Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board/ Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2026
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

School Board Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Edmond LaPlante, Rachel Vogt, Hannah Blood, Scott Peters, Christina Pierce, Melissa Diven, Brian Bohanna, Lisa Steadman, Jeff Cesaitis and Betty Tatro. **Absent:** Jennifer Strimbeck and Gina Carraro
Budget Committee Members Present: Jack Gettens, Edward Sheldon, Robert Audette, Steven Sawyer, Nancy Carney, Jon Hoden, Theresa Morin and Diane Benoit-LeBlanc. **Absent:** Wayne Lechlider, Bruce Murphy, Sara Burgess, Ann Marie Osheyack and Unassigned Rep. from Roxbury.

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

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

a. **Budget Committee Roll Call:**

b. **School Board Roll Call**

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: K. Noonan commented on the recent bus accident. She said she heard from many people that the bus driver did a wonderful job with the students.

R. Audette commented that the Swanzey Selectboard is meeting with the Energy Commission and that might be something the Board might look into.

3. MATTERS FOR JOINT MEETING INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. **Special Education Review:** S. Betit-Hancock is presenting the Special Ed. Review by Zoom. S. Betit-Hancock thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and is honored to represent her team. She explained that there are 13 education disabilities. Special Ed. is designed with support and services in the least restrictive environment. She explained an IEP and the evaluation process. She explained MRSD has a 45-day limit to complete the evaluation process. There is an annual review and a 3-year reevaluation. There are 336 IEPs. There are many entries and exits on a day to day basis that might change the number. Section 504 Plans are to ensure students with disabilities have access to accommodations. There are 111 students on a 504 Plan. Under the 504 there is no need for special designed education plans. S.Betit-Hancock explained the compliance highlights, she explained the indicators and the survey which took place. The district received a gold star from the State for being 100% in compliance with Indicator #13. She explained the results are from the 2024-25 data. She is proud of her team and the Mozaic Program. There are currently 21 students out of district, there are 2 court-ordered students and 12 Charter School students who receive services under their IEP. S. Betit-Hancock was asked by J. Rathbun to explain why students are sent out of the district, why we are not able to meet the students' needs and the need to find a specialized education or environment program. There are a number of students who the district has brought back due to the Mozaic Program and we also have the Life Skills Program. The students in the Mozaic Program are at a Level Three Autism. S. Betit-Hancock listed the members of her team. She mentioned that there are 1619 students enrolled in the district, 20.7% are on IEPs and 9% of the students are on a 504 Plan. She had a huge thank you to the Board for their shared commitment for our students and a huge thank you to her dedicated exceptional team where students come first.

b. Elementary Renovation Project Update: J. Rathbun explained that the district is in great shape. Emerson and MTC are complete with a punch list for this summer. Troy is moving ahead at record speed. We are very impressed. We are on track and there is a major move for this summer. The Troy School 1895 section will be gutted and renovated. A small amount of asbestos was found. A moving company is being hired to empty the school which is expected to take 3 days. Troy will be closed for the summer and the students will be moving into the new section in August and then in December everyone will return. It is great news. They broke ground in Gilsum but are working around the Rock Swap. Gilsum will be the shortest renovation. J. Rathbun explained that he is very happy with the progress and very happy with Hutter. We are on time and on budget.

c. CIP for SAU & MRMHS Campus: The CIP for the elementary schools is complete but the Board would like to create a 5-year, 10-year and 15-year plan. H. Blood explained that the Fin/Fac Committee met with T. Breen and J. Morin regarding the CIP and that will be on a future agenda. S.Peters explained that the district has been working on the roofs and getting bids for paving. The district has renovated wings within the MRMHS but has not addressed the heart of the school, the offices and conference areas. The SAU is in need of renovations. The SAU is not in ADA Compliance. The Board would like to complete a study on the SAU to explore the needs and cost.

d. 2026/27 Budget Calendar: The budget calendar was handed out to the Board and the Budget Committee. At the next meeting the Board will suggest ideas that the administration might be asked to explore for the next budget. The Board would like to ask the Budget Committee to suggest ideas for the Union Contract in the form of a motion.

e. Staffing & Vacancy Update: J. Rathbun presented the committees with the list of vacancies within the district. He mentioned that the positions are being filled and interviews are going on. He is conducting exit interviews for everyone. Most people are relocating. There are 8 retirements this year.

f. SPECIALISTS Contract Overview: L. Steadman explained that the negotiations for any contract is done in a non-meeting. There are no minutes and it is not open to the public. There are 3 Board Members on the Negotiations Committee as well as a legal representative. There are 5 employees currently in the Specialists Union and 7 vacancies. J. Rathbun had a list of the members and commented that some of the current staffing spots are contracted services. The cost of the contract is $824,064.00 and does not include benefits. Currently none of the Specialists take the insurance buyout. J. Hoden mentioned that receiving the contracts sooner than later helps the Budget Committee. E. Sheldon and J. Hoden feel strongly about having only 1 contract each year to negotiate.

4. S. Peters calls for a RECESS and E. Sheldon takes over the Budget Committee Meeting.
5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BUDGET COMMITTEE ACTION:

a. Approval of April 28, 2026 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes: MOTION: J. Hoden **MOVED** to approve the April 28, 2026 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** N. Carney **VOTE:** 9.839/0/0/3.161. **Motion passes.**

b. Monthly Reports, Transfer/expenses and Budget Tracking Report: E. Sheldon asked the members if there were any questions that were not answered tonight. There were no additional questions.

c. Budget Committee Adjourn: The Budget Committee will not be meeting this month due to the Joint Meeting.
S. Sawyer asked about the weighted vote due to the fact that B. Tatro does not vote anymore. That information is in the Bylaws and needs to be corrected.

d. Motion to adjourn: MOTION: N. Carney **MOVED** to adjourn the Budget Committee Meeting at 8:21 PM. **SECOND:** S. Sawyer. **VOTE:** 9.839/0/0/3.161. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

6. S. Peters calls the meeting back to order.
7. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Motion to Select External Auditor: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve using Plodzik & Sanderson as the external auditor for FY 26. **SECOND:** L. Steadman. **VOTE:**10.961/0/0/2.039. **Motion passes.**

b. Motion to Approve 2026-27 Nutrition Pricing: J. Morin explained that Beth Cox uses a tool given by the State to estimate the cost to charge the students and staff for breakfast and lunch. The increase is $.10 across the board. This information is needed for the Free and Reduced Lunch application. **MOTION:** R. Vogt **MOVED** to approve the increase of $.10 across the board for breakfast and lunch for the 2026-27 School Year as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** M. Diven. **VOTE:** 10.961/0/0/2.039. **Motion passes.**

c. Paving Bids: The 4 bids were presented to the Board for the paving. The warrant approved was for $85,000 and the bids came in more. All State Construction came in at $152,020 which is recommended by the administration due to the materials being used. J. Morin explained there are funds in the School Building and Grounds Expendable Trust for the remaining balance and there are funds for the tennis courts coming out of that account also. The current balance in the School Building and Grounds is about $215,000.00. The board would like the cost of the tennis courts before a decision on the paving. The district had an estimate for the paving project not a bid and due to oil costs it has increased. K. Noonan would agree on waiting. S. Peters said it is a 3-year warrant. H. Blood said the parking lot is a safety hazard. The paving project will be on the next agenda.

d. Approve the Consent Agenda (May 5, 2026 Public, Non-Public School Board Meeting Minutes, transfers and Manifest in the amount of $2,519,532.35): MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to approve the May 5, 2026 Public, Non-Public School Board Meeting Minutes, transfers: a budget transfer request from Brett Gottheimer in the amount of $42,500.00 from the MRMHS Special Ed. Salary and benefits lines to the ELA Supplies line, a budget transfer request from Brett Gotthemier in the amount of $9500.00 from the Night School Salaries line to the Tech Ed. Supplies line and Manifest in the amount of $2,519,532.35 as presented. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 10.961/0/0/2.039. **Motion passes.**

8. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. June 2, 2026

i. Education Report:

ii. Summer Hiring & Accounts Payable:

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS: S.Peters informed the Board that Ken Colby Jr. who had served on the Board from 2006-2009 has passed away. He thanked him for his service on the School Board.

J. Rathbun thanked M. Suarez, K. Schnare and Brett Gottheimer for being at the hospital, the scene of the accident and helping the students who were in the bus accident. He thanked the first responders and the coffee shop for helping the students. Everyone did an amazing job caring for the students. All 13 of the students are okay and Mr.French the bus driver should be out of the hospital soon.

J. Cesaitis explained that this will be his last Board Meeting. He will be resigning from the School Board. He has notified the Selectboard. S.Peters thanked J. Cesaitis for his work on the Board. ***J.Cesaitis is leaving the meeting.***

10. NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS under RSA 91-A:3, II

a. 8:49 PM Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring of a public employee: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring of a public employee. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

b. 8:52 PM Non-Public Session 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 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. Pierce **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

11. Public Session: SEALING MINUTES: MOTION: B. Bohannon **MOVED** to seal Item #3 of the May 19, 2026 Non-Public Meeting Minutes (c) until May 19, 2031 to protect the reputation of an employee. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

12. Motion to Adjourn: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to adjourn the Board Meeting at 9:03 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary