

**School Board Minutes**  
**Montpelier Public School District #14**  
**214 7<sup>th</sup> Ave**  
**Montpelier, ND 58472**  
**January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Tony Roorda, Brock Naze, Robert Froehlich, Abram Valenta, Lynn Boom, and Wade Dally. Absent: Scott Harms.

**Also Present:** Superintendent Mr. Phil Leitner, Principal Mrs. Sara Wilson and Business Manager Amy Maurer.

**Visitors:** Mrs. T. Kramer, and Mrs. E. Fehr.

**Call to Order:** President Roorda called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

**Agenda:** Valenta made a motion, seconded by Boom, to add Transportation and HB1251 to the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Consent Agenda:** Boom made a motion, seconded by Froelich, to approve the consent agenda which included the following:

- a) Approval of the bills and financial reports, as presented.
- b) Approval of the minutes from the December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 regular meeting, correcting the Stutsman County Spelling Bee date to February 15<sup>th</sup>.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Superintendent's Report:** Mr. Leitner reported:

- Building and Grounds
  - The new furniture for the learning center has been delivered. The total cost of the new furniture was \$15,534 and was paid by the special education unit.
  - Infinity has started work on adding insulation to the bus garage.
  - Core Facility Solutions has been contacted to do a free building needs assessment and once that is complete we will begin looking at prioritizing building maintenance and improvement options.
- Athletic/Extracurricular
  - The drone racing program is getting closer to being a reality. We are exploring a partnership with the James Valley Tech Center and other area schools. By doing so we believe that we have a possibility of getting grants with the goal of having significantly reduced startup costs for the first year of the program.
- Policy
  - An recommended promotion and retention policy will be discussed with teaching staff during the professional development on January 23 and after that a proposed policy to the policy committee.

- A new required policy related to the administrative rules set by DPI (based on state law) on critical race theory will be presented at the next policy committee.
- Finance
  - NDDPI is looking at changing the way Title I funding is allocated. Many schools are concerned with the inequities in the plan for some school districts. If this plan was in place for the current school year Montpelier's funds would have been reduced from \$54,624 to \$0.
  - At the board retreat the board asked how mill levy increases could affect taxpayers. Several versions of increases and their estimated impact on taxpayers were reviewed. It is important to note that we are still in the preliminary stages of identifying our budget priorities and a final mill levy rate will not be known until September.
- General School Business
  - We are waiting for the James River Special Ed Unit to finalize their back to school professional development. Once that is finalized and further discussions with staff are held, we will have a calendar recommendation for the board.

**PK-12 Principal Report:** Mrs. Wilson reported:

- The high school has concluded semester 1. More students were on the honor roll 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter than 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.
- Currently policy states that eligibility will be run every Monday morning before noon. Mrs. Wilson is interpreting that as the first day of the school week even if that is, for example, a Tuesday.
- She and Mrs. Haugen attended CPI training which focuses on de-escalating behaviors and the appropriate use of physical holds if a student is a danger to themselves or others.
- January is a busy month with NWEA testing to measure student growth for elementary and high school students.
- Mrs. Bear has been awarded a grant through the ND Department of Agriculture. She purchased an aquaponics plant growing kit and will begin science lessons using it soon.
- Bio Girls is starting in February. Girls and their mentors will focus on positive messages. It is anticipated that 15 elementary girls will participate. Four teachers, one substitute teacher, and Mrs. Wilson will be mentors.
- Hess Corporation has donated Hess Toy Trucks and STEM Education kits to every elementary school in ND. We will receive 24 sets of trucks and seven STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art math) activities aligned with the trucks for grades K-8.

**Driver's Education:** Valenta made a motion, seconded by Naze, to approve hiring James Bear to teach the driver's education program this summer for a salary of \$4000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

**Pledged Securities:** Ms. Maurer reviewed with the board the securities pledged by Unison Bank. In addition to \$250,000 FDIC, as of 01-03-2023, Unison has pledged \$1,208,298.75 in securities to cover our deposits.

**Virtual Learning/Storm Make Up Days:** According to the current virtual learning plan, there would be two days still available to be taught virtually and the rest would need to be made up in person. The days left in the calendar to make up days are February 20<sup>th</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup>. The possibility of adding more

storm make-up days to next year's calendar was brought up. There is a concern that we could have another 3-day snow storm. Parent and staff surveys both came out strongly in favor of virtual days being used rather than in-person make-up days. The intent is to uphold the expectation of academic rigor on virtual learning days. Naze made a motion, seconded by Dally, to approve removing the cap on the number of virtual days that can be used for the 2022-2023 school year. The motion carried unanimously. Putting a plan into policy was discussed.

**Teachers Letter of Intent to Negotiate:** Valenta made a motion, seconded by Boom, to approve the teacher's intent to negotiate. The motion carried unanimously.

**Return to Learning Plan and Continuity of Service Plan:** As part of the ESSER funding requirements this plan must be approved semi-annually. There are no changes from last time. Froehlich made a motion, seconded by Dally, to approve reauthorizing the Return to Learning Plan and Continuity of Service Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

**Transportation:** The current state school funding formula is based heavily on student population. Some potential open enroll students did not apply this fall due to the buses in their area being full. Mr. Wright said he would be willing to get a CDL which would allow him to drive a larger bus on his route. The board could still reconsider whether to take the 14-passenger bus that is ordered and due to be delivered this summer if they thought a larger bus was needed instead. One of the dealers who bid on the last bus said if we do take the bus, it should be easy to resell if needed since the delivery dates are typically so far out and they are in demand. There is a new larger bus available for purchase that could be delivered this summer for about \$120,000. The dealer of that bus said he would wait two weeks for our board to decide. After discussion, the board decided that the transportation committee should meet to look closer at the bus routes and discuss possible solutions.

**House Bill 1251:** ND House Bill 1251 proposes to require schools with fewer than 425 students to consolidate superintendents. Mr. Leitner estimates that the amount Montpelier would be allowed to contribute to a shared superintendent according to the proposal would be \$25,000.00. After discussion, Boom made a motion, seconded by Valenta, to send a letter to the district's legislators in opposition to the bill. The motion carried unanimously. Talking points that were discussed included: 1) Loss of local control 2) The duties and cost of the superintendent would then be spread to other personnel 3) The need for an on-site manager 4) The impracticality of combining multiple small districts over large geographical areas. A letter will be drafted and emailed to the board members to review.

The negotiations seminar is February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bismarck.  
The next board meeting is scheduled for February 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

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Tony Roorda, Board President

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Amy Maurer, Business Manager

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Approval Date