

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 19, 2017

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to notice sent to each member.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Jeffrey Monge, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams, Mrs. Nancy Zuena

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Sandra Paul, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Anne Hart

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Paul Griggs, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Minneci read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the following minutes be adopted:

DISCUSSION:

None

October 10, 2017 – worksession and October 17, 2017 – regular meeting

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

October 10, 2017 and October 17, 2017 – executive sessions

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Williams, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Zuena

MOTION CARRIED

COMMUNICATIONS:

REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Request from the Township of Union Education Foundation, Inc. to use Jefferson School cafeteria and gymnasium for the Second Annual Pizza Tasting Contest to be held on March 16, 2018 (with a snow date of March 23, 2018) from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – SUSAN ALSWANG

Request for unpaid non-FMLA medical leave from Susan Alswang, French teacher-Union High School, from December 1, 2017 and with a return date of January 2, 2018.

REQUEST FOR PAID LEAVE – CARDINALE

Request for paid medical leave of absence from Louis Cardinale, custodian-Union High School from July 24, 2017 and with a return date of January 3, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – COLLINS

Letter of resignation from Raquel Collins, paraprofessional-Kawameeh Middle School, effective December 16, 2017.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – DENNING

Request for maternity leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Noa Denning, speech correction/language specialist-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School from April 24, 2018 and with a return date of October 22, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION - DONOHUE

Letter of resignation from Mary Juliet Donohue, paraprofessional-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, effective January 16, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – JAKOSITZ

Request for paid intermittent FMLA/NJFLA leave from Cathy Jakositz, resource room teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, from November 28, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – LEIBROCK

Request for maternity leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Laura Leibrock, science teacher-Union High School from March 16, 2018 and with a return date of September 1, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – NUFRIO

Request for paid maternity leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Christina Nufrio, teacher-Washington Elementary School, from March 26, 2018 and with a return date of June 11, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – WHITFORD

Request for maternity leave and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Lauren Whitford, math teacher-Kawameeh Middle School, from February 2, 2018 and with a return date of June 1, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – ROSA

Request for paid maternity leave from Lisa Rosa, special services teacher-Battle Hill Elementary School, from March 19, 2018 and with a return date of May 2, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE - VENDOLA

Request for paid FMLA/NJFLA leave from Ronda Vendola, paraprofessional-Burnet Middle School, from January 2, 2018 and with a return date of February 12, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DENNIS

Letter of resignation from Shonda Dennis, part-time education clerk-special education-Hamilton School, effective January 4, 2018.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – DELLANO

Request for unpaid intermittent FMLA followed by possible consecutive FMLA leave from Paul Dellano Jr., math teacher-Burnet Middle School, from January 2, 2018 through June 30, 2018.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – SCOTTO

Request for extension of unpaid non-FMLA/non-NJFLA maternity leave from Jaclyn Scotto, English teacher-Union High School, new return date of September 1, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION - PAPILLON

Letter of resignation from Pierre Papillon, part-time bus driver-transportation, effective February 9, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION - LUNA

Letter of resignation from Carolina Luna, Spanish teacher-Washington Elementary School, effective February 13, 2018.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – HOUSE

Request for extension of FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently)/non-FMLA/non-NJFLA from Danielle House, teacher-Hannah Caldwell Elementary School, new return date of May 1, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE – GRATO

Request for paid maternity/unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Nikki Grato, speech correction/language specialist-Kawameeh and Burnet Middle Schools, from February 26, 2018 with a return date of October 1, 2018.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF LEAVE – PARKHURST

Request for extension of unpaid non-FMLA/non-NJFLA maternity leave from Jennifer Parkhurst, school counselor-Connecticut Farms Elementary School, with a new return date of May 1, 2018.

REQUEST FOR INTERMITTENT LEAVE – MANCINELLI

Request for intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Lynn Mancinelli, library media specialist-Franklin and Washington Elementary Schools, from December 20, 2017 through December 20, 2018.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE - TUOHY

Request for paid maternity and unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (concurrently) from Vanessa Tuohy, school social worker-Union High School, from January 16, 2018 and with a return date of May 29, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION - STANCO

Letter of resignation, for purposes of retirement, from Eugenia Stanco-Jefferson School, effective January 31, 2018.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION – DEEGAN

Letter of resignation from Andrew Deegan, math teacher-Burnet Middle School, effective January 8, 2018.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Mr. Tatum stated we have two retirees here tonight. Mr. Benaquista stated we have two retirees who will be retiring as of December 31st and January 1st. Mrs. Jarossi currently is in Union High School as a library media specialist – she joined us February 2007. I am sure she had many years in education besides us. I got to see her in action when I was at the high school and she helped the District a lot at Union High School.

Mr. Tatum stated I would like to congratulate one of our retirees. Any time a person retires, it is a separation from us and move on to bigger and better things. The one thing I like to do is to have our retirees come back and we have substitute vacancies. Congratulations and all the best.

Mr. Benaquista stated Barbara Perska – she is at Washington Elementary School and she started with us November 23, 1992. She is an ESL teacher with us and all our teachers look up

to her for direction, guidance, for her expertise. I did not get to work with Barbara but I have heard a tremendous amount of positive things about her. You did a great job for our kids and we thank you for that.

Mr. Tatum stated one thing I do know about Barbara, when I was principal at Jefferson how much of a mentor she was to those teachers. I always heard her name in a positive way and that is really saying something for the commitment that teachers we have in this District and the ones who leave have made to our students and our staff and I want to thank you for your service and continued help. Again, there are sub applications if you decide to come back after 180 days. We will certainly welcome you back.

Mrs. Perska stated I would like to thank you and the Board for these wonderful 25 years. I really enjoyed it.

Mr. McDowell stated on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank both you ladies. It takes a lot to be a teacher so thank you for all your services.

Mr. Tatum stated I am going to call up our auditors for the presentation which will be followed by a few highlights and events as we move forward in our school year.

Presentation of Financial Report by Auditors – Nisivoccia LLP (December 19th)

Ray Sarinelli stated I'm here with Kathi Mantell, senior consulting partner. Last year John Mooney spent a lot of time reviewing the financial statements and how to improve some of the accounts that had a lot of activity over the past few years. We were happy to see that you had taken our suggestions and a lot of work was done and our prior year recommendations were all remediated with corrective action and taken care of.

Tonight I will quickly go over the audit and spend some time talking about the general fund and general fund balance. It is important that you control what goes into the budget.

The CAFR, your audit book, is broken down into four sections. The financial section is where we want to spend most of the time is the "C" schedules. "C" Schedules are your revenues on a budgetary basis. This is what you control and it gives you a very accurate picture of what is going on. You see that the total fund balance is \$21,154,407 - \$744,000 over last year. The fund balance is broken down to different categories. I will spend a little time going over each category and what it means to the District.

Capital Reserve - \$7.5 million – capital reserve is used to appropriate capital funds. When you have large projects, funds can be appropriated from capital reserve and last year you had a high school boiler project and that is a perfect example of what the capital reserve should be used for.

There is big fluctuation from last year to this year. You used \$3.492 million and that was appropriated in the budget for projects. We had some suggestions in the beginning for you and you had a couple of one time revenues that came into the fund and helped bulk that up by the end

of the year. \$5 million came in from previous capital projects that came under budget so we returned the money to capital reserve and also you had a cast fund which had around \$850,000 and that money also came into the capital reserve. Overall you saw the increases for the \$7.5 million for capital reserve.

Next you will see the Maintenance and Emergency Reserve – these funds are a little more restrictive and you have to have a specific maintenance need or specific emergency to withdraw moneys from these funds. In this instance you don't see any changes.

Next is Excess Surplus – this is an area that is very important. Excess surplus is generated when you exceed the 2% of operating expenditures that you are allowed to carry in your fund balance. There is a fairly lengthy formula that is involved in this but basically what it does and there are some exceptions and allowances but it takes 2% of the operating budget and says that is what you can hold in reserve. In excess of that you end up with excess surplus. As you can see there is fairly significant fluctuation. Specifically the \$4.68 million fluctuation and what we want to do is bring stability to that number. We want excess surplus to remain consistent from year to year. The way to accomplish that is to have a good budget plan, policy and stick to your budget and monitor the budget to ensure that your unexpended balance at the end of the year can regenerate the excess surplus that you use from prior years.

Also communication – you want to have a good plan and you want to make sure that everyone is aware of the plan – from the governing body, to the administration and management and to all of your departments. You want to make sure everyone is on the same plan of controlling spending and bringing stability to the excess surplus.

Encumbrances – you have \$641,000. There is a decent fluctuation in that and that is typical for encumbrances and it is really based on timing of your expenditures. For instance if there is a large maintenance project that is going to go on during the summer and that money is encumbered at the end of the year.

Last thing is the unassigned fund balance of \$3.4 million. This is the 2% that you are allowed to carry and it is legislated by State and you can think of that as a savings account. It is to be held for cash flow purposes.

What we want to stress on you is that you had some one time inflows this year that were able to hold your fund balance steady but we want to encourage you to have a budget plan and stick to your budget plan and make sure that you are monitoring the budget.

Kathy Mantell stated the audit itself is in the neighborhood of 175-200 pages so rather than have everyone who is not a finance major, we tried to encapsulate important information through the CAFR and relay that all to you.

At the bottom of the first page we talk about how much you appropriated in subsequent years budget and you will see in 16-17 you used \$4.8 million, in 17-18 you appropriated \$6.5 million and then going into 18-19, you only have \$1.455 of excess surplus that you have to use as a revenue to offset your 19 budget. It is going to make the 19 budget a challenge where you

don't have that. The flip side of that was when you brought that money in as a fund balance, you had a large part of that money dedicated to capital outlay. If that money can't be regenerated, then the capital outlay portion of the 19 budget will be reduced.

What we did on the second page, we were looking at where we might expect to be in 2018. Where Ray told you that you had capital reserve of \$7.574 million, in the 18 budget you appropriated \$5 million of that which was for capital outlay and then you also by Board resolution appropriated another \$876,000 so as of today the balance in the capital reserve is \$1.697.

The other thing we wanted to demonstrate to you is to say that all those balances that existed as of June 30, 2017 – which just told you the changes were in the capital reserve and then excess surplus went into the 18 budget so that disappears and those encumbrances are open purchase orders at the end of year and they naturally will liquidate so those will be reduced during the year.

The assigned fund balance – as Ray said, at the end of the year that was \$3.4 million and your 2% calculation is really 2.6. Last year you received \$800,000 more than anticipated because of the extraordinary special ed costs and so the State allows you to put that on top of your 2% and then a reminder to the Board that money has to incorporate during the 18 year. The reason why we bring that up is we want to make you aware that in some districts we say isn't this nice, you go along and everything is balanced and you manage to generate these balances that give you consistency and it looks so easy but it really isn't. Once you are using the money for capital, you have to think ahead on how are you going to regenerate that.

We had conversations with the administration and the finance committee chair saying that is really important at this juncture to pay attention to how much money you are spending and how much is left over at the end of 18 so you are going to land on both feet and be secure and financially strong.

Ray Sarinelli stated the last thing we will talk about some of the comments and recommendations we have and we put together a management report that details all the things we looked at and the statutory requirements that go with the audit. You have recommendations in your report this year – two of the issues are housekeeping issues that are fairly minor and easy to correct and we already discussed with Greg and Manny and they are putting corrective actions in place.

The two issues were receipts being deposited in a timely manner and purchase orders being approved before the purchase. Fairly minor things but are statutorily required and they protect you from a lot of liability so we just want to make sure that when we come in and look at these things that they are being done. We talked to them and they have corrective action put together and they will have a plan to correct those things.

The last issue we are going to talk about is student activities which is a little more significant and when we got our hands in the student activity accounts we found that some policies and procedures are not being followed; receipts were not being accurately recorded; they

weren't being deposited in a timely manner as well; the cash was not being kept in a secure location. Over the past several months, Manny and Greg have taken a lot of steps to mitigate these issues and I think it is important that you continue to communicate with the staff that policies and procedures are there for a reason and to keep you protected from any potential liability. There is a lengthy recommendation in there and a corrective action regarding what is taking place. In the case of your student activities, you continue to do that and continue to discuss issues with your staff.

Thank you and we appreciate working with the District and if there are any questions.

Mr. Nufrio stated your comment regarding receipts, I would like to have something as a matter of record that this does not pertain to tax dollars. Mr. Sarinelli stated no. Mr. Nufrio stated I'm asking that be put on the record. Mr. Sarinelli stated they are receipts of miscellaneous revenue – your tax money comes directly from the Town. These are receipts that come directly from activities. Mr. Nufrio stated I would like to have it specifically indicated that these are receipts that are non-tax dollars. It was indicated in the last few months that tax dollars were not being secured properly. Mr. Sarinelli stated that again is incorrect. There is not a problem with tax receipts being deposited timely or being recorded properly. All tax money that comes into the District are deposited in the correct and proper fashion. This recommendation does not pertain to tax dollars.

Mr. Nufrio stated again my request is that this be formally noted in this report that it does not pertain to tax dollars.

Mr. McDowell stated I think what Mr. Nufrio is saying is that these are student activity funds that were collected by students, teachers and not part of the tax moneys. Mr. Nufrio stated and not to be comingled with any other revenues. Revenue is kind of misleading. However, it can be done. This is an official document and it should be duly noted that we are not talking about tax dollars as it was intimated in the press that tax dollars were not being secured properly, were not being stored properly and not being deposited properly and that is not so. I want that for the record.

Ms. Mantell stated so if you like us to revise the book, we will revise the book – one copy or all the copies. I think it would say receipt which does not include tax revenues. It wasn't just student activity funds. The collection process is such that somebody collects money and it is channeled. So it is a matter of changing the process. The District taxes come in automatically through an electronic transfer and the amounts that are being deposited are tuitions from other school districts and other miscellaneous. Mr. Nufrio stated which are not tax dollars. Ms. Mantell stated we can make that clarification. In the past year there were a lot of hurricanes and a lot of people wanted to do good and we had a meeting in the Township of Union Schools and we found in many of our schools and in every report that we issued this year, we talked about being aware and we had that conversation with administration and said we would like to guide, direct and get everyone informed and having the Board approve school activities and so everyone was very receptive and it was good to have that conversation.

Dr. Francis asked can you speak specifically to the purchases that were made prior to approval – purchase orders? Mr. Sarinelli stated when we perform our audit testing, we take a sample so in that random sample some of the purchases that we look out our huge – thousands of dollars and some are smaller, but we noticed in some of the smaller purchases – some pertaining to student activities and where someone wants to make a purchase and rushing through the process a little bit. I know when I talked to Manny and Greg about it, we spend a lot of time trying to reinforce that when people are entering purchase orders – they can't make the purchase until we approve it. I'm sure it happens a lot. Whoever is making the purchase wants to get their items as soon as possible. Sometimes you need to slow down and wait for the approval to ensure the availability of funds. More of the minor situations where people are trying to make purchases outside the business office.

Mrs. Williams stated I was looking at the financial highlights on page 13 - \$8.9 million and you were talking about regenerate – overall do you think we are stable financially? Ms. Mantell stated in the first part of the report, you are looking at the section called “Management Discussion and Analysis” and those are gap statements and so in there all the District's long-term liabilities and capital assets have been factored in. I usually show the Board the change in liability – the PTRS pension liability. It is the third year that it had to be recorded. So the pension liability across the board for the State went up about 30%. It is the third year that they did it.

Another reminder is that number is a big staggering number and highlight to the Board that is not something that you are going to pay over 1-5 years – it is everybody who is associated with Union Township schools who are currently in the PERS pension system and how much money they are going to draw on based on their age and other factors.

Mr. Monge stated thank you for spending the time on the phone yesterday and answering a bunch of questions. I will highlight a couple of things and this is for the rest of the Board members and general public.

One was the things to look out for in case of cyber security and it is actually something Ms. Paul and the Technology Committee discussed. It is something that we need to revisit with Ms. Paul and she can come back to Mr. Tatum. The idea that some districts actually engage someone to test their system and see if there is any gap and then speak to security.

In the opening statement from the District, there is the economic condition statement. It is the same statement that we had last year. I definitely don't think it is accurate this year. One of the things that I pointed out was that we had conversation that we will need an edit and the fact that we have a number of developments – there are only two stated there and obviously there are not two. There is a lot of projects that have tax abatements. Talking to the auditor yesterday, said that is something that normally they would request that we should keep track of and essentially see what those transactions consisted of. Are we going to be getting additional tax dollars? If not, then we are not but that is something. We are doing our own research to see if there is going to be a negative impact if we have hundreds of units and potentially additional students coming to the District without any taxes that are going to come because of the tax abatements.

I don't know if that is something that would come from you as a recommendation. Ms. Mantell stated it doesn't but we are required to put an audit footnote about tax abatements in a way that we provide that information is to go to the municipality website for their budget and see what statements in lieu of taxes agreements they have and in their user friendly budget if they disclose what the taxes would have been and what the agreement is for and then naturally that payment is made to the municipality.

Mr. Monge stated Mr. Brennan I actually tried to go to the Town website to see their user friendly budget but maybe that is something you can investigate and come back to the Board on.

The other thing was the English as a second language trends and we talked about that and I may be totally off but I saw very high numbers in the early grades which may be potentially that kids are coming out of the program or testing out. It probably makes some sense for us to look back and make sure that we aren't seeing a trend that we should be preparing for because the numbers from kindergarten to 3rd grade were pretty high.

The other thing is food service. We are carrying a balance of about half a million dollars and we talked about that and it could potentially reduce some of that instead of carrying so much. That may be an opportunity to make better use of that money that is sitting there.

Mr. Brennan stated we have ten kitchens that we need to reinvest that money into so that is something I want you to keep in mind. We invest in new equipment – refrigeration, stoves, heating products and things of that nature and that is what it is there for.

Mr. Monge stated do we have a capital plan for it, then we should be able to plan for it. Mr. Brennan stated yes we have done that – Mr. Loessel and I have integrated some of that money. Mr. Monge stated for food service and that is what we heard earlier. The money has just been sitting there for a number of years. If we have a plan, that should be something you should bring to the finance committee.

Extraordinary aide, this is a footnote – the last two years we have been budgeting \$700,000 as a placeholder and it probably should be twice that amount but the feedback was in certain districts they are conservative with that number put a zero and that is something I think internally we should know. It is a conservative assumption but in some districts are even more conservative than that.

Miscellaneous lines on page 80 – this is a great footnote here – the breakdown of that line that includes interest, bank interest, the money that we have in our bank account. That number for 2016 was \$394,000. In 2015, it was \$127,000. In 2014, it was \$26,000. What's the difference, we did a request for proposals for banking services, we went out and we got the best deal possible. We were able to get a very good deal and we were able to increase our interest rate that we were earning from the bank and not only that it is a floating interest rate so when rates go up, so does our interest rate. Today we are 1.16% and when we started the RFP process we were out .0035% so it is a big difference and based on 1.16% - we should be over a half million dollars with interest. That is the benefit of doing RFP's with competitive bids.

Trend term analysis – there was some high – low, the auditor said that is something that they can do so that would be fantastic if they are able to provide a professional opinion on these trends.

We also talked about capital projects going forward. The issue that we have here is that we are carrying receipt balances and we have work that needs to be done in our buildings so we put that money to work and we talked about that \$5 million that we transferred over from the Jefferson fund and I don't know if you heard but there was a lot of hoopla about should that money have gone back to taxpayers versus going back to the capital reserve. If you could make sure we are o.k. with what we did and I know we got a letter from you guys and make sure you didn't change your mind.

For the future capital projects and this is what districts do, capital projects they go for referendums. When you have dilapidating buildings, tens of millions of dollars that you have to do in work, they have told you that the money we now spent for the appropriate reasons, how do we come up with the rest of the money. We did what we had to do and we have to make sure we clean things up in house and we weren't going to take that \$1 million bank cap – we didn't do it for two years. We saved taxpayers \$2 million. Going forward if you don't raise the 2% tax, we don't pay our bills so that notion that we get criticized for taking the minimum that the State offers is something we need to think about. It doesn't make any sense – dollars and cents.

Mr. Nufrio stated Mr. Monge is correct except for one thing. The competitive bidding process should always have been the process but unfortunately it was not. For the last couple of years this Board has done everything possible to make sure and ensure that a competitive bidding process did take place and that contracts were not handed out to friends and family and thereby saving the District and tax dollars were saved. That is a point that needs to be understood by the public. We didn't start a new process; the process should have been this all the time and I challenge anyone.

Mr. Brennan stated I would like to thank Mr. Monge and Mr. Nufrio for your comments. I just want to clarify one thing. The \$500,000 that is in the cafeteria account – it does have to be used for food services just so everyone is clear on that. It is not like we can comingle the money and throw it back into our general fund. Mr. Monge you are right, these are trying times, where we have a 2% cap on our tax levy – it's only \$87 million of our budget. Our operating budget is \$131 million. The rest is State aide which is flat so when you do the calculation – it really comes out to 1.3% over our total budget that we are seeing an increase on. Meanwhile salaries are going up over 2%, benefits are going way up over 2% - more like 10%, but just so the public knows that costs are going up and the revenue stream is tight and it is constant.

Mr. Arminio stated thank you for a report that I was able to understand.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you very much for your clear and concise report. I appreciate the comments from the Board.

Ms. Mantell stated very happy holidays and many blessings.

Mr. Tatum stated I will the requirements - Student attendance was 96.4% and staff attendance was 94.6%.

Monthly highlights – Washington Elementary School was named the top fundraising school in the State of New Jersey for the Pennies for Patient Campaign.

On November 22 – Hannah Caldwell Elementary School celebrated colonial Thanksgiving. As you recall last month, we had students here and are being published in a poetry book. Myself and Mrs. Minneci attended the Thanksgiving program and it was very nice. I think the students and staff really enjoyed themselves. The students again need to be recognized for publishing the poetry in a book two years in a row.

Upcoming events – Christmas recess begins with a half day on Friday, December 22nd. All schools and offices will be closed until we return from the break on Tuesday, January 2nd.

Our next District planning committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27th at 6:30 p.m.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly announce and acknowledge Mr. McDowell and Mrs. Zuena for their service on the Board of Education. They have made a fine President and Vice President over the past year. You can't count how dedicated they are to our students and our District. I thank both of them for their support in my difficult job in trying to administer to the District. Thank you both so much from the bottom of my heart for all your hard work.

I would like to finally wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season as we move into a holiday break. As always we really strive for the very best for our students and staff and families and we will continue to do that in 2018 and that is my last report for 2017.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the following resolutions be adopted:

E-1. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S RESOLUTION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's resolution of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) conclusions for the period November 1, 2017 to December 22, 2017, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-2. APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CURRICULUM GUIDES:

Approve the following Curriculum Guide(s):

- a. Grade 5 Mathematics
- b. ELA Grade 1 – Curricular Frameworks Units 1-4
- c. ELA Grade 2 – Curricular Frameworks Units 1-4
- d. Language Arts Grade 3 – Units 1-4

- e. Language Arts Grade 4 – Units 1-4
- f. ELA Grade K – Curricular Frameworks Units 1-4

E-3. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (Project Graduation).*

E-4. **APPROVE FILM FOR UHS**

Approve film for Union High School – Grade 9 English, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-5. **APPROVE TITLE I DISTRICT-SCHOOL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICIES**

Approve the Township of Union Title I District - School Parental Involvement Policies for Burnet Middle School, Union High School, Franklin Elementary School and Jefferson School, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-6. **APPROVE TEACHERS EMPLOYED THROUGH BROOKFIELD SCHOOLS**

Approve teachers employed through Brookfield Schools, Cherry Hill, New Jersey to provide bedside instruction for District students on an “as needed” basis for the 2017-2018 school year, in the amount not to exceed \$2,500.00, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (Acct #7693-11-150-100-320-01-19).

E-7. **APPROVE PARTICIPATION**

Approve participation for Laura Damato and Tommy Harrell to become certified to administer professional development for Leader in Me Leadership Program modeled from “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” for Burnet Middle School, Kawameeh Middle School and all Elementary Schools, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-8. **APPROVE CAMP INVENTION AT JEFFERSON SCHOOL**

Approve two (2) sessions of Camp Invention at Jefferson School from June 25 to June 29, 2018 and July 30 to August 3, 2018 (not school funded), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-9. **APPROVE CONTRACT WITH GATEWAY FAMILY**

Approve Contract with The Gateway Family YMCA, in accordance with the information appended to the non-public minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Mr. Monge, seconded by Mr. Nufrio, that the following resolutions be adopted:

F-1. ACCEPT TREASURER'S REPORT

That the Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2017 be accepted.

F-2. ACCEPT SECRETARY'S REPORT

That the Secretary's Report dated November 30, 2017 be accepted.

F-3. CERTIFY TREASURER'S AND SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), I certify that as of November 30, 2017 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18:22-8.1.

/s/ Gregory E. Brennan
Gregory E. Brennan, Board Secretary

Dated

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.2(h), we certify that as of November 30, 2017 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2(d)3 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. This certification is solely based on the information provided by the School Business Administrator and Board Secretary and is assumed by the Board to be correct.

F-4. APPROVE APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

Approve appropriation transfers in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-5. APPROVE LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASE ORDERS

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchase orders pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (bid exceptions to requirement for advertising) and 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE TRAVEL

Approve district wide travel and related expenses pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Board Policy File Code 6471 and in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-7. PRE-APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIP DESTINATIONS

Pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-8. APPROVE STATE CONTRACT VENDORS

Approve the amended list of the 2017-2018 State Contract Vendors pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10(a) (purchase through State agency; procedure) to facilitate schools' purchasing, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-9. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (student activity).*

F-10. APPROVE OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT PLACEMENT LIST

Approval be given to amend the 2017-2018 out-of-district student placement list, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-11. APPROVE AMENDMENT TO FY18 ESEA GRANT

Approve amendment to the FY18 ESEA Grant to be submitted due to the FY17 ESEA carry-over funds as follows:: (a) Title I-A: \$145,647, Title IIA: \$168,331, Title III: \$3,246, Title III Immigrant: \$1,252 for a total of \$318,476.

F-12. REPORT ON ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION

Report on the Official Report of the annual school election held on November 7, 2017 as follows:

Three-year term:	Linda Richardson	4052
	Vito Nufrio	3473
	Sharon Sherry Higgins	3398
	Ronnie McDowell	3369
	Nancy Zuena	3186
	Michelle Schultz	2836

F-13. ACCEPT CAFR AND AUDITOR’S MANAGEMENT REPORT

Accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and the Auditor’s Management Report, as amended pursuant to comments by Board of Education, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (auditors will present report to the public at the regular meeting on December 19, 2017).

F-14. ACCEPT CAP

Accept the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for Single Audit Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2017, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-15. ACCEPT DONATIONS

Accept the following donations, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

From	For Use By	\$/Item
Greg & Geraldine Muller	C.E.O. Program of Union High School	\$100.00
Lifetouch National School Studios	Livingston Elementary School	\$1,093.75
Lifetouch National School Studios	Connecticut Farms Elementary School	\$772.00
Costco of Union	Hannah Caldwell-1 st /2 nd grade	200 back packs

F-16. APPROVE REIMBURSEMENT TO PARENT FOR TRANSPORTATION

Approve reimbursement to parent for transporting special education student to and from private school at a rate of \$8.75 per day from September 12, 2016 through March 23, 2017, in accordance with the information appended to the non-public minutes.

F-17. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF FY2018 IDEA GRANT AMENDMENT 1

Approve submission of FY2018 IDEA Grant Amendment 1 to allocate the \$31,745 unexpended non-public funds from the FY2017 IDEA Basic Grant.

F-18. APPROVE INCREASE IN P.O. #18-01223

Approve an increase to P.O. #18-01223 with EPIC Health Services, Inc. (EPIC) to provide nursing services for the 2017-2018 school year from \$40,000 to \$220,000 to meet the District’s needs, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-19. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (fundraisers).*

F-20. *For informational purposes only – vote not required.* List of legal services for the 2017-2018 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-21. APPROVE LEASE PURCHASE FINANCING

Approve the recommendation of Educational Services Commission of New Jersey to approve a 5-year lease purchase financing for the acquisition of radio equipment in the principal amount of \$448,000 with Municipal Leasing Consultants (MLC) at an interest rate of 2.177% and at the Swap Rate of 2.135%, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-22. APPROVE DONATION OF BOOKS

Approve the donation of books to the Union High School Library by author Wil Mara, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-23. APPROVE DONATION OF BOOKS

Approve the donation of books to the Union High School Library by BookLinx, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

F-24. APPROVE FUNDRAISERS

Approve the following fundraiser, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

Event Name – School/Club	Date	Purpose
Districtwide Dress Down Day – UHS JROTC – Operation Enduring Care	January 5, 2018	Raise money for hurricane relief efforts in Puerto Rico

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Monge stated F-17 – we want a clarification. Mrs. Conti stated we have to amend a grant to allocate the unexpended non-public funds. We have a portion of our grant that the money is allocated to non-public schools and if the amount is not expended, we have to do an amendment so that can carry over into the next grant.

Mr. Monge stated F-13 – we accept it as is and then if we have any adjustments. Mr. McDowell stated you are talking about F-13 and the comments made to the auditors. Mr. Brennan stated with the footnotes added. Mr. Monge stated is it something that we would add to that? Mr. Griggs stated you would. Is it comments to the management report or auditors report because the recommendations are in the management report. Mr. Monge stated I'm not sure where she is going to make that footnote. I will assume it is the management report. Mr. Griggs stated there is a timeline of submission of this audit I would just put as amended pursuant to comments by Board of Education and then Mr. Brennan will reach out to Kathy and she will get back to him on what she is doing and then he will send it out.

Moved by Mr. Monge, seconded by Mr. Nufrio, to amend F-13 to read “as amended pursuant to comments by Board of Education.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (F-8 contract 85922 only)

MOTION CARRIED

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Mrs. Zuena, seconded by Mr. Arminio, that the following resolutions be adopted:

O-1. APPROVE SECURITY DRILL AND BUS EVACUATION REPORTS

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 and P.L. 2009, Chapter 178, approve the following security drill and bus evacuation reports for the 2017-2018 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-2. APPROVE VOLUNTARY EDUCATOR'S DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

Approve resolution concerning (a) Colonial Life Voluntary Benefits and (b) New York Life Voluntary Benefits as a voluntary educator's disability insurance program, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

O-3. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (Uniform State MOA).*

O-4. APPROVE REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Approve request from the Township of Union Education Foundation, Inc. to use Jefferson School cafeteria and gymnasium for the Second Annual Pizza Tasting Contest to be held on March 16, 2018 (with a snow date of March 23, 2018) from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,
Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the following resolutions be adopted:

P-1. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (personnel actions).*

P-1A. APPROVE PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Personnel Actions be approved in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-2. *Agenda item approved at December 12, 2017 worksession (substitute lists).*

P-2A. APPROVE AMENDED SUBSTITUTE LIST

Approve amended Substitute List for the 2017-2018 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-3. ACCEPT LETTERS OF RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT

Accept letters of resignation/retirement from the following staff:

Resignations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Eff. Date</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Notes/ Corrections</u>
Collins, Raquel	Paraprofessional	KMS	12/16/17	Resignation	
Donohue, Mary Juliet	Paraprofessional	HC	1/16/18	Resignation	
Dennis, Shonda	10 Month Part Time Clerk position only	Hamilton Building/ SS	1/4/18	Resignation	Last working day 1/3/18 as per letter. She will remain an active sub in district
Papillon, Pierre	Part Time Bus Driver	Transp-Ortation	2/9/18	Resignation	Last day 2/9/18 as per letter
Luna, Carolina	Teacher of Spanish	Wash	2/13/18	Resignation	Last working day 2/12/18
Deegan, Andrew	Math teacher	Burnet	1/8/18	Resignation	Last working day 1/5/18

Retirements

Name	Position	Location	Effective Date: (Noted on letter)	Reason	Date of Hire Not including leave of absences. (May include Substituting history)	Attendance to BOE meeting
Stanco, Eugenia	Elementary Teacher	Jefferson	1/31/18	Retirement	02/01/1991	TBD

P-4. APPROVE LEAVES

Approve leaves for the following staff:

Leave of Absences

Name	Position	Location	Leave Dates	Leave Type Regarding updated info only.	Notes/ Corrections
Alswang, Susan	Teacher of French	UHS	12/1/17-1-Return of 1/2/18	Unpaid Non-FMLA Medical Leave	Does not meet FMLA requirements (length of service)
Denning, Noa	Speech /Language Specialist	HC	4/24/18-Return 10/22/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	
Cardinale, Louis	Custodian	UHS	1/24/17-Return 1/3/18	Paid Medical Leave	Use of all available sick time.
Jakositz, Cathy	Resource Room Teacher	KMS	11/28/17-6/30/18	Paid Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA 11/28/2017-6/30/2018	
Leibrock, Laura	Teacher of Science	UHS	3/16/18-6/30/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	
Nufrio, Christina	Elementary Teacher	Wash	3/26/18-Return 6/11/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	

Whitford, Lauren	Teacher of Mathematics	KMS	2/2/18-Return 6/1/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	
Rosa, Lisa	Teacher of Special Services	BH	3/19/18-Return 5/2/18	Paid Maternity	Use of sick time only at this time.
Vendola, Ronda	Paraprofessional	BMS	1/2/2018-2/9/18	Paid Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA 1/2/18-2/9/18	
Dellano, Paul	Teacher of Mathematics	BMS	1/2/2018-6/30/18	Unpaid intermittent FMLA followed by possible consecutive FMLA leave	Not to exceed the allotted 12 weeks under FMLA/NJFLA
Scotto, Jaclyn	Teacher of English	UHS	Extension through 9/1/18	Extension of unpaid Maternity Non FMLA Non NJFLA	FMLA/NJFLA allotted time exhausted 12/15/17 Org. leave began 9/1/17
Parkhurst, Jennifer	School Counselor	CF	Extension return of 5/1/18	Unpaid Non FMLA/Non NJFLA Maternity	FMLA/NJFLA allotted time exhausted 2/7/18 Org. leave began 9/11/17
House, Danielle	Elementary Teacher	HC	Extension return of 5/1/18	Unpaid FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	Org. Leave began 9/18/17
Mancinelli, Lynn	Library Media Specialist	Frank/Wash	12/20/17-12/20/18	Intermittent FMLA/NJFLA (Concurrently)	Not to exceed the allotted 12 weeks under FMLA/NJFLA
Tuohy, Vanessa	School Social Worker	UHS	1/16/18-5/29/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	
Grato, Nikki	Speech Correction/Language Specialist	KMS/BMS	2/26/18-Return 10/1/18	Paid Maternity And Unpaid FMLA/NJLA (Concurrently)	

P-5. APPROVE EVALUATION FORM FOR ATHLETIC COACHES

Approve evaluation form for athletic coaches, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

P-6. APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Approve Job Description for the position of Assistant Director of Instructional Technology, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio stated P-6 – it is just changing the job description for a position that we already filled and it is budgeted and it is just a change in title. No change in salary.

Mr. Tatum stated when we hired the technology specialist, there was a question whether or not that was an approved title and at the time the director gave us the title and it is indeed bonafide but the problem with that title is we were looking to have the person to also be able to provide classroom supervision and administration. The person that we hired is qualified to do such because he has the appropriate certification and degree but unfortunately the title he was under was not able to carry out those duties. There was an amended job description for technology specialist but that particular description had the supervisor position removed. One of the charges the Board had given to me was to try to provide some additional support in the technology area and since we have a Director now, whose plate is extremely full with a lot of technical aspects of technology and where we are trying to go in terms of the Chromebooks and infrastructure. She also had responsibilities on the instructional side as well. Professional development remained a very important part of the District with the move to the Chromebooks and the Google classroom and some other instructional strategies that we are employing. We are moving further away from the services as we know them as library media and that is going to have to be connected with other pertinent areas. That being the case, we would need to have someone who has confidence to be able to support classroom instruction so this is a districtwide central office position, we enlisted the use of that title so this individual can carry out the duties that we originally hired him to do.

Mr. Nufrio stated thanks for acknowledging that because that was the right way to go because if I recall collectively, Mrs. Paul also holds a certification of principal so it would have been derived with that thinking as well. They are still part of central staff not part of the administrative approval. Mr. Tatum stated that was the goal – the entire technology department is part of the central office staff and I was looking not to do is separate our staff. The title that we would have used also belongs to the unit separately. Mr. Nufrio stated as far as the evaluations because of the title and certification, they can actually submit an evaluation of their technological skills. Mr. Tatum stated and those of their supervisors. We spoke about that last week with Mr. Griggs in Personnel last week just so that we were on the appropriate path.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Nufrio (P-4 only)

MOTION CARRIED

RESIDENCY COMMITTEE:

Moved by Mrs. Zuena, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the following resolutions be adopted:

R-1. APPROVE LIST OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM ROLLS

Approval be given to amend the list of students removed from the rolls [four (4) students exited from November 1st through December 12, 2017 (4 from elementary) or a total of thirteen (13) students for the 2017-2018 school year] who are not domiciled in this school district, in accordance with the information appended to the non-public minutes.

R-2. APPROVE REMOVAL OF STUDENT

Approval to remove student #278248 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-3. APPROVE REMOVAL OF STUDENT

Approval to remove student #319051 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-4. APPROVE REMOVAL OF STUDENT

Approval to remove student #298198 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

R-5. APPROVE REMOVAL OF STUDENT

Approval to remove student #260547 from the attendance rolls as the student has been determined to be ineligible to attend the Township of Union Public Schools as a resident student.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Moved by Mr. Monge, seconded by Mr. Arminio, that the Board concur with the bills listed in the permanent bound register appended to the minutes and be ordered for payment.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Minneci (all bills for vendor 49500 only)

MOTION CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Arminio stated the bowling tournament that took place a couple of weeks ago. Our bowling team doesn't get much notice but in a prestigious tournament they placed 2nd to Woodbridge who always is one of the best in the State and a high game on the boys side – who came in 3rd was Kevin Olivera with a 247 and on the girls side a high game Kiera Powell placed second with a 227 and she had the high series in the tournament of 659 and if you know anything about bowling that is awesome.

Mr. Monge stated a quick update on technology. One of the things we mentioned was the wiring for Kawameeh Middle School has been completed which was necessary for the Chromebooks and in general being able to have bandwidth for technology in the school. Also at this time we have almost all of Burnet completed as well in time for the Chromebooks to be distributed next year. Chromebooks have been delivered to Burnet and in the process of being labeled and we are waiting for the Chromebooks for Kawameeh.

The elementary schools – infrastructure surveys are getting underway and to what I understand that cost is going to be reimbursed by the FCC to the District.

We talked about Amazon and the ability to purchase items online through Amazon as a dealer. There is a program that Amazon does with school districts that I sent over to Mr. Brennan and Mr. Tatum. There is definitely a program out there so if there is a will there is a way and maybe some savings and thank you Mrs. Regis-Darby for bringing that up.

Lastly we talked about the facility planning group, the architects – it would be great if we can do that. I will make myself available before the end of the year. I think it is important to get that going. We are going to be behind schedule if we don't.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Williams stated one of the things that was mentioned in the audit was the amount of money that we are spending on special education and when we were in Atlantic City there was a workshop on the NJTSS programs – it is complicated and there is a lot of information but one of the incidental benefits was the reduction in the number of their special education population. I thought that was something that we could bring back to the Board. We are implementing some of the components of this program with the RTI and stuff like that but I thought it was interesting and might help us out.

Mr. Nufrio stated I prepared a statement to read. My friends and colleagues – Nancy Zuena and Ronnie McDowell.

Nancy, Ronnie and I ran as incumbents, who we united in one ultimate goal, to put our children first in any and all decisions in our rolls as Board members. The irony of this story is that we met three years ago as opponents. We promised to strive for progress and to enhance the educational services for our children. The election of 2014 gave us the opportunity to deliver on our promises and we did with collaboration of our esteem colleagues for the past three years.

We joined together with other Board members whose independent voices were only focused on what was best for our children. Ronnie, Nancy and I had strong hopes and a fervent desire to continue in our mission for progressive accomplishments for our District. Unfortunately, our aspirations were decided on November 7th by the voters who chose to select two other candidates who have promised to pursue the same goals. My new hope is that they will do so without outside influence.

Nancy, you have given our children three years of dedicated and selfless service for which we are all grateful. You became a quick learner and an accomplished member of our Board. You began as a novice and eventually became an expert in Operations, Residency and many other areas of our Board services.

Ronnie, you served with sincerity and true commitment just as you do with your own children every day. Your leadership this past year, along with Mrs. Zuena, has been inspiring and productive. We have all been proud to have served with you both. You will be sorely missed. Hopefully your successors will do all that is necessary for the continuance of the type of service that you gave to Union and our children.

A difficult and challenging task of one that can be accomplished if the mantra of independent voices that work here at the Board – thank you and God bless you in all your future endeavors. Merry Christmas to you and everyone – Happy Holidays and a very happy and productive new year to all. Thank you guys.

Mr. Arminio stated Ronnie McDowell and Nancy Zuena – President and Vice President of the Township of Union Board of Education – I personally want to thank you for your service to the community, to the school system and to our children. Anyone who gives of himself or herself to the betterment of society should be commended.

The years that they have been on the Board have been a period of significant improvement of our school system. Both of them have gone far beyond the requirements of a Board member to the benefit of our school system and children.

Unfortunately, during this past election, they did not succeed in being re-elected and they were the target of some disparaging remarks and negative publicity.

The Board of Education is one unit of nine individuals and unfortunately when anyone is ridiculed or maligned – all of the Board members are diminished. For any Board member that was hurt, I hope that he or she can forgive those individuals or cast those dispersions. I know I have forgiven them. It is imperative that we as a Board work as one to continue our growth as a District.

Once again I applaud Ronnie and Nancy whose last meeting is tonight both they will always be remembered. Thank you.

Mr. Nufrio stated I neglected to add and I think it is important that I add this, unfortunately of the comment is not here this evening or at least left the room. You don't have to

apologize to anybody for asking for a recount Mr. McDowell – that is part of the democratic process and if anyone who suggests that it didn't need to be done, then democracy is not in play. That was the democratic process as is currently going on elsewhere. You were entitled to it and you did ask for justice on that and certainly it was something that was a normal process. Mr. McDowell stated thank you Mr. Nufrio.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated Ronnie and Nancy, you guys have been great Board members but even better than Board members, you guys are great people. I am very proud to have gotten the opportunity to work with Ronnie and Nancy and to be part of everything that has been accomplished by this Board. I truly appreciate you guys and what you have done for me, for the students, the children and all the stakeholders in this District and I am so happy that I had that opportunity to be part of that journey. I will miss both of you. Thank you.

Dr. Francis stated I want to thank Ronnie and Nancy for their services to the District. Three years ago when I asked you guys to run for the Board, it was because I needed your help. You both stepped up to the challenge and the reason is because you had skin in the game and that was your children. Over the past three years we have done a tremendous job as a Board and mainly by letting the Superintendent Mr. Tatum, as well as his Assistants Mr. Benaquista and Mrs. Moses, to do the job that they are here to do.

Ronnie you said something at one of the meetings that the Board isn't broke, it wasn't broke, we just did what was best for the kids in the District and not the politicians, specifically our current Senator. To both of you, all I ask is that you hold your head up high, be proud of what you accomplished and all the work and I want to say thank you to both of you.

Mr. Monge stated I don't have anything prepared but I have been thinking about this for weeks and I have said many things to the guys separately and that is the most important thing – obviously you guys are wonderful. We barely knew each other three years ago and I was running at that time but I decided to step down and not run because I knew that they were ready to go. They were there for their kids and for the right reason and I said I would wait my turn and run another year. It was the best decision I ever made. You guys got on the Board and you didn't disappoint and ultimately I got on the Board and we did some amazing things.

It is very hard for people to understand when you are in it and when you are not only thinking about your kids, you are thinking about the kids of this Town. There is nothing like the fight of a parent and not everyone has the opportunity to be parents but nothing like fighting for your child and other children when you go and have that responsibility. Not only for your child, but when you go to that basketball game and you drop the kids off and you look at all those kids, those are your kids as well because you are fighting for. When you have skin in the game, and you guys took on that challenge and when you went to run and it is unfortunate because you didn't lose because you didn't do the right thing, you did the right thing – you produced. It is unfortunate to not have the opportunity to land on top based on people taking on the position of lying. It was a slap in the face of this whole Board, our kids, this Town and everything happens for a reason. I always believe that. This is all going to come out in the wash because we have more people, I think, that recognize that you only get to educate your child one time and we all need to do the best that we can to do that and standing up to all this stuff that we knew was going

to come and it was pretty dirty but to stand up and run for the Board of Education and the things that Mr. Nufrio took on and Nancy and Ronnie – that takes a lot of guts and that takes a lot of love for the mission and for our children. I thank you dearly and I will miss you guys here.

Mrs. Minneci stated thank you. I had the honor of working with you this past year and it was nice to get to know both of you individually. I knew Nancy a little bit before. Mr. McDowell I didn't know you at all but it is honor to have had the privileged to work with you and I have learned from you. Thank you.

Mrs. Williams stated I want to say that I really enjoyed working with you two. I will still see you because you are a Deacon at my church. I am going to miss you both and I enjoyed working with you on residency and your input and guidance. Thank you.

Mrs. Zuena stated three years ago when me and Ronnie decided to run, I never really imagined the satisfaction that I felt when we accomplished something that no one thought we could do and no one thought we could win and we did.

We ran a campaign that was made from grass roots with no politics, maybe two nickels in our pockets, and a few people that supported us dearly. They have become true dear friends. Let me just remind you again that there was no politics involved, just friends and people that cared about kids.

I came in not knowing what to expect – wow what an eye opener did I get. I had a lot to learn. Every week being a Board member became a very natural and amazing experience to me. The changes we have made together as a Board are astounding and yes they were made with who in mind? Yes, the children of Union Public Schools.

Some of you that are here thought I should resign this year. Let's think about that. Let me resign from a mistake of a child. Answer this – did I miss a beat? Did it make me a different Board member – absolutely not. It almost became comical to me to read about myself and my son weekly in the newspaper, on the internet, social media – what do I have to say to that – shame on you, all of you. I may not have won this election. Funny how some of you made sure that I didn't win this election – flyers being sent home, wasted money – but at the end, I really didn't lose. I am still here and my voice is being heard. I will promise you this, I am not going away. My voice will be heard probably a lot louder from the other side of the table.

It was my pleasure to serve this District for the last three years and my heart will always be part of Union schools. I need to thank my family, they may have teased me a lot, but they supported me dearly. The one thing that I will not miss is pulling into my driveway at midnight.

All I can say to you and everyone that is here, it was my pleasure and I loved working with each and every one of you and I will continue to promise that I will be here and part of this District. Thank you.

Mr. Nufrio stated perhaps the rest of the public does not know it, Nancy has experienced a greater loss with the passing of her mom last week. I wish to extend my deepest condolences and that is the worse loss that you can possibly suffer.

Mr. McDowell stated I haven't prepared anything. It is an emotional time and honestly I wanted to be back on the Board. I wanted to continue to help our children and I enjoyed doing that. I tried to be on this Board with integrity, honesty and faithfulness to our children – that is all.

I could not believe it, it was just ridiculous. Even with our campaign we tried to be honest, have some integrity and not call anybody names or be dishonest. I am satisfied with what I have done and I will walk away with my head held high. I think I did a good job and I think Nancy did a good job. Together I think this Board did a great job for our kids. Thank you to each one of you and to the public for your support. For those that voted for me, thank you and I do appreciate that. Who knows you may not have seen the last of me on this Board.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Linda Lewis stated I am here because I want to thank Mrs. Zuena for her service on the Board as well as Mr. McDowell. Mrs. Zuena, I do not know you as well as I have known Mr. McDowell – we worship together on Sunday – I know his children and his wife and I know truly that he is a man of integrity and spiritual sound. I can only imagine that you are as well.

But in life sometimes things happen for which we have no explanation. When that happens I turn to reference source that guides my life. For there are some who believe they are in control. There are some without humility and there are some who proceed as if they have no one to answer to. I believe we must remain spiritually sound because we are accountable for our actions. In Isaiah 54:14-15, 17 it reads as follows: “In righteousness thou shall be established; thou shall be far from oppression, for thou shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thy. Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by Me. Whosoever shall gather together against me shall fall for thy sake. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.” So fear not those with false tongues, those who were deceptive, those who lie – they have a day of reckoning as well. We are the losers. The stakeholders of this Board of Education and our children are truly the losers. You did not lose an election. We lost two great people.

Miguel Guzman stated thank you to Ronnie and Nancy. We fought to get you guys back because we know what you stand for on this Board and we are grateful for what you have accomplished in the past three years collectively together and we will continue to fight to make sure that those that come on this Board to be accountable to the people that they serve. Thank you Ronnie and Nancy, it was great knowing you and well enough over the past year or so and I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. It may not be the last that we see you two, however, I trust that together with the public, we continue to come to these Board meetings and we continue to be proactive members in our community and continue to be a voice for the students because they deserve it. Thank you and appreciate all that you have done.

Tom Kemps stated according to our Board policies all fundraisers have to be approved by this Board and I asked a question about the softball fundraiser from last spring and I was asked to put in an OPRA request, which I did. I see in every month's minutes, I see a list of donations and approval for fundraisers in fact in this current agenda there are fundraisers but yet I could find nothing on the softball fundraiser or any donations or funds received.

I have the information about the fundraiser that I received from the OPRA request and it says donations were to go towards the upgrading of the equipment, field maintenance and field upgrades. Donations are vital for the success of the program. Donations will ensure that our athletes get the proper equipment to perform. The first problem I have is why are we asking parents for upgrading the fields – that makes no sense to me.

One of the options that the donation would go towards is new uniforms. Again I don't know why we are asking parents to pay for uniforms, why can't the Board pay for those. We actually asked the parents and relatives to donate money for the purchase of game balls – is that where our program is at that we can't afford game balls.

Out of the money fundraised, \$10,223. It sounds really good. Unfortunately, \$2200 was paid to the online service that they used. Again I don't think this was approved by the Board. I would never approve something like that, that is insane – over 20% of the money went to the online service.

\$1,000 of the money was external donations – checks received. Through the information I received with the account which I did send a copy to Mr. Tatum and Mr. Brennan – you can clearly see that \$6,176.71 was deposited – yet \$7,176.71 was collected. The external donations which were checks for \$1,000 is nowhere to be found – I couldn't find it; maybe someone else can find it.

My understanding when I spoke to Snap that they mail the checks back. Who they were mailed to I don't know. There is a missing \$1,000 if anyone is interested.

What we did spend the money on was we spent \$1810.21 on food. I don't know who approved that and it wasn't approved by anybody on this Board – the principal or the Superintendent – I have no idea who would approve \$1810 of food for the softball program.

I don't know if we approved \$326 on equipment. \$10,000 raised, \$326 spent on the softball team. \$1800 spent on food. Does that not seem insane to anyone in this room? To me it is insanity. I don't understand why there isn't any oversight.

I asked Mr. Brennan at last meeting and he said he was sure that it was accounted for but I could find nothing. After I put in my request, a funny thing happened, a check came from the coaches company – Union Girls Softball League Inc. – two checks for \$460 – after I put in my OPRA request. I don't understand that, maybe someone can explain that one to me. I don't know what is going on and I don't know if any of this is approved. I think this is a serious problem in our softball program. I came complaining about the wins and losses but now we are talking about missing money; misappropriated funds – this is crazy. According to Board rules,

all sport funds will be audited annually along with other District's funds – were they? Mr. Tatum stated I will have to defer to Mr. Brennan on that. Mr. Brennan stated all student activity accounts within each school are audited by the auditors. Mr. Kemp stated did they find the \$1,000? Mr. Brennan stated not to my knowledge, I will have to readdress that with them. Again these are student activity accounts, they are run by the schools. Mr. Kemp stated I want you to find the missing money.

Jill Hall stated I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday. I will be teaching on Tuesday night next semester so I won't be at the meetings.

I wanted to express to Ronnie and Nancy the gratitude of the community not really from the community standpoint but from the teacher standpoint. I have been coming to the meetings forever and I watch the two of you – so genuine and so authentic and so deeply invested not only in our kids but the entire process and I am so grateful for that. We really have a Board that everyone is doing that but there was something different because I have known Nancy since she was a little girl. I just felt so comfortable with you and I knew that every decision you guys made was in the best interest of the kids and every decision was thought about deeply and with a good sense of integrity. It did not go unnoticed and I just wanted to say that to you and thank you both.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. Monge, that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-2b.

- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.
- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.

The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. McDowell stated I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and wonderful and happy new year. Happy Holidays!

The Board returned to public session at 9:50 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the following resolution be adopted:

APPROVE SUSPENSION OF STUDENT #190846

WHEREAS, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board Committee conducted a disciplinary hearing for Student #190846; and

WHEREAS, the hearing was conducted in accordance with New Jersey law and regulations and Board Policy; and

WHEREAS, the Board Committee heard testimony from representatives of the School District and from the student; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Board hereby approves a long-term suspension for student #190846, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board will review this matter as required by law.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. Monge, Mrs. Regis-Darby

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. Arminio, that the following resolution be adopted:

ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF SUSAN ALSWANG

Accept the resignation of Susan Alswang, teacher of French at Union High School, effective December 31, 2017.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 p.m. All present voting YES **MOTION CARRIED**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**GREGORY E. BRENNAN
BOARD SECRETARY**