

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2026
MRMHS Library, Swanzey, NH

School Board Members Present: Lisa Steadman, Kristen Noonan, Rachel Vogt, Gina Carraro, Hannah Blood, Edmond LaPlante, Betty Tatro, and Christina Pierce. **Absent:** Jennifer Strimbeck, Scott Peters, Melissa Diven, Brian Bohannon and Unassigned from Fitzwilliam.

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

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM: K. Noonan opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no Public Comments.

3. Celebrate MRSD: J. Rathbun reported that school has started. Athletics have started and soccer and golf have had a great start. J. Rathbun shared a picture of Lillian and her new granddaughter. Congratulations Lillian! Homecoming is the week of September 21st. There will be sports, a parade, games, vendors and a pep rally.

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

a. Summer Programming Update: F. Ashworth, Director of Beyond the Bell and the Summer Camp Program gave a recap of the summer program. She said it was very busy. There were 291 elementary students attending and 96 middle school students. There were 65 mini camp themes. The camp partnered with Title One and offered support to 159 students. They partnered with a number of community members. There were 57 staff members and the program ran full days. She explained that with the after-school program there were 47 students at Emerson, 20 at Troy and 130 at MTC in attendance. There were 70 students in the MS after-school program. This is the 5th year of the grant. We will apply for the grant again. It is the 21st Century Grant and it is a very competitive grant. The elementary students are attending the 5 days and the MS students can sign up for the club days they want. We did not use First Student Bus Company. It is a bidding process and the Student Transportation of NH came in lower. J. Rathbun commented that the ESY work with all of the teams went very smoothly, it is a huge amount of work and service. K. Noonan said it sounded like it was a lot of fun by students and thanked F. Ashworth for a great job. F. Ashworth commented on how important it is for parents to have the Free and Reduced forms filled out. The grant is based on those numbers.

b. Student-Athlete Handbook: S. Tops, B. Gottheimer and the administration put together an Athlete Handbook containing the NHIAA rules and MRSD practices. This will have all documents and practices in one place. This is the first time for this handbook. S. Topa and the team are open to feedback.

c. Ratification of Specialist's Contract: Anna Cole, attorney for the Board was

introduced to the Board. She explained that it is a 3-year contract with a 5.75% increase for the first year, 4.25% for the second year and 4.5% for the third year. This is to be competitive with area districts. L. Steadman explained there are 7 members currently in this Union and 14 positions. By ratifying the contract means the Board is accepting the contract. **MOTION:** R. Vogt **MOVED** to ratify the 3-year Specialists Contract. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **DISCUSSION:** The attorney will ask the Specialist Union on behalf of the Board to allow the Board to remove the health insurance plans that do not exist from the contract. It states in the contract that the plans are until June 2025. Removing the plans does not do anything to the contract. **VOTE:** 6.824/1.118/0/5.058. **Motion passes.**

d. Review Estimates for Board-Proposed Budget Items: J. Rathbun listed the Board budget items. A public information officer at \$75,000-\$100,000 was suggested. A middle school life skills class which the administration had tried in previous years but could not find a teacher. We have the space. It would cost \$100,000 plus benefits. Text books versus online would cost about \$100,00-\$125,000. That would give one copy per student and not in every subject. There is a movement on a committee to look at screen time in the schools. It was explained that Science books would be more expensive. J. Rathbun said Math books at \$100 for 400 kids but not all in one year. It is very expensive. J. Rathbun would not have a quote for the suggestion of more bathrooms or is it to modify the bathrooms. They agree with the bathrooms but not in the budget. It would be a separate article. E. LaPlante commented on smoking in the bathrooms. J. Rathbun explained that we have vap sensors. To renovate the bathrooms is very expensive. Hall monitors would cost \$17.00 to \$20.00 an hour to monitor the bathrooms. J. Rathbun said a greenhouse did exist on this campus. There is one in Gilsum which was possible from a grant. He understands the scope of the greenhouse but not sure where it sits in the budget. Curriculum Personnel Mentors are paid for by Title II grants. It would be the cost of a highly paid teacher. J. Rathbun asked that the Board eventually tell the administration how much to spend and what to put in the budget. B. Tatro said the Budget Committee would like to see a flat default budget or less with the contract and contractual obligation increases. We will take into consideration the recommendations of the Budget Committee.

e. Debrief from HB1300 Tax Cap Training: J. Rathbun and J. Morin attended training on HB1300. It is the legislature that was signed into law, a tax cap. Currently there is a lawsuit against it. This bill is confusing enough and more with the cooperative district. There are a lot of questions. We have to do our best with this. The voters will vote on this issue and the ballots will be sent to the School Board Secretary. The vote must passed by $\frac{3}{5}$ vote of the entire district. The vote will happen in November. Bond payments are excluded from both the limits. We have a great legal team working on this.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Guardrails for Proposed Budget: R. Vogt would suggest looking at grants and closing positions not being filled. J. Rathbun would ask the Board to let the administration know what they want for a percentage increase. Many of the open positions are required for IEPs and they are currently contracted services. H. Blood suggested starting at the default. J. Rathbun said

the biggest driver is health insurance and we do not get the amount until October. We need the numbers to give the information to the Board. How does the Board prioritize the list? R. Vogt asked if there was any way to predict. J. Rathbun said the insurance cost is based on previous years' claims. There is not a lot of wiggle room. K. Noonan said that there is nothing super important. The greenhouse could possibly be grant-funded. H. Blood would agree. J. Rathbun said we are down to a very small fund balance. The Board needs to tell the administration the decrease and what not to touch in the budget. H. Blood commented that what I am hearing in her opinion is that we are not asking for anything new. K. Noonan said the default as the number and we are saying no staff cuts. Sports come up and not many want that cut. J. Rathbun would like to present the class size at the next meeting. K. Noonan would like more information in the Board packets because not all of the members are here.

b. Policies for Second Read:

i. JFABD: Admission of Homeless Children and Unaccompanied

Youth:

ii. JLCD: Administering Medication to Students:

iii. EBCA: Crisis Prevention and Emergency Response Plan:

iv. EHB: Data/Records Retention:

v. AC: Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-

Discrimination Plan:

vi. ACA: Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure:

MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to accept the proposed changes as presented by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** H. Blood. **VOTE:** 7.924/0/0/5.058. **Motion passes.**

c. Annual Audit: Required Board Survey: J. Rathbun explained that it is important for the Board to participate in the survey. J. Morin said at the next meeting it would be ok to return the surveys.

d. Approve the Consent Agenda: August 11, 2026 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes, transfers and the FY27 Manifest \$2,930,843.70: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to approve the August 11, 2026 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes, budget transfers: a request from J. Morin in the amount of \$12,300 from the ELA Information Access Fees line to the MRMHS telephone line, a request from S. Betit-Hancock in the amount of \$322,141.00 from the Psychologist Salary and Benefits lines to Contracted Services for Spec. Ed. lines, a request from S. Betit-Hancock in the amount of \$19,790 from the Private Tuition line to the Emerson Building Improvement line, a request from J. Morin in the amount of \$101,895 from the MRMHS Social Worker Salary and Benefits lines to the DW Social Worker/Guidance Salary and Benefits line, a request from J. Morin in the amount of \$52,000 from the Spec. Ed. Van Driver Salary and Benefits lines to Special Ed. Transportation line and the FY27 Manifest in the amount of \$2,930,843.70. **SECOND:** C. Pierce. **VOTE:** 6.811/0/1.132/5.058. **Motion passes.**

e. Approval of the SEALED August 11, 2026: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to approve the SEALED August 11, 2026 School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** C. Pierce. **VOTE:** 5.679/0/2.263/5.058. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. September 15, 2026**
 - i. Public Hearing Charitable Trust**
 - ii. Budget Guardrails**
 - iii. School Classroom Makeup**
 - iv. Delegate Assembly**
 - v. Vote to Retain or not Fund Balance**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

8. 8:55 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION: Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring any person as a public employee: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 7.942/0/0/5.058. **Motion passes.**

9. 9:04 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION: 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: C. Pierce **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:** R. Vogt. **VOTE:** 7.942/0/0/5.058. **Motion passes.**

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: C. Pierce **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 PM. **SECOND:** G. Carraro. **VOTE:** 7.942/0/0/5.058. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent