

MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
October 8, 2020 at 5:00 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

Board Chair Sandra Berardy called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Board members participating were: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Carol Burgess, Sheelagh Lapinski, Dana Ladyga, Joe Aquitante, and Monica Pomazon. Steven Loiler were 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 Representatives David Baukus, GiGi Johnston, and Town Council Liaison Joe Jaskiewicz.

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

None.

Item 3. Review the current health data and discuss district instructional model.

Board Chair Sandra Berardy asked Patrick McCormack, Director of the Uncas Health District, to give an update on the current status of the virus in the community. Montville Town data includes cases from Corrigan Correctional Facility but without that date, the numbers in Montville are consistent with other towns of our size. Last week Montville saw seventeen new cases. Norwich and New London are currently seeing a surge. So far the numbers have not made their way into other communities in part to do with housing. This week the town has had six new cases.

Hybrid has worked extremely well for a number of schools, the five days out of school has reduced the contacts and need to isolate. Our goal is to have students and staff reach out when they are symptomatic to avoid having them come into the schools.

Sandra: It seems like what we are doing is working: Patrick: Most of the closures are due to contact tracing not in response to multiple cases.

Superintendent Pallin: I recommend we continue in the hybrid model. I do not believe that we need to consider closing the schools at this time, but I do believe that the hybrid model plays an important role in our ability to keep schools open and avoid spread within the schools. The reasoning behind my recommendation includes:

- *The most recent data released from DPH has the risk factor in New London County rated as “moderate” based upon the 7 day average of new cases and the percent positivity. The State’s recommended school model when the risk level is moderate is the hybrid model.*
- *Students are at least 6 feet apart for much of their day. If we brought both cohorts in they would only be about 3 feet apart in most of our classrooms. While this distance is acceptable based upon CSDE guidelines, it greatly increases the number of close contacts in a classroom.*
- *In the hybrid model, there is only one student in each seat on the bus. On elementary buses, if we brought both cohorts in, there would be two students per seat and bus runs are up to an hour long.*
- *When a person does test positive, we determine the window of time they were contagious by counting back 48 hours from when they first exhibited symptoms. In 3 instances, when we counted back, we determined that the person had not been in school at all when they were contagious because every person has a 5 day window when they are not at school (Wed-Sun for cohort 1 and Sat-Wed. for cohort 2).*
- *When we have determined that there were close contacts, we were able to quarantine relatively small groups of students rather than shutting down a whole school because we are able to maintain greater distances between our students and staff.*
- *If more people were quarantined, that would include more staff members, and, especially at the middle and high school level where teachers teach 5 different classes, it is likely I would need to close the entire school during a quarantine because I would not be able to staff classes.*
- *While some parents have expressed the desire for their students to return to full in person learning, 20% of our students have opted to work fully remotely. Based upon what I am hearing from families, I believe that number will increase if we bring all students back to school and I believe it is very important to keep the greatest number of students in school as we possibly can, even if they are only here in person part time. If I can reduce the need for quarantines by using the hybrid model, I can better maintain the delicate balance which helps people feel safe and keeps students in school.*

I believe that providing hybrid instruction ensures that every student gets some time in school and provides the necessary and appropriate balance between students’ learning needs and the health and safety of our community. Our plan still is to have all students return to school as soon as possible, and we will reassess our decision by looking at the community infection levels at the end of October. I am working closely with the Uncas Health District to review data and evaluate timing for a return to full in-person learning.

Sandra Berardy – Board Members are your comfortable with that? Board: Yes

Item 4. IT Report – Nic Savoie

It is no secret that our network slows down daily. Our network was not designed for what is happening today. This change has put pressure on our wireless network. When you look at the data you can see it going up and down. In talking with Laurie I think we need to bring in an outside

service to see what is going on and offer suggestions. We feel the slowness every day. The network was not designed to do what we are asking it to do. I have reached out to two companies for quotes for a network study. We would receive a report of their recommendations and it would be up to us to decide what we want to tackle. This may involve some big money, I think it is going to be very expensive. We may need a multi-year plan. We don't know if this is a hardware or software issue. Monica: What is the cost? Nic: Around \$7,000 depending on our involvement. Jim: What is the time frame? Nic: I asked to have it done by January. Jim: Is there something that could be done to get us through this school year? Nic: It depends on the report findings. The HS and MS have newer equipment and may be a simpler fix. Switches can be changed out while school is in session, fiber pulls are more complicated. Dana: I think we should spend the \$7-8 grand to have them do the entire project, this should be the #1 priority for the district. Bob: The speed to get it done is the biggest factor for me. Dana: We can't even have this discussion until they come back with their analysis.

Item 5. Consideration and action to approve the contract of CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 Montville Paraprofessionals Chapter as recommended by the negotiating committee.

Motion: The Board moved to approve the contract of CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 Montville Paraprofessionals Chapter.

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

Two Members left the meeting before the vote, the vote reflects this.

Superintendent Pallin reviewed the changes in the contract with The Board.

Item 6. Consideration and action to approve the contract of CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 Montville Secretaries Chapter as recommended by the negotiating committee.

Motion: The Board moved to approve the contract of CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 Montville Secretaries Chapter.

Moved by: Monica Pomazon
Seconded by: Dana Ladyga
Roll Call Vote: Carried (7-0)

Item 7. Citizens' Comments

None

Item 8. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Jim Wood
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (6-0)

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM

Respectfully submitted by,

Sandra Berardy, Chair
Montville Board of Education
Minutes Approved: _____

Monica Pomazon, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

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