

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

**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 8, 2015**

**Present:** Chairman Donna Lane  
Vice-Chairman George King III  
Secretary Mark Hughes  
Board Member Christine Cascella  
Board Member Lee Crouch  
Board Member Jeff Guttman  
Board Member Amy Primorac  
Board Member Alan Vaglivelo

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

**Absent:** Board Member Shannon Monaco

**Call to Order**

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

**Report of the Chairman**

*Board Member Primorac* announced her resignation as she has accepted a position at Masuk. She noted that she enjoyed her time on the Board and thanked the Board Members for their support.

**Consent Agenda**

**Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda**

**Motion: (J. Guttman)**

**Second: (L. Crouch)**

Discussion: Superintendent Agostine noted that in the Board packet there was a letter of resignation from Alison Seavey and the appointments of two new hires: Nicole Schwartz and Julie Vostinak.

**Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Hughes, Cascella, Crouch, Guttman, Primorac and Vaglivelo)-0**

15-065

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

### **Ad Hoc Committee**

*Superintendent Agostine* said that the Committee will make a joint presentation in October to the Board of Education, the Board of Finance, and Town Council.

### **Public Participation**

*Board Member Crouch*, who also serves as Director of Development for CT Challenge, thanked the Administration for their generosity and support for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual CT Challenge Bike Ride which was held on July 25. The Administrative Teams raised over \$5,500 to provide programs of nutrition, exercise, and community support for cancer survivors.

## **Report of the Superintendent**

### **Fund Statement**

*Ms. DiBlasi* said that all purchase orders have been closed as of Friday. There will be a motion to give remaining funds to the Capital Reserve Fund as an agenda item for the next meeting.

*Ms. DiBlasi* continued that the Insurance Reserve balance is low, as it is the beginning of the year. Due to the Affordable Care Act, the District has to report on the employees' W-2 forms how much their insurance premium is worth. The majority of employees are 10-month employees, and their deductions only take place over the 10 months, the District does not contribute the entire amount of the premium to the Medical Reserve Fund in July and August.

*Ms. DiBlasi* noted that all of the summer projects, including the new traffic pattern at Masuk, and the restoration of foyer floors at Fawn Hollow, have been completed.

### **SBAC Results**

*Superintendent Agostine* said the District received the results this summer, and that he was very pleased with them. The testing results and college placements will be discussed in greater detail at the second meeting in October. The results are as follows:

### **Language Arts**

Grade 3: Monroe ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 161 schools

Grade 4: Monroe ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 162 schools

Grade 5: Monroe ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 163 schools

Grade 6: Monroe ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 163 schools

Grade 7: Monroe ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 157 schools

Grade 8: Monroe ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 158 schools

Grade 11: Monroe ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 131 schools

Monroe ranked 5<sup>th</sup> of 191 schools in Connecticut and in the top 2.6% of schools.

### **Math**

Grade 3: Monroe ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 161 schools

Grade 4: Monroe ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 162 schools

Grade 5: Monroe ranked 41<sup>st</sup> out of 161 schools  
Grade 6: Monroe ranked 48<sup>th</sup> out of 161 schools  
Grade 7: Monroe ranked 37<sup>th</sup> out of 155 schools  
Grade 8: Monroe ranked 54<sup>th</sup> out of 155 schools  
Grade 11: Monroe ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 128 schools

Monroe ranked in the top 19.5% across the State. *Superintendent Agostine* said that the new math program will address the dip in scores that occur after the elementary level and recoup at the high school level.

### **SAT Results**

*Superintendent Agostine* said that the District tied with their record of 92% participation. He stated there were dramatic improvements in reading, math, writing scores and a further discussion of the results will occur at a later meeting.

*Superintendent Agostine* also addressed concerns regarding the heat. He said that he has had conference calls with their weather consultant and though there are some schools, mostly in urban areas, that have early dismissals, the District will have regularly scheduled days. *Superintendent Agostine* added that they have monitored temperatures, curtailed physical activities, and relocated students to air conditioned spaces whenever possible. Though the temperature in some areas was uncomfortable, it was not dangerous. As the forecast for tomorrow is lower temperatures with some cloud cover, *Superintendent Agostine* anticipates there will be a full day of school tomorrow.

### **Presentations**

#### **Introduction of New Staff and Reports on the Opening of School - School Principals**

*Superintendent Agostine* said that due to Back to School nights at the elementary schools, the elementary principals will be giving a virtual presentation. He continued that this year has been the smoothest opening he has experienced with no bus or schedule issues. He attributed this to the Administrative Team and the building Principals, particularly for communicating with parents and setting expectations.

### **Masuk**

*Principal Kobza* reiterated that the opening was a seamless transition, and he acknowledge the bus company for getting the buses to school on time as it sets the tone for the day. He gave a brief presentation of aerial footage from the Masuk drone on the new traffic pattern. *Principal Kobza* continued that the new traffic pattern is definitely an improvement. *Secretary Hughes* asked if there was a staff member posted at the drop-off area; *Principal Kobza* said that there has been, and in addition, there will be additional signage. He continued that sports will kick off on Friday; *Student Representative Moraveck* will be returning with two more student representatives and the Masuk classes of 1965-1967 will be coming in for a building tour on Saturday.

### **Jockey Hollow**

*Principal Ceccolini* concurred it was a very smooth opening to the school year. He continued that it was a busy summer at Jockey Hollow and recognized the Music Department for implementing an enrichment program. He said there were 85 middle

school students from Monroe and surrounding districts who participated in a week long music camp. *Principal Ceccolini* said that there was orchestra, choir, pop choir, jazz band, and concert band offerings, and the feedback was been very positive. He continued that BYOT continues to be an important initiative at Jockey Hollow and STEM, and over 150 families participated in the BYOT training that was held in August. *Principal Ceccolini* added that the goal at Jockey Hollow and STEM is to ultimately have students be able to access a device at any given time. There was an Open House/Locker Orientation on August 19, and students were able to walk their schedules, use their lockers, and attend an Ice Cream Social in the afternoon. *Principal Ceccolini* continued that there are 784 students at the combined campuses, and there were 30 new enrollments over the summer. He added that 8<sup>th</sup> graders will now have the opportunity to research a topic of their choice in a year long course. *Principal Ceccolini* recognized the Music Department for their achievement in growing the programs; 72% of students in Jockey Hollow and STEM are involved in performance music.

### **Stepney Elementary**

*Principal Lazar* said that Stepney welcomed 430 students, and it was a very smooth first day. He added there is a new climbing wall in the gym, and he thanked the PTO for making the purchase possible.

### **Monroe Elementary**

*Principal Kovachi* said to celebrate Monroe Elementary's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, the PTO financed a new mural designed by *Michael Kramer*. She also showed the new playground, the outdoor garden, and the Learning Common in the library.

### **Fawn Hollow**

*Principal Kosisko* said Fawn Hollow has 497 students enrolled and reiterated that it was a very successful start to the school year. She showed the restored foyer floor and gave a brief tour of the Learning Commons and labs.

*Superintendent Agostine* thanked *Dr. Zmary* for working with the elementary Principals in putting their presentations together. He added that Learning Commons is a term that is an outgrowth of the work *Dr. Zmary* is doing with the Library Media Specialists across the District.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Turf RFQ (Request for Qualifications)**

*Superintendent Agostine* said the District received five responses to their RFP and interviewed three firms. The Committee unanimously decided on Milone & MacBroome for the design work. The total cost of the two phase design plan is approximately \$76,000. Milone & MacBroome was the low bidder; they did the traffic study as well as the demographics portion of the Facilities and Demographics Ad Hoc work.

*Superintendent Agostine* added that they have been told that the sub stratum of the track is in decent condition and probably doesn't need to be repaired and that the concrete stands can be reworked rather than replaced.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Food Service RFP**

*Superintendent Agostine* said that due to the State Department providing Monroe and other districts within the state RFPs that were out of compliance, the USDA has made some concessions and the contract can be fixed for this year. He added that the contract is extendable, one year at a time, for up to five years.

*Superintendent Agostine* continued that the District is waiting for guidance on what needs to be fixed; *Ms. DiBlasi* will attend the next meeting on Thursday. The District was given the option to extend their current contract to the end of September, which they have elected to do. Once the new language is received for the remainder of the year, they will sign that contract and go out to bid for a food service provider in the Winter/Spring for the 2016-2017 school year.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

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

**Motion: (L. Crouch)**

**Second: (A. Primorac)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Hughes, Cascella, Crouch, Guttman, Primorac and Vaglivello)-0**

15-066

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Hughes  
Board of Education Secretary