

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – NOVEMBER 12, 2013

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Susana Cooley, Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Richard Galante and Mr. Thomas Layden

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mrs. Versie McNeil, Mr. Vito Nufrio and Mr. Francis Perkins, President

In the absence of Mr. Perkins, the meeting was called to order by Mr. Galante, Vice President of the Board, at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Layden led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Galante stated that the minutes of the following minutes would be adopted at the regular meeting next week: (1) Executive Session – August 20, 2013; (2) Special Meeting – August 28, 2013; (3) Worksession – September 10, 2013; (4) Executive Session – September 10, 2013; (5) Regular Meeting – September 17, 2013; (6) Executive Session – September 17, 2013; (7) Worksession – October 8, 2013 and (8) Executive Session – October 8, 2013

COMMUNICATIONS:

All communication has been referred to the appropriate committees for consideration.

PRESENTATION

Warren Korecky and Richard Moleen from Suplee Clooney and Company gave a report regarding the surplus funds from the Academy program. Mr. Korecky said that the district asked Suplee Clooney to perform an audit of academy funds from 2011. He said that there was a \$2892 surplus in the fall of 2011. Mr. Korecky said that the district can, from an accounting stand point, run at a surplus; there is nothing wrong with that. He said that the program made estimations based on the cost and you don't know how many students will be enrolling in the program. Mr. Korecky said that the application indicated that the fee was non refundable. He said that the program was trying to meet costs and revenues; however, if the district does have excess, it should be carried forward into the program account. Mr. Korecky said that this is what was done. He said that the following academy in the spring of 2011 also yielded a surplus of \$2600. Mr. Korecky said that on a program on the books and records that are maintained, the surplus was shown every year from the first year of the operation of the academy. He said that this was a special revenue program. Mr. Korecky said that the Saturday Academy program also yielded a surplus of \$11,282. He said that the surplus was carried forward to the program account year in and year out. Mr. Korecky said that the following year some of the surplus was used to fund the program. He said that he did tell the finance committee earlier in the evening that there was nothing wrong with having a surplus in the account as long as it continues to be used for the Academy programs. Mr. Korecky said that if the district decides not to run the program anymore, it will be up to the board at that point as to whether or not refunds are given to parents. He said that usually in a case like this the surplus would be donated to the board and it becomes a part of the general revenue. Mr. Korecky said that the money was collected to run the middle school enhancement program and when the program is finally over, the surplus can either be refunded or taken as general revenue. He said that the amount of the surplus does reflect back to Mr. Vieira's records. Mr. Korecky said that there was a surplus in the program every year and it has always been used for the academy program. He said that this program has been running with no cost to the district since it started.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Martin said that he has been talking a lot this year about attendance. He said that the attendance for October 2013 was 96.881% for students which compares with 96.623% from last year and for staff, the attendance for October 2013 was 95.899% which topped last year's attendance figure of 95.267%. Dr. Martin said that he was pleased with the attendance for this year because there are numerous studies that directly correlate student attendance and faculty attendance with academic achievement.

Dr. Martin said that the Athletic Hall of Fame is having its inaugural induction ceremony on Monday, November 25th at 6 p.m. at Galloping Hill Inn. He said that this was a big event in the district. Dr. Martin said that student athletes, coaches and past championship teams are being honored and it promises to be a very special evening.

Dr. Martin said that the middle school academy started today. He said that 95 students were enrolled in Burnet; 64 students were enrolled at Kawameeh and 18 students were enrolled at the high school. Dr. Martin said that he attended the morning assembly at Kawameeh and Mr. Dougherty was leading a discussion with the students on the issue of bullying in the NFL. He said he thought that this was such a great topic of discussion with middle school students. Dr. Martin said that he went over to Burnet after school and he observed two classes; one had to do with the stock market that following the price of a certain stock in real time. He said that the students were mesmerized with the concept of making money by investing in something. To a sixth or seventh grader was a new phenomenon. Dr. Martin said that another class at Burnet was getting ready to read the book *1776*. He said that the teacher in this class was talking to the students about his expectations of reading this book and class discussions about Philadelphia and the birth of the nation. Dr. Martin thanked the board of education for continuing the academy program and he invited board members to drop in at any time.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Mr. Arminio said that the committee met and he presented the agenda items.

Mrs. Conti said that she wanted to add "in class support" to resolution E-7; this was a minor administrative error.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Gaglione said that the fiscal committee met and she presented the agenda. She said that the auditors would be present at next week's meeting to present the annual audit report to the board.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Layden said that the committee met earlier in the evening and he presented the agenda items.

Mr. Arminio asked why the HIB results were reported in the operations committee.

Mrs. Gaglione asked about resolution O-3, the agreement with the Health Department and was this only for emergency situations. Mr. Damato said that it was.

Mrs. Gaglione asked that resolution O-4 be explained. Mr. Wiggins said that the computer lab that was created at Union High School was not up to current standards (standard is 1400 square feet and this space is only 900 square feet). He said that he spoke to Ms. Dunn and she advised that the district could apply for a temporary variance for this year and this variance would have to be renewed each year until a better use of the space is found. Mr. Wiggins said that the space can be used for two or three years.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Use of Hannah Caldwell Elementary School by United Community Center on January 20, 2014 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration – Mr. Arminio said that the district approves this request every year and he has been to many of the celebrations over the years. He did not see any reason why the board should not approve it again this year.

Mr. Galante asked that a resolution regarding this be put on the agenda for next week's meeting so that the board could approve it.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Galante said that the committee had met previous to this meeting and he presented the agenda items.

Mrs. Gaglione asked for the backup for resolution P-10. A copy of this report was distributed to the board for their review.

Mr. Arminio asked why supervisory personnel had to be hired to stand in the high school library. Dr. Lishak said that when Jefferson School was re-opened, the district realized that there was not enough coverage in the library. She said that one of the librarians from the high school was covering classes at Jefferson School. Dr. Lishak said that this leaves her time on the "flex hours" not covered and in order to keep the high school library opened after school, there are teacher's in attendance to supervise students. She said that coverage would only be required two days per week. Mr. Arminio asked if this situation would be permanent. Dr. Lishak said she hoped that next year she could review the schedule and see if there is a better solution.

Dr. Martin said that he wanted to add a resolution for next week's meeting to approve Barry Loessel as Assistant Building and Grounds Supervisor position at an annual salary of \$85,000. He said that the reason this item is not on the P-1 backup is that he wanted to get approval from the personnel committee to make sure that they had a chance to review the interview process and the recommendation. Dr. Martin said that the committee did concur with this recommendation.

Mrs. Gaglione said that this would open up a head custodian position at Jefferson School. Mr. Damato said it would.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Galante stated that the bills would be approved for payment at next week's meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that this Friday, the high school football team was playing in the first round of the playoffs against Watchung Hills High School. He said that the game will be at 7 o'clock at Cooke Memorial Field.

Mr. Wiggins said that the Operations Committee discussed the recycling of food project at Livingston School which will be a pilot program. He said that the Town has really been pushing this program; the Town would like to use Livingston School as a pilot program to recycle food. Mr. Wiggins said that the food would be stored outside the school and it would be picked up once a week. He said that there are pros and cons to this program. Dr. Francis asked what Mr. Wiggins meant by "recycling" food. Mr. Layden said that whatever food is not eaten by the students in the cafeteria will be recycled. Dr. Francis asked what it would be used for. Mr. Wiggins said that it would be recycled or composted for use for animals. He said that there is a company that would be coming in that already have this program up and running at some schools in New Jersey. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the "food" would smell. Mr. Wiggins said that he believed it would. Mrs. Gaglione said that the smell from the garbage at Livingston School is bad enough. She said that this will also attract rodents. Mrs. Gaglione asked whose idea this was. Mr. Wiggins said that he was looking for input from the board. Mrs. Gaglione said that ultimately it would be the board's decision whether this program was undertaken. Mr. Wiggins said that was so. Mrs. Gaglione said that this program cannot go forward if there are too many concerns. Mr. Galante said that it might be productive if someone gave a

presentation about the program to the board. Mr. Wiggins asked if the board wanted him to get in touch with the company and representatives from the Town to speak to the board. Mr. Galante said he thought it would be a good idea. Mr. Wiggins said that he would try to arrange a presentation for next month's worksession. Mrs. Gaglione asked where the money that was generated from the program would go. Mr. Wiggins said that it would go to the Town. Mr. Damato said that the Town gets a grant based upon the "tonnage". Dr. Francis asked why the food could not just be transported to the DPW area. Mrs. Gaglione thought that was a good idea; she said she did not have a problem with that but she did have a problem with the food remaining on the school property for a week.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mrs. Lipstein asked what was going on with the cupola projects. Mr. Wiggins said that the cupola at Franklin School is complete; there is unfortunately a problem at Connecticut Farms School getting all of the material. He said that he did discuss this issue with the Operations Committee earlier in the evening. Mr. Wiggins said that this project should have been completed months ago; he said that the contractor is having a problem with the distributor. Mr. Wiggins said that the project will probably not be completed until December. He said that work is ongoing on the columns in front of the school to facilitate the reopening of the front door of the building as soon as possible.

Mrs. Lipstein asked if the personnel named in resolution P-6 were teachers. Dr. Lishak said that all are teachers. Mrs. Lipstein said that she personally lobbied for an additional librarian at Union High School many years ago and she was not too happy to hear that one of the librarians was traveling to Jefferson School because the idea of having two librarians at the high school was to allow the library to remain open longer during the day. She said that she had a feeling that there was a shortage of librarians in the district. Dr. Lishak said that since she has been in the district there have always been the same number of librarians. She said that the reason it was suggested that a librarian from the high school go to Jefferson School was because although the librarians are in the library at the high school, they were being underutilized because when classes came in to use the library, the classroom teachers were staying in the library to assist the students. Mrs. Lipstein said that she believed there were some elementary librarians that were also going to Jefferson School and that leaves the elementary schools shorthanded. She said that she liked to see that there was enough staff of librarians and she thought one possibility was for the district to hire someone for next year so that there is more coverage. Dr. Lishak said that she is having that discussion with Mr. Tatum and the library supervisor.

Mrs. Lipstein thanked Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Damato for getting the bench installed on the Walkway of Honor at Union High School in time for dedication ceremony which was held yesterday. She said that there were approximately 40 new bricks that were installed. Mrs. Lipstein said that it was a lovely ceremony and it was a little more special because Mrs. Fortunato had purchased a bench in memory of Sam Fortunato, former principal at Union High School. She said that there are photos of the ceremony on the Township of Union Education Foundation website and she has forwarded some photos to Mrs. Hart to be posted on the district website.

Mrs. Lipstein said that at the October 15th meeting she was asked by Mr. Perkins about the garden at Connecticut Farms School that the Education Foundation had started two years ago. She said that she had a meeting with Mrs. Moses and Mr. Pardo, who originally had received the grant for the garden. Mrs. Lipstein said that the gardens will be reinvented and reconfigured; she said that Mr. Pardo was going to get back to her with some plans. Mrs. Lipstein said at the time that the grant for the garden was given to Connecticut Farms School a curriculum was developed for each grade level and City Green came to the school and did a wonderful job with the teachers to develop a curriculum so that each grade would be doing something different in a garden bed. She said that Mr. Pardo had a position change and he was not able to oversee the project and the garden became overrun with grass and weeds. Mrs. Lipstein said that it became so overrun that the beds had to be removed. She said that the idea is that not as many beds will be installed. Mrs. Lipstein said that when Mr. Pardo gets back to her with the plans she will speak to Mr. Wiggins to be sure that the beds are mowed. She said that the Connecticut Farms PTA also has funds earmarked for the gardens and they will be working with the Foundation and the School; she said that there is also discussion about having a "grow lab" so that plants can be grown during the winter months and planted in the outside beds in the spring so that this can be a year round project.

Mrs. Lipstein said that she said Hannah Caldwell School also had a concern about their garden beds. She said that concern has been taken care of and there is enough money at the school to continue that project going. Mrs. Lipstein said that she was advised that City Green is going to provide seeds and plants for this garden.

Mrs. Lipstein asked about the grant for the outdoor classroom. Mr. Wiggins said that he did speak to the operations committee before this meeting and he will be coming up with some additional numbers. He hoped to present the project at the December meeting. Mrs. Lipstein said that Mr. Raphael from Union High School had received a \$5,000 grant from Lowes for this project. She said that the Foundation was also providing some funds toward an environmental center. Mrs. Lipstein said that she would like to get this project back on track.

Mr. Arminio introduced Lois Jackson, new member of the board who was elected earlier in November. Mrs. Lipstein asked Ms. Jackson to tell the board a little about herself.

Ms. Jackson said that she was a product of Union Schools. She said that she currently worked at AT&T as a budget analyst and she has worked there for 19 years. Ms. Jackson said that she was ready to work as a new board member. Mrs. Gaglione asked if Ms. Jackson had any children in the system. She said that she did not.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Gaglione, seconded by Dr. Francis that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss collective negotiations matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 10:4- 2b*. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, 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.

AYE:	Mr. Arminio, Mrs. Cooley, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Layden and Mr. Galante	
NAY:	None	
ABSTAIN:	None	MOTION WAS CARRIED

THE BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Foster, Ms. Bailey and Ms. Hazard entered the meeting. Mr. Foster stated that he and Ms. Bailey have been working in the community for approximately 20 years; he said that they work at the Central-Five Open Gym. He thanked the board for allowing the gym to be used for the community children. Mr. Foster said that in past years there has been open gym five nights a week and the past year, they have been granted three nights. He said that during the week, the smaller children are not allowed to come to the open gym because they must do home work and parents don't want them out too late but on Friday night, the smaller children were allowed to come to the open gym program. Mr. Foster wanted to know if the board would allow two more nights for the open gym program.

Ms. Bailey said that in the Vauxhall community there was not much for the children to do and they were trying to keep the children off the street and keep them busy. She said that the open gym was a community service for all ages in the neighborhood. Ms. Bailey said especially on Friday nights the younger children come from 6:30 until 9:30 and they offer a variety of activities and organized games. She said that with having only three days a week, the smaller children have been coming from 6:30 to 7:30 and then the older children come in and stay until 9:30. Ms. Bailey said that in the past there would be movie nights on Friday nights. She said that the children enjoy these activities. Ms. Bailey said it would be wonderful if they could have Friday night restored to the open gym program.

Mr. Damato asked if Mr. Foster or Ms. Bailey had approached Mr. Magliacano at the Recreation Department because he is the one who books the dates with the board of education. Mr. Foster said it was understood that Jefferson School was only granted three nights for open gym. Mr. Damato said that the Recreation Department only asked for three nights of open gym at Jefferson School.

Ms. Bailey said that she spoke to the principal of the school about this program. Mr. Foster said that it was his concern that they were only granted three nights. Mr. Damato asked if the group was looking to have the open gym reinstated on Friday nights. Mr. Foster said that they would really like five nights per week. Mr. Damato said that the Jefferson PTA has already reserved Tuesday nights. He said that the group needed to contact Mr. Magliacano and if he is in agreement with reinstating Friday nights, he will forward a letter to the board and the board will consider it.

Dr. Francis said that he was a product of the Friday night open gym at Jefferson School.

Ms. Hazard said that there are many families in the community who cannot afford to send their children to different activities and this is an activity that they can allow their children to attend to release school stress and enjoy themselves.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board it was moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mr. Layden that the meeting be adjourned. All present voting yes.

Respectfully submitted,

**JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY**