



MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 19, 2023 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.

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Recording Notice: This meeting is being voice and video recorded and the video recording of the meeting will be posted online when the meeting minutes are posted

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

Board members attending were: Wills Pike, Carol Burgess, Bob Mitchell, Timothy Shanahan, Tina Grove, Bonnie Bacon, Erika Striebel, Donna Funk, and Lisa Terry.

Also participating were: Superintendent Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, and administrators Paul LaChance, Rob Alves, Greg Gwudz, Jill Mazzalupo, and Liz Dumond. ELA coaches Suzanne LoPresto, Mary Aldia and Sharon Brown.

Item 2. Alterations to the agenda

None.

Item 3. Presentations

- a. Montville Marvels: Superintendent Pallin Presenting

It is recommended that the Board of Education acknowledge the following students, teachers, and community members in the areas noted:

Districtwide - For his 26.5 years of dedicated and exemplary service to the

Montville Public Schools and his most capable and forward-thinking leadership for the last 9.5 years as Director of Facilities: Steve Carroll

Superintendent Pallin explained - Steve, it is with great regret that I accepted your resignation as Director of Facilities. We will certainly miss you in Montville. I have worked with you in many ways over the years – from the days when you led field trips for my botany class and helped to landscape the courtyard with my ecology class to creation of COVID desk shields to development and implementation of our facilities capital plan to our 4 a.m. calls and texts yesterday morning to discuss a possible school closure, I’ve come to rely on you in myriad ways. In every aspect of our work together, I have trusted your knowledge, skills, and advice. You have been a colleague and a friend and I wish you the very, very best as you pursue new opportunities. Thank you for your dedicated service to Montville Public Schools. Your positive impact on our facilities will last long after you leave!

b. Transportation Master Plan Presentation

Superintendent Pallin explained - As we begin the capital planning process, I have worked on development of a district master plan. This plan is intended to help with future planning as we apply for grants, develop and present our capital requests to the town, and think about significant expenditures to the schools such as the HVAC projects.

Working with Theresa on transportation, Steve on facilities, and Nic on IT, we are documenting the current conditions and future needs for each building including the bus garage and the vehicles there. You are free to look at the entire master plan which is linked to your meeting materials, but tonight we wanted to draw your attention to the Transportation Section which begins on pg. 12.

In this section, we have provided as much information as possible to document the need to develop a replacement cycle for our vehicles. We describe the morning and afternoon bus routes and special transportation needs and detail the condition of our current bus fleet. As you can see from these documents, we have a rotation of buses which are used for daily routes, for sports transportation, and as spare buses to allow us to periodically take buses off the road for maintenance. Based on a life span of about 9 to 12 years and 170,000 miles and annual mileage of 12,000 miles for most buses, we have provided a ten-year bus replacement cycle. This will enable us to plan for rotation of our fleet and give the town an understanding of upcoming requests for vehicles.

Aside from vehicles, the plan also describes the mandate that we replace the underground fuel storage tank at the bus garage in 2027. It is our recommendation that we move to an above ground tank at an estimated cost of \$285,000 which will be part of our capital plan.

We will also place \$40,000 for an engineering study of the bus garage facility in the upcoming capital plan since the bus garage is showing a lot of rot and has poor ventilation in the garage bays.

Item 4. Citizens' Comments (regarding agenda items only)

The Board welcomes public comments at Board meetings. When you speak, please clearly state your first and last name and your address so that we can reach out to you after the Board meeting. Please try to limit your comments to 3 minutes. The Board's protocol is that they do not respond to citizen's comments at the meeting. They do, however, listen carefully and follow up after the meeting as appropriate. Your comments may lead to further dialogue at a future Board or sub- committee meeting or a follow-up phone call from a district administrator for more information

Rachel Dash from Black Ash Rd sent an email and was thankful and relieved that the A/C projects were approved

Item 5. Letters and Communications

None.

Item 6. Approval of the consent Calendar

Budget Update: Kathy Lamoureux

Kathy explained - Since the last Board meeting, the Accountants have come in to complete their field work needed for the June 30, 2023 audit. Additionally, they completed their review of the excess cost and the Education Financial Statement reports for June 30, 2023 as required by the State.

We have been notified by the State the Tyl Roof project has been accepted by school construction. We have notified Al Jacunski and he is planning on scheduling a plan review with the State. Once this is complete, we will be able to bid this project so the work can be completed during the 2024 summer.

We are working on completing the school construction grants for all of the schools for the HVAC which are required to be submitted by December 31, 2023. This process is time

consuming and the State's software is difficult to use. The State indicated they are working on updating the software to make it better to utilize in the future.

We are working on the 2024-25 budget. We are updating the salary schedules for negotiated contracts and will be reviewing enrollment. Last week, the Town and I had a meeting with MDG to review the 2024 Preliminary Anthem Renewal. The initial renewal is indicating a 14 to 17% increase in premiums however, we have another meeting in January which will utilize less trending and hopefully bring these percentages down.

I am still working on projecting the employee benefits for the current fiscal year which will assist in developing the next fiscal year's budget. I will be able to update the Board at the next meeting on these objects.

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

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

Item 7. New Business

- a. Presentation of District English Language Arts Program – Waiver Application Status, Current Program, Assessment Data, and Future Plans

ELA coaches Suzanne LoPresto, Mary Aledia, and Sharon Brown, along with Building Principals, explained the Reading Waiver Results, described our current programs, and explained student assessment data based on the PowerPoint linked to the BOE meeting materials.

Item 8. Old Business

- a. Review and consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Montville High School

Superintendent Pallin explained - The Board already approved Educational Specifications for the Tyl HVAC project. These are similar documents for each of the other five building HVAC projects. They must be linked to our HVAC grant application and the minutes of this meeting documenting the Board's approval of the documents must also be submitted. Each building has separate Ed Specs explaining the specifics of the work to be completed in that building's project.

Motion: To approve and submit the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Montville High School

Moved by: Lisa Terry
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (9-0)

- b. Review and consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for PBL Palmer Building

Motion: To approve and submit the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for PBL Palmer Building

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

- c. Review and consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Mohegan Elementary School

Motion: To approve and submit the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Mohegan Elementary School

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

- d. Review and consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Dr. Charles E. Murphy Elementary School

Motion: To approve and submit the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Dr. Charles E. Murphy Elementary School

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

- e. Review and consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated December

18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Oakdale Elementary School

Motion: To approve and submit the Ed Specs dated December 18, 2023 for the HVAC project for Oakdale Elementary School

Moved by: Lisa Terry
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (9-0)

f. Discussion of next steps in Tyl Roof Construction Project

Item 9. Committee and Liaison Reports:

- a. Policy – *No Meeting scheduled*
- b. Education Evaluation – *Bob Mitchell – I was elected to chair again. Had a wonderful presentation on AP African / American Studies, with no cost to district. Will be discussed at next BOE meeting.*
- c. Communications Committee- *Lisa Terry – Meeting held on Dec 7th, I was elected chair. Committee will send agenda to student representatives prior to meeting.*
- d. Montville Education Foundation – *Laurie- Grant awards were made over the past several weeks to Murphy’s Mary Ellen Kane for a 3-D printer, Tyl’s Sarah Cunningham for renovating the greenhouse, MHS teachers Jessica Hickey for a taxidermy project, and Addy Robarge and Carolyn DeCosta for replacement of the two kilns at the high school.*
- e. LEARN - *Bob Mitchell – Looked at Magnet School tuition rates, Special Education rates increased by 2%.*
- f. CABE/NSBA -*Carol Burgess CABE convention was held, we received recognition as a level two Board of Distinction. CABE orientation was held for new members. I attended a State Relations meeting since the last board meeting.*
- g. Montville Youth Services Bureau- *Timothy Shanahan- no meeting held, next meeting will be in March.*
- h. Student Board Representatives-

Junior Class Representative: Adam Gallagher

I’ll start off with some events that happened or are coming up. Winter sports like basketball and track have started up. Last advisory we spent decorating our respective doors, an idea that came from student government. It was fun to look at the doors and it got everyone in the holiday spirit. This Friday the rock band and the teacher band will be having a concert as well, which I’m very excited about.

I understand that you wanted to hear the response to the assembly that was held. Assemblies are difficult to make effective. The whole point is to get a serious message across to a ton of students, but that makes it very impersonal. Questions are also “socially discouraged” because of the thought your question might be

dumb or be laughed at. It's not reasonable to think that way, I know, but a lot of kids do. I think advisory is the solution to that. It's more personal, because it feels like more of a conversation whereas an assembly is more of a one way. This is not the fault of Mr. Alves or Mr. Daniewicz, because they are honestly really good at getting the attention of people, it's more the format of assemblies. But advisories, being smaller, allow kids to be more confident to ask questions. The interactive portion was interesting, but you just can't trust high schoolers to be serious. Me and many other people saw joking or inappropriate answers up on the screen, even if only for a split second. I think having a vote on preset answers would be good, but not necessarily people submitting their own open ended answer. The message was construed well, but assemblies are just hard to make effective.

i. Principals' Comments –

OAK – *Jill Mazzalupo – Students are very excited for the upcoming winter break. Trying to keep routines, but sprinkle with fun. On Friday the 5th graders will go room to room caroling.*

MHS- *Rob Alves – Happy Holidays!*

Item 10. Information Items

Future Dates

- Next regular Board meeting: January 16, 2024

Item 11. Report on District Operating Plan (Vision, Goals, and Strategies)

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

I wanted to provide our newest members of the board with a brief outline of the special education departments structure.

I have two special education supervisors, Theresa Gouveia at the elementary level and Amanda Brown at the secondary level. We have a special needs program at both the elementary and secondary level that service our most complex students. Those with ASD and severe cognitive delays. We also have programs at both elementary and middle school that support our social emotional and behaviorally challenged students with Palmer Academy servicing the high school students. In addition to these programs we have an integrated Pre-school program at Oakdale and a Transition Program at Fair Oaks that services those students 18-22 years of

age that have earned their high school credits yet continue to require transition support around independent living and vocational skills.

This year we were fortunate enough to add additional special education teachers to our schools to further support the social emotional needs district wide.

To this end based on the new legislation regarding the children's mental Health crisis we will be piloting a program called UPLIFT. This is a Trauma informed care program. During our November PD our mental health staff and program teachers participated in the first training for implanting this program. We will continue to hold trainings throughout the year with the hope to begin implementing this spring. Overall this training was well received. Staff are invested in building their capacity around mental health supports throughout Montville schools.

b. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Dianne Vumback

This has been a busy month of meetings! I'll share two of them that have impact on our district work:

All principals and their building level Title IX Coordinators attended Title IX training this month. This is a 3-hour webinar that offers the updates in legislation, reviews OCR compliance and current cases, and provides detailed information on how to respond to allegations of sexual harassment. As the District Coordinator of Title IX I also attended.

I attended a Webinar on increasing educator diversity plans with the State Department of Education. As you know PA 23-167 requires all districts to submit a plan by March 15, 2024. The session was pretty intensive and expected "homework" prior to the webinar. Future work requires a deep dive into the district's policies and practices to assist in creating an action plan around recruitment, hiring and selection and retention. We will begin this equity work upon return from winter break.

c. Report from the Superintendent – Laurie Pallin

SERAC Surveys are being administered to all students in grades 8-12 this week and the week we return from vacation. These surveys will help us to assess students' substance abuse and mental health needs which will give us guidance as we develop next year's budget and think about our reliance on Project Courage, our district social workers and other mental health services.

MHS had 31 students eligible for CT's Automatic College Admission Program and about 10 who chose to participate. Most of our students chose to apply to the CT state schools using the Common App on the application fee free day as a simpler alternative.

The Director of Facilities Search is underway. Applications closed yesterday. We will interview as soon as we return from vacation.

Item 12. Citizen's Comments

None.

Item 13. Board Chair Remarks -Wills Pike –

I did the Santa Claus thing at Youth Services, it was a lot of fun. Makes me look to future of the kids that will replace us. Hope everyone has a Safe and Happy Holiday, with a little bit of snow!

Item 14. Future Agenda Items

None

Item 15. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Timothy Shanahan

Seconded by: Carol Burgess

Vote: Carried (9-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____