

**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL  
Library Media Center  
April 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Board of Education Goal:  
To engage in a cycle of continuous improvement to ensure all students are educated with  
high standards and achieve at the highest levels of learning  
in the Montville Public Schools.**

**Electronic Meeting**

**Item 1. Call to order/ Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Chair Sandra Berardy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All stood and pledged the flag. Board members participating were: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Carol Burgess, Dana Ladyga, Steven Loiler and Monica Pomazon. Absent were Joe Aquitante and Sheelagh Lapinski.

Also present were Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Jennifer LeMay, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Administrators Paula LaChance, Marc Romano, Jill Mazzalupo, Will Klinefelter, M.J. Dix, Amy Espinoza, Jason Daly, David Gollsneider, Heather Sangermano, Rob Alves and Laura Zurell, Mayor Ronald McDaniel and Town Council Liaison Joe Jaskiewicz.

**Item 2. Approval of the Consent Calendar**

Motion: The Board moves to authorize the superintendent to apply for inter district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell  
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

**a. Budget update; Business Manager, Kathy Lamoureux**

*There have been a lot of changes since the last budget update. I am working on projecting changes to the budget as a result of the closure. As you are aware when school closed many of the staff elected to collect unemployment. However, on 4/1 the Governor issued an executive order directing public schools to continue to employ and pay school employees to the greatest extent possible. At that time, we called back paraprofessionals, permanent substitutes, behaviorists, nurses and vocational coaches and assigned work to be completed. Additionally, some of these employees qualify for the new Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which requires the District pay for staff members who have children at home because either their school or daycare closed at 2/3 pay.*

*Certified Staffing (111) -We are expecting an overage in this account because of the Athletic Director resignation and his replacement scheduled for 7/1. Additionally there have been requests by staff for unpaid leave, staff members who have been out on workers compensation, etc.*

*Noncertified Staffing (112) - We are expecting an overage as drivers have been furloughed and are collecting unemployment.*

*Monitors (113) - Expecting an overage as they are collecting unemployment.*

*Coaching (117) - Expecting an overage as the spring sports did not occur.*

*Substitutes (120) - Expecting an overage because currently there are only a few subs covering long-term absences and the permanent subs working.*

*We will be proposing a transfer from these salary accounts to cover the expected shortage in the unemployment account (204) at a future meeting. We are still receiving notices for current and past employees seeking unemployment and we are unable to accurately predict this cost at this time. Once we receive an invoice from Unemployment we will be able to better project the cost and what will be needed to transfer to cover this unanticipated expense.*

*Payroll taxes and pensions will likely show a surplus because of the staff on unemployment.*

*Health Insurance is predicted to have a surplus. As a result of drivers being furloughed the district will not be required to pay Teamsters the health insurance premium for the period of April to June. Based on conversations with Teamsters, this does not impact drivers as they will continue to have coverage under the plan until they go back on our payroll. Prior to the school closure, we had reported that we anticipated the insurance account would have an overage and this change will increase the total overage. We will propose a transfer to cover the cost of the technology that was required for distance learning.*

*Transportation -Contracted Service (510) - We had anticipated this account to have a shortage throughout the year. However, we are still trying to determine what payments will be required based on the Governors executive order, at this time we are projecting this account will come in within budget. Currently, the account has a remaining balance however, we still do not know if facilities will open prior to 6/30.*

*Tuitions (560 to 563) - We are trying to determine the costs that we will continue to incur for the outplaced students during this closure as we still have contracts with these facilities and students are receiving services from them remotely. We will have more information and will be able to report more accurately at our next meeting once we have more information.*

*Supplies and Textbooks – We are in the purchasing cycle now and schools are placing their supplies and textbook orders for next year.*

*Property (730) - This is currently running with a shortage as a result of the technology that was ordered for the distant learning and a transfer will be recommended next meeting.*

*To summarize there are a lot of items that are open. I find others in my department are attending numerous meetings to learn additional information as it becomes available.*

**Item 3. New business**

- a. Consideration and action to authorize the superintendent to apply for inter district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

Motion: The Board moves to authorize The Superintendent to apply for inter district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

Moved by: Steven Loiler  
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

b. Consideration and action to set tuition rates for 2020-2021 as follows:

	<u>General Education</u>	<u>Special Education</u>
Elementary	\$10,590	\$28,195*
Middle School	\$11,090	\$27,005*
High School	\$11,570	\$25,865*
Pre-School		\$27,125*
Other Service		Negotiable
Palmer Building		
PBL Program		\$37,335*
Pathways Program		\$52,720*
Other Services		Negotiable

\* Additional costs may be assessed based on the student’s individual educational program (IEP).

\* Additional costs may be assessed based on the student’s individual educational program (IEP).

*Laurie Pallin; Rates are set based on the Consumer price index increase which is 1.5% for the past 12 months.*

Motion: The Board sets the 2020-2021 tuition rates as recommended by The Superintendent.

Moved by: Jim Wood  
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

c. Discussion and action on revisions to the 2020-2021 Budget.

*Laurie Pallin:*

<b>Budget Items</b>	<b>Savings</b>	<b>New Total from \$39,744,736</b>
<b>Roll-Over Budget</b>		<b>39,744,736</b>
<b>Board Approved Increases</b>		
3 Certified Staff Positions including 1 social worker and two teachers to reduce class size		210,000
Increase number of full-time paraeducators		50,000
Purchase Chromebooks for Tyl and MHS		30,000
<b>TOTAL Board-Approved Budget</b>		<b>40,034,736</b>
<b>Proposed Reductions</b>		

Late teacher retirement	(\$32,587)	40,002,149
Athletic Director Savings	(\$12,315)	39,989,834
Oil Savings	(\$16,245)	39,973,589
Gasoline / Diesel Savings	(\$13,750)	39,959,839
Chromebooks	(\$30,000)	39,929,839
Reduction in Summer Help (Custodial / IT)	(\$38,000)	39,891,839
Municipal Retirement - rate updated from 15.24 to 14.95%	(\$13,200)	39,878,639
<b>TOTAL Proposed Revised Board of Education Budget</b>		<b>\$39,878,639</b>

*This reflects a decrease in the budget of \$156,097 and brings us close to the figure which the Mayor put in his budget for the Board's operating budget.*

*I have not included anticipated increases in costs due to COVID-19. I am hopeful that between CARES act funding and FEMA relief we can absorb those costs.*

Motion: The Board moves to reduce the 2020-2021 proposed budget by \$156,097 and submit the reduction to The Town.

Moved by: Steven Loiler  
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

*A roll call vote was called and all Board members were in favor.*

- d. Consideration and action to set dates of May 4<sup>th</sup> - May 8<sup>th</sup> for National Teacher Appreciation Week.

*Typically principals and parents' groups work together to provide a meal for staff to express appreciation. It has been several years since the Board has paid for anything for Teacher Appreciation. I believe this year, given the nature of the expectations which we have had for teachers, it is appropriate to recognize them with a small gift. I am working with the administrators and Jen LeMay on a plan.*

Motion: The Board moves to set the week of May 4<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> as Teacher Appreciation week to recognize the district teachers.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell  
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

## **6. Unfinished business**

- a. COVID19 update

- *Grading / GPA / Class Rank – A OneNote document was provided which contains a draft of a plan to utilize a Pass / Fail grading system for quarter 4 course grades at MHS and trimester 3 overall course grades at Tyl. Standard-based grades at Tyl and the elementary schools would simply indicate that the standard has been addressed or was not addressed during the third*

*trimester of distance learning. Elementary teachers would use narrative comments to provide more detailed information about each student's progress. We hope to finalize plans at the end of this week based on conversations with teachers and area districts. Our goal is that students' grades are not harmed by the distance learning. We working with MHS teachers now to discuss the details of GPA, class rank, earning credit for classes, use of incompletes, etc.*

- *Teachers' Slide Shows on Web Site – Teachers sent in photos of themselves at home with messages to their students, and secretaries at each school put the photos into slide shows set to music which were sent to families and posted on our web site on Monday for our return from vacation. We've received very positive feedback.*
- *Laurie shared initial planning which is taking place regarding the process for returning to school. A detailed document was placed in the Board's OneNote binder. Topics being considered include: mental and physical health of staff, students' mental health, a timeline for re-entry, consideration of implications of state-wide decisions, physical plant operations and physical safety in buildings, financial implications of the re-entry protocols required, academic needs of students including assessment of currently levels and interventions to help students recover from any loss in skills, summer school programming, and extra- and co-curricular programs including sports, music, and drama.*

**7. Committee and liaison reports:**

a. Principals' reports, distance learning

*Distance learning is up and running with the PBL & Pathways students. It is hard to believe that it is only Day 11 (not counting the two weeks of packet work) as it feels like we have been doing this for a long time.*

*Teachers have been nothing short of amazing. They have learned quickly, developed engaging lessons, been dedicated to the unique needs of our students, and demonstrated flexibility throughout this process.*

*Parents are doing the best they can but many are struggling. They aren't teachers and most aren't tech savvy. Palmer staff have been connecting with many families to provide support to the parents as best we can.*

*Students have been remarkable. Despite this being a generation that is connected to technology, most of our students report they miss school and seeing their friends and teachers.*

*Palmer staff have worked through a few issues. One issue was communication with the students as they typically don't answer their phones when a blocked number appears, don't have voicemail set up, and don't regularly use email. Our staff have found that contacting with the parents and then asking to speak to the student and using the Remind app has increased our communication.*

*We are using our non-certified staff (1 para and 3 behaviorists) to meet regularly with students to provide academic support. Of the highest priority are our seniors as well as any disengaged students.*

*Amy Espinoza provided a comprehensive overview of the distance learning process at the*

*elementary schools.*

*Will Klinefelter- A few families and teachers are still struggling with an assortment of technical issues that IT is working through. IT has been fantastic in addressing teacher and parent technical issues as they arise. Teachers are using a variety of platforms to engage with students.*

*Our School Psychologist and Social Worker are working with students through regular check-ins. They are focused on organization, work completion, mental health and engagement. Paras have been assigned to individual students as well as grade level and special education teachers to support student engagement and student learning. Student engagement has been very good. The vast majority of students are completing work and engaging in long distance learning. Feedback from parents has been fantastic. They really appreciate the efforts of our teachers and support staff. Parents loved the slideshow that was sent out on Monday of staff sharing how much they missed their students.*

*MJ Dix- Tyl students have their devices. A few families are still struggling with an assortment of technical issues that IT is working through. Montville Police Department has completed wellness checks on approximately 6-8 families based on lack of response to staff. Teachers are using a variety of platforms to engage with students including Zoom, email, google classroom, text, phone calls and chat features. Counselors, the School Psychologist and Social Worker are working with students through regular check-ins. They are focused on organization, work completion, mental health and engagement. Paras have been assigned to over 50 students for additional support. Full implementation of para support will begin Friday of this week.*

*Student engagement is the single largest challenge. It takes on a variety of forms including lack of work completion in all classes, picking and choosing classes in which to participate, and lack of consistency in completion of assignments. For these students we are heavily modifying expectations to jump start their participation.*

*Heather Sangermano - Distance learning overview; Platform has been Google Classroom.*

*Administrators are meeting weekly with departments, have stressed starting slow and allowing time for students to build skills as solely online learners. We are working to assist students with time management and organization. Students are adjusting and settling in.*

*This week teachers are sending a survey out to their students asking for feedback on what's working well, what they are struggling with, how much time they are spending on the work for the class etc. We will use this to guide us moving forward.*

*We have developed a system for monitoring student engagement. At the end of every week teachers forward names of disengaged students to department heads who then forward to counselors and administrators. Every Monday we divide up the list and reach out to students and families to look at the barriers students are encountering and provide necessary supports.*

*Special education teachers doing an exceptional job supporting their students, collaborating with teachers and spend extensive video time with their students.*

*Social worker and school psychologist are meeting with students on their caseload as well as students/families of concern.*

*Plans for prom and graduation; We are working with senior class advisors/students to brainstorm ideas based upon various scenarios and engaging in ongoing conversations with area high school principals. Working on grading, GPA, earning of credit, and final exams in conjunction with area districts.*

*Our most significant challenges are around re-engaging students who are disengaged.*

b. Board Chair remarks

*I know that people are looking at the school closure is a time to reduce the budget, this is not the time. There are many additional expenses including PPE etc., please remind people of that.*

**8. Superintendent's Report**

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

*I have to say the entire district has accomplished an amazing amount in such a short period of time. And as you have heard each school level has its own successes and challenges. As the saying goes - We will get through this together.*

*My program leaders and I are monitoring student and staff progress through Google Classroom and Zoom on a daily basis. It is quite amazing to see the work and interactions between students and staff. The videos and recordings are quite astounding and it is great to see the enthusiasm on many students' faces. I meet weekly with all special ed. teams as well as our support service teams. I have conferenced with a number of parents on their device needs as well as their frustrations adjusting to this endeavor. As you can imagine this has been a huge undertaking for everyone involved.*

*We have some students in daycare facilities that are unable to access their learning due to lack of support from the providers.*

*My Program leaders and I have begun to schedule PPT meetings this week and hope to catch up with past due annual/triennial meetings prior to scheduling the remaining ones. Although many of these PPT's will not meet the timeline set forth by the State we will not be penalized for them. I am also still waiting for further guidance on specific areas and designations such as birth to 3 students aging in during this time as well as those aging out of the developmental delay exceptionality. This normally occurs when a child reaches the age of 6, however I have heard the guidance coming this week will recommend pushing this back a year.*

*I have also begun the process for ESY programming but am not sure what that will look like just yet, and I am not sure when further guidance will come on this.*

b. Report from Assistant Superintendent – Mrs. Vumback

*It has been a very busy couple of weeks – entering new phases of teaching and learning we did not expect.*

*The teachers and principals have certainly risen to the occasion. They have done an outstanding job ensuring that all students are able to engage in their learning – no matter where they may be at in terms of home support, technology, educational needs, and the like.*

*During this time, teachers had to:*

- *Learn new technology*
- *Learn new ways of delivering instruction*
- *Ensure students can access their education*
- *Support families as they support their children*

*We have participated in daily zoom meetings with teachers and support staff to support them through this process and offer guidance on handling issues as they arise. We have also worked with coaches to ensure delivery of curriculum and instructional technology support as needed. We developed schedules for paras who are returning to work to provide students and families with strong academic and / or organizational support so that we are offering all stakeholders guidance as they navigate distance learning.*

*While each day we may experience a new hurdle or discover a new challenge, we have been continuously impressed with the level of creativity, engagement and commitment we have seen on a daily basis.*

c. Report from the Superintendent – Mrs. Pallin

*Device distribution occurred Monday and Tuesday, any remaining devices will be delivered.*

*Our food service workers have been working in all sorts of weather and they are doing a terrific job. A family has sent a flyer to surprise food service workers with a note in their trunk thanking them for their work which we will send out to families through school messenger.*

*IT staff are working hard to support families in their use of technology through the esupport help desk which is staff until 8:00 each evening. We just purchased a way that IT can remotely connect with students' devices to support them in their homes.*

**9. Information items**

Upcoming Meetings:

- a. April Budget Meeting dates - April 22nd Town, April 23rd Board

**11. Adjournment**

**Item 11. Adjournment**

Motion: To Adjourn

Moved by: Steven Loiler

Seconded by: Bob Mitchell

Vote: Carried (7-0)



The meeting adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sandra Berardy, Chair  
Montville Board of Education  
Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Monica Pomazon, Secretary  
Montville Board of Education

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