

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting
Regular Action Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:31 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Barbara Holstein, President	X	
Paul Brislin, Vice President	X	
Christopher Bell	X (arrived at 6:40 p.m.)	
Andree Campbell	X	
Danielle Christmann	X (via phone)	
Tasha DeGeorge	X	
Michael Zernhelt	X	

Others Present:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
James Andriac - Acting CSA	_x_	_
Carl Morelli, SBA/BS	_x_	_
Joseph Garcia, Esq.	_x_	_

3. FLAG SALUTE - FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE OR PRAYER

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 Andree Campbell 2nd Paul Brislin Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 6:56 p.m.

Motion Tasha DeGeorge 2nd Michael Zernhelt Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Motion Barbara Holstein 2nd Tasha DeGeorge Voice Vote: All in Favor

7. CSA REPORT - James Andriac, Acting CSA. Thanked the 164 people who came out to vote yes for our budget. Yesterday was a theater club performance and thanked Ms. Lane. NJSLA testing will start on May 8, 2023. Tomorrow night at the school at 6PM there will be the TREP\$ marketplace and bookfair. We had the talent show for the school on Tuesdays. There were 10 acts and everyone did a fantastic job. Students were able to vote at Town Hall for their favorite act. Thanked Ms. Donovan for putting on the Talent Show.

8. SBA REPORT - Carl Morelli, SBA - First item is the ESEA Consolidated Formula Grant which is on tonight's agenda under F-2 for the acceptance of the grant in the amount of \$117,317.00 for the 2022-23SY. The 2nd item is the Safety Grant award under F-3 for approval of the application and receipt of the Safety Grant in the amount of \$2,000 for the 2023 fiscal year. The 3rd item is the Interlocal Purchasing System under F-4 for approval to join and participate in TIPS which is a National Cooperative Purchasing Program offered by Region VII Education Service Center. There is no cost to join and will result in the district having a larger and more competitive pool of contractors to use for its projects and repairs which will allow us to use C&M Doors with a quote of \$5,300 instead of the original quotes of approximately \$7,200 with other vendors. I would like to announce the unofficial results of last night's election which had 160 yes votes and 106 no votes and would like to personally thank all the voters, our mayor and township council members, our administration and staff for their support of our budget. We have accomplished many things this past year and look forward to even more accomplishments for the next school year. Our district has been through alot and now is in very good shape to continue to move forward to provide the best possible education for our students. We will not have official results until May 8, 2023. Our reorganization meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2023 but due to the announcement from the Sussex County Board of Elections this morning that meeting will have to be rescheduled to May 10, 2023 because the county will not certify the election results until May 8, 2023.

9. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Thanked the town and all the election workers who worked the polls for the election. Thanked the 160 voters who voted yes. We would not be able to fulfill the mission at the school if the budget loses money. We put forth a zero percent increase 2 years in a row. We are saving the taxpayers money 2 years in a row. We may be the only District in the State who offered a zero percent increase following 3 years ago losing \$150,000 on the budget. Technically we are operating \$150,000 less than we were 4 years ago. This is an astounding achievement. If we weren't being diligent with the fiscal responsibility of the board and administration we would not be able to offer a zero budget. It is our sincere commitment to the taxpayers and the parents to fulfill both our mission to educate all the children but also being very responsible to the taxpayers. Going forward we need to be mindful that we are paying for the April election so we can give the voters a voice on the budget but this election cost us close to \$15,000. When the elections were held in November where you don't have a voice on it unless it goes over th 2%. If only 266 voted we spent \$56 a vote for less than 5% of the registered voters to come out and vote. That is not fiscally responsible when we can have a free election in November. After the 4th vote in April the Board will have to look at this and see if it is fiscally responsible to keep an April election or go back to a November election and not have to pay for. Again, sincere gratitude and respect to the 160 people who said yes to our children in this town.

10. CORRESPONDENCE - April 5, 2023 letter from NJ School Boards Association regarding increase in dues however, it turns out we are actually getting a decrease from NJSBA.

11. 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 7:08 p.m.

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Paul Brislin All in Favor

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:09 p.m.

Motion Andree Campbell 2nd Tasha DeGeorge All in Favor

12. FINANCE

F-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the April 6, 2023 through April 26, 2023 - Bill List listed below:

Fund 10	\$ 31,647.87
Fund 11	\$545,374.92
Fund 12	\$ 12,500.00
Fund 20	\$ 32,241.33
Fund 61	\$ 1,045.50
Grand Total	\$622,809.62

Moved: Paul Brislin

Seconded: Michael Zernhelt

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

F-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the acceptance of the ESEA Consolidated FORMULA Grant in the amount of **\$117,317.00** for the 2022-23 school year:

Grant Breakdown:

Title I-A - \$95,537

Title II-A - \$11,780

Title IV Part A - \$10,000

Moved: Tasha DeGeorge

Seconded: Andree Campbell

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

F-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the completion of an application and receipt of a Safety Grant Award:

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group (“NJSIG”) is a school board insurance group authorized by N.J.S.A. 18A:18B-1, et seq. to provide insurance coverage and risk management services for its members;

WHEREAS, the Montague Township School District, hereinafter referred to as the “Educational Institution,” is a member of NJSIG; and,

WHEREAS, in accordance with NJSIG Policy 3710, the goal of the safety grant program is to provide members the necessary resources to complete risk reduction projects and improve the safety of the population NJSIG members serve.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that: 1) The Educational Institution applies for a safety grant through the NJSIG safety grant program for the 2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,000.00 for the purposes set forth in their safety grant application; and, 2) The Business Administrator or their designee is hereby authorized to take all action necessary to apply for and receive a safety grant award.

Moved: Michael Zernelt Seconded: Tasha DeGeorge Discussion: Ms. Holstein asked Mr. Morelli what exactly do they get to use this money for? Mr. Morelli said school safety. It could be used to purchase items for safety, safety programs, anything under school safety. It is a yearly program from our insurance carrier.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

F-4 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve to join and participate in The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS) which is a National Cooperative Purchasing Program offered by Region VIII Education Service Center. There is no cost to join.

Moved: Christopher Bell Seconded: Paul Brislin Discussion: Ms. Holstein asked what kind of things we can use this for. Mr. Morelli said it can be used for the doors. This is part of the approval under Buildings and Grounds for the doors. That number was reduced by approximately \$2,500 from other vendors. This allows us to use more vendors. Mr. Zernhelt asked how many coops do we belong to? Mr. Morelli said he believes 5 at no cost to join. Ms. Holstein said it seems to be the way to keeping the costs down to work with one group. All the vendors have been vetted through the coop. Mr. Andriac said they have a lot of everything from furniture to floors.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

13. PERSONNEL

Motion to do Consent Agenda for Items P-1 through P-6 made by Michael Zernhelt, seconded by Tasha DeGeorge.

P-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve **MICHAEL BUSSOW**, as part-time summer custodian, Step F, pending background check (if needed), with a start date of on or about June 20, 2023 until August 31, 2023.

P-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approve **CHRISTOPHER GRENNILLE**, as substitute teacher, pending background check (if needed), for the 2022-2023 school year.

P-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approve **HEATHER D’AMORE MASELLI**, as substitute teacher, pending background check, for the 2022-2023 school year.

P-4 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approve **RENE CHAKMAKIAN**, as full time Special Education Teacher, Step O/MA+30, pending background check, for the 2023-2024 school year with a start date of August 29, 2023.

P-5 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approve **MOLLOY JACOBS**, as full time Health and Physical Education Teacher, Step A/BA, pending background check, for the 2023-2024 school year with a start date of August 29, 2023.

P-6 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **DANIEL DAWSON**, as 12 month full time custodian, Step G, pending background check, for the 2022-2023 school year, with a start date of on or about May 15, 2023.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

14. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Motion to do Consent Agenda for Items BG-1 through B-G-3 made by Christopher Bell, seconded by Andree Campbell. Discussion: Ms. Holstein stated that she is happy to get the windows and moving forward with making the school a better place.

BG-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the approve PTA’s request for Use of Facilities for the following: Saturday, June 10, 2023 - 11AM to 6PM - gymnasium, cafeteria and bathroom usage for their end of year event (this is just in case it rains the day of the event otherwise it will be held outside which was approved at April 5, 2023 meeting).

BG-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve James Window Tinting Estimate #1126 in the amount of \$3,400.00 for the installation of solar control window film on the gymnasium upper windows.

BG-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve C&M Door Controls, Inc., quote in the amount of \$5,300.00 for the installation of a classroom door and a door for the faculty/staff professional area.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

15. ADMINISTRATION

A-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the following field trips:

1. 2nd Grade to Claws and Paws Wild Animal Park on May 10, 2023 at a cost of \$465.00 (transportation provided).
2. Kindergarten to Camp Linwood MacDonald - YMCA on June 6, 2023 at a cost of \$646.00 (transportation provided).

Moved: Christopher Bell

Seconded: Tasha DeGeorge

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

16. POLICY

PL-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the second reading and adoption of Policy #5512 - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying.

Moved: Paul Brislin

Seconded: Andree Campbell

Discussion: Ms. Holstein said

they will be a lot more policy work over the summer.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

17. LIAISON REPORTS

- High Point - Tasha DeGeorge - They had their budget presentation which was approved, online is the School Performance Report, May 18th is the Junior Prom at Perona Farms, May 25th is the 8th grade picnic, June 16th is graduation and Fall sport physicals are June 22nd and August 3rd. Mr. Andriac stated that our 8th graders are attending the picnic. Ms. Holstein said this is wonderful because it is something that was prohibited in the past and is very happy about that.
- Montague PTA - Danielle Christmann - any information can be found on the PTA Facebook page for tonight.
- Sussex County Charter/Tech School - Andree Campbell - The superintendent stated that the play was a success. Enrollment was 226 for February. Board of Trustees approved their 5 year strategic plan and approved the budget draft for the 2023-24 school year.
- School Board Association - Nothing to report.

18. 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 7:24 p.m.

Motion Andree Campbell 2nd Christopher Bell Voice Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Bell asked that regarding the budget and the way people voted, there are a significant number of people that were not happy with the no tax increase. He cannot believe that people wanted a tax increase but either we didn't get the word out or people don't understand it. What is the general thing? Mr. Andriac thinks that when they go and vote it doesn't say zero percent on the ballot so people think their taxes are going up. We sent stuff home. It was shared on social media and it is on the website. Ms. Holstein did make a social media post thanking the people who voted yes and asked the people who voted no to please come to a board meeting or join in on the zoom meeting and give us a reason why they voted the way they did. Mr. Andriac would like to know also and asks that people call him. Mr. Morelli also stated that we have the budget@montagueschool.org they can send an email. We pretty much held steady. Mr. Bell asked what last year's numbers were. Mr. Morelli stated that 268 yes, 186 no votes so the voting went down. This year 10.5% voted. There was a decrease in voting. Ms. Holstein stated that the people that we sent to Trenton are the people we need to look at when we place blame on property taxes. The only way to change that is who we vote and send to Trenton. Until the school funding formula is fixed, it will plague the school districts forever. When you vote down a budget, it should be done when something is done egregiously. Ms. Holstein is disappointed in the 106 people who voted no on a very, very fiscal budget. Mr. Bell asked how the legislators in Trenton affect our property taxes? Ms. Holstein stated that we talked about it during our budget presentation. Last year, we lost State aid due to free and reduced lunch applications and this year we got more. The formula is under lock and key. It has been OPRA requested by a school district but the State refuses to fill the OPRA request. There was a 54 difference between having an approved budget or not having an approved budget. Mr. Morelli stated that going back to the free and reduced lunch applications, to everyone who submitted an application, thank you on behalf of the Board, and to the parents who did not to please submit an application. It can be done confidentially. We do know as a fact that it is part of our State aid formula. Also, a high percentage of our budget is State mandated. Since they are mandated, it means we have no

choice but to use that number. A majority up to 70% of our budget is mandated figures. Mr. Bell asked if we could have an effect on making property taxes go down? Mr. Andriac stated that if you have a negative budget maybe. Mr. Andriac said it is pretty amazing we are able to do what we are doing with a zero percent increase. Mr. Morelli said we have to be very diligent with looking forward because we will not have Covid funding. Mr. Garcia stated that there are 3 components to the tax bill. If the county or municipality increases tax it could offset the work the BOE does. Ms. Holstein said we don't get to vote on the municipal budget and it has gone up every year. The town was very receptive to our budget and very complimentary. Ms. Holstein would like to see more people come out and vote. Appreciates Mr. Bell bringing this up during this time.

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:40 p.m.

Motion Tasha DeGeorge 2nd Christopher Bell Voice Vote: All in Favor

19. NEW BUSINESS - Mr. Morelli stated that the Sussex County Board of Elections will not have the certified results until Monday, May 8, 2023. The earliest we can have our reorganization meeting is May 10, 2023.

Motion to cancel the reorganization meeting scheduled for May 3, 2023.

Moved: Christopher Bell

Seconded: Paul Brislin

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

Motion to advertise for a reorganization meeting to immediately follow our regularly scheduled meeting on May 3, 2023

Moved: Andree Campbell

Seconded: Michael Zernhelt

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	Christmann	DeGeorge	Holstein	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

20. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Barbara Holstein

2nd Tasha DeGeorge

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Time of Adjournment: 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Morelli

CARL MORELLI, Board Secretary