

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

**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 16, 2018**

**Present:** Chairman Donna Lane  
Vice-Chairman George King III  
Secretary Shannon Reilly-Monaco  
Board Member Christine Cascella  
Board Member David Ferris  
Board Member Jeff Fulchino  
Board Member Jessica Katuska  
Board Member Jerry Stevens  
Board Member Alan Vaglivello

**Absent:** 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.

**Exemplary People-Unified Sports**

The Board of Education recognized Jockey Hollow teachers, *Kim Green* and *Kate Gueli*, and Masuk teachers, *Nicole Schwartz* and *Danielle Harvey*, for the development and success of the Unified Sports Program. The Unified Sports Program is a program where students with special needs work with peers in a sports program. *Superintendent Battista* noted that it is a great program and encouraged the Board Members to attend a practice or game.

**Report of the Chairman**

There was no report at tonight's meeting.

**Presentation**

*Ms. Green, Ms. Gueli, Ms. Schwartz, and Ms. Harvey* gave a presentation on the Unified Sports Program. The Unified Sports is a program that combines athletes with and

without disabilities on sports teams for training and competition. There are three models for the program: competitive, player development, and recreation. Though 96% of Connecticut high schools have a Unified Sports Program, only 80 middle schools participate, and the current focus is increasing programs at the middle school level. Jockey Hollow is in the second year of having the program with over 40 students participating. They played a home and away game as well as participated in a tournament in Brookfield. Their seasons include soccer, basketball, and volleyball. They follow the player development model where athletes are paired with partners, do skill training, and play games. Their volleyball season will begin on March 29.

Masuk has participated in the Unified Sports Program since 2010, and there are three seasons: soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Each season lasts eight to nine weeks, and there are weekly practice sessions. They play at least two games per season, and end the season with a tournament with all the athletes from the different sports. In addition, the students also go on two field trips - one to a Leadership Summit, in Hartford, in December, and the second is a trip to the Hartford Yard Goats baseball game in May.

Last year was the first year Masuk participated in the R Word Campaign which is a Special Olympics initiative with the slogan, "Spread the word to end the word" to increase awareness of the derogatory use of the R word and eliminate it from people's vocabulary. The Unified Sports Team set up a banner in the cafeteria and pushed for their classmates to take a pledge to remove the R word, and the banner was then displayed for the next several weeks. They will continue the campaign this year.

The first Alumni Unified Sports Volleyball Game will be held in May. Last year, Special Olympics recognized Masuk as a Champion School for their participation in other inclusion programs such as Unified Culinary and the Best Buddies Club. In the spring, the Unified Sports Team attends two award ceremonies; the Michael's Cup for teammate awards and the SWC for leadership. For each award, one athlete and one partner are selected. Masuk has two home games for basketball; February 6, against Bethel, and February 13, against Bunnell. Since Unified Sports began, there has been increased interaction between athletes and partners, and there is a greater sense of camaraderie in the school community.

## **Consent Agenda**

### **Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

**Motion: (S. Reilly-Monaco)**

**Second: (C. Cascella)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

18-004

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

### **Masuk Student Representatives**

*Student Representative Santee* said Masuk will have an Advisory Schedule tomorrow, and it will help freshman adjust to the mid-term exam calendar. He said that there will be a college funding night on January 18 and a blood drive on February 2. *Student Representative Brown* said the Robotics competition went very well and the next one will be on Saturday, February 3, at Choate. There will also be a Color Guard competition on February 3, and the Dance SWCs will be on January 25, in New Milford.

### **CES**

*Superintendent Battista* provided *Chairman Lane* with the minutes from the last CES meeting.

## **Public Participation**

*Manaia Friend* and *Katherine Samoneck*, represented the Masuk Debate Club to present the benefits of offering standing desks to students. *Ms. Friend* said that standing reduces the risk of obesity as it burns more calories than sitting, increases productivity, and offering standing desks may improve the health of Masuk students. *Ms. Friend* proposed using some of the funds in the furniture line item for the standing desks which cost approximately \$78.77. She also suggested that woodshop classes could assist in building standing desks. *Ms. Samoneck* said that *standing* decreases restlessness and promotes attentiveness. She cited studies that indicate active learners, including those who stand, are more successful on tests and are more productive with less physical pain. *Ms. Samoneck* said that one of her teachers utilizes standing desks in the classroom, and she quoted her as saying that her students are more attentive and productive. *Ms. Friend* added that they have a petition with over 100 signatures supporting the use of standing desks.

## **Report of the Superintendent**

### **Review of the Fund Activity Statement**

*Ms. DiBlasi* said that as of Friday, the balance in the Insurance Reserve was \$616,000, and they are starting to spec out the truck that is in the budget so they will be ready to purchase it in July. She added that they are looking at blanket purchase orders that were opened at the beginning of the fiscal year to be closed if they have not been used. *Ms. DiBlasi* noted they are beginning to plan the summer projects such as air conditioning moves, painting, and equipment replacement

### **Goals and Action Plan**

*Superintendent Battista* said that the District has met the current goals, and they will meet with the Board of Education to work on the next set of goals. The administrative group has begun to look at the mission statement and will share some ideas with the Board at the meeting scheduled for Monday, May 14, at 6:30 p.m.

### Regional Plans to Develop Fiscal Efficiency

*Superintendent Battista* said that this is not regionalization to combine districts but rather it is looking at goods and services that can be combined to enhance efficiency and save money. He said that he, *Assistant Superintendent Zamary*, and *Ms. DiBlasi* met with neighboring schools and worked with their business managers on ways to save money on contractual services, non-payroll items, and duplicate services. He added that The Southern Fairfield County Special Education Directors also met as a group to determine where services might be shared.

### Update of the District Student Enrollment

*Superintendent Battista* provided the Board Members with an update on student enrollment. As of last Friday, there was 79 students enrolled since July 1 across the District, and the numbers are always changing as they just found out that there will be two new students enrolling in Masuk.

### Curriculum Committee

*Assistant Superintendent Zamary* said that the Curriculum Council is a bit larger than it has been in past years, and they are looking at homework. The Committee is crafting a proposal to bring to the Board to consider as a revision to the current homework policy. He noted the School Climate Surveys that are going out this week contain questions on homework and the feedback will help the Committee develop new proposal language.

### Posting Anticipated Openings

*Superintendent Battista* said that open positions need to be posted internally for ten days prior to posting externally, and they would like to begin posting the anticipated openings. The anticipated openings include four at Fawn Hollow, one at Stepney, two at Masuk as well as three Guidance Counselors throughout the District.

### Old Business

There was none at tonight's meeting.

### New Business

#### Negotiations for Nurses

*Board Member Vaglivo* will be the Board of Education representative on the Negotiating Committee. Negotiations will start in March and the goal is to end by June.

#### Monroe Elementary Oil Tank

The State of Connecticut requires that oil tanks need to be replaced every 25 years and the oil tank at Monroe Elementary must be removed this summer. Monroe Elementary has not used oil in many years as they use natural gas. *Chairman Lane* said that the cost to remove and replace the tank is approximately \$120,000, which will require bonding, while removing the tank will cost approximately \$22,000. If the District opts to go back to oil and install a new tank at a later date, the approximate cost would be \$150,000.

**Motion to Permanently Remove the Oil Tank at Monroe Elementary and Operate it on Natural Gas Going Forward**

**Motion: (S. Reilly-Monaco)**

**Second: (A. Vaglivello)**

Discussion: Board Member Ferris said given the removal cost versus the replacement cost, he felt it was prudent to remove the tank. It was noted that Stepney is the only school that uses oil, and that Fawn Hollow operates on gas and electric.

**Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

18-005

**Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:25 p.m.**

**Motion: (J. Stevens)**

**Second: (D. Ferris)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 9 (Lane, King, Reilly-Monaco, Cascella, Ferris, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

18-006

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco  
Board of Education Secretary