

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – December 12, 2023

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 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.

Ms. McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Gretel Perez, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. O’Shea led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. O’Shea read the district’s mission statement.

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act” that adequate notice was published in The Union County Local Source, The Star Ledger and/or Tap into Union, posted in the Administration Building and the Clerk’s Office of the Township; a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Executive Session:

Ms. McKenzie stated executive session will take place at the end of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at next week’s meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

Comments from Public (on resolutions and all other matters):

None

Superintendent's Report:

The Superintendent's Report will be at next week's meeting.

Education/Student Discipline Committee:

Ms. Carbonell presented the Education/Student Discipline agenda.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Ms. Carbonell, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, for adoption:

E-1. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period November 15, 2023 to November 21, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

E-1A. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent's Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period November 22, 2023 to December 12, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

E-10. APPROVE LICENSE AND CONFERENCE AGREEMENT – KEAN UNIVERSITY

Approve License and Conference Agreement between the district and Kean University for the use of the Wilkins Theatre, for the high school musical – Mean Girls on December 18-22, 2023 and January 13-21, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Mr. O'Shea presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Mr. O'Shea, seconded by Mrs. Williams, for adoption:

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

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

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Ms. Santana presented the Operations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

The following two discussion were presented and will be added to next week’s agenda for vote:

1. REQUEST FROM CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP – BATTLE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM – Request from Crossroads Christian Fellowship for the use of the Battle Hill Elementary School gym for a bi-weekly volleyball gym night starting on January 18, 2024 (Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.). Requesting waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance requested).

2. REQUEST FROM TOWNSHIP OF UNION – JEFFERSON SCHOOL CAFETERIA AND PARKING LOT - Request from the Township of Union for the use of Jefferson School cafeteria and parking lot for the Township’s MLK Day of Service on January 15, 2023 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (volunteers to sort donated winter clothing, non-perishable food items and have lunch), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana asked with respect to #2, did they resolve the cafeteria question? Mrs. Koon stated an email was sent out and we are waiting on a response. Ms. McKenzie stated we will need an answer by next week.

Ms. Santana stated tonight there is a recital at KMS. She asked if the schools could plan events around the Board meetings. Dr. Benaquista stated correspondence went to all the schools earlier today regarding this.

Ms. Santana stated congratulations to new Board members.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santana stated thank you to Brie Benaquista for her time here and the sacrifices of your family.

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked if the district was doing exit interviews. It is to the benefit of the district to know why people are leaving. Ms. McKenzie asked if the district could develop a survey that can be sent to the individuals that are leaving. Mr. Benaquista stated we have been meeting with employees.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci presented the Residency Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved at next week's meeting.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated she spoke with Kean University, student teachers are not coming here because the district doesn't pay student teachers. Maybe the district can look into this. Mr. Benaquista stated they can get sub pay if the teacher is not in.

Ms. Carbonell stated thank you to Dr. Perez and Dr. Benaquista – the education committee meetings have been involved in the intervention conversations.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Ms. Santana seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:28 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, student update.

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: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 9:39 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Ms. Carbonell, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

All present voting YES

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

