

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting
Regular Action Meeting/Public Budget Hearing Minutes
April 30, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Christopher Bell	x	
Paul Brislin, Vice President	x	
Andree Campbell, President	x	
Tasha DeGeorge	x	
Jaime Johnson	x	
Caitln Statkus	x	
Michael Zernhelt	x	

Others Present:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
James Andriac, Superintendent	x	_____
Michael Bussow, SBA/BS	x	_____
Joseph Garcia, Esq., Board Atty.	x via zoom 6:31 p.m.	_____
Dana Berry, Asst. to Bd. Sec.	x	_____

3. FLAG SALUTE - FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE OR PRAYER

4. MISSION STATEMENT - The mission of the Montague Township School District is to provide the best educational experience and opportunities to realize the potential of every child.

5. LEGAL NOTICE - In accordance with the New Jersey Sunshine Law, a legal notice of this meeting has been posted on the official bulletin board at the school and advertised in the New Jersey Herald and the Sunday New Jersey Herald.

Motion to open Executive Session at 6:32 p.m.

Motion Michael Zernhelt 2nd Paul Brislin Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 6:52 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Tasha DeGeorge Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Michael Zernhelt Voice Vote: All in Favor

6. CSA REPORT - James Andriac, CSA - State testing starts on Monday, May 5, 2025. Please have the students at school on time. Our track team has two meets on Thursday and Friday. Thursday is at Sparta and Friday is at Newton. Our FFA students are at the Agriscience Fair at Rutgers to compete. We had one HIB that was founded. We went through the full investigation and discipline was taken according to our handbook. Mr. Andriac thanked Ms. Coppolino and Mr. Romano for all their hard work for the State testing.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Andree Campbell - Both Ms. Campbell and Ms. Statkus attended STEM night. The kids were very excited. Ms. Campbell attended the township committee meeting.

8. SBA REPORT - Presentation on the 2025-2026 Budget

Mr. Bussow gave the public publication to the township. He went over the budget process. Reviewed 2024-2025 grant funded improvements, capital projects and school accomplishments. Discussed 2025-26 budget with detailed revenues and expenditures. Focused on programs, building projects, state aid and tax impact. We have money available to us because we have not utilized our full tax increases the past few years and we are not accessing that this year. We are taking a weighted increase for enrollment increases which we have not taken and are going with a 2% increase so there's an 8% eligible increase that we are leaving on the table from money that we have not asked for in prior years. We are just asking for the enrollment adjustment with a 2% increase and the State allows the \$141,000 adjustment for healthcare which is a portion of the Title 43 program that they have for how we manage our healthcare costs. Our staff contributes to their healthcare and we pay a large part to their healthcare. That increases substantially each year and the State is allowing us to retrieve a little bit of that from the tax levy. The total tax levy is \$7.8 million.

Mr. Andriac stated that more kids will go to HP instead of Tech because we have been working with HP now with our sports. It costs more for students to go to HP than Tech.

Ms. Statkus stated that there is a sizable difference between what the estimated about is and what the tax rate will be and what is unfortunate for the board is that we have to get a budget approved before the assessor has to submit their information so we won't actually know what the effect is going to be on everybody's taxes until the assessor does his job in July. The reason the tax rate has dropped is because according to the State of New Jersey, the value of land in Montague has gone up significantly over the last couple of years so that's why we need to raise more money and taxes. It looks like the rate is dropping but the rate would only drop if we were assessed at the correct amount which the State of New Jersey says we are not.

Mr. Bussow said our budget is based on last October's report to the State. The valuation rate is also based on October's report to the State.

There was a brief discussion about the MD rooms for next year.

Any questions can be directed to Mr. Bussow at budget@montagueschool.org. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE 2025-2026 BUDGET** – At this point of the meeting we invite members of the public to speak on **the budget** only for a maximum period of four minutes by the clock. Please state your name and address before you begin.

Motion to close public comment on the budget

Moved: Tasha DeGeorge

Seconded: Paul Brislin

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

10. ADOPTION OF BUDGET FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

WHEREAS, the Montague Township Board of Education adopted a tentative budget on March 18, 2025, and submitted it to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval, and

WHEREAS, the tentative budget was approved by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools on March 27, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the tentative budget was advertised in the legal section of the New Jersey Herald on April 17, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the final budget was presented to the public during a hearing held at the Montague Township School District, 475 Route 206, Montague, NJ, on April 30, 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Montague Township Board of Education hereby adopts the following final budget for SY 2025-2026:

	General Fund	Special Revenue	Debt Service	Total
2025-2026 Total Expenditures	\$11,210,718.00	\$1,375,049.00	0	\$12,585,767.00
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$ 3,387,510.00	\$1,375,049.00	0	\$ 4,762,559.00
Taxes to be Raised	\$ 7,823,208.00	0	0	\$ 7,823,208.00

Moved: Michael Zernhelt Seconded: Caitlin Statkus Discussion: Mr. Bell asked if the budget included the survey? Mr. Andriac said no it's not a motion it was just seeking approval.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Regular Meeting Minutes and the Executive Minutes of April 9, 2025.

Moved: Tasha DeGeorge Seconded: Jaime Johnson

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
ABSENT								

12. FINANCE

Motion to approve Resolutions F-1 through F-3 listed below:

Moved: Tasha DeGeorge

Seconded: Paul Brislin

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
RECUSE								
ABSENT								

F-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the April 10, 2025 through April 30, 2025 - Bill List below:

Fund 10	\$ 23,770.50
Fund 11	\$ 475,855.40
Fund 12	\$ 9,440.43
Fund 20	\$ 65,514.26
Fund 30	\$ 692,608.31
Fund 60	\$ 5,550.00
Grand Total	\$1,272,738.90

F-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the revised Contract for Educational Services for Student #13958990 reflecting the change from a full time paraprofessional to a part-time paraprofessional.

F-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education accept the potential change order job #24050 from Gilmore Electric, Inc., in the amount of \$12,449.15, to extend wiring from the school to the transportation department's bus shelter. The net effect on the existing contract will be an increase of \$5,157.55.

13. PERSONNEL

Motion to approve Resolutions P-1 through P-2 listed below:

P-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **TAFFY BANGHART**, as a substitute teacher, at the sub rate of \$115.00/day, pending updated criminal history and background check, for the 2024-2025 school year.

P-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **NOEL HEIDEN**, as a substitute nurse, at the sub rate of \$200.00/day, pending criminal history and background check, for the 2024-2025 school year.

Moved: Christopher Bell

Seconded: Michael Zernhelt

Discussion: Mr. Andriac said it's nice to have Ms. Banghart back.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
RECUSE								
ABSENT								

14. BUILDING AND GROUNDS

BG-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the following Request for Use of Facilities or Grounds:

Requested By	Event	Rooms	Date & Time
Montague Seniors	Practice for Senior Olympics	Gym, Playground & Bathrooms	May 30, 2025, June 6, 2025 & June 9, 2025 4:45PM to 5:45PM

Moved: Paul Brislin Seconded: Caitlin Statkus Discussion: Mr. Zernhelt said that it is great we are doing this for the Montague Seniors and best of luck. Ms. Campbell said good luck. Mr. Brislin said the Seniors' competitors have great athletes and our goal is to retain the title.

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
NO								
ABSTAIN								
RECUSE								
ABSENT								

15. ADMINISTRATION

Motion to approve Resolutions A-1 through A-4 as listed below:

Moved: Michael Zernhelt

Seconded: Christopher Bell

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
NO								
ABSTAIN								
RECUSE								
ABSENT								

A-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the cost of providing home instruction for Student ID 100462 in accord with Policy No. 2481.

A-2 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education affirms the Superintendent's decision in HIB Investigation Report #3 -2024-25 for reasons set forth in the Superintendent's report to the board.

A-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the 8th grade field trip to the Columns Museum in Milford, PA at the cost of \$150.00.

A-4 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the participation in ACES Enhanced Renewable Energy Product program for the term 2025-2027 where the district will receive 5% greater than the total of renewable energy required by virtue of the NJ Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

16. PUBLIC SESSION - ANY TOPIC

Public comment is invited on all matters pertaining to the school district. All participants shall be permitted four (4) minutes to speak and shall state their name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate. The board uses the public comment as an opportunity to listen to Citizen concerns, but please be aware that not all issues brought to a board meeting will be resolved this evening.

Motion to open Public Comment at 7:27 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Christopher Bell

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:28 p.m.

Motion Michael Zernhelt 2nd Christopher Bell

Voice Vote: All in Favor

17. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Tasha DeGeorge

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Time of Adjournment: 7:28 p.m.

Next Meeting - May 14, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Berry

DANA BERRY, Assistant to the Board Secretary