

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 30, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM, pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

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. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Kim Ruiz

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik

ALSO PRESENT:

Afshan Ajmiri Giner, Esq.

Mr. McDowell led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Dr. Morgan read the District’s mission statement.

Mrs. Minneci stated I would like to apologize to the public for having to witness a discussion that should have taken place in executive session. I take responsibility for my brief absence from the meeting which I feel contributed to the situation that occurred. As president and presiding officer, I encourage all members to remember that we represent our community and should conduct ourselves in a professional and respectful manner. Thank you for your patience and hopefully for your understanding.

Comments from the Public on Resolution

Susan Lipstein asked for the salary of Mr. Vieira for the position we are hiring for. Mr. Tatum stated I don’t have the number in front of me but this was in the range and it is not an astronomical amount of money that we will be recommending for this individual because it is within the going rate.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b. Personnel matters.

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

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:37 p.m.

Personnel Committee Resolution

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mr. Nufrio, for adoption:

P-1. APPROVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – KOON

Approve the Employment Contract of Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, effective on or before December 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member (under review by County Superintendent).

P-1A. APPROVE ACTING BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR – MANOCHIO

Approve Fernanda Manochio, as Acting Business Administrator, effective October 1, 2020 to on or before November 30, 2020, in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Minneci stated welcome Mrs. Koon. Mr. Tatum stated it is my honor to welcome Mrs. Koon to the Union Township Public Schools. She is going to be an asset to our Business Office and district. The Board will not be disappointed in the selection. I want to take this

opportunity to thank the Board for their support in getting this completed this evening so much as the Business Office is an important function in our district and certainly we are looking very closely to the needs of that office and I'm sure with Mrs. Koon's background and experience she has she is going to do a fantastic job in moving our Business Office and district forward.

Yolanda Koon stated good evening. I am thankful for the opportunity. I am looking forward to joining the Union Township family and looking forward to working with each and every one of you.

Comments from Public:

Susan Lipstein stated I didn't get my complete answer to my question so I just sent an OPRA request for Mr. Vieira's salary because I understand that information might be at the hands of the Superintendent at the moment but it is public information and knowledge. Also last month when a policy was brought up under new business, the policy wasn't on the agenda, are you still considering that as a first reading and will that be put back in writing next month as a second reading. Have you made a decision about that? Mrs. Minneci stated we will get back to you.

Mr. Tatum stated with regards to her request, she can have it tomorrow. There is no need for a formal OPRA request. I will send the information tomorrow morning. I'm home but if I was in the office I would have been able to give her the information.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:46 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b. Personnel matters – Superintendent search.

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

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 8:38 p.m.

Mrs. Minneci returned to Public Session at 8:38 p.m.

Mr. McDowell stated I was talking to a member of the Battle Hill PTA and she was wondering if we could have the school lunches delivered to the parents who can't pick it up because they are homeschooling. Do you remember discussing that? Mrs. Minneci stated I don't remember discussing that. I thought they said the lunches are available at each of the schools and you go to the one that is closest to you.

Mr. McDowell stated she said she sent emails to Mr. Tatum and Mr. Benaquista about a month ago and has not heard back from them. I thought we might have discussed it. Mrs. Minneci stated I don't remember discussing delivering it to their homes. Mr. McDowell stated it would be just for the elementary school kids who can't leave them to pick up lunch. Mrs. Minneci stated I will reach out to them tomorrow. Mr. McDowell stated I will forward to you her email and you can remind them and I don't know if Mrs. Moses were involved. Reach out to them so they can reach out to this lady and explain why we are not. Mrs. Minneci stated I will.

Mrs. Richardson stated when COVID-19 came, the security guards I thought they were delivering food to the children who couldn't get them. Mrs. Minneci stated we will check that out. Mrs. Williams stated I thought that was for the Chromebooks and getting them to the kids.

Mr. McDowell stated it is more public comment. This person was unable to attend tonight and she has a proposal to the Board. It is a letter. She is a paraprofessional, Lyn-Kristine Cornacchia.

“Mr. Tatum and members of the Board of Education

As the deadline for the re-evaluation to opening schools is nearing, it is clearly impossible to allow the schools to reopen and have the teachers teach the children face to face.

The town is not equipped with all the necessary PPE materials for the staff. The schools that have poor ventilation have not been fixed. Many of the CDC guidelines have not been met with 100. In addition, we don't know if there will be a second wave of the COVID-19.

How can you insure the safety of the employees? Everyone agrees that it is much better to teach the students in person, however not at the risk of contracting COVID-19.

The employees of the district stressed over the summer months regarding the opening of the school year. They took workshops on their own time to learn the new ways to navigate through virtual learning and spent countless hours preparing materials to teach virtually and waited patiently to see if it would be completely in person, hybrid or a combination.

Many staff members have been stressing about returning to in person learning especially when many districts having done so have seen an increase in cases. The stress level is increasing. How is this fair?

Is the board returning to work in person to person which includes board meetings not zoom meetings.

Please consider the spring of 2021 as a date to re-evaluate the situation for teaching person to person.” Lyn-Krstine Cornacchia, paraprofessional preschool, Livingston School – Head Representative

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

AYE: Dr. Francis, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

MANUEL E. VIEIRA
BOARD SECRETARY

