

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 29, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Barbara Holstein, President	x	
Denise Bogle, Vice President	x (zoom)	
Paul Brislin	x (zoom)	
Danielle Christmann	x	
Krista Mikulski		x
Glen Plotsky	x	

Others Present:	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
John Nittolo - Acting CSA	_x_	_____
Carl Morelli, SBA/BS	_x_	_____
Mark Nehme, Esq. – Board Atty.	_x (zoom)_	_____

3. FLAG SALUTE

4. MISSION STATEMENT - The mission of the Montague Township School District is to provide the best educational experience and opportunities to realize the potential of every child.

5. LEGAL NOTICE - In accordance with the New Jersey Sunshine Law, a legal notice of this meeting has been posted on the official bulletin board at the school and advertised in the New Jersey Herald and the Sunday New Jersey Herald.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education recess and proceed to executive session to discuss personnel matters and legal issues. Action may or may not be taken.

Motion to open Executive Session at 6:32 p.m.
 Motion Glen Plotsky 2nd Danielle Christmann Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 6:52 p.m.
 Motion Glen Plotsky 2nd Denise Bogle Voice Vote: All in Favor
 Note: Paul Brislin did not attend Executive Session

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 6:56 p.m.
 Motion Danielle Christmann 2nd Barbara Holstein Voice Vote: All in Favor

8. CSA REPORT: John Nittolo, Acting CSA - Zero HIB for this month. Tentative dates for the Student Learning Acceleration summer program - June 27 - July 28. Teachers have been given instructions as to the order of invites and how many children we can service. We have a lot of teachers who are willing to teach. The performance reports from the State there are embargoed as of now. There is no true information. They didn't include Start Strong reports. When it is not embargoed I will then report on the actual report. We have certified our Student Safety Data System which goes into HIB trainings. Have to do it twice a year. Met with our

Superintendent Round Table Winner of the Year - Gabby Vega. The luncheon is April 8, 2022. We have submitted our comprehensive equity plan statement of assurance extension. They are allowing a 1 year extension for next year. It covers all of your policies and programs in place against discrimination and equity in place in building. Submitted to the State to review the Preschool Education Budget so regardless of the vote of acceptance they have to get to see if it even passes to the muster of how we allocated our funds. You would be approving that we received this money and that is what we are submitting for next year. Caylee Fletcher won the Alcohol Awareness Month PSA Poster and will be in the NJ Herald. Nick's Hope coming to the school Saturday, May 21, 2022. Mobile clothing thrift shop.

9. SBA REPORT - Carl Morelli - Presented 2022-2023 Budget presentation with slides. Ms. Holstein thanked Mr. Morelli and Mrr. Nittolo for all the work done on the budget and stated that it was the most thorough presentation presented to the school district and taxpayers in a good number of years. Wants to commend both of them for working diligently over the past several weeks both have worked tirelessly with the County Superintendent's office in making sure that, her analogy, no one else's, that the swiss cheese we had here in place in our budget is now a very competent and complete budget. The vision as we have been rebuilding this school for the past year, making those strides, making sure we are meeting everyone's needs, this Board has come together and has come so far from where we were last April. The benefit has been passed onto the taxpayers. We took a situation and we pivoted to make our District better. We are the top of NJ and we have nothing more than the vision to bring up the top school of NJ at the top of NJ. We've talked about our lunchroom, our roof, our grounds. Our school was in a very difficult shape last April and it makes her extremely happy when she walks through and sees the 200 year old mural and how our hallways are bright and vibrant. If our building is vibrant and lively our students and staff will be vibrant and lively. The vision of the library has grown with discussion with staff to become an indoor/outdoor library with a love of reading. Referenced the movie Field of Dream.

Danielle Christmann thanked Mr. Morelli for the thorough presentation

Denise Bogle thanked Mr. Morelli and Mr. Nittolo for the thorough presentation. Let us continue moving forward and hope the voters of Montague support our school and understand fully what we have done with the budget.

Glen Plotsky stated that it was a very, very excellent presentation and appreciates the input from Mr. Morelli and Mr. Nittolo. Are we now returning to inhouse services that were outsourced about a year and half ago when we did a budget like the therapist, counselor, OTC?

Mr. Nittolo stated we are expanding the counselor. The OT that we have through an outside service warrants a full time position. We are actually paying more than we are outsourcing. We had a shared counselor. The only position we outsourced was the psychologist. We never had a full time OT. The only position we are bringing back is the psychologist. The only outsource position will be physical therapist which makes up a .2 position on the staff.

Ms. Holstein stated as we made transitory adjustments we had an increase in our special needs services after the school year started. Mr. Nittolo said it was about a 25% increase above what a normal increase would be.

Paul Brislin stated that tonight's presentation by Mr. Nittolo and Mr. Morelli was the most comprehensive that he has seen in a very long time. They are valuable members of our school District team.

Barbara Holstein again stated that anyone that has questions please utilize the budget email and reach out to someone with any questions.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

~~BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Regular Meeting Minutes and the Executive Minutes of February 14, 2022: Motion to table until next regular meeting.~~

Moved: Danielle Christmann Seconded: Denise Bogle Discussion: Barbara Holstein will be making a motion to table the minutes until the next regular meeting. Paul Brislin agrees to this motion.

Roll Call	Bogle	Brislin	Christmann	Mikulski	Plotsky	Holstein	Total
YES	x	x	x			x	4
NO							
ABSTAIN					x		1
ABSENT				x			2

~~BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Regular Meeting Minutes and the Executive Minutes of February 28, 2022.~~ **BE IT RESOLVED** at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent that the Montague Township Board of Education table the Regular Meeting Minutes and the Executive Minutes of February 28, 2022.

Moved: Barbara Holstein Seconded: Paul Brislin Discussion: Glen Plotsky stated that he did have the opportunity to review the minutes and they appear to be accurate but he is not sure if he will be at next meeting but wanted to record his vote.

Roll Call	Bogle	Brislin	Christmann	Mikulski	Plotsky	Holstein	Total
YES	x	x			x	x	4
NO							
ABSTAIN			x				1
ABSENT				x			1

13. PUBLIC SESSION – AGENDA ITEMS

Public comment is invited on all matters pertaining to the school district. All participants shall be permitted four (4) minutes to speak and shall state their name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate. The board uses the public comment as an opportunity to listen to Citizen concerns, but please be aware that not all issues brought to a board meeting will be resolved this evening.

Motion to open Public Comment at 8:20 p.m.

Motion Glen Plotsky 2nd Danielle Christmann Voice Vote: All in Favor

Andree Campbell, Armstrong Road, just wanted to thank Mr. Morelli and Mr. Nittolo for the wonderful budget presentation. It was clear and concise.

Barbara Holstein said that she is happy with the participation with the hybrid meeting.

Motion to close Public Comment at 8:22 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Denise Bogle Voice Vote: All in Favor

14. BUDGET PRESENTATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the final 2022-2023 fiscal year school budget and approve the submission of the final 2022-2023 fiscal year school budget to the Sussex County Executive Superintendent of Schools for approval as follows:

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>		<u>REVENUE</u>	
		General Fund	
General Current Expense	\$9,031,862.00	Local Tax Levy	\$6,572,446.00
Capital Outlay	\$ 161,693.00	Tuition Reserve	\$ 0.00
Capital Outlay Equip.	\$ 30,000.00	Fund Balance	\$ 460,000.00
		Federal Impact Aid (revenue)	\$ 196,194.00
Special Revenue Fund	\$1,347,799.00	Maintenance Interest	\$ 120.00
		Capital Reserve Interest	\$ 700.00
		Capital Reserve Withdrawal	\$ 160,000.00
		State Aid	<u>\$ 1,834,095.00</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$10,571,354.00</u>	Total General Fund:	\$ 9,223,555.00
		<u>Special Revenue Fund</u>	<u>\$ 1,347,799.00</u>
		Total Revenue	\$10,571,354.00

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education authorize the utilization of Unassigned Fund Balance as of June 30, 2021 in the amount of \$460,000.00 to the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education authorize the utilization of Federal Impact Aid in the amount of \$196,194.00 to the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following GENERAL FUND tax levy be approved to support the 2022-2023 budgets: General Fund Tax Levy \$6,572,446.00.

WHEREAS, the Montague Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$1,500.00 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023); and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq., but deemed by the Board of Education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Montague Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq. as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Montague Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.2(b), to a maximum expenditure of \$15,000.00 for all staff and board members.

BE IT RESOLVED that the School Business Administrator shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

Moved: Denise Bogle Seconded: Danielle Christmann Discussion: All had to be read because it is a State mandated requirement to put these thresholds in place and inform the public that we are monitoring School board related expenses. This is done every year when we do our budget. Glen Plotsky asked if we are approving in advance who approves if one teacher or staff member or board member is doing school business and it costs \$2,000, does that get approved in advance? Mr. Morelli stated that if there are workshops that require travel, expenditures, etc., it goes before the Board as a Resolution and needs to get Board approval before going. What you are approving tonight is the budget expenditure. Barbara Holstein said this is taken from the statute. Paul Brislin shared Glen’s concerns but he understands we are simply establishing an expenditure for the budget. An approval is still required.

Roll Call	Bogle	Brislin	Christmann	Mikulski	Plotsky	Holstein	Total
YES	x	x	x		x	x	5
NO							
ABSTAIN							
ABSENT				x			1

15. ADMINISTRATION

A-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the completed 2022-2023 Preschool Budget Workbook.

Moved: Barbara Holstein Seconded: Danielle Christmann Discussion:

Roll Call	Bogle	Brislin	Christmann	Mikulski	Plotsky	Holstein	Total
YES	x	x	x		x	x	5
NO							
ABSTAIN							
ABSENT				x			1

A-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the following Field Trips to be paid from the ARP ESSER Grant:

Date	Attendees/Grade	Location	Cost
March 30, 2022 And April 7, 2022	7th & 8th Grade FFA Students 11 students - 1 adult 5th Grade 25 Students - 3 Adults	Tamerlaine Sanctuary & Preserve	\$40.00
April 8, 2022	5th Grade 25 Students - 5 Adults	Liberty Science Center	\$417.50
April 29, 2022	8th Grade 14 students - 5 Adults	Six Flags Great Adventure	\$1,196.05
May 4, 2022	2nd Grade 30 students - 10 Adults	"Passport to Plants" at the Sussex County Fairgrounds	\$100.00
May 20, 2022	6th Grade 17 students - 2 Adults	Pequest Trout Hatchery	\$50.00 for the day
May 26, 2022	Kindergarten 28 students - 2 Adults	"Down on the Farm" at the Sussex County Fairgrounds	\$84.00
May 27, 2022	7th Grade 35 students - 7 Adults	YMCA Camp Mason	\$1,635.00
May 31, 2022	2nd Grade 30 students - 7 Adults	Claws 'n' Paws Wild Animal Park	\$458.00
June 1, 2022	8th Grade 14 students	High Point Country Club - Roadside Cleanup (community service)	N/C

Moved: Glen Plotsky Seconded: Paul Brislin Discussion: Barbara Holstein has a concern with Liberty Science Center since it is a mask mandate and we are a mask optional school. Barbara Holstein feels the parents should be given the option in making sure that their children whether they wear a mask or not is the parent's choice. Liberty Science Center does not give them that option. Glen Plotsky stated that mask optional means on or off. He thinks that the opportunity for a student to receive to go to Liberty Science Center. The parent here has a choice to say yes my child can go and wear a mask or no, I do not want my child to go because they have to wear a mask. He feels it should be the parent's choice to send the child or not. Ms. Holstein stated that she doesn't like to be in the position of putting our children in the situation to either attend the field trip or not because they have to wear a mask. It's not a fair option. Mr. Plotsky stated that if you want to utilize mass transit you have to wear a mask. If we chose LSC for every 5th grader we are taking the choice away from the parents and will be saying if your child wants to go on the field trip with all of their friends they have to wear a mask. Danielle Christmann asked what Barbara is suggesting to do. Take it off? Danielle Christmann asked Mr. Nittolo if he knew what the mask protocol was for Pequest? Denise Bogle stated that she understands Barbara's concern but she feels Mr. Nittolo should take it back to the staff to discuss with them. Paul Brislin has mixed feelings and would be inclined to let the administration and teachers and parents make the decision. If Mr. Nittolo thought there was a comparable to the LSC he would offer something up but he can't. He is at the position that he believes enough in the trip that he would want to offer it. He truly understands everyone's point of view. There is not a comparable place for LCS. If we wanted the 6th, 7th & 8th grade to go they would need to be vaccinated so they dropped it down to the 5th grade. Danielle Christmann stated that the notes went home to the parents and

17. PUBLIC SESSION

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Motion to open Public Comment at 9:00 p.m.

Motion Danielle Christmann 2nd Denise Bogle

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Eleanor Murphy, Plaza Drive, Newton, NJ - About 3 years ago at the BOE meeting they started discussing HVAC issues. Ever since then the BOE would occasionally bring it up again but never do anything about it. Pleased to see the HVAC and roof are getting resolved as well as the library.

Motion to close Public Comment at 9:02 p.m.

Motion Glen Plotsky 2nd Paul Brislin

Voice Vote: All in Favor

18. NEW BUSINESS - Danielle Christmann thanked the Board and the MEA Sunshine Committee for the kind words that were said, cards and moment of silence and understanding for her absence the last few weeks. It was all very touching and it was comforting during this tough time.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Danielle Christmann 2nd Denise Bogle

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Time of Adjournment:9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Morelli

CARL MORELLI, Board Secretary