

**MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Monroe, Connecticut**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 4, 2016**

**Present:** Chairman Donna Lane  
Vice-Chairman George King III  
Secretary Shannon Reilly-Monaco  
Board Member Christine Cascella  
Board Member Jeff Guttman  
Board Member James Martinez  
Board Member Carlos Reinoso, Jr.  
Board Member Jerry Stevens  
Board Member Alan Vaglivello

**Absent:** Masuk Student Board Representative Amit Gupta

**Also present:** Superintendent James Agostine  
Assistant Superintendent John Battista  
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi  
Masuk Student Board Representative Kanu Caplash  
Masuk Student Board Representative Ali Moraveck

**Call to Order**

*Chairman Lane* called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Report of the Chairman**

*Chairman Lane* welcomed Carlos Reinoso, Jr. to the Board and congratulated *Board Member Cascella* on the birth of her daughter. She added that *Vice-Chairman King* will be calling in for the budget vote.

**Consent Agenda**

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

**Motion: (J. Guttman)**

**Second: (S. Reilly-Monaco)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 8 (Lane, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Guttman, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

16-001

## **Reports of the Committees and Liaisons**

### **Masuk Student Representatives**

*Masuk Student Representative Moraveck* said that Alumni Day is January 7, and it is when college freshmen return to Masuk to talk with the juniors and seniors about the college process and their experiences. A FASA representative will also be at Masuk on January 7 to help parents fill out the financial aid forms. She added that The Masuk Choir will also have their Chorus Concert on Thursday. *Masuk Student Representative Caplash* added that College Funding 101 will take place next Wednesday, January 13, to provide information to parents on how to save for college. Midterms will begin on Friday, January 15, and Quarter 2 ends on January 14. He continued that the Masuk Swim Team has a home meet against Brookfield tomorrow.

### **Public Participation**

There was none at tonight's meeting.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

#### **2016-2017 Budget**

*Superintendent Agostine* thanked the Administrators for attending tonight's meeting and for their support. Since the last meeting when the proposed budget was 2.43%, there has been an additional retirement, at Jockey Hollow, resulting in a \$48,000 savings.

He added that *Jay Fiorello* and Cigna have been in continuous communication and their recommendation is to take \$205,744 from the \$500,000 initially proposed for Medical. The medical reduction and retirement bring the proposed budget to 1.96%.

*Superintendent Agostine* said that he is not comfortable going lower at this early stage as there are potential unknown risks that have to be taken into consideration when preparing for a budget a year out. *Superintendent Agostine* said he suggested to the Board of Finance that the oil tank removals are bonded projects but, if the Town does not approve the bonding, it could put the District at risk. He continued that the law requires that the tanks be replaced after 25 years. *Superintendent Agostine* added there is an ongoing problem at Monroe Elementary with the leak. Once the leak on the condensation pipe was repaired, it was determined that the other pipes, the original ones dating back to the 1930s, were extremely corroded and also needed replacement. It was an unexpected expense that is being funded from the Emergency Building Repair Fund.

*Superintendent Agostine's* recommendation is a revised budget of \$54,861,767 for a 1.96% increase over this year's budget. "It gets us everything we need to do." Though, it is a lean budget. *Board Member Guttman* asked if there are any bondings coming to an end; the Town is retiring about \$4 million in bonded debt. *Board Member Guttman* reiterated that he feels this is a very good start and he thanked *Superintendent Agostine* and the Administration for looking out for the taxpayers' best interests. *Superintendent Agostine* added if any further savings can be found, they will take advantage of it.

**Motion to approve the 2016-2017 Board of Education Budget as presented**

**Motion: (S. Reilly-Monaco)**

**Second: (J. Martinez)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Guttman, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

16-002

**Presentations**

**Board of Education PD-Board of Duties**

*Superintendent Agostine* and *Assistant Superintendent Battista* gave the presentation on Board of Education duties. *Superintendent Agostine* noted that it was timely presentation as there are four new Board Members. The Professional Development series is a result of the Board stating that they wanted to be informed of what is happening in the District. He added that this Board has been extremely good to work with, respectful and responsible in the role they play, and he doesn't see the type of behaviors that many Districts experience. *Assistant Superintendent Battista* welcomed any ideas for future Professional Development session from the Board Members.

*Superintendent Agostine* said that the Board's duties and responsible are founded in Connecticut General Statute, Section 10-220. Even though the Board Members are elected locally, they are elected to carry out the duties expected of the State Board of Education.

The Board's duties include:

- Maintaining a good public school by ensuring there are appropriate allocations for instructional supplies, equipment, technology and facilities.
- Developing Goals - *Superintendent Agostine* noted that this Board has taken this very seriously.
- Examining Data
- Conducting Air Quality Inspections
- Establishing a Curriculum Committee
- Developing Procedures for Reporting of Child Abuse

The Board's Responsibilities include:

- Serving the State and local Districts.
- Meeting the legal and personal qualifications - a Board Member cannot be employed by the Board of Education and must live in Town.
- Working as a Team
- Making policies - *Assistant Superintendent Battista* said that the Policy Committee is an important subcommittee of the Board. It is the Board's role is to make policies for the big picture, and it the District's role to implement those policies with regulations.
- Securing adequate funding
- Growing in Service - *Assistant Superintendent Battista* said that growing in service means to be informed of all the aspects of the schools, and he cited the Book Reads and Professional Development as ways the Board keeps current.

- Curricular leadership

*Assistant Superintendent Battista* said that CABE established a Code of Ethics in 1997 for Boards of Education.

The Code of Ethics includes:

- Well being of students is the primary goal as every role in the District supports the students
- Staunch advocate for all students
- Honor all national, state, and local laws
- Clear, appropriate communications
- Professionalism, honesty, and integrity
- Representing the entire community
- Recognize the Superintendent's role as the Agent of the Board
- Mutual respect, trust, civility, and regard for one another
- Educational leaders
- Making fair and unbiased decisions

The 10 Mistakes

*Superintendent Agostine* reiterated that though these are not a concern with the Board, he provided the Board Members with CABE's list:

- Lack of Patience
- Poor Behavior
- Challenging the Board after a Vote
- Acting like the Lone Ranger
- Not seeing the big picture - micromanaging the administration
- Challenging others on the Board to embarrass them
- Putting politics before the students
- Having a personal agenda
- Talking about confidential issues
- Putting the Board above family and business

*Assistant Superintendent Battista* also provided the Board with a Glossary of Terms from CABE. *Superintendent Agostine* said that CABE has been an invaluable resource, and he also thanked *Assistant Superintendent Battista* and *Vice-Chairman King* for their work on the Policy Committee.

*Board Member Guttman* asked if the residency that was discussed at a previous meeting had been clarified, *Superintendent Agostine* said that though this Professional Development session was not born out of that issue, it is timely. It was noted that the Town Charter states you have to be a resident of the Town.

*Board Member Martinez* said that as a School Administrator, he is very impressed, and this is the most civilized Board he has seen. *Board Member Reinoso* asked for the Student Representative's feedback as students; both representatives said that they think the Board is very thorough and always keeps the students' needs in mind.

## Old Business

There was none at tonight's meeting.

## New Business

### **Set Dates for Board of Education Evaluation & the Superintendent's Evaluation**

*Chairman Lane* said that the Board completes a self evaluation and an evaluation of the Superintendent on an annual basis. The Superintendent's evaluation will take place on January 19 and the Board's Self Evaluation will be held on March 7.

### **Policies – First Review**

*Assistant Superintendent Battista* said that Policy # 5131.1, Bus Conduct, contains a recommendation from CAFE to refer to the suspension policy. He continued that Policy # 6142.101 Instruction, Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy), has taken awhile to complete. In 2014-2015, there was a District-wide Nutrition Committee comprised of parents, a Sodexo representative, administrators, nurses and teachers who looked at nutrition, allergies, and food coming into the building from home. The policy addresses food during school hours, the Healthy Food Snack options, and food during afterschool activities. These policies will be up for a second review and vote at the next Board meeting.

*Superintendent Agostine* added that now that the Board has adopted the Board of Education budget, *Ms. DiBlasi* will make the line item changes and the document will be completed in the next few days.

## Adjournment

### **Motion to Adjourn at 8:30 p.m.**

**Motion: (J. Guttman)**

**Second: (S. Reilly-Monaco)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 8 (Lane, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Guttman, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivo)-0**

16-003

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Reilly-Monaco  
Board of Education Secretary