

State of New Hampshire
Monadnock School District
Warrant for 2026-27
Deliberative Session February 7, 2026
Monadnock Regional MRMHS Auditorium
Swanzey, NH

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Peters, Betty Tatro, Brian Bohannon, Rachel Vogt, Kristen Noonan, Ed LaPlante, Lisa Steadman Hannah Blood and Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas,
Absent: Jeff Cesaitis, Jennifer Strimbeck, Eric Stanley and Gina Carraro.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Carney, Edward Sheldon, Anne Marie Osheyack, Sarah Burgess, Jack Gettens and Steve Sawyer. **Absent:** Wayne Lechlides, Jon Hoden, Bruce Murphy, unassigned seats from Fitzwilliam and Roxbury. Robert Audette and Doug Bersaw.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: J. Rathbun, Superintendent, Lisa Spencer, Assistant Superintendent, J. Morin, Business Administrator, C. Czifrik, Director of Technology, Stephanie Betit-Hancock, Director of Student Services, and Laura Weiderman, Director of School Counseling.

ALSO PRESENT: W. Hutwelker, Moderator, K. Thibault, Assistant Moderator and Attorney Megan Glynn.

CALL TO ORDER: W. Hutwelker opened the Deliberative Session at 10:05 AM. He pointed out the exits and the designated seating.

Everyone rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Isaac and Everett Gorecki, Boy Scouts and students in the district, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

W. Hutwelker explained that the articles will be displayed on the screen. A Board Member will move the article and second the article. Everyone will be able to speak for 3 minutes. This is a SB2 district and the article will move to the ballot as printed or amended if that is what the body wishes to do.

W. Hutwelker introduced Senator Donovan Fenton. Donovan Fenton is the representative for Roxbury and Swanzey. He said he attended KHS which is Monadnock's rival but that is a thing of the past. There are 300 bills in the Senate and a huge portion are around education. It would be amazing to see people get involved at the State level. His office has resources available. He thanked the Board for all they do to educate the children of the district.

W.Hutwelker introduced Megan Glynn, the Board's attorney and K. Thibault the Assistant Moderator.

J. Rathbun thanked everyone for attending the meeting on this snowy morning. He said it is a pleasure to welcome you to this meeting. Everything we do is to educate the students in a safe

learning environment. The administration, teachers and staff are honored to serve this community.

J. Rathbun thanked the principals, the teachers, the support staff and maintenance for all they do for the children of the district. He also thanked L. Sutton for organizing the Deliberative Session flawlessly as well as the IT Dept. and maintenance department.

S. Peters introduced the School Board Members.

E. Sheldon introduced the Budget Committee Members.

W. Hutwelker appreciated the amount of time that the School Board and Budget Committee put into their committees. He thanked K. Noonan for her service as the Fitzwilliam Board Member for the past 8 years. She will now be running for the Swanzey School Board seat in March. He also thanked E. Stanley who has served either as a Board Member or a Budget Committee Member for the past 30 years.

W. Hutwelker invited everyone to the ribbon cutting at MTC on February 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM. He also mentioned that everyone will be required to have an ID in order to vote. No exceptions.

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 **\$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 this article. The Budget Committee supports this article. (Majority vote required)

MOTION: S. Peters **MOVED** Article One to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan.

DISCUSSION: S. Peters presented a chart of the budget drivers which are contractual obligations such as the health insurance increase and the second year of the MDEA contract. The administration has worked very hard and has a proposed budget which is less than the default budget. We are in the third year of the bond payment. There are no million-dollar renovations being asked for due to the elementary school renovations approved by the voters. This is the third year that our cost per pupil is below the State average.

Antoinette Cincotta of Richmond commented that the proposed budget is more than last year's budget, over \$40,000,000. It is 1.7 million more than last year. There are fewer kids and more money does not help education. NH is aging with a steady decline in students. We have the lowest performance in the Nation. One third of the students are illiterate and the Middle School students are worse.

Kim Domasco of Richmond said more money does not mean better schools. Overspending does not mean investment. Spending rises and enrollment is declining.

Lisa Mulhearn has 2 students in the district and is proud of the education they have received. They are at the top of the State in test scores due to the hard work of the teachers, support staff and administration. She thanked the School Board for supporting the teachers who do a great job. She commented that costs are higher everywhere. The School Board and the Budget Committee have done their best for the best education. She supports the School Board and the proposed budget.

D. LeClair of Swanzey commented on the difference between the town and the School district. With the town everything goes through, not the school district. The administration has shown where they made the cuts. The State testing is based on scores. Not every student takes the test. The parents can opt them out of the test. He thanked the administration, School Board and the Budget Committee for dropping the proposed budget below the default.

Antoinette Cincotta of Richmond commented that the health insurance has increased because the staff has doubled. She commented on students from ending up in prison.

E. Kaplan of Gilsum explained that the staff at the high school is fewer. The health insurance is higher and that is a national decision. He can not sit back and hear a comment saying that the students will leave the school and end up in prison. That comment is an insult to all that work in the schools. He is very proud of the students.

James Ward who has been a teacher for 50 years commented that there are some kids that struggle and with less money they would do worse.

Jim Peale explained that students can opt out of the test but not the Special Ed. students. He is a retired attorney in corrections and if you keep cutting the budget you will need more prisons.

Kim Domasco commented that students with A's do not opt out of the test. She stated the percentages that she retrieved from the NHDOE website in subject areas regarding proficiency. She asked if the Board is concerned about the students. B. Bohannon called for order. There is no new information. W.Hutwelker stated she had 1 ½ minutes remaining to speak. K. Domasco continued to speak of the information she found on the NHDOE regarding proficiency.

MOTION: E. Kaplan **MOVED** the question. **SECOND:** M. Symznik. **VOTE:** Voice Vote yes. **Article One will move to the ballot as written.** **MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article One. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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 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) **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** Article Two to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that this is a 3-year contract for the administrative assistants, para professionals, building and grounds, maintenance and van drivers. The article is for the first year in the amount of \$301,287. The remaining 2 years of the contract will be in future proposed budgets. There are step increases to be competitive, wage increases, health insurance cost and language changes.

Antoinette Cincotta of Richmond commented that there are more and more staff. She asked for the number of students and the number of staff members. S. Peters explained that the administration reduced the budget by closing positions that could not be filled. Antoinette Cincotta said that there has been a steady incline of staff since 2001. E. Sheldon commented that since COVID it had been up and down but not now. Some of the staff is based on a student's 504 or IEP. The district is obligated to provide specific help for those students. We need staff. We have not been able to fill positions due to wages.

Gina Munson of Swanzey commented that the district needs paras to help. People can make more at Dunkin Donuts and Target. The paras are always willing to help. Comments being made are untrue and people are welcome in the classroom to see what happens.

Christina Pierce of Fitzwilliam commented that she has a child with a 504 and her child is well above the grade level. We need the staff to provide support for our teachers in a clean and safe building.

W.Hutwelker reminded the audience to address the moderator, not each other.

Lloyd LeBlanc of Fitzwilliam asked if the \$301,287 was in addition to Article One. E. Sheldon explained it was in addition but year 2 and year 3 of the contract will be in future proposed budgets. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Two will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Two. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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) **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** Article Three to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** L. Steadman.

DISCUSSION: An aerial picture of the MRMHS roof was on screen. It showed the portion of the roof that needs the repair which is over the 700 section and the roofs that had already been completed. This is part of the CIP. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Three will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Three. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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) **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** Article Four to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan.

DISCUSSION: The section in need of repair is on the side of the school by the auditorium and the hill going up to the SAU. A. Cincotta asked about the bidding process. W. Hutwelker explained that you ask two or more contractors for a price in order to get the article on the ballot. When it is approved the project will go out to bid. The article number is the worst-case scenario amount. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Four will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Four. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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 this article (Majority vote required) **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** Article Five to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters explained that \$1.00 will be added to the fund if there are unassigned funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year. This is a place holder just in case a family or student were to move into the district and needed to be placed out of district or required special

accommodations. The amount could be increased at this Deliberative Session. The administration does not see a need to increase the amount at this time. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Five will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Five. **SECOND:** M.Szymcik **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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 this article (Majority vote required) **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** Article Six to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** S.Peters explained this was on the advice of the Budget Committee to have a Vehicle Expendable Trust so there are no surprises. A new vehicle is more than \$25,000 but it is a buffer. He explained that the funds in the expendable trusts are from unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year. There is \$60,496 in the Vehicle Trust currently. E.Sheldon commented that this was recommended by the Budget Committee. It is a small amount to place in the fund and there will be no need for an article when a need for a vehicle comes around. This has a limited impact on the voters. It was also explained that a new vehicle is bought only when the repairs are more than the vehicle is worth or the vehicle has died.

Lisa Mulhearn said that she appreciates the foresight to take the funds ahead of time and to plan ahead for the future. This is protecting me as a taxpayer.

A.Cincotta of Richmond asked where the funds come from. S.Peters said the end of the 2026/27 fiscal year. He did mention that the district has refunded the taxpayers each year. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Six will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Six. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik **VOTE:** Voine vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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) **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** Article Seven to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Seven will be moved to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Seven. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

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) **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** Article Eight to the ballot as written. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters explained that these funds will be used for physical buildings in the district. There are always repairs that need to be done. The \$50,000 is to replenish the account because repairs had to be done. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Article Eight will move to the ballot as written. MOTION:** E. Kaplan **MOVED** to restrict reconsideration of Article Eight. **SECOND:** M. Szymcik. **VOTE:** Voice vote yes. **Motion passes.**

Moderator Hutwelker recessed the Deliberative Session at 11:00 AM until the vote on March 10, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

**Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary**

**Given under our hands and seal this 11th day of February 2026
By the Monadnock Regional School Board:**

NAME	POSITION	DATE
<i>Keith Noonan</i>	School Board - Vice Chair	2/13/26
<i>Elizabeth Patton</i>	Swansey Rep	2-13-26
<i>Bob Manton</i>	Swansey Rep	2/13/26
<i>John Steadman</i>	Town Rep	2/13/26
<i>Joe J. S.</i>	TRAY - chair	2-13-26
<i>Ernie</i>	Swansey	2/16/26
<i>Lillian C. Sutton</i>	District Clerk	2/16/2026

**Lillian C Sutton
NOTARY PUBLIC
State of New Hampshire
My Commission Expires 5/3/2028**