

**Montague Township Board of Education Meeting
Regular Action Meeting Minutes
July 9, 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:

James Andriac - CSA

Michael Bussow, SBA/BS

Joseph Garcia, Esq. – Board Atty.

Dana Berry, Adm. Asst. to Bd. Sec.

Present

X

X

X

X

Absent

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.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montague Township Board of Education recess and proceed to executive session to discuss personnel matters and legal issues. Action may or may not be taken.

Motion to open Executive Session at 6:31 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Christopher Bell

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Executive Session at 7:11 p.m.

Motion Michael Zernhelt 2nd Tasha DeGeorge

Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to reopen Regular Meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Motion Paul Brislin 2nd Christopher Bell

Voice Vote: All in Favor

7. CSA REPORT - James Andriac, CSA - Summer school has started and going well. We are operating from 8AM to 12PM. Welcome Back packets will be sent out to parents no later than August 15th. Please check the website for clubs and sports that we are offering for the coming school year. Our office is open from 8AM to 1PM Monday through Thursday and available by email Monday through Friday. We will be putting in 2 pickleball courts and a new stationary basketball court in the back area where pick up and drop off is. All school supplies will be provided by the school for every student. The new PreK time will be from 8AM to 2:30PM. For parents who have students starting at 9AM we will be providing a holding area in the gym for the students until 8:45AM. We will be doing the same for the PreK students who will be going home with siblings so from 2:30PM to 3:05PM they will be able to stay with their siblings and take the bus home. PreK kids who go to aftercare will also be allowed to go to the holding area until 3:30PM. Starting all of our students is not an option because of our high school runs. This change is to help with the congestion on 206.

8. SBA REPORT - Michael Bussow, SBA - Gave update on PreK construction.- Furniture being delivered early August. Our facilities department has been very busy preparing the classrooms. Some teachers are switching rooms to better utilize space. Thank you to the Montague Fire Department for providing water to run the construction equipment. We are leasing two (2) buses. We had 2 quotes come in. They were very close. We are going with First Hope bank at 4.59% for five (5) years. It is less expensive to lease the buses than it is to rent them.

9. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Andree Campbell - Attended both the PreK and 8th grade graduations and both were wonderful.

10. 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 June 11, 2025.

Moved: Paul Brislin

Seconded: Caitlin Statkus:

Roll Call	Bell	Brislin	Campbell	DeGeorge	Johnson	Statkus	Zernhelt	Total
YES	x	x	x		x	x	x	6
NO								
ABSTAIN				x				1
ABSENT								

11. PUBLIC SESSION – AGENDA ITEMS

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 7:19 p.m.

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Tasha DeGeorge Voice Vote: All in Favor

3 people online

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:20 p.m.

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Tasha DeGeorge Voice Vote: All in Favor

12. FINANCE AND INSURANCE

Motion to approve Resolutions F-1 through F-16 as listed below:

Moved: Paul Brislin

Seconded:Jaime Johnson

Discussion: Mr. Bell wanted it noted that F-14 was only a 3% to 4% increase which hasn't happened in the last 2 years. It is a modest increase. Ms. Statkus asked if we know what the total value is for F-6. Mr. Bussow said it is about \$115,000 because we are holding that check.

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

F-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the June 12, 2025 through June 30, 2025 - Bill's List listed below:

Fund 10	\$ 23,772.02
Fund 11	\$ 802,299.71
Fund 12	\$ 11,500.00
Fund 20	\$ 107,182.56
Fund 30	\$ 499,057.42
Fund 60	\$ 41,640.65
Fund 95	\$ 328.54
Grand Total	\$1,485,780.90

F-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the July 1, 2025 through July 9, 2025 - Bill's List listed below:

Fund 11	\$66,707.36
Fund 20	\$ 101.95
Fund 60	\$ 3,741.83
Grand Total	\$70,551.14

F-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Board Secretary's Report and the Treasurer of School Monies Report for the Month of **May 2025** pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(C)3 and 4.

F-4 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the May 31, 2025 transfer report.

F-5 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education authorize the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary to pay supplementary bill lists and payroll which shall become due on or before June 30, 2025 including all year-end payables; to proceed with all necessary adjustments and transfers to close the books for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, as well as any and all entries and actions for the opening for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, including but not limited to the issuance and/or cancellation of purchase orders, transfers, compliance with the Public Contracts Law and other such actions as may be required by statute, code and Board Policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorize the SBA/Board Secretary to process and issue the payment of bills and claims between Board meetings during the month of July and August 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all of these actions shall be presented to the Board at its next meeting for final approval.

F-6 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education authorize the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary to cancel, if any, all outstanding, stale dated checks issued in fiscal year 2024–2025.

F-7 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Tuition Contract Agreement between **Mount Carmel Guild Academy** and the Montague Board of Education for **Student ID#100628** for the 2025-2026 school year commencing July 7, 2025 with an annual tuition charge of \$63,000 (200 days at a per diem rate of \$315) and \$49,200 for extraordinary services (200 days at a per diem rate of \$246).

F-8 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Tuition Contract Agreement between the **Shepard School** and the Montague Board of Education for **Student ID#100516** for the 2025-2026 school year commencing September 2, 2025 with an annual tuition charge of \$60,831.03 (183 days at a per diem rate of \$332.41).

F-9 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Contract of Educational Services - ESY25 between the Sussex County Educational Services Commission and the Board of Education of Montague Township for **Student ID#100626** to attend the ESY25 program at **Northern Hills** commencing July 14, 2025 until August 12, 2025 with a tuition fee of \$11,003.00 and paraprofessional fee of \$5,991.00 (\$16,994 total cost for ESY25) .

F-10 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approves the SFA to SFA Vended Meals Contract between Montague Township Board of Education and High Point Regional Board of Education from July 1, 2025 until June 30, 2026 at the cost of \$2.40 for breakfast and \$4.00 for lunch at a total cost of \$230,400.

F-11 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the nutrition program for full price breakfast of \$3.00 and full price lunch of \$4.50 for the 2025-2026 school year.

F-12 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the order of Discovery Education Social Studies Techbook (start date 09/01/25 through 08/31/26)in the amount of \$6,526.80.

F-13 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Savvas Learning Company Quote #Q-177415 dated July 1, 2025 in the amount of \$44,549.54 (3 year subscription for K-8 enVision math).

F-14 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the requisition for taxes for the Montague Township School for the 2025-26 school year.

MONTH	PAYMENT AMOUNT
July 2025	\$616,254.25
August 2025	\$616,254.25
September 2025	\$616,254.25
October 2025	\$616,254.25
November 2025	\$616,254.25
December 2025	\$616,254.25
January 2026	\$616,254.25
February 2026	\$616,254.25
March 2026	\$616,254.25
April 2026	\$616,254.25
May 2026	\$616,254.25
June 2026	\$616,254.25

F-15 RESOLUTION APPROVING RFO (Request for Quote) FOR THE LEASE PURCHASE FINANCING

WHEREAS, the Montague Township Board of Education has determined to lease purchase finance the acquisition of two (2) new school buses and enter into a Lease Purchase Agreement for an amount not to exceed \$289,049.19. The term requested was for funding to an escrow account, on or before August 1, 2025, with five (5) equal annual payments commencing on August 1, 2025 and a balloon payment of 30% of the cost of equipment due the end of the fifth year; and

WHEREAS, the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission ("HCESC") Lease Purchase Advisory Service, has served as financial advisor to conduct a RFO (Request for Quote) for the lease purchase financing to pay for the acquisition of two (2) new school buses and a total of two (2) bids were received on June 18, 2025; and

WHEREAS, upon review of the bids, the HCESC - Lease Purchase Advisory Service, recommends the award be made to First Hope Bank, N.A. at their rate of 4.59%. (a copy of the RFO is on file in the Board office);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education accept and award the lease purchase financing to First Hope Bank, N.A., for the total amount of \$289,049.19 with the interest rate of 4.59%.

F-16 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF THE VEHICLES AND ACCEPTING THE FIRST HOPE BANK LEASE

Lessee: Montague Township Board of Education

Principal Amount Expected to be Financed: Two Hundred Eighty-Nine Thousand Forty-Nine Dollars and 14/100 (\$289,049.14).

WHEREAS, the Lessee named above (the "Lessee") is a political subdivision of the State of New Jersey (the "State") and is duly organized and existing pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the State;

WHEREAS, pursuant to applicable law, the Lessee acting through its governing body (the "Governing Body") is authorized to acquire and lease personal property necessary to the functions or operations of the Lessee;

WHEREAS, the Governing Body hereby finds and determines the execution of the lease-purchase agreement ("Equipment Lease") in the principal amount not exceeding the amount stated above (the "Principal Amount") for the purpose of acquiring the equipment described generally below (the "Equipment") and to be described more specifically in Exhibit A, Description of Equipment, attached to the Equipment Lease, is appropriate and necessary to the functions and operations of the Lessee;

Brief Description of Equipment: **Two (2) new school buses**

WHEREAS, First Hope Bank, A National Banking Association (the "Lessor") is expected to act as the Lessor under the Equipment Lease;

WHEREAS, the Lessee may pay certain capital expenditures in connection with the Equipment prior to its receipt of proceeds of the Equipment Lease ("Lease Purchase Proceeds") for such expenditures, and such expenditures are not expected to exceed the Principal Amount; and

WHEREAS, the Lessee hereby declares its official intent to be reimbursed for any capital expenditures made for the Equipment after adoption of this resolution but prior to the issuance of the Equipment Lease from the Lease Purchase Proceeds.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Montague Township Board of Education ("Governing Board of the Lessee") as follows:

Section 1. The Lessee hereby determines that it has critically evaluated the financing alternatives and that entering into the Equipment Lease and financing the acquisition of the Equipment thereby is in the best interests of the Lessee.

Section 2. The Lessee is hereby authorized to acquire and install the Equipment and is hereby authorized to finance the Equipment by entering into the Equipment Lease. Any action taken by the Lessee in connection therewith is hereby ratified and confirmed.

Section 3. Either one or both of the School Business Administrator or the Board President (each an "Authorized Representative") acting on behalf of the Lessee is hereby authorized to negotiate, enter into, execute, and deliver one or more Equipment Lease in substantially the form set forth in the document presently before the Governing Body, which document is available for public inspection at the office of the Lessee. Each Authorized Representative acting on behalf of the Lessee is hereby authorized to negotiate, enter into, execute, and deliver such other agreement or documents relating to the Equipment Lease (including, but not limited to, escrow agreements) as the Authorized Representative deems necessary and appropriate.

Section 4. By a written instrument signed by any Authorized Representative, said Authorized Representative may designate specifically identified officers or employees of the Lessee to execute and deliver agreements and documents relating to the Equipment Lease on behalf of the Lessee.

Section 5. The aggregate original principal amount of the Equipment Lease shall not exceed the Principal Amount and shall bear interest as set forth in the Equipment Lease and the Equipment Lease shall contain such options to purchase by the Lessee as set forth therein.

Section 6. The Lessee's obligations under the Equipment Lease shall be subject to annual appropriation or renewal by the Governing Body as set forth in each Equipment Lease, and the Lessee's obligations under the Equipment Lease shall not constitute indebtedness of the Lessee under the laws of the State.

Section 7. It is hereby determined that the acquisition of the Equipment is permitted under the laws governing the Lessee and is essential to the efficient operation of the Lessee.

Section 8. The Governing Body of the Lessee anticipates that the Lessee may pay certain capital expenditures in connection with the Equipment following adoption of this resolution but prior to the receipt of the Lease Purchase Proceeds for the Equipment. The Governing Body of the Lessee hereby declares the Lessee's official intent to use the Lease Purchase Proceeds to reimburse itself for such Equipment expenditures. This section of the resolution is adopted by the Governing Body of the Lessee for the purpose of establishing compliance with the requirements of Section 1.150-2 of Treasury Regulations. This section of this resolution does not bind the Lessee to make any expenditure, incur any obligation, or proceed with the acquisition of the Equipment.

Section 9. The Lessee covenants that it will comply with all requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, (the "Code") necessary to ensure that the interest portion of rental payments due under the Equipment Lease will be excluded from gross income under Section 103(a) of the Code. The Lessee reasonably expects it will not issue more than \$10,000,000 of tax-exempt obligations (other than "private activity bonds" that are not "qualified 501(c)(3) bonds") during the calendar year in which each of the Equipment Lease is issued and hereby designates each Equipment Lease as a qualified tax-exempt obligation for purposes of Section 265(b) of the Code. The Authorized Representative is further authorized to take such actions and execute such documents as may be necessary to ensure the continued status of the interest portion of the rental payments due on the Equipment Lease authorized by this resolution as excludable from gross income for federal income tax purposes pursuant to Section 103(a) of the Code.

Section 10. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption and approval.

13. PERSONNEL

Motion to approve Resolutions P-1 through P-15 as 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								
ABSENT								

P-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education **rescind Resolution P-8** on the June 11, 2025 agenda and approve **JOSEPH SCHLENKER**, as a substitute bus driver at the rate of \$32/hour, pending background check and review of Driver History Abstract, for the 2025-26SY, effective June 30, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education **rescind Resolution P-14** on the June 11, 2025 agenda and approve **MICHAEL D'AMORE**, as School Security Guard for the Summer Extended School Year/Learning Acceleration Program commencing June 30, 2025 to July 31, 2025 up to 4 hours a day for 20 days to be paid at an hourly rate based off his current salary.

P-3 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **AMANDA BERNSTEIN**, as a part-time Paraprofessional, at Step C, pending criminal history and background check, effective August 26, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-4 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **LOUANN FORRER**, as a full time bus driver at Step R, pending background check and review of Driver History Abstract, for the 2025-26SY, effective on or about August 26, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-5 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Board of Education approve movement on the salary guide for the following staff members for the 2025-2026 school year with new salary and step:

Staff Member	Previous Step and Salary	New Step and Salary
Katlyn Vallis	BA+15/C - \$65,000	MA/D - \$69,000
Danielle Christmann	BA/H - \$74,000	BA+15/I - \$77,000
Kayte Snyder	BA+15/J - \$79,000	MA/K - \$83,000

P-6 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the appointment of the following staff members to participate in the School Improvement Panel for the 2025-2026 school year. (The school improvement committee is mandated by the State of New Jersey (N.J.A.C 18A:6-120) and serves to ensure, oversee, and support the implementation of the district's evaluation, professional development, and mentoring policies at the school level.)

- James Andriac, Superintendent
- Alicia Citro, Vice Principal
- Jennifer Battikha, Teacher
- Stacey Blasdel, Teacher
- Samantha Frost, Social Worker
- Elizabeth Palazzo, Teacher
- Darah Pinzone, Guidance Counselor

P-7 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, appoint **ALICIA CITRO, VICE PRINCIPAL**, as the Anti-Bullying Coordinator for the Montague Township School District for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-8 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, appoint **MICHAEL D'AMORE**, as the School Safety Specialist for the Montague Township School District for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-9 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, recognize **MICHAEL D'AMORE**, as an authorized substitute teacher as Mr. D'Amore holds a valid New Jersey Substitute Certificate and can serve as a substitute within Montague Township School when needed.

P-10 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, appoint **MARIA COSTA**, as the Truancy Officer for the Montague Township School District for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-11 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education, recognizes **TROOPER SHAWN COERTS**, as the School Resource Officer for the Montague Township School District for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-12 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approves all certified teaching staff in the Montague Township School District as providers of Home Instruction for the 2025-2026 school year.

P-13 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **ANDREA RETTING**, as Maternity Leave Replacement Teacher, at Step BA/E, pending criminal history and background check, effective August 26, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-14 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **HALLIE ARMSTRONG**, as a part-time Paraprofessional, at Step C, pending criminal history and background check, effective August 26, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

P-15 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education approve **AMBER BOCAI**, as a part-time Paraprofessional, at Step C, pending criminal history and background check, effective August 26, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

14. ADMINISTRATION

Motion to approve Resolutions A-1 through A-2 as listed below:

Moved: Christopher Bell		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								

A-1 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Montague Township Board of Education adopt and approve the submission of the Montague Township School District's Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program for the 2025-2026 school year, including the LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs, to the County Superintendent.

A-2 BE IT RESOLVED, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Montague Township Board of Education approve the Renewal Service Agreement between E2E Exchange and Montague Township for the 2025-26SY.

15. PUBLIC SESSION

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 7:24 p.m.

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Jaime Johnson Voice Vote: All in Favor

Motion to close Public Comment at 7:25 p.m.

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

16. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Reminder - School Board Petition due to County Clerk's Office by July 28, 2025 by 4PM
- b. Board members to finish their part of Superintendent Evaluation - Dana Berry said that an email was sent to Board members
- c. Board/District Goals for 2025-26SY

17. NEW BUSINESS - Dana Berry thanked KJ Feury, RN/Injury Prevention Specialist of Morristown Medical Center for donating 10 new bicycle helmets for our preschoolers.

Mr. Brislin asked about the bear costume. Mr. Bussow said we have funds leftover from the 2020-2021 so we should be able to tap into that for the costume and for the digital sign.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Christopher Bell 2nd Paul Brislin Voice Vote: All in Favor
Time of Adjournment: 7:28 p.m.

Next board meeting: August 13, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Dana Berry

DANA BERRY
Administrative Assistant to the Board Secretary