

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – February 11, 2025

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, February 11, 2025 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. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Mr. Michael Cohan, Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Guida Faria, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Greg Nasta, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Gerald Benaquista, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq., Ms. Yolanda Greene

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and 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.

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 in **BOLD** and ALL MATTERS):

Ms. Carbonell read the following statement:

"Good evening everyone. I'd like to take a moment to thank you all for being here today. As we begin the public comment portion of this meeting, I want to remind

everyone that we value your input and appreciate your time and effort in sharing your thoughts and concerns.

As Ms. Koon stated previously, I ask that all comments be respectful and constructive, and that we refrain from calling out, yelling, and disrespectful language.

Each speaker will be given three minutes to address the board. Please remember that while we are eager to hear your perspectives, we may be unable to engage in back-and-forth dialogue during this portion of the meeting. However, your comments will be carefully reviewed and taken into consideration by the board, and if feasible, the Superintendent or designee, will respond to questions in real time or provide a response at a later time.

With that said, I invite our first speaker to approach. Please state your name and address.”

Sol Atencio referenced Dr. Rodriguez’s letter of February 6th informing parents about UHS being removed from Title I and asked what is the process for this to happen? Ms. Carbonell informed Ms. Atencio that will be part of Dr. Benaquista’s Superintendent Report next week. She also informed everyone that the school is still a Title 1 school but in a different category.

Virginia Jeffries spoke about the online agenda and the paper agenda were numbered differently. She asked why F-Atty is so unorganized and not in sequential order? She also asked for the current payout to Taylor Law.

Kathleen Bruns Meyer – she understands that the redistricting and relocation of the PreK is up in the air but she wanted the Board to know that no one has been contacted about a realignment meeting. She also mentioned that there should be a different survey for PreK – most teachers do not want to go to a center. She advised the Board that last year they got a new playground for students under 5, if the PreK’s are moved to centers we lose the playgrounds. Ms. Carbonell advised that come March, meetings will be set up and the district will proceed full steam and responsibly.

Diana Cantone – she is worried about a PreK center because it would be like a daycare instead of a PreK. The PreK students would miss out on buddy reading and if teachers want to move up will they lose out? She also asked if they will get boxes when it is time to move back to Hannah? Ms. Carbonell indicated she would volunteer her time to help in the move. She also informed everyone that the district is considering all sides to make the best decisions and Dr. Benaquista is speaking with UTEA.

Ann Margaret Shannon – she has been visiting buildings, there are still questions about the realignment and the UTEA will be working with you. She advised that they started a personnel committee. She asked if it would be PreK-5 or 6? She also asked that the district get

communications out to everyone. Ms. Carbonell asked that everyone bear with the district and the district will hopefully share information in a town hall meeting.

Superintendent’s Report:

The Superintendent report will be next week.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

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

E-1. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT OF HIB

Superintendent’s Report of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period January 22, 2025 to February 11, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

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

Affirm the Superintendent’s determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods January 14, 2025 to January 21, 2025, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

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

F-7. 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: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Grievance/Negotiations and Legal Committees:

To be voted on next week.

Operations Committee Resolutions:

To be voted on and discussed next week.

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, for adoption:

P-1A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS – NEW HIRES

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

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Residency Committee Resolutions:

To be reported on next week.

Technology Committee:

To be voted on next week.

Approval of Bills:

To be voted on next week.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

None

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board go into Executive Session at 7:31 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, legal 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: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 9:54 p.m.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

There being no further business before the Board it was moved by Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board return to public session at 9:54 p.m.

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Grievance Committee Resolution:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, for adoption:

APPROVE RETRO PAYMENT – EMPLOYEE #11046

Approve retroactive payment to Employee #11046, in the amount of \$5,367.00.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

AYE: Mr. Cohan, Mrs. Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Faria, Mr. McDowell,
Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Ms. Santana, Ms. Carbonell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY

