

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting
Workshop Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2022**

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

2. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Barbara Holstein, President	x	
Denise Bogle, Vice President		x (with notice)
Paul Brislin	x	
Andree Campbell	x	
Danielle Christmann	x	
Tasha DeGeorge	x	
Michael Zernhelt	x	

Others Present:	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
John Nittolo- Acting CSA	x	
Carl Morelli – SBA/BS	x	
Joseph Garcia – Board Attorney		x

3. Moment of silence in regards to the tragedy in Texas

4. FLAG SALUTE

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. CSA REPORT AND ITEMS TO ADVANCE - John Nittolo, Acting CSA - Mr. Nittolo stated that there have been 426 school shootings since he began teaching in 1993. He received a call from a parent asking what we can do moving forward. He’s had discussions with people about that. There is very little we can do in some respects but there are things we can do regarding our building, locks, 3m film, having more of a police presence, staying vigilant with keeping doors locked and not letting people into the building. Board goals should include a safe and secure school environment. Read March Students of the Month. NJSLA testing finishes on May 26, 2022. It has been running smoothly. Thank you to Mr. Romano for running the tests and all that you do outside of your job description. The Special Education Local District Profile goes live on June 1, 2022 and is for the 2020-2021SY so it is a look back at the special education program. Will present on that at the next meeting. PreK Graduation is June 14, 2022 at 6PM, 8th Grade Graduation is June 16, 2022 at 7PM, Track and Field celebration is June 2, 2022 at 6PM. Very proud of our track and field participants and thank you to Mr. Runne and Ms. Weiss for all their hard work. The Counselor’s Association chooses a student at every school and is honored at a luncheon and our caring student was Richard Dylan Tohosky. Congratulations to him.

8. **SBA REPORT AND ITEMS TO ADVANCE - Carl Morelli, BA** - Library is up and running with soft opening for our students to use. Will continue with renovations over the summer. Looking at a PreK area with smaller tables and chairs. Roof project has begun. Right side of the building there is material that has been delivered. There will be some noise but nothing to interfere with teaching. Nothing is hazardous to students and staff.

Items to Advance:

- 1) Strauss Esmay contract for Policy management. Strauss Esmay used to be used by Montague BOE from 2010-2013 but it is now NJ School Board. They are on top of every single policy that comes out of Trenton. They are owned by attorneys. Because they have not been here since 2013 they will need to do our policy book from scratch. From what I have seen there are a lot of areas that should be updated. The basic reason why we have a policy is that it helps guide the BOE, District, Admin., as to what needs to be done. It also is a preventive measure. When lawsuits are filed the first thing the attorney will ask is "what is your policy?" Best advice is to give this company the consideration it deserves. Fee is normally \$13,000 but they cut it down to \$10,000 and we will get an up to date policy book. There are options to have it online as well. They are responsible for maintaining the whole database. They are responsible for the maintenance of the database and the system running correctly. As well as \$10,000 there is an annual fee. We pay school boards a little under \$5,000 for the year.

Tasha asked if they will make it a searchable website? Carl Morelli answered yes it will be. Suggested going on one of the District's that have it and see what their link looks like for policy. Barbara Holstein said that will only come into play if they opted to have the public portion. NJ School Boards is about \$5,000 a year in addition to whatever fees we contribute. This will be a little more expensive than NJ School Boards. We have to pay \$395 a year in addition for the searchable database. In 2020 there was a reevaluation of our policies by NJ School Boards and according to them we were up to date except for 4 policies and 2 of them were approved in November 2021. Is it possible as a Board for all of us to view it together? Carl can contact Strauss Esmay and find out. Barbara Holstein also asked about the section where it reads for annual fees "unlimited consultation to district on policies" Is that legal consultation with attorneys on staff? Carl Morelli said yes it is owned by attorneys and they are on staff. Barbara Holstein asked "what kind of guarantee do they give us if we end up in a lawsuit over a policy if something was incomplete with our policy? Carl Morelli said he will ask them. Is the annual policy seminar included in the price? Is it at the school or do they have to attend it? Carl Morelli will get the information on that. Carl Morelli stated that there would be a hard copy policy book in the office. Michael Zernhelt asked if we could get a copy on a zip drive? Can we just have a digital version on a USB drive? Carl Morelli stated it would be good for the BOE members but part of this program is to have it available to the public. This is a starting point where we know we have all up to date policies. Barbara Holstein asked if they would allow us to take a pdf or zip file and be allowed to put it on our website? Carl Morelli will ask and find out.

- 2) The Guide to Board of Education Meetings from NJ School Boards is on our website under the policies page. I also received 1 or 2 emails requesting it and asking what it was. Information so the public can read it and how a Board Meeting is about, how it's run and what are the duties and responsibilities. It was created for the public.
- 3) Policy 9130 which is regarding our Board Committees. I am bringing this up to the Board of the Whole Committee can discuss the different areas here. This agenda was put together based on these areas. It's a framework of our workshop agendas. Barbara Holstein asked if we want to discuss this under #15 - Policies? Discuss this and 9311. Barbara Holstein would like to have an in depth discussion about this. We are within

compliance of policy but thinks it could be clearer and would like to see something different with the committee names and separate it a little differently.

- 4) Discussion on liaisons for High Point, Charter and PTA. Barbara Holstein brought this up to Carl Morelli since going to other meetings and seeing this on other school board agendas. These are not limited to one person. As we go into discussion about the 9130 we can possibly rename these committees. Under the next meeting agenda these sections will be on the agenda. Committee of the whole determined that the liaisons are as follows:

High Point Liaison - Tasha DeGeorge

Charter School Liaison - Andree Campbell

PTA Liaison - Danielle Christmann

- 5) Reimbursement to BOE members for fingerprinting - Being a board member is a voluntary position and Carl Morelli thinks it is appropriate for the BOE members to be reimbursed. Barbara Holstein believes that she was reimbursed but her fingerprinting was archived. Paul Brislin didn't ask for reimbursement but believes it should be reimbursed. Andree Campbell thinks it is in the policy. Carl Morelli asked if she is referring to Policy No. 9250 Travel & Expense Policy which covers more like conventions, tolls, traveling, hotels. It might fall under this possibly in the fine print. More related to activities. Barbara Holstein is going to search the NJ School Board website. Nothing immediately came up. We can research some more or come up with a policy for it. Carl Morelli didn't find anything in the policy regarding fingerprints exactly.

8. BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT AND ITEMS TO ADVANCE. This is new and witnessed at other meetings. Barbara Holstein thought this was an appropriate thing to have and having a Committee of the Whole is the most important and transparent thing we could do. The only area of the committees that would have to go into executive for to discuss personnel. Joseph Garcia, Esq., is in agreement that personnel should be in executive but no action is to be taken. We will continue to reduce our attorney cost since we will only need him once a month. Doesn't have to attend a workshop meeting. As we go into executive session for personnel, we will review 9311 and 9130. Barbara Holstein has the hope that with the workshop meeting every month will have more transparency. The relaxed feel of this meeting will give the public more freedom to come to the meeting or call in. Congratulations to the track team. Will be attending the track banquet on June 2, 2022.

9. PUBLIC SESSION

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 7:18 p.m.

Motion Michael Zernhelt

2nd Paul Brislin

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Dana Berry, President of the Montague PTA. Wanted to let the BOE that the PTA purchased graduation lawn signs for all 8th grade students and asked if the school can reach out to the 8th parents to make arrangements for picking up the signs. The PTA also purchased yearbooks for all the 8th grade students as well as all of the field day t-shirts for students and staff members. No out of pocket costs to parents.

The PTA also would like to thank Mr. Nittolo for everything he let us do this school year. We appreciate everything he has done for the school, staff, parents and students.

Barbara Holstein asked that we leave it as PTA. Thankful that the PTA donated the yearbooks, t-shirts and signs. Danielle Christmann and Michael Zernhelt said thank you.

Brent Runne, Teacher at Montague Township School, welcomes new board members. One of the track coaches. Spoke about the wonderful news about the end of season track meet at Newton HS. 16 different schools there with hundreds of athletes competing. 15 Montague students participated and nearly all of them were able to post their best times in their individual events. This was wonderful accomplished. Connor Hagerty from Montague is now the fastest runner in Sussex County in the 800 meter event. Capping off the season with the first ever track banquet on June 2, 2022. Sportsmanship was always on display. We put our school in a positive light. We felt very supported by BOE, admin, student and staff.

Motion to close public comment at 7:27 p.m.

Motion Tasha DeGeorge

2nd Michael Zernhelt

Voice Vote: All in Favor

10. CORRESPONDENCE - Danielle Christmann read her email that she sent to Mr. Runne and Ms. Weiss thanking them for their time and dedication to the track program.

11. FINANCE AND INSURANCE

1. Safety Grant to the New Jersey Insurance Group requesting the amount of \$2,600.00.

- Mr. Morelli stated that this is a yearly grant that the District receives and we put in our submission and is to be used for safety issues within the school.
- Barbara Holstein asked how we go about getting more grants besides what we currently use. Mr. Morelli stated that anything that comes across his desk he presents it to the Board to discuss as long as the grants fit our criteria as a school district. He is looking into new grants regarding transportation. As an example, there is a green transportation grant for the purchase of additional vehicles if needed, of electrical vehicles. Barbara Holstein asked if he gets grants in all areas related to school? Mr. Morelli stated yes. Barbara Holstein stated that she would like to discuss grants as Board of the Whole Committee.
- Mr. Nittolo asked Mr. Romano what the name of the technology grant was. It was a federal grant for remote learning, chromebooks, hotspots. We went out and got quotes and submitted them. Just waiting on an answer.
- Barbara Holstein said these grants help bring back money to the taxpayers. They are a benefit to the District and help the taxpayers by bringing their tax money back.
- Tasha DeGeorge asked who writes the grants. Mr. Morelli stated that he would write the grants for the financial side if it is an educational grant. It winds up being a combination.
- Mr. Nittolo stated that our biggest grant is the Preschool grant which is over 2 million dollars. When there is something we can apply for we do. Some grants are appropriate for us and some are not. Appreciates the work that Mark Romano did for the technology grant.

2. Additional ESEA Funds

Mr. Nittolo stated that the ESEA grant is our Title 1, Title 2 and Title 4 funds that we receive from the federal government every year based on our population, poverty levels, free and reduced lunch. Numbers are usually very steady. Title 4 is always \$10,000.00 which we used the past couple of years for our STEM and Agriculture program. Title 2 is \$11,780.00 that usually can go towards Professional Development for staff. The Title 1 funding last year had gone towards a couple of salaries in the Special Education department. The money could be spent to affect the entire population of the school (K-8).

3. Board of the Whole Finance and Insurance Discussion - Barbara Holstein stated that if we were working in a committee this whole thing would have been discussed in a room with 3 members. Having a Board of the Whole is more transparent and productive.

12. PERSONNEL

Due to the nature of personnel discussion, the Board of the Whole Committee will meet in Executive Session to discuss personnel items.

MOTION TO MOVE TO 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 7:39 p.m.
Motion Danielle Christmann 2nd Paul Brislin Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 9:15 p.m.
Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Danielle Christmann Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 9:16 p.m.
Motion Tasha DeGeoge 2nd Danielle Christmann Voice Vote: All in Favor

12. PERSONNEL CONTINUED

1. At the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve the following stipend positions for the 2022-23 school year:

Basketball	8th Grade Advisors	Asbestos Certified
Cross Country	Bait Buddies	Black Seal Certified
Girls on the Run	Bell Choir	National Board Certification
Track & Field	Sunny Seeds	
	Student Council	
	Theater Club	
	Yearbook	

Mr. Nittolo stated that the above are our standard stipend positions that were approved last year and have them approved this year. We sent out a google form to any and all interested teachers who would like to apply for any of these positions. There are things we can add. If the Board feels that someone has a good idea we can add it. These are the ones we have presently.

2. At the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve the following job descriptions: Academic Interventionist and Speech Therapist.

Mr. Nittolo stated that we created the job descriptions for the Academic Interventionist and Speech Therapist. Barbara Holstein stated that they had copies of the job descriptions.

13. BUILDING AND GROUNDS

1. Barbara Holstein asked Carl Morelli that he stated that the library is up and running and Mr. Morelli said yes to a soft opening. She then stated that the first phase of the roof has started. What sections of the roof? The section above the cafeteria. When will the classroom upper wing be done? This is the \$800,000 something project that was approved. This is the entire roof project that was approved.
2. Barbara Holstein stated that something that came up was the goal of doing something with our food service. Maschio's didn't work out. Would like to see our cafeteria as a full service cafeteria. Can we develop this over the summer? Mr. Morelli said there are many options. Part of our budget is for the cafeteria. We would probably operate at a loss with a 100% operating on our own. If we maintain what we have with High Point for most of our food do we purchase some equipment that we could supplement? Maybe having equipment for special events and special occasions but not be 100% on our own. Barbara Holstein said people would like to see us offer more. Mr. Morelli said we are starting from scratch. Never wants to propose a situation where things look good on paper but we lose costs somewhere else.
3. Michael Zernhelt brought up the driveway and parking lot needs attention. Barbara Holstein stated that we own 70 acres of land. Why don't we have a driveway going behind the building? How could a second driveway be put in? Danielle Christmann stated that she and Paul Brislin has pushed for this since they became part of the board. Danielle Christmann brought up the parking of the buses for afterschool activities. Look into rectifying parking issues for the fall. Barbara Holstein personally doesn't like to see the busses parked facing downhill on the driveway. Would like to create a bus parking area. Fields backup to New Myrtle backyards.
4. Barbara Holstein would like a circular wall around the Finnegan Tree.
5. Andree Campbell brought up the other trees for Muresi/Young and Mr. Firchoir (sp).
6. Mr. Morelli suggested a beautician committee.

14. TRANSPORTATION

1. Andree Campbell asked if there was any way we could look into bus companies wanting to buy our buses from us. Her concerns are the liability, maintenance, do the bus drivers have enough experience? Mr. Morelli stated that we are within maintenance. Some buses are still under warranty. The issue comes up with a new contract with a new bus company is what the

rates are. We can look into it. So we can compare what it costs us now. The contracts we had were renewal contracts. Now we are talking about starting new contracts. Ms. Holstein commended the drivers and Danielle for the job they have done. How fiscally responsible is it to keep the buses or consider getting rid of them? Danielle Christmann would like to see the cost analysis too. Barbara Holstein stated that more Districts have been phasing away from independent contractors and going with district drivers. Look into over the summer.

15. POLICY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Strauss Esmay was discussed in the BA report.
2. 9311 Formulation, Adoption, and Amendment of Policies and 9130 Board Committees. Barbara Holstein discussed the policies. Barbara Holstein would like to amend the policy to replace with "shall operate under a committee of the whole system and take out a committee system." Second recommendation is to review the names of the standing committees. Would like to make this an option and move the Standing Committee down and replace it with Committee of the Whole and then sections. Barbara Holstein asked Carl Morelli where does insurance fall under? Carl Morelli said it normally falls under finance. Barbara Holstein said she would like to have a Finance section. Tasha DeGeorge said finance is finance. In the past 2013, it was Buildings, Grounds and Transportation all together and all fell under the SBA as opposed to CSA and would like to see that going forward and how is that implemented? Is anyone opposed to having Building Grounds and Transportation together? Carl Morelli stated that since we own the buses we should keep transportation separate. Item E, Policy and Public Relations. Would like to see Public Relations become the beautification committee. What can we do as a Board? Anyone opposed to splitting the two? No opposition. Curriculum and Child Study Team. Barbara Holstein feels Curriculum should be separate. Barbara Holstein said to omit Child Study Team. She also suggested a Grants committee. Any other suggestions? Carl Morelli stated that G for Grants, H would be Public Relations. Special Committees no changes. Will probably have one in the near future for High Point Contract. 9130 is to be typed up and introduced at the June meeting. We will use these committees to follow the workshop agenda.

16. CURRICULUM AND CHILD STUDY TEAM

1. We will be omitting CST not appropriate to bring up. No curriculum discussion.

17. ADMINISTRATION

1. Interlocal Shared Service Agreement between High Point Regional High School Board of Education and the Montague Board of Education regarding Nurse - Mr. Nittolo stated he is not recommending this he is just sharing it with the Board. This is for sharing a nurse in case you do not have a nurse in the building. The nurse can administer medication. The nurse will leave the school and come to our school to administer the medication then go back to their school. It is a great idea on paper but difficult idea in implementation. All of the other districts in the High Point region are voting on it at the June meeting. If we did not have a nurse to send out, parents are responsible to give medication and 911 will be called. Schools can operate without a nurse in the building.

2. Barbara Holstein asked if we needed the nurse the other districts would send their nurse. Why did this come up? Yes, the district would send a nurse. It came up because Districts are having a hard time getting a nurse. Nurse Mott is not a fan of it. We have received nurses from EdServices and other nursing services and used approved substitute nurse. We also have a contract next year with Morris County. This is just to dispense medication.

18. NEW BUSINESS - Tasha DeGeorge would like to pass a resolution opposing the National Park. Kittatinny HS, as did Montague and Sandyston opposing the National Park and sent Barbara a copy of the Resolution. Barbara Holstein stated that the resolution would have to be tweaked so that it would pertain to Montague especially with the Impact Aid. Thrilled to see that Kittatinny did this as did all of their sending districts. County Commissioners have done this. Similar actions are taking place across the river, Milford, Dingmans, and Bushkill. Barbara Holstein said she believes this will impact our District, especially the impact aide that we receive. We could lose access to the Grange and Foster-Armstrong House. Tasha DeGeorge said they could limit our activities. Barbara Holstein stated that there is a proposal out there that is broad and loose and doesn't have a lot of definition as to how it would impact any of the towns. Sandy Hull from Sandyston Township is spearheading the No National Park website and will be at the next meeting to speak and give a presentation to what she is doing and how it would impact us. Tasha DeGeorge stated that they talked about was encompassing some of the State land that they already own into the National Park and that could affect our taxes, take tax money away from us. It will impact all of our tax resources.

Danielle Christmann recognized the Girls on the Run completed their 5K run in Sparta and thanked Ms. Mac and Ms. Pinzone for their dedication to the program.

Michael Zernhelt brought up the proposed curriculum under NJSLS in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (NJSLS-CHPE). Asked the Board of the Whole to take this into discussion as a committee. Barbara Holstein stated that the standards are to be in the Districts throughout the State however, NJ School Boards has stated it is not mandatory. Commended Mike for bringing it to her attention. That's what it takes to produce a productive Board. Barbara is not opposed to the resolution. She could email it to Carl for all Board members to review. She has an easier to read version of the standards. Paul asked Mike to provide the Board members with a copy of the resolution.

Tasha DeGeorge made an announcement to remind everyone that June 3, 2022 is Montague Night at Skylands and Montague Day is June 25, 2022.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Barbara Holstein 2nd Paul Brislin Voice Vote: All in Favor
Time of Adjournment: 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Morelli

CARL MORELLI
Board Secretary