

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONTVALE, NEW JERSEY  
WORKSESSION MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 5, 2018**

The Board of Education of the Borough of Montvale, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, entered Regular Public Meeting Session on Monday, March 5, 2018 in the Instructional Media Center of Fieldstone Middle School, Spring Valley Road, Montvale NJ. President Rossig called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. Roll call showed the following to be present: Mrs. Bagdat, Mrs. Baskin, Mr. Carvelli, Mr. DiFiore, Mrs. Foley, and Mr. Rossig. Mrs. McGauley-Eichhorn was not present. Also present were Dr. Petersen, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Wasserman, Board Secretary/Business Administrator.

Mr. Rossig read the **Open Public Meetings announcement** as follows:

"The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Board of Education of the Borough of Montvale has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted by Borough Hall/Montvale Public Library, the Board Secretary's Office, posted on the district web site, and such notice given to *THE RIDGEWOOD NEWS* and *THE RECORD*."

**COMMENTS BY THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

Mr. Rossig announced that no smoking is allowed and that pre-approval of audio or video recording by the public is required.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**Mr. Carvelli introduced motion 4.1 as follows, which motion was seconded by Mr. DiFiore and was unanimously approved.**

Motion 4.1      **WHEREAS**, the Open Public Meetings Act and the Montvale Board of Education reserve the right within the constraints of State Law to sit in Private Executive Session, and

**WHEREAS**, there now exists a need for this Board of Education to meet in Executive Session, now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Montvale Board of Education recess into Executive Session to discuss exempt matters as follows:

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying  
Personnel – New Hires, Retirement, Resignation, Employee Stipends,  
Leave Request, Salary Guide Advancement, Student Teacher/Interns,  
Negotiations  
Legal Issue

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the public will be informed

1. When the Board reconvenes to the Regular Meeting business portion of this meeting this evening; or
2. At a later date, undetermined at this time.

### **RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION at 8:04 p.m.**

At 8:04 p.m. the Board returned to public session. Roll call showed the following to be present: Mrs. Bagdat, Mrs. Baskin, Mr. Carvelli, Mr. DiFiore, Mrs. Foley and Mr. Rossig. Mrs. McGauley-Eichhorn was not present. Also present were Dr. Petersen, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Wasserman, Board Secretary/Business Administrator, and approximately 40 members of the public. The Board President restated the open public meetings announcement and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed the public and invited them to sign the attendance sheet, if they so chose. He announced that no smoking is allowed and that pre-approval of audio or video recording by the public is required.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**Superintendent's Report** – The Superintendent's Report for March 5, 2018 was an update on the district's safety and security measures.

Dr. Petersen reviewed a presentation including security improvements in the district since 2013, and what we as a district and a community can do to work to keep the district safe and secure.

Montvale Police Chief Abrams provided an update, noting that the Montvale police department and the school district have a very good relationship. Chief Abrams shared that the police have been involved in the security updates that have happened in the school. This is an on-going item and the district needs to continue to keep moving forward and the police need to continue training and maintaining a presence in the schools. Chief Abrams said that Bergen County is very focused on school safety and has a mobile SWAT team.

Montvale Mayor Ghassali also spoke, encouraging everyone to tell the police if they see anything suspicious, and to please keep an eye on your children.

Dr. Petersen then opened up the discussion for public comment:

Kari Solomon of Montvale thanked the board for the presentation and shared that she was happy to hear staff is on the outlook for students with mental challenges. Ms. Solomon questioned how staff and schools respond to concerns regarding a child's mental safety. Dr. Petersen and Chief Abrams explained the process when a student exhibits concerning signs.

Susan Buonocore of Montvale asked for guidance on how to reinforce lockdown lessons from school at home. Dr. Petersen recommended following the advice of staff, following instructions, and remaining quiet. Ms. Buonocore requested the school lessons be expanded to educate students about what to do when they are walking in the hallway or in the bathroom.

Renee Herrera of Montvale asked about the access police have to the live video. Chief Abrams shared that the police can look at the video from their vehicles. Ms. Herrera suggested investigating bullet resistant doors in classrooms.

Donna Simon, Fieldstone Science Teacher, shared that staff does work with students on different safety scenarios and that staff is on the lookout for students who might be having a hard time emotionally. Mrs. Simon thanked Dr. Petersen for an open dialogue between all the stakeholders. There is always more to be done.

Elyse Lovett of Montvale shared concern about information being shared on social media and requested people be careful about what they post. She requested the district have a long term plan for school safety and do both big and small things to help with school safety.

Board of Education President Scott Rossig commended everyone who came to the meeting to get information from the source versus relying on social media for facts that might not always be true.

Maureen McLaughlin, Memorial Kindergarten Teacher, said the schools run the drills in a strict manner, they don't scare the children, but want to ensure the children know what to do. Practice is very important.

Stephanie Unger of Montvale asked about the process when a student is in a hallway during lockdowns and how a substitute teacher knows what to do. She shared she is happy to hear the district is exploring security options regarding the Memorial entrance.

Yuri Gurevich of Montvale thanked the Board for hosting the meeting and for addressing concerns regarding the MCC door at Fieldstone. He also suggested considering using only one entrance point for the schools.

Jamie Palatnek of Montvale shared her concerns about the MPR at Memorial. She believes families in town will contribute to security projects and Dr. Petersen will work with the PTO to see if this is feasible. She also introduced the Sandy Hook Promise program.

Matt Solomon of Montvale requested student education about who the students can talk to when they have concerns and encourage the students to reach out to a trusted adult.

Laurie Murrell, Fieldstone ELA Teacher, shared with the attendees that the teachers truly care about the students and the advisory program is helping everyone get to know each other so that could help students find a trusted adult they feel comfortable with.

Monika Reninger of Montvale recommended a daily checklist to ensure the simple safety items don't fail.

*Trustee Debra McGauley Eichhorn arrived at 9:32 p.m.*

Tiffany Cirilli of Montvale shared her concerns about the Memorial morning drop off procedures.

The discussion ended with some concluding comments from Chief Abrams, Mayor Ghassali, Councilwoman Gloegler, President Rossig, and Dr. Petersen.

The discussion concluded at 9:45 p.m.

## HEARING FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS

No members of the public wished to be heard.

## BOARD BUSINESS

*The board discussed and approved placement on the upcoming Board agenda of the following:*

**Minutes** - Enclosed are copies of the minutes of the following meetings for review and comment:

February 5, 2018 (see attached)

February 12, 2018 (see attached)

**2018-19 Work Year Calendars** – Attached are proposed calendars for custodial/maintenance staff and administration/clerical staff for the 2018-19 school year. The upcoming agenda will include a resolution approving the calendars.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*The board discussed and approved placement on the upcoming Board agenda of the following:*

**Music and Art in Our Schools Month** – A resolution will be included on the public agenda to recognize March as Music and Art in Our Schools month.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

*The board discussed and approved placement on the upcoming Board agenda of the following:*

**Voucher Payments** – The following voucher checks have been processed:

**Student Activities Fund**

Checks #2302-2322	\$5,157.98
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In addition, a list of checks issued March 19, 2018 will be presented on the public meeting agenda.

**Appropriation Transfers** – Transfers to the 2017-18 school year budget will be presented on the public meeting agenda.

**Board Secretary's and Cash Reports** – The financial statements for the month of January 2018 will be presented on the public meeting agenda.

**2018-2019 School Budget** – A resolution will be included on the March 19th agenda to approve the submission of the 2018-2019 budget for review by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.

**Disposal of Obsolete Textbooks** – A resolution will be included on the March 19<sup>th</sup> agenda to approve the selling or disposal of obsolete textbooks.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports were shared at this time.

## **BOARD MEMBER REPORTS/COMMENTS**

Mrs. McGauley-Eichhorn attended the Bergen County roundtable hosted by Holly Schepisi on school safety earlier in the evening and shared her notes with the rest of the Board. The panel members discussed safety procedures already established throughout the country, NJ, and Bergen County, emphasizing that Bergen County is fairly advanced with its procedures. One of the main discussion items was should school staff be armed and should schools hire School Resource Officers. All agreed open communication between the schools and law enforcement is essential. Bergen County has two mobile SWAT teams to deal with crisis management situations and all Bergen County police conduct active shooter training following the same procedures. The discussion also including ensuring students feel safe in their schools and that schools have enough resources, such as guidance counselors, to work with troubled students. Parents and the schools need to educate students on civil responsibility and digital citizenship.

Mr. Carvelli attended the recent MEF meeting where administration presented four grant proposals. Three have been approved by the MEF and Mr. Carvelli thanked the MEF for all they do, and encouraged staff to apply for MEF grants.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**SEMI Waiver Granted** – Dr. Petersen received a letter from the County granting the district’s request for a SEMI Waiver for the 2018-19 school year.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was reviewed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Foley asked if the district would support the Special Olympics run scheduled to run through Montvale on June 8. The Board agreed and information on this event will be sent out via the Wednesday folder.

## **HEARING FROM THE PUBLIC**

No members of the public wished to be heard.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Mr. DiFiore introduced motion 19.1 as follows, which motion was seconded by Mrs. Bagdat and passed unanimously.**

Motion **RESOLVED**, that this meeting be adjourned at 10:51 p.m.  
19.1

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Wasserman  
Board Secretary