



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
November 19, 2024 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: Bonnie Bacon, Timothy Shanahan, Tina Grove, Erika Striebel, Donna Funk, Bob Mitchell and Carol Burgess. Lisa Terry was absent.

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Dianne Vumback, Assistant Superintendent Andrea Flynn, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Director of Facilities Willie Quinones, Administrators Rob Alves, Ken Daniewicz, Amanda Brown, Greg Gwudz, Jessica Lilienthal, David Gollsneider, William Klinefelter, Jill Mazzalupo, Liz Dumond and Board Cert Behavior Analyst Kelly Carvalho.

Item 2. Alterations to the agenda

Bonnie Bacon: I would like to add an agenda item to discuss the results of the failed bonding referendum

Wills: Do we have a second?

Bob Mitchell: I will second that

Wills: I will address that, it does not require an executive session or anything of that nature. I will discuss the no vote and why it failed I am willing to talk about that, I am not willing to discuss politics.

Bonnie Bacon – Requested an alteration to the agenda, adding a discussion regarding the failed referendums from October 17, 2024

Board chair indicated that he would not allow anything which involved politics. Board Members and Board Chair discussed the failure of the BOE's bonding referendums on October 17, 2024 and concerns surrounding Vote No signage with the Board Chairs name on them. Board Member Remarks, the Board held a discussion on the implications of the VOTE NO Signs with the Board Chairs name on them.

Bonnie: Why was your name on the signs that said to vote No. Did you support the projects on the referendum? This is a conflict of Interest to be for and against the items on the referendum? This is confusing for the public to see a sign that says to vote no with the Board Chairs name on it. Did you support these projects or no? Will this happen again? I think this is a problem as you are the Chair. Why didn't you defend our projects at the meeting? The ambiguity makes board members wonder if this may happen again. It is a conflict of interest for you to be on both sides, for and against.

Erika Striebel – Bonnie is not alone, we need to have this conversation. We need clarity. The conversation needs to be had.

Carol Burgess – We need to have this conversation no matter how uncomfortable this is. This is a conversation that we as a board of ed needs to have. We are group that works together for the benefit of our school.

Bob Mitchell – Didn't see the sign. I understand the Treasurers name needs to be on the sign. Let's talk about it and move on to do the work.

Tina Grove – Saw the sign but I didn't notice name on it

Tim Shanahan - I know where you stand, but 99.99% of the time you make a statement about the money. However, that night only Tom McNally made a statement to vote no on all projects.

Donna Funk – Suggest we move on with this meeting

Board Chair Remarks: Wills Pike – I will not discuss Politics in this meeting! My name being on the bottom of the sign is no indication of how I feel or how I voted. I didn't not put my name on the signs, Tom McNally did. This is very political. My name is on the sign because I'm the Treasurer of the Republic Party. I don't control these signs. I voted no for these signs. I voted for our projects. I have no conflict of interest as I voted for the projects, my allegiance is to the school district as it has been for 24 years.

Bob Mitchell: Bonnie would you consider withdrawing your motion now that we have had the discussion?

Bonnie: Yes

Bob: I second the withdrawal of the motion

As always, a full recording of this meeting and materials can be found on the district website

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

None

Item 4. Letters and Communications

None

Item 5 Presentations

- a. Montville Marvels: Principals Greg Gwudz, David Gollsneider, Rob Alves and Superintendent Dianne Vumback.

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

Leonard J. Tyl Middle School - For building school community and making real world connections through their work with the Adopt a Cow Program: Sasha Discuillo, Chanderev Chouhan, Jesse Clark, Rori Clark, Trinity Clerkin, Camdyn Condeza, Cameron Congdon, Giancarlos Cruz, Jackson Czeluskiak, Brooklyn Daniels, Shaina Debbis, and Jampa Delek.

PBL Palmer Campus – For her dedication to academic excellence and self-advocacy skills: Sofia Delicato for his dedication to the Palmer Building and being a positive member of our school community: James Clark

Montville High School – For quickly becoming a vital part of the Montville High School community, consistently offering kindness and support to her peers, both in and out of the classroom: Ava Geer For consistently being a steadfast advocate for Montville High School students, embodying unwavering dedication and compassion throughout her 24 years of service: Cathy Macri

Community Award – Barbara Lockhart

Dr. Vumback - I am very excited to present my first award – the Community Support Award – to Barbara Lockhart. Barbara was one of the first community members I met, and I was immediately impressed with her passion for students, her commitment to the community

and her eagerness to support the school system as a whole. She has supported us with resources, funding, and training. Our athletic coaches, social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors and administrators have all been trained in Narcan and Suicide prevention training. Barbara allocated funding to support the cost of Project Courage – an agency that provides student support counselors to support our students with addiction and mental health concerns. And this year Barbara has provided us with two social worker interns to support Palmer and Tyl. I can go on and on – she has offered so much in terms of student supports for teen dating, bullying and mental health. She also provides leadership opportunities for students, ensuring all voices are heard.

She is an awesome community partner and I am honored to present to Barbara this plaque to represent our appreciation and gratitude for her dedication to Montville Public Schools ... and for her friendship.

b. Presentation on District Assessment Data

Superintendent Dianne Vumback and Assistant Superintendent, Andrea Flynn, provided a presentation on District Assessment Data. The presentation can be found on the school's website under "Board of Education" and then in the drop down "Agendas & Minutes".

Item 6. Approval of the Consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

Moved by: Tim Shanahan

Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (8-0)

- a. Budget update: Kathy Lamoureux

State Financial Reports

I forwarded the State's letter to the Accountant regarding the requirement to review the Excess Cost and Education Financial Statement reports for June 30, 2024 by January 30, 2025. I also left a message requesting they contact me to confirm their schedule. Other than providing information for bank confirmations and reviewing accounting processes, they have not reached out further. Since writing the report the accountant's have given me a comprehensive schedule of items they are requesting for the audit.

I am currently preparing the Excess Cost Grant, which must be submitted to the State by December 1, 2024.

Retiree Health Insurance Transition

Anthem notified us that the retiree health insurance plans will no longer be offered as of January 1, 2025. MDG, the Board's insurance consultant, conducted a request for proposals, resulting in two responses. Anthem proposed a Medicare Advantage Plan comparable to the current plan, with no minimum enrollment requirements. We selected this plan due to its pricing and network continuity. Informational sessions, both in-person and via webinar, have been provided for participants. The transition is progressing smoothly. Special thanks to Melissa Almond for her outstanding support throughout this process.

Tyl Roof Project

A punch list developed by Willie and Al for the Tyl Roof Project identified minimal issues, which are nearly resolved. Greenwood Industries has been highly responsive during this project. We anticipate requesting Board approval to accept the project as complete at the January meeting.

The Town has set us up in the State's CORE System, enabling us to process the first progress payment for the Tyl Roof Project. Additionally, I met with Town officials and the Bond Counsel to review cash flow for the HVAC grants and the High School athletic field project. The Town indicated they can support cash flow until spring, when a bond offering is anticipated to take place.

HVAC Projects Update

The State has distributed a survey, due by December 31, 2024, requesting updates on all HVAC projects. Al Jacunski will provide input for this survey. During our conversation today, Al outlined the planned sequence for bidding as follows: Oakdale, Murphy, Tyl, High School, Mohegan, and finally Palmer. He expects to receive the final drawings from RZ this week, which will allow the Oakdale project to go out to bid. Following this, the remaining projects will be staggered, with bids

spaced no more than a couple of weeks apart. Willie along with the Architect and Engineer firm have been conducting walkthroughs to ensure the plans are finalized and complete.

High School Track and Football Field Replacement

Following the successful passage of the referendum to fund the High School track and football field replacement, a planning meeting was held with Rob Alves, Tim Dilweg, and Willie Quinones to outline the next steps. It was decided to engage Field Turf/Classic Turf to discuss the project's goals and scope. This vendor, well-regarded for their work on the High School tennis courts, has also collaborated with the Town on Camp Oakdale projects and completed similar projects at Griswold, Waterford, and the Coast Guard Academy, bringing valuable expertise to the table.

Field Turf/Classic Turf is currently preparing a preliminary design and cost estimate, expected to be submitted in December. They indicated the pricing will be presented in a detailed, line-item format, enabling a thorough review and prioritization within the budget. The vendor also confirmed their availability to complete the project in time for the fall season.

To minimize disruptions to the sports program, we may consider requesting a bid waiver, leveraging the vendor's familiarity with our facilities and their previously vetted qualifications.

Scoreboard Project

The scoreboard project incurred unanticipated cost increases, adjusting the project cost from \$31,000 to \$38,000. This project was initially funded through the 2% account, the additional expenses are currently covered by the operating budget. A review will determine whether a transfer of the additional costs back to the 2% account as we monitor the budget throughout the fiscal year.

Tyl Grease Separator Update

The advertisement for bids will appear in this weekend's paper. A walkthrough with potential vendors is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2024, with bid submissions due by Monday, December 16, 2024.

Budget Monitoring

- **Wages and Health Insurance:** I am still working on projections for current fiscal year. As of October 31, 2024, expenditure report only 29 days of the school year are reflected.
- **Special Education Tuitions (Object 560-563):** Projecting a potential shortfall however, due to the volatility of this account, which can shift based on changing demographics, placements, and services this may change.
- **Regular Education Tuitions (1100-560):** Current billings align with the budget.
- **Special Education Purchase Services (1200/321):** Billing for magnet school special education services anticipates a shortage due to new student enrolling who require services.
- **Legal Fees (Object 331):** Fully expended, with approximately \$11,300 remaining as retainer. The anticipated shortfall is attributed to legal representation related to administrator negotiations, special education matters, employment issues, and a CHRO complaint, which carries a \$10,000 deductible.
- **Electricity (Object 410):** As of October 31, 2024, expenditures are at \$154,095, compared to \$120,396 in 2023. Remaining budget percentages decreased from 74.4% to 67.23%, a difference of about 7%. This will be further reviewed for the next Board meeting.

Item 7. New Business

a. Consideration and action to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Report for submission to the Mayor.

Motion: To consider to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Report for submission to the Mayor.

Moved by: Tim Shanahan
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (8-0)

Each year we present the work that the administrative team and their staff, the Board of Education and the Central Office team has completed in the previous school year as they are aligned with the District's vision, goals and strategies.

b. Consideration and action to approve the 2025-2026 District calendar as recommended

Motion: To consider and to approve the 2025-2026 District calendar as recommended

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (8-0)

This calendar follows the LEARN suggested calendar that area schools typically follow. Our Montville District changes suggested for the 2025-2026 calendar year is the elimination of three half day PD. Last year we discussed this was a goal as it is inconvenient to families and the lunch schedule creates problems for the secondary schools in particular – as lunches need to begin at 9:30. The change will allow us to increase student instructional time and not increase teacher's contracted days of 186. In a comparison of professional days in our area we found we are right in line with others or have additional time. For example, in one district they have five full days; another three full days and 5 half days. We will have six full days – two at the beginning of the year and four throughout the year.

c. Discussion and possible action to approve the proposed 2025 Committee meeting dates (Policy, E&E, Communications).

Motion: To consider and to approve the 2025 Committee meeting dates (Policy, E&E, Communications).

Moved by: Wills Pike
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (8-0)

We are trying something different this year. We are aiming to set our committee dates around the needs we are trying to meet. For example, E&E agenda items typically come up twice a year for

consideration. Instead of scheduling meetings every month and canceling, we are suggesting we plan for three meetings during critical times in the year and if we need more, we hold a special meeting.

Communications is another meeting we typically do not hold except around Budget time. We will hold these as special meetings. We will keep Policy planned as normal which is monthly.

Item 8. Old Business

None

Item 9. Committee and Liaison reports:

- a. Policy – Tina Grove – Meeting this week to review policy 51381 electronic devices. Change to policy will be out in January.*
- b. Education Evaluation – No meeting*
- c. Communications Committee – No meeting*
- d. Montville Education Foundation – They held meeting this month*
- e. LEARN- Bob Mitchell-Regular meeting this week. Would you like the Executive Director of Learn to give a presentation to the Board?*
- f. Montville Youth Services Bureau- Tim Shanahan, meeting held last Thursday. The sket raffle fund raiser is the big fund raiser this year, will be drawn on Monday.*
- g. Student Board Representatives*

Senior Class Representative: Adam Gallagher

Last Thursday the National Art Honors Society and Culinary Club had a joint fundraising event afterschool. Customers would pay to pick out a bowl an NAHS member painted and they could have soup and some bread made by our breads class, so they were involved as well. The turnout wasn't great, and, in retrospect, we should have publicized it more and gotten the word. It was really unfortunate because it was a really nice night for the students and people that came. But, that means in the future if we have more events like this we'll have the hindsight. Our poet laureate was also declared, and it was very close between myself and Sabria Wynn but I was ultimately the winner. The arts council also had an autumn poetry contest with the winners being Jace Robinson, Hannah Suarez, and Mars Innes, who is a night school student. Their poems are posted on the Montville arts council website. The drama department's fall show is coming up, their show dates being 12, 13, and 14. Earlier this month NHS went around Tyl, The High School, and Fort Shantok and picked up trash. Together we got about 8 bags worth of trash. In previous years, Mrs. Grills used to do an event where you could adopt a family, and because she is no longer at the high school, Mr Richmond and Mrs. Buckley are putting on their own event where you can "adopt a family" and you'll get a list of items that families request and you can buy those items for them, so that's a nice spiritual successor to what Mrs. Grills used to do.

Junior Class Representative: Tiana Bamber-Absent

Hello everyone!! In this report I wanted to give a summary of some events from Quarter 1 as we step into Quarter 2. It was definitely a busy and productive start and I'm excited to see what next Quarter has in store. Attendance was a strong point for students this past quarter. Overall, 87% of students were present for at least 90% of the school days, which amounts to attending 40 out of 45 days.

Seniors led the way with an 88.9% attendance rate, closely followed by juniors at 88.5% and Freshman at 87.9%. Sophomores came in at 82.2% which is still good but definitely something we can work on improving as we head into the rest of the year. Keeping students engaged and motivated will be a key component to boosting attendance.

Academically, PSAT scores were released this quarter, and our school's average score was 946, matching the district average. This is consistent with our local performance over the past three years, but it is slightly below the state average of 956 and the national average of 986. With this information I think it will be great to continue to support students in their test preparation and create more resources or programs to help them improve their scores. [possibly bring up slideshow from health about ideas for student led after school study groups w/ Seren]

Some creative highlights of the quarter was the Autumn Poetry Contest hosted by the Montville Arts Council. This event brought out the artistic talents of our students with winners receiving small prizes for their work. It was a wonderful way to celebrate creativity and engage students outside the classroom. Also, On November 7th, Montville's Concert Choir hosted a Community Sing at Tyl Middle School in the auditorium. The community sing is an event where anyone can come and Mr. Cushing from the High School will teach songs for the people to sing together. I have attended/worked all of the community sing events since my sophomore year, and it truly is a fun and comfortable experience for anyone of all experience levels. There is an upcoming Community Sing event in the winter on December 8th. This event is a caroling event at the Montville Town Hall for the tree lighting ceremony and will be headed by Mr. Cushing and Mr. Vitali from TYL.

As we move into Quarter 2 we have a lot to look forward to. I am very confident that with collaboration and support we can continue to strengthen student engagement and academic achievement. Thank you!!

h. Principals' Report

MHS – Rob Alves: *Wall of Honor is growing. It's to recognize diversity population and accomplishments of former graduates.*

TYL- Greg Gwudz: *Proud of the outcome of the Veteran's breakfast. Working on the donations for the Holiday.*

Item 10. Information Items

Next BOE meeting December 17, 2024

Item 11. Report on District Operating Plan

a. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Andrea Flynn

This month we were able to further support our staff with the implementation of our CKLA reading curriculum by providing in-depth PD on November 5th which consisted of CKLA presenters engaging with our K-2 and 3-5 teachers, and our special education staff working together and prioritizing how to differentiate for our special populations.

In an effort to be transparent and clear about the importance of fidelity to the program and the expectations for the classroom I rolled out a CKLA Implementation Handbook which outlined these expectations for teachers and administrators. This document included pacing guides by grade level, non-negotiables and electronic fidelity checks for administrators to use as they visit

classrooms. This tool will help us gain valuable insights into the strengths and also provide information on curricular adjustments that may be needed going forward.

I was also able to visit at least one classroom at every grade level during their reading block in which I was able to see the implementation in action. This gave me the opportunity to see how we can support our teachers and students going forward. I plan to do this again in December and January.

b. Report from the Superintendent – Dianne Vumback, Ed.D.

As you know we approved our evaluation plan and the first step is to meet with leaders to discuss their growth plans collaboratively. I have met with all principals and I am thrilled with the rigorous goals they set for themselves. I have been observing classrooms with the principals in each of their classrooms and have visited the schools regularly and am impressed with the learning taking place.

We received news from the State Department of Education that our Diversity Plan was approved. We are very happy and eager to begin our work on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We are working with LEARN to create an Equity statement and to build a community team.

c. Report from Director of Special Education – Paula LaChance

No Report

Item 12. Citizens' comments

None

Item 13. Board Member Remarks

Donna Funk – *Thank you to the Administrators*

Tim Shanahan – *Happy Thanksgiving*

Tina Grove – *Thanks to everyone for all your hard work*

Bob Mitchell – *Doing a great job and is impressive team*

Carol Burgess – *Thank you, impressive*

Bonnie Bacon – *Results are data driven. Thank you*

Erika Striebel – *Thank you*

Wills Pike – *Thank you to all, you don't have an easy job. We do an excellent job in Montville. People do slip through the cracks, but by no means do I think it happens here. Happy Thanksgiving!*

Item 14. Future agenda items

Offering EMT Training as ½ year course.

Item 15: Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____