

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2017

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

Also present: Superintendent James Agostine
Assistant Superintendent John Battista
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi
Masuk Student Board Representative Michelle Cobuzzi
Masuk Student Board Representative Kevin Brown

Absent: Masuk Student Board Representative William Santee

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

There was no report at tonight's meeting.

Consent Agenda

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Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (S. Reilly-Monaco)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: Superintendent Agostine noted there will be an end of year celebration for the retirees.

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Stevens, and Vaglivello)-0

17-001

Reports of the Committee and Liaisons

Student Board Representatives

Student Board Representative Cobuzzi said that Alumni Day will be held on January 5. It is a day where students who graduated last year return to share their college experiences with the junior and senior classes. January 12 is the Choral Concert and Strings will join

them for a few pieces. *Student Board Representative Brown* said that Boys Basketball has a game tonight in Bethel and a home game on Friday. Girls Basketball is facing Weston tonight, and the Boys Swim Team also has a home meet tonight. On Saturday, January 7, the Masuk Polar Plunge will take place in Southport to support Mr. Castillo's wife who is battling cancer. *Student Board Representative Brown* added that they have also created a Go Fund Me Page.

Public Participation

There was none at tonight's meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

2017-2018 Budget Discussion

Superintendent Agostine updated the Board on this year's budget. He said that due to the overruns in Special Education and the reduction of ECS Grant by \$134,000, the budget has been frozen as of this afternoon and any expenditure requires his approval. He said that he will be participating in a conference call with Superintendents from across the State to discuss how they will handle the reduction. He added that the suburban areas are being hit more heavily on a percentage basis than urban districts.

Superintendent Agostine said that the budget presented at the previous meeting was a 3.47% increase over the 2016-2017 Budget, but due to additional retirements, Special Education savings, salary savings, and other departmental savings, the budget is now at 2.95%. He added that he will continue to scrutinize every potential saving. His recommendation is for the Board of Education to adopt a budget of a 2.95% increase which is a \$1,610,546 increase over last year's budget for a total of \$56,252,314.

Board Member Martinez asked if there was the possibility of further retirements. *Superintendent Agostine* responded that by contract, teachers eligible for the retirement incentive needed to have informed the District by December 31. He said there can be savings if a more experienced teacher leaves the District and is replaced with a teacher with less experience. He also noted that a departure could cost the District more if it is in a shortage area.

Chairman Lane added that J.P. Sredzinski had asked for a list of the top five unfunded mandates they felt should be reconsidered. She said that if there are any savings from any action taken, the District would not know until the end of the legislative session in June.

Superintendent Agostine said that the unfunded mandate of professional development has had a significant impact to the District as there are approximately 38 different mandates of training for teachers, paraprofessional, and other employees. He said that PMT (Physical Management Training) is a six hour training so it costs the District a full day of training opportunities for the staff. *Superintendent Agostine* continued that there is also an unfunded Alternative Education Mandate starting next year that states an expelled student would have to receive the equivalent of the current Alternative Education Program (minimum of 900 hours) rather than the current 2 hours per day of instruction during the school week. The cost to the District is 49,000 if a student is expelled for the year so, though there are not many expelled students, the additional cost could be significant. *Secretary Reilly-Monaco* stated that the mandates are unsustainable and

unrealistic. *Board Member Vaglivelio* asked if there were any efforts to stop the mandates, *Superintendent Agostine* said there are. *Board Member Reinoso* added the perception that Fairfield County can sustain itself needs to change at the State level.

Superintendent Agostine added there is also the unfunded mandate on districts paying tuition to the Magnet Schools. The cost to the District could be as high as \$90,000. *Board Member Martinez* asked if Monroe would consider having early dismissal days for Professional Development. *Superintendent Agostine* said that *Assistant Superintendent Battista* supports that idea though it is his feeling that it has too great an impact on instructional time and is inconvenient for some parents. He said there are half day dismissals already for parent teacher conferences and tests.

Old Business

Curriculum Proposals -New Course and Resource - Second Review

Motion to approve the new course, Anatomy and Physiology, and instructional materials for Anatomy and Physiology and the AP Psychology Textbook as presented

Motion: (A. Vaglivelio)

Second: (J. Stevens)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens, and Vaglivelio)-0

17-002

New Business

Approval of the 2017-2018 Board of Education Budget

Motion to approve the 2017-2018 Board of Education budget of 56,252,314, an increase of 2.95%, as presented

Motion: (J. Martinez)

Second: (S. Reilly-Monaco)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens, and Vaglivelio)-0

17-003

Magnet School Tuition

Superintendent Agostine reiterated that the cost of the unfunded mandate, which districts are trying to disavow, could cost the District as much as \$93,000. *Board Member Stevens* asked if there was any way to join other districts such as Stratford and Fairfield who have significant exposures, *Chairman Lane* responded that a group email has been established and there is a concerted effort to fight the mandate.

Set Dates for Board of Education Self Evaluation

Chairman Lane explained that CIBE provides the Board of Education an evaluation form which each member completes and gives to *Assistant Superintendent Battista*. The self evaluation is done on an annual basis; this year's self evaluation will take place on March 6, at 6:00 p.m. The Superintendent's Evaluation will take place on February 21.

Policies-First Review

Policy #5131.81 Students, Electronic Devices

Policy # 5141.21 Students, Administration of Medication

Vice-Chairman King said that Policy #5131.81 has not been reviewed since 2006, and they are using CABE policy regarding updating technology and it addresses BYOT and District devices. Policy # 5141.21 needs to be updated to a change in state law and the school nurses collaborated on the update.

Superintendent Agostine also updated the Board on the bonding for the Stepney Roof Project. He said that he has reached out to *Frank Lieto*, Town Council Chairman, and *Mike Manjos*, Board of Finance Chairman. *Mr. Lieto* responded that he will await Board of Finance action to approve the bonding and then it will go to Bond Council before the proposal goes to a Town Meeting. This should occur within the next month.

Board Member Reinoso also added that CABE is having a breakfast on January 17th at Staples High School for this area and all the Board Members were invited to attend

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (C. Reinoso)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens, and Vaglivelo)-0

17-004

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Board of Education Secretary