

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – OCTOBER 10, 2017

NOTICE OF MEETING:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mr. Ron McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Jeffrey Monge, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams, Mrs. Nancy Zuena

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mr. Barry Loessel

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Paul Griggs, Esq.

Mrs. Williams lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Williams read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS IN BOLD ONLY:

Mr. Brennan stated we will not be voting on O-9 tonight.

Anne Margaret Shannon stated I’m an aunt of a special ed student that went through the Union Schools and I’m president of the UTEA. E-11-I have very serious and strong concern and if I’m correct this is going to some kind of temp agency to get paraprofessionals for our students and it is very upsetting that we would go to any old stranger from a temp agency to take care of our very own kids.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes will be approved at next week’s meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. McDowell stated most of the communications relate to the resolutions.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

Mr. Tatum stated the Livingston Leaders presentation for October 17th will not take place next week. One of the teachers that wanted to do this is not available so that will be put on for another time. There will be two presentations last week – one from Randi Moran and the other from Jeremy Cohen, our language arts supervisor and math supervisor, respectively. They have some new information that they want to provide to the Board and the District.

Also next week I will be giving you a lot of the highlights from the month of October. There will be an update on the question that was raised last month about the health benefits for those employees that we are replacing and I will provide an updated number on that and all the general things that come before me and it will be included. Hopefully we will give you another update on re-registration.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mr. Monge, that the following resolution be adopted:

**E-11. APPROVE AUTHORIZING COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING –
PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

Approve the Township of Union Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.1, authorizing competitive contracting for the procurement of paraprofessional support services subject to approval of the New Jersey Division of Local Government Services.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Minneci stated since we had a comment, I think we owe them an explanation as to why this is up for a vote right now.

Mr. Griggs stated the District is in need of paraprofessionals. They haven't been able to budget for paraprofessionals so the alternative which a lot of school districts are going into and we are involved as a firm, is to outsource the paraprofessionals. What is going to occur here is it going to be a competitive contracting which means you don't simply take the lowest bid. There is evaluated criteria that you follow if you get to the point where you award the bid. It is a slower process, you need 20 days for the companies to put in their proposals. You need approval from Trenton to do it. The alternative is just regular bidding and the low number doesn't work in this case because within the specifications are very specific criteria and what is needed. The specs which are almost completed provide the school district with the ability to reject any bid that is sent to them. I've seen this more towards Hunterdon and Warren counties but it is the same problem. What's happening with school districts is if they employ a full-time paraprofessional then they have to provide benefits. In these times and notwithstanding the Chapter 78 contribution, the family package can cost \$28,000 and then your paraprofessional is going to cost you another \$20,000 so when the day is out you are probably up to \$60,000 with social security tax and those types of things so it simply doesn't fit the budget with a 2% cap.

This is the alternative. Last year the District had an arrangement with the UTEA where they were able to hire full-time paraprofessionals but that is no longer in existence. As I understand it now, substitutes are being used to fill some of these positions and the other challenge is as we move forward in time and again this is not unique to Union Township, more and more children are classified and more and more aides and paraprofessionals are needed. It is not a maybe thing, it is required by law. To not do this and not have the staffing, it puts the District into a little bit of exposure legally in terms of what is in the IEP. If it is a one-to-one aide, if it is aide that just shadows the child around. If it is an aid in a general education classroom where you have in-class support which is all part of inclusion so that is the challenge and it is a monetary challenge and a legal challenge. The only alternative in my mind is competitive contract.

Again competitive contract is good because you can evaluate certain points for this and that and a vendor can't say well I put in a low bid because obviously nobody in this room wants to have a low bid. These people will be trained too.

Mr. Monge stated can you speak to that. There wouldn't be a notion of you are getting less. We have requirements for our paraprofessionals today and those same requirements would be the same. Mr. Griggs stated as I understand it, whoever is assigned to a child that requires a one-to-one aide, then that person has to have some training to deal with that child – they can't just say here take care of this child. That is some of the criteria in the specs.

Mr. Nufrio stated can you expand a little bit more on we had an agreement last year but we can't do it this year. Mr. Griggs stated as I recall the agreement with the UTEA states if you work 20 hours or more you are entitled to benefits. Mr. Nufrio stated what was the agreement last year? Mr. Griggs stated it was a sidebar agreement. A sidebar agreement is when you have a collective bargaining agreement between an educational association and a board of education and for three years you can amend that collective bargaining agreement by both parties agreeing to modify it and it is usually done by what is called a sidebar agreement. We agree during the term of this contract the following changes – whatever it may be and that is what occurred here. There was a sidebar agreement which permitted the Board to employ full-time aides for less than 30 hours a week without having to provide benefits.

Mr. Nufrio stated didn't the State declare that could be done? Mr. Benaquista stated that is the new amount of time allowed. Mr. Nufrio asked why don't we have that today? Mr. Benaquista stated they did not want to continue the sidebar – it expired. Mr. Nufrio asked why couldn't we continue that? It needs to be said because it is public information to know why we can't do that this year. Mr. Griggs stated I'm going to tell you because the association has not agreed to extend the side bar agreement this year.

Dr. Francis stated my question is if we were able to extend it would we have to use this outsourcing anymore? Mr. Benaquista stated for most of the aide positions we would be able to cover ourselves but some of the aides that are needed for one-on-one situations, they require a true full-time above the 30 hours. So for those positions, we would still need to hire more bodies for those positions. The other ones that we can manage within the building to stay under the 30 hours, we would be able to hire people with that sidebar agreement. We did have people hired

last year with the sidebar agreement that ended June 30th and we ended up having to let go in that position because the sidebar agreement did not continue.

Mr. Arminio asked what would be the result of passing this to the present? Mr. Tatum stated currently all of the paraprofessionals employed by the District would not be affected by this company. What I have said over and over again and including last year, everyone that we wanted to put into 29-1/2 hours or less would be those people that replace people who left the District. Any new positions other than for the need of a one-on-one or a classroom that requires the support of a full-time assistant would not be affected by the part-time agreement that we had. In this case, as we replace people and people leave, they would then be provided by an agency but no one who is currently working right now would be affected because the benefits are already provided for in the budget.

Mr. Nufrio stated we could possibly do with part-time – do you know what the ratio is between what we can do with part-time and what we would need full-time. Mr. Benaquista stated I would have to ask the Director of Special Services. We need the breakdown of needed positions right and how many are one-on-ones. Mr. Nufrio stated I would figure that they would be far less. Mr. Benaquista stated correct. Mr. Tatum stated one of the things that we identified was in the budget but that is an increasing number that we have and as we get new students that has an IEP that mandates a full time assistant or an assistant, we have to provide an assistant for them. In some cases we can cover with the three-quarter person depending on what the needs are. Again there are some children that need an aide from the time they get off the bus in the morning to the time they get back on the bus in the afternoon. Every situation has its own individual need. We are trying to make sure that those are the ones that we have covered. Some of these situations where we can possibly have an aide where we have 2-3 children and they can do it within the amount of hours; remember there is a time period before school that is not instructional. There are time periods after school that are non-instructional time also where an aide may not be required. It depends on the circumstances. We found there are a number of them they we can do within 29 hours; maybe four days a week where they are there for five hours and the last day do it within four or vice-a-versa – mix it up.

Mr. Nufrio stated just to understand it a little bit – we are at this situation now because the sidebar agreement was not agreed upon for renewal because it expired. Mr. Tatum stated correct. Mr. Nufrio stated had it been approved the renewal we would have far less number of individuals that we would need to bring into the District. Mr. Tatum stated correct.

Mr. Monge stated are these costs under the special services department budget? Mr. Griggs stated yes.

Mr. Nufrio stated can it be that there is a revisiting of that sidebar agreement with the association? Mr. Tatum stated there is always that possibility. Mr. Nufrio stated we need to know that. Mr. Tatum stated I would request that we continue to pursue this because right now because the sidebar agreement expired and we still have to provide support for services and that is really where we are at this stage of the game. We have situations that arise in the District and unfortunately don't always fit where we would like them to fit but at the same time we still have

the responsibility for the students to ensure that they are covered. If you want to table this until next week...Mr. Griggs stated you can't because there are certain timelines that you have.

Mr. Nufrio stated but a solution can be revisited. Mr. Griggs stated the resolution should be approved this evening and the answer is yes. You can bring in the proposals and you don't have to award the proposals; but proactively you need to do this.

Mrs. Minneci asked if we decided to go with them, we have to use the people that they recommend or other people can apply on the outside? Mr. Benaquista stated in speaking with one of the companies, they only present attrition models, they don't like to get rid of current employees because they need to be successful. The first thing they do is ask the employer, which is us, to reach out to any people we have that are possibly interested in working under their company in the same position. They have a lot of success in recruiting people that are working for us as substitutes. They do try to recruit community as they can because it is important for us to be comfortable with the people that we are getting. If we are not happy with someone we do have working for us, they will replace them and we are part of the hiring process of who we want with our students. It makes it a little difficult when you are working with a third party but they want to make sure that they do everything to make sure that we are comfortable in who we want working for us.

Mr. Nufrio asked how does the company operate, do they get a fee from the employee? Mr. Griggs stated they are companies, there are more than one. They get a fixed number for a paraprofessional by the day. You specify the number of hours that they are expected to work – say 6.5 hours and they give you that cost and that can be prorated. They pay the benefits for that person but the Board knows this is the cost to bring this paraprofessional in for \$100 a day and that is what the bid form will look like.

Mr. Nufrio stated so the bill will be sent to us for the paraprofessional. Can we be surprised that the number down the road will actually exceed what we would have to pay? Mr. Benaquista stated the cost has not gone up. Mr. Griggs stated the proposal at this point – if it starts would be for the balance of this year and then there will be 2-3 renewal periods and they would have to specify their costs and that is the costs. That cost will never change, it might change for the following year. The employer social security goes up, that is on the contract. It is like any other bid – this is my number, this is what we are going to charge you, we have insurance, we have to do all the fingerprinting so they can't go beyond that number that they are giving you which certainly makes it much easier to budget. The only other way it might change would be the same amount of money would be proration. If you need less hours a day or if you have a student where you need an extra hour per day because of a bus issue or something like but you know the hourly rate so when the voucher comes in and the invoice will be clear – name, time, hours, days – total cost.

Mr. Nufrio asked have we done the math on the projections as to what per diem cost would be as opposed to us hiring and we are seeing a cost reduction? Mr. Benaquista stated yes of what the rate is out there. As far as us hiring a full-time para, it could be as much as a \$60,000 employee or a \$30,000 employee. We don't know that until we know if they take benefits. They average out to about \$50,000 employee across the board. By us hiring a para ourselves – we

have to project at the rate we have averaged out right now - \$50,000. Where if we hire a company, we are projecting out the rate that is close to our salary rate of a para. We can definitely project a more accurate number by hiring fifty paras through this agency then if we hired 50 ourselves.

Mr. Monge stated snapshot today? Mr. Griggs stated we don't know the number. Mr. Benaquista stated I found out what some other districts are paying and almost all of them are in our range of our salary. Mr. Griggs stated once the numbers come in and they can go through committee.

Mr. Nufrio stated their survival business percentage is already built in to the cost that they are going to pass on to us. They are not charging the employee. Mr. Griggs stated no. It is like outsourcing the cafeteria, custodial services. It is where the schools are going now.

Mr. Nufrio stated I just want clarification because if the cost savings isn't there why bother. Mr. Griggs stated then you don't do it. Mr. Benaquista stated once the bids come in we will have an accurate number.

Mr. Monge stated it is more of a competitive process and if it is there it's there if it is not then it is not. Mr. Griggs stated correct.

Mr. McDowell stated because of the shortage of people, we need to vote on this tonight. We need the service. If the sidebar agreement comes up later or down the road, that is fine too. This is like backup that we need.

Woman from the audience, asked if she could ask a question. Mr. McDowell stated I'm sorry but we passed the public comment section of the meeting. Mr. Nufrio stated she can do it at the end. Mr. McDowell stated we had a portion of this meeting in the beginning where the public was allowed to make comments on the resolutions that we would be voting on tonight. The only one who spoke up was Ms. Shannon. Man in audience state but there was a lot of information given out here and that doesn't seem fair to me.

Mr. Griggs stated there are two times you can give public comment. If you see something on the agenda you are more than welcome to put your public comment in. The Board after that has the right to discuss it and the next opportunity is at the end of the meeting and the Board is not awarding any contract. If this contract is awarded, it won't be awarded until the beginning of November at the earliest. Man in audience stated it is going to be overturned? Mr. Griggs stated it is not going to be overturned, the Board would just not award the contract.

Mrs. Minneci asked so we are not paying the benefits but if they are full-time employee, they pay the benefits? Mr. Benaquista stated what they do and how they handle their business is theirs. We care about our costs. Mrs. Minneci stated we want to get quality people so if people want benefits – that is the only thing. Mr. Benaquista stated there are a lot of people that would like to take a full time position with us and they would say they don't want the benefits; however, making a decision like that for the District isn't wise of me because what if they turnaround after they are hired and say I want benefits – then I would have to give it to them.

For someone like that, working for this company would make sense because the pay is comparable, if not a little better and if they don't need the benefits then it is a great opportunity to work for us. Mrs. Minneci stated I just wouldn't want to lose somebody that we really benefit from having it. Mr. Benaquista stated anyone who is working for us in a substitute capacity that doesn't want to stop being a substitute for us, stays as a substitute for us – we hire substitutes every month because we don't have enough and those people can stay and the rate is pretty much equal to a para so then they just go to a day-to-day job for us and they are in the same position.

Mr. Nufrio stated as I understand it, if the sidebar agreement were to be renewed we technically would not be at this situation where we would have to engage outside resources. Mr. McDowell stated you are talking in the future. Mr. Nufrio stated right now. Mr. McDowell stated right now we are at this situation and the sidebar has not been renewed. Mr. Nufrio stated had the sidebar agreement been renewed we wouldn't be at this juncture. Mr. Benaquista stated you would see a lot more part-time paras hired under that agreement.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Monge asked why are we voting on F-9. Mr. Brennan stated these are student activities. Mrs. Cappiello stated some of these are old invoices. Mr. Brennan stated from the high school and should have been paid.

Moved by Mr. Monge, seconded by Mr. Nufrio, that the following resolutions be adopted:

F-6. APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE 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 in the hands of each Board member.

F-9. APPROVE CONTRACTS AND/OR PURCHASES

Approve the below and attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) (paid by funds raised by or collected by students), in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member:

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Union High School	3250/Athletics	Susan G. Koman – fundraising event	\$2,000 (approx.)
Union High School	3201/Athletics Football	Varsity Athletic Apparel Inc. For new Alumni Sports Banners	\$8,000 (approx.)
Union High School	3240/Athletics Football	BSN Sports – sweatshirts and team apparel for football team	\$4,000 (approx.)

Union High School	3380/Athletics Wrestling	UCIAC – County Wrestling Tournament	\$4,000 (approx.)
Union High School	3220/Athletics Student Trainer	School Health Corp – sports drinks and water sold at Field House	\$2,000 (approx.)
Union High School	3380/Athletics Wrestling	NJSIAA – State Wrestling Tournaments at UHS	\$12,000 (approx.)
Union High School	2100/Athletics Football	NJSIAA – State football game	\$4,000 (approx.)
Union High School	2033/Music	Laura Muller – reimbursement for rental of truck for band camp	\$783.93
Union High School	2033/Music	Laura Muller – reimbursement for purchase of lumber and paid for construction of marching band props	\$894.88
Union High School	2033/Music	Laura Muller – reimbursement for rental of equipment truck for marching band competitions	\$2,000 (approx.)
Union High School	2012/Senior Prom	O'Donnell Sign Company – lawn signs – senior graduation	\$1,344
Union High School	2055/Yearbook	Life Touch - yearbook balance 2016-2017	\$8,190.13
Union High School	61/Cosmetology	Burmax – cosmetology kits – 2017-2018	\$4,451.22
Union High School	2014/Campers	Fairview Lakes YMCA Camps – camping trip 5/2-5/5/17	\$2,322.00
Kawameeh Middle School	27/Scholastic	Scholastic – book fair	\$2,700.

F-13. APPROVE SIGNATORIES CONNECTONE – WASHINGTON

Approve the following signatories on the ConnectOne “Washington Elementary School Student Activities Account”: Thomas Matthews and Mary DiNardo.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Monge presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Monge stated F-15 in the backup it talked about a justification being an increase from 15-16 so I’m trying to understand why this amount wasn’t budgeted for 16-17 because we skipped a year. If we knew there was an issue in 15-16, then we would have rectified it in 16-17 and then we wouldn’t be having this increase. Is there some feedback to that?

Mrs. Conti stated I will double check on the 15-16 but what happened was we were using other neurologists and last school year we had one neurologist that we are no longer using so those evaluations being done by that neurologists are now going over to this neurologist. Also the other neurologist began last minute and had limited availability so we had to push those evaluations from the neurologist that could not do as many to this neurologist here. Then towards the end of the school year there was an increase in the 15-16 and we are doing our budget for the 16-17 but then at the end of the 16-17 school year there was an increase as we got towards the end of May – those three components are what caused the increase and I don't have it in front of me but I will go back and double check with the accountant.

Mr. Monge stated my last question to Barry – the maintenance plan and I made this comment last year is basically your checklist for every building and this is based on a cents per square foot – based on the building size. Mr. Loessel stated pretty much. Mr. Monge stated there is consideration based on the year of the building so there is an adjustment as it pertains to the age of that building. Mr. Loessel stated pretty much yes. We have to figure out the custodians that we have there, the age of the building. Mr. Brennan stated it is based on square footage of building, building replacement value, etc. Mr. Monge stated building replacement value is taken into consideration. In real estate newer buildings are a certain cents per square foot versus older buildings would be a greater number.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Zuena stated I received a request that we go over the discussion items first since we are voting on some of these tonight.

1. Letter from Crossroads Christian Fellowship requesting use of Battle Hill School gym beginning Thursday, January 8, 2018 through Thursday, April 5, 2018 (every Thursday from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. for their 2018 volleyball/basketball program and the waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance to be provided).

2. Request from Holy Spirit School to use Hannah Caldwell Elementary School gym Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Washington Elementary School's gym Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. (mid-October through February) for their 2017-2018 basketball season and waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance to be provided).

3. Request from League of Women Voters to use the Union High School Library from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursday, October 19, 2017 for the Union Board of Education Candidates Night Forum and Debate (Certificate of Insurance to be provided).

4. Request from Vauxhall Historical Society to use Jefferson School gym Saturday, November 4, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the annual Veterans' Day Program, the waiver of all fees and insurance and to have the UHS ROTC to post the colors and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Request from Township of Union Recreation Department to use Jefferson School's Parking lot for the 2017 Township of Union Recreation Department's Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 28, 2017 from 12 noon to 5 p.m.

6. Request from Debra Lester, 123College.com, Inc. to rent out classrooms at Union High School on December 5, 2017 and December 7, 2017 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to provide a free educational workshop (Certificate of Insurance to be provided), in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member.

We are voting on some of them so if you have any questions with them we should go over them first.

Mr. Nufrio stated as part of the Operations Committee, I would like to have had some discussion on a couple of these. Since we really haven't had a chance to do that I would like to suggest that we table O-6 because I think it needs to have some tweaking based on prior years' experiences. We can always do this next week but I think it is an issue that the committee should discuss with the President of the Board. Mrs. Zuena stated so we will remove O-6 from voting. Mr. Arminio stated don't we have to vote on whether to remove it or not. Mr. Nufrio stated I made a suggestion.

Mr. Griggs stated there is no motion pending. Mrs. Zuena stated should we discuss it in executive session. Mr. Griggs stated you can't discuss this in executive session. Mr. Nufrio stated I'm just recommending tabling it. Mr. Griggs stated you are not going to table it you are just going to remove it from the agenda for voting.

Mr. McDowell stated we will remove it from voting tonight but we will vote on O-3, O-4, O-5 and O-9. Mr. Brennan stated I just want to clarify because the numbering under the discussion items is different than the Operations agenda items. Mrs. Zuena stated it is O-6.

Mr. Monge stated when we have folks requesting no rental fee, I thought we said our basic expenses would always be part of the costs. Mrs. Zuena stated I think I can speak and Barry can confirm that on the nights that the schools are open, we have custodians that are in place already, so it is only if they are coming in on the times that there are no custodial staff there. Mr. Monge stated in this case the staff is going to be there any way.

Mr. Arminio stated we have also had these three organizations – Holy Spirit, Christian Fellowship and the Veterans using those schools for a number of years and the league of woman voters have been using the high school library for years. We are just following what has been done. Mrs. Zuena stated I think he was just confirming that there was coverage in the buildings already.

Mrs. Minneci stated the one that we are taking off the agenda. Mrs. Zuena stated it is just tabled til next week. We are just not voting on it tonight. Mrs. Minneci asked is there going to be a discussion at some point about this because Halloween is going to be here before you know it. Mrs. Zuena stated we can have a discussion about agenda items after these three are voted on.

I just went over the discussion items. After I am done with the discussion items, I will read the three resolutions I'm voting on and then we will still have time to discuss the other resolutions that are on the agenda.

Mrs. Williams stated we are removing Trunk or Treat. Mrs. Zuena stated we are not removing anything, we are just not voting on it and we can discuss it later. Mrs. Williams stated discussion item #6. Mrs. Zuena stated that is different from O-6.

Mrs. Zuena stated #6 is not on the agenda – is this a new request from Debra Lester. Mrs. Cappiello stated yes, we never received anything from her. Mrs. Zuena stated we never had any information from this woman before so is she requesting for free? Mr. Arminio stated it says to rent out classrooms. Mr. Monge stated it seems like it is a for profit entity.

Mrs. Zuena asked Barry are they willing to pay the rental cost? Mr. Loessel stated they want to rent the rooms. Mr. Monge stated I don't know if anybody checked them out. I went online and looked at what kind of company they were. I think it is a for profit. Mr. McDowell stated we need to vote on O-3, O-4 and O-5. Mrs. Zuena stated I did the discussion item first because we have to vote on some of them. Mr. McDowell stated o.k. Mr. Monge stated I would suggest that Ms. Ahern take a look at what these folks do because it is basically what her department does and essentially it is a marketing opportunity to be able to get parents to engage them to help get scholarships and financial aid assistance and the like. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we are hosting an event next week on financial aid for the parents. This company is 15 minutes of free analysis for the parents. I think this is something Nicole needs to look into before we move ahead with this.

Mr. Nufiro stated O-9 is also being taken off. Mrs. Zuena stated we are only voting on O-3, O-4 and O-5 tonight. Mr. Nufiro stated O-6 and O-9 are off. Mrs. Zuena stated we are not voting on O-9 tonight.

Moved by Mrs. Zuena, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the following resolutions be adopted:

O-3. APPROVE REQUEST FROM HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL

Approve request from Holy Spirit School to use Hannah Caldwell Elementary School gym Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Washington Elementary School's gym Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. for their 2017-2018 basketball season and waiver of all fees (Certificate of Insurance to be provided).

O-4. APPROVE REQUEST FROM LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Approve request from League of Women Voters to use the Union High School Library from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursday, October 19, 2017 for the Union Board of Education Candidates Night Forum and Debate (Certificate of Insurance to be provided).

O-5. APPROVE REQUEST FROM VAUXHALL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Approve request from Vauxhall Historical Society to use Jefferson School gym Saturday, November 4, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the annual Veterans' Day Program, the waiver of

all fees and insurance and to have the UHS ROTC to post the colors and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Arminio asked why are we voting on O-33 but not voting on O-2? Mrs. Zuena stated O-2 is not starting until January 8th and the basketball season is starting right away – it is timing.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Zuena presented the Operations Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Nufrio stated just as a point of order, when I said that the committee did not have an opportunity to fully discuss O-6, we did discuss O-9 and I suggest as such the committee should have an opportunity to discuss this because we are a board of committee not a board of a whole so that takes precedence over discussion. Mrs. Minneci stated so we are not going to discuss it. Mr. Nufrio stated it is a point of order and I'm saying that we hadn't had a chance to discuss O-6. I think it is a committee issue before it comes before the Board. Mrs. Zuena stated we can meet as a committee and discuss that. Mrs. Minneci stated will it be before next week. Mr. Nufrio stated with all probability yes. We realize there is a timeline involved. We have not had a chance to discuss it so why would we discuss something that the committee hasn't finalized. We discussed the other issues.

Mr. McDowell stated the Operations Committee will discuss this and then come back to the Board with your recommendation. Mr. Nufrio stated we would like to have you included in that discussion. Mr. McDowell stated we will make a date before the next meeting.

Mrs. Minneci stated Mr. Monge informed me that I'm on the Operations Committee. Mr. Brennan stated it is Nancy, Jeff and Mr. Nufrio.

Mr. Monge stated O-9 – we are essentially leaving it for vote for next week because we wanted to try to see if we could get a second bid. Right now there is just one quote. Mr. Nufrio stated and it exceeded the \$6,000 threshold.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Arminio stated we are only going to vote on one fraction of that – the leave replacement teacher at Hannah Caldwell who is starting this coming Friday so we need to approve her. It is Leah Pastawski who is a first grade leave replacement teacher. The Board office was informed today by the principal that the teacher was leaving on Thursday and the leave replacement teacher will begin. We are only approving that part of P-1.

Moved by Mr. Arminio, seconded by Mrs. Zuena, that the following resolution be adopted:

P-1. APPROVE PERSONNEL ACTION

Personnel Action for Leah Pastawski be approved in accordance with the information in the hands of each Board member.

DISCUSSION:

None

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Monge, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Zuena, Mr. McDowell

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Arminio presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Minneci stated on these resignations, I see they are passed and I looked at the backup – do they have a timeline? In other words, I’m leaving this day and they just submitted the letters. Mr. Tatum stated when a person resigns, they have a 60-day termination clause in their contracts; however, if we are able to procure a replacement, we can release them earlier. Some cases we have to keep them but most cases we will let them go to their new job.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

Mr. Arminio presented the Policy Committee agenda – for the first reading POL-1 – 9113 and we had a meeting of the Policy Committee and it is really just correcting a missing item in the policy which is filling vacancy bylaw which operates the Board of Education – the 9000 section of the Board policies. What it is doing is simply adding “in public” so when we have a Board resignation, or for some reason has to leave, when we fill that position – in 2014 when we revised the Board policies, the whole policy manual, we revised that one to say that the Board would replace a member of the Board using an “ad hoc committee” of 3-4 appointed by the Board President or the entire Board could be part of the interview committee and that would be done in public because the words “in public” were never added and this was discovered. I sent the Policy Committee an email on that and we also discussed it today.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Nufrio stated the public is essential because last year when I was President I simply augmented what Mr. Arminio did in previous years where the interview was conducted in this room but given the limited space we have here and given the fact that it wasn’t televised and also given the fact that you can’t have more than four Board members in a room without it causing a conflict so last year what we did was we did it at the Union High School library and it was televised and it began as a public meeting thereby affording all Board members the ability to attend that interview and even if they only participated by submitting some questions for the

interviewers but at least it gave the transparency that it should have which it didn't have in past years.

RESIDENCY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Zuena presented the Residency Committee agenda.

DISCUSSION:

None

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:

Mr. Monge gave an update on the Technology Committee. The wiring for the middle school in preparation for the Chrome Books is kicking off. We talked about trying to have the Chrome Books after we come back from break versus delaying it like we did last year. Mrs. Paul will talk to Mrs. Moses about that. She didn't think it would be an issue.

Mr. McDowell stated the middle schoolers won't be allowed to take them home. Mr. Monge stated they won't be able to take them home, they will be in the classroom. The idea right now is that they will be assigned but the logistics are still trying to be figured out. They will receive them at homeroom and return them before the end of the school day. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we discussed that in the Education Committee meeting and Gerry is looking into that and email with more information. Mr. Tatum stated I had a discussion with Mrs. Paul this morning about this and you can't do this without the involvement of the building principal and they have to be involved in the scheduling issues and logistics that go into it. I think the lead time of the Chrome Books coming in and in the hands of the students maybe that can be part of the preparation so when Mrs. Moses comes back – what I suggested to Mrs. Paul was that part of the discussion has to be with her about what her plan was for the timeline and then bring it back to everyone so they understand what we are doing and what obstacles may be in front of us regarding implementation.

Mrs. Zuena stated so each child will be assigned their own Chrome Book and so my question is do the parents have to sign a waiver because there still can be damage. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated they do have the Chrome Book agreement that the parents will have to sign. It is uploaded onto Genesis. Mrs. Hart stated it is ready to go but I have to proofread it one more time.

Mr. Monge stated the other thing we talked about was the training happening immediately for the teachers to make sure that we try to integrate the technology into the classroom in the lessons.

The other thing that is kicking off is the process of getting the infrastructure study for the elementary schools for them to now take off on the one-to-one project; that is pretty exciting for the elementary schools to be involved in this project.

The last thing two things – one we are going to be looking at the phone system. It is over a decade old and there are a lot of issues. Lastly, Genesis – I know there has been some work with some of those forms but we are trying to see if there is an opportunity to get some

professional development in and take it to the next level because we should have everything electronically. Mrs. Zuena stated we will look at that at the convention also because me and Mr. Brennan had a big discussion with them last year. Maybe I can bring some information back.

Mr. Arminio stated we spoke about that in Education and Genesis will come and speak to all of us. Mrs. Zuena stated just even uploading the school forms that we have to fill out the first night.

Mrs. Hart stated the medical insurance is ready to go – I just didn't open it up yet and I just want to make sure I can tell who filled it out. The military one is ready to go. Chrome Book one is ready to go. The next one I have to work on is the athletic forms. By September we will have everything. The other thing I am working on much to my 8th grade son's dismay is setting up more alerts for parents. They can choose what grade – every time he gets less than a 65 you get a text message.

Mr. Monge stated the last thing, Mrs. Paul is going to come to Mr. Tatum about the possibility of adding something to next week's agenda – the purchase of the Chrome Books which needs to be done sooner rather than later in my opinion. We are going to try to get that on the agenda for next week.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills will be approved at next week's meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Arminio stated I will update you on a number of sports next week. The girls' soccer team is doing marvelously. The volleyball team is doing wonderfully. The gymnastic team is doing terrific. The football team - if you were at the home game last Friday night – what an exciting game – we lost 7-6 to Westfield; what a really good game. The next game is October 20th against Ridge. Football team played terrific and Westfield is ranked #17 in the State and has been undefeated for the last 29 games.

Just to update you on a couple of things. Last month we had a presentation by the ESL and I connected the Friends of the Union Public Library with Yvonne Lorenzo and the Director of Library, Karen O'Malley, and they are going to have discussions to come up with something with the Friends of the Union Public Library – to fund a program during the summer for our ESL students. They will make a presentation to Mr. Tatum and then he can present it to the Board. They gathered together some ideas and now they are going to sit and talk and make a presentation to Mr. Tatum. I think it is a great collaboration between the public schools, Friends of the Library and the Public Library itself. It is really a good thing.

Relay for Life is coming up and I'm going to be nagging you – June 2nd.

Last Saturday there was a softball game between Burnet Alumni and Kawameeh Alumni and for the 4th year in a row Kawameeh was victorious. I was the umpire. What's good about it is the alumni get together and they raise money for the Education Foundation. It is a lot of good

will. The Jr. ROTC came and made the flag presentation and they were awesome as always. I want to thank them publicly for coming and giving up their Saturday afternoon.

Lastly, the Athletic Hall of Fame is coming up Monday, November 20th – this is our third hall of fame. We do it every other year. This year we have 12 individuals being inducted. A lot of hall of fames have been around for decades; we started our six years ago and we have a lot of catching up to do – from 1923 until today. Three of the honorees were employees here at the District in education. One is a present employee, Sue Zawacki from Kawameeh – she is being inducted into the Hall of Fame, Brian Churnan, a former coach, and Roy Wooton, who was a guidance counselor at Kawameeh for quite a few years until he went out-of-district to become a principal or vice principal. Robert O'Dell, a long-time track coach, the 1991 football team, which was All State and #1 in the State. The 2005 gymnastic team and Bill Parson, the special contributor for athletic hall of fame, he was a student and went through the Union school system. Phys ed teacher at a number of the schools and then became the athletic director until he retired a few years ago and Linda Ionta took over. It is a good affair honoring those that deserve to be honored. Maybe we can start talking about other hall of fames and not just athletic.

Mr. Nufrio stated I would like to ask Mr. Tatum to forward the email I sent two days ago – I sent it to Mr. McDowell, Mr. Arminio and Mrs. Minneci. It was the October issue from NJSBA. I don't know if you got to look at it Mr. Tatum but it is about what I have been screaming about for several years about how we can improve, enhance, embellish – whichever you choose, our vocational program. Just for the publics information, the NJSBA is forming a task force which will study educational opportunities for the non-college bound student. I have also reached out to NJSBA and I volunteered my services if they should choose to accept it. Because of my vocational background in administration but the report will be forthcoming this coming June. If any Board member did not receive it and I didn't want to violate any ethics by communicating it to more than three Board members at a time so if anyone didn't receive, just let me know and I will send it but it will be in the publication that we also get by mail. It is about time that not just districts' talking about how vocational education has been the abandoned orphan child and not because we wanted to abandon it but the State sought fit to only address areas of education that was primarily college prep, college bound and of course that has disparity. The vocational student or the non-college bound student literally became an orphan child. It is about time a major organization like the School Boards Association is going to do an extensive study and perhaps the State will actually listen to its recommendation that are put forth. It is going to require more funding and I know Mr. Tatum in the past said I wish we had the money to do all of this; but it has to happen. It can't be continued to be disregarded because more than half of our children do not go to college. Those that do a good percentage don't finish and they are right back to the work field or some other vocational direction which they have to pay for privately. If they don't pay for it privately, they get loans which ultimately is the taxpayers responsibility as well. I just wanted everyone to know that I offered my services and certainly Mrs. Minneci or Mrs. Zuena who have a concern and I guess some investment in that field to also extend your services. I don't know when they are going to decide who the elite members would be or the members of the task force will be but I hope to be one of them. Maybe then we can start planning something for next year given the fact that it does take time to prepare for these things.

Mr. McDowell stated I appreciate that and according to that study there are 30 million good jobs that don't require a 4-year college degree. Mr. Nufrio stated it is a void that needs to be filled.

Mr. Tatum stated you only can facilitate what research says about curriculum and the development of curriculum and pangolin swings back and forth educationally and based upon the needs of the society happens to be is what we have to do in schools and that is really where it comes from. Unfortunately over the years, legislatively, we have been commanded to take an approach which is more college bound and unfortunately the first thing that goes away is vocational. When I first came to this district, coming from a middle school in a neighboring community, and I saw the electives that middle school students had – along the vocational lines during those days, sewing, cooking – all those things – I was surprised because I didn't have a quarter of those electives in my former district and I was amazed how much you had here at the time. I also regret to say that those electives were cut out in lieu of saying every child must take algebra and particular courses. When they came out with the common core standards they dictated those things and unfortunately the school districts had to trim down and take away. We have made some efforts over the last couple of years to take a look at how some of those programs could be restored. About 3-4 years ago we had a grant for a welding program and I shared the comment with the Board that teachers were amazed how focused students were on those projects. It was short lived – it was experimental type of thing. Do I think there is some merit to looking at this more closely, I did share that email with Mr. Benaquista because he and I already had some discussion about this. We do take this seriously and we look forward to it.

Mr. Nufrio stated I know you do take it seriously Mr. Tatum but it takes money. What I'm hopeful is to see that any recommendation that comes out of this study is going to put the State on notice that what we are doing for kids is insufficient. Not everyone can go to college and even those that do go, not everyone finishes. What you just said that we were put to task to provide academics and point all children towards college, that is a fair statement and certainly vocational ed and I can personally indicate that I experienced it in my building where vocational programs were not only decimated but gutted in some cases and never renewed. There is an answer to that and I'm going to be bold enough to say it, I shared a little dialogue with Mr. Monge and he let me vent a little bit, this has to do with politics and it always did because there is no money to be obtained through promoting vocational education. There is a lot of money that goes into ETS and all the other testing services, all the other academic services that provide the so called bible for us to follow and if one were to really take a look at that we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars and we all know where some of that money winds up.

Mrs. Minneci stated I was an educator in a vocational school system for 39 years and over the years I could see the trend going towards college. When I first started we had about 10-12 seniors apply and go to college. By the time I left almost 90% applied to college and went to college. Not even a vocational school, to a college. I agree with you and we need to look into that. Mr. Tatum stated the revisitation of vocational ed goes back to the 70's when you were in high school and there was a track which we called either CP or VP – one was college prep and one was vocational prep and there was a whole curriculum and courses that governed that whole concept. Mr. Nufrio stated there were schools dedicated to vocation. Mr. Tatum stated unfortunately it was scaled down so much over the years. It is all because of mandates.

Mrs. Minneci stated I belong to the Women's Club of Union and every year in the spring we have a committee and we get in touch with the high school and the guidance counselors recommend a few girls and we have a program that is called "Girls Career Institute" and they hold it at Douglas College and this year and just last week they selected a junior to go to the Career Institute and the committee interviews and selects and the young lady came to our meeting last week. Her name is Jazlyn Sarpong – what a wonderful girl. Our committee was so amazed at her and how she embraced it and can't wait to come back as a guest speaker to the high school next year to encourage the girls to get involved in this. It gives them a taste of what college life is going to be like. Going away and they have different programs – it is a 4-day program and they go Monday to Thursday and stay at the college. One or two girls from each district in the State are sent. I can't say enough about her and I spoke to her mom and they gave me permission to mention this and I would like to mention it again next week and maybe I can get in touch with her and she can come and speak.

Mr. Monge stated I want to thank Mr. Benaquista and Mr. Brennan for moving forward on the Connecticut Farms traffic study and see if we can get some proposals and finally come up with some solutions for the issues that are going on and it is going to get worse with the re-routing of the traffic from 22. Mr. Benaquista stated when I spoke with Captain Tims, the original date was January 2018 and they don't have an updated date yet. If we get this going now, we do have time. I don't think it is going to be shortly.

Mr. Monge stated another thing we talked a little about in the Finance Committee and Mr. Griggs was going to take a look at that Shared Service Agreement – we are saying we can't keep kicking this can down the road. We will have to start looking at accounting for every event, any cost that is part of that Shared Service Agreement going forward for sure but we still have to take a look back and try to put some kind of accounting from the beginning of this agreement. I don't know if there was anything you saw in particular in that agreement. Mr. Griggs stated I am more interested in the itemization of what you are doing and what the Town is doing and that to me is the critical part. The Agreement is pretty straight up. The key thing is to be able to account for what the Board thinks is their contribution and what the Board thinks of what the Town is contributing and try to come to some equal understanding.

Mr. Monge stated the email I sent out trying to categorize from at least what I read from it but obviously you guys take that and come back say this is what we believe because right now we have nothing. We have to do something. We have a contractual agreement on both sides to be able to account for it.

Mrs. Zuena asked can they provide a cost effective list of what their costs were to us? Mr. Monge stated we have to start with us. I think it is embarrassing to knock on the door and say what is your list, I don't have my list. Mrs. Zuena stated Barry your office should be able to have a print out of the facility use.

Mr. Monge stated to Mr. Griggs' point, we have to figure out what we believe those line items are. Start there and then going back and looking at what has transpired since the agreement and making sure that we start tracking it going forward. I would think it would be

some type of report on our audit because it is a contractual agreement and maybe it is a side note. Mr. Griggs stated in my experience it is not going to be as easy as pulling it off a printout. It is really about getting into it. By way of example, there is an employer share of social security tax at the cost of the Board. Obviously salary, straight time, overtime – my point is it is going to take some time.

Mr. Monge stated so you are saying really is figure out what the itemized expenses are, shared costs are and then go from there. Mr. Griggs stated you have to have a defensible position so you are able to say look these are our costs and we have records to indicate this. The non-certified people, the Board is paying some of their pension – overtime is not pensionable obviously. It has to be precise and you have to put the time in and get exactly what the costs are and that way you know.

Mr. Monge stated our report on what our proposed committee goals are. We talked about this a couple of months ago so I will talk about that next week. Also about the efforts that are going on with the disaster in Puerto Rico – that is where my family is from.

Mr. Nufrio stated Mr. Griggs, a couple of weeks ago and perhaps you received it, I was in Kenilworth and near the Kenilworth Little League Field – I always meant to ask – are there regulations that prohibit us from actually doing some advertising along the field. Kenilworth has extensive billboards which could supplement some costs. Mr. Griggs stated it would be Board policy – I don't know if you have a policy on that but you should establish a policy. Mrs. Zuena stated we have it on our field already. Vito are you talking about the school field or the Town field? Mr. Nufrio stated the school field. Mrs. Zuena stated our football field does have signs. The Athletic Department or the Fifth Quarter Club is the one. Mr. Arminio stated it is no longer the Fifth Quarter Club it is now the Booster Club. Mrs. Zuena stated the Booster Club does send out and our organization advertises. The Wrestling Club takes out a sign. Mr. Nufrio stated I'm talking about businesses. If you look at the Kenilworth field there are a lot. Mrs. Zuena stated there are some out there. Are you saying for the money to come to the school? Mr. Nufrio stated no not to us, the Athletic Department. Mr. Griggs stated it is a matter of Board policy. Mr. Nufrio stated it can be done, it hasn't been prohibited but when I saw there was very little out there I thought there was some kind of regulation that was put in place. Mrs. Zuena stated I think it is not pursued effectively. Mr. Nufrio stated the little league is not attached to the school, it is a Town entity. Maybe we should try to promote that a little more so we can get some extra cash to buy new equipment. Mrs. Zuena stated they do have a new president to the club and they are trying to rebuild the program back up. Mr. Nufrio stated maybe Mr. Tatum can do a little push on that.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I would like to thank and I know she is not here but Mrs. Paul with the Chrome Books and it was a big issue with emailing and the Chrome Books not allowed to email and she did a fantastic job – I spoke with her about three times and it is done and the kids are able to email their teachers so kudos to her and her team they did a great job.

Mrs. Williams stated I also wanted to give kudos to Mrs. Paul because I know there were some issues with the kids being able to go to some sites that they weren't supposed to be going to and when my son got his Chrome Book and he had this look on his face and I said what's the

matter and he said we can only use our Chrome Books for schoolwork this year. So good job to Mrs. Paul because everything is blocked and he is pretty savvy and he couldn't get passed it.

Dr. Francis left the worksession at 8:40 p.m.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC:

Annie Clove stated I'm here on behalf of my daughters, one attends Burnet Middle School and one is at the high school, and speaking to you guys with respect to the 700 athletes that we have in Town and we have one athletic trainer. On September 15th was the first football game of the season – home game, 7 p.m. Our boys' varsity team was playing at Volunteer, one of our athletes got hurt and there was no trainer present. Just recently on Thursday, two of our girls got hurt. There was three games that day and one of the boys team was practicing on a field. Meg had come from the boys, she wasn't done with one and another child got hurt. It is essential that the committee look at this as a whole because if something happens to a child it is not my name on the paperwork, it is the Board of Ed. It needs to be looked at and revised and discussed because it is not fair to Meg, Mrs. Ionta or parent of an athlete or the coaches. I know they get a stipend but they are volunteering their time. I don't think it is fair to anybody.

Mr. Tatum stated the issue with the trainer was something that this Board of Education approved about a year and a half ago. I read a number of emails yesterday and I sent an email off to Mrs. Ionta last night and asked her whether or not, as I had suggested to her at the end of the last school year, we had put a request in the budget for this school year as I do with all department heads when we developed the budget last year and Mrs. Ionta responded to me that she did indeed put it into the budget. My last comment to her was if it was put in the budget, then why haven't we posted the position? This morning I came in still with the athletic trainer on my mind and I asked the same question and I asked for documentation that it was indeed in the budget. At that time I did contact our business office to determine whether or not there was indeed a position on the books for a second athletic trainer and I recognized only one athletic trainer was in the budget. However, this afternoon I had a meeting with the Business Administrator, Mr. Benaquista who is in charge of personnel and my response was to get a posting done today. We have a posting and it has already been posted. They will start the interview process. Mrs. Ionta followed what I asked her to do and I already knew the Board had given approval to this two years ago but we only had partial funding but in the new budget there was supposed to be funding for a new athletic trainer and I have to be honest, it was out of sight, out of mind until I started getting these emails.

Ms. Clove stated now it is on your mind and it is being taken care of. It is posted. Mr. Tatum stated you can see it on our website right now.

Rich D'Avanzo stated UTEA vice president. First I want to thank Mr. Arminio for volunteering his time on Saturday. He was wearing the half and half shirt. I wanted to let you know it is the 5th year that we ran it. We give the donations to Mrs. Lipstein for the Ed Foundation. The UTEA has a hand in it along with the community.

Gentleman from Crawford Terrace stated I have two questions – one is are there any plans to eventually have the middle schoolers bring the laptops home? I ask because I know in

other districts middle schoolers bring it home. I am not sure 6th graders do but I know 7th and 8th graders do. I think that is something to consider. I also think it eliminates the logistics of returning them after school and you don't have to deal with picking up and dropping off and storing it away; especially if parents are going to be signing an agreement or something like that. Mr. Monge stated we spoke about that and we thought the same for at least the 8th graders but the recommendation from Mrs. Paul was to get it situated first and then look at trying to roll out potentially the 8th graders next year after we try to get everything established. It was something we brought up at committee and at least for the 8th graders because it would be a great introduction to take it home and then go into the high school the following year.

Gentleman from Crawford Terrace stated I think 7th and 8th would be ideal. My other question pertains to the Trunk or Treat you were discussing earlier. I have a concern because this is supposed to be a family event and it is held on school grounds. As you consider talking a little bit more about this, I would like you to consider also making sure that because it is on school grounds, make an event that is not politicized. The reason I say that is because in the past even though families get to enjoy the trunk and treats, there is this underlying political campaign going on that should not take place. We saw it in last year's trunk or treat where candies were being handed out to candidates to be elected or wanting to be elected. If they want to have trunk or treat in another public setting, but here you have it at a school setting, where the majority of the attendees are students from the local school and local area and in this case all around Town. Keep that in mind as you consider making adjustments or whatever it is that you guys discuss and I definitely keep that in mind.

Anne Margaret Shannon stated UTEA President – I want to clear up the air about what was discussed about that sidebar because last spring there was an absolute end to that sidebar. The UTEA did not benefit from it, the Board of Ed said they needed it, we did it because the kids needed it. There was an absolute end and the reason was because our contract was going to expire August 31, 2017 so there was no reason to go forward because we were going into negotiations. I really take great offense that it was applied that the UTEA would not renew something that we said from the beginning that it would not be renewed. It was a sidebar with a particular timeframe and that is it. I just wanted to make it clear that nobody reneged on anything, nobody went back on anything – we didn't get any benefit out of it other than to help the students.

Mary Katherine Kelly stated I wanted to clarify on that contract and how those employee work. If you are going to have a paraprofessional that will be shared for three kids, is it going to be one person or is it a per diem where it could be rotating people? Mr. Benaquista stated it would be a full-time hire as long as we were o.k. with that person. It would be just like we are hiring this person, but they are not getting paid by us. It wouldn't be a rotation unless we weren't satisfied with the performance.

Ms. Kelly stated as far as the training goes, what kind of training and I know it depends on the kids and who would be providing that training. Mr. Benaquista stated they have to follow all the State mandated trainings. Also if I said we want them trained, we can also train the people as well. If they are with us during the day and we are providing training, they would be part of that. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated Gerry won't it be based on the IEP needs of that child and

that para would come with that particular training. Mr. Benaquista stated Mrs. Conti could probably speak about the district trainings on all our paras but if there is a district training for all our paras, they would be part of that.

Mr. Tatum stated what I hear from Nellis is – it would be IEP specific, depending on the disability and certainly we would expect anybody who is employed to ensure that they are providing the actual services that the child needs. It becomes a moot issue because when we have paraprofessionals now, our current paraprofessionals have to be in-tuned with the IEP and sometimes the assignment is based upon that. Sometimes paraprofessionals move from one building to another because they have that expertise for that individual student.

Mr. Nufrio stated just so everyone understands – clearly the criteria for paraprofessionals, there are mandates by the State that must be adhered to and isn't it so they need to have a certain amount of credits? Mr. Tatum stated based upon Title I funding and who also pays the salary. Mr. Nufrio stated fingerprinting and all that must be complied with. Will they also be vetting the individuals in terms of prior employers? Mr. Benaquista stated all these company put their employees through background checks. They meet all the requirements of public education. Until the company bids and we start an agreement with them, we can set the parameters of what we require. We are not going to accept anything less than what we hire; if so it is not going to work.

Mr. Nufrio stated they will fall under the same guidelines and policies that the Board has established. Mr. Benaquista stated yes. Mr. Nufrio stated in which case someone is reported to have done something wrong – violated a policy, we would be the ones that would automatically make the recommendation. Mr. Benaquista stated it is actually probably an easier process to remove the person.

Jose Carrera stated are there provisions to keep from the lowest bid – they put in a low bid, they get that bid and now later on they have a specific amount and then it is going to cost more to the Township – can we keep away from that? Mr. Benaquista stated there is going to be an agreement for a period of time. During that period of time we know the cost because the bid came in at a certain amount and they have to stay at that amount. When that agreement ends and we say rebid, we put out another RFP, we might get different proposals. We might get ones that are lower or ones that are higher – we might get this company who wants to keep our business and seeing that they made x-amount of dollars they could reduce their cost too knowing that there is going to be competitive bids. There is no guarantee after the contract ends of what the new costs are going to come in at but during that period of time.

Mr. Griggs stated there is the initial period, then there are renewal periods. The renewal periods are on the agreements of the two parties. The Board does not have to renew. We will know the first year what the renewal amounts are. It is pretty much identical to the RFP for the health benefits for the employees. We put that out last year. The initial contract term there was a price of "X" and there were two renewal periods that vendor agreed to renew for the same cost for the next two years so they were locked in and that is the same type of arrangement. I'm not sure a vendor wants to go out two years because of various reasons including the affordable care act because nobody knows where that is going because there are liabilities to a contractor. At

this point the initial thought is to have them price the beginning period which would be December 1 through June 30th and then the second period would be 18-19 and then there will be another period to renew on the mutual agreement of the parties so that is how it will be structured.

Mr. Carrera stated I have seen it and it's not good because there are not provisions on that from keeping it from happening. They give you a low ball and then they forget this and forgot that. Mr. Griggs stated they are not going any place with that.

Mrs. Lipstein stated I'm talking first as the president of the Education Foundation. I want to thank the Burnet and Kawameeh rumblers. It was a fun day and we appreciate the donation that was given and will go to grant applications for Burnet and Kawameeh.

I want to talk as a parent who came and sat at these Board meetings and was begging to see progress with technology and our schools and how little we had and how little was done year after year and when I hear someone say we should let the kids take it home – to me it is a miracle that we are getting it. It has been 15-20 years that I waited. My kids are out of school, graduated and doing very well but it was a long wait.

This Board started in 2014 and that was their mind set and they were going to move this district and when Mr. Monge called me and said you missed the presentation, everyone is going to get Chrome Books in a year and I said no way and they are there and I want to thank this Board from 2014 on for moving this district the way it needed to be moved. Many times we would get grant applications for computers and Chrome Books and we could only divvy them out 1-2 at a time and this time we gave 30 to Livingston Leaders which is a separate program. When they get them in the elementary, they will finally have what they have been asking for. You guys did it and kudos to you.

Kathy Sharpe stated right now I'm talking as a staff member at Hannah Caldwell. I'm glad you didn't vote on it tonight but please consider the chiller for Hannah because that is what it is over there. In the winter, the poor kids and staff with coats on; since September we are sitting there with no air conditioner. The poor kids are sweating to death. We have to do something. This has been before you and Barry has been pushing for it. We can't keep the classroom doors open because that is a fire hazard. You can't get any cross circulation. It is a mess and the kids cannot learn in this environment. In the winter if they are sitting there with coats on and this time of year when I thought it would be cool by now the kids are still sweating. Please give it a lot of thought. I know you are hoping for a lower bid but let's start thinking about these kids and the staff. I appreciate anything you can do to fix this problem. Mr. McDowell stated help is on its way.

Mr. Brennan stated the chiller does not affect the heat just the air. Mrs. Sharpe stated we need help with the heat too. Mr. Monge stated we didn't hear that. We just heard that it just broke down and so we responded to that. We only received one bid so it is just a question that we make sure we get a couple of bids. Mr. Brennan stated it is a quote not a bid.

Mr. Monge stated do you want to offer some clarity. This just happened right? Mr. Loessel stated this just happened and it is not related to the heat.

Woman in audience stated thank you for posting because as parents we obviously want the best for our kids and we needed that done and thank you on behalf of parents.

With the ever growing homes being built in this Town is there a discussion with the Board about possibly building or extending the high school and/or adding another middle school because of fire hazards, capacity. Mr. Tatum stated right now we are engaged in a capacity study. Our architects are taking a look at that because we are also looking at enrollment projects and there are numbers of things that started in the last school year. Members of the Board of Education expressed concerns about all the buildings that are going on in the community. We also talked about grade level configuration as another consideration in terms of how we house our schools and so forth – transportation, there are a lot of pieces that go with this whole thing. It is under study right now and we are moving forward to try to get a handle on how many students may be in those new developments. What happens is we have builders building luxury condos that is going to service empty nesters and now they change it to three-bedroom rentals and that opens up the doors to more students. We are certainly looking at that as a possibility as we move forward.

Woman in audience stated I understand that apartments/condos whatever bring in tax dollars especially the one near Kean – in my eyes be better utilized as a new high school which is bigger. You would have to redirect the traffic a little bit. Mr. Tatum stated the principal over there will love that you are making that statement because he asked for a new high school previously. Woman in audience stated just a thought a new high school and make the high school the middle school. Mr. Tatum stated certainly a great idea and would love to see that happen.

Mr. McDowell stated one of the things that you have to bear in mind and maybe take to the Township that the Township is not required to talk to the Board of Education at all about what they build and how many they build. They can build as many houses as they want and as many units as they want and not have to talk to the school board about it at all. It is called a land use law and they are not required to do any kind of study on how many kids are coming in and what kind of burden will be on the schools. They just do what they want to do.

Mr. Nufrio stated on the flip side we had the attorney address the Township for what we know to be an impact study which is what you are talking about – how it will impact our district and we were responded to and I will let Mr. Griggs respond. Mr. Griggs stated they said that they are not required to do an impact study. Mr. Nufrio stated we are basically handcuffed and we are at the mercy of whatever our Town leaders decide to do with vacant properties.

Mr. Arminio stated I have to clarify a couple of things. I have been involved in that for years. First the Town doesn't build it. The land was sold to a private developer and he decided what goes on it to the maximum use allowed by law. We should have been at that meeting six years ago and I was there screaming when the Merck property was being sold and that is when we should have been there fighting who was going to buy it. Kean University wanted to buy it.

This private developer wanted to buy it and after several years in court, the private developer got it. Then what was going up – we should have been at the planning committee meeting. I was there telling how it would impact the schools. We should have all been there saying this is going to impact the schools why are you building it.

Remember there are three stages – the first stage is 448 units and 40,000 square feet of retail and that is only the first stage. The second stage when it is all said and done there will be 1200 units at the Merck site. We should have been there from the beginning because they broke ground and it is done.

Mr. Nufrio stated maybe it would have been better if we let Kean have it.

Mr. Monge stated there is a master plan that the Town approves. That master plan is what the developer is working off of. I tried to get it online and it is not available online. The other thing I will say on the tax side – what these developers are getting are what they call tax abatements. If you have a piece of real estate and that real estate developer is paying taxes, those taxes go to the school for us to incur these expansions. What is happening is there are tax abatements that are being provided to these developers and the justification as it pertains to the schools and I have been at meetings where it was said “no impact” on the schools. What is happening is we are getting the tax abated so the money is not coming to the schools but these developments are being built and kids are coming out of those and what happens is it ends up going on the school board to do more with less and we are doing that today. We have one of the lowest school taxes in the State of New Jersey and definitely one of the lowest in the County. It is an issue that we are trying to first assess how much is the damage and then we have to speak to the damage that we are going to end up seeing as it pertains to the future of our schools.

Pat Higgins stated I work for the Board of Education and for all my wife is running for the Board of Education. As far as the Merck property, if we gave the Merck property away we would lose \$6 million.

Mr. Griggs stated I want you to listen to me. Address the chair, not the member. You have a perfect right to make a public comment for five minutes.

Mr. Higgins stated we had the lowest amount of students ever in 25 years in Union. E-11 I have a problem with that because it doesn't actually tell what the qualifications are for that paraprofessional. Right now we have substitutes that come into our schools that only need 60 credits of education to be a sub and in the school I work in, half of them have been blackballed from coming back in. Just because you have 60 credits of education doesn't mean you are an educated person. If that is what we are going to have for paraprofessionals who need more help than your normal student, that is a problem. I see that we do have some people right now in my school who are now handling three children which is a very difficult task because they go in three different directions. Their lockers are spread out in all different parts of the school and it is very difficult for that person to handle those three children. For what I see and I have been doing it five years, it just doesn't work. It is my opinion and we will see how that turns out.

Obviously we are trying to save money on health insurance and that is the reason for bringing this in – the one and only reason. Twenty-nine and a half hours and we have to pay them health insurance so we are getting sub-quality help because how much turnover are we going to get when people don't have health insurance. The turnover is going to be astronomical. What is the pay going to be?

Mr. Benaquista stated I won't know until the bid comes in. First I want to make it clear that we are not doing it to save money for this district. It is money that we cannot afford and you are talking 100 aides at \$50,000 an aide – how much money is that for our district? The easiest job for me is to say to Mr. Tatum let's hire 100 aides. My job would be done, they would be in our buildings, we would have people the principal want – I would love to do that but you know what ethically my job in this position is also to present options for the Board that will not financially constrain the Board from doing all these other things. Right now I can speak of what other districts are doing. The local association is working with districts and creating different packages of health benefits for their aides to keep it in-house within the local association. I have tried over and over again to work to try to bring things to this Board that would make sense for this district and you know what, I can't also bring something financially that is going to bankrupt us and you are talking a lot of money. You are talking Mr. Tatum having to come to the table next year and cutting out teachers because you know what comes first the law and those IEP's are law and I have to follow the law. I am bringing an option to this District that I think number one is an attribution model. It is not affecting people that are hired. It is people that we don't know. I will make sure that if we get a person in this District just like me, I have a substitute when a principal calls me and says this person is not adequate for these reasons, that person receives due process as well because I'm not going to violate the public employment law. I have to give due process and if I could terminate that person, they are terminated. We will make sure that people, if I have to go this route, are the right people for our students because you know who I care about and who I am here for are the students like all of us.

It is not something that I'm happy to present to this Board but it is something that I feel I have to because we got a half a year last year and now we are going into and this is going to drag on and it is not right because Mrs. Conti can validate for me that we need to make sure that we are covering these IEP's and right now it is not working.

Mr. Griggs stated this is not for Board discussion.

Mr. Higgins stated I understand exactly what Mr. Benaquista is trying to do and we all want the best for our children at the lowest cost but sometimes the lowest cost isn't the best thing. We do have the lowest amount of students that we have had in 25 years – I could be wrong so don't quote me and the other thing is when we did have a less than 2% increase on our budget but that's equivalent to \$6 million. We raised our budget \$6 million and we have the lowest amount of students that we have had in history.

Mr. Brennan stated it is only \$1.7 million on the tax levy. We can only raise our tax levy 2%. Overall the tax levy is \$87 million so that is \$1.7 million – the overall operating budget was \$131 million and that increase equates to 1.3%. Mr. Higgins stated I will have to check my figures. Thank you very much.

Mr. Tatum stated I want to make one comment concerning tax and enrollment. We continually hear that the enrollment may be different than it was 20 years ago but you just illustrated something a moment ago about something that goes on in your school building about an aide with three students and going in different directions and I have to say that illustrates to me that the needs have changed and the times have changed and unfortunately we are faced with a changing population of disabilities, of students that have needs that are far greater than they have ever been and I say this all the time and we talk about our building size and capacity. I researched when there were 700 students in a particular building and now there is 400 or 500 but that is because some of the classrooms are occupied by fewer students than they were due to disabilities. As the population shifts in this district, not just in Union because I worked next door for 20 years and the population shifted there and the needs changed, unfortunately although we have a low enrollment we have a greater need and a greater expense than ever before. The bottom line is and I will say this again, going back to vocational ed tonight, all these things that we are impacted by are mandated by the State of New Jersey. There may have been a time where you didn't have security at Kawameeh Middle School but you have it now. You have it because you need it there. You have it in Jefferson School now and just the physical layout and what I know about children of that age level and I have a lot of years of experience that I brought to this district with working with 10 year olds because I taught that level and I was an administrator at that level and I came here as an administrator of a 5th grade school. You can't have that layout without security. There are a lot of different needs that prevail now. Kids did things differently.

What I'm saying is that I think the wrong message gets out there about what we are doing in the District and how resources should be allocated. There is one thing I will say and I'm going to talk about my administration now since I have been in charge of this district, we have been champions for our staff in this District. We have never looked in any way shape or form to try to reduce, to try to take away from children – we try to give to them and we really don't want to have to do this with these aides but by the same token, it is a give and take situation. We have to provide support to those children regardless of how we go about doing it.

The last point I want to make when you talk about us taking a bid – anybody who knows anything about bid laws, you take the most responsible bid which means that those people that meet our specifications are the ones that we will hire not someone because it is the lowest bid because if that is the case, let me say this to you, there are a lot of things we can save money on and we don't because the bid is not responsible – it doesn't fit the bid threshold, it doesn't fit the law as it is written. There is a lot of thought and planning that goes into this.

What happens is you guys see things on the surface but you don't know all the background of what goes on in terms of preparation for it and again let me say this to you and say this to everyone, you are going to meet the needs of the students that are in front of you whether you want to or not because the State of New Jersey and the federal government says we have to and it is my job to make sure that we do those things and that we do them correctly. Guess what at the end of the day you know who takes the shot, I do and I am going to make sure to empower my staff to do what is right for children and at the end of the day if I'm not doing what is right for the children, I don't need to be here. That is why I'm here because I want to do

good things for the kids. It is not about ego and I think you know me well enough – it is not about any of that stuff. It is about what is right for children.

We have to get away from what happened 30 years ago because times have changed. The world has changed and it is continuing to change and if we have to adapt to those changes and make this district conducive to the students that we have in front of us.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Moved by Mrs. Minnici, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-2b.

- Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiation and matters falling under the attorney-client privilege.
- Matters involving employees and terms of their employment and contract.

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.

All present voting YES. MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Zuena left at end of worksession - 9:25 p.m.

The Board returned to public session at 10:55 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Minnici, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:55 p.m. All present voting YES. MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

GREGORY E. BRENNAN
BOARD SECRETARY