

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 20, 2026**  
**Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH**

**School Board Members Present:** Scott Peters, Edmond LaPlante, Lisa Steadman, Betty Tatro, Kristen Noonan, Jeff Cesaitis, Hannah Blood, Gine Carraro, Rachel Vogt and Jennifer Strimbeck. **Absent:** Eric Stanley, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas 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:** S. Peters called the meeting to order.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no Public Comments.

**3. #celebrateMRSD**

**a.** The Girl's Varsity Basketball Team won the Rob Colbert Holiday Christmas Tournament. The Boy's Varsity Basketball Team did well. L.Spencer explained that 4 students from the Monadnock Band and Choir received recognition at the Monadnock Valley Music Festival. They were amazing and it was challenging.

**b.** J.Rathbun thanked the Board for the opportunity for the entire staff to receive training on an Active Shooter provided by Homeland Security. Everyone was engaged. This was so important. This empowers everyone to do what they have to do.

**4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION**

**a. NEASC Update:** Bret Gottheimer introduced the members of the NEASC Team: Cat McLaughlin, Becky Russell, Kathy Schnare, Shannon Topa and Erin Kelley, Chair of the Committee. The Team presented a slide show to the Board. E. Kelley explained what the NEASC is, the process needed to follow and the 10-year cycle. She explained the standards for accreditation. She would like to commend the efforts of the staff through the process. She said working with the NEASC Team is amazing. B. Gottheimer explained that October 2026 is a Collaborative Conference and October 2028 is the full Decennial Accreditation Visit. The Team meets on a regular basis. Gathering evidence is the main focus now and the Team will have 2 meetings to complete the task. He said that they are in good shape and it should be completed by February break. Weekly updates are provided by B. Gottheimer on Sunday. It was commented that Portrait of a Graduate is a representation of who we are. We want to do it the justice we deserve. Maybe get some Board Members involved. We will form a committee and meet over the summer on the issue. A structure that holds us accountable. The NEASC is looking for formative and growth. We need to show that we are growing. We have identified items. B. Gottheimer had joined Hinsdale at their Collaborative Conference. Hinsdale is going through their NEASC Process. J. Rathbun thanked the entire administrative team, the division leaders and the steering committee for their hard work during this process.

**b. Program of Studies First Read:** L.Spencer presented the Program of Studies to the Board as a first read. There are a few additional class requirements for the 2030 Class and 2027, 2028 and 2029. Some of the additions are Financial Literacy, NH Government, Civics, Power & Panic in Colonial America among others. S.Peters would like to know the number of students in each of the current classes.

**c. Update on Paid/Unpaid Time Off Process:** J. Rathbun explained if a staff member has taken their time off and does not have FMLA or ADA left they must bring a request to the Board. The Superintendent will review the request and make a recommendation to the Board. J. Rathbun explained that the number of requests has gone down significantly. During unpaid leave the employee is responsible for their entire health insurance cost. There is a time when unpaid leave is needed but he will approach it fairly, without bias and without discrimination.

**d. Status of Town Payments:** J. Morin had mentioned at a previous meeting that there were a few towns that had not paid their portion of the school taxes and she was worried about covering payroll. She explained that 30% of the Adequacy Aid from the State came in. A few towns are still behind but the District is in a better place. She mentioned that this is an example of why the District has the Article to retain funds from the fund balance. She said the District and the towns have a good working relationship but this year is difficult.

**e. NHRS Audit:** J. Rathbun explained that the NH Retirement Audit went really well. There are a few items that need to be fixed. Congratulations to J. Morin and her office. They are already fixing the items identified.

**f. MTC Grand Opening Ceremonies:** H. Blood explained that CRC met this evening and discussed the MTC Grand Opening. J. Rathbun mentioned that this will take place on Feb. 17, 2026. The gym floor should be complete by then. H. Blood said that the event will be similar to Emerson with more people. J. Rathbun said the ribbon cutting will be at the new entrance, there will be food and staff will be situated around the building to guide visitors.

**g. Policies for 1st Read:**

**i. AB: New Hampshire Parental Bill of Rights**

**ii. BEDG: Meeting Minutes**

**iii. JCA: Change of School Assignment – Best Interests and Manifest Hardship**

**iv. JICK: Bullying Prevention - Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention**

**v. JLCJA: Emergency Plan for Sports Related Injuries and Additional Protocols for Athletics Participation**

**vi. GBEBB: Employee-Student Relations**

**vii. EBBCA: Use and Location of Automated External Defibrillators:** K. Noonan explained that the Policy Committee is presenting the policies for a first read. These policies are required by law.

**h. Deliberative Session:** The Deliberative Session is on February 7, 2026 at 10:00 AM. The Board should meet at 9:00 AM in the Teacher’s Lounge for a pre-meeting with the moderator and Budget Committee. H. Blood explained that the CRC had discussed this issue earlier this evening and will gather information and a week to a week and a half before the

Deliberative will put it on the website. J. Rathbun mentioned that Feb. 7, 2026 is the last day for this meeting to happen. The Board was reminded of the open seats on the Board and Budget Committee.

**i. Open Enrollment:** J. Rathbun explained that the Board needs to make a decision regarding a warrant article on the ballot for open enrollment. J. Rathbun explained that he spent time with the attorneys and personally a warrant is not the way to go. There has been no conversation. We may not want to be out front regarding this issue. Maybe wait until next year. A warrant article sends the wrong message. The Board has to decide to either create a warrant article or do nothing. R. Vogt said that there should be a subcommittee. J. Rathbun would like to see how the other districts decide on this issue. Keene School District is having open enrollment for their elementary schools. Both lawyers J. Rathbun spoke too, do not see the benefit of jumping into this. There was no motion.

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

**a. Finalize Warrant Articles: MOTION:**B. Tatro **MOVED** to support Article One with the proposed budget number of \$40,874,456 and the default proposed budget number of \$41,106,512. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

**b. Warrant Articles in Plain English:** H. Blood explained that she updated the Warrant Articles in Plain English and presented them to the Board. The Board made changes. This information will be in Monadnock Education News and on the green sheet at the Deliberative.

**c. Cheshire County's Sheriff's Department Deputy at MRMHS:** J. Rathbun explained that there is a deputy for the district. The position is a full time SRO. There are funds in an open regular ed position. This will be in next year's budget but hopefully we will be able to fund the SRO this year. **MOTION:** J. Cesaitis **MOVED** to approve the Sheriff Deputy as the SRO for MRS D as presented by the Superintendent. **SECOND:** E.LaPlante. **DISCUSSION:** This position will be primarily for the MRMHS but will be able to go to all of the schools. **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

**d. \* Approve the Consent Agenda: December 16, 2025 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes, the Manifest \$4,638,609.03 and budget transfers: MOTION:** R.Vogt **MOVED** to approve the December 16, 2025 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented, the Manifest in the amount of \$4,638,609.03 and the following transfers: a budget transfer in the amount of \$64,400 requested by S. Betit-Hancock from MRMHS Para Salaries lines to DW Special Ed. Contracted Services lines and a budget transfer in the amount of \$35,000 requested by J. Rathbun from MRMHS Regular Ed.Para Salary line to DW Music Equipment Rentals line as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

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

- a. Program of Studies**
- b. Policies for 2nd Read**
- c. Cutler Sale**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.

**8. 8:57 PM MOTION TO ENTER NON-PUBLIC SESSION under 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 employee. **SECOND:** H. Blood **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

**9. 8:59 PM MOTION TO ENTER 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: 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:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

**10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 PM. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** 9.605/0/0/3.305. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

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