

**Montague Board of Education Meeting  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
April 4, 2017**

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Tacia Johnson	X	
Diane Cole	X	
Gayle Andriac	X	
Sally Kurtzman	X	
Emma Masset	X	
Glen Plotsky	X	
Linda Spinapolice	X	

Others Present:

- X- Robert Walker – Interim Chief School Administrator
- X- Tina Palecek – Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- X- Gary Kraemer – School Attorney – **Arrived at 8:00pm as scheduled**

**Flag Salute**

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 Middletown Record.

Please note, the school's anti-bullying policy and how it applies to all; Board Members, Administration, Teachers, volunteers, parents, and members of the community. We are all to display appropriate behavior for the children of our community, so they can learn by example: not harass, intimidate, or bully others, either in person or writing, inclusive of via social media. On a number of occasions, it was brought to the attention of the Board and Administration, prior to a meeting, as well as during meetings, statements were made on social media by those in attendance at the meeting, which not only included insinuations and threats of violence which were both harassing, intimidating, and of course forms of bullying, but these comments were also supported by others in attendance. Additionally, since 2015 there have been ongoing reports of continual harassment at meetings and on school grounds. Therefore, as a safety precaution for the Board Members, Administration, public and students, the presence of the Constable has been requested at the meetings until these threats cease to exist.

**Announcement of Executive Session**

There will be an Executive Session at the end of this meeting regarding negotiations; attorney privileged issues, personnel, and legal matters.

**Recognition**

Any/all recognition to take place at Regular Meeting on April 18, 2017

**Presentation**

None scheduled

### **Approval of Minutes**

Any/all minutes will be approved at Regular Meeting on April 18, 2017

### **CSA Report**

CSA report regarding new information on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders and new graduation date will be presented at the Regular Meeting on April 18, 2017

### **SBA Report**

SBA/BA report will be presented at the Regular Meeting on April 18, 2017

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Finance & Insurance**

Chair, Emma Masset, reported great concern that in order to do a budget we must address the many items this facility requires, the roof, heating system and other items to determine what we need to add to the budget.

Bob Walker – reported that the School Business Administrator has been interviewing architects/engineers to get overviews of what repairs are needed.

Emma Walker – communicated we must know how much necessary repairs will cost so we can properly prepare the budget. Mrs. Masset asked Mrs. Palecek what the architects have reported so far.

**Buildings, Grounds, and Transportation** (the committee discussion for BG&T is more detailed due to the identified importance of the present state of the school facility)

Chair, Linda Spinapolice – in answer to Mrs. Masset's question, Mrs. Palecek reviewed items discussed with the architects to date including roof repairs, heating issues, electric work, and asbestos tiles. Multiple architect firms (3) have been invited to do a walk-thru the building in order to get an idea of which items will be a priority and which items can be postponed. Mrs. Palecek referenced the Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) and that it needs to be updated and accurate. Each organization has expressed we need a feasibility plan to determine what course of action is needed. They each communicated that Montague is currently reacting instead of being proactive; we need to be proactive. Each firm is receiving the same information and blueprints to ensure it is a fair apples-to-apples comparison of abilities. Mr. Walker also was able to secure blueprints from the son of the builder today; he climbed in an attic to find the blue prints.

Tacia Johnson asked if we have heard from the insurance company yet regarding the heating issues Montague just experienced. Hobbe Heat installed HV Smith RTS28 – this model has a water stabilizer which will ensure the water that returns to the unit will not cause cracks – which is what happened to our other unit. The insurance will cover \$11,877.00 of the total cost for this repair, our deductible is \$1,000.00. Previously the insurance company had denied our claim for the broken pipes based on age and being buried in concrete, however, with the boiler issue, they are reopening claim to see if we can get some financial compensation.

Tacia Johnson also added that the different architectural forms are going through the building to determine what they believe should be done. After that is done, all information will be presented to the Board? Tina Palecek responded that once the Building Grounds and Transportation committee gets all of the information the entire Board will receive the reports and recommendations so everyone understands.

Linda Spinapolice – we have a LRFP now. We did not have one in the past because the Board was told there was no updated software so there was a message from previous administration that a LRFP was not necessary and/or possible. In light of our current needs, Mrs. Spinapolice working with the committee and administration has put together a LRFP.

1. Windows in Room 92 have been scheduled for April 17-20, 2017 with start and finish dates confirmed with Panoramic Windows.
2. Heating in the lower wing – temporary piping will need to be replaced with permanent piping this summer.
3. Removal of expansion tank in ceiling – needs to be replaced. Montague Custodial staff is expected to be able to complete this task.
4. Roof Upper Wing needs to be repaired/replaced
5. Asbestos Flooring remediation
6. HVAX
7. Curbs and Sidewalks
8. Electrical interior
9. Electrical exterior
10. Nurses office expansion
11. Insulation
12. Thermostats in classrooms - updated

Robert Walker told the Board that he found out about three additional leaks in two classrooms. Mrs. Spinapolice communicated the ongoing efforts of Mrs. Palecek to identify who did which part of the roof to determine warranty information.

Tacia Johnson asked about the recent leak in the boys' bathroom and Mrs. Palecek explained it was not a leak in the roof, but a plumbing issue that was fixed. Ms. Johnson questioned if there was a folder somewhere in the building dedicated to all information regarding roofing; the answer is no. Mrs. Palecek found one folder containing roofing information, but it was for only a partial portion of the roof. It did not include the information needed for leaks.

Mrs. Spinapolice told the Board about how committee members and administrators climbed through attics and behind boilers to locate missing, unknown, and needed blueprints to help us make repair.

Ms. Johnson pointed out to all present that the effort by the committee members and the administration to locate any blueprints effectively saved the school money because otherwise we would have been charged to recreate those documents which are very expensive to reproduce. Mrs. Palecek told the Board that the architects who have already visited requested our custodial staff create a riser diagram of the heating systems through the entire school including pipes, to determine where the pipes go.

Mr. Walker is also planning to go to the municipality to look at any/all blueprints on file.

Mrs. Cole reported that there were some items discussed on October 4, 2016 by the previous administration that were not on the new LRFP, they include:

- a. Lower roof
- b. Room 201
- c. Upgrade lighting to LED
- d. Floor in Hallway by IT Room
- e. Intercom system to Phones in classrooms

- f. Rebuild Univent in multiple rooms
- g. Finger scanner for employees
- h. Visitor ID

Ms. Johnson discussed nurse's office expansion to allow privacy for students. A group discussion included opening up the nurse's office and the room next door. There is an issue with the electrical panels, but there could be a way to use the closet from the nurse's office as access. Expansion is more appealing than relocating to keep the office close to the front door for emergency service access.

Roof: Leaks in the roof were discussed. Mrs. Spinapolice discussed the leak in a classroom that has been there for 3.5 years. There were questions regarding why it was not identified during a building walk-thru. Mr. Walker explained to the Board members how leaks could happen when nails are used instead of screws; Mr. Walker to clarify he had no first-hand knowledge only reports from staff. Mrs. Spinapolice questioned how many leaks, but Mr. Walker explained there is no way to know without an inspection. Mr. Walker congratulated the Board on identifying neglect and recommended a referendum to offset the cost to fix the many problems. Ms. Johnson asked what is being done to ensure we do not have any mold in our ceilings. Mr. Walker said we will not know until we have the entire situation looked at completely.

Mrs. Palecek told the Board that responses and recommendations are expected by the May Board meeting.

Mrs. Spinapolice – explained to the Board why the school was closed for the boiler replacement. Decisions were made based on outside temperatures and student safety. Mrs. Spinapolice clarified we will only have to pay one deductible according to RC Lain.

Mrs. Masset asked about our current insurance policies. Our policy is in effect until July 2017, but it is recommended we stay with RC Lain because of our underground oil tanks. We are grandfathered with our current insurance company; if we change companies we will have to pay an exorbitant fee for their existence. Group discussion was held regarding the removal, testing, and filling in of old tanks if the Board decides to go that route.

Sidewalks – Mrs. Spinapolice told the Board that the sidewalks repaired last year needs to be repaired already. There is a section of curbing missing a big chunk that may be a safety issue and will need to be repaired. Mrs. Cole recommended our in-house maintenance personnel fix the small sections without bringing in another contractor. Mrs. Masset commented that the repairs made last year were not done in the best manner even though she requested it many times. Ms. Johnson told those in attendance that the RFP's showed all the bids were the same – as presented by the former CSA.

Mr. Walker congratulated Mrs. Palecek for her effort to get the bandwidth increased from 25mg to 100mg so there will be no down-time during PARCC testing. This is a major achievement.

Mrs. Cole asked when the leaky window with the makeshift gutter system would be fixed. Mrs. Cole expressed concern for the safety of the room considering there are electronic devices in the room. That repair is scheduled for April 2017.

Transportation – There was a question regarding the supervision of students getting dropped off by Kittatinny in the afternoon. Mr. Walker will look into who should be monitoring.

Mrs. Palecek and Mr. Walker will follow-up on reviewing all routes to ensure there is no overlapping and routes make sense. Mr. Walker told Board of an idea to lease buses ourselves in effort to cut costs.

### **Personnel**

There were several letters from staff who requested any discussions regarding Rice Notices received be made in public; others did not request public discussion. There are some people who are asking for public discussion and private discussion that overlap; because of that closed session discussions will happen first and then any public comments by the Board if deemed necessary.

Bob Walker commented that the Rice Notices were sent out without the Personnel committee chair knowing about and Mr. Walker does not agree with the Board President sending out Rice Notices. Ms. Johnson communicated that the notices were requested on behalf of the Board based on previous conversations with committees. Tacia Johnson explained that the list is an ongoing list that has been accumulated for several years. Ms. Rice notices do not necessarily mean something bad it is the only way for the Board to discuss personnel legally. Mrs. Masset added that it is not the job of the Board Secretary to send the notices to staff and that she had no idea anyone got Riced. Mrs. Masset asked if the Board members were questioned and if they agreed to send out Rice notices. Mrs. Andriac also commented she did not know of anyone being Rice Noticed.

### **Negotiations**

After review of committee notations, the MEA contract will be sent to NJSBA for a free review for their recommendations; that should take about a month to get the document back.

### **Curriculum**

Mr. Walker will find out how many students will be going to Charter, Choice, or other schools and report to the Board so planning can be completed for the 2017-2018 school year.

Mrs. Spinapolic reported there is a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The Pre-K curriculum will be available on April 5, 2017 for Board members if they wish to have a copy.

The QSAC review has identified an issue with our current foreign language program which is being reviewed by Mr. Walker.

Board discussion regarding 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade placement took place in regard to curriculum and extracurricular activities.

### **Correspondence**

An email from Mr. Gettler regarding information about High Point's expenses

### **Liaison Report**

Mrs. Spinapolice reported she attended the March 21 meeting. The scholar athlete award was presented to the basketball team and other students who maintain a 90% or above to qualify. Also, Mrs. Spinapolice shared a document used to review the annual budget; the document will be modified and used for the Montague budget review process.

### **Public Session**

**As a reminder for all, and as per NJSBA, Board of Education meetings are "a meeting in public, not a meeting of the public. Many people, especially parents and community members, misunderstand the nature of a school board meeting. School boards provide leadership for what are typically multi-million dollar corporations. The board has important work to accomplish. And, to do that work, the board needs to be fully engaged around the table. The Open Meetings Act requires that public business be done in public, and that citizens have opportunity to observe and comment at every meeting."**

**Additionally, as per NJSBA 2C:33-8, 10:4-12, and as adopted by Montague's Board of Education in Bylaw 9322, please remember the public participation shall be governed by the following rules:**

- 1. A participant must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface - by an announcement of his/her name, place of residence, and group affiliation if appropriate;**
- 2. Each statement by a participant shall be limited to 3 minute duration**
- 3. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard;**
- 4. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board Members individually;**
- 5. The presiding officer may:**
  - a. Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;**
  - b. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;**
  - c. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;**
  - d. Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action; and**
  - e. Waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or the efficient administration of the Board's business.**

**During this portion of the meeting, the residents are invited to address the Board with any comments or concerns that may be in respect to the operation of their school.**

**Motion to open public comment at 7:47 pm**

Motion Sally Kurtzman 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glen Plotsky

All in Favor – No Opposed

Motion carried

Debra Holtalen, (Old Chimney Ridge, Montague) addressed the Board to ask why the Board only acknowledge students from Port Jervis? She also communicated the Montague Board behaves in an unprofessional manner and should stop blaming old staff. There is so much positive about Montague, need to keep focus on positive; it's sad when Board members pull their students from Montague to go to other schools. Also, it's sad that the cost of legal fees could have paid for the building improvements.

Krista Thomas, (Elm Court, Montague) Is there High Point H.S. representation yet? Change is hard, but she believes the Board is perpetuating problems with send/receive. High Point Regional High School sports successes include many Montague students and should be made know so students can get excited. She stated that the bashing of the past administrator must stop; it is appalling and she hopes some Board members get voted off. Many current Board members are just spinning wheels and spending money and need to stop.

Christine Bisl (Coss Lane, Montague) Thanked Mr. Walker for saying something about the obscene gestures that were made recently. Focus must be made to keep everyone safe. Emails and letters have been sent regarding this activity (which has been done in front of students in this building). Also, the treatment of Board members toward other Board members with disdain, is unacceptable it unacceptable for members of the Board to talk down to each other and others do nothing to stop it; other people just sit there and no one does anything to stop it. How many times can the Board defend the bully?

Lorie Jeskey (Montague Teacher) Thank the Board for fixing the heating issues so quickly and looking at the bigger issues and the full building. Thank you Mr. Walker for being here and your wisdom

Krista Thomas (Elm Court, Montague). Saw Mr. Walker try to do what is right for the school, but the Board continue to be resistant to change. Focus should be on academics why is there so much focus on the past?

Christine Bisl (Coss Lane, Montague) how much longer will the Board allow someone to give obscene gestures in front of students? Mr. Walker graduation date?

**Motion to close public comment at 7:58 pm**

Motion by Emma Masset 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sally Kurtzman

All in Favor – No opposed

Motion carried

Public comment discussion: Linda Spinapolicie did acknowledge the television program from the Preschool class. Mrs. Spinapolicie also clarified she only identified Ms. Johnson's daughter as a award recipient because she was surprised to realize it was her daughter; she did not recognize her before the announcement of her name.

Glen Plotsky – he has volunteered to be the High Point Liaison, but has not been able to go due to conflict of meeting dates, but will attend in the future as much as possible.

Tacia Johnson – my daughter did go through Montague and attends Port Jervis. We report on Port Jervis because of an active contract with them to attend the Board meetings; that is why we report.

Diane Cole suggested we regularly report on Montague students whatever school they attend.

Mr. Walker – the individual with the obscene gesture. Mr. Walker addressed the situation and believes it has been handled appropriately.

### **Committee Action Items**

Action items will be reported at the Regular Meeting on April 18, 2017

### **Unfinished Business**

Items for each committee were addressed above in committee reports.

### **New Business**

#### **Executive Session:**

**BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Board of Education recess and proceed to executive session to discuss personnel, legal matters, negotiations, and client-attorney privilege.**

**Action may or may not be taken.**

Motion to open Executive Session at 8:30 pm  
Motion Gayle Andriac 2<sup>nd</sup> by Emma Masset  
All in Favor – No Opposed  
Motion carried

Motion to close Executive Session at 11:25 pm  
Motion Emma Masset 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gayle Andriac  
All in Favor – No Opposed  
Motion carried

Motion to re-open Workshop meeting at 11:25 pm  
Motion Glen Plotsky 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gayle Andriac  
All in Favor – No Opposed  
Motion carried

#### **Adjournment**

Motion Gayle Andriac 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glen Plotsky  
All in Favor – No Oppose  
Motion Carried