



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

Board of Education Goal:

Montville graduates will possess the skills and dispositions to navigate complex tasks. Our graduates are communicators, information consumers, problem solvers, and independent learners. They exhibit empathy, perseverance, inclusivity and self-awareness.

Library Media Center

Item 1. Call to order/ Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence – 6:00 P.M.

Board Chair Wills Pike called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Board members attending were: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Carol Burgess, Sheelagh Lapinski, Timothy Shanahan, Florence Turner, Tina Grove and Tara Crossley.

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Administrator Paula LaChance, Principals M.J. Dix, Rob Alves and Amy Espinoza.

Item 2. Citizens' Comments (regarding agenda items only)

None

Item 3. Alterations to the Agenda

None

Item 4. Letters and Communications

Board Secretary Bob Mitchell shared a letter received concerning flooding on Gay Hill near Palmer Academy.

Item 5. Approval of the consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Carol Burgess
Vote: Carried (9-0)

a. **Budget Update: Kathy Lamoureux**

Since the last Board Meeting we have been working on developing the 22-23 budget. We reached out to both the property liability and health insurance brokers to determine increases we should budget for in the 22-23 fiscal year.

Our Health Insurance Broker, MDG Benefit Solution met with us, along with the Town, to review the renewal projections received from Anthem. Anthem is proposing the possibility of increasing the individual stop loss of \$175,000 per individual to a higher amount for four individuals. Based on this proposal, if each of these four individuals hit their new stop-loss, it would have a \$700,000 impact to the reserve account. MDG is currently marketing the insurance for both the Town and Board.

Daniel Anderson from HD Segur Insurance has recommended a 10% increase for both the Workers Compensation, Property and Package policies. HD Segar will meet with the carriers in February to discuss the renewals. They have indicated they are not sure what will be happening with the Cyber Liability and they will meet with us to discuss it. Hopefully this will not have a significant impact to the insurance costs.

Salaries: *The salary object accounts are in line with the budgeted amounts and planned use of the ESSER grants. Some of the objects are reflecting a surplus while others will have a shortfall which will offset one another. The only impact to certified and contracted salaries are unpaid leaves and resignations where the new hire comes in at a different pay schedule. The hourly employees, such as paraprofessionals, monitors, bus drivers, and substitutes are more difficult because of the turnover, vacant positions, and need to assign extra hours to current staff to cover for one another.*

Employee Benefits: *In November we reported that between the unemployment and health insurance accounts there was a surplus between \$175,000 to \$225,000. In December, we made a transfer of \$65,500 from these objects to purchase a 2022 Ford F 350 Dump truck with a plow. This transfer is on the agenda as New Business Item G. As we explained at the November meeting, the 2007 GMC truck had to be taken off the road due to a cracked frame. At the Board's direction, we reached out to the town but they were not able to provide a vehicle that met our needs. Steve was able to locate a new truck with a plow. It was determined it was necessary to purchase the truck immediately to avoid any lead time in securing another truck and to avoid the*

use of subcontractors during the winter months. The purchase of the truck was critical to the schools' operation and therefore Laurie authorized this transfer per Board policy.

***Additional Information:** The new phone system is up and running. Nic and Steve did a great job working with CT Communication to get this project completed so quickly.*

We were notified by the Accounting firm that an extension was filed for the completion of the 2020-21 fiscal year end audit. We continue to work with them on this process.

Item 6. New Business

- a. Consideration and possible action to address paraprofessional staffing shortage. Shortage extremely important will discuss further at future BOE meeting.

Laurie provided a handout with information about current paraprofessional staffing at each school along with an explanation of the impact in time, money, and services to students associated with the high para turn-over which the district is currently experiencing. She reviewed the difference in cost between two part-time paras and one full-time para.

Board members expressed the importance of ensuring we are adequately staffed and retain the para we hire. Laurie suggested that our budget proposals for next year include several scenarios which increase the number of full-time paras. Board members discussed the importance of acting this year and Laurie and Kathy said they could absorb an increase in salaries and insurance without going over budget in that area due to the number of unfilled positions, however the budget overall will require the use of funds from the 2% non-lapsing account due to the costs of unanticipated special education outplacements.

Motion: To hire three (3) full time paraprofessionals.

Moved by: Carol Burgess
Seconded by: James Wood.
Vote: Carried (9-0)

- b. Discussion regarding plans for budget survey to be sent to community

At their last meeting, the Communications Subcommittee decided that we will not hold budget forums prior to the development of the budget due to historically low attendance at both in-person and virtual meetings. Instead, we will send a postcard to all household with a link / QR code to a survey

designed to gather information about budget priorities from all community members. While it is our preference that surveys be completed electronically, hard copies will be available at strategic locations throughout town. We will also publicize the survey through news media and will incentivize survey completion through a drawing for school-related items. The survey used several years ago was used as a model for development of the new survey.

- c. Consideration and action to approve the proposed 2022-2023 school calendar

Motion: To approve the proposed 2022-2023 school calendar as presented

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: James Wood
Vote: Carried (9-0)

This calendar is aligned with LEARN's regional calendar. As we have done in the last two years, it begins with two half days for students to provide a transition back to school and to allow us to resolve any issues in transportation routes. The LEARN calendar does reflect the change from Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Given our affiliation with the Mohegan Tribe, this change does seem worthy of consideration in Montville.

Board members discussed and expressed support for the change to Indigenous People's Day.

- d. Consideration and action to set the Montville High School graduation date for June 13, 2022

Motion: To set the Montville High School graduation date for June 13, 2022

Moved by: Bob Mitchel
Second by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (9-0)

By statute a local or regional board of education may establish for any school year a firm graduation date for students in grade twelve which is no earlier than the one hundred eightieth day noted in the school calendar originally adopted by the board for that school year .However, seniors were excused from school on Oct. 13 for PSAT exams so 180 days actually falls on June 13, not June 10.

- e. Discussion regarding addition of a Narcan Policy allowing standing orders for administration of Narcan at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School and Montville High School

Motion: To stock Naloxone in all Montville Schools and to task the Policy Committee with refining a sample CAGE policy regarding its administration and related training of staff

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Second by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (9-0)

A sample policy for CAGE for Opioid Overdose Prevention through storage and emergency administration of Naloxone was distributed. Dr. Walia, our medical advisor, is in support of this policy and would be the issuer of standing orders for our nurses to store and administer Naloxone. Our nursing supervisor, Marcia Wilcox, is also in support of having Naloxone in the schools. Once approved, nurses and other identified staff would need to be trained. Given the recent incidences of fentanyl-laced marijuana, this practice seems especially important. NFA currently has a similar policy and it is working well.

The Board agreed that it was important to have Naloxone in schools including elementary schools and that the Policy Committee should address concerns about whether Naloxone should be administered only to students/staff or also to visitors to the school. Laurie suggested that Marcia Wilcox and Dr. Walia might attend the meeting to offer their thoughts.

- f. Discussion of current Board liaisons to town; consider a proposal by the Communications Subcommittee to add liaisons to Town Council and Parks and Recreation Commission.

Motion: To task the Communications Committee with looking at the possibility of adding a liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission

Moved by: Carol Burgess
Seconded by: Florence Turner
Vote: Carried (9-0)

The Communications Committee had a discussion regarding enhancing communication with town agencies by reviewing our current Board liaisons and considering adding liaisons to other town agencies.

- g. Action to recognize the transfer of \$65,500 from Employee Benefits, objects

204-222 to Plant Operations function 2600, Other Equipment object 739 for the purchase of a 2022 Ford F 350 Dump Truck with Plow under state contract pricing

Motion: To recognize the transfer of \$65,500 from Employee Benefits, objects 204-222 to Plant Operations function 2600, Other Equipment object 739 for the purchase of a 2022 Ford F 350 Dump Truck with Plow under state contract pricing

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (9-0)

As Kathy mentioned in her report, we were able to find a truck for purchase and felt that it was essential to move forward with that purchase prior to our January meeting due to the lack of a suitable town vehicle, approaching winter weather, and the shortage of vehicles for purchase. According to policy, I am authorized to make such transfers if the urgent need for the transfer prevents the Board from meeting in a timely fashion to consider the transfer provided it does not exceed 5% of the annual budget. In this case the transfer is announced at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

- h. Consideration and possible action to adopt revisions to Policies 5000 through 5131.911 provided by CAFE as edited by the Policy Committee.

Motion: To adopt revisions to Policies 5000 through 5131.911 provided by CAFE as edited by the Policy Committee.

Moved by: James Wood
Second by: Florence Turner
Vote: Carried (9-0)

- i. Update on pandemic-related grants

An attachment showing allocations and planned use for ESSER, ESSER II, ARP ESSER, ARP IDEA, and ESSER II Special Education grants was explained.

7. Information Items Budget Meeting Dates:

- a. Budget Meeting Dates:
 - Budget Presentation, February 15th Regularly scheduled Board meeting
 - February 23
 - March 1
 - March 8
- b. Town Budget Hearings
 - Town Budget, April 27, 6:00 P.M.,
 - Board's Budget, April 28, 6:00 P.M.

8. Committee and Liaison reports:

- a. Policy – *Jim Wood explained that Policy Committee will meet next Tuesday and will continue review of policy series 5000*
- b. Education Evaluation – *Bob Mitchell reviewed two course proposals brought the E&E Committee: Rock Performance (Rock & Roll 1940s to Current) (1) credit. African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies (a new state mandated course). The proposals will be submitted to the Board next month*
- c. Communications Committee – *Carol Burgess discussed the plan to mail post cards with links to the budget survey for community members*
- d. Principle Reports – *Amy Espinoza, Rob Alves: Showcase Definition of Learning; Preparing the Montville Graduate*
- e. Montville Education Foundation – *James Wood – No meeting*
- f. LEARN – *Bob Mitchell stated that staffing shortages and pay increases for staff in the \$16-\$20 / hour range were discussed*
- g. CAFE/NSBA – *Bob Mitchel – No meeting, some upcoming events.*
- h. Montville Youth Services Bureau – *No meeting*
- i. Student Board Representatives

Junior Class Representative: Matthew Malbourn

It's been a while since last meeting together. On December 22nd, the high school music department held a combined choir and band concert. This was the first concert held by the music department since before the start of the 2020 lockdown. Not only was it amazing hearing the choir perform, and the band perform, but they were able to perform several songs together! Now in the works is their annual combined spring concert with the middle school.

The high school theatre department held their auditions for the spring musical Little Women right before break. The cast list was released, and they got right to work as soon as we returned from break. The shows will be on March 9, 10, 11, 12 all at 7pm, and I hope to see you there!

The student government has been at work trying to boost the morale of the school. For example, something new you will see right across from the library doors in Senior Court is a High School Musical New Year's resolution poster that will allow students to write down their resolution for the new semester! Small projects like this are what build us up into a stronger community when what we can do is so limited, and we hope to be able to do even more when the current wave of covid falls.

Us high schoolers have started our midterm exams, the first exams since the midterms 2 years ago. Something that has been brought to my attention is the scheduling of these exams. In the past couple of weeks, I have heard numerous complaints in all my classes from my peers about the scheduling of these exams and how stressful it is, especially last week. With the original scheduling before the cancellation of school on Friday, we would have had our first two exams on that Friday, then a three-day weekend before our next exams, and concluding them with the start of semester 2 on a Friday, not to mention it being a double A Day with Monday. For me and many of my peers, last week was spent stressing out and trying to study for our first exams while trying to do regular homework for our other classes on top of that. I believe going forward, some student input should be considered for scheduling exams.

Senior Class Representative: Gigi Johnston –

Since the last meeting, students have started their winter extracurricular activities. The winter sports season has begun, and this includes boys' and girls' basketball, indoor track, and wrestling. Indoor track has had four meets so far this season, and the athletes have put up a tough competition for their opponents. Many are on the right track for qualifying for the ECC and State tournaments. The boys' basketball team has also been working hard on the court and continue to get better each game as they focus on improvement. The girls' basketball team has been doing the same, and with a record of 6-5, they are ready to take on Fitch tomorrow night. The girls also won the Holiday Tournament a few weeks ago that was hosted at Montville. Lastly the wrestling team has been enjoying their time on the mats, since their season last year wasn't able to happen. The players have been serving as a tough challenge to their competition this year. Also, the weight room has been opened to all students after school to workout at their own pace and in their own way.

A little before the holidays, the National Art Honors Society was spending their time volunteering to wrap gifts for other students and staff members of the school. They supplied the wrapping paper and the materials needed, and they gladly did the work for others who may not have had time in such a busy and stressful time of year. The National Honors Society also put together homemade Christmas and Holiday cards for the retirement home before we went on break. They have additionally decided to join with the Leo's in the spring to coordinate their annual Dog Day event.

As we know, midterms are currently taking place, and while this is not students' favorite time of year, we are all just thankful that we have been able to be in school all days of the week, and can participate in extracurricular activities.

Item 8. Superintendent's Report

a. Report from the Director of Special Services – Paula LaChance

Since we last met I have attended weekly update meetings for the new CT-SEDS system and data migration into the new system from Frontline. Thankfully the state is contracting with Frontline/IEP Direct to assist districts with this migration. We were informed today that the agreement with Frontline will include the migration of three years of documents from the document repository along with all the IEPs and meeting invitations. Throughout this process we will continue to use Frontline to complete:

- *referrals that are in process using the process log;*
- *progress reporting on IEP's that are still active as of 7/1/22;*
- *service delivery in the related service log for Medicaid claiming.*

As we slowly migrate to the CT-SEDS System we will need to assess which Medicaid claiming system we will utilize going forward.

This month I have worked closely with the preschool team to review our process for child find. This process will be conducted as a spring screening which will take place on March 30th. These screenings are designed to screen children to determine if they will qualify as a peer for our program or if we need to do further evaluations to determine if they will qualify for special education.

Additionally, I am working with my supervisors Amanda and Theresa on movements within the district for next year and the impact that has on our needs in order to prepare for our budget.

Similarly, the three of us met today to discuss guidelines and criteria for ESY qualifications. I will be revising our forms and distributing to the case managers next month. We will be holding ESY for 3 days per week for four weeks and the day is 4.5 hours long.

b. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Dianne Vumback

DESSA/EJI Committee: *We have really begun our work on DESSA, the social emotional universal screener. Our primary goal right now is to support our elementary staff in the screening process and then move on to other levels.*

Our goal is to gather benchmark data so that we can support students with their social-emotional needs at the classroom level and measure the growth at the midyear data collection. We have an amazing district team that has been working diligently on organizing an effective rollout process.

In addition, they have been meeting with me to discuss Equity, Justice and Inclusion. We are just beginning this work and in the process of identifying and determining the data we need to explore.

***Vaccination Clinic:** We had our last scheduled vaccination clinic on October 8th. With each clinic, numbers declined of those opting to get vaccinated. This is not a surprise at this point.*

Overall the collaboration with UNCAS Health and Griffin Hospital was awesome and many community members reached out letting us know they appreciated the convenience of this option for them.

***MYSB:** Barbara Lockhart at MYSB has been such a great resource for us. They have been sharing some wonderful tools for us to utilize with our staff.*

As October is National Anti-bullying Month, they shared a film called “The Upstanders” and other resources that encourages others to stand up, speak out and support those that are bullied. Previously they shared resources on anxiety. Our social workers use these tools as they work with students in need.

On October 8th we had about 18 certified teachers, social workers and a few administrators get QPR training with MYSB. This is suicide prevention training designed to help empower individuals in their communities.

c. Report from the Superintendent – Laurie Pallin

Last Thursday, I was notified that Montville High School, the Palmer Building and Murphy had tentatively been awarded funds for the 2021 Connecticut School s Security Competitive Grant Program. The total budgeted amount approved was \$265,979 with a reimbursement rate of 69.05%. The state share would be \$183,658 and the district share \$82,320.50. The brief email I received indicated that specific items had been targeted for approval including changes to front door access at MHS, installation of additional cameras at Murphy, and changes to the entrance at Palmer.

State, local, and district investigations into the incident which led us to place a teacher on leave in have all been closed and we are pleased to have the teacher return to work on Jan. 24 at the start of the second semester.

I am sorry to inform the Board that I have received the resignation of Jason Daly, assistant principal at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School. He has decided to pursue an opportunity outside the district which he is excited about. We do have a candidate who is a highly recommended retired middle school assistant principal who we have interviewed and we are hopeful she will be able to help us out until the end of the year. We will open a search for a permanent replacement for Jason.

You probably noticed that we did not have Marvels this evening. We made the decision to keep the audience small this evening due to the surge in COVID numbers. We are hopeful that we can include both groups of Marvels next month.

It was with great regret that I made the difficult decision that we needed to close school last Friday due to staffing shortages. We have struggled to maintain adequate staff throughout the fall, but Friday we reached the tipping point. Having four days out was helpful and hopefully we will not experience a shortage at that level again this year.

I'd like to welcome Pam Rodgers, our new Board recording secretary. The position has been vacant for a number of years and we are pleased that Pam has agreed to take on the role. Pam works part-time for Steve Carroll as a secretary for our facilities dept.

Item 10. Citizen's Comments

None.

Item 11. Future Agenda Items

Paraprofessional staffing shortage and Naloxone policy

Item 12. Consideration and action to enter Executive Session to update the Board on legal issues involving CIRMA representation

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss legal issues involving CIRMA.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (9-0)

It is anticipated that the Board will enter executive session to discuss legal issues involving CIRMA representation.

Item 13. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Bob Mitchel
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (9-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education
Minutes Approved: _____

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education