

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting  
Regular Action Meeting Minutes  
October 25, 2023**

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

	Present	Absent
Barbara Holstein, President	x	
Michael Zernhelt, Vice President	x	
Christopher Bell		x
Paul Brislin	x	
Andree Campbell	x	
Tasha DeGeorge	x	
Jaime Johnson	x	

Others Present:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
James Andriac - Acting Superintendent	_x_	_____
Michael Bussow, SBA/BS	_x_	_____
Joseph Garcia, Esq. – Board Atty.	_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 6:33 p.m.

Motion Andree Campbell                      2<sup>nd</sup> Paul Brislin                      Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 7:02 p.m.

Motion Tasha DeGeorge                      2<sup>nd</sup> Andree Campbell                      Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin                      2<sup>nd</sup> Tasha DeGeorge                      Voice Vote: All in Favor

- 7. CSA REPORT - James Andriac, Acting Superintendent** - Thanked Town Council Member Richard Iannella for teaching our 3rd grade classes about local government. Our Halloween parade will be on Halloween at 11:30 a.m. Parents are welcome to attend. The PTA will be hosting their Halloween dance on Friday, October 27 at 6PM. We are having a pumpkin design contest. The families that come to watch the parade will be able to vote on the pumpkin. Our cross-country team is continuing to do very well. One of our Montague boys came in first place at the Sparta race. Out of the 5 areas in QSAC we fell below 80% in 2 of the areas. We are putting together an action plan to get above the 80%. In instruction and planning we received a 68% and in fiscal we got a 76%. It will not be a problem for us to get up to the 80% threshold. QSAC was looked at 3 years prior to last year. So when we get it done in 3 years it will be based on last year, this school year and next year. We also finally got the decal on the gym put up. An email went out to all parents for lunch balances due. Some of these balances were very high this may be because they go back a couple of years. We do not turn children away for lunch. Please return your lunch forms. It was one of our audit findings. Mr. Bussow did state that our debt continues to grow from unpaid balances. There were several recommendations made to us. Steps have been made to correct. Our auditors were here for 2 days. They gave us quick feedback. Ms. Holstein stated that on the school lunch itself it has been discussed in the past. We are forced to contract out because we cannot make the food ourselves. Board discussed different options on how to reduce costs for food services.
  
- 8. SBA REPORT - Michael Bussow, SBA** - We got the padding installed on the gym walls so we can get ready for basketball season. One side is up and one side is in the process. We are meeting with architects this Friday for a progress report on HVAC, electrical and parking lot expansion. We made modifications to ESSER III grant allowing us to better utilize the funds and on the 20th they were approved and we are going to get about \$12,000 from a federal supply chain for food service and with Provident Bank we are going from .05% interest to 4.75% interest which should bring us about \$20,000 a month in interest. We were getting about \$100 a month. Board members all thanked Mr. Bussow for getting this from the bank.
  
- 9. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Barbara Holstein, Board President** - Most school boards are down in Atlantic City this week. Ms. Holstein has no interest in being at the conference because it doesn't really address any of the issues that we are talking about in Montague. The QSAC scores are a self evaluation that the State imposes a school district to do every 3 years to see how your school is doing. Ms. Holstein sees amazing progress on this Board since January 2021. We have made it a priority to utilize our funding to improve our school, both the physical parts of our school, to maintain staff and to make sure our kids are coming to school. We have taken charge of the transportation needs of the students. This QSAC report does not show how beautiful our school is, how well our kids are doing, the improvement in their scores and it doesn't tell how happy our parents are. These are things that are not measured on the QSAC report. Thanked Mr. Iannella for doing the civics lesson for the 3rd grade. Would like to have the secret reader back and having presentations once again before the Board meetings.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE** - Ms. Holstein read a letter that was sent to Ms. Weiss who is one of our Cross Country coaches as well as Mr. Runne and Ms. Hashagen. The letter was sent from a parent of a student from another school district. Ms. Holstein thanked the parent who wrote the letter for taking the time to write a letter for commending our staff and our children who are putting their heart and soul into our cross country program and Ms. Holstein commending the entire staff and Mr. Andriac for fostering the children for good team sportsmanship so much so that they are encouraging other teams that they are competing against to never give up and to push harder. Ms. Campbell added that she was at the last track meet and our students are focused and Ms. Weiss and Mr. Runne are amazing coaches and the kids respect them and we are very lucky to have them. Mr. Andriac added that there are many parents that have come up to him and have told him the same exact stuff and our students are always well behaved at the track meets and are always encouraging their teammates and he very proud of our students.

**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 7:36 p.m.  
 Motion Andree Campbell                      2<sup>nd</sup> Paul Brislin                      Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:37 p.m.  
 Motion Tasha DeGeorge                      2<sup>nd</sup> Andree Campbell                      Voice Vote: 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 October 12, 2023 through October 25, 2023 - Bill List below:

Fund 10	\$ 11,998.39
Fund 11	\$377,030.44
Fund 12	\$ 9,000.00
Fund 20	\$ 64,773.56
Fund 60	\$ 1,575.00
Grand Total	\$464,377.39

**Moved: Tasha DeGeorge                      Seconded: Andree Campbell**

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Holstein	Johnson	Zernhelt	Total
<b>YES</b>		x	x	x	x	x	x	6
<b>NO</b>								
<b>ABSTAIN</b>								
<b>ABSENT</b>	x							1

**13. PERSONNEL**

**MOTION TO DO A CONSENT AGENDA FOR ITEMS P-1 THROUGH P-5**

**Moved:** Tasha DeGeorge                      **Seconded:** Jaime Johnson

**Discussion:**Mr. Andriac stated that regarding P-3 we already had her to start the first week of November however she got out of her other school early and she was able to start here this week so we got her on the agenda.

**P-1 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **Employee ID #10870639** request for intermittent unpaid leave of absence in accordance with the New Jersey Leave Act (NJFLA) and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

**P-2 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of **Employee ID #10870625** effective November 10, 2023.

**P-3 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education rescind the start date of on or about November 2, 2023 from P-3 of the September 13, 2023 agenda for **STACEY BLASDELL**, full time Interventionist, Step O/MA (prorated), for the 2023-2024 school year and approve a new start date of **October 23, 2023**.

**P-4 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **MOLLOY JACOBS**, as Soccer Club Advisor with a \$1,000 stipend per the MEA Agreement for the 2023-24 school year.

**P-5 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **SEAN HALL** as a substitute custodian, pending background check, at the rate of \$20.00 per hour for the 2023-2024 school year.

<b>Roll Call</b>	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Holstein	Johnson	Zernhelt	Total
<b>YES</b>		x	x	x	x	x	x	6
<b>NO</b>								
<b>ABSTAIN</b>								
<b>ABSENT</b>	x							1

## 14. POLICIES

**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 the attached Strauss Esmay bylaws, regulations and policies. (Hard copies are available for review at the school).

**Moved:** Paul Brislin      **Seconded:** Jaime Johnson      **Discussion:** They are online and the Board has both worked in small committees as well as independent evaluations. Ms. Holstein is very happy we are moving forward with this second reading with Strauss Esmay and closing the book on the NJSBA policies and moving forward with the Strauss Esmay policies. Ms. Holstein stated that one of the things we need to watch out for with Strauss Esmay is that when they go to update bylaws online they will be the ones managing it so we must monitor the policies carefully because we must make sure that they do not add any policies that the Board has not reviewed and evaluated before it being posted on the school website. We do not want it on our website until we have approved it and reviewed it. Ms. Holstein asked Mr. Bussow and Mr. Romano to ask Strauss Esmay how they manage the Board Doc site and how they will integrate it at Montague. We have to be cautious that they don't go slipping things in. Mr. Brislin asked what is the advantage in giving Strauss Esmay the control as opposed to what we have been doing? Ms. Holstein stated that one of the selling points is that it is the BoardDocs and it is easier to find. Mr. Garcia stated that the real value is that you are paying for them to continue to monitor for legal updates and to make sure your policies are compliant. Mr. Garcia stated that one of the bad things is that when they make a mistake is that you may approve a policy that you have to do. Ms. Holstein stated that we need to be conscientious on what we are approving. Currently, our policies are not full and robust. It is required by law for all school boards to belong to them. The County office is looking for us to update our policies too. Mr. Brislin asked what our current expiration date with Strauss Esmay is. Mr. Bussow will look it up. Mr. Garcia said we are not giving up rights. We just have our PDF policies. Nothing is going up on the website without us approving it first. Mr. Zernhelt stated that Mr. Romano is the buffer between Strauss Esmay and what goes up on the website.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Holstein	Johnson	Zernhelt	Total
YES		x	x	x	x	x	x	6
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT	x							1

## 15. TRANSPORTATION

**T-1 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Montague Township School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Report of October 16, 2023.

Time	Location of Drill	Route #s included in the Drill	Name of School Principal/Person(s) Overseeing Drill	Other Info.
9:00 a.m.	Montague Twp. School - Front of Bldg./Sidewalk	Bus 1, Bus 2, Bus 3, Bus 4, Bus 5, M-1 (little bus)	James Andriac, Principal, Danielle Conklin, Michael D'Amore	Rear Door Evacuation Drill

**Moved:** Tasha DeGeorge      **Seconded:** Paul Brislin

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Holstein	Johnson	Zernhelt	Total
YES		x	x	x	x	x	x	6
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT	x							1

**16. ADMINISTRATION**

**MOTION TO DO A CONSENT AGENDA FOR ITEMS A-1 THROUGH A-5**

**Moved:** Paul Brislin                      **Seconded:** Tasha DeGeorge

**Discussion:** Ms. Holstein stated that in reference to A-5 that she is excited to see that our FFA is headed to Rutgers for another competition. Mr. Andriac stated that two students placed at the top 3 last year.

**A-1 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve the New Jersey Department of Education School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*: School Year July 1, 2022 - June 30 2023.

**A-2 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, authorize the submission of the Annual Preschool Operational Plan Update B for 2024-2025 to the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Services.

**A-3 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve **SAMANTHA FROST, School Social Worker** as a member of the School Threat Assessment Team.

**A-4 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **DAVID MILLER, Director of School Facilities**, to attend the Integrated Pest Management Training session at Warren County Vo-Tech on Friday, October 27, 2023. (*Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training sessions are offered for school IPM Coordinators and other school personnel with administrative responsibilities that accord with the IPM law. IPM Coordinators receive certification of attendance to fulfill the MANDATORY training requirement as stated in the NJDEP Pesticide Control Program regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:30-13.3*)

**A-5 BE IT RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, the Montague Township Board of Education approve the request of Instructor Rachel Van Gorden and four (4) middle school students to attend the FFA Competition at Rutgers University on Thursday, November 16, 2023. (The cost is \$44.00 plus cost of transportation).

<b>Roll Call</b>	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Holstein	Johnson	Zernhelt	Total
<b>YES</b>		x	x	x	x	x	x	6
<b>NO</b>								
<b>ABSTAIN</b>								
<b>ABSENT</b>	x							1

**17. LIAISON REPORTS**

- High Point - Tasha DeGeorge - they are having a food driver tomorrow and a football game is coming up.
- Montague PTA - Mr. Andriac - Monster Mash is this Friday.
- Sussex County Charter/Tech School - Andree Campbell - Nothing to report.
- School Board Association - Barbara Holstein - gave report in President’s 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 7:55 p.m.  
Motion Andree Campbell            2<sup>nd</sup> Tasha DeGeorge            Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:56 p.m.  
Motion Tasha DeGeorge            2<sup>nd</sup> Andree Campbell            Voice Vote: All in Favor

**19. EXECUTIVE SESSION, IF NECESSARY: No action will be taken**

**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 7:57 p.m.  
Motion Paul Brislin            2<sup>nd</sup> Tasha DeGeorge            Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 8:08 p.m.  
Motion Paul Brislin            2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Zernhelt            Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 8:08 p.m.  
Motion Tasha DeGeorge            2<sup>nd</sup> Andree Campbell            Voice Vote: All in Favor

**20. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion Paul Brislin            2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Zernhelt            Voice Vote: All in Favor  
Time of Adjournment: 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dana Berry*

DANA BERRY,  
Administrative Assistant to the Board Secretary