**TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union will be held on October 4, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at James Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on October 4, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at James Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey, pursuant to notice sent to each board member.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Susana Cooley, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mr. Francis Perkins (President) and Mrs. Judy Salazar

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mrs. Versie McNeil,

Mr. Perkins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Cooley led the board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The secretary read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the secretary.

Mr. Perkins said that while Mr. Damato’s statement indicated that action may be taken at this meeting, he did not anticipate that the board would be taking any formal action at this meeting.

Mr. Perkins said that the purpose of this evening’s meeting was to discuss goals and objectives for the 2012-2013 school year. He said that this was anticipated to be done at an earlier meeting, however, regular board business had precluded this discussion. Mr. Perkins said that he would also like to put a time limit on tonight’s meeting if there was no objection and 9:00 p.m. will be the time to adjourn. He said that public comments will be taken starting at 8:45 p.m. and limit that to fifteen minutes.

PROPOSED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Dr. Martin said that the purpose of this meeting was to set board goals for the coming year and the board goals in many ways become school district goals. He said that the administration’s view is that when the goals are set, it becomes the district’s job to focus on those goals as a school district. Dr. Martin said that the School Boards Association has often said that it is good to choose three or four goals for a school district because any more would make it difficult to focus on any of them and it is tough to get them done. He agrees that three or four goals is a manageable number and the district can really do some work with them. Dr. Martin said that the goals and objectives that are listed on the agenda came from discussions that Mr. Tatum, Dr. Lishak and he had heard over the past few months as ideas that might be good goals. He said that they are just to get the board talking and they were not meant as the board goals or that the board had to choose from these goals. Dr. Martin said that the board is free to go in any direction and reject all of the ideas listed if that is what they choose.

Mr. Perkins said that he thought this should be an open, free flowing discussion on each of the items and if the board does not wish to discuss a particular item, the board does not have to discuss it. He said that the goals and objectives that are required of the board by law are set out by the State and the board’s principal job is to get up every morning to come to work to educate the children that the board is charged to educating to the best of the board’s ability. Mr. Perkins said that it was very hard to measure whether a goal has been achieved.

Fitness and Health

The Township of Union Public Schools will continue to focus on the school communities’ health and fitness including students, parents and employees. Assemblies, workshops and health and fitness programs will be implemented in order for the school community as a whole to better understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating, which leads to a healthier and more productive educational community.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Perkins said that when he talks about fitness he means physical fitness, academic fitness and character fitness. He said that the board has had several discussions concerning this issue.

Mr. Arminio asked if the district still had a “Wellness Coach” and did he still visit the schools and meet with the teachers? Mr. Damato said that the concept is still there. He said that the individual who was serving as the Wellness Coach last year has resigned and the position is in the process of being filled at this time. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the cost of the Wellness Coach is still being picked up by the district’s insurance company. Mr. Damato said that the insurance company is providing for the position. Mr. Perkins stated that the coach was only for employees and not for students. Mr. Damato said that was correct. Mrs. Gaglione said the employees have been taking upon themselves to better their health and well being from what she is seeing. Mr. Damato said that there are a lot of programs going on throughout the district. He said that there is Zumba one or two nights a week being offered as well as yoga and boot camp programs that are being offered to employees. Mr. Damato said that these classes are very inexpensive and are paid for by the employees that participate. He said that the district committed to make an effort when the district renewed its insurance with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Mr. Damato said that one of the things that they wanted the district to do is to get people to quit smoking and the Wellness Coach was instrumental in helping three people in the district to quit smoking. He said that the potential there in avoided claims could be quite a bit but this initiative was geared toward trying to get the district’s experience down on its health plan so that the district’s renewals would be less expensive and the district would have a savings. Mr. Damato said that the trends are in the opposite direction and he thought that the trends were driven by the higher incidences of diabetes, heart disease and all of the other conditions that are brought on by smoking, particularly. He said that was the whole premise behind this initiative. Mr. Damato said that the new health club which is opening up across the street is very interested in working with district staff members. He said that there have not been any substantive discussions yet but that will be happening soon and he thought it would be a good idea if the Wellness Coach was involved in this. Mr. Damato said that there should be a new Wellness Coach hired within the next few weeks. He said that it was goal of the wellness program to get everyone up and moving for at least 30 minutes a day. Mr. Damato said that the district has committed to Blue Cross/Blue Shield that it would try its best to get the entire staff to do that.

Mr. Perkins said that he the issue of obesity among children in school is very serious. He is also concerned about the relationship of this condition with many other medical problems. He said to see obese young people, walking down the halls is particularly disconcerting. Mr. Perkins said that he met with an Ad Hoc Committee which included Ms. Ionta, Dr. Martin, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Arminio about a week ago at the high school. He said that he felt strongly whether the board adopts this as a specific goal or not, the board should continue to emphasize the importance of physical fitness. Mr. Perkins said it was his concept of the operation was that every teacher in the district is a fitness instructor. He said that he has spoken to several Supervisors in the district to make an effort to integrate fitness activities into the curriculum.

Mr. Arminio said that Mr. Perkins’ idea was terrific and he supported it. He said that if this is going to be a goal, the board must first decide how it will be implemented; who will be in charge of this; who will organize the assemblies, run the workshops and run the fitness program at all of the school and how will the district measure any kind of success with this goal. Mr. Arminio said that the district’s food service, the physical education department, the classroom teachers, the parents and the community must all be brought into this program in order for it to be successful. He said that overall he thought there needed to be some type of publicity to let the community at large know that this is something the district is doing and it is important to us. Mr. Arminio said there is not one negative to this wellness initiative.

Mr. Perkins said that sometimes a culture will adopt an event without much planning. Mr. Arminio said that he did not want this to be a fad he wanted this to be instilled in the lifestyle of the students and employees of the district. Mr. Perkins said that he did not think that this goal needed a specific structure because he felt that as it goes along it will develop. He said that he thought the natural person to be in charge of this from an administrative point of view would be the Athletic Director.

Mr. Nufrio said that he had two suggestions. He said that with the students, things will pretty much develop as time goes by and who will pick up the “baton”. Mr. Nufrio said that each teacher needs to incorporate this initiative into their curriculum to imbed the terminology in the minds of the students. He said that when it comes to staff, he asked Mr. Damato if the insurance company might assist a teacher who wished to participate at the new health club in town to pay for the monthly fee to join. Mr. Nufrio thought this would be an investment on their part. Mr. Damato said that he did have the discussion with the insurance company when the program was first instituted and the answer was that the insurance company and the broker are both prohibited by law from giving any incentives because they are viewed as a “rebate”. He said that when he originally discussed this program, there was a discussion about giving gift certificates available to people who met certain health and wellness goals. Mr. Damato said that this was an idea that the broker offered but about two weeks later the broker came back and advised that he had spoken to their attorneys and persons in the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance and were told that the broker could not offer things like that to the district. He said that what was done as an alternative was to organize a Health Fair, have various vendors from the township attend and allow those vendors to offer discounts and incentives to the employees. Mrs. Gaglione said that there are some insurance companies that give a discount. Mr. Damato said that what Blue Cross/Blue Shield does do is if there are certain things that employees take advantage of the employee will get them at little or no cost. He said that one of the things that the Wellness Committee is working on doing now is to get free flu shots available at locations in the school district and it would be sponsored through CVS. Mr. Nufrio said he did not know why an insurance company would not want to give someone an incentive who wants to be healthy and thereby reducing health expenses is crazy. Mr. Damato said that the broker was willing to do it but they found out they were unable to do it from their legal counsel. He said that the Wellness Committee also talked about doing some health evaluations on site. Mr. Damato said that the insurance company advised that many of the screenings and benefits that are offered are not being taken advantage of by members. Mr. Perkins said that the constituency that is reached by the district is 1500 employees, almost 8,000 students and their families by extension.

Dr. Martin said that everyone spends a lot of time speaking about the fitness portion (exercise, etc.) but very little time talking about the nutrition and this is the other half of the goal. He said that if this is something that the board wants to pursue as a goal, he will approach ARAMARK for help with implementing more nutritional menus in the schools. Dr. Martin was sure that if the district reached out to the parents to ask them to join in with this initiative. He felt that parents were looking to the school district for leadership in this regard. Mr. Nufrio said that he thought that ARAMARK was going to modify the lunch program based on the new format. Mrs. Gaglione said that ARAMARK did do that to follow the new regulations. Mr. Vieira said that the Type A lunches were changed to conform to the new regulations but not the a la carte menu. Mr. Nufrio said that the food service needed to be spoken to as to what is the format of what the National Lunch Program is expecting from every school. He said that there needs to be an adoption of what the National format is and why isn’t our lunch program showing an indication of change. Mr. Vieira said that he did not know the specifics as far as the number of grams but white bread is being replaced with whole grain bread, there is a maximum number of protein grams that can served, there has to be a fruit and a vegetable served versus a starch like french fries. Mrs. Cooley asked why chips and ice cream are being sold. Mr. Vieira said that’s what sells. Mrs. Gaglione said that both she and Mr. Gibbons brought up this issue to ARAMARK at the Wellness meeting. She said that ARAMARK was going to look at some other choices that could be offered to the students in the cafeteria and present those ideas at the next wellness meeting. Mr. Nufrio said at the least these changes should be in the elementary schools. Mrs. Gaglione thought that in the elementary schools and at Central five these changes have already been made. She thought that the middle school and high school employees are older and can make their own choices.

Mr. Perkins said that as he looked through the items on the agenda there was nothing listed that he could see that the district shouldn’t be doing. He said to just pick two or three of these things and really concentrate on them, does not mean the district is going to turn its back on any of them. Mr. Perkins said that all of these things would be done. He said that the question really is, in addition to what the board is discussing at this meeting are the types of goals that the board is talking about when we say we will pick two or three goals that the board is really shooting at. Mr. Perkins said that on a goal such as increasing test scores, it is not inappropriate to have measurable goals.

Curriculum

GOAL: The Township of Union Public Schools will continue to increase the rigor of academic instruction district wide through the implementation of the Common Core Content Standards (CCCS) in all areas of instruction. Standardized test scores will continue to be a focus of the district proficiency scores by no less than 10% by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Layden said that he agreed all of the goals are very important but he thought the board should focus on as a school district is the curriculum and academic achievement. He thought that the most important goal the school district can have is to continuously monitor student achievement and see where the district needs to improve. Mr. Layden said these goals should be in writing so that they can periodically be monitored and reviewed to make sure the district is going in the right direction.

Mr. Nufrio agreed with Mr. Layden but the problem lies within the confines of what is the evaluation process. He said that many types of evaluations, benchmarks and periodic testing and quizzes are presently in place but that may not always give you the most accurate picture because unfortunately some students just do not test well. Mr. Nufrio said there has to be more than that; evaluation has to be done by more observations and more evaluations of what is going on the classroom. He said that the district cannot allow teachers simple conduct business on a daily basis and not be aware of exactly what they are doing with the curriculum. Mr. Nufrio said that there has to be more vigilance on the part of the administration in the buildings and at central office. Mrs. Gaglione asked when the new evaluation system will be implemented. Dr. Martin said that this year three schools (Battle Hill, Kawameeh Middle School and Union High School) will be using this new system. He said next year all schools will be using the system. Mr. Nufrio said besides the new evaluation system the district can’t just say “by next year this time everyone will be on board.” He said that the district has to be on board now. Mr. Nufrio said that the administration must do more evaluations of teachers even if the district is not yet ready for the type of evaluations that the State is looking for. He said that he used to walk through about ten classrooms a day when he was an administrator to let the teachers know that there was someone watching them. Mr. Nufrio said that he never wanted to hear a teacher talking about a subject matter that had nothing to do with the curriculum. He said that this does happen in the classroom every day.

Mrs. Gaglione asked if the district was looking for a 10% improvement. Dr. Martin said that was correct. Mrs. Gaglione asked if all of the board members were in agreement that the district should have at least a 10% improvement on test scores. Mr. Perkins said he did not know how that number was reached. He said that one of the things that he would not like to see happen tonight is to pick a specific number. Mr. Perkins said that sometimes this board agrees to things because they sound like a “good idea” without ever really looking at whether they are validly a good idea or not. He said that 10% sounds like a good number and it sounds like it is attainable but he did not know that it was or wasn’t; maybe the board should be talking about 20% or more. Mr. Perkins asked if 10% was too high and was it an unrealistic goal. Mr. Nufrio said it was not according to State standards. He said that the State wants the district at a certain number by a certain year and if the district doesn’t start at 10% or higher the district will never get there. Mr. Nufrio said that 10% is the minimum that a district should be able to realize on a yearly basis in order to effectively reach the goals that the State requires. Mr. Perkins asked if 20% should be the goal and if that number would be attainable? Mr. Nufrio said that this was up to the Superintendent and the board should not be determining what the percentage should be based upon where the scores are currently.

Dr. Martin said that in many areas the test scores have increased in the past few years. He said that in 2009 the percentage of 11th graders passing language arts on the HSPA test was 78% and this past spring 88% of the students passed. Dr. Martin said that this includes general and special education students; without special education the percentage is 94% passed the test the first time. Mr. Arminio said that if the third graders scored 96% in language arts how can they increase by 10%? Mr. Nufrio said the highest you can go is 100%. Ms. Hart said that she thought the meaning of the resolution was that 10% of the students would show an improvement; for example if 500 students take the test, five more students will pass the test. Mr. Perkins asked what the appropriate number that the district should be aiming at? Ms. Hart said 10% sounded like a fair number. She said that when the State gives the district its goals, they are attainable goals. Dr. Martin said that it would be harder if you are at a 93% pass rate to get 10% increase than if you have a 60% pass rate. Mrs. Gaglione said that the district has to set a goal which is a “number” so that there is somewhere to reach to. Ms. Hart said that there has to be an attainable number. Dr. Martin said that two years ago the district was in DINI (District In Need of Improvement) and that was based upon test scores. He said that the district is out of that now and it has everything to do with the faculty. Dr. Martin said that this is not a new concept and the vast majority of teachers are working hard. He said that the teachers are not afraid of the goal because they want high scores.

Mr. Layden said that he would like to see Dr. Lishak and Mrs. Moutis report on a student achievement on a regular basis to the board so that it can be reviewed rather than wait until the end of the year. Mr. Perkins said that he saw nothing wrong with that. Mr. Arminio said that the students do take a mid-year proficiency assessment test.

Safety and Security

GOAL: The Township of Union Public Schools will continue to focus on the safety and security of the school community by increasing the number of security cameras in each school building which will be monitored by district security staff and the Township of Union Police Department. It is the goal of the district to increase online monitoring through a computer-based system tied directly to the Union Police Department by at least two schools by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio said that he assumed the two schools to be added would be the middle schools; he did not know how much this would cost. Dr. Martin said that right now only the high school is directly connected. He said that this is the ability that the police department has to access the cameras in the schools in the police vehicles. Mrs. Gaglione asked if there was any additional grant money that would be received to help pay for this. Mr. Damato said that he received a check from the ERIC North Sub-fund which is an insurance risk consortium that the district belongs to and is part of New Jersey School Boards Insurance Group. He said that the district has received grants from them for the past three years. Mr. Damato said that he was told at the meeting on Friday that the Board of Trustees of ERIC North has voted to discontinue giving out these grants. He said that there is a lot of anger over this decision. Mr. Damato said that ERIC North’s actuary told them that they need to maintain a $25 million reserve to meet their obligations or extenuating circumstances. He said that ERIC North has insurance for catastrophic losses; they don’t pay out every dollar. Mr. Damato said that ERIC North currently has $180 million surplus but it went down by $10 million because of the hurricane. He said it was unbelievable that they came to this conclusion. Mr. Damato said that the grants that ERIC North gave out amounted statewide to approximately $2 million. He said that this was a great program that allowed school districts to enhance their safety and security measures. Mr. Damato said that the district had to seek out new sources of funding for security measures since it looks like for at least next year there will be no grants available from ERIC North. He said that the district was involved in a grant application with the Township where they sought out grant money for a sidewalk, a connecting link from Hannah Caldwell over to Union High School. Mr. Damato said that the district applied for that connecting link because the high school was Hannah Caldwell’s emergency evacuation site. He said that it does not look like the district will be getting that grant this year and he felt it would be worthwhile for someone to pursue other sources of funding if they are available through Homeland Security or where ever. Mrs. Gaglione asked where this year’s money will be spent. Mr. Damato said that the check was in the sum of $36,000 will go for radios, cameras and knox boxes on the outside of each building to allow access by the police and fire department. Mrs. Gaglione asked what happened with the grant for the walkway. Mr. Damato said that he was not sure and would have to speak to Mr. Manzella about it.

Mrs. Gaglione said that the goal indicates that by the end of the 2012-2013 school year, two more schools will be linked to the police system; she asked if that was possible? Dr. Martin said that as soon as all of the security cameras in the middle schools are installed than the system can be connected by allowing police access to a particular frequency. Mr. Wiggins said that the cameras at Burnet are being worked on now and when that is completed work will be begin at Kawameeh. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the district had the money for this project presently budgeted. Mr. Wiggins said that the installation is being done in-house. Ms. Hart said that the cameras are all ready for Kawameeh and most of the wiring is complete. She said that everything except the second floor at Burnet is complete. Ms. Hart said that what the goal is referring to though is the on-line monitors. She said this is not the same thing as the cameras. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the district was getting any money from the Township for this project. Mr. Nufrio said that he recalled something from the police department; he remembered that the police department indicated that they would have funds to be able to link up the systems. Mr. Damato did not recall that meeting. Mr. Nufrio said that it was a Security meeting with representatives from the police department and he remembers asking about the cost of the link. He said that he was told not to worry about it, the cost would be covered by the police department. Mr. Damato said that the police indicated that there was some way that the police had to log on to the network. Ms. Hart said that the police department had to log on to the server. Dr. Martin said that as long as you have internet access, you can get into the program. Ms. Hart said that there must be access and you have to be able to log on to the server, it is not like going onto the internet.

Dr. Martin said that it was only a couple of years ago where there were only a handful of cameras in Burnet and many of them did not operate. He said that because of the budgeting that the district has done, Mr. Wiggins’ crew and Ms. Hart’s work the high school security system has been completed and the two middle schools will be completed this year. Dr. Martin said that he was not saying that this needed to be a goal but it was not easy to achieve and it is being done.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the alarm systems in the school buildings go directly to the police department. Mr. Wiggins said that the fire alarm is monitored but the burglar alarm is not monitored at all. Mr. Nufrio asked why the alarm did not go to a central station. Mr. Wiggins said he believed it was a monetary issue. He said that he looked into this a couple of years ago and at that time the estimate was $100 per school per month. Mr. Nufrio said that the district is paying a monitoring fee. Mr. Wiggins said that this fee is only to the fire department for the fire alarms. Mr. Nufrio said that this alarm goes to a central station and the fee to add the burglar alarms should be nominal to include burglary. He said that this is something that the district should consider because burglary is expensive. Mr. Nufrio thought that $100 per month per building was an excessive fee. He asked what the district was paying for the fire alarm. Mr. Wiggins thought that the cost was about $8,000 for the year and the burglary system would be an additional $100 per month per building.

Union High School

GOAL: The Township of Union Schools will continue to support Union Senior High School’s positive pride initiative. The district will support the project by increasing student accountability for a positive school culture through an increase in student achievement, service projects and school community activates designed to increase the “Farmers Pride”.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio asked Dr. Martin to explain this proposed goal. Dr. Martin said that in January or February of last year when the board had its goal setting meeting. He said that the number one goal was to increase student accountability for a positive school culture at Union High School. Dr. Martin said that after that meeting there was a real initiative where student government and the faculty became involved and the “U Matter” program to recognize positive behavior. He said that anti-bullying was really pressed and the students ended the year with successful picnics. Dr. Martin said that all of these activities were aimed at positive culture and increasing school spirit. He said that he thought that this positive energy has continued this school year and he thought that everyone at the high school was trying hard. Mrs. Gaglione said that community service projects were part of the pride initiative.

Central-Five/Jefferson School

GOAL: The Township of Union Public Schools will focus on the opening of Central-Five/Jefferson School for the school year 2013-2014 with positive public relations campaigns, community building tours and town meetings designed to create a Fifth Grade central academic learning facility.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Perkins said that he felt this was a specific, measurable goal that the board must meet. He said that the school shall be opened by the 2013-2014 school year. Mr. Layden asked for a status update on this project. Mr. Wiggins said that the project is still ahead of schedule and below budget. He said that there was already work being done on the interior of the building such as drywall. Mr. Wiggins said that the majority of the windows are installed and the majority of the brick work is done. He said that the auditorium work has come a long way. Mr. Wiggins said he did not see any hurdles at this time. Mr. Layden said that this should be the easiest goal to meet. Mrs. Gaglione said that she would like to see added to the goal that the district expects a smooth transition from the elementary schools back into Central-Five.

Mr. Damato said that one of the district’s goals is to have enough money left over at the end of the project to buy new furniture for the school. He said that the contingency account is approximately $850,000. Mr. Damato said that everyone on the project is working very hard to try to keep costs down on whatever change orders come about. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the schedule is kept up when will the project be completed. Mr. Damato thought that the site work should be done sometime in May. He said that there would be a punch list. Mr. Damato said that if the windows and the roof are installed and the heat is on before the end of the fall, the project should progress smoothly because there is a lot of finishing work that needs to be done and so long as the building is “weather tight” all of the interior work can be done throughout the winter months.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the EPA would do an inspection of the air content in the new construction to be sure that it is suitable for breathing and for working. Mr. Damato said he did not know. Mr. Nufrio said that there really should be an inspection because of all of the new chemicals in the building. Mr. Damato asked Mr. Wiggins if air quality testing is required before occupancy. Mr. Wiggins said he did not think so. He said that the contractor really checks everything that is going into the building during construction. Mr. Nufrio said that carpeting and glues are very potent, detrimental chemicals. Mr. Perkins asked if the Department of Education construction standards were reviewed by the Department of Education on a project such as this and they are approved or not approved. Mr. Damato said that was correct. Mr. Nufrio said that the district needs to get a private inspection. Mr. Damato said that the district can get a private, air quality inspection but he was going to check to see if this is cover in the project specifications.

Mr. Layden asked if there were any traffic modifications that have to be worked with the police department as far as streets, directions or traffic flow or is all of this already incorporated into the plan. Mr. Wiggins said he did not think that any “traffic flow” would be changed. He said that the traffic should be a lot better because there is a drive through in front of the building which brings the buses off of the street to the drop off area. Mr. Wiggins thought that this would help with traffic congestion and will be safer for the students.

Hamilton School

GOAL: The Township of Union Public Schools will review and create a transition plan for the use of Hamilton School. Stakeholders meetings will be held to review the best use of the building facilities to serve the needs of the township students.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio said this is a very important item and the board needs to establish some kind of goal for what will be done with Hamilton School after the fifth grade students leave. He thought this should be one of the board’s top priorities this year. Mr. Perkins agreed with Mr. Arminio and he felt that there must be a “not later than” date for this purpose. He said that when the board was contemplating the cessation of use of Hamilton School for the district’s purposes, there was some discussion about how the building would continue to be used. Mr. Perkins said that there was some sentiment to sell the building at that time as well. He said that one of the issues was continued use as a school so that the non conforming circumstances that existed and still exist in the building could be “grandfathered”. Mr. Perkins said that if the district wants to continue to use Hamilton as a school at some future date, the district must continue to hold some classes in the building. Mr. Damato said that the building would need to be used a school starting in September 2013. He said that this is of extreme importance to the board. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Vieira was approached by Union County Educational Services Commission as a potential lessor of the building. He said that he did not know what the offer or the duration of the lease would be at this time. Mr. Damato said that there were certain other things that should be considered before the board considers renting the building to someone else. He said that one consideration was if the district could use the space for offices, programs or things of that nature. Mr. Damato said that maybe the right way to approach this would be to establish an Ad Hoc committee. He said that a length of time is needed to “hash out” what needs to be done at Hamilton but it must be done in short order. Mr. Damato said that when the district entered into the lease agreement with the Morris Union Jointure there was an independent market value appraisal done by a real estate firm. He said that they figured out for a school use, in a residential zone, 42,000 square feet, condition of the building, type of utilities, etc. what the value of the building is. Mr. Damato said that Morris Union Jointure indicated at that time that they wanted the lease term to be ten years and at the time, the district had some serious capital needs and Morris Union Jointure had a $40 million surplus. He said that the negotiation for this lease was that the Morris Union Jointure would pay a sum of $1.5 million to the district up front and then the remainder of the rental costs would be divided over ten years and redistributed over the term of the lease.

Mr. Arminio said that Union County Educational Services has indicated that they wish to start a program for “over 21 year olds” who have multiple disabilities and they are looking in they are looking in the area for sites. He said that Union County Educational Services would be receiving money from the State for this program.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the State would discount the district for any revenue received from the rental of Hamilton and would it affect the budget. Mr. Damato asked what Mr. Nufrio meant by “discount” it. Mr. Nufrio said would be discounted against any other state aid which the district would receive. Mr. Vieira said that State Aid is not based on revenue. Mrs. Gaglione said that the board should ask Union County Educational Services for what purpose they want to rent Hamilton School and what the terms of the lease would be. Mr. Damato said that when a proposed lease is prepared, it will be distributed to the board to review and then the board can make a more intelligent decision about whether it is worth it to the district to rent the building or use it for other purposes. He said that there have been some suggestions on how the district can use the space such as moving Special Services to that location and relieve some of the overcrowding at Burnet Middle School. Mr. Damato said that the district already pays for the utilities and garbage disposal at Hamilton School; those costs are already built into the budget. He said that if the board wants to operate Hamilton as a school or operate Hamilton as an office building or for some other types of programs, the district may need to hire additional staff. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Vieira will be starting to prepare the budget very soon and the costs will have to be built into the budget for next year.

Mrs. Gaglione asked how many people would be on the committee. She said that this has been a topic of conversation for the past few months and she thought that time was critical now since it is already October. Mr. Perkins said that he felt if the district can do something to “grandfather” all of the inconsistencies and violations which would otherwise exist that the board take that option because then the district has the option to use the building as a school. He said that if there is another option to use the premises as office space and the use of the building as a school is lost, it seemed to him that while in the real estate market that option may not affect the value it will never be able to be used as a school. Mr. Perkins said that was the genius of having the Morris Union Jointure utilize the building as a school for ten years. Mr. Damato said that there are many possibilities for use of the building. Mr. Perkins said that if the district uses the building for only one class, does that preserve the entire building for school use. He said that the impetus and the research must come from the district staff because the board does not have the ability individually to do it. Mr. Perkins said that Mr. Damato will have to speak to Union County Educational Services to see for what purpose they want to lease the building. Mrs. Gaglione said that a date should be set to get feedback so that the Ad Hoc Committee can discuss. Mr. Perkins thought that thirty (30) days was a sufficient time to do this and he felt that Mr. Vieira should be involved. He said that by the November meeting the board should have something concrete to deal with and he agreed with Mr. Arminio that this was the most urgent item on the agenda. Dr. Martin said that he, Mr. Vieira and Mr. Damato were talking about this earlier today and fleshing out ideas.

Mr. Layden said that he was at a Municipal Drug Alliance meeting about a week ago and there was a suggestion made by one of the D.A.R.E. officers that the school be used for a “Sundown” program for middle and high school students. Mr. Nufrio said that

the only thing about creating an “at risk” program was the stigma which came with it and it is long lasting. Dr. Martin said that he was discussing the possibility of an “alternative” high school to be established.

Mr. Perkins said that it was a goal of the board that by the November meeting there would be feedback as to what purposes Hamilton School would be used for next school year.

Special Services

GOAL#1: The Township of Union Public Schools will continue to increase students educated in the least restrictive environment.

GOAL#2: The Township of Union Public Schools will increase students’ proficiency on standardized testing

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Conti distributed a list of the activities that the Special Service Department was doing to support the goals. She said that the two goals that she chose for her department were based upon State Performance Plan Indicators. Ms. Conti said that there were 14 indicators on the Department of Education website that guide her department. She said that two of them have consistently had to show an increase or improvement for and they are the two goals.

Ms. Conti said that when she became Director of Special Services in 2008, there were too many students in segregated settings. She said that this continues to be a goal for the district. Ms. Conti said that the State Performance Plan Indicators set the target for her Department’s goals. She said that every year the target gets tougher and tougher to meet. Ms. Conti said that when she first started in the Department, 35% of the students were educated in general education but she had to keep expanding that goal. She said that the district was cited for having too many students. Ms. Conti said that she was happy to report that this is no longer a concern as far as students being educated in the general education setting as there are well over 60% of the special education students that are educated in general education settings. She said that the other side of the coin is when you move students from out-of-district setting to a self contained classroom, although that is not a general education setting, it still is a “less restrictive” environment for those students who have come from an out-of-district school. Ms. Conti said that this is the one goal that the district is still having difficulty meeting. She said that when she first became Director of Special Services there were 220 out of district students and now there are between 110 and 130 students who are in out of district placement. Ms. Conti said that the district still has not met its target. She said that to meet the district’s target, there should only be 88 students in an out of district placement. Ms. Conti said that the district has students who are severely disabled, mostly in the categories of autistic and

emotionally disturbed. She said that it is much more difficult to bring these students into a less restrictive environment. Ms. Conti said that these students must have a strong support system to come back to the district.

Ms. Conti said that the other goal has to do with meeting standardized testing adequate yearly progress. She said that for the district, most of the time, means “safe harbor” which is moving 10% of the students in this category into proficiency. Ms. Conti said that there are different activities that will be done this year and continue to do to meet the goals.

Ms. Conti said that in order to bring more students back into district, the district will expand its in-class resource setting; either replacement or support which is determined by the student’s I.E.P. She said to facilitate that, the district will continue to expand and support co-teaching. Ms. Conti said that this year there were enough special education teachers to do almost full inclusion for all subjects. She said that professional development and use of assistive technology will continue. Ms. Conti said that her department is also expanding with the use of i-Pads which is a great tool for students with autism or children with communication disorders. She said that there were APS on the i-Pad that are very easy for students to access and operate to help express themselves much better. Ms. Conti said that she wants to keep increasing the assistive technology that is utilized. She said that she also wanted to bring more of the integrated related services back into the classroom to help support students who have been place in a general education environment so that there is less differentiation between general and special education classes. Ms. Conti said that related services such as speech, occupational therapy and physical therapy back into the classrooms helps students to generalize their skills more readily.

Ms. Conti said that this year CPR and First Aid training will be provided to the self-contained classes. She said that this is already being done for students in the community based instruction program because they go out into the community and they are away from the school setting. Ms. Conti said that sometimes in the self-contained classes because of developmental disabilities or physical needs students are more at risk and may need to have someone trained in CPR and/or First Aid.

Ms. Conti said that she just sent out two of her supervisors, Joseph Seugling and Jason Killian to get training in non violent crisis prevention. She said that this will help to train students who “act out” to do it in a preventative rather than a reactionary way and if something should escalate and become a physical confrontation, it is training to be sure that everything is done in a safe manner. Ms. Conti said that this is very important with the increase of behavioral disabilities and autistic classes.

Ms. Conti said that the district is also trying to increase parent training after school hours. She said that the parents of students with autism who may need help in attaining goals, there will be training on self-help skills. Ms. Conti said that programs are being offered to help parents help their own children meet their goals. She said that there is also professional development being offered to administrators in the area of diverse learners and cultural awareness, which Dr. Lishak and Ms. Moutis were instrumental in organizing. Ms. Conti said that this was to address the disproportionatality that the district was cited for which was having too many black students in the category of “specific learning disabilities”. She said that this is not only a special education issue but also a general education issue. Ms. Conti said that she is also trying to get researched based interventions that are at risk before they are seen by the Child Study Teams, to make better classification decisions and to be more culturally aware in the strategies and interventions that are used in the classroom. She said that the district had the Equity Alliance Center come out as well to shed some light on that issue.

Ms. Conti said that the district received a grant from the New Jersey Child Assault Program (CAP) a portion of which will be funded by the district. She said that they will be coming to instruct students from kindergarten to grade 3 and grade 8 to help them to become advocates for themselves and become aware of how to handle a situation if they become victims of any type of violence or abuse.

Ms. Conti said that the district will continue to expand its multi-sensory reading program.

Ms. Conti said that it is one of the department’s goals to help students as they transition from graduation out into the work or school world because the district is monitored by the State. She said that she had to get a list of all graduating students to find out what they are doing and keep track of them.

Ms. Conti said that the district is also continuing to expand the positive behavior supports in schools. She said that Hannah Caldwell has been one of the first school’s to do this with Dolphin Dollars. Ms. Conti said that Burnet Middle School is also a spotlight school and they are using the Lion’s Loot program. She said that the SAC’s and the guidance counselors have noticed discipline problems decreasing in the schools as a result of these programs. Ms. Conti said that the State does ask the district to monitor the discipline at the schools who are utilizing the program. She said that she hopes that the program can be expanded throughout the entire district.

Ms. Conti said that the district still has Dr. Goddard and the Trinitas Program and Rubin Lambert who does the counseling program at Union High School. She said that she knows that the administrative and teaching staff at the high school really support the work that Mr. Lambert does with students who are as risk, academically, socially and behaviorally. Ms. Conti said that students can just drop into that center and receive extra support in those areas to help them be successful. She hoped that this program can be brought down to the two middle schools in the future.

Mr. Arminio thought that Ms. Conti’s department goals were wonderful and the activities are marvelous. He said that if the board wanted to make them one of their goals, could they be combined into one goal? Mr. Arminio asked if this would be educationally sound. Ms. Conti said that it would be because if the district was increasing performance on standardized tests, she felt that all of the other goals follow as well.

Mr. Perkins said that Mr. Arminio’s question really raises something that he has been going over in his mind and that is, that everyone has a multitude of goals at different levels. He said that it seemed him that the Hamilton School and the Jefferson School goals are issues that are not districtwide; they are building specific but they must be accomplished. Mr. Perkins thought that it was totally appropriate for the board to say that they will support the programs developed by the Special Education Department. He said that this is something that affects how many special education students will do better on the standardized tests. Mr. Nufrio said that he feared down the road the special education department will have more specific “measures” to meet.

Technology

GOAL#1: The Township of Union Public Schools will unveil a newly designed district website. The website will be available for public viewing and will be updated throughout the school year to include information on district programs, school documents and links to important information.

GOAL#2: The Township of Union Public Schools will implement departmental and teacher web pages for each subject area and teacher within the district. The website will be fully implemented and functional by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

GOAL#3: The Township of Union Public Schools will have all teachers, grades K-12, maintain grade books and complete attendance for their students through the Genesis SIS. Full implementation of the program will include Genesis generated report cards, electronic grade books and access to student information access for parents on the parent portal.

GOAL#4: The Township of Union Public Schools will continue to focus on upgrading the IT infrastructure throughout the district as follows: October 1st – Kawameeh fully upgraded (new wiring and switches); November 1st – Union High School fully upgraded; March 31st Elementary Schools fully upgraded. By June 30th , all schools in district will have full wireless capability.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Martin said that he saw lots of progress being made in technology. Ms. Hart said that with regard to Goal #3 all teachers grades 6-12 are using the Grade Book so that parents who have signed up for the “portal” can log on and see their child’s progress. She said that the teachers really love this program and there have been no complaints from them. Ms. Hart said that for grades K-5 all the teachers have been trained on how to use Grade Book but the parents cannot get on line yet so that the teachers can get comfortable with posting the grades online. She said that the report cards will be done online and report cards for grades K-12 will be processed through Genesis. Ms. Hart said that by the beginning of the third marking period, all teachers will be using Grade Book as opposed to just posting grades. She said that by next September, all teachers will have to post grades and all parents in the district will have access. Ms. Hart said that the parent portal is doing very well; student schedules were able to be viewed on Labor Day Weekend. She said that districtwide there are 2700 accounts and at the high school there are 1600; Burnet has 600 and Kawameeh has a little over 300 accounts. Ms. Hart said that parents are signing up and using the portal to check student progress. Mr. Perkins said that when Ms. Hart refers to “accounts” he assumed that refers to parental access. Ms. Hart said that each parent registers for an account. Mr. Perkins said what happens if there are several children in a family. Ms. Hart said they would all be on one account. She said that students can also register and have an account where they can look at their grades but they do not have access to all of things that the parents have. Mr. Perkins asked if there was an issue with accessibility by some parents who do not have access to a computer. Ms. Hart said that no one has called her to say they did not have a computer. She said that there are computers available at the public library and most people have computers at their workplace that they can use. Ms. Hart said that the only call she has received is that the parent does not have an e-mail account. Mr. Perkins said that the district should pay attention to. Ms. Hart said that if she gets any calls with regard to this, she will let the board know and something can be figured out.

Ms. Hart said that with regard to Goal#1 and deal with the new websites. She said that she is actively working on this and she has reached out to each building principal because she would like there to be one person in each school who will be responsible to post specific things about the school. Ms. Hart said that she will train that person. She said that the district site will be taken care of by the technology department. Ms. Hart said that hopefully she will get volunteers in the buildings to be the webmaster of each school. She said that once each school is up and running, she would like to have “links” to each department, Special Services and each curriculum have their own tab to post what they are doing. Ms. Hart said that the other thing that will be a “link” is that each teacher will have their own website, instead of the classroom update that is now being used, where they can post homework and test dates, etc.

Mr. Nufrio said that he had suggested to Dr. Martin how the district can best have the parents notified ahead of time that next week there will be testing. He said that the principals should be able to do that with ease. Ms. Hart said that they can do that. Mr. Nufrio said in addition to that and with regard to teachers having their own website and be able to post events. Ms. Hart said that they will be able to do that. Mr. Nufrio said that will be a big help. Ms. Hart said that the problem is getting some of the teachers to keep the website up to date because some of them will do it the first couple weeks of school and then it fades away. She said that at some point she will probably make it mandatory. Mr. Nufrio asked if the guidance counselors and the building principals have that measure by which they could also notify the parents. Ms. Hart said that counselors will have their own pages also. Mr. Nufrio said can they notify the community that “next week students will be taking this test”; whether the counselor or the administrator does it does not matter. Ms. Hart said that through the website and through the parent access anyone who has an account can be sent out an e-mail from the district. She said that this will only go to parents who have an account. Ms. Hart said that there is a global connect phone message system that can send messages and this system has been being used.

Mrs. Gaglione said that Ms. Hart spoke about the different schools and to make sure that everyone is up to date and they are utilizing their websites. She wanted to know who in the schools will be in charge to keep them up to date. Ms. Hart said that some schools presently have a “webmaster” for the school. Mrs. Gaglione asked whose responsibility is it to monitor to make sure that their website is up to date. Ms. Hart said that right now no one and that is one of the problems. She said that once the new site is up she will make sure that someone is responsible for it. Ms. Hart said that there will be a webmaster in each building. Mrs. Gaglione said that there is no way that the building principal will not appoint a webmaster. Ms. Hart said that she will insist that each building have a webmaster and she will be able to speak to that person about updating the site. Mrs. Gaglione asked if Ms. Hart will be training the individual chosen as the webmaster. Ms. Hart said that she would. Mr. Perkins said that this is an evolving thing that will continue to evolve for the rest of our lives. He wondered how far we were away from a homebound student attending a class remotely by Skype. Ms. Hart said that Kawameeh used Skype to connect to another school and had a class with students in another town. Ms. Hart thought that it was a day that was coming.

Ms. Hart said that Goal #4 concerns the wiring issues. She said that she is trying to make sure that the “wireless” service in the buildings is updated to accommodate all of the wireless devices that are being used by staff and students. Ms. Hart said that by the end of the year it is her goal to have the entire district fully “wireless”. Mr. Perkins asked if there is a filter on the wireless server so that students cannot use that connection to get to particular websites. Ms. Hart said that there is a filter. Mr. Perkins said that this presents a problem for a user such as himself because when he is in the administration building he cannot access half of the sites. Mr. Nufrio said that the problem with the “filters” the students find ways to get around them.

Mrs. Gaglione said that she was in a few classrooms and was advised by the teachers that they did not have the “wires” to connect to the SmartBoard. Ms. Hart said that some teachers want extension cords because they want to move the Smart Boards to another place in their classrooms. She said that when the original drops were installed in the schools the placement of them was decided by the building principal. Ms. Hart said that some teachers don’t necessarily like where the drops are and they want a longer wire. Mr. Wiggins said that some of the SmartBoards are mobile based and the teachers want them mounted on the wall but he does not have the brackets to accomplish this. Mrs. Cooley said that there were a few classrooms that she visited during Open House that were not using the SmartBoards because they were not hooked up. Mrs. Gaglione said that when the SmartBoards started to be used, some teachers did not use it because they were afraid of them. She said that now the teachers like them. Mrs. Cooley said that one of the teachers she visited at Open House was still using overhead projectors even though the glass on the projector was cracked. Mr. Nufrio said that this is something that can be observed by administrators doing “walkthroughs”. He said that basically part of the “walkthrough” is to be sure that the technology is being utilized and all equipment is getting some use. Ms. Hart said that to get the teachers to “buy in” to using the new technology she had to get a few teachers to starting to use the Genesis program by having them post their grades while sitting in the cafeteria. She said that once the other teachers saw how easy Genesis was to use, it made the other teachers want to learn the system. Ms. Hart said that you can’t “force feed” people technology, they have to want to learn it.

Mr. Layden asked how Ms. Hart felt about having a pilot program sometime in the future for students, maybe in AP classes, using i-Pads instead of a textbook. He thought that this idea might save a lot of money on textbooks and would be a “green” initiative for the district. Ms. Hart said that there are a few textbooks being utilized in the district that students can access on the computer at home. Mrs. Gaglione said the new Algebra I textbook allows computer access to the textbook and even offers tutorials on the lessons. She thought that this was a wonderful thing. Mr. Perkins said he thought that the i-Pads were a great idea.

Mrs. Gaglione asked about the i-Pads that were to be provided to the Board of Education members so that they could have access to the board agendas. She said that she thought the board agreed on this so that so much paper would not be used to distribute agendas. Mrs. Ditri indicated that she uses approximately one case of photocopy paper per month to reproduce agendas for distribution to the board and to the public. Mr. Perkins said that this paper can be recycled. Mr. Wiggins said that he has had several meetings with the DPW and recycling companies in order to start the recycling process in the district. He said that he hoped that the district would be utilizing diversified receptacles, one will be used for paper only. He said that the district was also looking at the disposal of “food” garbage in order to cut waste pick up and carting costs in half. Mrs. Gaglione asked where the board was going with the i-Pads or laptops. She said that using so much paper is such a waste. Mr. Layden said that one of the top goals of the board should be recycling within the district; saving on paper; reducing energy costs and going “green” as a school district. He felt that one way to save energy was to use an i-Pad or a laptop to eliminate a lot of the paper that is used for the meetings. Mrs. Gaglione said that the board took the first step by posting the agenda on a website and cutting the cost of distribution of the agendas to board members. She said that the next step would be to consider the work hours that go into preparation of the agenda document. Ms. Hart said that an i-Pad is a little smaller than a laptop and there are less applications that can be done with them as opposed to a laptop. Mrs. Gaglione said that she assumed that if laptops are used, they would be the same ones that are used in the library and they will have to be transported back and forth. Mr. Perkins said that he did not have a problem with the concept. Mrs. Gaglione said that the board keeps talking about it but now it has to be done. Mr. Perkins said that this is a volunteer board and everyone spends a lot of time on board business. He said that everyone is concerned about the welfare of the district. Mr. Perkins asked what the problem would be by simply buying and issuing either laptops or i-Pads to each board member. Mr. Damato said that anything that is purchased by the Board of Education belongs to the Board of Education. He said that it could be issued to a board member when they are sworn in and when that board member ceases to be a member of the board, the laptop must be returned to the district. Mr. Damato said there was nothing wrong with that at all. Mr. Perkins said that some boards of education issue automobiles to the board members. He asked that this be looked at. Ms. Hart said that the board members don’t have to get the same thing; they can choose either an i-Pad or a laptop.

Mr. Perkins asked the board members prepare a list of three or four things that can be considered goals for this year. Dr. Martin said that he agreed that all of things that the board discussed tonight must be done. He said that everything has to move forward. Dr. Martin asked if the board would be picking several issues that will be given special attention in the upcoming year. He said that the Hamilton School issue must be accomplished before the next school year. Mr. Perkins asked how the goals should be stated. He felt that safety and security, technology and fitness were very important. Dr. Martin said that there was no way that the district would be taking its eyes off curriculum as that never goes away. He said that there are only two States in the United States that mandate students to have physical education classes and New Jersey is one of them. Dr. Martin said that to the extent that you can build a case that there is an epidemic of physical problems in the United States with children, it is amazing that public school districts across the nation are not paying more attention to physical education. He thought that it was a good thing that the board was talking about the wellness and fitness of students and staff within the district.

Mr. Perkins said that Mr. Damato shared the fact that 60% of the staff has not had an annual physical of any kind. Mr. Damato said that was correct. Mr. Perkins said that he asked if the district can require new potential hires to pass a physical examination. Mr. Damato said that the district is presently required by law to do that. Mr. Perkins asked when the last time the district did it. Mr. Damato said that as long as he has been in the district, the district has never done it. He said that the district should reconsider this requirement. Dr. Martin said that drug screening for new hires should also be considered. Mr. Damato said that another thing he has had discussions about in his professional circles was that police, fire and other public employees are also required to have psychological evaluations. He said that teachers, psychologists or social workers are not required to have such evaluations.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Nufrio seconded by Mrs. Cooley that the meeting be adjourned at 8:45 p.m. All presenting voting yes.

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO

BOARD SECRETARY