

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
September 6, 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 Vaglivelov

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

Call to Order

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

Chairman Lane noted that an agenda item needed to be added. Item B, Acceptance of Donation from Masuk Booster Club, under Report of the Chairman.

Motion to amend the Agenda by adding Item B, Acceptance of Donation from Masuk Booster Club, under Report of the Chairman

Motion to amend the Agenda by adding Item B

Motion: (J. Guttman)

Second: (J. Martinez)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Guttman, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivelov)-0

16-049

Report of the Chairman

Acceptance of a donation from the Monroe Newcomers and Neighbors Club
Superintendent Agostine introduced *Kim Henderson* from Monroe Newcomers. She presented a \$2,400 check to be allocated to the three elementary schools from their spring event, A Day at the Beach. It was a free event for the community and the funds raised were raised by local vendors and advertising. *Ms. Henderson* said that each school can choose to use the funds based on their needs though the group would like to see it used for technology or educational purposes.

Masuk Booster Club

Jennifer Aguilar represented the Masuk Booster Club and said they committed giving \$25,000 to the Turf Field Project. This was money that they raised throughout the year. From their recent golf tournament, they raised \$17,000. She added that they have been selling bricks for the past few months and so far, they have sold approximately \$17,000.

Chairman Lane announced that tonight will be *Board Member Guttman's* last meeting as he is moving out of town. She and *Superintendent Agostine* presented him with a thank-you gift for his years of service on the Board. *Board Member Guttman* said that he appreciated the opportunity to serve the Town for the past 11 years in various capacities, and it has been an honor for him and a wonderful experience.

Exemplary People

The Board recognized *John Kimball*, of the Kimball Group, for their work on the Fawn Hollow playground. *Superintendent Agostine* said that when it was discussed that Fawn Hollow needed a new playground, one of the options was to take the Sandy Hook playground and bring it to Fawn Hollow. He continued that they received many bids and *Mr. Kimball* came in with a great bid price. The Kimball group volunteered a lot of time and manpower and went “way above and beyond what was expected” and saved the Board of Education a significant amount of money. *Superintendent Agostine* thanked *Mr. Kimball* for his dedication to the District.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (S. Monaco)

Second: (C. Reinoso)

Discussion: None

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

16-050

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Board Member Lane said that the Committee met tonight and discussed the Turf Field update. The field is coming along well, and it is anticipated it will be completed by October 1.

Superintendent Agostine said that the lights are on tonight as the workers are putting the carpet down. The Board Members will have the opportunity to see what the lights look like after the meeting.

Board Member Lane added the District will be returning approximately \$250,000 to the Town for the Capital Reserve Account. *Board Member Guttman* added he wanted to make sure that the voters understand that the Board did not ask for too much money. The return is possible because of how *Superintendent Agostine* manages the District, and all the administrators spend wisely. *Superintendent Agostine* said that the bulk of the money comes from unexpected, extended maternity leaves and paying substitutes generated savings.

CES

Board Member Reinoso said that they met this past Thursday and that their convocation was held last Monday. They had a lot of new employees, and they hired four new speech and language pathologists which they are willing to share with the districts if the need arises. *Board Member Reinoso* added that in regards to the HR Management piece that was mentioned at the last Board of Education meeting, CES does not want that responsibility, and they will keep the Board informed of any developments. He added that they also discussed background checks for teachers. CES will have a 5K fundraiser in October, and they have invited the Board Members to any performance the Regional Art School presents.

Public Participation

There was none at tonight's meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

Superintendent Agostine thanked *Board Member Guttman* for all the support he has given over the year and noted he has played an integral role in negotiations. He continued that he will personally miss his camaraderie and the work he has done for the Board of Education.

Superintendent Agostine provided the Board Members with a letter he received from *Mr. LaMonica* regarding his concerns with Planning and Zoning and the proposed construction of a six home subdivision. He added that at this time, he is not encouraging the Board to take any side in the matter.

Stepney Roof Project

Superintendent Agostine asked for a few Board Member volunteers to join the building committee; there would be approximately six meetings in order to bring the bond issue to Town Council for their approval.

CABE Board of Education

Superintendent Agostine said that CABE was looking for feedback from Superintendents on their Boards of Education for the CABE Board of Education Recognition Awards. CABE had put together a survey regarding the roles and accomplishments of the Board of Education, and *Superintendent Agostine* expressed his thanks to the Board for the tremendous amount they support and contribute to the District.

Technology at Chalk Hill

Superintendent Agostine said the First Selectman has discussed the possibility of moving the Technology personnel to Chalk Hill. Though there are benefits such as having training site labs, more space to repair and set up equipment, the District does not know yet from the Town how long Chalk Hill will be there.

Chairman Lane asked if there would be any monetary commitment to having the personnel at Chalk Hill. *Superintendent Agostine* said that is one of the questions that need to be answered. *Board Member Stevens* asked who will make the decision on Chalk

Hill. *Superintendent Agostine* said that it would need to be addressed by several groups including the First Selectman and Town Council.

Bridgeport Magnet School Tuition

Bridgeport is are now charging for magnet school students at Fairchild Wheeler, and the bill for the 2017-2018 will be approximately \$30,000. Though an exposure, the \$30,000 is considerably less than what many surrounding towns will have to pay. This is an example of unfunded mandated.

Presentations

All the Principals introduced their new staff members and spoke on the first day opening. *Principal Kobza* said that Masuk has 1,064 students and 19 students attending outside schools including Henry Abbott Tech. There were 27 new student enrollments over the summer. *Principal Kobza* said the start of the year was very smooth, and All-Star Transportation did an excellent job in having the busses arrive on a timely basis. He continued that Masuk will be hosting *Chris Herren*, a former NBA player, who will give a school wide presentation on addition. *Principal Kobza* added that a student group from Germany will perform a concert with the Masuk students. On Saturday, he will be giving a tour of Masuk to the class of 1961 alumni.

Principal Ceccolini said they welcomed 785 students on the first day of school, which includes 33 new students who enrolled over the summer. In addition, there were 18 new staff members to Jockey Hollow and STEM, due to transfers and new hires. He continued that Jockey Hollow housed the Music Enrichment music program in July and in August. They had over 300 parents and students attend the BYOT workshop.

Principal Kosisko said that a week before the official start of school, almost 25 staff members came to learn about Readers Workshop. There are 517 students which includes 43 new enrollments. *Principal Kosisko* added that the childcare program now at Fawn Hollow gives an added energy to the school. There is a new playground and the PTO supplemented what was from Sandy Hook. *Principal Kosisko* continued the Commissioner of Education visited Fawn Hollow on the first day of school.

Principal Kovachi said that it was a quiet summer without any major projects, and they enrolled 20 new students across the grade levels.

Principal Lazar said that the topsoil from the turf field has been spread and seeded and it will be ready for use in the spring. The oil tank replacement has been completed, the trees were cut down in the back and upper fields, and the grounds are looking good. Enrollment is 447 students including 32 new students. *Principal Lazar* reiterated that the bus company did an outstanding job with busses being on time.

Mrs. Moser said that Student Support Services had some staff changes, and they also saw an increase with 11 new students. She added that several of the people who moved to Monroe said it was due partially to the services the District provides.

Superintendent Agostine said that the CMT and CAPT Science results were announced and the three elementary schools were in the top 29 schools of the 511 elementary schools in the State. Jockey Hollow was 31 out of 285 schools, and Mausk was 15 out of 211 schools in Connecticut. He noted that the standings reflect the dedication and effort from all involved.

Current Enrollment

Superintendent Agostine said that October 1 is the legal enrollment date but, as of August 29, the enrollment was 3,215 students which is an increase from last year and ahead of Milone & MacBroom's projection of 3,092 students. He added that the increase will have to be taken into account when preparing the budget for next year.

Old Business

Chairman Lane said that they needed to redo the vote due to an error that was made on the Substitute pay.

Motion to approve the 2016-2017 Rates and Fees

Motion: (J. Guttman)

Second: (S. Monaco)

Discussion: It was noted that there was a correction to the Substitute daily pay rate; the current rate is \$85.00.

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

16-051

New Business

New Teacher Ratification

Superintendent Agostine said that the teachers approved the contract on Wednesday and he recommended that the Board ratify it at tonight's meeting. He stated that the Board of Education was dedicated to the strategy of containing costs and that the discussions were always professional throughout the process. It is a three year contract from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2020.

Superintendent Agostine added that in addition to the financial impacts, there were also some language changes to bring it current. For the first year, there was a 2% general wage increase and a step increase of 1.3%, for the second year, the increase was 2.24% general wage and a 1.60% step increase, and in the final year, the general wage increase is 2.4% and a 9/10th of a percent step increase. There are 278 teachers with 173 already being at the maximum step. The deductible was increased from \$2,000 for single to \$2,500 and from \$4,000 to \$5,000 for family coverage. He continued that increasing the deductible for medical resulted in a net impact of 6% savings in the first year.

Superintendent Agostine continued that in addition, the agreement included the sunseting of the retirement benefit of the sick day buy back; it was a \$15,000 liability for each retiring teacher. The agreement also addressed critical ill days, preparation time at the elementary level and the grievance process.

Motion to Ratify the Teacher Contract

Motion: (J. Guttman)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: Board Member Guttman said that he felt the contract was good for all parties, Secretary Reilly-Monaco thanked all involved for their efforts in negotiating and Board Member Stevens abstained from the vote; he abstained with his recent rehiring and past affiliation, he was abstaining.

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

16-052

Motion to Adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

Motion: (S. Monaco)

Second: (C. Reinoso)

Discussion: None

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

16-053

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Board of Education Secretary