

**Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)**  
**School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**May 7, 2024**  
**Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH**

**Members Present:** Scott Peters, Edmond LaPlante, Lisa Steadman, Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Eric Stanley, Jeff Cesaitis, Dan LeClair, Kristen Noonan, Gina Carraro,  
**Absent:** Brian Bohannon, Jennifer Strimbeck and Unassigned seat from Swanzey.

**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 at 7:00 PM. He informed the Board that S.Nikiforakis has resigned from the Board. The Board discussed the process on who will appoint the person to fill the Swanzey spot. Some members felt the person that came in third at the last election should fill the spot. It was commented that the Swanzey members on the Board will vote on who will fill the positions after a nomination process. The Board will fill the position per Board policy.

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

**3. Celebrate # MRSD:**

**a. Career Milestones & Retirement Celebration Recap:** J. Rathbun explained the District held the Milestone and Retirement Celebration Night. He said it was heartwarming and a lot of fun. He thanked the Board for their support. There are pictures on Facebook.

NHDI has been working with the students as a weeklong dancing activity and a program at the end of the week.

J. Rathbun reported they are working on an ad campaign for the Elementary School Renovation Project. The District will need to constantly update people regarding the project on the website and Facebook. Hutter has appointed a Superintendent to the job which they are very excited about. The groundbreaking at MTC is being discussed. **B.Tatro arrives.** J. Rathbun explained that the playground at MTC has to be moved for the new renovations and can not be reused. J. Rathbun showed photos of the new playground the administration had picked out. There was concern about the color might make the seats hot in the sun and there was a concern about handicapped accessibility. The playground is handicapped accessible. There is certain chip material for under the structures, there is a separate section for Pre-K and K and another section for 1-6 grades.

**b. Powerlifting Club Medal Swag:** The Board is still reviewing this topic.

#### **4. MATTERS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:**

**a. Update on Principal Search Committee:** C. McDaniel-Thomas explained that the committee has interviewed candidates and there are 4 candidates that will be invited to the open forums. The committee will take the feedback from the forums and the committee's input in order to make a recommendation to bring to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then have an interview with the candidate. The administration would like to bring the candidate to the next Board Meeting.

**b. Standing Agenda: Student Government Report:** O.Higgins is not present.

**c. Cell Phone Policy (Board Input/Discussion to Support Education Comm.)** S. Peters asked the Board Members if they would like to individually give comments regarding cell phones in the schools. E. Stanley said there are parents who want their children to have them. Why is there a need for cell phones if they have the chromebooks. D. LeClair said there is no need for cell phones in the classroom. E. LaPlante said that the students have the chromebooks and there is no need for the cell phones in the classroom. If the parent needs to get a hold of the student they can contact the office. J. Cesaitis said he read an article that said there is social and emotional damage from cell phones. Every school issue is due to cell phones. It was commented that we need to do the cell phone policy first in order to have no cell phones in the schools in September. G. Carraro said the biggest issue is the parents. She supports the no cell phone policy. L. Steadman commented that there are also smartwatches. She does contact her child but not during class. S.Peters commented that we will have to think of a policy for employees. J. Rathbun asked regarding the administration and the principals what problem is the Board trying to solve? K. Noonan would like to hear from the staff and teachers. What are other districts doing? Parents want kids to be able to contact them but not during class. We do have the chromebooks. B. Tatro doesn't want to say no cellphones at all. It should be different for elementary students and high school students. C.McDaniel-Thomas feels that it is too late to do a substantial change for next year. It is not good to rush this. This is going to require the students and parents to buy in. E. Stanley said everything being said is valid but a nightmare to enforce. J.Cesaitis said it needs to be planned out, consequences and who will enforce it. J. Rathbun commented that we can tell the kids what to do and the parents will tell them differently. Should they be punished if their parents say different things? J. Cesaitis said yes. The students need to realize that there are rules. E.LaPlante said if they do not like it join the School Board. K. Noonan commented that a public forum for this issue would be a good idea. We need to let people know.

**d. Overview of Marzano Highly Reliable Schools:** J. Rathbun explained that the idea is getting the team to see what is working, not working and how to fix it. The schools need to be safe and where the kids want to be. All of the schools will follow the same standards. The standards will be set but the individual schools can do them their way. There will be professional development for all staff in November. The presenters will be meeting with the elementary staff.

The presenters conduct the surveys and analyze the data. There will also be coaching sessions this summer. The high school is going through the NEASC. Once we have the tools we will look next at the instructional practices. The district will be building the foundation, the base this year. This is a way to put the pieces together. We will do the elementary schools first. They will build on the professional learning communities. There is a step by step process. He would like to invite the School Board Members to the leadership forum. Accountability to the School Board but let the administration, teachers and staff do the work. Safe and supportive collaborative. It will allow us to see what we may be missing and be able to ask the School Board for support. The Title 2 funds in the amount of \$30,000.00 were used for this and approved by the State overnight.

**e. Standing Agenda: Board Meeting Calendar and Goals Update:** S.Peters reviewed the upcoming committee meetings and Board meetings for the month. J.Cesaitis, Chair of the CRC explained that the committee approved the survey questions and would like the survey to be put on the next Board agenda. They will need a platform for the survey. S.Peters asked J. Rathbun and the administration to review the questions before the next meeting. The Education Committee is discussing the cell policy issue. The Fin/Fac Committee is discussing the elementary renovation building process, the financial reports and the unaffiliated comp.study. There is also discussion regarding the CIP. The Policy Committee is working through Book J.

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

**a. Board Goals for 2024/25:** S.Peters commented that he feels that the committees have a lot of goals and he does not see the need for extra goals. The Board would agree with S.Peters.

**b. Superintendent Goals for 2024/25:** S. Peters explained that he has started the process with J.Rathbun. The goals will be brought to the next Board Meeting. S.Peters asked the Board Members to email any suggestions to him regarding J. Rathbun's goals. He will get J. Rathbun's thoughts first and share with the Board. J. Rathbun would like 3 measurable goals that are important to the Board.

### **c. Policies for Second Read:**

**i. BID-Stipend Policy: MOTION:** K.Noonan **MOVED** to adopt changes to Policy BID as presented with the addition of a clause that limits payment for committee meetings to members on the committee. **SECOND:** C.McDaniel-Thomas **DISCUSSION:** D.LeClair commented that this policy was presented because people did not show up to meetings. He said it is a bad idea and he does not like this. E.Stanley said this is a bad idea. People volunteer for other school things. He is not on this Board for money. K. Noonan said she does not like that some members are not showing up and are still getting paid. C.McDaniel-Thomas said the committee was not in agreement regarding the changes to the policy. We all agree we are not in this for the money. The same people are not attending. D. LeClair said it is not required to have School Board Members on a committee. C.McDaniel-Thomas commented reward the ones that do the extra work. E.Stanley said excused absences should receive money. It is not the money, it

is the principle of it. It was explained that the payment date has changed. K.Noonan said she struggles with people not doing their job. E. Stanley suggested everytime someone does not show without an excuse take \$25.00 away. **VOTE:** 2.126/7.908/0/2.966. **Motion fails.** S.Peters commented that he would be willing to take another crack at the policy. E. Stanley suggested doing the opposite with unexcused absences. L. Steadman commented that we would certainly be over budgeted. B.Tatro commented that the towns should have to address it. The selectmen cannot remove a School Board Member. D.LeClair commented that the members are elected to the Board not subcommittees. At what point are you going to penalize? J. Cesaitis suggested the Board does not get paid. C.-McDaniel-Thomas does not care about the money but they need to do their part on the committees. L. Steadman said it would cost her money to attend all of the meetings she does and travel. K. Noonan commented on gas money. K. Noonan is happy to have S.Peters review the Policy again. S. Peters commented that the stipend is proper acknowledgment of the work being done by the School Board. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to revisit Policy BID. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** J. Cesaitis-no, E. Stanley-no and the remaining members-yes. **Motion passes.**

ii. **FF-Naming New Facilities:** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to adopt the NHSBA Sample Policy FF as presented with committee edits. **SECOND:** C.McDaniel-Thomas **DISCUSSION:** E. Stanley asked what if the person is still on the committee or a coach. S.Peters said it is time to give people a breather to pause regarding the time to be considered. He said it makes sense to him. E. Stanley does not agree. **VOTE:** 8.903/1.132/0/2.966. **Motion passes.**

b. **Approve the Consent Agenda:**

i. **April 16, 2024 Minutes**

ii. **Manifest:**

iii. **Budget Transfers:** **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda: to approve the April 16,2024 School Board Meeting Minutes, the Manifest in the amount of \$1,724,335.21 and the budget transfer requested by J. Morin in the amount of \$281,361.00 from the salary and benefits lines to the Out of District and Service Related lines. **SECOND:** B.Tatro. **VOTE:** 10.035/0/0/2.966. **Motion passes.**

**MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the Board Meeting Calendar for 2024/25. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** 10.035/0/0/2.966. **Motion passes.** *J. Cesaitis leaves the meeting.*

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

a. **5/21/2024 Joint meeting with Budget Committee:** S.Peters mentioned that the Budget Committee has agreed to have a joint meeting with the Board. The committee discussed the topics for the Joint Meeting.

b. **CRC Student Survey**

c. **Budget Process**

7. **Public Comments:** E.Stanley explained the letter of interest for the Swanzey Board seat should go to the Board Chair.

8. **8:55 PM Motion to Enter into 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:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 8.937/0/0/4.063. **Motion passes.**

9. **9:00 PM Motion 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. 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:** C.McDaniel-Thomas **VOTE:** 8.937/0/0/4.063. **Motion passes.**

10. **ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** D.LeClair **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 8.937/0/0/4.063.. **Motion passes.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

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