



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
June 20, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**

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: James Wood, Bob Mitchell, Carol Burgess, Sheelagh Lapinski, Timothy Shanahan, Tina Grove, Lisa Terry. and Lilyana Sherbanee.

Also participating were: Superintendent Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, and Administrators Rob Alves, Greg Gwudz, David Gollsneider, and Elizabeth Dumond. Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix was absent.

Recognition of new Board member Lilyana Sherbanee

Item 2. Alterations to the Agenda

- a. Move item 6j. End of Year Evaluation of the Superintendent and Extension of Contract to the end of the meeting following executive session.

Item 3. Citizens' Comments (regarding agenda items only)

None

Item 4. Letters and Communications

- a. Thank you note from recent retiree Amy Espinoza was read.

Item 5. Approval of the consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

Moved by: Tim Shanahan
Seconded by: Carol Burgess
Vote: Carried (9-0)

Item 6. New Business

- a. Consideration and action to appoint Jessica Lilienthal as the Assistant Principal at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School

Motion: To appoint Jessica Lilienthal as the Assistant Principal.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Wills Pike
Vote: Carried (9-0)

Superintendent Pallin - Jessica was the unanimous choice of our interview committee which included Board members Wills Pike and Tina Grove and members of the Tyl Leadership Team. Jessica served as interim assistant principal at Tyl last year for three months and has been a special education teacher, school counselor and head teacher in Montville since 1996. She has been instrumental in development of Tyl's SRBI process and worked closely with the administrative team to improve school climate and culture. She was highly recommended by Principal Gwudz and the Tyl teacher leaders as someone who is invested in Tyl's continued growth and student success.

- b. Consideration and action to direct the superintendent to transfer funds from budget categories which reflect a surplus to categories which are overbudget in order to reduce the funds needed from the 2% non-lapsing account before the close of FY2023

Motion: To transfer funds from budget categories which reflect a surplus to categories which are overbudget.

Moved by: Carol Burgess
Seconded by: Wills Pike
Vote: Carried (9-0)

Superintendent Pallin - As we close the 2022-2023 fiscal year, we anticipate that we will have a surplus in several categories and deficits in others. As we did last year, we are requesting authorization to make transfers between

categories (e.g. from salaries to purchased services) to reduce our overall deficit and the need to draw for the non-lapsing account to balance the budget. At this time, we anticipate that we will need to use about \$250,000 from the non-lapsing account due to significant overages in special education tuitions and transportation, but we are hoping to reduce that number as much as possible by leveraging savings in other areas of the budget.

- c. Discussion and possible action to approve continued use of State of Connecticut's flexibilities in teacher evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year

Motion: Action to approve continued use of State of Connecticut's flexibilities in teacher evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year.

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

Superintendent Pallin - For the past several years, we have worked with the teachers' union to agree to adopt flexibilities in the teacher evaluation process offered by the CSDE. We have decided to continue those flexibilities for one additional year while we transition to a new teacher evaluation process. While we still need to include the four required areas (student learning goals, observations of performance and practice, whole school goals, and stakeholder feedback or peer observations), we are able to use a holistic scoring system, focus on holistic measures of student growth, and conduct shorter observations. We will spend the next year reviewing the state's new requirements and developing a plan that provides more useful feedback focused on continued growth rather than numerical scores.

- d. Discussion regarding role of Student Board Representative

Board members discussed utilization of Student Board Representative.

Superintendent Pallin - The role of the student rep on the Board has started to move away from students who were involved and engaged in Board discussions and subcommittee work to a report of events which occurred at MHS over the past month. Wills and I wanted to engage the Board in a discussion of what you would like to see as the role of the Board rep. Several years ago, we moved the student report to the end of the meeting so that reps would stay the entire meeting and participate in the Board's dialog, but that has not occurred regularly in recent years.

Board members expressed interest in having student reps participate in discussions regarding agenda items, though they would not vote on motions.

e. Discussion of CSDE Racial imbalance report

Superintendent Pallin- For the second year, we have received notification from the CSDE of an impending racial imbalance at Mohegan Elementary School. We are not required to file a plan to address an impending imbalance but we are strongly encouraged to address the matter in a proactive manner to avoid future identification of racial imbalance. An impending imbalance exists when the proportion of students of color for a school falls outside a range from 15 percentage points less to 15 percentage points more than a comparable proportion for the district. A racial imbalance exists when the difference is 25 percentage points. At this time with 54.25% minority students, Mohegan has 15.64% more minority students than the elementary school average of 38.61%. Oakdale has 10.13% less than the elementary school average.

Board members discussed the options of redistricting the elementary schools, restructuring the schools so that all students at a grade level attended the same school, or doing nothing at this time. They agreed to revisit the conversation in the fall.

f. Discussion of School Parent Involvement Reports – Policy 1110.1

Superintendent Pallin - By policy, each principal prepares a report annually for the Board describing the activities which the school has implemented that year to involve parents in school activities and their children's education. Activities described include: orientation programs, parents' nights, individual student conferences, concerts and drama productions, community events, meetings of parent groups, weekly and monthly electronic newsletters, communication through the website and social media, use of Google Classroom and PowerSchool, parent surveys, attendance at sporting events, award recognition ceremonies, family dances and games nights, parent volunteer opportunities, translation services for non-English speaking families, and of course timely response by teachers and administrators to parent emails and phone calls.

g. Consideration and action to set August 15, 2023 as the Board Retreat for the purpose of setting district and Board goals and strategies

Motion: Action to set August 15, 2023 as the Board Retreat for the purpose of setting district and Board goals and strategies.

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

- h. Discussion of reimbursing or partially reimbursing families of students who travel out of state for recognition as scholars or athletes

Superintendent Pallin - I received a request in June to help pay the costs for one of our track student athletes to participate in the New England Championships in Saco, ME and wanted to discuss with the Board the district's practice regarding reimbursing or partially reimbursing families for travel and/or hotel expenses. While this request was for one student, we frequently have wrestling students in similar situations and might also receive requests for students for academic competitions (e.g. History Day). We do not currently cover travel costs for our wrestlers which is the most common example. A.D. Tim Dilweg reached out to other schools regarding their practice and heard from 7 districts. Three (Bacon, New London, and Windham) pay for some portion of the expenses and four (Stonington, Woodstock, Plainfield, and St. Bernard) only pay the entry fee for events. The districts that do pay indicated that they use proceeds from gate receipts to pay expenses for the athlete, however at this time, our gate receipts do not cover the costs of our athletic events and costs of athletic events are subsidized in part by the Board.

Board members did not support paying these costs out of the operating budget. Options discussed included seeking funds from Music or Sports Boosters, MEF, and local civic organizations.

- i. Appraisal of music department field trip to New York City, April 26-28, 2024

Superintendent Pallin - By policy the Board is apprised of overnight trips out of state. Next spring the MHS music program would like to take students to New York City from April 26-28. It is anticipated that about 50 students will participate with Josh Cushing, Austin Schmidt, a nurse and two parent volunteers. They will travel by bus and use several fund-raising activities (flower, mattress, and gift card sales) to defray costs. The trip will include a Broadway workshop which is an interactive experience including a 60-minute clinic with an actor from that night's show where the group will learn to sing a piece from the show along with the choreography followed by a 30-minute Q&A, attendance at the show, sightseeing, attendance at a jazz show, and clinics for band and choir at Montclair State University. The cost for the trip will be about \$900 per participant.

- j. End of Year evaluation of the Superintendent and extension of contract.

Moved to the end of the meeting.

Item 7. Old Business

- a. Discussion regarding possible 2023-2024 budget alternations

Superintendent Pallin – We need to find \$338,000 of savings in the Board’s budget to meet the town’s funding of \$43,461,544. I have requested of the town council that the \$90,084 difference between the town’s budgeted amount for ECS funding and the final state budget be allocated to the Board and am awaiting a response. Possible reductions to the budget include \$17,000 in CAFE dues, \$66,195 for the cafeteria program, and \$44,055 in reduced salaries for two new administrators. This would still leave us with a shortfall of about \$121,000. We budgeted \$77,000 for the ELA coach and \$28,000 each for two PT custodians. While the ELA coach is a critical position which was the last choice for reduction by four Board members, we cannot make a schedule work at Tyl without more PE/Health sections, and I believe the lack of an athletic trainer is a real liability. I think we need to move forward with those two positions first. We are still looking to see if there are any savings in fuel costs, health insurance rates, salaries, and benefits for new hires, and possible a reduction in outplacements. If we see any of those savings and receive the \$90,084 from the town, I think it would be very important to try to keep these positions if at all possible.

Our hiring of special education teachers is going well. First we had to fill existing vacancies (C. Kelley, S. Henderson, R. Slane, T. Zurowski, E. Lilienthal, J. Rice) and we are in the process of filling three of the newly created positions (Palmer Pathways, Tyl, Oakdale Pathways). I am hopeful that we will also be able to fill the remaining 2 newly created positions at CEM and Mohegan.

Board members expressed strong support for the ELA coach, asked for clarification of the role of a coach, and asked a number of questions about the role of the athletic trainer and the necessity of that person.

Item 8. Committee and Liaison Reports:

- a. Policy – Policy Chair; Jim Wood – Meeting was held on June 20, 2023.
Tonight we discussed job descriptions updates and the importance of having job descriptions line up with the annual reviews, will hold a meeting in August to vote on moving these forward

Item 9. Information Items:

Superintendent Pallin gave updates on the Summer work that is being performed throughout the district.

Item 10. Citizen’s Comments

None

Item 11. Board Chair Remarks

Wills Pike – The Police Chief Ceremony will be held July 01,2023 at the High School. First time Montville will have an official Police Chief.

*Town's response to day care request –
The Town is not in the position to pursue this request. The Board has received only one written request from one family. Despite posting the agenda item on the public website and contacting the parent who made the request to invite them to the meeting, we have not had any follow-up requests. When we did open a child care program at Oakdale, it was not viable and had to close due to lack of participation. Lisa Terry responded that she had seen a Facebook post requesting child care.*

Wills expressed his pride in Montville Athletes.

He told the Board there is a possibility of meeting in July to address the budget.

Item 12. Future Agenda Items

Teacher Contract negotiations – Please hold these draft dates:
August 23, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Ground rules and first exchange
August 30, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Second exchange
September 6, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Substantive negotiation session
September 13, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Substantive negotiation session

September 20, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Substantive negotiation session
October 11, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Substantive negotiation session
October 18, 2023 at 5 p.m.: Substantive negotiation session
Mediation date is 10/23, arbitration date is 11/17

Item 13 Business for consideration in executive session

Motion: That the Board enters executive session for the purpose of conducting the end of year evaluation for Superintendent; inviting Superintendent Pallin into the session.

Moved by: Tim Shanahan
Seconded by: Sheelagh Lapinski

Vote: (9-0)

The Board entered executive session at 7:40 p.m.

The Board exited executive session at 8:31p.m. and made the following motion:

Motion: To extend the contract for Superintendent Pallin for one year, through June 30, 2026

Moved by: Wills Pike
Seconded by: Tina Grove
Vote: (9-0)

Item 14. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Lisa Terry
Seconded by: Tina Grove
Vote: Carried (9-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____