

## MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION REMOTE MEETING

### ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES Tuesday, January 5, 2021

#### **Call to Order – By Board Secretary Alicia Schauer at 7:33 p.m.**

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 8, 2020 and December 22, 2020. 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.

#### School Election Results

Ms. Schauer, Board Secretary, announced the results of the annual school election of November 3, 2020.

<u>Three Candidates (Three-year Term)</u>	<u>Number of Votes</u>
Christina C. Harris	5,088
Victoria “Cookie” Franco-Herman	4,376
Zelda Spence Wallace	4,359
 <u>One Candidate (One-year Term)</u>	 <u>Number of Votes</u>
Patrick Todd	7,827
 <u>Board Appointed Candidate (One-year Term)</u>	 Appointed at the 11/24/20 Board Meeting
Dr. Antoine Yver	

Ms. Schauer, Board Secretary, swore in the newly-elected Board members, Ms. Harris, Ms. Franco-Herman, Ms. Wallace, Mr. Todd, and Dr. Yver.

#### **ROLL CALL-Via Teleconference**

Phyllis Bursh – Present  
Victoria Franco-Herman – Present  
Christina Harris – Present  
Michael Morack, Jr. – Present  
Richard Specht - Present

Zelda Spence-Wallace - Present  
Shreesh Tiwari – Present  
Patrick Todd - Present  
Dr. Antoine Yver - Present

Also Present: Mary McLoughlin, Superintendent of Schools  
Damian Pappa, Assistant Superintendent  
Kelly Mattis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources  
Alicia M. Schauer, School Business Administrator/Interim Board Secretary  
David Palumbo, Associate School Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary

## **SALUTE THE FLAG**

### **Election of Officers**

Acting as temporary chairperson, Ms. Schauer requested a motion to open nominations for president of the board of education.

A motion was made by Mr. Todd, seconded by Mr. Tiwari to open nominations for president of the board of education.

A motion was made by Dr. Yver to elect Ms. Bursh as president.

A motion was made by Mr. Todd and seconded by Mr. Morack to close the nominations for president.

Upon call of the roll, Ms. Bursh was voted as president unanimously.

Newly appointed Board President, Ms. Bursh, ascended to the chair and conducted the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Bursh requested a motion to open nominations for vice president of the board of education.

A motion was made by Mr. Morack, Jr. and seconded by Dr. Yver to open nominations for vice president of the board of education.

A motion was made by Mr. Morack, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Tiwari to elect Ms. Spence-Wallace as vice president.

A motion was made by Mr. Todd and seconded by Mr. Tiwari to close the nominations for vice president.

Upon call of the roll, Ms. Spence-Wallace was voted as vice president unanimously.

Ms. Bursh read a statement hoping the entire board will work together for the students of the district and the entire school community.

Ms. Spence-Wallace read a statement regarding her and her family's background in the Montgomery community and what inspired her to run for the board. She is looking forward to contributing to create the district's excellence.

**PRESENTATION**

Ms. Gwen Thornton, Field Service Representative with the New Jersey School Boards Association, gave a Powerpoint presentation on School Official Ethics and Board Roles.

There were a couple of discussions regarding the communication of the board with the community.

Dr. Yver discussed referring questions to the board attorney for possible conflicts. He inquired if board members could talk to the board president or superintendent first for cost savings.

Ms. Bursh asked if a disagreement can be discussed in public by the board. Ms. Thornton stated that it could.

Mr. Bursh questioned if there could be a discussion of committees making decisions. Ms. Thornton stated committees can't make decisions. Committees can make only recommendations.

Mr. Specht noted that the committees can't tell anyone to do something. The board as a whole will need to vote on it.

**BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Karen Kevorkian, Montgomery Township resident and Vice President of the MTEA, welcomed all the new board members.

Ms. Jocelyn Pena, Montgomery resident, had two questions. Is the district going hybrid on January 19<sup>th</sup> and is the board going to continue with having one meeting per month? This will allow SEPTA to schedule their meetings and avoid conflicts.

Mr. Craig Buszka, Montgomery High School teacher, stated that during the last meeting he expressed his concerns with the changes being made to the science curriculum. He noted that one of the challenges of an integrated model is that a staff member may not have taught or studied it before. Some caution should be taken with changing the science models, and he would like the board to share the criteria for evaluations of staff members.

Mr. Alex Wolfson stated that he is hopeful that the new board will not follow the path of the board from last year in failing to prepare for the pandemic. Children need to physically be in school.

Mr. Greg Brown, Montgomery resident, echoed Dr. Wolfson's sentiment to open school to full in-person attendance. Data has shown the clear fact that schools are safe.

Ms. Vera Gor, Montgomery resident, stated as a parent of a student who is struggling immensely, she urges the board to reopen schools. She also would ask the board to be more transparent with the results of polls and surveys sent out to parents. The results should be posted on the district website.

Ms. Bursh responded to Ms. Pena that there will only be one meeting per month.

Ms. McLoughlin responded that the district intends to return to in-person learning on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. McLoughlin responded that based on surveys a majority of parents want a return to a hybrid model of learning.

A motion was made by Mr. Morack and seconded by Ms. Franco-Herman to approve agenda items VII through XVIII as follows:

- VII. Appointment of Board Secretary - It is recommended that the Board approve the appointment of Alicia M. Schauer as Board Secretary and that the Board Secretary be authorized to invest district funds and make all deposits for the district.
- VIII. Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.) – In accordance with N.J.A.C. 17:27-3.3 the Board designates Alicia M. Schauer 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.
- IX. 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.
- X. 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."
- XI. 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

XII. 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:

Phyllis Bursh	President
Mary McLoughlin	Superintendent
Alicia M. Schauer	Secretary

In the event the President is unable to sign, Zelda Spence-Wallace, 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: 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

XIII. Regular Board Public Meetings - It is recommended that the Board adopt the attached calendar of Board of Education Meetings. Business Meetings will generally be held the fourth Tuesday of the month beginning at 7:30 p.m. The meetings will be held in the Media Center of Montgomery Upper Middle School (see Page 10).

- XIV. 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.

- XV. Readoption of Textbooks - It is recommended that the Board readopt the existing textbooks for the 2021-2022 school year.

- XVI. 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.

- XVII. 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.

- XVIII. 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**

- 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.
- XIX. Appointments – The Board President will make the following committee assignments for 2021:
- Members of the Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction Committee (ACI);
  - Anti-Racism and Reform Committee (ARRC)
  - Members of the Human Resource Committee (HRC);
  - Members of the Operations, Facilities and Finance Committee (OFF);
  - Members of the Policy and Communications Committee (PCC)
  - Legislative Liaison for the purpose of receiving materials;
  - 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**

Ms. Alex Wolfsen asked if it would be possible to ask parents on the next survey why they chose to stay home instead of selecting the hybrid model.

Ms. Jocelyn Pena, Montgomery resident, inquired of the people who responded to the December survey selected the virtual model instead of the hybrid model because when they go into a hybrid model they are not getting the attention they would normally get.

Ms. Bursh responded that the board will take the information and give it to the individuals working on surveys.

Mr. Tiwari congratulated Ms. Bursh and Ms. Spence-Wallace on their new roles and recognized the other new board members and previously-selected board members.

Mr. Todd thanked everyone who supported their team during their campaign. He is hoping for change within this school district.

Mr. Specht welcomed the new board members and would like some continuity so issues can be monitored on a regular basis. He hopes the new board members provide new thoughts and opinions.

Ms. Franco-Herman echoed the thoughts of Mr. Todd and Ms. Spence-Wallace and thanked the community for their trust in them.

Ms. Harris congratulated Ms. Bursh and Ms. Spence-Wallace along with the new board members and stated she is looking forward to working with everyone. She also thanked the community for their trust in her.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Mr. Morack and seconded by Mr. Todd to convene into Executive session at 9:41 p.m. Upon call of the roll, the motion carried with a unanimous vote recorded.

The Board convened in Executive Session at 9:41 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, 6 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.

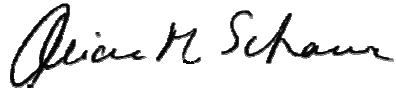
**RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION** – The Board returned from Executive session at 10:47 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Todd motioned to adjourn at 10:47 p.m. seconded by Ms. Franco-Herman. Upon call of the question, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia M. Schauer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Alicia M. Schauer  
Board Secretary

## **APPROVED SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEETINGS**

Following is the **ADOPTED** meeting schedule for the Montgomery Township Board of Education for the year 2021. Generally the Board will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month except in those cases where this date is a holiday, schools are closed or when there is a statutory requirement. Then an alternate day shall be utilized. The meeting place will be the Montgomery Middle School Upper Campus media center unless otherwise noted prior to the scheduled meeting. The public portion of the meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m.

**ADOPTED:** At the Montgomery Township Board of Education Organization Meeting of January 5, 2021.

Tuesday	Business	January 26, 2021
Tuesday	Business	February 23, 2021
Tuesday	Business	March 16, 2021
Tuesday	Business	April 27, 2021
Tuesday	Business	May 25, 2021
Tuesday	Business	June 22, 2021
Tuesday	Business	July 27, 2021
Tuesday	Business	August 24, 2021
Tuesday	Business	September 28, 2021
Tuesday	Business	October 26, 2021
Tuesday	Business	November 23, 2021
Tuesday	Business	December 14, 2021
Tuesday	Organization and Business	January 4, 2022