



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
September 19, 2023 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: James Wood, Bob Mitchell, Carol Burgess, Sheelagh Lapinski, Timothy Shanahan, Tina Grove and Lisa Terry. Board Member Lilyana Sherbanee was absent.

Also participating were: Superintendent Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, and Administrators Paula LaChance, Rob Alves, Greg Gwudz, Jessica Lilienthal, William Klinefelter, Jill Mazzalupo, David Gollsneider, and Liz Dumond. Town Council Liaison Colleen Rix was absent.

Item 2. Alterations to the agenda

- a. Remove 6h, Confidential hearing of student matter.

Motion: To remove 6h from agenda

Moved by: Bob Mitchell

Second by: Tina Grove

Vote: Carried (8-0)

- b. Adjust 6f, Consideration and action on recommendation to present Air Conditioning Engineering Study to the town

Motion: To adjust agenda item 6f

Moved by: Bob Mitchell

Second by: Timothy Shanahan

Vote: Carried (8-0)

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

None.

Item 4. Letters and Communications

Bob read letter sent on Sept. 14 by Rachel Dash-Dougherty advocating for funding for installation of air conditioning in Montville Public Schools.

Wills shared Email dated August 17 from Brian James regarding concerns about topics taught in classrooms, opposition to the statute regarding supplying feminine hygiene products in male bathrooms, and statutes regarding recognition of gender

Item 5. Approval of the consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell

Seconded by: Tim Shanahan

Vote: Carried (8-0)

Item 6. New Business

- a. Explanation of change to location of BOE agendas, minutes and supporting documents.

Laurie explained - If you go to the district website, BOE Agenda and Minutes, you will pull up a table which has links to the agenda, all supporting documents, and ultimately meeting minutes. This change was made in response to new legislation which requires that all documents shared with Board members be posted on the district website. We will no longer be using OneNote binders as repositories for Board documents.

- b. Consideration and action to review and approve the draft of 2023-2024 Board Strategies and goals developed during the August Board retreat

Motion: To approve Board Strategies and Goals developed during the August Board retreat.

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

Laurie explained - Strategy 4: Videos of BOE Meetings - If the Board wants to be able to capture presentations, etc., would need someone to man the camera. We have a student worker available at \$15/hour. We would need to purchase a camera (about \$250). Board members would need to speak loudly since we don't have individual speakers for every Board member. We would post the video the next day on a district YouTube Channel and link it to the Board website. Would you like to move forward with this by testing it at our October meeting to see the video quality? Board members agreed to give it a try for October meeting.

Strategy 7: Role of student representative - suggest that this be reviewed collaboratively with the student reps, MHS administrators and the Communication Subcommittee for further discussion at its October meeting. Alexa and Adam agreed to attend the October 5th meeting.

Strategy 12. Review of grant-funded expenses is on the agenda for later in the meeting

Another item that came up at the retreat was the desire to provide an explanation to audience regarding Board's response to comments made during the audience of citizens. Your Board documents include our existing statement regarding public comments and one shared by CABE. It was agreed that a review of these documents would also go to the Communications Subcommittee?

- c. Consideration and action to reschedule Board and committee meetings from October 17 to October 10 as a result of MEA Negotiations

Motion: To reschedule Board and committee meeting to October 10th.

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

- d. Consideration and action to approve and submit the application to CABE for the Board Recognition Award.

Motion: To approve and submit to CABE for the Board Recognition Award.

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

Laurie explained - Jen is currently compiling the documentation to apply for Level II recognition again this year. We need a motion from the Board to submit that application on your behalf. It is due on Oct. 5th.

- e. Review and possible consideration for approval of the Ed Specs dated September 19, 2023 for the HVAC project for Leonard J. Tyl Middle School

Motion: To approve Ed Specs for the HVAC project for Leonard J. Tyl Middle School.

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

Laurie explained - Similar to last month's motions for the roof project, we need to re-approve the Educational Specifications for the Tyl HVAC and Boiler project which were approved last fall as we prepare to apply for the next round of HVAC grants. These grants are due in December, and we need to refresh the motions made by the Board and the Town. The Ed Specs have been modified to reflect the fact that the boiler project was completed over the summer at a cost to date of \$768,365 which is about \$20,00 above the \$748,000 which the town bonded for this project. The grant does allow reimbursement for projects which have already been completed. I have also asked the town for updated motions authorizing us to apply for the Tyl HVAC project, authorizing the submission of schematic drawings with the application and establishing a building committee comprised of the Board of Education and the superintendent for this project.

- f. Air Conditioning Engineering Study Discussion

Motion: To present Air Conditioning Engineering Study to the town.
Motion as adjusted: Consideration and action on recommendation to present Air Conditioning Engineering Study to the town

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

Laurie explained - On Sept. 12, we received the results of the air conditioning study which was funded in the town's capital plan (\$48,600). The Board documents include budgets for each school and a summary of costs. Not including Tyl (whose costs are included in the HVAC project above), air conditioning our other five schools would cost about \$15.3 million. If we were to receive HVAC grant reimbursement, the town's cost would be estimated at \$4,422,645. It is important to remember that the HVAC grant is a competitive grant with \$244 million to be allocated throughout the state. There is no guarantee that our grant request would be funded. I am also not certain that there is enough time to secure the funding needed for the town's portion of this project in time for the Dec. 2023 grant submission deadline if the Board wanted to move this project forward. It is our practice not to share maps of our schools online for security reasons but the study details all of the un-air-conditioned spaces in the schools and plans to cool them.

- g. Consideration and action to review and approve the Annual Calendar for 2024-2025

Motion: To approve the Annual Calendar for 2024-2025

Moved by: Wills Pike

Seconded by: Lisa Terry

Vote: Carried (8-0)

Laurie explained - This calendar mirrors our current calendar in most ways and aligns with the recently approved regional calendar. The April vacation is moved to the third week to align with the region and Good Friday.

- h. Confidential hearing of student matter

Removed from agenda

Item 7. Old Business

- a. Review of ESSER Grant Use

Current Staff in the ARP ESSER Grant: \$827,773

Tutors for MHS and Tyl tutoring centers (5) - \$165,000

Teachers - \$490,512

Elementary Classroom Teachers - 5

Special Education Teacher - 1

PreSchool Teacher - 1

Social Worker (1) - \$58,133
SSO's (4) - \$172,300

The state department has communicated to me that the US Dept. of Education announced yesterday that there will be an extension to the liquidation period for ARP ESSER funds. Therefore, we will try to preserve as much ARP ESSER funding as we possibly can for liquidation in the 2024-2025 school year to slow down the need to try to absorb some of these costs in the budget, however this will probably not allow staff salary payments. We will be working with principals to determine which items we need to move to our 24-25 budget request, which will be cut, and which might remain in the grant for next year. We will have completely expended our ESSER II grant by Sept. 30 of this year.

b. Discussion regarding before and after school childcare

Laurie explained - In our area, some schools have partnered with a daycare provider (e.g. Carelot), some districts run their own program. At this time, I don't believe the district has the capacity to run an internal program; would need to be operated by a non-profit or private daycare

Concerns -

- *Quality of program,*
- *Availability of staff,*
- *Location in building and storage of supplies,*
- *Effect on families if the program can't be staffed or isn't financially viable after families have made commitments to it,*
- *Measuring true interest in the program without knowing actual cost, location, etc.,*
- *Effect on other local private daycare businesses.*
- *In the worst-case scenario, if our program resulted in a loss of children at another daycare and then our program was not viable, families would have a further reduction in available care.*

The Head Start program at Murphy has not been able to open this year due to an inability to staff the program. Head Start has multiple programs without staff, not just Montville. Our past experience with before school care in the building closed due because it was fiscally viable.

Board members shared their views concerning before and after school childcare.

Motion: To talk to the Town Council regarding before and after school childcare

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

c. Update on Tennis Court Project

Laurie explained - Based upon issues the installer has had completing projects which were in line before ours due to delays caused by weather and lack of materials, our project is expected to start next week. It is anticipated that concrete will be poured around the middle of October. If winter concrete is needed based upon temperatures, the installer will do that at no additional cost to the district. The concrete needs to cure for a month before the courts can be coated and painted. That cannot happen with November temperatures, and therefore, it is anticipated that the courts will not be completed in time for the spring season. Classic Turf can line the bare concrete so the courts could be used for practice in the spring season, but not for games. The cost for lining the bare concrete would be \$1500 per court. This could be completed as soon as the courts are warm enough to allow masking tape to adhere to the concrete surface. We are attempting to ask Classic Turf to absorb at least a portion of the cost for lining the courts, but at this time, they have not agreed to that. We have strongly expressed our extreme dissatisfaction with the timing of our project. The project will be fully completed by June 15.

Item 8. Committee and Liaison Reports:

- a. Policy – James Wood, meeting held on 9/19, approved revisions to (3) policies due to new state stature.
- b. Education Evaluation – no meeting
- c. Communications Committee- no meeting
- d. Montville Education Foundation – Laurie attended meeting where they discuss the golf tournament and Mohegan Sun concert fundraisers. The fall grant season is opening now.
- e. LEARN - Bob Mitchell explained LEARN's plan to purchase old school at 51 Daniels Ave. Discussed the high cost of building new schools. Groton Magnet school is #1 in the state.
- f. CABA/NSBA Carol Burgess, had meeting where they discussed CABA's role in response to new legislation to develop orientation for new board members.
- g. Montville Youth Services Bureau - no meeting.
- h. Student Board Representatives- see below
- i. Principals' Report - Opening of School – provided in Board docs.

Senior Class Representative: Alexa Beams –

Good evening everyone. It is nice to see you all again for another school year. All of Montville Schools have gotten off to a good start, despite the heat and days of early dismissal a couple weeks ago. On the first day, students at the high school were greeted with encouragement from student government's chalk drawings at the front entrance. Unfortunately, Oakdale Elementary's plans to chalk their front entrance ended up being rained out.

Fall sports are in full swing at both MHS and Tyl. A few highlights include football's first game and first win of the season, the boys cross country team becoming the wheeler invitational champions for the second year in a row, and volleyball's current 3 game winning streak. Tyl middle school's cross-country team began their practices last week and today they hosted their first meet against Clark Lane.

From just these first few weeks of school, I have observed students truly embracing our new mascot. Athletics have taken on the motto of "the way of the wolf", our student section has been named the "wolf den", and spectators of the football games are entertained with appearances from our mascot. I believe the wolf mascot is bringing back Montville pride among students and will continue to as the year progresses.

As mentioned at the June board meeting, the role of student representatives will be refined to better serve the needs of Montville schools and Adam and I look forward to the input of the board and community of what they would like to see from us moving forward.

Junior Class Representative: Adam Gallagher

If you don't know me already, my name is Adam Gallagher. I am extremely honored to be in this position, and I look forward to cooperating with you all the next few years. I was told there was interest in expanding the role I play, and I have no objections. Please tell me anything I can do to make myself more useful or any information you would like me to be aware of. As a member of the student body, I know I have an insight unlike others here, so please let me know if there's any way I can be of assistance. As for the beginning of the school year, fall sports have started up, and our volleyball team and soccer team each came out the gates with wins. Student Government has continued their weekly meetings with Jesse Bradham as student government president. Our homecoming is in the works, and this week we'll start brainstorming future spirit week and pep rally ideas. This Friday our poet laureate candidates, including myself, will be reading some of our poems to some faculty and possibly an audience of students. I, and I assume my competitors, have all been working hard to create our lovely pieces and perform them. Some of

the other participants are friends of mine, so I'm excited to see what they wrote. Wish me luck! Once again, I am proud to be here and look forward to the coming years. I will try my absolute best to deliver whatever may be asked of me. Thank you.

-

Item 9. Information Items

Future Dates

Sept. 20 - MEA Negotiations, 4:45

Sept. 27 – Board meeting, student hearing, 5:00

Oct. 2 - MEA Negotiations, 4:45

Oct. 5 - Communications Committee Meeting - Role of Student Board Reps

Oct. 10 - Special Board Meeting - CAFE Presentation on New Legislation

Item 10. Report on District Operating Plan (Vision, Goals, and Strategies)

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

We have had a lot of changes this year with several new special education teachers hired across the district.

We have 6 new teachers at the elementary level along with a full time Social Worker at Oakdale. At the secondary level we are fully staffed with four new special education teachers on staff at Tyl and two at Palmer. All teachers across the district have made a smooth transition into their positions.

We currently have approximately 402 special education students in district, 32 in magnet schools and 17 placed in out of district programs.

I was able to bring 4 OOD students back to Palmer and they have made a nice transition into their programs.

At the beginning of the month I attended the Annual Back to School conference hosted by state's Bureau of Special Education. At this conference they discussed the CSDE's obligation under the IDEA to:

- 1.) make annual accountability determination measures for each district in the state*
- 2.) to publicly report on these determinations.*

- *Last year's data included a new "Results" Indicator, for the first time "Chronic Absenteeism" for students with disabilities. I am proud to say Montville made the*

list of those districts that had between 10-25% reduction in Chronic Absenteeism for students with disabilities. I would like to give a shout out to Diane for the work she continues to do across the district. When my supervisors and I were feeling pretty proud when they announced this at the conference.

b. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Dianne Vumback

Attendance

I want to give a shout out to the administration at the middle and high school. They saw incredible decreases in their chronic absent rates from previous post-Covid years. I have been at their attendance meetings and I can't say enough how impressed I am with their knowledge about the students, their families and their needs. Elementary saw a decline the previous year and continue to hold close to those numbers. All schools have an attendance team that works with the families to get their students to school and the use of a strength-based model has help curve the absences (meaning the first call is not where are you, but "hey, we missed you in class today" or "we miss how you make everyone laugh").

EL Students

We have over 100 students who qualify for EL services. This year we have a few students who a considered "new arrivals" or "newcomers" meaning they are relatively new to the United States and their native language is not English. We have a couple of students who are considered SLIFE students (students with limited or interrupted formal education) and can not read and write in their native language - which makes it extra challenging to educate them in English as well. Making sure the students feel valued, welcome and supported is our top priority as we build educational programming and supports around their needs. Faith Emond, EL District Coordinator has been working diligently on providing the resources needed to staff.

Mental Health Team

Paula and I met with the MH Team which is comprised of our social workers, school psychologists, and special education supervisors to organize our community supports for students and families. As in the past, we are partnering with Project Courage at the secondary schools. UCFS is now located at Tyl as well as MHS for therapeutic services. Both Project Courage and UCFS have a case load of students already. New this year is UCC (Urgent Crisis Center) – which is funded by DCF – for students up to the age of 18 who are experiencing a mental health crisis and don't require hospitalization. We had a family use this service already and were really pleased with the quick support in a therapeutic setting versus sitting in the ER for hours in a hospital setting. We are working with LEARN on a trauma informed care pilot that will build awareness and understanding of trauma informed concepts and strategies and we will begin that training within our Pathway programs.

c. Report from the Superintendent – Laurie Pallin

Negotiations - held our first meeting last week and will meet again tomorrow night. It is important that we have a consistent team so any Board members who want to commit to attend these meetings to follow through the process should plan to attend.

Start to the Year - has been extremely positive. Administrators' hard work to lay the groundwork for a successful start was very obvious. New Smart Boards are in place at MHS and Tyl; work began this week to install them at Palmer and elementary schools. IT has set up students and staff with online resources. Bus routes are running very smoothly; very few concerns have risen to my level. At this point runs are ending at 4:30 each day which is our goal.

Item 11. Citizen's Comments

Beth Richmond - Upcoming play by the drama department was written by Montville High School grad while attending UCONN.

Item 12. Board Chair Remarks

None, discussed previously.

Item 13. Future Agenda Items

Paraprofessional staffing

Item 14. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Lisa Terry

Seconded by: James Wood

Vote: Carried (8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____