

**MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Minutes of the Tuesday, October 8, 2013 7:00 P.M. Workshop Meeting**

These minutes have not been formally approved and are subject to change or modification.

The Montgomery Township Board of Education held a Workshop Meeting on Tuesday, October 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

**OPENING OF THE MEETING**

- A. The Montgomery Township Board of Education held a workshop meeting on Tuesday, October 8, 2013 in the Upper Middle School Media Center.
- B. Roll Call - The following Board members were present: Shalini Bhargava, Sandra Donnay, Humberto Goldoni, Judy Humza, Adelle Kirk-Csontos, Anne Michaelson and Dr. Lei Yu

The following Board members were absent: Andrea Bradley and Arun Rimal

Also Present: Nancy Gartenberg, Superintendent  
Thomas M. Venanzi, Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary  
Annette Wells, Associate Business Administrator/  
Assistant Board Secretary  
Alexander Chen, Student Representative

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION – A motion was made by Ms. Humza and seconded by Ms. Bhargava that the board adopt a resolution to go into executive session at 7:02 p.m.

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975 provides that a public body may exclude the public from that portion of a meeting of which the public body discusses certain matters for which confidentiality is required as permitted in Section 7B of the act.

RESOLVED, by the Board of Education of the Township of Montgomery in the County of Somerset and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. Items related to personnel, superintendent's merit goals, a special education settlement agreement and student disciplinary matters will be discussed.
2. The matters discussed in executive session shall be disclosed to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Upon call of the roll, the motion carried with a unanimous vote recorded.

- D. RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION – The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:30 p.m.

- E. Vice President Kirk-Csontos then read the following Statement of Open Meeting and Public Participation – In accordance with the State’s Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by mailing notice of meeting on April 24, 2013 and October 1, 2013. Notice was provided to Board of Education Members, Montgomery Township Clerk, Rocky Hill Borough Clerk, Public Library, Township Posting, School Postings, PTSA Officers, Courier News, Princeton Packet, Trenton Times, and The Star Ledger.
- F. Vice President Kirk-Csontos then led everyone in the Salute to the Flag.
- G. Vice President Kirk-Csontos welcomed all to the workshop meeting.

### **PRESENTATION – Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the 2012-13 School Year**

Mr. Robert Swisher, Engagement Partner for Suplee Clooney and Company the district auditor, gave an overview of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that has been submitted for the period ending June 30, 2013.

Mr. Swisher explained that the audit is a compliance audit of all funds under the control of the board of education. The audit team also assesses the internal controls of the business office in order to determine if any material weaknesses exist, which is the basis for the issuance of the independent auditor’s opinion on the condition of the financial records. He indicated that the internal controls are very good with checks and balances in place which has led to the issuance of an unmodified opinion which reflects a position that the financial records truly reflect the financial condition of the school district.

Mr. Swisher also informed the board that there were no areas of non-compliance noted which meant that there would be no audit recommendations included in the report.

Mr. Venanzi stated that the board will accept the report at the next business meeting, and the audit will be posted on the district website the following day. A synopsis will be provided to the public at the business meeting.

### **COMMITTEE/REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

#### **Representative Reports**

##### **Student Representative Report**

Mr. Alex Chen, student representative, reported that this week is Montgomery High School spirit week. He stated that the pep rally and homecoming game will be held this Friday. Mr. Chen also added that the district is very competitive, and the students are supportive of each other.

### MTEA Report

Ms. Debra O'Reilly, Village Elementary School teacher and MTEA Vice President, gave the following MTEA report:

The Challenger Little League season is under way. The MTEA would like to thank the district for allowing the MTEA to use one of the fields. For those who may not be familiar with Challenger Little League, it is a program led by HS English teacher Ms. Christine D'Amore which allows children with developmental disabilities to play baseball. We formerly ran the program in the spring, but moved it to the fall this year to avoid conflicts with Special Olympics. Thanks to Ms. D'Amore and the Challenger Little League volunteers for their great work. Also, thanks to NJEA for providing the funding to make this happen.

This year's NJEA Professional Development Convention will take place on November 7 & 8<sup>th</sup>. It is the largest professional development event for educators in the world. There will be hundreds of workshops, hundreds of exhibits, a technology integration showcase where members show how they have integrated technology into their instruction and much more.

Teacher For a Day will take place during American Education week in November, which runs from the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The MTEA will be mailing invitations to Board of Education members and other community leaders. Anyone interested in taking part should contact our Pride in Public Education chair Ms. Jennifer Yulo at her school email address.

### Board Member Delegate/Representative Reports

Ms. Michaelson reported that she attended the elementary PTA meeting. The PTA is busy setting up committees and plans to have a winter carnival again this year.

Mr. Goldoni responded to Mr. Chen's report stating that the community is supporting our children. He has never seen so many events so well attended.

Dr. Yu reported that the SEPTA Parent Teacher Advisory Committee met. This committee is a forum for community members to voice concerns. The committee is working on better and more regular communication through a special education newsletter or providing a special education section in school newsletters already going out to parents. Dr. Yu stated that the committee has an informal structure, and parents are welcome to attend and provide input.

### Board Committee Reports

#### Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction Committee Report

Dr. Yu reported that the committee met on September 19<sup>th</sup> and covered several topics. He highlighted the following items:

- Overall district goals – improving communication, reviewing assessment programs, placement of staff and student attendance
- 2014-15 budget priorities
- STEM education
- Textbook approvals

Dr. Yu stated that the next meeting will be held on October 17.

Finance and Budget Committee Report

No Report

Human Resources Committee Report

No Report

Operations and Facilities Committee Report

Ms. Michaelson reported that the committee met and discussed the following items:

- 2014-15 Budget - the building principals have begun putting together facility needs.
- Building Use – the committee recommends going out for bids for before and after school care for September 2014.
- High School Speed Limit – The County is introducing an ordinance, which if approved will reduce the speed limit in front of the high school from 50 mph to 35 mph.
- At the last board meeting, Mr. Chris Crow, MTEA president, made a comment on the air quality in our buildings. We participate in an energy program which is a revenue source for the district. When we are called upon, we must reduce our energy consumption. This only happens a couple of times each year.
- UMS HVAC system change order
- Late Bus Service at LMS - utilization of buses is low and it is the opinion of the committee that given the late time and zone drop off, the late bus should be discontinued for the LMS students.

The board discussed the late bus at the Lower Middle School. Recommendations included providing ample notice to parents by sending email and telephone blasts or sending letters home with students. The board agreed that parents should be notified of concerns, and the late bus service should end in November.

Policy Committee Report

Ms. Bhargava reported that the committee met on September 25 and discussed the following policies which are on the October 15 agenda for first reading:

9140	Citizens Advisory Committees
3144.12	Certification of Tenure Charges – Inefficiency
3144.3	Suspension Upon Certification of Tenure Charge
3372	Teaching Staff Member Tenure Acquisition
3373	Tenure Upon Transfer or Promotion
5512	Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Ms. Bhargava invited the public to the HIB Presentation on October 9 at Montgomery High School from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Our attorney, Mr. Stephen Fogarty, is the presenter. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Ms. Bhargava reminded the public that the policies are on the district website.

Ms. Bhargava stated that the policy committee also reviewed policy #8061 – Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal. This policy is still being discussed.

Ms. Michaelson stated that the committee researched other school districts regarding this policy and most required a note up to fifth grade. We are still reviewing this policy.

Ms. Gartenberg added that the committee had additional discussion regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders after dismissal.

#### President's Report

Ms. Kirk-Csontos reminded the public that there is an election on November 5<sup>th</sup>. This election will include voting for school board members. There are five people running for three 3-year seats and Dr. Yu is running unopposed for a one-year seat.

#### BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Debra O'Reilly, VES teacher, discussed the late bus issue. She feels we are penalizing students who stay after school for extra help. She questioned if the district could hire someone to supervise the students for one hour. She expressed that tiered busing has made for a long day for students, and the students are basically shut down by 3:00 p.m. Regarding the air quality issue, Ms. O'Reilly stated that the air quality has been a problem at VES for the past three years.

Mr. Alan Wirsul questioned the possibility of having only three buses take the younger students home. He also questioned the status of the board member attendance policy. Mr. Wirsul also asked how the district receives federal funds and if we are affected by the debt ceiling.

Ms. Kirk-Csontos responded that the board takes the busing comments to heart. She stated that tiered busing came about due to a defeated budget. We were given little choice and saved \$700,000 by moving to triple tier.

Mr. Venanzi responded that ten rooftop units were replaced at VES this summer. The contractor is still trying to fine tune the system. There are some control issues which are part of the close-out items. This is also happening at UMS due to the replacement of new units.

Ms. Bhargava responded that the policy on board member attendance was amended to include three consecutive public meetings. Unfortunately, due to some confidential issues, board members cannot skype into many meetings. She added that being a board member is a huge commitment.

Ms. Kirk-Csontos added that a lot of work is done at the committee level.

Mr. Venanzi responded that we have two major federally funded programs: IDEA and NCLB. Together these programs amount to a little above one million dollars. These are entitlements. We budget for future budgets under the guidelines of the State Department of Education. If the funding went away, we would have to look for alternate ways to fund or reduce programs.

#### REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the following Board Meetings:

September 10, 2013 Executive Session Meeting  
September 10, 2013 Workshop and Special Meeting

September 24, 2013 Executive Session Meeting  
September 24, 2013 Business Meeting

Ms. Michaelson requested a minor change on Merit Goal #5.

The Board will approve the minutes at the October 15, 2013 Business Meeting.

**REVIEW DRAFT BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 15, 2013**

The board requested that the date on item #3.14 for discontinuance of late bus services at the Lower Middle School be changed from December 20, 2013 to November 20, 2013.

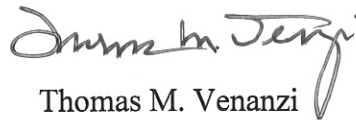
**BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Wirsul asked if the federal debt ceiling was not expanded, would it affect the district in the short term? Mr. Venanzi responded that we would not be affected. We get our funding on a reimbursement method. We spend the funds and then apply for reimbursement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Goldoni and seconded by Dr. Yu to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Upon call of the question, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas M. Venanzi  
School Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary