

**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION  
September 15, 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 via Zoom**

**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, Sheelagh Lapinski, Joe Aquitante, and Monica Pomazon. Steven Loiler was absent.

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, Amanda Brown, Marc Romano, David Gollsneider, Jill Mazzalupo, Jason Daly, Rob Alves, Will Klinefelter, Laura Zurell, M.J. Dix, Amy Espinoza, and Heather Sangermano, student Board Representative David Baukus and Town Council Liaison Joe Jaskiewicz.

**Item 2. Hearing of delegates and citizens (regarding agenda items only)**

*None.*

**Item 3. Letters and communications**

*We received a letter Olivia Irons regarding retiring the Indian Mascot. Sandra: We will continue to work with the Mohegan Tribe on this decision.*

**Item 4. Approval of the Consent Calendar**

Motion: The Board moved to approve the consent calendar noting the change from February 22 to February 23.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell  
Seconded by: Jim Wood  
Roll Call Vote: All in favor

**a. Budget report from Kathy Lamoureux; Business Manager**

*We have closed out the 19-20 fiscal year with a surplus of approximately six hundred thousand prior to any adjustments made by the accountants. The new accounting firm, Blum Shapiro has started the field work necessary for the audit of the fiscal year in conjunction with the Town. As a result of working with a new accounting firm and the pandemic, this process has required more time of the staff than in the past. On a positive*

*note, we have enjoyed working with the accountants that have been assigned our account and hope to have a long-term relationship with them.*

*Our focus for the next board meeting will be projecting the salary accounts. We will also be preparing a grant that was set up to handle costs related to help offset additional costs that Districts anticipate incurring as a result of the pandemic. Montville has used the ESSER grant (\$219,586) to offset costs for items such as masks, filters, cots, purchased services and some staffing that were required to support the virtual and in-school experience. There are additional ongoing costs this year that have not been budgeted for in the event that we continue in the hybrid model throughout the year, and we will use the next grant to fund some of these costs. Hopefully once the audit is completed, the Town will support funding the 2% account with the 19-20 surplus for a contingency to offset any unexpected costs needed to operate during this unprecedented time. The Administrators will closely monitor spending this year during the beginning of the school year to help manage the budget. This will be a difficult year as we are unable to trend expenses due to the ever changing times we are in.*

**Item 5. New Business**

**a. Consideration and action to approve the Board of Education 2021 meeting dates.**

Motion: The Board moved to approve the 2021 Board of Education meeting dates.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell  
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon  
Roll Call Vote: Carried (8-0)

**b. Consideration and action to appoint a Board Member to serve on the hiring committee for the Elementary Program Leader Position.**

Motion: The Board moved to appoint Dana Ladyga to serve on the hiring committee for the Elementary Program Leader Position.

*Laura Zurell has resigned from her position and we have posted the position; very few applicants though there are two or three that look qualified. Laura has agree to continue to work for us remotely as we work to fill the position.*

*Applications for the position close on 9/21*

*Applications will be reviewed on 9/22*

*Interviews are set for 9/24 and 9/29*

**c. Discussion regarding fall sports.**

*Marc Romano, we are still in conditioning, on the 21<sup>st</sup> we are supposed to go into full tam practices. We are awaiting final word on Thursday.*

*Laurie: At this time we are moving forward with all fall sports except indoor girls' volleyball and football.*

*I recognize the strong feelings of some students and their families who want the district to offer football this fall. As Superintendent, I do not have any special expertise in matters of public health, and I must defer to the appropriate state and local public health authorities. If and when the Connecticut Department of Public Health recommends how school districts can safely permit student athletes to play football and indoor volleyball, I will support and implement those recommendations and authorize this activity to go forward. Before we can make any decision about volleyball and football, the DPH and CIAC need to reach agreement. The letter which the DPH sent to the CIAC today lists multiple concerns that still need to be resolved.*

**d. Discussion regarding staffing.**

*Currently have one vacant teaching position (Mohegan School Psychologist) and one vacant administrator position (Elementary Special Services Program Leader). Have left an additional elementary teacher position unfilled at Oakdale. If all students were to return to school, we will need to fill this position, but for the short term, we are leaving the position unfilled to save money needed for new uncertified staff. We have hired additional permanent substitutes, monitors for halls, bathrooms, and medical care room, school safety at Tyl, and custodians. These positions were not budgeted but were necessary to open school.*

**Item 6. Committee and Liaison reports:**

**a. Principal Reports – Start of School**

*Jill Mazzalupo: It was great to welcome the students back last week. Students, staff and parents have been very cooperative and are adjusting to the hybrid schedule. We have been holding classes outside whenever possible and using technology in creative ways.*

*Heather Sangermano: I mirror what Jill said, students have been respectful of each other and compliant in wearing their masks. All students have seen all of their teachers. Students are happy to be back in school. It has been a good transition.*

*MJ Dix: We had a similar experience, it was great to see how the lunch works, it went very smoothly. Our new staff has worked with students to reinforce social distancing. We find that students prefer to keep their masks on outside so they do not have to socially distance as much. We are planning to begin cross country in a modified version. The kids are happy to be back together.*

*Sandra: Do you think the teachers felt more comfortable after PD? MJ: Absolutely, they needed that time to prepare to determine which lessons would be hybrid vs in-person.*

*David: We are off to a great start at Palmer, really good compliance with the new procedures. It is nice to have the students back in the buildings.*

**Item 7. Superintendent's Report**

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

*It has been an ever changing landscape for special education, we have offered support to the teachers as they navigate this hybrid model. It is a work in progress. I have spent a considerable amount of time at the Transition Academy assisting the long-term teacher sub. The program runs on a hybrid model along with the district. Case managers have been busy developing Implementation Plans required for special education students. We have quite a few DCF 603 cases as well as new homeless cases.*

- b. Report from Assistant Superintendent – Mrs. Dianne Vumback

*As you know we began the school year with six days of professional development using our greatest resource; our teachers. We were able to provide some great professional knowledge to the staff. I continue to monitor to ensure that we are tracking attendance. We are tracking students who were chronically absent last year to touch base upon their first absence.*

- c. Report from the Superintendent – Mrs. Pallin

*Laurie reviewed procedures for isolation or quarantine due to COVID-related symptoms, or positive COVID tests, and the process that will be used if necessary to communicate positive cases and any class, grade level, bus and/or school closure to families. Our medical care rooms have been used several times over the first two weeks of school.*

*Summer maintenance – The Mohegan gym floor is almost done and looks great; the Murphy roof project is completed and the new roof units were turned on this morning; and the entrance at Tyl has been reconfigured to ensure visitors do not have access to the hallways and rest of the school. Hand sanitizers, towels, masks, gloves, and cleaning spray have been placed in every classroom, and shields have been put in place to separate students in every instance where they are not facing in the same direction.*

*Training and PD – All staff have been trained in health and safety protocols by our school nurses, and position-specific training has been provided to paras, monitors, custodial staff, and bus drivers. Prior to the start of school teachers received training in use of technology for hybrid instruction and social / emotional learning.*

**Item 8. Citizens Comments**

*Mark Brochu, I would like to voice a concern regarding communication. Our kindergartner received 15 minutes of instruction the first week of school, we were not clear on what technology would be used, the devices should have been handed out in advance in order to prepare. It would have been helpful to have the actual curriculum. Some teachers are doing a better job than others. I am hoping this week will be better for the distance learning portion. I am frightened at the prospect of going to full distance learning.*

*Dana Ladyga; Speaking as a parent- If we have to go all virtual, I am concerned about the teaching aspect. We need to seriously consider streaming teaching. My children tune out quickly when they do not have a teacher in front of them. My stepson has streamed teaching and I think we need to*

*explore that. I sent my kids to school with their own device, I thought that was an option. Both of my kids were told they have to use the ChromeBooks, my daughter was told last week that she could not use her device. Laurie: That is incorrect communication, I think that was a misunderstanding with a few staff members. Nic sent directions to all teachers today to aid them in connecting to our wireless system. We have been working hard to correct that communication with parents.*

*Dana Ladyga: My son who attends Murphy, loved going outside for lunch, he thought that was cool. He said recess was normal he was able to talk to his friends. My daughter who goes to Tyl was so happy to be there.*

*Grechen Brochu: Why are we not doing distance learning at least on Wednesdays? We have been informed only a morning meeting will be synchronous on Wednesdays. I don't understand why teachers are allowed to choose between synchronous or not, that should be consistent districtwide. I think your teachers are blessed to work in Montville, but I think that their needs should be balanced to the needs of the students.*

*Laurie: We have a lot of work to do to determine what percentage of teachers can participate in synchronous learning at one time, understanding the limitations of our network etc. Gretchen: Are your teachers allowed to teach from home on Wednesdays? Laurie: We are sensitive to all teacher childcare needs so they do have that choice.*

Item 9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Bon Mitchell  
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga  
Vote: Carried (8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 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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