

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2015

Present: Chairman Donna Lane
Vice-Chairman George King III
Board Member Christine Cascella
Board Member Lee Crouch
Board Member Shannon Monaco
Board Member Amy Primorac
Board Member Alan Vaglivelov

Also present: Superintendent James Agostine
Assistant Superintendent John Battista
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi

Absent: Secretary Mark Hughes
Board Member Jeff Guttman

Call to Order

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

Chairman Lane requested a motion to add a discussion on the Food Service RFP as C under New Business.

Motion to Add Item C Under New Business, Food Service RFP

Motion: (S.Monaco)

Second: (L. Crouch)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 6 (Lane, King, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelov)-0 15-056

Board Member Crouch will be Acting Secretary for this evening's meeting.

Report of the Chairman

There was no report at tonight's meeting. *Chairman Lane* provided packets from the FBLA for each Board Member.

Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (L. Crouch)

Second: (S. Monaco)

Discussion: Superintendent Agostine said that Maureen Hall has accepted an administrator position in Newtown and that Kristen Phelps is relocating out of the District. There is currently an opening for a Special Education teacher. Amy Ginter will join the District as a .5 FTE Speech and Language Teacher and Rachel Kovach will join the Pre-School.

Motion passed 6 (Lane, King, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivello)-0 15-057

Reports of the Committees and Liaisons

Finance Committee-*Chairman Lane* said that the Finance Committee met tonight and discussed the Turf Field RFP, which has a return date of August 14. The Masuk Parking Fees and the Traffic Study will be discussed later at tonight's meeting.

Public Participation

There was none at tonight's meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

Fund Statement

Ms. DiBlasi said that they have closed out May and as of June 30, there was a little over \$3,000 left, though there are still some open blanket purchase orders as well as some utility costs that need to be finalized. Insurance ended the year with a reserve balance of \$1.8 million, which is in the mid range of the Board's targeted range. *Ms. DiBlasi* reiterated the deadline for the Turf Field RFP is August 14. There are no major projects occurring in the buildings over the Summer.

Superintendent Agostine provided a reminder on the CABE/CAPPS Convention as there are significant savings for early registration. The Convention will take place November 20-21. He added there will be FOI training on August 17 prior to the start of the Board meeting, and he encouraged the Board Members to attend. *Superintendent Agostine* continued said that the upgrades to the phone system that will occur July 28-30 may result in intermittent outages in the buildings, but 911 will be fully operational throughout the process.

Old Business

Field Trips

The two field trips up for second review are Spain/Portugal and China.

Motion to Approve the field trip to Portugal and Spain, and the field trip to Beijing, Xian, Shanghai, and China, during Spring Break 2016

Motion: (L. Crouch)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivello)-0
15-058

Approval of the Superintendent's Contract

Chairman Lane provided the changes to the Contract to the Board members. The term of the new contract is 2015-2018, the compensation, base salary and annuity increased by

the previously agreed amount and the life insurance policy after retirement was agreed upon.

Motion to Approve the Superintendent's Contract as presented

Motion: (A. Primorac)

Second: (S. Monaco)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0
15-059

Approval of the 2015-2016 Masuk Student Parking Fees-Second Review

Chairman Lane asked for a motion to approve the 2015 Masuk parking fees as presented.

Motion to approve the 2015-2016 Masuk Parking Fees as presented

Motion: (A. Primorac)

Second: (S. Monaco)

Discussion: Ms. DiBlasi provided the Board members with a brief presentation. The fees were originally established in 2004 to pay the Town back for the purchase of land for the South Driveway, South Field and Junior Parking lot. The Town was paid back in 2008 using a combination of parking fees and operating budget. Currently, the fees are used for:

- Annual Curbing and Pothole Repair
- Annual Striping of Parking Lots
- 2015 Traffic Study at Masuk
- 2015 Implementation of Traffic Study Plan
- 2014 Paving of Overflow parking lot at Masuk
- 2013 Speed Bump Installation at Masuk
- Annual Signs directing traffic and parking

Ms. DiBlasi gave a visual presentation of the parking areas at Masuk as well as a chart that listed the parking fees at DRG B and Area High Schools. Brookfield and Fairfield charge \$150.00 per year, Greenwich does not charge for student parking but their per pupil cost is significantly higher. Ms. DiBlasi continued that Trumbull currently does not charge though there is discussion of charging \$150.00 per year and reducing costs in other areas; she noted that Monroe is “right in the middle of the pack.”

The Plans for Summer 2015 and beyond are:

- Implementation of recommendations from Milone and MacBroom for traffic flow improvements, including signage, painting, curbing and plantings
- Repaving of access roads towards overflow lot and middle fields
- Striping, curbing and pothole repair

A reduction of fees will result in a \$10,000 loss that would need to be taken out of the operating budget. Board Member Vaglivelo said he could not support the cost of 150. Vice-Chairman King asked if there was an average cost for maintenance per year; Ms. DiBlasi estimated \$25,000. Board Member Crouch asked if reducing the charge to \$125 would meet the District's cost for repair and maintenance. The response was that some

years not all of the funds are used, while other years all the funds are expended, depending on seasonal conditions and needs.

Superintendent Agostine said that because the budget is transparent and accurate, any reduction will be difficult. He added he is not a proponent of user taxes in the schools but it is a common concept in the State of Connecticut.

Board Member Primorac said that the issue of enforcement was not addressed; Principal Kobza said that he and Mr. Schwarz have spoken about it and towards the end of this year, the Monroe Police Department increased ticketing and enforcement. Though the District does not receive revenue from tickets generated by the police, there is an increase in the number of students paying for a parking pass rather than take the chance of being ticketed.

Board Member Primorac asked about the amount of parking available and if there was the opportunity to sell spaces; Principal Kobza stated there is definitely enough spaces and added that there will be 50 less students in the coming year who would be eligible to purchase parking passes so without any reduction in cost, there will already be a reduction in revenue.

Motion to reduce the annual proposed parking fee at Masuk to \$125

Motion: (L. Crouch)

Second: (G. King)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0
15-060

Motion to approve the annual parking of \$125 at Masuk for 2015-2016

Motion: (A. Primorac)

Second: (S. Monaco)

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0
15-061

Town/District Medical Insurance

Superintendent Agostine said that *Jay Fiorello* from Ovation was present at tonight's meeting to answer any questions from the Board regarding the process for doing a merger of this kind. The State statute does authorize municipalities, commissions and Boards within the towns to do mergers of this type. In order for the Board of Education to participate in the merger of insurance, there would have to take a formal vote to put it into action. *Superintendent Agostine* continued that with this type of merger, there would still be two separate pools of medical reserve and a third pay-out account would be created. The Town has not formally requested the Board of Education to consider an insurance merger and that should to happen before the Board takes any action.

Superintendent Agostine said that he, *Mr. Fiorello*, and the representative from Cigna have spent a lot of time discussing the pros and cons of a merger. There is an area of concern. The savings that Lockton is estimating for the Town in the second and third year out do not look realistic due to the stop-loss. *Superintendent Agostine* said when there is a large organization such as the Board of Education, you can go out for \$175,000 stop

loss, but when you have a group of 100 and there are forced to go to our limit, it could severely impact on their budget. He continued that there are still many questions to address such as who will manage the insurance.

Superintendent Agostine's suggestion is to wait for the Town to make a formal request for the Board of Education to consider the option. The Town will be going back to Lockton to review their projected savings. *Board Member Crouch* said that this is a very unique situation and as very few municipalities have merged their insurance, she was not comfortable.

Mr. Fiorello said that usually one entity runs the entire program and is responsible for the entire budget. *Mr. Fiorello* continued, "A plan document is an absolute requirement; you need ground rules." *Board Member Primorac* asked if a committee has been formed to review the option. The answer is there has not been, as there has been no formal request from the Town. *Chairman Lane* stated that the Town would need to formally present a request to the Board, and a committee needs to be established to come to an understanding of how the process works. At this time, there is not sufficient information on what the Town would want from the Board.

Masuk Traffic Study

Superintendent Agostine said that Milone and MacBroom did a traffic study at Masuk, and they came up with what he felt was a workable plan. He said that there may be a few events such as graduation that may add time to departing from the parking lot. Incoming traffic would be redirected, the outer loop would be made one way, the parking spaces would be angled, the drop-off area would be at the STEM location, and parents would have the option to proceed out the North Exit or take a left hand turn and proceed out the South exit.

There is a crosswalk for the STEM area and a walkway to the Junior lot which currently does not exist. It is a safety issue, and there may be some additional work needed such as ramping. Signage would need to be done, and there would have to be education on the changes. The contractor gave a rough estimate of \$27,000 without the staircase between the crosswalks and the walkway to the Junior Lot. Depending on the engineering work that may be necessary, the quote could easily increase to \$40,000. *Superintendent Agostine* continued that this plan has not been presented to Planning and Zoning, so this is not something that will be happening in the Fall. It is possibly a late Spring or Summer 2016 project. A formal vote is not required, but *Superintendent Agostine* wanted the Board's opinion on moving forward; the consensus was to move forward.

New Business

Motion to Approve the Motion to approve the Board of Education Meeting Dates September through December 2015

Motion: (L. Crouch)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0

15-062

Board of Education Committee Assignments

Chairman Lane said that no action was needed tonight, but she asked the Board Members to review their assignments.

Food Service RFP

When the District went out for the Food Service RFP two years ago, they used the State RFP form, and they were informed that Monroe and 48 other districts are out of compliance. The State Department met with the USDA, and the USDA agreed to give the 49 districts one more year to honor that contract, but the contract has to be amended so that any violations can be corrected. The Board needs to approve the one year extension at the August 17 meeting. The State should have a new RFP document that is in compliance with USDA requirements, and the District will have to go out for an RFP.

Superintendent's Yearly Review for 2014-2015

Motion to Enter into Executive Session inviting Superintendent Agostine

Motion: (S. Monaco)

Second: (L. Crouch)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0
15-063

Motion to Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Motion: (L. Crouch)

Second: (A. Primorac)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Crouch, Monaco, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0
15-064

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Crouch
Acting Board of Education Secretary