



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION  
April 20, 2021 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.**

**Library Media Center**

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

Board Chair Sandra Berardy called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

All participated in the pledge. Board members attending were: Bob Mitchell, James Wood, Monica Pomazon, Sheelagh Lapinski, Carol Burgess, and Wills Pike. Board Members Joe Aquitante and Dana Ladyga were absent.

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Administrators Paula LaChance, M.J. Dix, Jill Mazzalupo, Theresa Gouveia, David Gollsneider, and Heather Sangermano

Alterations to the agenda

**Add Item 6h:**

Consideration and action to revise the 2021-2022 school calendar to align with regional calendar by moving April vacation from April 11-15 to the week of April 18-22

**Add agenda item 6i:**

Consideration and action to reduce the Board's operating budget for 21-22 by \$70,000 in salaries and benefits for transportation. This brings the Board's budget to \$39,816,140 or a 1.39% increase from last year.

**Add agenda item 6j:**

Consideration and action to move funds from the salary accounts to equipment and purchased services to cover the costs of the Districtwide Infrastructure and Technology Upgrade (estimated at about \$510,000) and the Mohegan, Murphy, Oakdale, Palmer Wireless Project (estimated at \$75,000) and delete these items from the capital plan. The

allocation of funding between equipment and purchased services will be made once a bid for the infrastructure project has been approved.

**Add agenda item 6k:**

Consideration and action to move funds from the tuition accounts to equipment to cover the cost of the District Server (estimated at 95,000) and the Tyl Clock System (estimated at \$27,000) and delete these items from the capital plan.

**Motion: To approve the alterations to the agenda.**

Moved by: Robert Mitchell

Seconded by: Wills Pike

Vote: Carried (7-0)

**Item 2. Presentations**

**Montville Marvels Virtual Presentations**

**Secondary Principals shared the April Montville Marvels presentations as follows:**

**Leonard J. Tyl Middle School** - Sean DeCora; for his positive mindset despite all of the challenges the year has brought, actively engaging in his classes and lessons, and completing all of his assignments on time.

Caiden Myers; for his outstanding poetry and contributions to the drama program, including his most recent performance in the digital play "Home Schooled."

**Montville High School** - Wendy Halsey, Karen Daniels, Kelly Brooks, Julie Perry, Nicholas McAneny, Hollyann Moriarty and Anthony Occhialini for their commitment to facilitating student choice and authentic products within their curriculum.

**Palmer** - Zy'Ionna Holmes, for working extremely hard during Q3 on her academics, challenging herself and showing remarkable improvement in the area of SEL by using coping skills to help her regulate her emotions.

**Recognition of Carol Dodson, Director of Food Services**

*Laurie recognized Carol Dodson for her selection as School Nutrition Association of Connecticut's Rising Star Director of the Year for the 2020-2021 school year. Carol was recognized for her commitment to the success of our district's nutrition program and her work to insure the health and wellness of Connecticut's school children. She was nominated and evaluated by her peers in school nutrition, and selected as the director who exemplifies the best of child nutrition programs through her professionalism and program innovations.*

*Carol will be honored and presented with this award at SNACT's virtual Award Ceremony on Thursday May 6 at 5pm. I wanted to publicly honor her and congratulate her exemplary efforts in child nutrition!*

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

*None*

**Item 4. Letters and Communications**

*Monica provided information about three letters sent to the Board. Two from parents (V. Hintz and K. Duhamel) requesting that the Board consider changing the policy regarding diplomas of academic distinction to eliminate the requirement that students be in the top 10% of the class and base the recognition solely on GPA and a third letter from B. Casey asking the Board to voice their opposition to legislation eliminating religious exemptions for vaccines.*

**Item 5. Approval of the Consent Calendar**

**Motion: To approve the consent calendar.**

Moved by: James Wood

Seconded by: Monica Pomazon

Vote: Carried (7-0)

**a. Budget update; Kathy Lamoureux**

*As you know, when the 20-21 budget was developed, we assumed a normal school year, which did not occur. When the 21-22 budget was presented, the 20-21 budget reflected about an \$825,000 surplus. Projecting the surplus in this year's budget continues to be difficult because of the uncertainty of our educational model. The surplus at this time is projected be around \$1.2 million with \$700,000 coming from the salary line items; \$200,000 from employee benefits, \$200,000 coming from the tuition accounts and \$100,000 from purchased services. However, there are still 2.5 months left in the fiscal year and therefore this is subject to change. I will to keep you apprised at our monthly meetings.*

*This year's budget was developed prior to our knowledge that Board would receive about \$800,000 in funding from the COVID Relief Funds and the ESSER I grant. These grants were used this year for salaries, purchased services and supplies to help offset the costs of the changing the educational model during the pandemic.*

***Salaries:***

*We have projected a surplus in salaries throughout the school year in most of our staff object lines. Examples of causes of this surplus include:*

- The hybrid plan (4 instead of 5 day weeks for bus drivers, monitors, substitutes, cafeteria workers)*
- A late teacher retirement who we elected not to replace due to the number of elementary remote learners*
- Delayed hiring for several positions which we could not fill in time for the start of school*
- Several staff members on unpaid leave*
- The decision not to fill a library media secretary and Career Resource position due to COVID eliminating the use of these gathering spaces, and not to fill vacant para positions due to the number of remote / homeschool students*
- After school activities which did not operate*
- Staff using the FFCRA leave (at a significant pay reduction) to care for their children out of school.*

*The non-certified salary line for transportation reflects a significant surplus because, in addition to the hybrid plan, we did not have any field trips, ran fewer extra curricula activities, reduced internships, and continue to be unable to hire the bus drivers needed to fully staff our routes.*

***Employee Benefits:***

*Much of the surplus in employee benefits is directly related to the surplus in salaries. Additionally, at the end of last year, the Board paid a bill for unemployment costs. However, after the bill was paid, it was determined that the federal government would help offset this cost because it was related to the pandemic. In addition to this credit from the government, there has been minimal cost associated with unemployment this year, and we were able to rehire the one teacher that was laid off last year.*

***Tuitions:***

*The regular education tuition surplus was a result in a decrease from our projected numbers in enrollment in the magnet schools. When we develop the budget each year, we roll up the students currently in the program to the next grade in the magnet program and establish the opening grade level using the current enrollment at that grade. Unfortunately, we are not notified of the actual enrollment until after the budget is developed.*

*The special education surplus is a result of several out-placed students who moved out of the district and movement in state facilities during the year. We do believe we will have a new out-placement this spring which indicates the volatility in this account.*

***Purchased Services:***

*In aggregate, these objects reflect a surplus which is mainly the result of the reduction in contracted services for transportation for outplaced students.*

***Supplies:***

*Currently the supply orders are being completed and processed for next school year. At this time we anticipate purchasing supplies as originally projected when the budget was developed.*

***Surplus Recommendation:***

*Based on the anticipated surplus, Laurie and I recommend that the Board consider funding the network project, server, the wireless project, and Tyl clock system out of this year's operating budget appropriation. This would allow us to complete the RFQ and award a contract this spring for the network project so we can schedule the work to ensure the network is ready for the next school year. At the Board's request, we had hoped to begin the network project as quickly as possible in order to maximize students' access to online resources and remote instruction.*

*The Mayor's proposed capital budget for the schools has these projects, along with the Tyl Middle School Roofing project, funded out of the ESSER II grant. We have concerns about the eligibility of the Tyl roofing project for ESSER II funding. Ventilation projects are clearly eligible, but our capital request was for roofing only; we had removed the ventilation units from the project.*

*If you remember last meeting Laurie explained her recommendation for the ESSER II grant which was to address documented student learning loss along with meeting the social and emotional needs that has occurred during the pandemic. Using our operating budget surplus to address these capital needs would enable us to meet both our IT/facilities needs and our students' learning needs.*

*Transfers totaling \$707,000 from this year's operating budget surplus to fund items in our capital request are proposed in agenda items 6j and 6k.*

*If the transfers are made, this still leaves us a surplus of about \$490,000 for unanticipated costs and possible continued support of capital requests at future meetings.*

*If the town does fund the 2% account with the funds returned from the Board of Education FY2020 budget, we may be able to combine this with any additional surplus in the 20-21 budget to cover the costs of other capital expenditures. Our 2% account currently has \$332,849 and an additional request to the Town Council to add the surplus from FY2020 of \$605,360 is pending.*

*However, we would want to insure that the 2% account would maintain some balance to account for unanticipated costs going forward.*

### **21-22 Budget**

*When we presented the budget, we indicated that we would bring items forward to the Board so you can consider any adjustments to the FY22 budget based on more current predictions of costs. After reviewing the current year's budget, we recommend a reduction to the transportation budget by \$70,000 to account for reduced staffing. Based on the driver shortage we have experienced for the past several years, we have realized it is unlikely we will be able to staff at the level that was budgeted for. While we are still actively recruiting and hiring drivers, we don't believe we will be fully staffed next year. This reduction will be allocated among salary, FICA, Medicare, pension and health insurance objects if approved.*

*We are continuing to work with the insurance brokers for the health insurance, property, and workers' compensation premiums to see if any further changes to the 21-22 budget are warranted.*

*It is important to note, the surplus for this fiscal year is largely resulting from changes related to the pandemic and the additional funding from the CRA and ESSER I grant. As Laurie explained, unlike this year, the FY 2022 budget was compiled with knowledge of the ability to utilize the ESSER II grant and American Recovery Act funds for expected costs going forward and therefore they were not built into the operating budget. If the ESSER II grant is not used for these purposes, we will need to add some additional expenses to the operating budget. There are anticipated costs that will not continue after the grant ends but must be funded next year.*

### **Capital Project Report**

- The Tyl Teachers' Parking has been advertised with a mandatory pre-bid meeting April 20, 2021 on with a bid opening on May 17, 2021.*
- The Security Grant for \$178,224.70 was funded over two years. This grant was for Tyl and the three elementary schools. Currently there is approximately \$28,000 remaining to be spent. We are waiting to ensure the purchase orders close out for the amount encumbered before we spend the remaining amount on the cameras and walkie talkies we requested. We have submitted a request for reimbursement to the state for the security grant based on payments to date of \$129,704.50 which will result in a reimbursement of \$89,275 once it is reviewed.*
- The van that was approved in the last year's capital plan has been purchased using the State Contract pricing.*
- We have secured pricing for the lease of the bus approved in last year's capital budget but the costs are higher than originally budgeted for. Tonight's agenda does call for a motion which will allow us to make up*

*the difference in costs and align with the capital plan that was approved last year.*

- *The Mohegan Gym Floor has been completed with a small surplus.*
- *The gym floors that were approved in the amount of \$75,000 in last year's capital plan capital plan have been postponed until the gyms are no longer being used for student spacing for the lunch program. We are not clear if we will still need to separate students for meals next year or not.*
- *Tyl Roofing still has outstanding amount which will be used to complete an end-of-life study on each of the air handlers.*

*Wills Pike spoke in support of the budget transfers to fund capital requests. He asks that the Board also consider funding replacement of the boiler at Tyl with any additional surplus. This will be reviewed in May when we have a better picture of the year-end budget position and we can have Steve Carroll present at the meeting.*

#### **Item 6. 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 Moved to authorize the superintendent to apply for inter-district cooperative grants and state and federal grants for various educational programs.

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

*Laurie explained that this is an annual agenda item that empowers her to seek and apply for grant funding*

- b. Consideration and action to set tuition rates for 2021-2022 as follows:

	<u>General Education</u>	<u>Special Education</u>
Elementary	\$10,770	\$28,675*
Middle School	\$11,280	\$27,464*
High School	\$11,765	\$26,305*
Pre-School		\$27,590*
Other Service		Negotiable
Palmer Building		
PBL Program		\$37,970*
Pathways Program		\$53,620*
Other Services		Negotiable

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

*Laurie explained that this is also an annual agenda item. Increases in tuition are based on the Consumer Price Index which increased 1.7% in the last 12 months. Tuition is usually only charged to other districts who are placing students in MPS. Policy doesn't allow individual families to enroll students on a tuition basis unless the family moves during the school year and requests to finish the year.*

*Bob asked whether other districts currently have an agreement with Montville to send their students to MPS. Kathy explained that we had an agreement with Sprague and Bozrah in the past, but due to transportation issues, those agreements are no longer in place. Bob expressed interest in marketing district programs to attract other districts.*

Motion: The Board Moved to set tuition rates for 2021-2022 as recommended by The Superintendent.

Moved by: Robert Mitchell  
Seconded by: Wills Pike  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

c. Consideration and action to revise Policy Number 5123

Motion: The Board moved to approve the revisions to Policy Number 5123 as recommended by the Policy Committee.

Moved by: James Wood  
Seconded by: Monica Pomazon  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

*Jim explained that this was discussed by the policy committee and they unanimously voted to send it to the Board for approval. The proposed revisions are to ensure that attendance is not the sole basis for retention of a student. This is in line with a shift in philosophy that we promotion of students should be based on mastery not on seat time.*

d. Consideration and action to approve Spanish for Business Course at Montville High School

Motion: The Board moved to approve Spanish for Business Course as recommended by the Superintendent.

Moved by: Robert Mitchell  
Seconded by: Wills Pike



Vote: Carried (7-0)

*Bob explained that this proposal was presented to the E&E committee last month, however we did not have a quorum so we decided to bring it to the full Board for a vote. The proposed course is designed for students who wish to focus on building vocabulary and conversational skills that could be used when meeting with Spanish speakers in the workplace rather than a traditional grammar-based approach. It can be staffed with our existing staff and will not have any additional costs.*

*Sandra asked that the Board be given a report next year about the success of this course.*

- e. Discussion and possible action to grant a bid waiver to purchase the bus that was approved under the Town's 2021 Capital Plan. This bid waiver is requested to enable us to continue standardization of the fleet for efficiency of maintenance and inventory.

*Laurie explained that the vendor we would like to use is the regional vendor for Bluebird buses, School Lines Inc. Our lease of 8 buses 3 years ago was for Bluebird buses.*

Motion: The Board moved to approve the bid waiver to purchase a bus, previously approved under the Town's 2021 Capital Plan.

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

- f. Discussion and possible action to transfer \$16,700 from Unemployment (204) to Vehicle (739). This request would fund increased costs since the capital project was approved for air conditioning and price increases that occurred since the quote was obtained. The budget transfer will keep the lease cost in alignment with the lease that was approved in the Town's Capital Plan.

Motion: The Board moves to transfer \$16,700 from unemployment object (204) to vehicle object (739) to fund the purchase of a bus.

Moved by: James Wood  
Seconded by: Robert Mitchell  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

*Laurie explained that the amount approved in the capital plan last year was \$87,635 (broken into a five-year lease at \$17,527 per year). The cost of the bus has increased by \$16,700 and we are proposing to make up that difference using the surplus Kathy described in her report in our unemployment account.*

g. Report on Summer Programs by Dianne Vumback

*We are working on providing a summer school/enrichment program at the elementary, middle and high school levels.*

*Both the middle school and high schools are building a program for the summer school with specific objectives. At the high school, they have created a comprehensive plan to address credit recovery for core academic areas, freshman credit advancement, and participation in extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities will include strength and conditioning for all students as well as sport specific, drama, music, athletic clinics, and some leadership programs. The program will run five days a week for four weeks in the month of July.*

*At the middle school, the approach is centered on academic engagement, creative enrichment and counseling and support. Activities will include transitional/return to school activities for our fully remote students; team building games, field day activities and band will be offered to all interested students; and targeted counseling support through social-emotional activities will be available to students in need.*

*The elementary level is providing some very creative and engaging enrichment activities that we believe will have students learning about social emotional learning, reading, writing, math, history, technology, art and fitness. Students will be learning through activities such as mindfulness, Harry Potter discussions, poetry, cooking, using maps, robotics, gardening, makerspaces, singing, puppetry and getting physical with hula hoops and yoga!*

h. Consideration and action to revise the 2021-2022 school calendar to align with the changed regional calendar by moving the April vacation from the week of April 11-15 to the week of April 18-22.

Moved by: Carol Burgess

Seconded by: Wills Pike

Vote: Carried (7-0)

*Laurie explained that the LEARN regional calendar was adjusted from the draft which we used to create the 2021-2022 calendar that the Board approved. We would like to make the same change to our calendar so that our April vacation aligns with other districts across the region. This means that Good Friday no*

*longer falls within the April vacation week. The 181st student day in the original calendar fell on Friday, June 10. We would need to extend the year to Monday, June 13.*

*Monica agreed that we end the school year on June 13th understanding that the Board can revisit that during the year if we don't have any snow days and want to end the year on a Friday after 180 student days.*

- i. Consideration and action to reduce the Board's operating budget for 21-22 by \$70,000 in salaries and benefits for transportation. This brings the Board's budget to \$39,816,140 or a 1.39% increase from last year.

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

- j. Consideration and action to move funds from the salary accounts to equipment and purchased services to cover the costs of the Districtwide Infrastructure and Technology Upgrade (estimated at about \$510,000) and the MHS Wireless Project (estimated at \$70,500) and delete these items from the capital plan. The allocation of funding between equipment and purchased services will be made once a bid for the infrastructure project has been approved.

Moved by: Wills Pike  
Seconded by: Robert Mitchell  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

- k. Consideration and action to move funds from the tuition accounts to equipment to cover the cost of the District Server (estimated at 95,000) and the Tyl Clock System (estimated at \$27,000) and delete these items from the capital plan.

Moved by: Monica Pomazon  
Seconded by: Wills Pike  
Vote: Carried (7-0)

## **Item 7. Unfinished Business**

- a. COVID19 update

*Laurie: Case rates in Montville and the health district remain about the same as they were in the update I sent out last week. As reported to you and to families and staff at the affected schools, our quarantines have been larger now that all students are back*

*in grades K-8. As expected with students closer together in classrooms and seated next to one another on buses, the number of close contacts is greater.*

**b. Update on the 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget**

*Laurie displayed a slide showing the Mayor's suggested plan for meeting our capital expenses for next year. I did call the Mayor to discuss this plan and he explained that he was recommending that the Town Council fully fund the Board's operating budget but reallocate capital requests to either the 2% account with unexpended funds from prior years' appropriations or utilize the ESSER II and ARP grants. Based upon the Board's motions this evening, we have proactively moved \$707,000 of our capital requests to this year's budget. I am concerned about utilizing the ESSER II and ARP grants for capital given the very real learning needs our students face as a result of the pandemic. These funds are intended to last for three years to meet student needs related to the pandemic and those needs are significant.*

**c. Report on students' needs for learning acceleration**

*Laurie: Our administrative team has spent a great deal of time analyzing student data to evaluate students' learning and social and emotional needs. The data compels us to recommend use of grant funds to address these needs. I provided a document to the Board last month, but believe it is important to elaborate on these needs. Some of the data includes:*

- **Literacy Assessment Data** - DIBELS scores indicate that students in K-2 are significantly behind students in past years in the areas of First Sound Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, and Degrees of Oral Reading Fluency and Accuracy. The percent of students scoring in the "well below" range and qualifying for intensive support ranges from 23% to 32% which is about double that in previous years.
- **Math Assessment Data** – Some grades K-5 students are not on track to meet grade level standards on assessments designed to evaluate mastery of standards. This group of students needs a focused math intervention block to ensure basic number sense is developed prior to moving to middle school math.
- **Secondary Student Failure Rate** – Middle school trimester 2 report card grades indicate that 33% of Tyl gen. ed. students have a grade of D or F and 54% of spec. ed. students have a grade of D or F. 24% of gen. ed. and 32% of spec. ed. students have 2 or more grades of D or F. The number of students failing courses per quarter at the high school is also higher than in past years. 112 MHS students had at least one grade of F at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and 126 students at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. 22% of the students who had at least one F in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and 13% of students with an F in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter had never received a failing grade prior to this year. This year's new after school credit recovery program which prepares students to complete a project or assessment to earn credits back quarter-by-quarter has been extremely successful. Of 16

*students who participated in the first round of quarter 1 recovery in English and Algebra all but 1 earned a new quarter grade above a 70. The average of the grades earned was 83%.*

- ***Special Education Science Grades at Tyl*** - *At the middle school we currently have special education co-teachers in reading, writing and math classes. Science, another core area subject assessed in the state's accountability measures, does not have specific support for special education students. The pandemic has exacerbated students' struggles in science. Tyl currently has 77 special education students and of those students, 36.7% (or 29 students) currently have grades of D or F in science.*
- ***Secondary Survey Data*** - *Survey responses of students, parents and teachers indicate that course curricula require teachers to address too many topics resulting in students feeling overwhelmed and unable to fully master concepts being taught*
- ***MHS Students Off-Track for Graduation*** - *With over 100 students who have earned grades of F in one or more courses at Montville High School and Palmer Alternative High School (representing 239 failed classes in quarter 1 and 319 failed classes in quarter 2), we will have a number of students who require a summer credit recovery intervention program. While we don't have year-end failure rates yet, a significant number of students who earn an F for two of the four quarters are likely to fail to earn credit for the course. While our high school graduation rate was 98.5% last year, these students will require credit recovery programs to ensure they get back on track for on-time graduation*
- ***Elementary Attendance and SEL Data*** – *Our elementary students exhibit multiple signs that they have unmet social and emotional needs. They are exhibiting chronic absenteeism at rates that are over 5 times higher than they have been in past years. The percent of students absent 10% or more of the time by Jan. 1 ranged from 15.3% to 21.2% at our three elementary schools. The number of students and families requiring the services of a social worker is about 3 times higher than it was last year. At Murphy, in 2020, 5 families and 12 students were served by the social worker. This year she is serving 17 families and 34 students. The one elementary social worker does not have the capacity to effectively meet the needs of all the students and families in need.*
- ***Social and Emotional Learning Data*** - *Our student and family survey responses (both qualitative and quantitative) indicate that students' mental health is a concern. Students need an SEL program with specific strategies for managing their emotions. As one student stated in his survey response, teachers need to "understanding my mental health issues play a role in me failing in school."*
- ***Social and Emotional Learning Data*** – *In student surveys, only 42% responded that they have enough social time with their peers. They report they are struggling to form and sustain meaningful relationships with both*

*peers and teachers. Furthermore with over 22% of our students learning fully remotely and double the normal number of students being homeschooled, we have a number of students who have not been physically present at school in more than a year. To rebuild relationships, establish routines, foster engagement, and provide learning opportunities, we plan to run week-long, interest-driven summer programs for students entering grades 1-5.*

**Item. 8 Committee and Liaison reports:**

**a. Policy – Jim Wood**

*Jim reported that the policy on the diploma of academic distinction was reviewed by the committee. It was decided not to make any changes to the policy at this time with the rationale that this is not the time to make changes regarding something that is happening in six weeks based on four years of work. Wills added that he did not believe we should take the distinction away from those students who did meet the criteria to achieve a diploma of academic distinction. Jim explained that the committee would like to look at the policy again to make changes for the future but they would likely recommend a very different approach to recognizing distinguished graduates.*

**b. Education Evaluation – Bob Mitchell; No Meeting was held**

**c. Communications Committee – Monica Pomazon; No Meeting was held.**

**d. Montville Education Foundation –**

*Laurie reported that MEF met on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Their investments are doing very well and they currently have a total of \$152,170. Grant applications for the spring cycle are due April 30 and will be reviewed on May 10. They are going forward with the golf tournament this summer.*

**e. LEARN –**

*Bob reported that at their last meeting LEARN discussed ending Zoom meetings. It is likely that the June meeting will take place in person.*

**f. CABE/NSBA –**

*Bob reported that the NSBA virtual convention was held last week. He encouraged the Board to think about submitting a presentation for next year's convention*

**g. Montville Youth Services Bureau –**

*Sheelagh reported that instead of a meeting the members viewed the movie "Like." She explained that this movie has been offered to the middle and high school for use with students. Dianne responded that she had watched the video and found it thought-provoking; she added that the principals are in the process reviewing how it might be used in the schools.*

**h. Student Board Representatives**

**David Baukus** – *no report*

**GiGi Johnston** – *no report*

- i. Board Chair Remarks** – *Chair Sandra Berardy urged Board members to attend the public hearings on the town and education budgets next week.*

**Item 9. Superintendent's Report**

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

*This past month I worked closely with two families to help them navigate the process for residential treatment for their child. In both situations these students were already either placed or being recommended for a therapeutic day treatment school. Amazingly enough we were able to secure very reputable placements outside of the state which was picked up by their individual insurances.*

*Also this month I attended my monthly Directors meeting with updates from the state. The state just released new procedural safeguards for parents which was last updated in 2011. The new safeguard have hyperlinks and will be posted on our website.*

*The state also reviewed a random sample of the Learning Model IEPs (from 41 districts or 20%) to see how they compared to one another. What they found was a lot of inconsistencies with clarity and specificity and they will be providing us with more guidance if we need to write these again. The state will also be coming out with additional special education guidance due to Covid and educational loss.*

*The CSDE is currently working with stakeholders to produce and publish the AccelerateCT guidance document, which will provide a framework for the acceleration of learning to address the educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic there will be a link to a special education specific guidance document related to the concept of recovery. They anticipate the release of this document in the very near future.*

*I have continued this week to work on staffing needs for our ESY and the two nursing vacancies for the upcoming school year. We made an offer to one candidate but unfortunately she turned it down. I am awaiting references on another and will be putting her forward for hire once that process is complete.*

*Lastly tomorrow we have our spring preschool screening from 9:00-12:30 with 6 little people every hour for a total of 21 students. We usually identify anywhere from 3- 8 students from this type of screening.*

**Report from Assistant Superintendent – Dianne Vumback**

*DESSA – Social Emotional Learning Assessment*

*The CSDE is partnering with Aperture Education to launch a statewide K-12 social emotional learning assessment system. This universal screener will provide data to strengthen social –emotional skills and will help inform instruction for students who need additional supports. We know how critical the integration of SEL contributes to whole child success in school, life and career – so there is an urgency to provide supports around SEL and mental health to effectively address the trauma, anxiety and struggles that our students have experienced due to the pandemic.*

*I attended a workshop on the assessments and our next step is to determine if we want to participate in the first cohort .... It will provide assessments that are quick to complete and an impressive dashboard that provides visuals and reporting features that will help us understand students' current social-emotional skills. The quick assessments are done three times a year to monitor every student's progress related to SEL.*

*The work will include training, access to reporting features, strategies and interventions and uses a Train the Trainer approach. I spoke with our social workers about it briefly today and will continue the conversation once we receive all the information that will be sent out at the end of the week.*

*District Wide Attendance Committee Work*

*The District Wide Attendance committee continues to monitor our absenteeism across the district. I sat in on a few school based attendance teams this month and I am so impressed with how much these committee members know about the students and their families. Schools are approaching attendance in a supportive and caring manner and offering solutions that are personalized and sensitive in nature. It is tough work as we do not always see the result in the “numbers” but we do in the building of relationships. We just met today to put the finishing touches on our district-wide support manual that will offer guidelines and tiered interventions. It is designed for the teams to quickly identify the root causes or barriers to attendance and offer result-oriented strategies to support the student. It is also designed to address the anticipated obstacles students will encounter as we approach our next school year.*

*State Assessments*

*We have begun some of our state assessments this week at the middle school and by all accounts, things went smoothly. Elementary is planning to begin next week. We are preparing to be able to proctor the test remotely for our students who do not come into school at all. While it poses some challenges, we are confident that we will be able to work with parents and students to accomplish this important task. As you know, the CSDE waiver was approved last week, which means the accountability measures will not be used to sort schools into categories or identify them as focus or turnaround schools.*

**b. Report from the Superintendent – Laurie Pallin**



*Phone system – Steve and Nic are currently working with our NOVUS contacts to develop an RFQ for the phone system replacement. Our plan is to get the RFQ out by May 1, hold a vendor meeting on May 7 and receive proposals by May 15. They are currently working on a rubric to review the proposals.*

*New Security Grant – Applications for security grants are due on June 1 and we plan to submit a grant request for the items in our original grant at MHS and Palmer which were not funded and for additional cameras at all schools, the film for expansive windows at Tyl and MHS entries and cafeterias, and the Raptor systems to screen visitors. Marc Romano will convene a meeting of our districtwide security team as we move forward in the development of this grant application.*

*Lighting – Steve is currently working with EverSource to evaluate the possibility of a cost neutral replacement of lights with more energy efficient lighting similar to the work which was completed at MHS.*

*Public Wi-Fi – CEN has installed a public Wi-Fi access point outside the high school. We will designate parking spaces for the public to use (facing the road in the side parking lot where police can easily see vehicles) and have posted notice on our website. Internet is available 24-7.*

*Board members asked how the public Wi-Fi will be publicized to the community and suggested that we put something in The Day and Montville Times.*

**Item 10. Information Items**

- a. Public Hearing on General Government Budget, April 28, 2021, 6:00 p.m.,  
Montville Town Hall
  
- b. Public Hearing on Board of Education Budget, April 29, 2021, 6:00 p.m.,  
Montville Town Hall

*Wills asked if these meetings will be in-person or virtual. Laurie responded that she will reach out tomorrow to offer the use of the MHS auditorium.*

*Laurie added that on April 21 at 6:00 there will be a meeting of the Board's Finance Subcommittee and the Town Finance Committee in the MHS library*

**Item 11. Citizen's Comments**

*None*

**Item 12. Future Agenda Items**

*Sandra asked that at the next meeting we look at the possibility of funding travel for Board members to attend conferences in the future.*

*Wills asked about the district's expectation of parents given that all of our conversations about the work of staff to support students and families. Laurie responded that our expectations of parents this year have been greater than ever and many have worked extremely hard to meet those challenges, but they do report that the year has been very stressful.*

**Item 13. Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

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

Monica Pomazon, Secretary  
Montville Board of Education