

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the Thursday, January 7, 2020 7:30 P.M. Organization Meeting

These minutes were formally approved at the February 25, 2020 Business Meeting.

The Montgomery Township Board of Education held an organization meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 in the Upper Middle School media center.

ORGANIZATION MEETING

School Election Results

Mr. Venanzi announced the results of the annual election of November 5, 2019.

<u>Three Candidates (Three-year Term)</u>	<u>Number of Votes</u>
Shreesh Tiwari	2,595
Phyllis Bursh	2,651
Jinesh “Jin” Patel	2,205
<u>One Candidate (Two-year Term)</u>	<u>Number of Votes</u>
Michael J. Morack, Jr.,	3,269
<u>One Candidate (One-year Term)</u>	<u>Number of Votes</u>
Raghib Muhammad	3,075

Board Oath

Newly-elected board members, Mr. Tiwari, Ms. Bursh, Mr. Patel, and Mr. Morack, Jr. all of whom had signed and executed the state required oath for school board members, were sworn into the board by Mr. Venanzi. Mr. Muhammad has decided not to take office due to personal reasons.

Roll Call - The following Board members were present: Phyllis Bursh, Minkyo Chenette, Amy Miller, Michael Morack, Jr., Jinesh Patel, Ranjana Rao, Shreesh Tiwari and Joanne Tonkin (Note: One Vacancy)

Also Present:	Mary McLoughlin, Acting Superintendent
	Damian Pappa, Acting Assistant Superintendent
	Thomas M. Venanzi, Interim Business Administrator/ Board Secretary
	David Palumbo, Associate Business Administrator/ Assistant Board Secretary

Mr. Venanzi 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 January 4, 2019 and January 3, 2020. 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.

Mr. Venanzi then led everyone in the Salute to the Flag.

Mr. Venanzi welcomed all to the organization meeting.

Election of Officers

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

Mr. Morack, Jr. nominated Ms. Chenette. Ms. Chenette accepted the nomination.

Ms. Miller nominated Ms. Tonkin. Ms. Tonkin accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Ms. Bursh and seconded by Mr. Morack, Jr. to close nominations for president.

Upon call of the roll, Ms. Tonkin was voted as president with five members voting in favor and Ms. Chenette, Mr. Morack, Jr. and Mr. Patel voting against.

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

Ms. Tonkin thanked Ms. Chenette for her time and passion involved with being the Board president. Ms. Tonkin thanked the rest of the Board as well and stated she is looking to continue the collaborative process and create unity among the team.

Ms. Tonkin announced that nominations were open for vice president of the board of education.

Mr. Tiwari nominated Ms. Bursh for vice president of the board of education. Ms. Bursh accepted the nomination.

Mr. Morack, Jr. nominated Mr. Patel for vice president of the board of education. Mr. Patel accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Mr. Morack, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Patel to close nominations for vice president.

Upon call of the roll, Ms. Bursh was voted as vice president with five members voting in favor and Ms. Chenette, Mr. Morack, Jr. and Mr. Patel voting against.

A motion was made by Ms. Bursh and seconded by Mr. Patel to approve agenda items VII through XII as follows:

- VII. Appointment of Board Secretary - It is recommended that the Board approve the appointment of Thomas M. Venanzi as Interim Board Secretary and that the Board Secretary be authorized to invest district funds and make all deposits for the district.
- VIII. Official Newspapers for Publication of Legal Notices - It is recommended that the Board approve the designation of The Courier News and/or The Star-Ledger as the newspapers to publish legal notices for the Board of Education.
- IX. 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 and The Trenton Times as the newspapers to receive notices of Board of Education meetings under the "Open Public Meetings Law."
- X. 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

- XI. 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:

Joann Tonkin	President
Mary McLoughlin	Acting Superintendent
Thomas M. Venanzi	Secretary

In the event the President is unable to sign, Phyllis Bursh, 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

- XII. 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 2020-2021:

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:

Thomas M. Venanzi	Board Office
Paul Popadiuk	Montgomery High School
Cory Delgado	Montgomery Middle School (Upper Campus)
Michael Richards	Montgomery Middle School (Lower Campus)
Susan Lacy	Village Elementary School
Kathleen Scotti	Orchard Hill Elementary School

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

A motion was made by Mr. Tiwari and seconded by Ms. Miller to approve agenda item XIII as follows:

- 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).

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

A motion was made by Ms. Miller and seconded by Ms. Rao to approve agenda items XIV through XVII as follows:

- 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 2020-2021 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.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Patel and seconded by Ms. Miller to approve agenda item XVIII as follows:

Each member of the Board read a portion of the code of ethics into record.

- 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.

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

Ms. Tonkin recommended that the committees, liaisons and delegates remain the same for the next few weeks. She would like to have members of the Board email her for their interest in any possible posts. This includes giving the individual who will fill the vacant board position a chance to be a member of a committee. Mr. Venanzi stated the Board could make it part of the interview process.

- XIX. Appointments – The Board President will make the following committee assignments for 2020:

- 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)
- Legislative Liaison for the purpose of receiving materials;
- Board liaisons to the Montgomery Township PTSA;
- Liaison to the Montgomery Township-Rocky Hill Municipal Alliance Committee;
- 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;

- XX. Election of Delegate - It is recommended that the Board of Education elect _____ as delegate to the Somerset County Educational Services Commission and _____ as an alternate delegate.

BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Tonkin thanked Ms. Chenette and the entire Board for their tireless effort to the district. Everyone on the Board will have a voice.

Ms. Rao stated she would like to see a policy change where there is a change in the leadership of the Board each year. Both the president and vice president should change each year. She also stated that full-day kindergarten and later start times are a priority, but they must be sustainable.

Mr. Tiwari stated the Board achieved a lot last year. He would like to see that team effort continue for the coming years.

Ms. Miller stated that she hopes 2020 brings a good team effort with different ideas and positivity. She would like an email blast sent out regarding the vacant Board position and to possibly extend the deadline. The interviews would then start soon after that.

Mr. Scott Mason, President of the MTEA, congratulated Ms. Tonkin as becoming the president of the Board and thanked Ms. Chenette for her service as board president. He also welcomed Mr. Venanzi back as the BA and looks forward to the MTEA's continued collaboration with the Board which has garnered recognition across the state and country. Mr. Mason also stated that the district learning teams are comprised of strong leaders from each building and has never seen more harmony in the district in the 25 years he's been employed here.

Ms. Kathy Sinclair, First Vice President of the MTEA and MTEA Vice President at Orchard Hill Elementary School also spoke of the collaborative effort of the Board and central office administration. She was happy to see many stakeholders have a voice when the full-day kindergarten committee was launched. It was very important to get input from the two kindergarten teachers and preschool teacher involved.

Mr. Jim Dolan, MTEA Vice President at Village Elementary School, spoke of collaborative effort as well. The professional learning communities (PLC) are important as everyone in the room is seen as "educators." The new PLC allows everyone to have a voice and offers the flexibility of meeting with other PLCs. In addition, the minutes are kept electronically and available for all to see.

Mr. David Gordon, MTEA Vice President at the Lower Middle School, stated that collaboration is important, especially when dealing with Social Emotional Learning (SEL.) The Lower Middle School has a flexible schedule which meets its staff members' needs. The schedule was created through the collaboration of the flex schedule committee.

Ms. Karen Kevorkian, MTEA Vice President at the Upper Middle School, noted that she has never seen a Board meeting where the MTEA membership came out to say good things about the Board of Education. This could only happen because of the collaborative effort of the Board and staff. Collaboration is the modern day education because it invites all relevant voices to have an opinion.

Ms. Jennifer Jones, MTEA Vice President at Montgomery High School, stated that collaboration means coming to the best decision for all stakeholders. There needs to be transparency and an open line of communication which creates a healthy work environment. The high school has a solutions committee where members come to meetings with answers instead of problems.

Mr. Adam Warshafsky, Vice President of the APSMT, congratulated Ms. Tonkin and Ms. Bursh for being appointed president and vice president of the Board, respectively. He echoed the thoughts of his MTEA colleagues regarding the collaboration between the Board and staff members. The relationship between the Board and staff is in a much better place as compared to a year ago. This is all due to the collaborative process.

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal at Village Elementary School, thanked the Board for its collaborative efforts, especially in allowing the APSMT to be included in the Board's committee meetings. The APSMT looks forward to the collaboration in the upcoming year to achieve many of the district's initiatives.

Ms. Sadaf Jaffer, Mayor of the Township of Montgomery, stated she is the township's liaison to the Board of Education. Public service is a thankless job; however, the collaboration between the township and the Board of Education has allowed for important steps to bridge the two governments according to Mr. Vincent Delucia of the NJSBA.

Mr. Jack Garhart, 26 Bayberry Lane, Belle Mead, requested the Board go out for referendum for the funding of the full-day kindergarten. He believes the residents should be able to vote on it.

Ms. Marisa Narula, Belle Mead, congratulated the Board of Education for the work they've done over the past year. She thanked Ms. Chenette for her service and looks forward to Ms. Tonkin doing a great job as the new president of the Board. In addition, she is excited about the possibility of adding full-day kindergarten as Montgomery is one of the last three districts in Somerset County not providing it.

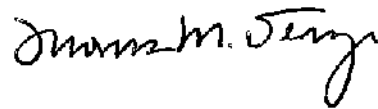
ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Tiwari and seconded by Mr. Morack, Jr. to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Upon call of the question, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas M. Venanzi
Interim School Business Administrator/
Board Secretary

APPROVED SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEETINGS

Following is the **ADOPTED** meeting schedule for the Montgomery Township Board of Education for the year 2020. 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 Montgomery Middle School Upper Campus media center. The public portion of the meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m.

PROPOSED: At the Montgomery Township Board of Education Organization Meeting of January 7, 2020.

Tuesday	Business	January 28, 2020
Tuesday	Business	February 25, 2020
Tuesday	Business	March 24, 2020
Tuesday	Business	April 28, 2020
Tuesday	Business	May 19, 2020
Tuesday	Business	June 23, 2020
Tuesday	Business	July 14, 2020
Tuesday	Business	August 25, 2020
Tuesday	Business	September 29, 2020
Tuesday	Business	October 27, 2020
Tuesday	Business	November 24, 2020
Tuesday	Business	December 15, 2020
Tuesday	Organization and Business	January 5, 2021