

**DRAFT**

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MEETING OF THE  
MONTPELIER BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

January 17, 2018  
MINUTES

Minutes Approved:

Present

Board: Bridget Asay, Becky Bowen, Michele Braun, Tina Muncy, Jim Murphy, Peter Sterling (arr. 6:20 p.m.)  
Administration: Superintendent Brian Ricca, Principal Mike McRaith  
Student: Omeed Fallahi  
Public: Elmira Behzadikia, Michelle Lesnak, Anna Sarquiz, Ron Sarquiz, and others  
Absent: Steve Hingtgen

**Item I – Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. Chair Braun took time to acknowledge the tragic event occurring on the Montpelier High School campus the previous day and to express deep gratitude to School Resource Officer, Corporal Matt Knisley, for his effective work and the entire Montpelier Police Department for helping the administration to secure the building to keep the faculty, staff and students safe.

**Item II – Public Comment** None.

**Item III – Consent Agenda**

Superintendent Ricca requested the addition of a resignation to the consent agenda.

- **Approval of Warrants** for Payroll & Accounts Payable for February 2, 2018 (Limitations Policy 2.4)
- **Approval of Resignation**

Ms. Asay moved, seconded by Ms. Muncy, to approve the consent agenda including Warrant 16 dated February 1, 2018 in the amount of \$694,592.66 and the resignation of Director of Facilities Thom Wood. Motion carried unanimously, Mr. Sterling absent.

**Item IV – Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication and Support to the Board**

- Discuss with Racial Justice Alliance

Club advisor Mary Ellen Solon and members of the Racial Justice Alliance presented their proposal urging board members to join them in raising the Black Lives Matter flag at Montpelier High School and keeping it up on the flagpole until the American flag alone acknowledges the worth and dignity of black lives. Board members thanked the students for their work and courage. Ms. Bowen read a prepared resolution (copy attached). Ms. Bowen moved, seconded by Mr. Murphy, to implement the resolution directing the superintendent and high school principal to fly the Black Lives Matter flag on the high school flagpole on school days during the month of February. Motion carried unanimously.

Student Joelyn Mensah inquired as to the board's hesitancy for agreeing to fly the flag for the entire time requested rather than just for the approved time of Black History Month. Ms. Bowen acknowledged an unawareness of the breadth of the students' request before the resolution was prepared and suggested the Board readdress in March the possibility of keeping the flag aloft. Ms. Muncy concurred, saying it was an understanding issue. Following discussion, there was consensus to revisit the length of time for flying the Black Lives Matter flag at MHS upon students' return from winter break in March.

**Item V – Executive Session**

- Motion for Approval for Executive Session for the Purpose of Contract Negotiations

Minutes of Board Meeting  
January 17, 2018

Mr. Murphy moved that the Board find that discussing contract negotiations in open session would put the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Ms. Asay seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 6:40 p.m.

- Motion to Move to Executive Session for the Purpose of Contract Negotiations

Mr. Murphy moved that the Board enter into Executive Session in accordance with 1 VSA §313 to discuss contract negotiations. Ms. Asay seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 6:40 p.m. Montpelier Roxbury board members Lisa Frost and Ryan Zajac were invited to attend the session. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to leave Executive Session at 7:06 p.m.

**Item VI – Adjourn**

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:07 p.m.

Heather Michaud  
Recorder

January 17, 2018  
Montpelier Board of School Commissioners  
Resolution to raise the Black Lives Matter flag  
February 2018

The Montpelier Board of School Commissioners is committed to making our schools inclusive, to combating institutional racism, and to working toward equity for every student. We also recognize, as our own students have courageously shown and told us, that the experience of African-American students in our schools is not equitable.

Student advocacy and leadership by the Racial Justice Alliance have been critical to increasing awareness and initiating change. This important work has become part of our curriculum and student experience, through classes, trainings, faculty in-service, a student assembly, and the student-led Race against Racism.

The Board's decision to fly the Black Lives Matter flag at the high school is part of this ongoing process of increasing cultural awareness in our community and ensuring that we are supporting every student. It signals our commitment to equity. It is part of our ongoing work of adjusting our curriculum to acknowledge, discuss, and begin to remedy systemic racism. We know that flying this flag will prompt difficult discussions and a range of responses in the community. Those conversations are a necessary part of the work of educating students.

We echo our students in saying that we make this decision to fly the Black Lives Matter flag *with love in our hearts and courage in our voices, and we reject any purported connections to violence or hate*. Our students are not motivated by hostility toward others; only by a desire for respect for every student in our community, and the Board shares this desire.

The Board of School Commissioners directs the superintendent and high school principal to fly the Black Lives Matter flag on the high school flagpole on school days during the month of February.