J. Morin suggested \$200,000. Funds had to be withdrawn for the mold removal at Wilcox and a water filtration system at Emerson.

6. SCHEDULE REVIEW and QUORUM CHECK:

a. **January Meeting needed prior to Deliberative:** The Budget Committee will not meet on January 27, 2026.

b. **Reminder to those with terms ending to get on the ballot:** E.Sheldon reminded the members where and when to sign up to be placed on the ballot for a spot on the Budget Committee.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS:** J.Rathbun had no additional comments.

8. **SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON COMMENTS:** No additional comments.

9. **CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS:** E. Sheldon thanked the members of the public for attending the Public Hearing.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** C. McDaniel-Thomas said tonight was interesting, valuable and time well-spent.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
MRSD Recording Secretary