



MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

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/Zoom

Item 1. Call to order

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

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

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin, Assistant Superintendent Dianne Vumback, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Jennifer LeMay, Director of Facilities Steve Carroll, Administrators Paula LaChance, M.J. Dix, Jill Mazzalupo, Amy Espinoza, Heather Sangermano Jason Daly, David Gollsneider, Liz Dumond, Theresa Gouveia, and Heather Sangermano

Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

All participated in the pledge

Recognition: A) Montville Marvels

The following staff and students were recognized by administration at their schools:

Mohegan Elementary School – Acting Principal Liz Dumond recognized the following students:

For his continued growth both emotionally and academically: James Williams.

For his investment in doing well in school, demonstrating a high level of maturity and responsibility in his classwork, and communication as a remote learner:
Raymond Mei.

For her motivated approach to distance learning, creating brilliant animations, increasing her fact fluency and coming to Zoom class ready to learn every day:
Olivia Xu.

For acting as a model 21st century learner, her enthusiasm for learning is contagious making those around her excited about the subject matter too, inciting lively classroom discussions: Choenyi Lhatso.

Dr. Charles E. Murphy Elementary School – Principal Amy Espinoza recognized the following students:

For selflessly coming out of retirement when Murphy was faced with a dire need for a school psychologist: Lori Caron.

For going above and beyond with their dedication to the staff and school rollout of the RULER program: Tracy Zurowski and Tracy Wigfield.

Oakdale Elementary School – Principal Jill Mazzalupo recognized the following students:

For being an enthusiastic learner, showing perseverance with challenging assignments and being a kind and helpful classmate: Landon Rose.

For the pride he takes in his work and his willingness to start a discussion and listen to his fellow classmates when sharing their ideas: Brody Bigby.

For the hard work and perseverance he has shown while a remote student, always maintaining an upbeat and positive attitude: Julian Silva.

For her hard work, putting her best effort forth during academic tasks, and approaching learning with a smile: Claire Zawada.

B) CABE Student Leadership Awards:

Principals MJ Dix and Heather Sangermano recognized the following students:

Adam Sheridan - Leonard J. Tyl Middle School
Nicole Hudson - Leonard J. Tyl Middle School
David Baukus - Montville High School
Tenzin Dadon - Montville High School

C) Recognition of Senior Student Board Representative; David Baukus

Superintendent Pallin recognized David and presented him with a gift from the Board for his contributions to the Board as Student Board Rep for the last two years. David will be attending UCONN in the fall.

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

None

Item 4. Letters and Communications

None

Item 5. Approval of the Consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar.

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

a. Budget Update; Kathy Lamoureux

As of the April board meeting, it was projected that the 20-21 budget surplus was going to 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. At the April meeting the Board voted to transfer \$702,500 of this surplus to address the network, wireless project, server and clock system at Tyl Middle School. After these transfers it left approximately \$500,000 in surplus. As the school year winds down and less trending is needed to project costs, the surplus has increased an additional \$200,000. That means that after last month's transfers, we now have about \$700,000 in projected surplus. The additional surplus is a result of unpaid leaves, non-certified paraprofessional, monitor and substitute costs coming in lower than the April projection.

We are currently completing the normal purchasing cycle for supplies for the next school year in order to insure a smooth opening for the 21-22 school year. At this Steve has indicated that the department needs floor scrubbers and a lawn mower. Because we purchased custodial supplies from grant funds, we have money in supplies which we would like to transfer to equipment to make these purchases (agenda item 6a).

Currently, we are in the process of advertising three bids:

Tyl Parking lot bids were due on Monday, May 17. We had two vendors attend the mandatory pre-bid meeting however only one bid was received which was higher than anticipated. We are in the process of scheduling a meeting with the vendor to discuss the bid. However, the budget contracted services has a balance to cover the difference.

We held a mandatory pre-bid meeting on May 14th for the Voice over IP System. There were a number of contactors who attended and the bids are due June 11, 2021.

The network fiber project has a scheduled mandatory pre-bid meeting on May 19 and bids due June 4, 2021.

We have ordered the bus that the Town approved in their last capital plan for a 5 year lease based upon the additional funds appropriated at the last Board meeting. It is anticipated that the bus should arrive in District either prior to, or close to, the start of next school year.

We are awaiting confirmation from E-Rate to generate the purchase order for the Elementary and Palmer wireless project.

The Town Council approved the funding of the 2% Board of Education account at their meeting on June 10, 2021. With this approval, 2% BOE account balance is \$938,209.

We believe we should keep a balance of between \$300,000-\$400,000 in the non-lapsing account to cover unbudgeted, unexpected expenses such as additional out-placed special education students or unforeseen equipment replacement.

21-22 Budget

We received May's enrollment numbers from LEARN for the magnet schools they operate. Based on these enrollment, the 21-22 budget has a shortfall of \$60,755. The shortfall is mainly a result of the size of the entering class at Three Rivers Magnet (6) and the Friendship School (11). We have not received enrollments from the other magnet schools or Ledyard to calculate the true impact on our tuition account.

Item 6. Unfinished Business

- a. Discussion of how Capital Projects were prioritized, Steve Carroll

Kathy explained: On the capital plan that was adopted and submitted to the Town Council the following items remain open in the 2021-22 budget year.

<i>Transportation Van</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>	
<i>Tyl Roofing</i>	<i>\$872,630</i>	<i>Highest priority</i>
<i>Oakdale Parking Lot</i>	<i>\$275,000</i>	
<i>MHS Replace Southeast Parking lot</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>	

Steve has prioritized these items that were included in this year's request and placed the generators for Murphy, Oakdale, and Mohegan, and the Mohegan window replacement above replacement of the boiler at Tyl. As you are aware, every year when the capital plan is developed items may move around based on any new developments that have occurred. Steve is here to explain his reasoning and answer questions about those priorities.

Surplus Recommendation:

Based on the anticipated surplus, Laurie, Steve and I recommend that the Board consider using the 2% account to fund the roof which was the highest priority on the above list. The roof is leaking causing damage to the interior of the building which will only get worse if not fixed. We feel the roof is the highest priority to protect the taxpayers' investment in the building.

If this project was funded entirely from the 2% account, that would bring the balance down to about \$65,000. This amount is not sufficient to cover unanticipated costs.

Al Jacunski indicated that the roof replacement could not occur until after the 2021-22 school year was completed however his firm would be able to start the planning in December 2021 and complete the local and state review for reimbursement to be able to secure a bid to start the work at the conclusion of the 21-22 school year. This timing means we are not able to generate a purchase order using any of the FY20 surplus to fund the roof project.

Therefore prior to going forward, we would like to schedule a meeting with the council to discuss an agreement which would remove the roof project from our capital requests and allow returned funds from the 2020-21 school year to be added to the 2% account so that we can pay for the roof in its entirety and leave a balance in the 2% account.

Item 7. New Business

- a. Discussion and possible action to transfer \$44,500 from Supplies (610-643) to Other Equipment (739). This request would fund the purchase of a lawn mower, edger and two Chariot floor cleaners.

Motion: The Board moved to set transfer \$44,500 from Supplies (610-643) to Other Equipment (739)

Moved by: Jim Wood
Seconded by: Wills Pike
Vote: Carried (7-0)

As explained in Kathy's report, we were able to move custodial supplies to grant funding and therefore have a surplus in supplies which we would like to use to purchase equipment for maintenance of the grounds and buildings.

- b. Discussion and possible action to transfer \$275,000 [\$125,000 from Salary (111-130) and \$150,000 from Employee Benefits (204-222)] to Contracted Services (423) for paving at Oakdale School. This request was originally included on the Capital Plan which was approved on March 9, 2021.

Motion: The Board moved to transfer \$275,000 [\$125,000 from Salary (111-130) and \$150,000 from Employee Benefits (204-222)] to Contracted Services (423)

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

Kathy explained:

With a total projected surplus at this time of \$700,000, we recommend the Board consider funding the parking lot at Oakdale through a budget transfer tonight. The capital plan has this project priced at \$275,000 and we have the bid specification ready to advertise. This would allow us the time necessary to advertise and award the work prior to 6/30/2021 so that we can complete a purchase order using this year's funds.

If this transfer is made, that would leave the 20-21 school year with an estimated \$425,000 surplus which we would request the Town to fund the non-lapsing account for unanticipated costs and possible additional capital requests, such as the \$60,000 requested for the MHS parking lot.

- c. Discussion of Policy No. 5141.8 and 4218.237; Face Masks, Coverings

Laurie explained: We have received some pressure to end our mask-wearing requirements, however both CDC and DPH call for continued mask-wearing in schools for the rest of this school year. DPH stated that "most people in schools have not been vaccinated, therefore continuation of masking in schools for the remainder of the year is an important strategy and mask-wearing should be required of all students and staff." We have been told to follow all existing protocols and the guidance will be coming regarding expectations for summer school and in the fall.

Jim Wood; Asked Board Representative David Baukus his thoughts on wearing masks for the remainder of the year. David agreed that the masks should continue for the remainder of the year.

- d. Discussion of end-of-year events, set date for Board recognition of retirees

Laurie outlined upcoming events:

- ❖ *May 19: MHS Underclass Awards*
- ❖ *June 5: Senior Dinner – Outdoor Dinner at Ocean Beach*

- ❖ *June 11 - Palmer Graduation*
- ❖ *June 14: Elementary Grade 5 Send-Off- drive through event (awards during school day)- video of all will be shared on Tuesday*
- ❖ *June 15: MHS Graduation and Senior Awards as part of graduation; rain date June 17 Diplomas will be distributed by one person*
- ❖ *June 16: Tyl Promotion Ceremony; rain date June 18*
- ❖ *Recognition of Retirees – In School Recognition, June 10 and 11- June 11th: Bob, Monica, Wills; June 10th: Carol Burgess, Sandra Berardy, and Jim Wood*

e. School Community Voice Team and community survey

Laurie explained: We will be sending a survey out to all parents, teachers, and students asking for their feedback as we think forward to our vision for the future. This year we asked community members to respond to surveys reflecting on students' experiences in a hybrid environment so that we could build our skills in teaching hybrid in-person and remote learning classrooms. As we emerge from the pandemic, we are sending a survey asking for more "preflection" than reflection. We will use responses to help co-create our future to ensure our students' education is relevant to the realities of the world today. What do we hold sacred that we should fight to keep? What are practices that we have used in the past that we don't want to continue? What have we learned from the last year and a half that we should carry forward? The disruption of the past year provides opportunities for reflection, discovery, and even reinvention, and every voice matters as we embark on that process. We will seek any desired changes in membership on our school community voice team as their work shifts from responding to the pandemic to analyzing stakeholder feedback to set a vision for our future.

f. Discussion of ARP ESSER Grant and Board representation on stakeholder group

Bob Mitchell, Wills Pike and Jim Wood will represent the Board as stakeholders.

Laurie explained: The American Recovery Plan ESSER Grant application will open on May 24th. We plan to use the grant to continue to address the learning needs outlined by the data which I presented to you. The five areas eligible for grant funding are:

- *Learning acceleration*
- *Family and community connections*
- *Social, emotional, and mental health needs*
- *Strategic use of technology*
- *Safe and healthy schools*

The state has stated that ESSER I grant funds were necessary to survive, ESSER II grant fund are to ensure students thrive, and ARP ESSER funds are for "reimagining schools to transform students' lives. We are required to convene stakeholder groups

to receive input into our plans and I have already convened 3 initial stakeholder meetings of our MEA Labor Management Committee faculty. Our parent, student, and staff surveys all ask respondents to provide emails if they would like to be part of a focus group to discuss future plans and funding priorities. We must develop a “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan” and post it for public comment by June 23. Grant applications are due mid-August. We are awaiting more detail about this plan at a meeting on May 27th, but I am hopeful that we will be able to use significant portions of the plan which we created for the start of school this year. The CSDE needs to comply with a very similar process for the use of the funds allocated to the state and I have sent you all an email inviting your feedback as stakeholders in the state’s plan.

- g. Consideration and possible action on provision of remote learning in 2021-2022

Motion: The Board moved eliminate the ability to opt-in to remote learning as an option for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

The state has determined that after the period of emergency this school year, schools will not be mandated to provide all students with daily access to remote learning at the unilateral request of the student/family. While this can certainly change, at this time the DPH and CSDE do not anticipate the need to mandate that all districts provide the choice for students and their families to opt-in to a voluntary remote option after this school year.

It is my recommendation that the Board end the ability to opt-in to a fully remote program at the end of this school year, but agree to provide remote learning only to students who are required to quarantine as close contacts or isolate due to positive test results next year. You may wish to wait to make a formal decision until we learn more about an open bill (Senate Bill No. 2: An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health, Safety and Education of Children) regarding remote learning, but I wanted to make a public statement tonight so that families of fully remote learners have time to consider their plans for next year.

- h. Consideration and action to approve salaries/benefits for unaffiliated staff for 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Motion: The Board moved to discuss salaries for unaffiliated staff for 2021-2022 fiscal year in executive session.

Moved by: Wills Pike
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell

Vote: Carried (7-0)

Motion: That the Board approves salary/benefits for unaffiliated staff as proposed by Superintendent during executive session.

Moved by: Monica Pomazon

Seconded by: Wills Pike

Vote: Carried (7-0)

- i. Annual evaluation of Superintendent and consideration and action to extend contract by one year

Motion: That the Board approves the extension of the Superintendent's employment for an additional year to June 30, 2024

Moved by: Bob Mitchell

Seconded by: Joe Aquitante

Vote: Carried (7-0)

Item. 8 Committee and Liaison reports:

- a. **Policy – Jim Wood:** *No meeting was held*
- b. **Education Evaluation – Bob Mitchell:** *Reviewed two recommended courses which the committee discussed and will bring to The Board next month*
- c. **Communications Committee – Monica Pomazon:** *Reviewed the CABE Communication Manual, will read the manual and bring information to The Board. Dianne reviewed the revamping of the website to showcase what learning looks like now following the pandemic, highlighting the creativity of the work being done.*
- d. **Montville Education Foundation – Laurie:** *Met last week to review the grant applications.*
- e. **LEARN – Bob:** *nothing to report*
- f. **CABE/NSBA – Bob** *asked the Board to complete a survey from CABE.*
- g. **Montville Youth Services Bureau – Wills Pike** *reported for Sheelagh, no change to budget, registration for summer programs has begun, free breakfast and lunch will continue. Remembrance quilt squares are available at the police and fire departments.*
- h. **Student Board Representatives**

David Baukus – *As we near the end of the school year, the senior class has been hard at work in putting together and finalizing the activities for the class of 2021. Class council members have begun selling tickets to the banquet, which is scheduled to take place on June 5th at the Ocean Beach pavilion. At the banquet will be catered food along with mini golf and trivia and yard games, along with a picture booth. Beyond the banquet, Project Grad has also come up with an activity for the seniors, as they have bought out Quassy amusement park for the day. Members of the senior class can go for the rides, waterpark, or games, and free food will be provided all day long as well.*

Along with the 2021 Class council, student government has been very busy. At the beginning of the month, the government held a spirit week as the entire school returned to fully in person instruction. As it was the first time that the entire school had been together, everyone was excited to participate. There was widespread turnout for all of the dress up days, which included, first day of school outfits, tie dye day, pajama day on Wednesday, College/career day for the seniors, and of course, black and orange day. The week ended with a bang for the seniors, as superlatives were given out during a class wide meeting, and the class picture was taken. Recently, the members have decided to hold one last spirit week and pep rally. Dates are still being finalized, however, students throughout the school, especially the seniors, have expressed interest in having a class colors day along with other spirit week activities. The details are still being finalized, and the government is hard at work in refining what will happen during the event.

Finally, I would just like to end with the Boys Tennis team. This year, they are having one of the best seasons on record. As of right now, the team is 8 and 1, and ranked third in ECC's S division. Our singles 2 player, Brendan Duhamel, is undefeated in the season so far and was one of Montville's ECC athletes of the week. We hope to go far in ECC's this year, depending on how many players we will be able to send.

GiGi Johnston – *No report*

i. Principals' report: Student Learning

This unique year has allowed for the emphasis on unique skills, strengths and emotions that have positively impacted the trajectory of learning that were not illuminated prior to the pandemic. These are important pieces of the school and school culture and may be difficult to measure but are invaluable nonetheless. As we reflect on where we've been in the past and where we would like to go as a district, we begin with the foundation which is based on the definition of learning. As an administrative team we came together to calibrate our definition.

Nothing changes without coherence around what is meant by this word. This evening we would like to explain our shared definition as well as highlights of occurrences of deep learning within our schools. An administrator from each building provided examples of the learning that is happening in each building.

- j. Board Chair Remarks** – *Chair Sandra Berardy thanked the finance sub-committee for working with the Town Council to educate them on our budget. She also expressed the desire to have a second graduation ceremony during the summer for any students who do not have enough credits to graduate in June and will attend summer school to earn those credits. We are discussing a small graduation ceremony to recognize these students following the successful completion of the summer school program.*

Item 9. Superintendent’s Report

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

This was a busy month for interviewing and hiring staff across the district for both next year and ESY. We will start ESY with two new-to-the-district teachers and two veteran teachers. At this point we are fully staffed with teachers and paraprofessionals which is a great relief.

As you know the Spec Ed department it is very fluid. We have had two new families move into district both with children outplaced at therapeutic schools and being serviced remotely. I have spent time conferencing with both the parents and the receiving schools to fully understand the students’ levels of functioning. For one, I was able to arrange services in district with our Remote Special Ed Teacher Jen Gregory. The other is quite complex with extreme behaviors therefore will remain at the current OOD.

Theresa and I have been collaborating on development of the RISE (Research-based, Individualized Success and Empowerment) Program at Mohegan which serves the K-5 special needs population. We will have two teachers next year to accommodate the increase in number of special needs students. The program will include a sensory room designed for calming or stimulation to meet the specific needs of each child.

In an effort to supplement COVID-19 special education recovery efforts, the CSDE/BSE made available an opportunity for a one time stipend to school districts who apply. The stipend is intended to assist with addressing delayed, interrupted, suspended, or inaccessible IEP supports and services. I applied for funding to support the needs at the Transition Academy and the Rise program. I am pleased to say my application was accepted so I am thrilled.

Wills Pike- How much was the stipend? Paula - \$20,000

b. Report from Assistant Superintendent – Dianne Vumback

SBA

We are at the end of the SBA testing window, which officially closes on June 4, 2021. We have had a great response in having our fully remote students come into the school buildings on Wednesdays to take the assessments. The 1:1 technology has allowed for a smooth operation from a technical standpoint versus having to schedule students around available technology.

Vaccines

We held our first COVID Vaccination clinic on Tuesday, May 11th for interested students ages 16 and older. We had slightly over 20 students participate. We were in competition with local vaccination sites that had just started promoting “no appointment needed” sites. Thursday (June 20th) of this week we will hold our second COVID Vaccination clinic and students ages 12 and older are eligible to participate. This event was scheduled and ready to go the moment CDC approved this age bracket. As a result, currently we have over 80 students signed up.

Summer School Registration

Elementary Summer School – we have just under 100 students, however they mostly chose a session in the first two weeks. In fact we had less than 10 students select weeks 3 and 4 combined. Therefore we are limiting the elementary program to just two weeks in July. Middle school began promoting their sessions targeting remote learners and have a few interested students. The high school sent out individual letters to students just a couple days ago and we are hoping for a good turnout.

ESOL Curriculum & Support

I have been doing work with Lisa Kaplan, our EL district coordinator to tighten up our supports for our EL population of students. We are looking to strategize the best use of our tutors and ensuring our students have access to a comprehensive ESOL instructional model so that our English language learners can speak, write and read proficiently in English. An interesting note is that district wide, we have a total of 90 students who qualify for EL services (which is 4.6% of our student population) and there are 10 languages other than English that is the primary language spoken at home.

c. Report from the Superintendent – Laurie Pallin

Live Streaming District Cameras MOU – I have worked with Lt Radford to develop an MOU so that we can open access to our camera system to the Montville Communications Center Dispatchers. We just finalized language this morning and I will bring the MOU to policy in June for Board approval. We would be giving the police and dispatcher access to view the cameras live in an emergency and with verbal or written authorization from the superintendent or designee when conducting an investigation. They would not be

allowed to routinely monitor the cameras or video recordings. In the event they could not contact me or a designee the MPD police chief would have the discretion to determine whether a situation is urgent enough to warrant viewing the cameras. The district will be able to see all log-in activity and anyone who accesses the system from the PD would need to complete a MPD CAD entry documenting the date, time, and reason for access.

COVID-19 Update – *We continue to see lower numbers of cases in Montville and the Uncas Health District, however, as expected, when we have a positive case, the number of students quarantined is greater since we ended the hybrid model. We currently have 46 MHS students out on quarantine. Since classrooms are full, quarantines typically are required of the whole class rather than a smaller group of students.*

Use of School Facilities: *M.J., Steve and I met with the Mayor and Peter Bushway to discuss the summer camp which will operate at Tyl. We have opened our buildings for use of facilities and fields by outside groups.*

“Indian” Nickname: *Sandra and I had planned to meet with the Mohegan Tribe this week to continue our collaborative discussion around the use of the “Indians” as a nickname for our teams. Our conversations to date have gone very well, but this meeting was postpone. I have been asked by The Day to provide an update on any plans we have to change our nickname and I asked for time to meet with members of the Mohegan Tribe before commenting to the paper.*

Item 10. Citizen’s Comments

None

Item 11. Future Agenda Items

None

The Board entered executive session to evaluate the Superintendent and discuss unaffiliated contracts, salaries and benefits.

Motion: To enter executive session at 7:58 P.M. inviting Superintendent Pallin for the purpose of completing the evaluation of the Superintendent and to discuss unaffiliated contracts, salaries, and benefits.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Joe Aquitante
Vote: Carried (7-0)

Motion: To exit executive session with no votes taken at 8:54 PM

Moved by: Wills Pike
Seconded by: Jim Wood
Vote: Carried (7-0)

Item 12. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Joe Aquitane
Vote: Carried (7-0)

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

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

Monica Pomazon, Secretary
Montville Board of Education