

**TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 7, 2020**

**NOTICE OF MEETING:**

**TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:**

The organization meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 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.

Manuel E. Vieira, the Board Secretary, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

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

Mr. Vieira administered the oaths of office to the newly elected Board members – Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Nancy Minneci and Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams.

**Announcement of newly-elected Board Members:**

1. Dr. Guy Francis
2. Nancy Minneci
3. Mary Lynn Williams

**PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:**

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

**ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:**

None

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Manuel Vieira

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. Vieira read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

Dr. Morgan read the District's Mission Statement.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

None

Mr. Taylor stated I would like to state the ground rules for the process so Board members are aware. In preparation for this evenings meeting, I reviewed your bylaws which govern in

accordance with State statute and your individual bylaws, the election and duties of president. Bylaw 9121 – I will note that the bylaw is silent as to the voting requirements and process. Your Bylaw 9322.1 – governs the organization of the meeting pursuant to State statute. The Board is required, when you have a November election, to organize in the first week of January. One of the first obligations and responsibilities you have is to elect a president and vice president. If the Board fails to elect a president this evening at the actual organization meeting, the Executive County Superintendent has the right and responsibility to appoint a president from amongst the membership.

Pursuant to Bylaw 9325.4, the voting method essentially all votes require a majority vote of members present in voting. This would fall in that category in the absence of specific guideline or rule in terms of nominating a president.

I understand past practice, for lack of a better term, you have a nomination, that nomination is seconded. You do not need to have a roll call for the person that is nominated. There can be more than one person nominated for the office of president.

I would recommend that the first person who is nominated, if there is a second person, you would do a roll call on that first person first. If that first person was nominated gets a majority vote of the members present and voting, that person becomes the president of the Board of Education. If that person does not get a majority vote, let's say a 4-5 vote, then you would go to the second person. Does everyone understand that?

Dr. Francis stated I have a concern about that. The reason I have a concern Mr. Taylor is if you only take the first person who is being nominated for a vote, without considering the other candidate – the Board member, I might not have given my vote to the first person. I think the way it should be done is that you put on the floor the candidates, it doesn't matter how many, you put them all on the floor and then call a roll call and if you ask me I will give you the name of the person I'm voting for. So there is no rush to decide. Let everybody nominate who they want to nominate, if they accept, then you can do a roll call and you can ask each individual person who they want. For example, Mr. Nufrio as president and make a nomination for him, then five people vote but maybe if Kim Ruiz was up there on the floor maybe I wouldn't give Mr. Nufrio my vote – maybe I would give it to Kim.

Mr. Taylor stated I understand and my proposed process is not intended to rush any one to nominate someone before the other person. Quite frankly the process you outlined is no different than voting on one versus the other. Because when you vote for member A versus member B, you have done the same thing. Dr. Francis stated I may not want that individual. Mr. Taylor stated you may not so therefore you can vote no for that person. All I'm saying is if two people are nominated, Board member A and Board member B, when your name is called to vote if you cast your vote for Board member B, you are in essence voting no for Board member A. It is no different from the first process.

Dr. Francis stated I would prefer that all the nominees for positions be on the floor. Mr. Taylor stated I will defer to the majority will of the body. I was just trying to in the absence of clear guidance in your bylaws, suggest a process that other boards of education in the State of

New Jersey, one of which I was at their meeting last night, and their bylaws follow that process that I just outlined. I thought it was fair and clean for you to do. If the majority of your colleagues want to do it your way, by way of saying the name, that is fine.

Dr. Francis stated this was done last year but it wasn't done in previous years. You weren't here, it was always you made the nomination for the person and then the votes were taken. Mr. Taylor stated I gave a recommendation. I won't be offended if you don't take the recommendation as a Board. I'm just saying I reviewed in preparation of the meeting your bylaws, there is no clear directly in terms of the process. In the absence of same I tried to recommend the process that would be orderly and transparent so that it is clear. If you, being the Board want to do it, that is fine. I was just making a recommendation.

Mrs. Ruiz stated your proposal that all individuals be nominated before we vote except we will vote in order of nomination? Mr. Taylor stated my proposal was anyone could be nominated, if there was more than one person nominated, that is fine; however, the first person whose name was nominated and seconded, once the nominations were closed, the Board would do a roll call vote in the order of the candidates who were nominated. For instance, if your name was nominated first – great, we would do a roll call vote and if it is 9-0 you are president. There is no need to go to the second person because you already won. Obviously if nine people voted for you, they weren't going to vote for the other person anyway.

Mrs. Ruiz stated so all nominees will be known before we vote. Mr. Taylor stated correct. Mrs. Ruiz stated I just wanted to clarify because we are all saying the same thing in a different way.

Mr. Nufrio stated with all due respect Dr. Francis, as long as I have been on this Board, we have always done it this way. It was explained to me the very first time that it would not be repetitive in the voting process. As you said, suppose it is a 9-0 vote, what's the purpose of embarrassing the other person to receive a 0-9 vote, of course that is an extreme result. If we are going to change it, meaning both names are going to be proposed and then each of us votes for that purpose that we wish to have, the recording of the vote needs to be done as to who actually received the majority. I think that would require the Board right now to make a change in that process, unless you say differently. Mr. Taylor stated let the record reflect we agree.

Mr. Nufrio stated so it would require someone to propose that way – name both individuals or if there are three individuals – the roll call is done. Once all three names have been placed on the table for consideration, then we each individually chose the individual that we wish to vote for. Mr. Taylor stated correct. Say there is three people nominated and pursuant to Roberts Rules, applicable case law – there are arguably in the absence of a clear definition one could win by plurality. Let say there are three people, three people vote for one person, two for the other and one for the other and arguably that person with three votes may win under that theory. However, your Bylaw 9325.4 would trump that and that would not carry – you need a majority of members present and voting. For instance, if you had two law firms being considered, you wouldn't put them both on the floor and call out which one you are voting for. There would be a motion to appoint law firm A and if they get appointed, they win and if they don't get appointed then you go to law firm B. That is how you typically conduct business of the

board of education. This is how this Board conducts business on virtually every other recommendation that comes before you from the administration and/or the motions that are made from the Board members from the floor. I am not trying to propose anything to upset the apple cart or reinvent the wheel, I'm just trying to give you some legal advice that is orderly and logical and fair for all Board members present this evening.

Mr. Vieira stated I agree with Mr. Taylor that we should just nominate the candidates for president and if there is more than one, if you vote no for the first person – go to the second.

ORGANIZATION:

Mr. Vieira called for nominations for the Office of President:

Moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Williams that Nancy Minneci be nominated for the Office of President

Mr. Vieira called for other nominations

Moved by Dr. Francis, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz that Ronnie McDowell be nominated for the Office of President.

Mr. McDowell stated thank you Dr. Francis but I respectfully decline.

Mr. Vieira asked for other nominations. No other nominations made.

ROLL CALL: For Mrs. Minneci as President

AYES: Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams

NAYES: Dr. Francis, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz

ABSTAIN: Mr. McDowell

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Vieira stated congratulations Mrs. Minneci.

Mrs. Minneci assumed the chair as President. Mrs. Minneci stated thank you for your support and I look forward to chairing this year. I thank everyone who supported me in the election.

Now I will call for nominations for the Office of Vice President

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Higgins that Mary Lynn Williams be nominated for the Office of Vice President.

Mrs. Minneci called for other nominations

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Dr. Morgan that Ronnie McDowell be nominated for the Office of Vice President.

Mrs. Minneci asked for any other nominations. No other nominations.

ROLL CALL: For Mrs. Williams as Vice President

AYES: Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams  
NAYES: Dr. Francis, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Ruiz  
ABSTAIN: None MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Taylor stated both votes carried. For the record, if we followed the process that you referenced sir, it would be the same outcome. One would have five and one would have four – same outcome. Dr. Francis stated but then we wouldn't have to say no to anyone. I would just give my vote. Mr. Taylor stated whether you are in congress, the senate, council, board members, it is yes, no, abstain – that is Roberts Rules of Order. I'm not being argumentative with you, it is just the process.

Mrs. Minneci stated we move to the order of the meeting.

MEETING NIGHTS

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the schedule of committee meetings, work sessions and regular meetings be adopted in accordance with the schedule, in the hands of each board member; and be it further moved that copies be posted in the Administration Building and with the Township Clerk and that copies be sent to the Star Ledger and the Union County Local Source for publication.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Mrs. Minneci, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams  
NAYES: None  
ABSTAIN: None MOTION CARRIED

POLICY MANUAL

Moved by Mr. Nufrio, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, that the Policy Manual of the Township of Union Board of Education presently in effect be hereby readopted.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci  
NAYES: None  
ABSTAIN: None MOTION CARRIED

DESIGNATE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS

Moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the Board adopt the formal resolution in the hands of each board member designating the Union County Local Source and

the Star Ledger as newspapers to receive notice of meetings and fixing charges for notices to the public meetings in the amount of \$60 for 2020.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson,  
Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAYES: Dr. Francis

ABSTAIN: Dr. Morgan

MOTION CARRIED

DESIGNATE INTERNET WEBSITE FOR OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION

Moved by Mrs. Ruiz, seconded by Mrs. Higgins, that the Board adopt formal resolution designating the Township of Union Board of Education's internet website ([www.twpunionschools.org](http://www.twpunionschools.org)) for official notification pursuant to the New Jersey local unit pay-to-play law, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr.  
Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci,

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

DESIGNATE DEPOSITORIES FOR FUNDS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION (School Activity Funds)

Moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board designate Connect One Bank, Investors Savings Bank, Wells Fargo Bank and Unity Bank as depositories for funds of the Township of Union Board of Education as currently maintained, in accordance with the list appended to the minutes.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr.  
Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

AUTHORIZE DEPOSITORY BANKS TO HONOR AND CHARGE ACCOUNTS OF TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION

Moved by Mrs. Higgins, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board authorize the following depository banks be and are hereby authorized to honor and to charge the accounts of the Township of Union Board of Education and all Board of Education checks and drafts bearing the stamp or perforation commonly known as a facsimile signature of the Treasurer of School Monies and the President of the Board of Education and that checks and drafts of the various Board of Education accounts be signed by the designated officers, in accordance with the list appended to the minutes.

**ROLL CALL:**

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci  
 NAYES: None  
 ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED****UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Dr. Morgan stated as we move forward to another board year, I would ask Mrs. Minneci as President would you please outline the requirements for the committee chairs that we have agendas that they communicate with their members so we know what is going on before we go into the worksession and that the minutes are given to us at each meeting. Last year I didn't receive any information for each committee that I was on and I didn't know what was going on. I would ask that we be a little more uniformed in the way Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby had it last year; that the agenda is given to us and have discussions before the work session.

Mrs. Minneci stated the Education Committee – Mrs. Moses presented the agenda that we discuss. What we discuss in the meetings is already on the agenda. Whatever committee you are on I will ask the chair to outline exactly what will need to be discussed.

Mr. Nufrio stated I totally support what you just said. When the committee does meet the administrator in charge of that area – category, usually goes through the agenda as it has already been published. If there is anything that needs to be added then it is the chairs responsibility to present that to the committee so at the time of the committee meeting, anything new being presented by the administrator, that is in addition to or perhaps an explanation of one or more of the resolutions so there is some clear understanding and transparency of what is being presented to the public and to the Board for consideration.

Mrs. Richardson stated whichever committee you are on, members of that committee if they can be there on time for the meetings so we can get all the information done because we have a short period of time to get done what we have to do during the workshop period and it is difficult to do when you have to catch up when someone comes in late. If you are on a committee, it would be respectful to the chairperson that you be there on time. Also, if you are not going to make it, please contact Mrs. Minneci and she will let the chairperson know that you are not going to be at the committee meeting. There have been times where we waited for someone to come.

Dr. Francis stated we wouldn't have this problem if you didn't have the same person on 3-4 committees and the work is not totally being disbursed to all the members. The second thing – personnel and we don't get to speak about personnel in public. If anything is done in personnel, I expect that all the Board members will be updated with what is going on because there was stuff done the last year that I didn't know that was happening in the district and Mr. Tatum I'm asking you as Superintendent, to apprise us all of what is going on in personnel so that we know and we can make informed decisions.

Mr. Tatum stated I think the personnel issues are quite different than you outlined Dr. Francis then the other committees. Personnel is done in executive session which is the appropriate place. When my committee meets, there are times that we meet not only on the same night as the regular worksession but on separate nights. Sometimes during lunch hour when there are issues going on – there are sometimes too many going on. Through counsel because a lot of times personnel is also being advised by counsel and in most cases there are legal requirements and there are things that we can and cannot talk about when it involves individuals. Something may happen on one night and it may be a week before we can talk about it. I hear what you are saying. Individual matters will be discussed in executive session.

Mrs. Richardson stated in looking at the timeframe here, I think the Fiscal Committee has the largest part of the agenda when we are meeting – so I don't know if we can adjust that and make it 5:45 p.m.

Mr. Taylor stated you have chosen by way of your bylaws to operate on a committee based format. The committees respectfully are the Board's committees not the administrations committees. However, you work with the administration. Obviously for the information to be prepared, inclusive of an agenda, in consultation with the chair of that committee, as well as the data, the documents and ultimately the recommendation because as you all are aware, having been incumbent Board members and new but having served before, that the Board can only vote on items that are recommended to it by the Chief School Administrator/Superintendent. In essence everything that is reviewed by the committee is in one way or another coming from the administration; albeit with the input of the Board members. When it comes to the Board President pursuant to her authority by way of your bylaws to appoint members to the committees, that committee chair in consultation with the other members of the committee and out of professional courtesy of the administration, have the authority to schedule the meetings at a time that is most convenient for them. If it is at noon because you are retired, the administration would love it. If it is a 7 p.m. because you are an administrator in another district or you have a medical practice, they will deal with it. You set up the meetings at a date and time that is convenient for you and the administration will work with you to accommodate the Board schedule keeping in mind your regular meeting schedule. You don't want a committee meeting three weeks before a board meeting because stuff happens between that time frame. You might not want to have it an hour before because it may be a long agenda. It is something that you can work out. If you can't figure it out tonight maybe at a subsequent meeting. Maybe a retreat may be in order where you can work out some of this team building stuff that might help you all gel individually as committees but also collectively as a body.

Mr. Nufrio stated Mrs. Richardson you may recall in the past, in the interest of consolidating most of the work that emanates from operation and fiscal, it was recommended and I tried to do it while I was president to fuse the two committees. It never happened but that would give 30 minutes and usually building and grounds supervisor attends the committee as does the business administrator. In the interest in giving a little more time to both of those committees because some of the issues are related. So fusing those two committees and having the same individuals on that committee and I think we did that this year except for maybe one person. That is just my recommendation.

Mrs. Minneci stated at your convenience please submit what committees you are interested in and then we will work on the times. Maybe with regards to personnel, we can break for executive session early – before we vote and then come back and continue the meeting. Mr. Nufrio asked when do you want this by – the end of this week? Mrs. Minneci stated yes.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

None

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Susan Lipstein stated Happy New Year to everybody and congratulations to our Board members and Dr. Francis, it is good see you back up there.

First I'm going to speak as the President of the Township of Union Education Foundation – teachers of the year – applications are available on our website and are due February 28<sup>th</sup>. We are having dine to donate on January 30<sup>th</sup> at Tiff's. Please all Board members and staff, May 7<sup>th</sup> – our reception at the Knights of Columbus. We really like to see Board members there. Our teachers do a wonderful job with the materials that we give them. Everything that is raised goes to the teachers and the children. It is always a great night.

The concern that I have had in the past and this year also is that we have Board members who are unable to participate fully because of the connection to people in this Town. I'm wondering if Mrs. Minneci is going to have the lawyer explain exactly what you guys can't do because you have relatives – Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nufrio and Mrs. Higgins – that you are conflicted. Is it o.k. if he lets everyone know because people need to know what you cannot do because of the conflict.

Mr. Taylor stated I'm going to defer to the Board President because the protocol is for the members of the public to speak and at the end the Board can respond.

Mrs. Lipstein stated she can ask you to answer. I'm asking her to ask you to answer. I finished my portion of what I'm saying as a member and now I'm speaking as a member of the public and that is how we have done it in the past. I'm asking her permission to have you answer the question. She could answer too but to be honest I think it is more effective if it comes directly from you.

Mr. Taylor stated I appreciate that vote of confidence. I want to defer to her for direction. Mrs. Minneci asked are you finished with your comments? Mrs. Lipstein stated yes I am and that is the question that I have and I really would like it laid out for the public to understand and I think it is important.

Mr. Taylor stated in general, the Board members are governed by Title 18A which is a New Jersey Statute that governs education, institutions and school districts. Title 18A:12-24.1 is the Code of Ethics for school board members and it has subsections A-L that board members have to subscribe to and by. The school district or board members – the governing body or the authority for ethics is the School Ethics Commission. They have jurisdiction. They decide cases and complaints that may be made and/or to issue advisory opinions to board members with

questions, individually and/or members of the public or other board members, administrators as to whether someone has a conflict. It is a fact sensitive inquiry. It is hard to generalize as to who has a conflict – where, when and why. There are certain issues that may be a conflict, that may prohibit the person from voting on a particular personnel matters. There are other issues that may prohibit a board member for voting for a vendor. There are other conflicts that if they have relatives in the district and/or dependents working in the district, where they won't be able to vote to hire a relative if they are on the Board and the regulations prohibit the superintendent from recommending the hire of a board members relative and/or a relative of himself currently. There are other conflicts that may prohibit board members from participating in the evaluation process, the search and/or the vote to hire a superintendent. That is a general analysis. I can't go through one by one right now; I don't know what their individual circumstances are. I don't know if they have changed since the last time we inquired.

What we do is distribute a questionnaire to board members which you will get shortly. It will ask you if you are affiliated with the NJEA, a teacher in another district, if you have a relative or dependent who is employed by the district – all the different criteria and if the answer is yes we will advise the Board members under the attorney-client privilege of what their options and limitations are.

It is a board members' business. They do not have to report it to the public per se if they have a conflict. It is not required by law or statute. However, it is their individual responsibility to abide by the Code of Ethics and if they don't they can be subject to penalties if there is a complaint filed, censure, reprimand, suspension or removal.

Mrs. Lipstein stated we do have three people that are conflicted and we know are conflicted. Mr. Taylor stated there is no prohibition from a board member who may have a conflict from being a candidate for and/or elected to a board of education. That is not a prohibition.

Mrs. Minneci stated Mrs. Lipstein if you want to speak with me privately one day I will explain it to you. Mrs. Lipstein stated I understand, I know some of it is legal terminology. Mrs. Minneci stated I know there is always a question about me so I would like to clarify that.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated President of UTEA. Happy New Year. Good luck to the Board of Education for the upcoming year. Congratulations to Mrs. Minneci and Mrs. Williams and Dr. Francis for coming back to the Board. I look forward to working with the Board of Education and central office. I hope you include the Union Township Education Association and all curricular and programs and any initiatives and activities – we look forward to working with you. We hope to support your work on behalf of all the students and the community and all the UTEA members.

Laura Ditgen stated congratulations; happy new year; welcome back. My first question was regarding bylaws. I would imagine that once the committees are set the public will know who is in charge. Curriculum - in the past I was able to help direct that.

I did hear the Board attorney mention “in the absence of clear guidelines in your bylaws” this evening when you were about to vote. I think it is about the third time where I have been present at a Board meeting and there were probably more because I’m not at every single one – where there were questions of the guidelines. I would like to know if there is a bylaw committee? Who is in charge of it? How often do the bylaws need to be revised? I know you can’t answer right now but it is my questions for on the record.

Also since you brought up the Code of Ethics, I am very familiar with that. For example, I know I can’t run for the Board of Ed because I’m a teacher in the district. Until I retire I can’t run. I would be curious to know how familiar all the candidates were with the Code of Ethics and if anyone had any violations especially being a non-partisan election. It being unethical to be endorsed or accept funds or even a photograph with a politician of a particular party. That is just a curiosity on my part. I think the public should be aware of the committees and who the chairperson is. If at some point if you can let me know about the bylaws. Who is in charge of that and how often do they get revised?

Mrs. Lopes stated it saddens me to see two people who were elected and they lied in my opinion because I was told that my taxes were going down. Those people being elected will bring out better programs for less money so I’ll be here every meeting waiting to see when my taxes get lowered and that these programs get better than what they are. I have two kids in the district and I think that it is not the way to do it when we want to get the stuff we want and I got not one but three phone calls from Mrs. Minneci and Mrs. Williams’ campaign. I don’t think that is proper or nice but I do think that the people that watching at home and don’t come here, they should know that if they got those phone calls, those phone calls are – I don’t see how the Board of Education being that it is not affiliated, can lower my taxes. Next meeting I will be asking again about my taxes.

Nellis Regis-Darby stated happy new year to everyone sitting on the Board. I will hold you accountable and I’m going to hold every member on this Board accountable for not only my daughter but for every child in our district. I believe as we move forward in 2020 that you are the members of the community that are supposed to be doing the right thing, not only for my child but for every child in the community. As a parent, I’m happy to be sitting on this side of the Board because when I come to this Board meeting I’m going to call you out – starting with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendents and every Board member because I have a daughter who has two more years in this community. My friends and family have members in this community that have children in the schools and I think that education is very important and every time I hear the agenda being read, it is a recommendation from the Superintendent. So Mr. Tatum I am going to hold you accountable for everything that is on the agenda in 2020. Congratulations everyone and see you at the next meeting.

Sienna Bocu stated you don’t have any influence over the Township committee but the calendar that you voted on for your meetings – you have control over that. The fact that there are conflicting meetings every year on Tuesdays – go to either the Board of Ed worksession or the Township meeting, especially if you are concerned about your taxes. It is a problem. Reading of the minutes of the worksession, could be great but doesn’t give you the information that you would get if you were sitting there and hear someone talk. As somebody who is not always able

to be here, I want to maximize my time. Sometimes it is very difficult I know it's like "oh this is what we do and we are just going to vote yes, we got this handed to us" – it has been something that has been brought up at several other Board meetings so if you happen to go over it, then control it and next year – think about it the next time.

Suehay Monge stated I wanted to touch on some things that the Board to know and I mentioned this earlier today to Mrs. Moses. I have a senior and there are many senior parents in the high school who expressed concerns about the process of when that child becomes a senior and college applications and essays and the like. It is a very overwhelming process. It is overwhelming and if you have two parents who work, it can be so daunting that it becomes a situation that students are not putting in applications for early action which is really important for them to get acceptance letters early and get a handle on what they are doing.

I have had a counselor that has been absolutely amazing with the process in helping him and tell him what he needs to do. Overall, applying to college now is not like applying five years ago or when we applied. It is very overwhelming and some parents may not have the means to hire someone to help and I feel that is where the school should come in and set up some type of program either through the actual curriculum to help these seniors at the end of junior year or beginning of senior year and help them write their common application. Their essays for the common app because some schools don't ask just for one, sometimes 2-3 – questions and portfolios and it goes on and on and it is overwhelming for parents and I can't even imagine what these students are feeling. I feel like they are not given a leg up. They are not being given the best support to apply for these schools that they may be interested in.

Another thing I want to bring up is sports. We have social media – kids that are involved in school sports – when they get accepted to colleges. It should be applauded because they worked hard to get good grades, they're athletes and they are getting into all these schools – this should be celebrated and it is motivation for other students that are coming up after them. But what I don't see as much is those same accolades given to students who are not necessarily athletes. I feel like it should be on both sides. We should be putting these athletes on a pedestal but also putting our students who are not involved in athletics, but they are getting into major colleges. If we promote that it will get other students to say "hey look this kid got into this school – that is what I want to do – maybe I'll go talk to him and find out how to do that"; that is something that I feel we are kind of lacking and I know there is someone who is in charge of taking all of these pictures. Maybe we should coordinate something with counseling because we have kids that have gotten their early decisions and do the same thing we do with athletes.

Rich D'Avanzo stated UTEA vice president – happy new year to all. I look forward to having a great year. I bring up that we are looking forward to negotiations this year. We are ready and raring starting in February; just waiting on Mr. Vieira on important information from your office and look forward to begin working on this upcoming year. The sooner we can sit down and start hashing things out, going over things – February/March is when you find out about State funding. Hopefully things will move much more smoothly.

One more thing I want to bring up is a resolution – the State board of ed who is still under control of a few Christie people are actually looking to increase the amount of tests that are

going to be put on our students and the amount of time and money that is wasted as a result of these tests so there is going to be a little more push for the board of eds to come up with this resolution so if they pass legislation in Trenton, your resolution will trump that when it comes to excessive testing and increasing testing and for high school graduation requirements. Hopefully you will look at that and come up with a resolution because that is a moving piece of many boards of ed right now and hopefully very shortly we will have something to give you in addition as well. Excess standard tests – hopefully a possible resolution as well.

Paul Casey stated happy new year. I just have a clarification question regarding the ethics question that came up earlier. I know we have conflicted board members because of personnel matters – people that work in the district. I’m curious if the candidates that were just elected as president and vice president now are conflicted in negotiations because the NJEA endorsed them and a donation was made to political candidates but in turn donated that money to their candidacy That really feels like a conflict of interest regarding the UTEA and the new president and vice president. I’m curious on how that can be addressed.

David Arminio stated congratulations Nancy, Mary Lynn as president and vice president – good luck to you Dr. Francis. One it is January and June is coming very quickly and the Relay for Life is coming up May 30<sup>th</sup>. Last year the Relay for Life raised \$55,000 and overall since we started we raised over \$200,000 for cancer. Make sure that the board of ed and the schools get involved and I’m sure that all the board members and administration will participate in this year’s Relay for Life.

The Friends of the Union Public Library has museum passes and one of them is for Grounds for Sculpture but coming this March they are cancelling all museum passes for Grounds of Sculpture. All of you and people at home, take advantage you have three months to go to Grounds for Sculpture for free. It is expensive if you get individual tickets. It is a great outing. Have a great year.

Mr. Nufrio step out of meeting prior to adjournment.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Mrs. Higgins, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

AYES: Dr. Francis, Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

MANUEL E. VIEIRA  
BOARD SECRETARY