

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING – REALIGNMENT MINUTES

May 4, 2024

NOTICE OF MEETING:

TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member.

Ms. Santana called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Ms. Dixiana Carbonell, Mr. Michael Cohan, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. Greg Nasta, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Lester Taylor, Esq.

Mr. Nasta led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Nasta read the district's mission statement.

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

Realignment Discussion:

Board President gave a re-cap of why we were here and provided a summary of what occurred at the last meeting. Board President presented and went over the task at hand which was to establish committees and its purpose from our Superintendent, Dr. Benaquista. Also suggested that at least one board member will lead the committees. Anyone can participate in these committees. We want all stakeholders to be a part of this process. Perhaps we should put something out on the website for anyone interested. The committees are as follows (also see attached):

- Demographic Committee

- Boundaries Committee
- Community Engagement Committee
- Fiscal Committee
- Legal Committee
- Implementation Committee

Board members suggested that all colleagues should review the 2019 report. Board President asked Mrs. Bernadette Watson to again send out the report to all members and include the Long-Range Facility Plan (LRFP).

Also, Board member reminded us all that the board video and minutes where some information was reported out to the public. It is still posted on our website. (See August 2019 meeting)

Mrs. Koon identified a software that other districts have used to help with the Zoning and boundaries of which she is trying to procure to assist in this effort called ArcGis (ESRI). Essentially, it's mapping software that does various things which will also help in the future with residency.

Board President went around the room with Board members on their thoughts and then to all public participants.

Kim Eason - community member of Vauxhall section of Union shared that she was the last class at Jefferson before it became C6. She wanted to know will there be a decision made or are we just talking. She would love to be part of the process and to share it with the Vauxhall community and churches.

Kayla Khaled - community member wanted to make sure that the committees are looking at the ESL population as there are hot spots. She also shared her opinion as she is a teacher in Elizabeth. She would love to be a part of this process.

Dr. Francis- community member wanted to know what the grade configuration would look like. Please look at K-6 model as research shows kids do better as he alluded to when Superintendent Tatum and Assistant Superintendent Annie Moses presented a few years ago. Things will change, we just need to factor in to make the adjustments.

Ann Margaret Shannon - She spoke about our schools should be 'community schools'. Please take some time to look at what is a community school vs just a neighborhood school(s). Community schools provide various things our kids need, not just academic. This will improve the value of our programs.

Rich D'Avanzo - again wanted to make sure we are looking at equity, demo and not just cost savings. We need to look at how we can improve our schools.

Next steps:

Board Members Mr. McDowell and Mrs. Elsie Conteh-Mackey will reach out to members and find out \ assign members to committees, set target dates, identify who else should be on the committee making sure we have the right folks on the committees.

Mrs. Watson will create a google sheet to put on website for anyone interested in joining the committee.

Dr. Benaquista (absent) will forward the “Mission Statement” for this work, so that Board members can edit it as they see fit.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mr. Cohan, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

AYE: Ms. Carbonell, Mr. Cohan, Mr. McDowell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. Nasta,
Mrs. Williams, Ms. Santana

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY