

**MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
Orchard Hill Elementary School Cafeteria
244 Orchard Road
Skillman, New Jersey 08558**

**ORGANIZATION AND BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Friday, January 5, 2024
5:00 p.m. Public Meeting**

Call to Order – By Board Secretary Jack Trent at 5:00 p.m.

School Election Results

Mr. Trent, Board Secretary, announced the results of the annual school election of November 7, 2023.

<u>Three Candidates (Three-year Term)</u>	<u>Number of Votes</u>
Christina Harris	3,759
Victoria “Cookie” Franco-Herman	3,667
Zelda Spence Wallace	3,610
John A. Sangiovanni	2,733
Santi Buscemi	2,719
Deatte Gettinger	2,719

Mr. Trent, Board Secretary, swore in the newly-elected Board members, Ms. Harris, Ms. Franco-Herman and Ms. Spence Wallace.

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 January 4, 2023 and December 22, 2023 and January 3, 2024. Notice was provided to Board of Education Members, Montgomery Township Clerk, Rocky Hill Borough Clerk, Public Library, Township Posting, School Posting, PTSA Officers, Courier News, Montgomery News, Princeton Packet, Trenton Times, and The Star Ledger.

The Board reserves the right to enter into Executive Session during all meetings of the Board of Education.

This meeting is being recorded for the purpose of Board review and future reference and to assist in the preparation of minutes.

ROLL CALL

Martin Carlson – Present
Michelle Dowling – Present
Joanna Filak – Present
Victoria Franco-Herman – Present
Christina Harris – Present

Dr. Zelda Spence-Wallace – Present
Maria Spina – Present
Patrick Todd – Present
Ania Wolecka-Jernigan – Present

Also Present: Mary McLoughlin, Superintendent of Schools
Jack Trent, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Rodney T. Hara, Board Attorney

SALUTE THE FLAG – Mr. Trent led everyone in the Salute to the Flag.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Mr. Todd and seconded by Ms. Spina to convene into Executive session at 5:05 p.m. Upon call of the roll, the motion carried with a unanimous vote recorded.

The Board convened in Executive Session at 5:05 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.

WHEREAS, the items that are permitted to be discussed in executive session are as follows:

- 1) a matter rendered confidential by federal or state law
- 2) a matter in which release of information would impair the right to receive government funds
- 3) material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy
- 4) a collective bargaining agreement and/or negotiations related to it
- 5) a matter involving the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public funds
- 6) protection of public safety and property and/or investigations of possible violations or violations of law
- 7) pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiations and/or matters of attorney-client privilege
- 8) specific prospective or current employees unless all who could be adversely affected request an open session
- 9) deliberation after a public hearing that could result in a civil penalty or other loss

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education will be discussing items 3 and 8. Action may take place on these items.

The matters discussed in executive session shall be disclosed to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION – The Board returned from Executive session at 6:05 p.m.

Election of Officers

Acting as temporary chairperson, Mr. Trent opened nominations for president of the board of education.

Ms. Spina nominated Mr. Todd. Mr. Todd accepted the nomination.

Ms. Filak nominated Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan. Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Dr. Spence-Wallace and seconded by Ms. Spina to close nominations for president.

Upon call of the roll, Mr. Todd was voted as president with six members voting in favor and Mr. Carlson, Ms. Filak and Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan voting against.

Newly-appointed Board President, Mr. Todd, ascended to the chair and conducted the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Dowling motioned to remove the position of second vice president and was seconded by Ms. Franco-Herman.

Upon call of the roll, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Todd opened nominations for vice president of the board of education.

Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan nominated Ms. Filak. Ms. Filak accepted the nomination.

Ms. Franco-Herman nominated Ms. Spina. Ms. Spina accepted the nomination.

Ms. Harris nominated Ms. Dowling. Ms. Dowling accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Ms. Spina and seconded by Mr. Todd to close nominations for vice-president.

Upon call of the roll, Mr. Carlson, Ms. Filak and Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan voted in favor of Ms. Filak.

There were not any votes for Ms. Dowling as vice president.

Upon call of the roll, Ms. Spina was elected vice president with five members voting in favor as follows: Ms. Franco-Herman, Ms. Harris, Dr. Spence-Wallace, Ms. Spina and Mr. Todd voting in favor and Mr. Carlson, Ms. Filak and Ms. Wolecka-Jernigan voting against and Ms. Dowling abstaining.

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson and seconded by Ms. Franco-Herman to approve agenda items VIII through XX excluding XVI and XVII as follows. Upon call of the roll, the motion carried unanimously.

- VIII. Appointment of Board Secretary - It is recommended that the Board approve the appointment of Jack Trent as Board Secretary and that the Board Secretary be authorized to invest district funds and make all deposits for the district.

- IX. Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.) – In accordance with N.J.A.C. 17:27-3.3 the Board designates Jack Trent as the Public Agency Compliance Officer to ensure the District's implementation and administration of all procedures pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for public procurement for the district.
- X. Official Newspapers for Publication of Legal Notices - It is recommended that the Board approve the designation of the Courier News, The Star-Ledger and/or The Montgomery News as the newspapers to publish legal notices for the Board of Education.
- XI. Official Newspapers for Publication of "Open Public Meeting Law" Notices - It is recommended that the Board approve the designation of The Princeton Packet, The Star-Ledger, The Courier News, The Trenton Times and The Montgomery News as the newspapers to receive notices of Board of Education meetings under the "Open Public Meetings Law."
- XII. TD Bank and Santander Bank Designated as Bank Depository - It is recommended that the Board adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED: That TD Bank be designated as the Depository of some of the funds of the Montgomery Township Board of Education in the various accounts for the ensuing year. For investment purposes, other institutions may be used at the discretion of the School Business Administrator. The following accounts are held with TD Bank:

General
Payroll
Agency
Food Service
Capital Reserve
Flexible Spending Account
Unemployment Trust
Vision Account
Summer Enrichment Account
Summer Payroll
Athletic Account

All Activity Accounts for each School

RESOLVED: That Santander Bank be designated as the Depository of some of the funds of the Montgomery Township Board of Education in the various accounts for the ensuing year. For investment purposes, other institutions may be used at the discretion of the School Business Administrator. The following accounts are held with Santander Bank:

Investment Account
2016 Referendum Account
Emergency Reserve Account

- XIII. Persons Designated to Sign Checks for the Ensuing Year - It is recommended that the Board adopt the following resolution authorizing check signatures:

RESOLVED: That the general account and food service account in the name of Montgomery Township Board of Education be opened or kept with TD Bank for the deposit in said Bank to the credit of these accounts from time to time of any and all moneys, checks, drafts, notes, acceptances or other evidences of indebtedness, whether belonging to these accounts or otherwise, which may be or thereafter come into its possession, and that the said Bank be and is hereby authorized to make payments from the funds on deposit with it upon and according to the checks, drafts, notes or acceptances of these accounts, to be signed with the following three signatures:

Patrick Todd	President
Mary McLoughlin	Superintendent
Jack Trent	Secretary

In the event the President is unable to sign, Maria Spina, Vice President, will sign the checks.

Check signature for the Summer Enrichment; Payroll Account; Agency Account; Vision Plan; and Summer Payroll: School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Two check signatures for the Flexible Spending Account; and Unemployment Trust Fund: Patrick Todd, Board President, Superintendent and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

Check signatures for School Activity Accounts: Administrator and Secretary

Check signature for Athletic Account: Athletic Director and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

- XIV. Petty Cash Funds - It is recommended that the Board, in accordance with NJSA 18: A19-3 authorize the Board Secretary to establish the following imprest-type petty cash funds for 2024-2025:

Board Office	\$ 225
Montgomery High School	250
Montgomery Middle School (Upper Campus)	250
Montgomery Middle School (Lower Campus)	150
Orchard Hill School	100
Village School	100

and that the maximum single expenditure which may be made from each fund shall be \$25; and that the following individuals will be responsible for the proper disposition of each fund:

Jack Trent	Board Office
Heather Pino-Beattie	Montgomery High School
Raquel Estremera-Rivera	Montgomery Middle School (Upper Campus)

Lisa Romano
Susan Lacy
Daniel Van Hise

Montgomery Middle School (Lower Campus)
Village Elementary School
Orchard Hill Elementary School

- XV. Regular Board Public Meetings - It is recommended that the Board adopt the attached calendar of Board of Education Meetings (See Schedule A). Meetings will generally be held the fourth Tuesday of the month. The meetings will start at 7:00 p.m. and will be held in the Cafeteria of Orchard Hill Elementary School.

SCHEDULE A

APPROVED SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEETINGS

Following is the **APPROVED** meeting schedule for the Montgomery Township Board of Education for the year 2024. Generally the Board will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month except in those cases where this date is a holiday and schools are closed. Then an alternate day shall be utilized. The meeting place will be the Orchard Hill Elementary School cafeteria. The public portion of the meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday	Business	January 23, 2024
Tuesday	Business	February 27, 2024
Tuesday	Business/Tentative Budget Approval	March 19, 2024
Tuesday	Business/Budget Hearing & Adoption	April 30, 2024
Tuesday	Business	May 21, 2024
Tuesday	Workshop/Business	June 11, 2024
Tuesday	Business	June 25, 2024
Tuesday	Business	July 16, 2024
Tuesday	Business	August 27, 2024
Tuesday	Business	September 17, 2024
Tuesday	Business	October 15, 2024
Tuesday	Business	November 19, 2024
Tuesday	Business	December 17, 2024
Tuesday	Organization and Business	January 7, 2025

- XVI. Readoption of Curriculum and Courses of Study - It is recommended that the Board readopt the existing curriculum and courses of study.

RESOLVED, that all current written curriculum and courses of the District, as on file in the Office of the Superintendent, be adopted for the period from the date of this Organization Meeting until the Organization Meeting in the next calendar year, unless modified upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

- XVII. Readoption of Textbooks - It is recommended that the Board readopt the existing textbooks for the 2024-2025 school year.

XVIII. Readoption of Job Descriptions - It is recommended that the Board readopt the existing job descriptions:

RESOLVED, that all current written job descriptions in the District, as on file in the Office of the Superintendent, be adopted for the period from the date of this Organization Meeting until the Organization Meeting in the next calendar year, unless modified upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

XIX. Existing Board Policies Adopted for Ensuing Year - It is recommended that the Board adopt the existing policies of the Board of Education for the ensuing year with the understanding that revision of Board policy can be made at any time by Board action.

XX. Code of Ethics - It is recommended that the Board adopt the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) Code of Ethics as it appears in the district's policy manual (Bylaws 0142):

NJSBA Code of Ethics for School Board Members – Each board member read the Code of Ethics in a round robin fashion.

- A. I will uphold and enforce all laws, state board rules and regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes should be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- B. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will strive for public schools which can meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
- C. I will confine my board action to policymaking, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- D. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- E. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action, which may compromise the board.
- F. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- G. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools, which if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. But in all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board member, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.
- H. I will vote to appoint the most qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.

- I. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- J. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.
- XXI. Appointments – The Board President will make the following committee assignments for 2024:
- Members of the Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction Committee (ACI);
 - Members of the Human Resource Committee (HRC);
 - Members of the Operations, Facilities and Finance Committee (OFF);
 - Members of the Policy and Communications Committee (PCC)
 - Board liaisons to the Montgomery Township PTA, PTSA and/or PTO;
 - Board Liaison to the SEPTA (Special Education PTA);
 - Liaison to the Montgomery Township-Rocky Hill Municipal Alliance Committee;
 - Negotiations (CWA, MTEA and APSMT)
 - Voting member and alternate to the New Jersey School Boards Association;
 - Member and alternate to the Executive Committee of the Somerset County School Boards Association;
 - Delegate and alternate to the Somerset County Educational Services Commission.
 - Liaison to Montgomery Township Municipal Committee

BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Wolfson, Skillman resident, has two children in the district, thanked the board members for doing this. He wanted to discuss school start times. The board of health sent a letter to the board of education with recommendations. The Academy of Pediatrics recommends that school should not start before 8:30 a.m. It leads to high risk of suicide, depression and obesity rates especially among teenagers. He understands that busing is an issue, but it should be looked at again.

Mr. Bucs, Springfield township resident, stated he is a North Burlington Board of Education member, but he is speaking on his own behalf. He congratulated everyone sworn in tonight. He came tonight to see what he can learn or pass onto this board. The election of board officials seems to be an ongoing problem. There were a couple of times that his board got it wrong. He recommends that the board review policy 152. Under Robert's Rules, the roll call vote is the nominations and are put in and then a vote is cast. This will eliminate the advantage of being the first person nominated. The language in the policy is very vague, but it should be revisited.

Mr. Grant, Belle Mead resident, congratulated Mr. Todd and Ms. Spina for their leadership role. The past year has been marked by acrimony cause by the lack of transparency and listening by the board as well as the lack of listening to the parents. During the swearing in of the board officers, he only heard one mention of transparency and one mention of parents. The board is here as a proxy for the parents. If the board is transparent, not much can go wrong. There could be some dissention. He looks forward to working with the board.

Mr. Specht, Belle Mead resident, congratulated the reelected board members and the new board officers. He appreciates the district has begun the Strategic Plan process. We need to see where we can approve and improve the education of our students. It would behoove the community to attend a meeting and become part of the process.

The second Strategic Plan meeting will occur on January 31st at 7:30 p.m. in the LMS media center.

Mr. Hackel, OHES staff member and Vice President of the MTEA, stated that he is speaking on behalf of Jim Dolan, MTEA president, who is sick. He thanked the board members for their work and the new and past board officers. The MTEA looks forward to working with the board officers and new board of education.

XXV. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

ACTION AGENDA

Ms. Franco-Herman motioned items 1.1 through 4.3 seconded by Dr. Spence-Wallace. Upon call of the roll, the motion carried unanimously.

1.0 ADMINISTRATIVE

- 1.1 The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve the Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Report.

2.0 CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

- 2.1 Consultant Approvals 2023-2024 – Approve the following consultants for the 2023-2024 school year:

CONSULTANT NAME/VENDOR	SERVICES PROVIDED	RATES OF SERVICE
American Reading Company	Provide one (1) day of professional development on supplemental reading materials that will be used for the High Impact Tutoring program.	\$2,400.00 <i>To be funded by High-Impact Tutoring Grant</i>

- 2.2 High-Impact Tutoring Grant Resources Approval – 2023-2024 - Approve the following resources:

Title	Course/Grade(s)	Amount
Foundational Skills Toolkits (American Reading Company)	Supplemental Reading Resource – High-Impact Tutoring Program	Not to Exceed \$8,720.00 <i>To be funded by the High-Impact Tutoring Grant</i>

Bridges Intervention Math Kits (The Math Learning Center)	Math Resources – High-Impact Tutoring Program	Not to Exceed \$5,868.00 <i>To be funded by the High-Impact Tutoring Grant</i>
Savvas Math Diagnostic & Intervention Kits (Savvas Learning Company)	Math Resources – High-Impact Tutoring Program	Not to Exceed \$3,074.00 <i>To be funded by the High-Impact Tutoring Grant</i>

3.0 OPERATIONS, FACILITIES AND FINANCE

- 3.1 Approve Contract with Ross Haber and Associates, LLC – approve a contract with Ross Haber and Associates, LLC to complete a comprehensive demographic study for the district at a cost of \$4,500.
- 3.2 Approve Contract with School Accounting and Consulting Services – approve a contract with School Accounting and Consulting Services to provide accounting services at a cost of \$115 per hour for onsite and remote services as needed.

4.0 PERSONNEL

- 4.1 Approval of Personnel Agenda – approve the personnel agenda (see Page 11).
- 4.2 Approval of Resolution – approve resolution regarding an administrative leave of employee (see Pages 11 - 12).
- 4.3 Approve the Resolution - approve resolution regarding an administrative leave of employee (see Page 12).

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Todd motioned to adjourn at 6:56 p.m. seconded by Ms. Franco-Herman. Upon call of the question, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jack Trent
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary

4.1 PERSONNEL**A. Resignations/Retirements**

	Location	First	Last	Position	Effective	Reason	Dates of Employment/Notes
1.	VES	Fatima	Mughal	Teacher/Grade 3 TCH.VS.TCHR.03.17	03/29/2024	Resignation	09/01/2020 – 03/28/2024

B. Appointments (Certificated Staff)

	Location	First	Last	Position	Replacing	Degree	Step	Salary	Pro-rated	Dates of Employment/Notes
1.	MHS	Lori	Horton	Teacher/English (Leave Replacement) TCH.HS.ENG.MG.12	Joseph Riccardi	MA	A	\$71,070	Yes	01/02/2024 – 03/01/2024
2.	OHES	Rebecca	Cardinal	Teacher/Grade 1 (Leave Replacement) TCH.OH.TCHR.01.15	Alyssa Mancella	BA	A	\$65,070	Yes	09/01/2023 – 04/26/2024 - <i>Revised</i>

1.1 C. Appointments (Non-Certificated Staff)

	Location	First	Last	Position	Replacing	Step	Salary	Pro-rated	Dates of Employment/Notes
1.	MHS	Mary Preetha	Frank	Paraprofessional AID.HS.TIA.RC.04	Dawn Schroeck	A	\$28,560	Yes	01/03/2024 – 06/30/2024 - <i>Revised</i>

4.2 Resolution Authorizing Administrative Leave of Employee – Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has recommended that employee #6697 be placed on administrative leave with pay, pending an investigation;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds that it is in the best interest of the school district to accept the Superintendent's recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the employee is on administrative leave with pay, effective December 21, 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Superintendent or her designee to take whatever steps are necessary to effectuate the purposes of the resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assistant Board Secretary shall provide said employee with notice of the Board's action as set forth in this Resolution forthwith.

4.3 Resolution Authorizing Administrative Leave of Employee – Approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has recommended that employee #4248 be placed on administrative leave with pay, pending an investigation;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds that it is in the best interest of the school district to accept the Superintendent's recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the employee is on administrative leave with pay, effective December 21, 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Superintendent or her designee to take whatever steps are necessary to effectuate the purposes of the resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assistant Board Secretary shall provide said employee with notice of the Board's action as set forth in this Resolution forthwith.