

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2018

Present: Chairman Donna Lane
Vice-Chairman George King III
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: Secretary Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Masuk Student Board Representative William Santee
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

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

Chairman Lane acknowledged, with gratitude, a \$100 donation from *Ruth and Robert L. Lesser*, which will be added to the Field Trip Scholarship Fund.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (D. Ferris)

Discussion: None

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

18-001

Reports of the Committees and Liaisons

Masuk Student Representatives

Masuk Student Representative Brown said Masuk will follow an Advisory Schedule tomorrow, and Alumni Day is scheduled for Thursday. The Robotics Team has two

upcoming tournaments, and there is a possibility they will compete in the World Championship again this year. He added the chorus concert will be on Thursday, January 11, at 7:00 p.m. Tonight last year's male All-State athletes are being recognized. The female All-State announcement will take next place next Tuesday.

Public Participation

There was no public participation at tonight's meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

Superintendent Battista said they will post the Assistant Superintendent position tomorrow. It will be posted internally for ten days. *Chairman Lane* and *Board Member Vaglivelio* will be the Board of Education representatives on the Interview Committee; *Tammy Julian* is the Parent Council representative; the Teacher and Administrator representatives will be determined later this week.

Superintendent Battista also provided the Board Members with a copy of an article he wrote for the Monroe Courier. The Editor had asked if the District would like to submit a monthly editorial or article. This month's topic is, "*Is this a Good Call.*" It was regarding what is entailed in making a decision on closing schools for inclement weather.

Superintendent Battista added the reception for *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* will be held on February 20, at 7:00 p.m., prior to the scheduled Board of Education meeting.

2018-2019 Budget Discussion

Superintendent Battista provided a summary of the 2018-2019 Proposed Budget prior to the Board's discussion and vote tonight.

The 2018-2019 Proposed Budget of \$56,281,117 is a 1.84% increase over last year's budget or an increase of \$1,016,220. 80.41% of the budget is Salary and Benefits. The budget includes an increase of \$400,000 in medical costs and reinstates two of the three K-5 District Coordinators. *Ms. Casinelli* will assume the role of the K-5 Coordinator for Language Arts. The three Technology Paraeducators at the Elementary level were also reinstated, and a 0.2 Social Worker is also included in the budget for the first time, as the needs of the community have increased. There are 3.5 FTE certified staff reductions at Jockey Hollow, Masuk, and Monroe Elementary as well as 1.5 non-certified staff reductions at Central Office and Masuk. *Superintendent Battista* continued that there is a reduction of 213,000 in negotiation reserves as they are no longer negotiating the five contracts from last year. \$55,000 is included for a new plow truck which replaces the 2009 GMC with a liftgate that has been experiencing hydraulic problems, and the body has been welded numerous times. He added that there is also a 10% decrease in the Special Education line items.

Chairman Lane added that more definitive numbers on the health insurance, stop loss, and Special Education busing will be known at the end of February. *Board Member Vaglivelio* asked about the Alternative School and if District is comfortable with the rent

they are paying currently. *Superintendent Battista* said that he and *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* met with Newtown's Interim Superintendent, and they discussed sharing. He added that if more than a few students from out of district attend the Alternative School, they may need to look at a larger space but it presently fits their needs.

In addition, the new State law regarding providing 900 hours of instruction to expelled students requires the District to find adequate space in a cost effective manner. *Superintendent Battista* thanked the Principals and Administrators for their efforts with the budget process, and he reiterated they believe this is a solid budget.

Presentations

Board of Education Professional Development-Ways We Communicate
Chairman Lane noted the Board of Education provides professional development on a monthly basis and this month's topic is communications.

Superintendent Battista said that communication is a goal for teachers and for the District. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* reviewed some of the feedback they received from the 2017 Climate Survey as the data determines the types of things the District invests their time and resources into.

Jockey Hollow and Masuk - 97% of families agreed that they understood how to access their student's grades, attendance, and assignment information, and 91% agreed that school leadership effectively communicates important information and events to families. Elementary level - 80% of families are satisfied with the teacher/school response they get when they contact their child's school/teacher with questions and concerns. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* stated that though they had positive feedback, they are always looking for ways to improve.

The District communicates in the following ways:

SchoolMessenger-Phone, Text, and Email

Websites

Social Media, such as Facebook and Twitter

Power School and Google Classroom

Board Meetings: Live, TV Broadcasts and Video

Newsletters

Saturday Morning Conversations

Back to School Nights and Parent Conferences

Individual Phone Calls and Emails

Anonymous Alerts

PTO Meeting and Communications

CIAC Athletic Event Calendar

School Climate Surveys

Parent Lecture Series

Local Media

Assistant Superintendent Zamary continued that SchoolMessenger is a primary communication tool for the District, and it includes *Principal Kobza's* weekly phone calls, Jockey Hollow Lions' Pride emails, messages from the principals, as well as community and emergency announcements. He noted that parents have complete control over how they receive announcements and directions on how to receive SchoolMessenger are listed on the website.

Assistant Superintendent Zamary said the District will introduce a new website in the coming months with a draft being created for March/April with a link to allow for user feedback. Prior to it going live in July/August, the draft will be edited and revised based on the feedback received. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* said the new site will integrate with SchoolMessenger and social media as well as being phone/tablet friendly. He added that having an interface that works well on mobile devices is essential. Because the District is in a consortium, the website will cost less than they presently pay. He showed an example of the vendor's site, and the Board will receive a full presentation on the draft at a future meeting. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* noted that the Saturday Morning Conversations have led to good discussions and exchange of ideas despite the relatively low attendance. He added that ongoing feedback and improving communications is a priority to the District, and they are working diligently to make updates to the School Climate Survey to better assess strengths and weaknesses.

Old Business

Board of Education Committee Liaisons - It was noted that due to the meeting day and time of the CES meetings, there will not be a Board of Education liaison though *Chairman Lane* will receive the forwarded minutes.

New Business

Approval of the 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget

Motion to approve the 2018-19 Board of Education Budget as presented

Motion: (D. Ferris)

Second: (A. Vaglivello)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Cascella, Ferris, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0

18-002

Climate Survey-*Assistant Superintendent Zamary* gave a brief overview of the Climate Survey. The surveys will be sent out by the end of January rather than in May in order to get additional information sooner in the school year. He said that they have made a concerted effort to keep the nature of the questions consistent over time so they can see a comparison of growth and change. The format, questions, and recipients will remain the same but questions have been added about homework and technology. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* said that students are surveyed in Grades 3 and 5, 6 through 12, and for parents, there is one survey to complete for each of their children enrolled in the school system. In addition, all District staff members are surveyed.

The survey questions include:

Climate - How people in our schools treat each other

Safety

Bullying

Communication

Homework

Technology

After school activities

Assistant Superintendent Zmary continued that the Survey is sent out using Google Forms, a free format, with a link sent to the individuals which provides the District with real time feedback. The Board will have a presentation on the feedback in the early spring and all schools will also receive feedback. The data is used to measure growth over time and to develop improvement strategies.

Discussion of Board of Education Self Evaluation

Chairman Lane said the Board conducts an annual self evaluation to determine how they are working together, what they are accomplishing, and where can improvements be made. She said last year one of the questions was confusing due to the wording of a question. *Superintendent Battista* said he will get the Board clarification on the question and information on professional development. The Board will discuss their evaluation on March 19 after the shortened Board of Education meeting scheduled for that evening.

Chairman Lane said they should set a date for setting goals and developing an action plan with *Assistant Superintendent Zmary*. It was noted that it will be on the agenda for the next meeting. *Chairman Lane* said that they should set a date for early May.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (C. Cascella)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Cascella, Ferris, Fulchino, Katuska, Stevens and Vaglivo)-0

18-003

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco