

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

**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 5, 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  
Board Member Alan Vaglivello

**Also present:** Superintendent John Battista  
Assistant Superintendent Jack Zmary  
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi

**Absent:** Board Member Jerry Stevens

**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**

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

**Motion: (C. Cascella)**

**Second: (S. Monaco)**

Discussion: None

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

17-057

**Reports of the Committees and Liaisons**

CES

*Board Member Reinoso* said there will be a meeting on Thursday evening.

Policy

*Vice-Chairman King* said that Policy met tonight, and there will be policies presented to the Board at the next Board of Education Meeting.

## **Public Participation**

*Patrick O'Hara*, 282 Wheeler Road, introduced himself as the Board of Finance liaison specifically for the Cigna/Brown & Brown Proposal.

*Marie Blake*, Wheeler Road, A Masuk teacher, said that she felt the opening went very smoothly. She continued by saying, "The Professional Development was fabulous, and the Convocation was very inspiring."

## **Report of the Superintendent**

### **New Hires and Overview of Staffing**

*Vice-Principal Schwarz* said that Masuk welcomed back 1,036 students including 21 new students. New staff members include: *Lauren Iverson*, Spanish Teacher; *Marissa Esteve*, a Masuk alum and SPED Teacher; *Terry Stroz*, SPED Teacher; and *Marissa Memoli*, SPED Teacher. *Superintendent Battista* added that all buses were on time on the first day, and that they continue to run on schedule.

*Principal Ceccolini* said the BYOT workshops were held in August, and over 200 parents and students attended. Approximately 90% of students attended the Open House and Locker Orientation on August 25. He introduced the new staff members at Jockey Hollow including *Robert Beehler*, Band, String and Music Tech Teacher; *Blakeley Cole*, Grade 8 Algebra; and *Caroline Nieto*, Grade 7-8 Spanish Teacher.

*Principal Kosisko* said there were no new staff members at Fawn Hollow and that they enrolled over 35 new students over the summer, so the total population is 525. She added there are four sections of every grade level. *Principal Kosisko* added this is the fifth year for their PBIS Program which has been very successful, and it is Fawn Hollow's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

*Principal Kovachi* introduced *Kirsten Berube*, Library Media Specialist, and *Megan McHugh*, also Masuk alum, SPED Teacher. She presented a brief slide presentation of the activities that took place before the beginning of school as well as of the first day. *Mrs. Kovachi* added that there were 20 new students this year with 7 of them being fifth graders.

*Principal Lazar* introduced *Alexandra Oakley* as the new Elementary Music Teacher and showed a slide presentation created by *Lisa Martinsky*, a Second Grade Teacher. He continued there were 23 new students with 7 of them being in second grade. The roof project is almost complete and the Back to School Social will be held on Thursday.

*Superintendent Battista* said that the Stepney Roof Project has gone very smoothly, and he is very pleased with how the project was handled. *Ms. DiBlasi* added they were on budget.

## Enrollment

*Superintendent Battista* said that the total enrollment is 3,183 students which is 17 above the Milone & MacBroom projections. The official count will be as of October 1, 2017.

## TC Changes/Professional Development

Due to the cuts that occurred with the lack of a state budget, there were reductions in Professional Development and Teachers College Readers and Writers Workshop. *Ms. Casinelli* gave an overview of some of the changes, including the elimination of writing units of study for Grades K-5, Professional Development for the Kindergarten staff, and Calendar Days, which are one day workshops in New York City, and transportation to the Weekend Reunion Days. *Superintendent Battista* said that they have seen positive results from the Columbia Teachers College Readers and Writers Workshops. The Reading Units of Study Groups will be held for Grades 2 through 4 at each building, writing for Grades 6 through 8, and a Grade 1 and Grade 5 teacher from each building will participate in a Specialty Group. *Superintendent Battista* said that he feels that Professional Development is money well spent as it allows teachers to grow professionally and bring the new learning back to the students.

## Turf Field Usage Update

*Ms. DiBlasi* said that AYF is using the field most Sundays. They requested to have restroom facilities open so there will be a custodian present, and AYF will pay for the coverage. After AYF, MSC has the field for some of their games, and the custodian will help put the soccer goals out on the field which will help preserve the field from damage. They are not charging for the fields, just for the custodial time.

## Cigna/Brown & Brown Proposal

*Superintendent Battista* said that Brown & Brown is the District's new insurance broker effective July 1, 2017. He said they had a discussion with Brown & Brown last year about finding ways to get more money back for the District. *Superintendent Battista* continued that Brown & Brown is very knowledgeable and experienced in the marketplace, and their task was to control and reduce costs without changing the plans that had been negotiated with Cigna. They devised a renewal strategy and their expertise allowed them to identify Cigna's administrative costs and pharmacy costs as a way to save money. *Superintendent Battista* said they estimate the end of year savings will be approximately \$175,000 which will go back to the Medical Reserve. *Superintendent Battista* continued Brown & Brown has been very responsive to the District. Brown & Brown will attend the next Board of Finance meeting.

## Monroe Police Department

*Superintendent Battista* said they will be returning to bi-monthly meetings with the Chief and department personnel. Effective October 1, Monroe Police will wear body cameras though they will only be turned on when there is an altercation or officer involvement. The Police Department will retain both the video and audio, which can be redacted for

privacy. Board Member Ferris asked if the information can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act. He added that he will work with Vice-Chairman King on a District policy

## **Old Business**

### 2017-18 Budget Update

Superintendent Battista said that Representative Sredzinski has been very communicative, but there is no update. There will be a meeting in Hartford the week of the September 11.

### Sodexo Meal Count and Revenue for the 2016-17 School Year

Ms. DiBlasi said Masuk made approximately \$74,000, and that includes picking up the subsidy for free and reduced meals now that Masuk is off the National School Lunch Program. The cost of subsidizing is almost \$17,000. Lunch at Masuk has been very successful this year, and they have several new offerings and options. Because Masuk is off the National School Lunch Program, the District now longer gets \$28,000 towards the fruits and vegetables it has in the past. Ms. DiBlasi said there is a consultant in the District for the next few weeks, and she is looking at how the elementary and middle school can increase participation and stay on the school lunch program.

## **New Business**

### Special Education Audit - Ms. Moser

Ms. Moser noted it was a smooth start to the year for special education students both in and out of District. There are 402 special education students, which is approximately 12% of the student population, and there were 20 new students enrolled over the summer. Ms. Moser continued that every district is required to report yearly to the State information on special education students including their hours and service, related services, and re-evaluation dates. The State sends the information to the Federal Government and four years ago, they implemented a Desk Audit. Ms. Moser continued that the District participated in the Pilot Program and are in year three of a three year rotation. She continued that on February, 15 Monroc students were randomly selected, and there was representation from every building, newly identified students and students new to the District. Ms. Moser provided the Board Members with a copy of the checklist they had to perform. The District demonstrated accuracy in reporting the data and demonstrated full compliance of the IDEA requirements. No further action is needed at this time; Ms. Moser concluded that the school teams do a wonderful job

Approval for the Submittal of the 2018 Application for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant

### **Motion to approve the Submittal of the 2018 Application for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant**

**Motion: (D. Ferris)**

**Second: (S. Monaco)**

Discussion: Assistant Superintendent Zmary thanked Bill McDonough for his efforts in completing the application for a \$96,000 grant that will enhance both the Tech and Marketing sides of the CT Department.

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

17-058

Ratification of Paraprofessionals Contract

**Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the Paraprofessionals Contract inviting Superintendent Battista, Assistant Superintendent Zmary, and Ms. DiBlasi**

**Motion: (C. Reinoso)**

**Second: (S. Monaco)**

Discussion: None

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

17-059

**Motion to ratify the Paraprofessionals Contract as presented**

**Motion: (C. Cascella)**

**Second: (S. Monaco)**

Discussion: None

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

17-060

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:55 p.m.**

**Motion: (C. Cascella)**

**Second: (D. Martinez)**

Discussion: None

**Motion passed 5 (Lane, Cascella, Ferris, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0**

17-061

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco  
Board Secretary