

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES – November 14, 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, November 14, 2023 at 5:00 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 5:10 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq., Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq.

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

Mrs. Minneci 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.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the Board go into Executive Session at 5:12 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: student discipline, personnel, litigation 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, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,  
Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 7:19 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes will be approved at next week's regular meeting.

Communications:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

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

Ann Margaret Shannon stated E-6 – the MOU with Zeta Nu Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity – can you doublecheck the dollar amount – it seems high.

Superintendent's Report:

The superintendent report will be presented next week's meeting.

Education/Student Discipline Committee Resolutions:

Ms. Carbonell presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolution was moved by Ms. Carbonell, seconded by Mrs. Minneci for approval.

E-1. AFFIRM SUPERINTENDENT'S DETERMINATION OF HIB

Affirm the Superintendent's determination of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the periods October 11, 2023 to October 17, 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 October 18, 2023 to November 14, 2023, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes (*no vote required; for reporting purposes only*).

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana,  
Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Fiscal and Planning Committee Resolutions:

Ms. McKenzie presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

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

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICT WIDE TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Approve district wide travel and related expenses pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7 and Board Policy File Code 6471 and in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

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.

Ms. Santana stepped out of meeting prior to vote.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Grievance/Negotiations Committee:

Ms. McKenzie presented the Grievance/Negotiations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

Operations Committee Resolutions:

Ms. McKenzie presented the Operations Committee agenda.

Dr. Benaquista informed the Board that agenda items O-3 and O-4 – donations of novels will be removed from the agenda.

Ms. McKenzie stated that the following discussion item will be placed on next week’s agenda for a vote.

1. REQUEST FROM UNION ELKS – USE OF GYM - Request from Union Elks to use the Washington Elementary School gym on December 9, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to host the Elks Hoop Shoot Contest for local athletes ages 8-13; requesting waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance provided).

**DISCUSSION:**

None

Personnel Committee Resolutions:

Ms. McKenzie presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated will there be sufficient staff at the middle school because the leaves. Dr. Benaquista stated it is intermittent leave and if there is a crisis Gina Calderone will be in charge.

Policy Committee:

Ms. McKenzie presented the following resolutions for first reading:

**POL-1. POLICY 3432 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Policy 3432 – Sick Leave (Teaching Staff Members).

**POL-2. REGULATION 3432 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Regulation 3432 – Sick Leave (Teaching Staff Members).

**POL-3. POLICY 4432 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Policy 4432 – Sick Leave (Support Staff Members).

**POL-4. REGULATION 4432 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Regulation 4432 – Sick Leave (Support Staff Members).

**POL-5. POLICY 5460.02 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Policy 5460.02 – Bridge Year Pilot Program.

**POL-6. REGULATION 5460.02 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Regulation 5460.02 – Bridge Year Pilot Program.

**POL-7. POLICY 8540 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Policy 8540 – School Nutrition Programs

**POL-8. POLICY 8550 – ABOLISHED**

Abolish Policy 8550 – Meal Charges/Outstanding Food Service Bill.

Residency Committee Resolutions:

Mrs. Minneci stated that there was a residency hearing today and the father was given a 6C to complete. The Residency Committee will review this matter again once it is received.

Technology Committee:

Ms. Santana asked if the phone numbers are on the website. Dr. Benaquista stated teachers don't have phone numbers but until we are able to update the website, there is a document that has been uploaded to the website with all the phone numbers and email addresses.

Approval of Bills:

Bills will be approved at next week's meeting.

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated all the information needed for the donation of the refurbished laptops was submitted. Will it be on the agenda for next week?

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated can Mrs. Paul and the librarian come to next month's meeting so they can speak regarding the ban books.

New Business:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated please have the policy committee review the regulation and policy of the G&T programs. What we have now does not benefit the students or parents. G&T placement – she hopes that we have seats for those students. Are second graders given the opportunity to take a paper test or a test on the computer? Dr. Perez stated the test took place and she will follow up. Dr. Benaquista stated we are working on updating the regulation.

Ms. Santana stated we will invite Mrs. Regis-Darby to the next policy committee regarding G&T.

Ms. Santana stated teachers may not have phone numbers but they do have email addresses so that needs to be put together. Dr. Benaquista stated we will work on it.

Mrs. Brens-Watson asked what is going on with the UHS auditorium? Mrs. Koon stated there are mechanical issues. We will use a co-op, so we don't need an RFP. It will cost approximately \$350,000.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated if you are an out-of-district student (magnet school), your accounts get turned off and you don't get emails. Dr. Benaquista stated students should still have access to athletics and you should call Mr. Zieser.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Ms. Santana, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON  
BOARD SECRETARY