



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**

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: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Carol Burgess, Sheelagh Lapinski, Timothy Shanahan, Florence Turner, Tina Grove and Tara Crossley.

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Interim Principal Rob Alves, Director of Facilities Steve Carroll and Director of Technology Nicholas Savoie.

Item 2. Citizens' Comments, (regarding agenda items only)

Board Chair advised the audience that Citizens will have opportunity to discuss the honorific use of the "Indians" nickname under Item 4

Karen Duhamel, 1 Fox Hollow Dr., Oakdale, Parent, supports new tennis courts at the Montville High School. Encouraged BOE members to honor the capital request.

Item 3. Discussion and possible action to make discontinuation of the mask policy effective on Feb. 28 instead of March 1

Motion: To make February 28, 2022 the date of discontinuation of the mask policy.

Moved by: Bob Mitchel
Seconded by: Tara Crossley
Vote: Carried (9-0)

Item 4. Discussion and possible action to discontinue the use of the honorific “Indians” nickname at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School and Montville High School and to replace any logos which include Native American symbols with the logos displaying only a large orange T and M

Motion: To Postpone decision until a Special Meeting of the Board of Education on March 14, 2022.

Moved by: Bob Mitchel
Seconded by: Carol Burgess
Vote: Carried (7-2)

Laurie shared the following statement: The legislation which was passed in the June, 2021 special session regarding use of Native American names, symbols or images goes into effect for the fiscal year ending June, 2023 and certification forms are due to the Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs by March 15th, 2022.

PA 21-2 JSS Sec. 63 states “...no municipality shall be paid a grant from the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund established pursuant to section 3-55i, if a school under the jurisdiction of the board of education for such municipality, or an intramural or interscholastic athletic team associated with such school, uses any name, symbol or image that depicts, refers to or is associated with a state or federally recognized Native American tribe or a Native American individual, custom or tradition, as a mascot, nickname, logo or team name” without written tribal consent.

First I’d like to make a point of clarification – Changing of honorific names of schools, roads, and boroughs is not under consideration. This means that Mohegan Elementary School will retain its current name as will names of locations in town.

As you are aware, Ron McDaniel and I have been in communication with the Mohegan Tribe regarding the use of the honorific nickname “Indian” at Tyl and MHS for several years. We are all in agreement that the value of the relationship between the town, the schools, and the tribe is much more important than the use of a nickname, and we don’t want the use of the Indian nickname to be a polarizing issue for the town and the tribe. We also recognize that the use of the Indian nickname is not a Montville-specific decision, but has larger, national impact. We do not have a letter of consent from the tribe to continue to use the nickname, but I believe what we do have from the tribe is more important...we have their commitment to stand together as a partner with us as they have for generations. One illustration of this partnership is the tribe’s offer to provide financial support for costs associated with the change.

Working with Rob Alves and Meagan Sears, it is our recommendation that we discontinue use of the Indian nickname and simply refer to ourselves with great pride as “Montville.” There may be a time in the future when we explore another nickname, but for the present, we think it is wise to pause and reflect on our identity as the Montville school community.

We have already made some adjustments in preparation this legislated change. Our newer uniforms do not reference the Indians or the feather logo, and many of our logos have been replaced to show only a large orange T or M without depiction of a tribal image. We are currently developing a list of the items which would need to be replaced in order to be in compliance with legislation.

I am pleased to have been part of the collaborative dialogue with the Mayor, Chief of the Mohegan Tribe Lynn Malerba, and Chair of the Mohegan Tribal Council James Gessner. I am very hopeful our community will unite and stand together with the tribe as we make this change.

Board Chair Wills Pike asked for Citizens’ Comments regarding discontinuing the use of the honorific “Indians” nickname.

Jonathan Wilson, asked why are we going to change now?

Jerry Roberts, 79 Massachusetts Rd, Oakdale, former student, requested that the tribe allow us to consider using the Indians name and current logo and asked that the tribe reconsider

Lauren Terni, 24 Anderson Lane, Oakdale, Parent, stated that her mother-in-law is a Mohegan Indian, and she wants the name to remain the same. Lauren read a statement from her mother-in-law in which she state that the Indian name signals honor, resilience, and bravery and requested that the Board hold off on decisions so other tribal members could be involved in the decision.

Board Chair Wills Pike explained this is a difficult decision and is at a state level. It’s not about the money, but rather the relationship with the Mohegan Tribe. Superintendent and the Mayor have worked over 3 years with the tribe on this issue. Doesn’t support an extension on the decision.

Several BOE members expressed their concerns on this subject. Tim Shanahan mentioned that other Mohegans had expressed support for keeping the name on social media. Mayor McDaniel responded that the tribe has held numerous talking circles with members of the tribe.

Bob stated that a decision needed to be made tonight due to a hard deadline of the 15th. Laurie explained that the form does have the option of stating that we have not made a decision, but requires documentation explaining why a decision could not be reached.

Carol Burgess and Tara Grove expressed support for the original motion. Jim and Tim supported delaying a decision to allow for more time.

Item 5. Review of Capital Requests

Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, justified the transportation request. Explained the lease to buy option for the buses. The age of five of our buses are at the end of their useful life

Steve Carroll, Director of Facilities, justified the following Capital Improvements in the next fiscal year, explained how several items already exceed life expectancy:

- 1. Tyl Roof Replacement -end of life \$1,050,320.00*
- 2. Tyl, Caulking of exterior joints & windows, end of life - \$177,900*
- 3. Tyl, Boiler Replacement -end of life - \$748,000.00*
- 4. Murphy, Palmer & High School Security Grant - \$82,320.50*
- 5. Palmer, Roofing Section of Gym & Vocational Room -\$93,200.00*
- 6. Tyl, Replacement of Public Address System-over 30 years old and outdated - \$20,475.00*
- 7. Districtwide, Air Conditioning Study- \$48,600, Wills Pike will take request to the State ARP meeting.*
- 8. Tyl, Sidewalk -\$33,225, town sidewalk*

Wills Pike, Board Chair, opened additional discussion of tennis courts by stating that working together with the town is required. He is in support of one set of tennis courts, combined for the town and the high school not two, stating this would be more efficient use of funding, and might be funded with the American Rescue Plan. Laurie stated that six courts are needed, so the current plans for courts at Camp Oakdale would not meet the school's needs.

Item 6. Continued discussion of 2022-2023 Board of Education Budget

Board of Education members continued to discuss the operational budget items. Wills Pike, Board Chair, plans to advocate this budget with the town. This budget is a 4.81%

increase compared to previous fiscal year, however the Board has been provided with extreme evidence that all items in this budget are required.

Item 7. Citizens' comments

Karen Duhamel, 1 Fox Hollow Dr., Oakdale, Parent, supports the operational budget and asked for additional clarification on Mr. Pike's plans for the Tennis Courts. She stated that if the six courts are at Camp Oakdale, she requests that the Board provides transportation to the courts.

Susan Corrice, Parent, expressed concerns about the tennis courts and whether the site would be cleaned up if the courts were moved. She also expressed concerns with the budget survey, saying it was hard to provide answers to the questions in format provided.

Item 8. Future Agenda Items

March 8th Special Budget Meeting – Please submit questions or ideas to Kathy or Laurie prior to the meeting.

March 14th Special Meeting: Discussion and possible action to discontinue the use of the honorific "Indians" nickname at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School and Montville High School and to replace any logos which include Native American symbols with the logos displaying only a large orange T and M

Item 9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Timothy Shanahan

Seconded by: Bob Mitchel

Vote: Carried (9-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education
Minutes Approved: _____

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education