

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 7, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The organization meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Yolanda Koon, the Board Secretary, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Mrs. Koon facilitated the meeting until the Board President was selected.

Mrs. Koon lead the Board and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADMINISTER OATHS OF OFFICE:

Senator Cryan administered the oath of office to the newly elected Board members:

1. Greg Nasta
2. Chastity Santana
3. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

REPORT ON OFFICIAL REPORT OF ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION

Report on the Official Report of the annual school election held on November 5, 2024 as follows (*report only, no vote required*):

Three-year term:	Greg Nasta	12,504
	Chastity Santana	12,327
	Kimberly Scott-Hayden	12,895
	Sol V. Antencio	4,400
	Write-in	287

ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Guida Faria (left at 7:14 p.m. – prior to roll call)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Christopher Buggy, Esq.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Mrs. Cappiello read the district's mission statement.

## OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

Mrs. Koon read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" that adequate notice was published in the Union County Local Source, the Star Ledger and/or Tap into Union, posted in the Administration Building and the Clerk's Office of the Township; a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Koon informed the Board and public that the Board's attorney will provide the process for the nomination of office of presidency.

Mr. Buggy read the following from Policy 0152:

"The Board of Education shall organize at its first regular meeting by electing one of its members as President and another as Vice President.

Any Board member may place a Board member's name in nomination for Board President and Vice President; a second on the nomination is not required. Election for each office will be conducted by a vote when the nominations for that office are closed.

Voting shall take place by verbal roll call vote after nominations are closed. When more than one person has been nominated for a single position, the Board will vote on candidates in the order in which they were nominated.

The person with the majority vote of all of the members of the Board shall be elected. In the event no candidate receives a majority vote of all of the members of the Board, the procedure shall be repeated until someone receives a majority vote of all of the members of the Board.

Officers shall serve for one year and until their respective successors are elected and shall qualify, but if the Board shall fail to hold the organization meeting or to elect Board officers as prescribed by N.J.S.A. 18A:15-1, the Executive County Superintendent shall appoint from among the members of the Board a President and/or Vice President."

## ORGANIZATION:

Mrs. Koon called for nomination for the Office of President.

Moved by Ms. Santana that Ms. Carbonell be nominated for the Office of President. There were no other nominations.

## ROLL CALL:

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

The President assumes the chair.

Ms. Carbonell read the following statement:

“Good evening distinguished members of the Board, Senator Cryan, leadership, staff, guests and family.

It is both an honor and a privilege to address you this evening as the president of this esteemed Board. Together we represent a collective committed to the vision, mission and values of our school district and community.

I am deeply humbled by the trust you have placed in me and am excited about the opportunity to serve our schools, our staff and our students.

As I assume this great responsibility, I pray to God for the courage to do what is right, wisdom to discern the best path forward, and the compassion to listen with an open heart and open mind.

While our tenure as Board members these past couple of years has been met with a number of challenges, we are steadfast in our resolve. We will seize every opportunity afforded to us to create policies and opportunities that help:

1. Engage multiple stakeholders
2. Raise academic standards and student performance
3. Support a thoughtfully executed district realignment
4. Cultivate a safe and inclusive learning environment
5. Maximize on our material and human/professional capital
6. Improve our overall organizational structure, operational efficiency and accountability

Thank you again for your confidence in me. I am excited to move forward with all of you, united in making a meaningful difference. Thank you once again.”

The President called for nominations for the Office of Vice President

Moved by Mrs. Minneci that Mrs. Scott-Hayden be nominated for the Office of Vice President. There were no other nominations

## ROLL CALL:

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

Mrs. Scott-Hayden read the following statement:

“Good evening students, parents, staff, elected officials – Mayor Bowser, Committeewomen Frazier and Terrell and community stakeholders.

This is such a prestigious honor that I hold in high regard and I look forward to serving as the Vice President of this amazing Board and evolving institution of educational excellence. I thank my husband, Eric, and my loving family who honors and supports my passion for community service and public education!

We, meaning President Carbonell, and my fellow colleagues look forward to a year of moving this district forward to establish great public schools for every student in the Township of Union.

We, the Board, alongside this administration, will work hard to continue to foster the very relationships required to ensure the success of our students and that of the staff who gives so much of themselves day in and day out! You guys are commended for reassuring them and reaffirming their potential but also holding them to high expectations because we know they can do it!

Whether it is within the halls of our school buildings or within the streets of this vibrant community, we will work to build the collaborative partnerships necessary to ensure that every child has the necessary tools to be where every student is seen, welcomed and met at the level of where they are and for who they are regardless of their makeup!

I believe in this Board, I believe in this Administration, I stand firm with this community and support every parent who holds us accountable in moving this district upward and onward to achieve great public schools, we are Union!”

Mayor Bowser, Councilwomen Frazier and Terrell congratulated the re-elected board members, the Board President and Vice President and indicated the Town and the district are a partnership, and they will support the Board.

Senator Cryan congratulated the re-elected board members, the Board President and Vice President and indicated there is a collaborative partnership on the State level and we will work together to have successful students.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (on resolutions and all other matters):**

David Arminio congratulated the re-elected Board members and the Board President and Vice President. He mentioned the following: (a) January 18, 2025, the Union County Wrestling Tournament will be held at Union High School, (b) January 12, 2025 – open house at the Parsonage (Union Historical Society) – all students are invited. UTEA usually gives out gift cards and (c) the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary – through Dr. Rodriguez, we have initiated a contest for all students to submit a logo to represent the Town. Final submission is due in March.

Ann Margaret Shannon congratulated the re-elected Board members and welcomed the new Board President and Vice President. She indicated that the UTEA is partners with the Board and she expects great things in the future.

Virginia Jeffries congratulated the re-elected Board members, the Board President and Board Vice President. She indicated that she has concerns with the appointments on the agenda – when is the effective dates and maximum caps? When will the disclosure forms be submitted? She indicated that the Board attorney does not hold any position and should not participate in the Board meetings.

**REORGANIZATION RESOLUTIONS:**

Ms. Carbonell read the reorganization resolutions and asked for a motion.

Moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the following resolutions be adopted by the Board:

**ADOPT NJSBA CODE OF ETHICS**

The Township of Union Board of Education adopts the School Code of Ethics for the 2025 Calendar Year:

WHEREAS, each School Board Member is responsible to read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics for School Board Members; the Code of Ethics became part of the School Ethics Act on July 26, 2001. Questions about the Policy should be directed to the District Board Secretary. If the Board Secretary is unable to answer the question, you may be directed to the School Ethics Commission from whom you may request an advisory opinion; and

WHEREAS, the following Code of Ethics for Board Members, pursuant to district Policy 0142, is set forth as a guide to conflict-of-interest situations and unethical activity for Board Members.

**CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

- a) I will uphold and enforce all laws, state board rules and regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes should be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures;
- b) I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools which meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing;

- c) I will confine my board action to policymaking, planning and appraisal and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them;
- d) I will behave toward my fellow board members with the respect due their office--demonstrating courtesy, decorum and fair play at all public meetings and in all public statements;
- e) I will refrain from inappropriate conduct in public meetings and in making public statements, refraining from any disparagement of my fellow board members or others on a personal, social, racial or religious basis;
- f) I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run;
- g) I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the board;
- h) I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends;
- i) I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. But in all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools;
- j) I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the superintendent;
- k) I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties;
- l) I will refer all complaints to the superintendent and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

The board shall see that all members of the board receive training in understanding and adhering to this code of ethics and shall discuss it annually at a regularly scheduled public meeting. Each member shall sign documentation that he/she has received a copy of it and has read and understood it.

#### **ADOPT ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER**

Approve to adopt Roberts Rules of Order as the official procedure manual to be used to conduct meetings for the 2025 calendar year.

#### **APPROVE MEETING NIGHTS**

Approve the schedule of committee meetings, work sessions and regular meetings for 2025 be adopted in accordance with the schedule, available to each Board member; and be it further moved that a copy be posted in the Administration Building and with the Township Clerk, that a copy be sent to the Star Ledger and the Union County Local Source for publication, and that a copy be sent to Tap Into Union to be placed in the events calendar.

#### **APPROVE POLICY MANUAL**

Approve the Policy Manual of the Township of Union Board of Education presently in effect be hereby readopted.

**APPROVE DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS**

Approve adoption of the formal resolution available to each Board member designating (a) the Union County Local Source and the Star Ledger as newspapers to receive notice of meetings and (b) Tap Into Union as the electronic newspaper to receive notice of meetings and fixing charges for notices to the public meetings in the amount of \$60 for 2025.

**APPROVE DESIGNATION OF INTERNET WEBSITE FOR OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION**

Approve the adoption of the formal resolution designating the Township of Union Board of Education's internet website ([www.twpunionschools.org](http://www.twpunionschools.org)) for official notification pursuant to the New Jersey local unit pay-to-play law, in accordance with the information available to each Board member.

**APPROVE DESIGNATION OF DEPOSITORIES FOR FUNDS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION (School Activity Funds)**

Approve designation of Connect One Bank, Citizens Bank, Wells Fargo Bank and Unity Bank as depositories for funds of the Township of Union Board of Education as currently maintained, in accordance with the list available to each Board member.

**APPROVE AUTHORIZATION OF DEPOSITORY BANKS TO HONOR AND CHARGE ACCOUNTS OF TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Approve authorization of the following depository banks to honor and to charge the accounts of the Township of Union Board of Education and all Board of Education checks and drafts bearing the stamp or perforation commonly known as a facsimile signature of the Treasurer of School Monies and the President of the Board of Education and that checks and drafts of the various Board of Education accounts be signed by the designated officers, in accordance with the list available to each Board member.

**APPROVE AUTHORIZATION TO SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS BETWEEN MEETINGS**

Approve authorization to the School Business Administrator to approve payment of bill(s) between Board meetings on an as needed basis, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4.1 for the 2025 calendar year.

**APPROVE LIST OF FINANCIAL VENDORS**

Approve list of financial vendors (including flex-spending, 403(b), 457(b) and ROTH companies, etc.) doing business with the Township of Union Board of Education, in accordance with the list available to each Board member.

**APPROVE GENERAL COUNSEL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION COUNSEL – TAYLOR LAW GROUP**

Approve the law firm of Taylor Law Group as General Counsel and Special Education Counsel at an hourly rate of \$190.00 (paralegals \$100/hr.).

**APPROVE SPECIAL LABOR COUNSEL – APRUZZESE, McDERMOTT, MASTRO & MURPHY**

Approve the law firm of Apruzzese, McDermott, Mastro & Murphy as special labor and special project counsel at an hourly rate of \$190.00, on an as needed basis.

**APPROVE BOND COUNSEL – WILENTZ GOLDMAN & SPITZER**

Approve the law firm of Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, as bond counsel for the district.

**APPROVE ARCHITECTS**

Approve the following architectural firms: (a) EI Associates, (b) Parette Somjen Architects LLC, (c) Spiegle Architectural Group Inc. and (d) Potter Architects.

**APPROVE ENGINEERS**

Approve the following engineering firms: (a) Consulting & Municipal Engineers, (b) T&M Associates, and (c) Colliers Engineering.

**APPROVE AUDITOR**

Approve the auditing firm of Suplee Clooney & Co. to audit the district's financials, not to exceed \$70,000.

**APPROVE FINANCIAL ADVISORS**

Approve Phoenix Advisors to manage secondary market disclosure obligations for continued compliance with disclosure requirements and Acacia Financial Group for year 2025.

**APPROVE INSURANCE BROKER - FAIRVIEW INSURANCE AGENCY**

Approve Fairview Insurance Agency as the property/casualty/workers' compensation brokerage service for the district.

**APPROVE 504 COMMITTEE COORDINATOR - RETTINO**

Approve Vincent Rettino, Director of Personnel, as the 504 Committee Coordinator for year 2025.

**APPROVE PUBLIC AGENCY COMPLIANCE OFFICER – KOON**

Approve Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator, as Public Agency Compliance Officer (PACO) for year 2025, at no cost to the district.

**APPROVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICER – AWARDED CONTRACTS - KOON**

Approve Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator, as Affirmative Action Officer for awarding contracts for year 2025 under P.L. 1975, c. 127, at no cost to the district.

**APPROVE CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS – KOON**

Approve Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator, as Custodian of Records for year 2025, at no cost to the district.



**APPROVE QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT – KOON**

Approve Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator, as Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) for year 2025, at no cost to the district.

**APPROVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICERS**

Approve Affirmative Action Officers for year 2025, at no cost to the district, as follows: Isabella Scocozza, as Affirmative Action Officer; Lauren Walker, as Assistant Affirmative Action Officer and Ben Kloc, as Affirmative Action Officer for classroom practices.

**APPROVE DESIGNATED PERSON – ADA/FACILITY COORDINATOR, INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR AND AHERA**

Approve Anthony Cirella, Facility Manager, and Yolanda Koon, School Business Administrator, as ADA/Facility Coordinator, IPM coordinator and AHERA designated person for year 2025, at no cost to the district.

**APPROVE TREASURER OF SCHOOL MONIES – TED GEORGIU**

Approve Ted Georgiou as the Treasurer of School Monies for year 2025.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**ROLL CALL:**

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Minneci congratulated the Board President and Vice President and looks forward to working with everyone.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden asked for a moment of silence for Kathy Gilmartin, ESP, who unexpectedly passed away. Please lift the family in prayer.

Ms. Carbonell asked that we recognize and pray for the victims and families of the New Orleans and Las Vegas incidences and for President Carter. She looks forward to working with everyone. February is Black History and Technology Month and March is woman’s month.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board in public session, it was moved by Ms. Santana, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Yolanda Koon*

YOLANDA KOON, BOARD SECRETARY

