

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2018

Present: Chairman Donna Lane
Vice-Chairman George King III
Board Member Christine Cascella
Board Member Jeff Fulchino
Board Member Jessica Katuska
Board Member Jerry Stevens
Board Member Alan Vaglivello

Absent: Secretary Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Board Member David Ferris
Masuk Student Board Representative Ryan Winkler

Also present: Superintendent John Battista
Assistant Superintendent Jack Zmary
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi
Masuk Student Board Representative Kevin Brown
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

Acknowledgement of Donation

The Board acknowledged and expressed their gratitude for the donation of a Makerbot Replicator Z18 3D Printer from *John Skidmore*, a Monroe resident. The large format printer, valued at \$6000.00, has been added to the CAD and Imaging Lab at Masuk High School.

Board Member Vaglivello volunteered to be Acting Secretary for this evening's meeting.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (J. Fulchino)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 6 (Lane, Cascella, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0

18-009

Superintendent Battista read a letter from *Masuk Student Board Representative Ryan Winkler* stating that he has appreciated the opportunity to participate on the board but he needs to resign due to scheduling conflicts. *Principal Kobza* is looking for another junior to serve on the Board for the remainder of this year and next.

Reports of the Committees and Liaisons

Masuk Student Representatives

Student Representative Santee said the Robotic Regionals were held this weekend and both Masuk teams made the Championships and qualified for the World Competition in Louisville, Kentucky. *Student Representative Brown* said that Economic students will be going to Sacred Heart and there will be students visiting the United Nations tomorrow. There is also a DECA competition where students have the opportunity to present ideas, address problems and issues in a business environment. *Student Representative Brown* added that *Kelsey Colville* and *Andrew Maslar* were selected as Students of the Month. *Amanda Dial* placed first in the state and 4th in the country for the Invest Right Stock Market Game and Essay Competition. The Pi Day 5K will be held on March 11. *Student Representative Brown* continued that the Fashion Show, benefitting the Post Prom, is March 14 and both he and *Student Representative Santee* will be participating in the event. The Ring Dance for sophomores will be held on March 14 and The SAT Bootcamp will take place on March 17 and 18.

Public Participation

Masuk Students *Theo Gross* and *Dylan Ferris* spoke on behalf of the Masuk Political Action Club and approached the Board regarding forming a subcommittee to review parking issues. The subcommittee would be comprised of parents, staff, and students to address ongoing concerns including fees.

Report of the Superintendent

Update on the 2018-19 Budget

Superintendent Battista said that he and *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* along with the administrative team will attend the Board of Finance's budget workshop tomorrow evening. He added that he and *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* have met with the PTO's, Parent Council and will be going to the Senior Center.

Insurance Budget Update

Superintendent Battista said they met with Brown and Brown and they tried to join a consortium for better rates but because of the District's number of high claimants, they were unable to join. However, Brown and Brown did work with Cigna and they offered a zero percent increase in the aggregate stop loss and no administration fee.

Superintendent Battista added that premiums will be increasing by 9% and Brown and Brown are comfortable with the \$400,000 increase that was put into the budget.

Monroe Early Learning Center Fees by 2% for the 2018-19 School Year

Ms. DiBlasi said that it is a self-funded program and the Learning Center provides childcare for children from 6 weeks to 5 years. The program is available to Board of

Education and Town employees. This is the first increase since 2012 and it was noted the costs are very competitive.

Monroe's Response to "Call for National Walkout"

Superintendent Battista said that the High School and Middle School are working on programs. *Principal Ceccolini* said their program will focus on reassurance and awareness rather than focusing on the recent acts of violence. He continued that, in an advisory, they will review protocol and talk about the different ways one can use their voice in a democracy including peaceful protests and writing campaigns. On the 14, students will have the opportunity to write to state and local officials on a topic they choose that shares their voice in an appropriate manner. *Principal Kobza* said that the students want to be heard and have their issues addressed so rather than a walk-out; there will be a community conversation with students, police, Board of Education and Town officials, where the students have the opportunity to ask questions. This forum will be held in the auditorium on March 14 and there will be an alternate place for students to go should they choose not to participate. *Principal Kobza* also noted that he would speak with the Registrar of Voters about talking with students eligible to vote.

Celebration of Reading

Superintendent Battista said that the Celebration of Reading took place on Friday with 63 volunteer readers going into the classrooms. He thanked the schools' reading teams who selected the books as well as the parent volunteers including *Sandra Gabriel-Busa* who coordinated the volunteers.

Old Business

Curriculum-Non-Fiction Reading-Texts-Second Review

Motion to approve texts Chasing Lincoln's Killer, Refugee, and the Unconquerable Soul for Non-Fiction Reading as presented.

Motion: (C. Cascella)

Second: (A. Vaglivo)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivo)-0

18-010

New Business

School Security

Discussion of Safety and Security at PTO Meetings

Superintendent Battista and *Assistant Superintendent Zmary* gave a brief presentation on the Safety and Security information that had been presented to parents. *Superintendent Battista* said that he explained to parents that some of the information is internal and could not be shared. He noted there is "not a 100 percent solution rather 100 1% solutions."

Assistant Superintendent Zamary added they have worked on security plans over the years and continue to update them. There are regular Security Committee meetings and the members bring the information back to the schools. The Committee is comprised of administrators, staff, fire personnel and police; *Board Member Ferris* is the Board of Education liaison.

Monroe Security Plan consists of:

- Consistency across the district
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Communication protocols
- Common Language
- Plans for every type of emergency
- Site specific information
- Align with BOE, State and Federal Policies

There are Four Tiers of School Security:

1- Behavior

Behavioral Monthly practice drills

- Monthly practice drills
- Don't open the door
- See something, say something
- ALICE training for staff
- Ongoing Security Committee meetings
- Feedback

Superintendent Battista said that they received information from a parent regarding a product that blocks the doors but they want to present it to the Security Committee for their review and input.

2-Technology

Assistant Superintendent Zamary noted there have been many improvements in Technology in the past years including:

- Addition of Video cameras
- Police have the ability to monitor
- Swipe badges access
- Panic buttons in every office
- Common language and "All Call"
- School Gate Guardian for visitors

The District has a good working relationship with the police and they are present at all drills.

3-Structural

The structural changes that have taken place are:

- Addition of Video cameras

- Police have the ability to monitor
- Swipe badges access
- Panic buttons in every office
- Common language and “All Call”
- School Gate Guardian for visitors

4-Law Enforcement

- 4 SROs (full time Monroe Police Officers_ for the 5 schools
- The District is investigating hiring SSOs
- Provide feedback about practice drills
- Don’t open the door
- See something, say something
- There are ongoing meetings with police

SSO Discussion

Superintendent Battista had a discussion with the Chief about covering for the SROs (School Resource Officer) due to absences and lack of available staff. The SROs are specially trained and work with students, enter classrooms, and are an active part of the school environment. He noted that Newtown has SSOs, School Security Officers, who are ex-police who have left the force in good standing, are trained and allowed to carry weapons. *Superintendent Battista* said that he wants the Board’s input before proceeding with further discussions. He continued an SSO costs are about ½ that of an SRO though they do not plan to eliminate SROs as they have a different skill set. Right now, the SROs are under the Police Department and one question is whether the SSOs would be part of the school. *Chairman Lane* said that they would need to be supervised by the police and under the town budget. Though the state has specific requirements for SSO’s; the district would be able to set certain criteria such as years on the force or in the military. *Vice-Chairman King* asked about security officers at Masuk; they are not armed and deal with visitors and student passes.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 7 (Lane, King, Cascella, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0

18-011

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Vaglivello
Acting Board of Education Secretary