

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – February 11, 2020

NOTICE OF MEETING:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Williams called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Sherry Higgins, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Manuel Vieira, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mrs. Sandra Paul

ALSO PRESENT:

Afshan Ajmiri Giner, Esq.

Mrs. Higgins led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Vieira 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. Ruiz read the District’s mission statement.

Comments from Public on Resolutions:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated E-1A – how many cases were being affirmed? Mr. Vieira stated one.

Mrs. Lopes stated substitute teachers that we are approving – I hope they are being trained. Mr. Benaquista stated we follow all guidelines for training.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes will be next week.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Tatum stated we will start with the Student Liaisons.

Pedro Torres stated today we had a meeting regarding the new applications for honors and AP and I would like to say from the sophomore class, we got a pretty good reception. You already know if you are going to be in AP because you have to maintain that B average. A lot of people like this and we met with Mrs. Moses, Mrs. Monge and the supervisors to finalize our plan at the end of summer and so far it is pretty good.

Faith Olayinka stated nothing really from the junior class. We are worrying about schedules right now. That system with the honors to honors and AP to AP is really simple and makes everything less stressful.

Mr. Tatum stated next week we will have a presentation by IT on technology and we will be adding a presentation by Franklin Elementary School.

Mr. Benaquista stated lunch strategies – about a week ago we met as a committee to strategize what we can do. We started a plan and followed through on it and we will give monthly updates with what we have collected. We started on Sunday night with calls and we are working on trying to get 100% signed up for My School Bucks which would make it a lot easier.

Since Sunday we have collected over \$6,000. We decreased it by 7% - 143 accounts are no longer negative; 485 have decreased their balance so now they are on payment plans. It is a good amount of money in a short term.

I will put out a couple of more calls and then move on to phase 2 and phase 3 down the road. Manny was at the meeting, as well as food service administrators and we all came up with the plan together. I think it is positive so far and I will keep reporting back and give you an analysis of where we are out. I understand that the word is getting out that we are starting this so I think more and more people will be taking care of that.

Ann Hart stated two calls went out this weekend. One call was to everybody saying sign up for My School Bucks account if you don't have one. The second call only went to people that had a negative balance. If you didn't get the second call you are in the positive.

Mr. Benaquista stated our goal is to have 100% of My School Bucks registered because they can see what their kids are eating, they can see their balance and it is easy for us to push out information because it works with the POS system. That is why we felt that was key to get everyone in. We have plans for next year with applications as well as signing people up at the start of the school year.

Mr. McDowell asked when parents register for My School Bucks do they have to register a credit card? Mr. Benaquista stated no. Ms. Hart stated you can do it just to view what they are getting, where the money is going. Even if you get free and reduced lunch, you get an account so that your child can get extras. Everyone has an account already, even if they haven't

registered to view it yet. Any child who has purchased lunch, has a record of everything that they have bought in My School Bucks account already.

Mrs. Ruiz asked the \$6,000 you collected, is this towards this year’s school debt or the overall debt. Mr. Benaquista stated the list that we sent out I believe it is anyone who had debt.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Ruiz presented the Education/Student Discipline agenda.

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period January 22, 2020 to February 11, 2020, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, for adoption:

E-1A. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT’S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent’s determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods January 15, 2020 to January 21, 2020, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio,
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions

Mrs. Richardson presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

Mrs. Richardson gave a committee update. Mr. Vieira gave us information on these items – F-13 is a concern because of the amended increases. Legal had 24 active cases which is the highest number this school district has experienced over the last 25 years. \$400,000 is special education.

We discussed the calendar for the budget and we are on track. The Governor will give his message on February 27th. He will release the state aid on February 27th – expected date. March 6th it will be presented to the Board through your email. March 10th is the workshop. March 17th we have to approve it because it has to be the County by March 20th for them to approve and the County has until April 20th to come back to us. It has to be approved by us May 14th.

Mr. Vieira stated the public hearing is April 30th and our regular Board meeting is April 28th.

Mrs. Ruiz gave an update on the Education Committee meeting. Lisa Krause applied for the Fast Grants through the NJEA and she got the grant and that is how we are going to have that Friday Night Light's Program. I want to give her a shout out because that is a lot of work to apply for the grant and she did a great job. It will be a collaboration through the Union Public Schools and our school library where the students will be reading under the lights and other activities are planned as well.

This summer we will be launching another re-registration districtwide so parents will be receiving information about that.

For September 2020, we will be rolling out three new courses – two will be full-year courses and one will be half-year course so we are diversifying our curriculum in this district. The half-year elective will be dance classes and the full-year courses – one will be a sports statistics class and it will augment our math program which we think will be a big seller for the students and the other full-year course is a screen writing course that will be presented through our English department.

Finally many students that came to the lockdown meeting last week expressed several concerns but the overarching concern was communication and the lack thereof during the lockdown so parents are going to be receiving information from the district soon. Going forward Genesis messaging will be used to communicate with parents during an emergency situation. Parents will receive a robocall instructing them to go to their child's Genesis portal and a message will be there. Simultaneously our students will be receiving the same message the parents are receiving through their school email account. This will ensure effective, timely communications to both students and parents and hopefully eliminate some of the chaos we experienced. The parents are grateful that the district heard them.

Discussion for Fiscal items:

Dr. Francis stated F-13 – when I was on the Board six years ago and Jim Damato was the attorney, he was paid a little over \$200,000 in salary and the idea of getting a part-time attorney was to save money and it seems every year that money has been going up. We have 24 active cases and I received the status report. Just from December 17, 2019, did we expend \$370,000 already? Mr. Vieira stated the \$650,000 is the projection through June 30th. Through December 31st, we paid \$413,000 in attorney fees.

Dr. Francis asked special ed? Mr. Vieira stated that is only attorney fees, no settlements.

Dr. Francis asked the increase in the special ed - \$300,000? Mr. Vieira stated \$400,000 – nursing services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, those types of services.

Dr. Francis asked how much did we spend last year? Mr. Vieira stated probably around \$2 million but now it keeps increasing. Dr. Francis stated I would like to see, if we can, to have

some of that explained to us so we know what are the increases specifically. It is one thing when you have services given out to special education, I think sometimes we can do a little bit better with RFP's on those. I think we should look for RFP's on some of these services to save money. Mr. Vieira stated a lot of the services that we use, they are State contract pricing and co-op pricing. Dr. Francis stated but we don't have to use them. Mr. Vieira stated we don't have to use them but the co-op's and State contracts – they are bidding the pricing on our behalf. They are shopping for us so they are the better prices.

Dr. Francis stated we can put out our own bids and get better deals; we don't have to use the State contract bids. So I think we should. We are not denying services but what we are doing is getting better rates on services. I think we should start looking at them. Every year we complain about not having any money and special ed is one the areas that is going up. I think we can do a better job. Mr. Vieira stated the special ed costs have been increasing about 7% per year and our tax levy is only increasing 2%.

Mrs. Ruiz stated \$400,000 is for special ed so the difference is for legal services? Mr. Vieira stated yes. Mrs. Ruiz stated is that number for legal fees or does that take into account settlements? Mr. Vieira stated just legal fees.

Mrs. Higgins asked would some of the settlements be covered under insurance? Mr. Vieira stated yes.

Mr. McDowell stated legal is going up faster than special ed? Mr. Vieira stated at the moment yes. Mr. McDowell stated we budgeted \$220,000 and we are projecting three times that. I think we have to look into that to see if we can cut some of that out and save money somewhere because that is a lot more than we budgeted. It doesn't make sense.

Mrs. Higgins stated with respect to the use of the co-op, when they go out on our behalf, is that an aggregate? Mr. Vieira stated as a member of the co-op, different school districts. Mrs. Higgins stated if there are ten district in the co-op, they are getting a bid on that volume of business – is it lower than if we would go out? Mr. Vieira stated probably, a volume discount.

Mr. Nufrio stated it is usually the norm that we rely on State contracts – we can only use State approved contractors to begin with. Mr. Vieira stated we use State contract pricing to expedite the process and it is the better pricing. Mr. Nufrio stated if we did go out on our own, we would be soliciting some vendors who may or may not be on the State approved list. Mr. Vieira stated correct. Mr. Nufrio asked was there ever a time where we didn't rely on co-op or State listing contractors; we went on our own and we found that to be cost savings. Mr. Vieira stated yes, possible. Mr. Nufrio stated the requests are sent to your office by special ed. We realize that request has been hopefully fully vetted because they too have the same list of contractors that you would have. Mr. Vieira stated yes.

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Richardson presented the Operations Committee agenda. O-5 is for bond counsel for the ESIP program – which will be relatively not too expensive. Mr. Loessel stated it will be absorbed by the actual project.

Mrs. Richardson stated we met with the health insurance brokers – dental there was no increase; the health benefits is a 6.5% increase. Mr. Nufrio pushed for 5.9% so it came down a little bit. It is still a big amount of money that we will have to look at for next year. Mr. Nufrio stated they proposed 6.5% and I negotiated many contracts and I said that should not be their final answer and to come back with a better number and they did. So we saved six tenths of a percent. Overall the actual increase from the previous year translates to \$1.3 million. Of that number \$300,000 is absorbed by the staff so it is \$1 million in a change in premium cost. It would have been higher if we said o.k. to 6.5%. The premium increases are inevitable. The dental is not additional increase in cost because it was a 2-year initial deal and that translates to \$735,000 premium to the district. Does the staff absorb any of that? Mr. Vieira stated the staff pays about \$150,000 – staff’s contribution. Mr. Nufrio stated so we are looking at \$590,000 plus the million so that is \$1.6 million in overall additional costs – increase. What is the overall costs of the benefits? Mr. Vieira stated March 1st is our renewal date for the health and the health premium is \$23.3 million – the staff contributes about 22% of that which is \$5 million.

Mr. Vieira stated the increase is \$1.3 million; \$300,000 shared by the staff, \$1 million by the Board. Our tax levy is only increasing \$1.8 million – 2% of \$90 million. Of the \$1.8 million that we are increasing taxes, one million is being absorbed by the health benefits increase and that is without any salary increases.

Mrs. Richardson read the following discussion items:

1. Letter from Department of the Army-ROTC requesting the use of facilities at Union High School (large gym, small gym and cafeterias) for the JROTC Battalion to host the North Jersey League Drill Championship on Saturday, March 7, 2020.
2. Letter requesting the use of the Union High School football field on Friday, May 29, 2020 from 5-10 p.m. for a community reading program entitled: “Friday Night Lights” sponsored by a grant received from the NJEA.

This is the same date as the Relay for Life event. Mr. Tatum it is your decision on how you want to handle this. It was recommended that we combine the two programs and have them on one day. It is a great grant and great opportunity. Mr. Tatum stated we will talk about this and get back to the Board with a recommendation and we will work something out.

3. Letter from the Township of Union Chamber of Commerce requesting the use of the Union High School facility site for the Chamber’s 10th Annual Mayor’s Day 5K Run on Sunday, September 20, 2020. The race begins at 9:00 a.m.
4. Request to Township of Union Board of Education to name the gymnasium at Jefferson School in Vauxhall in honor of Mr. Paul Robert Hayes.

Mrs. Richardson stated for 40 years Mr. Hayes worked evenings at Jefferson School gym. He had a positive impact on a countless number of young boys and girls who looked at him as a father figure. He taught them to respect him and each other. On Monday, Wednesday and

Friday nights, he provided a safe place for anyone to come have fun. He protected the kids to make sure no one was being bullied and that everyone had an opportunity to participate in the activities. Growing up in Vauxhall he understood the need for guidance and education. He created opportunities for college admissions, scholarship and employment. Many of the children he influenced went off to college, trade school or began successful careers because of the advice and guidance he provided. He is like an unsung hero. A letter describing Mr. Hayes is attached to the minutes.

Mr. McDowell stated he is being recognized by the Township of Union to receive the unsung hero award on February 29th.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Francis stated O-5 – bond counsel – how long is this agreement for? Mr. Vieira stated until we issue the bonds. Dr. Francis stated we are retaining them for the ESIP? Mr. Vieira stated right – the bonds that we will issue for the ESIP. The energy savings will be used to pay off the bonds. Dr. Francis asked what about future work? Mr. Vieira stated this is just for ESIP. I know they are providing specialized service I think we should try to, when we can, go out for RFPs.

Mr. Nufrio stated if you were to prepare an RFP for that what is the projected time? Mr. Vieira stated we wouldn't be able to do the projects this summer.

Dr. Francis stated no one is asking you to go out for RFP – that should have been done ahead of time. I don't know all this nonsense about talking about going out for an RFP. Mr. Nufrio stated this is not nonsense. Mrs. Williams stated we are going to have some decorum here – we are not going to do this.

Dr. Francis stated in the future, I think it is wise to go out for an RFP because we are always trying to save money in this district.

Mr. Tatum stated on the discussion items – 1 and 3 are standard resolutions that we have done in the past.

Afshan stated there is a question on item 2 so there is a hold on that right now. Mr. Vieira stated 1, 3 and 4 will become resolutions.

Personnel Committee Resolutions

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, for adoption:

P-2. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE LISTS

Approve Substitute Lists for the 2019-2020 school year in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio,
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. McDowell presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Richardson asked approving internships – when are they starting. Mr. Benaquista stated we approve them every month. The ones in IT are new and we are trying to get different internships in our district. We are working with Kean. Some are not just in the classroom; some are experiences in our offices – like HR. We are expanding bringing people in. Mrs. Paul is working with Lincoln Tech to try to get more resource hands in here to help her department as well. You will see this list every month.

Policy Committee:

Mr. Nufrio stated Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Ruiz and myself – we met twice and we included Mr. Tatum. These are the five policies that will be presented next week for approval.

Mr. Nufrio presented the following policies for first reading:

POL-1. POLICY 4110 – RE-EMPLOYMENT

Policy 4110 – Re-Employment, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member. (*first reading*)

POL-2. POLICY 4141/4231 – ESTABLISHING INITIAL PLACEMENT ON SALARY GUIDES

Policy4141/4231 – Establishing Initial Placement on Salary Guides, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member. (*first reading*)

POL-3. BYLAW 9130 – COMMITTEES

Bylaw 9130 – Committees, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member. (*first reading*)

POL-4. BYLAW 9270 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Bylaw 9270 – Conflict of Interest, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member. (*first reading*)

POL-5. REGULATION 9322 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

Regulation 9322 – Public Participation at Public Meetings, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member. (*first reading*)

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Francis stated I have a problem with two of the policies and two of the bylaws. The first one is File Code 4110 – why was it changed from five years back to three years? Mrs. Williams stated we changed it back to three years so people have the opportunity to come back to the district.

Dr. Francis stated I remember when this was adopted – I was on the Board with Mr. Arminio, Ronnie McDowell, Nancy Zuena and a few other people – this policy was originally the brainchild of Mr. Nufrio and the idea behind it was geared towards Noreen Lishak trying to keep her from coming back into the district. There were some other unwarranted affects for teachers that might have left but this was originally geared towards Noreen Lishak. It was a good policy. I had my own misgivings about Dr. Lishak – I didn't think she cared enough about our kids. I think she tried to undermine Dr. Martin and I think her whole idea was to become superintendent and that didn't work out because Mr. Tatum became superintendent. She wanted come in do her terms and leave this place before this became a "Newark or Irvington". Mr. Nufrio I thought it was a really good thing but I find it weird that we are reducing it. Why are we changing this policy? Mr. Tatum had a policy that he wanted to changed for over two years and nothing. Mr. Tatum stated it is on here tonight. Dr. Francis stated I know but why are we changing this? Who do we want to bring back?

Mrs. Williams stated this was directed at any one person. We are losing paras and good teachers and if they want to come back I don't think they should have to wait. Dr. Francis stated paras were let go – they didn't walk away. Mrs. Williams stated some of them resigned and if they want to come back to this district, I don't believe they should wait five years. Whatever happened before I got on the Board, happened before I got on the Board, I don't know anything about a Lishak or anything else or any policy designed to go after anybody. Dr. Francis asked was it your idea? Mrs. Williams stated actually it was.

Mr. Nufrio stated I would like to comment on it was all my idea – this was done collectively. There were many brain-childs I had that weren't done collectively or done at all. Secondly it was never intended for any one person. It was a time we were experiencing a number of individuals that had left the district and we were upset because some of those people we actually paid for their graduate work and that was the crutch of why that policy became a brain-child – I don't remember being the absolute one who did because there were a number of people on the committee besides myself. When I'm given a request or directive by the President or someone else, Mr. Tatum, he is the coordinator, it is my job as chairman to follow through and bring it to the attention of the committee and it was fully discussed and vetted by the committee. That is all I have to say about that.

Mr. McDowell asked would there be a situation or case where it would be up to the superintendent's discretion as to whether an employee can come back in less than three years? Mr. Tatum stated thank you for bringing that up. When this was being discussed, that was supposed to be an attribute of the policy that if indeed there was a critical need that the superintendent had discretion to re-employ that person with the recommendation of the Board; however, that was not included in the policy. When I went back to review it, I saw it was included. I think I even asked that question at one point as to whether I had any discretion. We

had a teacher that wrote a letter to you Mr. McDowell and it was forwarded to me and I thought I had discretion in this matter and I went back and looked and found out I didn't and we didn't rehire that person. It was originally discussed but it didn't make it into the policy. That is something you may want to rethink and add it to the policy.

Dr. Francis stated I think there is a policy or bylaw that we have that you have the right to suspend a policy. If that was the case that you wanted to bring someone back, you could. It is already there. Mr. Tatum stated in all due respect what happens here is if you want to do this, you turn to this page, if you want the answer, turn the page and you find the answer. I think the policy needs to be clear and concise. I don't have a problem with 3 or 5 years whatever the Board desires is not my concern. My concern is when I'm faced with a critical area and there is someone that we need, and in some cases people want to come back to the district, because they thought the grass was greener but they find out they had it great here and want to come back, I would take them back but unfortunately I can't. To suspend the policy and you are correct Dr. Francis without there being a discussion with the Board, then it appears that I'm circumventing the process that is why I would like to see it in black and white in that policy saying if I'm in that situation, the Board is giving me discretionary latitude to make that recommendation to the Board.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I don't recall any discussion about this additional language that you wanted. I don't think it is terrible. Mr. Tatum stated Mr. Nufrio and I spoke by phone one day about this and I said I don't have a problem with three years, whatever you guys want, but this was way before your time – this was the original we didn't speak this time around. But I want to put it on the table that is something we talked about 4-5 years ago and you bring up the same issue.

Mrs. Higgins asked besides the superintendent's position, what positions would it really effect? Five years, two years, if you don't want the person back, it doesn't mean they are automatically back. Mr. Tatum stated the superintendent's position goes by contract and there is a term served. A teacher may decide to leave the district and we got some one we trained and specialized training and they leave but maybe the policy should also say we are going to do the specialized training and they have to stay x-number of years or pay the money back. If people know that they are going to be required to stay or pay back the money the board put out, they may decide to stay.

Mr. Nufrio stated in my recollection, it also had to do with tuition. We also made some change on the pre-requisite for eligibility to get tuition reimbursement. There were a myriad of situations going on at the time. To simply focus on an individual, past, present or future, is not the spirit of what a policy is for. Of course every board member has a right to vote yes, no or indifferent. If a policy is recommended, it is reviewed, discussed, presented and voted on; that is how the process works. It doesn't mean if 1-4 individuals disagree that you say o.k. it is a bad policy, you still need five votes to pass it. End of story.

Mr. McDowell asked should we modify it? The other policy says the superintendent may, in individual cases, recommend to the board for consideration. That is the establishing issue on the salary guides so maybe the same thing needs to be in this policy. Mr. Nufrio stated

it just doesn't happen because he says he is overlooking this policy, the board still has to vote on it. Mr. Tatum stated how the policy is written now is like don't even try it. So that is something to think about. It is not just for me it is for anyone behind me, they should have that latitude.

Mrs. Williams asked as a Board do we want to add that to this policy? Mr. Nufrio stated whatever the board's will is, certainly we can add the additional language to ensure that Mr. Tatum has that latitude. It is inherent even in the policy that says you can ask for an abatement of that policy.

Dr. Francis stated File Code 9130 – this bylaw was just amended last January and you had a big discussion on it – we had a discussion before I left – but you guys decided to vote on it, approve and adopt it back in January. You changed the language to president “from will to may from time to time appoint such special committees as the business of the board may require”. Further down that same paragraph you tried to limit the scope of what this policy is for. It says “for legal, audit and health insurance” where is the banking service, architect, special services and all the other things. If you look at special services, legal fees – a lot of that stuff costs the district a lot more money. Why would you limit that only to legal, auditor and health insurance? To me that didn't make any sense. If this is one of the things the board itself has a right to determine, who are our architect, our bank, our lawyers, healthcare insurance broker – that should include all of them not just part of them. I don't think that after you guys voted on this and approved it last year and then turned around and tried to change it again – to me that doesn't make any sense. I think there is always suspicion as to why you are changing this again. I think the public will have a lot to say about it as well. For me, I think this changing from “may to will” and leaving out the other services is something that is suspicious and I think ConnectOne Bank I remember they were going to lose their bid because they didn't offer us the best rates and then when they came back crawling to us saying we will do better and we saved money for this district. Now we want to give that up and not include them in this. It doesn't make sense. If you all want to vote on that you can but I'm just telling you to me this is again nonsense. It is a waste of time and this policy itself is not helping our district nor is it helping our kids. It is just nonsense.

Afshan Ajmiri Giner stated Dr. Francis with regard to the review of RFPs, that language still says “will” from what I'm looking at. The “may” is only for the special committees to conduct board business. The ad hoc committees are entitled to create – that still says “will”. In terms of professional services, limiting them to legal, audit and health insurance, if you are suggesting that other professional services be included one way of doing that is citation to the Code that talks about RFPs, that would cover all. Dr. Francis stated I think professional services by itself would include all of them. So all that doesn't need to be there – the purpose of this policy are legal, audit and health insurance. Afshan stated and it is excluding other professional services. Dr. Francis stated yes. I think it is a play in words and it gives the lawyers, I'm not accusing you, to BS the whole board about this. I had gone through this with our previous lawyer. Afshan stated as the policy is written, the “board president will convene an ad hoc committee for professional services, which includes legal, audit and health insurance”. It still requires. Dr. Francis stated take that out, it doesn't need to be there. Again I have my vote.

Mr. McDowell stated when we talked about this the first time, it is nothing definite. Even from time to time, what does that mean? I do think it should say “the superintendent may from time to time” if that is what we want. If not, we have to take out “from time to time the president will appoint such a special committee” because when it says “time to time” what does that mean? It is up to their discretion which is I guess not all that bad but I do think adding the additional language as Dr. Francis said “for purposes of this policy legal, auditor and healthcare” that does not need to be there. There should be a period after services. The first sentence “the president may from time to time” – leaves it up to their discretion which depends on who is doing it at that time. If we can agree to take out the part that designates legal services, there is no need for that because it says “for professional services”. I think the policy was o.k. as it was. Dr. Francis stated you worked on it for three months arguing.

Dr. Francis stated Bylaw 9270 – conflict of interest – “(a) no board member shall hold any form of paid employment with the district while he/she is serving for six months” and they want to make it “two years after leaving office”. What board member is planning on doing something with the district after we leave? I want to say two things. One, there is a Statute 18A:12-1.1 – it says “no member of the board of education shall during the term for which he/she elected or appointed be eligible to be appointed to any paid office or position required to be filled by the board unless he shall resign or cease to be a member at least six months prior to his appointment, except in cases where the office or position is by law required or permitted to be filled by a member of the board”. Mrs. Ruiz stated that is a minimum, not a maximum. Dr. Francis stated in most school districts that I looked into have six months. If you want to change you go ahead but I always think that is always some underlying reason why somebody wants to change it. The other thing is “(c) no board member shall serve as mayor or as a member of the municipal or county level governing body of the district while he or she is serving nor for two years after leaving the office”. I don’t think the board of education or the district can legislate what a board member does outside once they leave office except for them coming back to work for the district. I think that should be removed. I don’t think it should be there. Tell me if I’m wrong. Afshan stated you are not incorrect. I do think “while he/she is serving” needs to be in there because it is not clear otherwise. The other part our office can double check and confirm – it seems legally not appropriate in terms of dictating what a board member does as long as it is not connected to the school district or the board’s operations.

Mrs. Ruiz asked will you let the policy committee know what your findings are? Afshan stated we will confer with you. I can tell you right now from looking at it, it doesn’t seem appropriate but I will confirm.

Mr. Nufrio stated the same theory and spirit of the first which was letter (a) was applied to letter (c) and we felt that a conflict has many different possibilities in which case it was pointed out to the committee that just as you would choose not to have somebody elected to be or eligible for a paid position within the district, for a 6-month period, a two-year period would be more practical was predicated on the fact that there are many things that the board members are privy to confidentially or even with regards to budget practices. With that the same recommendation was made to the committee that this could possibly present a conflict if that individual were to hold a position in the city or the county because they are in possession of possibly some very serious information that should not be a part of any entity and that was the

reason why. Afshan stated the conflict of interest policy comes from the Code of Ethics and there are a lot of advisory opinions and decisions related to those matters and what we will do is scan through everything to see whether this is going to be appropriate regarding two years or just with after leaving office that I can see being a legal issue – we will look into that.

Dr. Francis stated I'm not a fan, I think six months is fine. I might want to leave office in three years and become a coach or something. Why should I have to wait two years?

The last policy 9322 is about limiting the amount of time the audience, the stakeholders get to speak, I'm not a big fan of that. I know they were trying to limit the amount of people to speak and I think that would have been in violation of the Sunshine Law – that is my opinion. I think the board can limit the speaking time. I'm not a fan of three minutes. I think five minutes was fine. I would like to see how that would have gone over at that town meeting we had last week when people came out to speak about the lockdown. I think five minutes is sufficient.

Mr. McDowell stated Policy 4141 – there is something that is not clear to me. Paragraph number four says “up to seven of the ten years” – it doesn't specify what the ten years are? Mr. Tatum stated there was an amendment – I believe the way it reads is supposed to identify any experience in their lifetime and it is at the discretion of the person who is hiring to determine how much that experience is relevant because it wasn't within the immediate ten years. Mr. McDowell stated that is fine but I think it needs to say something like you said - the past ten years or last ten years. Mr. Tatum stated 7-10 years in the field of education.

Mr. Nufrio stated it does give discretion to the superintendent to present any special circumstance. It is exactly verbatim that Mr. Tatum presented. I added the word “additionally”. The 7-10 years was the original; 7 of the last 10 years meaning having held a full-time teaching position, it doesn't specify that but that has been the past practice. The latitude he has as superintendent, he can make any recommendations to the board, that is already the authority that he has. Mr. McDowell stated that is fine with me. I wanted to be clear so someone down the road doesn't interpret in a different way. I think we need a word to say “the last ten years” or whatever.

Mrs. Ruiz stated do we want to add language so that it says “up to 7 of the last 10 years of education experience may be considered for initial placement on the teacher's salary guide”. Is that what you want? Does that reflect your intention? If it does we can add it in. Mr. McDowell stated it is clear to me. Mr. Nufrio stated it shouldn't be 10 years, 20 years ago. You want to maintain some continuity. It is like any other job, if you haven't been in the business in such a long time, it may not be the best thing for the district, for the children.

Mrs. Williams stated we want to change 4110 – reemployment – add at the discretion of superintendent – can we agree as a board to add that language in there? No objections.

Mrs. Williams stated 4141 – we are going to add “up to 7 years of the last 10 years of educational experience”. No objections.

Mrs. Williams stated 9130 – stays the same. Mrs. Ruiz asked are we going to pull it? Afshan stated if you leave it as professional services, it covers essentially everything that is identified as professional services under 18A:18A regarding the RFP process. It addresses Dr. Francis' concerns regarding limiting it to only legal, audit and health at this point. If it says professional services, then it covers everybody. Mr. Nufrio stated the spirit behind that was also a joint discussion with Mr. Vieira and Mr. Tatum because he is also part of the process. What was arrived at was some of those professional services are licensed individuals and had a lengthy conversation with Mr. Vieira about what services would necessitate an RFP. His response was most of them don't. Afshan stated none of them do – they are professional services. Mr. Nufrio stated in order to focus on the ones that were the most important aspect of what a board's mandate is hiring the superintendent, budget and policies. Those are the three areas that the board has the obligation to do more than just rely on the recommendations of the business administrator and the superintendent. At that point the ad hoc committee may arrive at a different selection of the number of RFP's that were presented. We certainly experienced a lot of time and delays with regards to that and it was recommended to the committee that should have changed because we want to be able to do things with expediency and not delays but the focusing on those three were primarily delegated to the fact that the board's main concerns and main mandates are budget, policy and superintendent.

Afshan stated just to clarify, if you do use that limiting language, which for the purpose of this policy, are these three areas, if you do go out for a RFP than the vendor could easily say that your policy says you are only limited to legal, audit and insurance so that is something to keep in mind because the policy limits. But again, you do not have to go out for RFPs for anything. Mr. Nufrio stated they can't interfere with internal process. Afshan stated if they are unhappy with a decision, then they can file and say they violated a board policy and the RFP process was tainted.

Mrs. Ruiz asked the paragraph that says “the president may from time to time...special committee as the business of the Board may require. These committees shall consist of not fewer than two members and shall function only for the specific purpose for which they have been appointed.” When we put out RFPs for food services, food services doesn't fall under professional services but Mrs. Minneci did convene an ad hoc committee. That first sentence does allow for that to happen. Afshan stated the first sentence allows for you to have a special committee like you did for food services. The second sentence is the one where the president will convene ad hoc committees for professional services. The first sentence allows you to create special committees for those that are not professional services. Mrs. Ruiz stated then all RFPs would be covered under this policy. No one could come back and say we violated because the first sentence gives us room to convene a committee.

Afshan stated the second sentence relates to RFP's for professional services only. Banking is a professional service under the Statute so what this language is doing is limiting and that was the concern of Dr. Francis. I can pull up the code of what is considered professional services – architects, nursing, physicians, your carriers for insurance. So what this is saying is you will create an ad hoc committee for RFPs for professional services for just the three. Mrs. Ruiz stated so we should eliminate that. Afshan stated I'm not saying one or the other, I'm just trying to explain what the concern is and what some of the discussion is.

Mrs. Higgins asked what is the downside of just having professional services? Afshan stated it covers everybody. Mrs. Ruiz stated I think it is more inclusive. Mrs. Higgins stated it doesn't mean it is a requirement. It just means that we can. Mrs. Ruiz stated "will" is a requirement. Afshan stated it is a requirement. If you go out for proposals for professional services, the Board President will convene.

Mr. Nufrio stated the intent was not to exclude but to specifically identify those that should absolutely have an ad hoc committee. Mrs. Ruiz stated then maybe we should make the language "including but not limited to" and then we can list what we want to list and there is still room for the others. Dr. Francis stated there is no downside when we can save money.

Mr. Nufrio stated it has to come to a vote next week on second reading. Being there are two Board members that aren't here and the second reading is next week, and as such it would be incumbent upon the Board to take a vote as to what should or should not be done. It doesn't mean the second reading has to be a final reading. Next week should be the time to address the possible changes that the committee may or may not address and that is my recommendation.

Mrs. Higgins asked is there a difference between a special committee and an ad hoc committee? Afshan stated a special committee is purely for the purposes of a particular circumstance. A good example is last year's food service. An ad hoc committee can essentially serve for the purposes of reviewing multiple RFP's.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mr. McDowell presented the Residency Committee agenda.

Technology Committee:

Dr. Francis gave an update from the Technology Committee. He stated that Mrs. Paul and Mr. Vieira would be meeting with Fairview Insurance to get details on cyber security insurance coverage. They want to arrange with AIG, our cyber security insurance company, to have a conference call regarding the coverage.

The replacement Chromebooks for the high school – RFP for bidding on the financing of the Chromebooks was completed by ESCNJ and will be posted in the newspaper today.

A meeting with A+ Technology to get demo on halo detection device including vaping; responses from schools that have installed this device. After installation there will be training sessions for maintenance and IT.

My School Bucks – about a balance uploaded into Genesis – still working with Ann Hart on this. Through Mr. Benaquista, Pomptonian, Mrs. Hart – notifications are being sent out regarding school lunch balances.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved next week.

Unfinished Business

Mrs. Ruiz stated the Livingston and Connecticut Farms Elementary Schools are having their Tricky Tray events.

Mrs. Higgins stated Jefferson has their honor student event tomorrow night.

New Business

Mr. Nufrio stated Jefferson School receiving a special recognition – are we planning anything to address that? Mr. Tatum stated we are waiting on more information from Mrs. Damato.

Comments from the Public:

Nellis Regis-Darby stated about five months ago the district gave parents a survey and I have been asking for three months for the results. The district keeps telling the public and me that they are going to give us more transparency but after four months there is no evidence of the results of the survey. It is a disservice to parents. It took 15 minutes to do that survey.

Dr. Morgan has been asking for intervention data and last month Mr. Tatum gave that data to the public. My question is how are you going to support the black and brown students because their suspension rate is the highest within the district. What things are in place to support black and brown students in this district?

Policy 4110 – my suggestion to the Board is to leave it at five years and give the superintendent the opportunity to hire whoever he feels is going to fill that position. My suggestion is to leave it alone.

Policy 9130 – this policy was implemented one year ago and it was moved one time. The one time it was moved and successful was the RFP for food services. If something isn't broken, why are you changing it right now?

Policy 9270 – I did some research and spoke to three of my buildings, and we looked at state statute – it says that if a board member leaves, 6 months – so why is it that this district, especially the policy committee, is trying to go above state statute. I think that is illegal. We should take a look at that.

Also Policy 9322 – my only comment is if this Board had an effective president, she would find better ways to be efficient with communicating to the public instead of trying to silence the public by giving them three minutes to speak. We have a lot of members in the public that have disabilities and three minutes is not enough time to express whether they have positive praise for the district or whether they want to say something of concern to the district. As a board, you have to think about those that have special needs and want to come to the meeting to have their voices heard.

Why does it seem that the policy committee is making changes to adult policies rather than making changes to policies that effect students of the district. Every policy tonight is an

adult policy. No policies here tonight is about making changes for the students in this district and that is your priority as board members.

All day pre-k, obviously we are transitioning for every all day pre-k for the entire pre-k program, my suggestion is if we are going to do that I'm hoping that the district can come together and create some kind phonics program, if we don't do this at this pre-k age, we are going to fail our students early. If you can come together and get that kind of curriculum that supports phonics for pre-k to first graders, then we will be on the right path.

Susan Lipstein stated I came late because I was at the Township committee where I gave a statement and I had five minutes. It seems to me that we need to be consistent in the community. There is no reason to lessen that. Either you don't care or you want to go home early. I read a statement to them about my concerns about the lack of communication that the community got during the lockdown. I was monitoring things on different Facebook media and I was getting texts from parents who were actually onsite. Then I got a phone call from a parent who couldn't get a hold of anybody and get any information. The lockdown started at 10:22 and they didn't get any updates and it was 1 o'clock. I was able to give her an update that I got from a parent that was onsite and who spoke to the police captain. I got a call from Telemundo for information and I don't give information but I let the police know this and I'm letting you know to and I told Mr. Tatum and Mr. Benaquista and Mr. Hoyt because you have to be able to communicate and there has to be a spokesperson. There needs to be an update and there needs to be a safe place for parents to wait – not on campus when possibly there is a gun situation. Not having a hundred parents standing there, they need to go to a safe place. I suggested Town Hall and I suggested that a Township Committee person come speak with them and calm them down because you don't need frantic parents. I know you had a meeting but I didn't go to it. I also found a suggestion on the web that I emailed to everybody that it was put out by a middle school in Texas entitled "For parents, what happens during a lockdown".

Also I found out that all the computers were down at the police department and he didn't know how to get the information out and I think that needs to be addressed. We have a reverse 911; we have Channel 34. My suggestion is to inform the entire community when there is a lockdown. I live near the high school and if I know there is a situation, I won't travel – I don't want to add to the traffic for the emergency personnel. There is a lot more that needs to be done. I did not want to go to Town Committee and not bring it up because it is only fair that you hear from me.

Laura Detjen stated I have three things that are concerning to me. The electives at the high school and I'm glad there was a CAD teacher on the list to be approved. I was with my 8th graders during the information session on the pathways of the high school where they have to choose their courses. It is a great program and presentation. I did notice a sample schedule for incoming freshman and of course it included World Language. Everyone is aware that I was blindsided that April 30th French and German were being eliminated at the middle school level. This current 7th grade class is the last class that has had all three courses that we offer at the high school as far as World Language. The current 8th graders do have last year's exploratory cycle classes to keep in mind when they are choosing their language. I'm wondering and hoping that the exploratory World Languages are put back into the middle school level so that the children

have some choice on exploration before they go to the high school. I hope it is not that Spanish will be their only choice at the high school. I hope it won't be eliminated up there too.

The other thing is as far as honors and AP classes and the continuation of those programs, only Spanish students are the only ones that will be able to be in an honors class as a freshman at the high school because there is no opportunity for French and German to be recommended any more. There is no longer a French I program. It is no longer available for that track, only for Spanish.

Putting that back into whatever configuration or academy you are envisioning that I plan to the curriculum committee quite a bit now that I know who the curriculum committee is looking into the future; I hope that is an opportunity for all students to go through all honors and AP and not just the Spanish.

We are left with the leadership in the financial literacy that replaced the French and German. I believe that is going well. Nobody has asked me how it is going or followed up and we have a wonderful supervisor who is observing us. He is doing a great job. I would like to communicate with the curriculum committee regarding how much exactly is needed and what are the State's mandates. I don't believe we need financial literacy every single year. There is a certain amount that has to be done in the middle school years. Leadership is not State mandated. I love the program. I do believe having taught it now and I'm in the fourth cycle, I do believe it is a program we can have in 6th grade and 7th grade. We can put back the languages. We are the same two teachers that teach the languages so we can do it all.

With the bus driver shortage, I recently requested a field trip for my 8th grade leadership students to go to Kean University. I hope it was approved. I was told that due to the bus shortage, we will not be able to get there on time for when the conference starts. These are programs and opportunities I would love for the kids but because of our lack of funding or allocation of funds, I can't drive them there myself. I'm sure parents would love to bring them to Kean themselves but it is unfortunate for the kids that don't have that option. I'm hoping something happens and we can get there in time for the conference and Union middle schools will not be the only ones arriving late.

Finally I wanted to speak not exactly the RFP process but doing it earlier in advance when we are projecting the needs – especially the ESS program and the para situation. Could you have imagine if we had done that earlier. Maybe we would be in a different position right now.

Bernadette Watson stated great to hear that you want to do the re-registration but I do hope that you will ask for input in the district, in the schools – those of us that do it on a daily basis. We have some great things that we would like to add.

I'm also here on behalf of Mrs. Damato, the principal, the leadership committee and the staff at Jefferson School. We were kind of blindsided tonight on discussion item number four with wanting to name the gym after a gentleman from the community. You know we have been working hard in our building. We did get the school character. We just completed our national

application and waiting to hear back for that. On the back burner we also were going to submit to the Board a name of a former employee to the name the gym after him. We are asking the Board to reconsider before you jump on anything, give us an opportunity to submit our proposal for having the gym named after Joe Russell, former employee. He grew up in the neighborhood, he lived across the street, he went to the schools, he served not only the district as a head custodian, and finishing out at Hannah Caldwell, he came back to us at Jefferson School as the greeter until his death. He is a combat veteran, three times. This was something we were going to come to you about. No disrespect to Mr. Hayes. I lived here all my life; I never have run into Mr. Hayes. We are just asking for an opportunity.

Jill Hall stated Friday night lights – some people said that is too much in one weekend. There is a couple of things – that grant has to be done by the end of the school year. Secondly, if you are going to be in Town for a community event on a Saturday, let's plan for it for Sunday and let's make it a whole weekend. It might not be a bad idea.

I also got a fast grant from the NJEA and I want to thank Suzanne Whitley who really helped me in that process and we will be bringing in Sam Anthony Speaks – he is a motivational speaker. He lived in Union, he went to Union High School and he had an addiction journey and his journey into recovery and he comes and speaks to the students and to the parents. There is an assembly piece for the kids and then a parent program through the generosity of the NJEA.

We spent a lot of time in the last week talking about what went wrong with the lockdown. At no point did anyone talk about any of the things that went right. There were a lot of things we loved and there are a lot of things that we can improve on. We have to talk about the kids. There were 2,000 kids in that building on that day who took direction, who trusted the teachers to keep them safe, who followed the process, who learned a lot about one another, who started to really take care of the other kids that needed to be taken care of, kids that they would have never had any interaction with, that were afraid and these kids stepped up. I watched them walk out arm and arm, hugging their teachers and thanking them. I saw the email, I got the box of cookies and I didn't even have any kids with me. I got a beautiful box of cookies with a note – “we just knew you would keep us safe”. I think we need to shift the focus on all the things that went well. The kids were amazing but they are struggling and so are the teachers and we also haven't talked about that. We spent a lot of time in counseling and we have systems set up. Counselors have been very busy over the last two weeks with kids. We are happy to do that and that is what we are there for. We have done a lot of focus groups. We are talking about what we can do for them and how to support them and the teachers. Please in these discussions can we shift – it is so easy to talk about the negative things; we need to start looking at the positive things. Those kids were amazing and extraordinary. We should be proud of them and I think we are but we just don't say that. We get stuck in all the negative stuff. Let's shift that and tell you that there were a lot of things going right at the high school on that day. I'm really proud of them and I'm proud to work there and proud of the teachers and the staff that were present and helping those kids.

Chasity Santana stated I sent the district and Mrs. Minneci a blog from the New Jersey School Board Association and it was specifically on communications. It is a 45-minute audio blog. I'm hoping that it will get to everyone sitting at this table. It is with the Ramsey school

district and learning consultants of things similar to which you just said. Things in the district – you look at it before, you look at it during and you also look at it after. It is great information. Maybe Mrs. Moses and Mrs. Minneci can cascade it to you guys.

The school bucks thing, in order to reload it there is a charge. It is minimal but you need to mention it.

Saturday detention – my child gets Saturday detention – I walked into the room of the first Saturday detention and I saw 13 black and brown boys, and they were sitting there reading or doing an assignment and I think this is such a waste. This is the audience that we need to help make better decisions. Why aren't we engaging these kids with good speakers? I'm sure somebody would do it pro bono. I will beg everybody in New Jersey if you want me to. Our Saturday detention should be filled with much more than doing an assignment and read a book. This is the audience that needs the help to become better. To do what it is to make them great. As I sat there, I asked Mr. Malanda, can I do something, can I bring them donuts – he said Mrs. Santana please go home. I said o.k. but I'm going to bring it to the Board. These are the kids that need us. We need to make it happen and I'm sure it is happening in Burnet and the high school.

As everyone knows I have a Type I diabetic and my biggest fear is when that lockdown happens, none of my children were in the high school, but I thought about him in that situation. I'm trying to put things in place for his 504 but one of the biggest things that I found out through this journey, teachers are not CPR certified, glucagon certified, epi-pen certified. I was told because of contractual reasons, you don't have to be. Some are but because of a bunch of things that don't matter to me but if someone is in a room for 6-7 hours with my child and God forbid he goes into diabetic ketoacidosis I would like them to know how to draw glucagon or an epi-pen or CPR certified and that is where I am at and that will be my journey.

Mrs. Hall stated at the high school we do a social emotional learning piece at Saturday detentions where we do focus groups and small group counseling to make better use of that time. Maybe we can talk about pushing that into the middle schools.

Cathy Sharpe stated I would like to speak to the policy of public participation. As a person who takes a lot of your time, meeting after meeting, this is an important issue to me personally but mostly for the people sitting here and at home who come out if there is a problem. Just think tonight, if you Board members were held to three minutes, what would have happened tonight? None of you would have gotten to finish what you wanted to get across to somebody. When I come up to speak, most of the time I am talking off the cuff. When you don't have it prepared, three minutes – you aren't going to get very much out and I think you owe it to the people here and the people at home. They are the ones that put you in these seats that you are in because we all felt that you were people that would listen to what we had to say. You might not agree with us but you would listen. Now you are saying we don't want to listen. This is not fair. I really hope you put yourself in our places before you make a final decision on dropping this down to three minutes.

Suehay Monge stated I hope to address the policy from five minutes to three minutes. I want to thank Dr. Francis for championing all the policies tonight. My concern is students. The other night, I thank you for allowing the students to take as much time as they needed to get what they needed out because they were going through a lot after the lockdown. But in the situation like this they are only going to have three minutes and that might not be enough for some students. You have students with disabilities and they won't be able to get it out in three minutes. You have parents who speak English as a second language – it may not come as quickly to them. In addition to parents that can't attend, I had a parent send me a message tonight asking me to talk about the CAD program and I won't have to cover my piece and I can't represent him as a parent. People can't make it because we live in a working community and it is not right. It is now 9:24 p.m. I took time and Mr. Nufrio took 10 minutes talking about health insurance or something like that. Dr. Francis although it was a meaningful conversation, that took 15-20 minutes. In addition, the back and forth took another 10-20 minutes. No offense to Mr. Taylor but if he was here that would be another 30 minutes. The reality is we are sitting here through all of that because it is necessary, you should be sitting here through all of it for us because it is necessary and we are your stakeholders. We have children that go to this district and we need to be heard and sometimes three minutes is not enough.

I was wondering if there was an update on the CAD program. I saw there was a teacher posted on there to be approved today. What is the projected start date for that? Is there any way to share the experience on that teacher and what is the plan for the substitutes for the interim when the teacher is actually going to start.

The lunch program – I'm glad they sent out the robo call about the school bucks I think that is a start to get everybody on board. We really should be pushing the application. Pomptonian was to do a survey with the students. I'm not sure if that has been done. Who is the designated liaison for this because I'm seeing things online about molded cookies, smaller portions and this is a great company and the Board did a lot of work getting these people to come here and they are in other communities that are very happy with them. Like I tell my children, if you invite people to your home and you are not taking care of your home and you are not supervising what your guests are doing, they are going to do what they want to do and that is what happened with ARAMARK – they were here 50 years and no one was checking on them and making sure they were doing what they were supposed to be doing. We really need to hold these people accountable or we are going to end up in the same situation that we were before.

April 1st tricky tray at the high school – we need donations – baskets and things to put in them. If you are willing to donate, that would be great.

Lastly, the lockdown – I want to thank the district for having that; Mrs. Moses, Mr. Tatum, Mr. Benaquista for being there. I needed to talk about this because there were parents there. In regards to the students that left the building, a parent was addressing the panel and just asking why were they brought back into the building that seemed unsafe and they had experiences at work and that was not the protocol. The response from the Chief was very concerning to me, he said what are we supposed to do with them, babysit them? That is scary to me and it scares our kids. To be honest that is not the answer that should have been given. Mrs. Moses I want to applaud you because things do happen and mistakes were made but you took

accountability for that and said that wasn't supposed to happen, the kids were to be taken to Burnet. As parents we understand that things don't always go 100%. A lot of things went right but the things that didn't go well, the worst thing you can do to a parent is to try to brush it under the rug. Take accountability for it and say it won't happen again. This is supposed to happen.

Mrs. Lopes stated the school bucks, they charge \$2.49 for each time you put money into the account. I have two kids so I have to put money on two accounts so every time I put in money, that two meals just to put the money in there. I'm doing it because the money didn't go in last year so I'm doing the school bucks for my own piece of mind. But there might be people out there that don't have that \$2.50. It is money that they need there for their kids to eat. I don't know if there is anything you can do or not. Maybe parents aren't doing it because it is \$2.50 every time you put money in.

When doing the budget, I hope you are not cutting out last minute and have all the issues that we have been having in the past years.

Are we going with the 5.9 increase or are we looking for other options?

Jeffrey Monge stated I'm speaker number ten – not everybody went to five minutes. Even if you take two minutes away from those ten people, it is 20 minutes. Let's take that into account. We have been here for two hours before we had an opportunity to speak and that is just an extra 20 minutes. On average this is what you get at most Board meetings so please take that into account.

F-13 – the professional services – if you look at the original budget to what is being proposed now. It is a 33% increase from the original budget - \$830,000 – legal cost is up 295% so going back a number of years when we had changed from Mr. Damato to a third party and I give credit to Mr. Nufrio for pushing that. We saw that there was a savings for using a third party versus having Mr. Damato here. For a couple of years we were about \$200,000 a year. Today we are talking about \$650,000. There is obviously something wrong in what is going on here. It is something we need to correct. We are here fighting for paras or librarians or what have you and we are giving it to professional services.

Committees – the policy – it should stay the same. Anybody who wants to go back to the TV monitor, we fought for five months trying to fix that because it was a disaster when we were trying to do this committee of the whole and have the Board make these decisions. Mrs. Richardson you remember that at the very end we actually agreed and we had something approved and the biggest proponent, with all due respect, Mr. Nufrio it was you. We actually tried to include some of your language and we had something the whole Board approved. I think it should stay the same.

O-5 – you have approved bond counsel – there is a ton of bond counsel that do exactly this. You didn't take it to an RFP. If you look at the agreement and monetize it, has anybody come up with a number that it is going to cost us because we will come out with a retainer and there is cost related to it and how much the bond issuance is. The policy that we have in place today, basically said that should have been an RFP and we didn't do it. And now we are up

against a clock, that should have been done months ago. The savings program, I agree with and I heard someone was selected and that should have been an RFP. Here we are in February and we are going to be going into March and I know how tough it is to get everybody in place to be able to do deals in the summer time. If we have policies in place, let's follow them.

The lockout – there should be a summary of findings. People were there for four hours. There was criticism about the lack of notes. No one recorded it. Or at least there is a recording that could be shared but there should be a summary of findings, a summary of action items so we can all have accountability. We talked about inclusion of parents and students in that process and the staff as well – that should be part of it.

Counseling – we don't have enough counselors at our schools. The one thing about communications – the Genesis idea is fantastic but I also heard that Union police systems were down and the Chief told me we couldn't get a hold of you if we wanted to so my question that I want to be answered if possible – when did the police department tell the Board of Education – here's the message reach out to the parents. They couldn't use their system. No one knew that.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:35 p.m. All present voting YES MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

MANUEL E. VIEIRA
BOARD SECRETARY