

**TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2023 – 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 Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Union High School Library, 2350 North Third Street, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member.

Mrs. Yolanda Koon, the Board Secretary, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mrs. Koon will facilitate the meeting until the Board President is selected. The Board President will proceed with facilitating the rest of the meeting.

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

Mrs. Koon stated at this time, we have a special guest to administer the Oaths of Office to our newly elected Board members - Senator Joseph Cryan.

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

NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS:

1. Dicixiana Carbonell
2. Nancy Minneci
3. Mary Lynn Williams

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Yocasta Brens-Watson, Ms. Dicixiana Carbonell, Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Mr. John O’Shea, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Ms. Chastity Santana, Mrs. Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Scott Taylor, Mr. Gerald Benaquista, Dr. Gretel Perez Mrs. Yolanda Koon

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Christopher Buggy, Esq.

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 Clerk’s Office of the Township; a copy of

which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Mrs. Cappiello read the district's mission statement.

Mrs. Koon stated the Board's attorney will provide the process for the nomination of office of presidency.

Mr. Buggy stated under Title 18A – the first order of business is for the Board to elect a president and vice president. If the Board is unable to do so, the Executive County Superintendent has the authority to appoint individuals to those positions. Board Policy 0152 states the follows:

“Any member may place a member's name in nomination; a second is not required. Election for each office will be conducted by a vote when the nominations for that office are closed. The candidate receiving a majority vote of the members of the Board present and constituting a quorum will be elected to office.

Voting shall take place by verbal roll call vote after nominations are closed. When more than one person has been nominated, the Board will vote on candidates in the order in which they were nominated. In the event no candidate receives a majority vote of the members of the Board present and constituting a quorum, the procedure shall continue until someone receives a majority vote.”

ORGANIZATION:

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

Moved by Mrs. Williams that Ms. McKenzie be nominated for the Office of President.

Mrs. Koon state there are no other nominations; the nomination floor is closed.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Ms. McKenzie, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Regis-Darby

MOTION CARRIED

Ms. McKenzie assumed the chair of Board President.

Ms. McKenzie stated thank you to everyone that came out tonight and I am honored and privileged to serve as a member of this Board of Education. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the administration and my fellow Board members and I'm looking forward to continuing to do good work that we have started and we will finish strong for the remainder of this school year.

Ms. McKenzie called for nominations for the Office of Vice President.

Moved by Mrs. Minneci that Ms. Santana be nominated for the Office of Vice President.

Ms. McKenzie stated there were no other nominations; the nomination floor was closed.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Ms. McKenzie, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea,
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Regis-Darby

MOTION CARRIED

Ms. Santana assumed the chair of Vice President.

Ms. Santana stated it has always been my goal to sit on this seat. I will grow with this community, my Board members and this administration. I am so excited to do excellent work. Thank you for the opportunity.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

ADOPT NJSBA CODE OF ETHICS

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Township of Union Board of Education adopts the School Code of Ethics for the 2023 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.

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated that the Code of Ethics does not represent what is in NJSA 18A:12-24.1.

Mr. Buggy stated this is what was adopted last year by the Board; it contains all of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24.1 and two additional subsections (d) and (e) and it is part of Bylaw 0142.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: Mrs. Regis-Darby

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPT ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden that the Board approve the adoption of Roberts Rules of Order as the official procedure manual to be used to conduct meetings for the 2023 calendar year.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci,
Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: Mr. O’Shea

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE MEETING NIGHTS

Moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board approve the schedule of committee meetings, work sessions and regular meetings be adopted in accordance with the schedule, appended to the minutes; and be it further moved that copies be posted in the Administration Building and with the Township Clerk and that copies be sent to the Star Ledger and the Union County Local Source for publication.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE POLICY MANUAL

Moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson , that the Board approve the Policy Manual of the Township of Union Board of Education presently in effect be hereby readopted.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O’Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS

Moved by Mrs. Minneci, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board approve adoption of the formal resolution appended to the minutes 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 2023.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE DESIGNATION OF INTERNET WEBSITE FOR OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION

Move by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, that the Board approve the adoption of the formal resolution designating the Township of Union Board of Education's internet website (www.twpunionschools.org) for official notification pursuant to the New Jersey local unit pay-to-play law, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board approve designation of Connect One Bank, Investors Savings 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 appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. O'Shea stated that Investors Bank has been sold and is now Citizens Bank as of February 1st. Mrs. Koon stated she did not receive any documentation, once received we will bring this back to the board.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Mr. O'Shea, Mrs. Regis-Darby

MOTION CARRIED

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

Moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Minneci, that the Board 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 appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

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

Moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the Board 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 2023 calendar year.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVE LIST OF FINANCIAL VENDORS

Moved by Mrs. Brens-Watson, seconded by Mrs. Williams, that the Board approve the list of financial vendors (including flex-spending, 403(b) companies, etc.) doing business with the Township of Union Board of Education, in accordance with the list appended to the minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,

Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Minneci stated I want to congratulate you and Ms. Santana in your new positions; wish you well and good luck. You have my support – 100%. I want to welcome Ms. Carbonell to the Board and I want to thank everyone who supported me through the campaign. I look forward to a great year.

Mrs. Scott-Hayden stated Ms. Carbonell, welcome to the Board. Welcome back Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Minneci. Congratulations to you and Ms. Santana. I look forward to your good work and we will continue to do good work for the rest of the school year. To the community I hope you had a safe and happy holiday and you are well rested and ready to come back and work hard for our students. I look forward to 2023.

Mrs. Williams stated congratulations to Ms. McKenzie and Ms. Santana. I am excited because there are eight women on this Board. We are going to do a tremendous job on behalf of our students because we all love kids. Nancy, I am so happy we are back here together again. It has been a very productive school year and congratulations to Dixie. We have a lot of work to do and we have one of the best teams in my six years on the Board.

Mr. O'Shea stated this is the first time in 30 years that I'm the only man on the Board. Congratulations to Marissa and Chastity; I know you will do a good job. Welcome Ms. Carbonell and congratulations. You will be a strong asset and I look forward to working with you. Nancy and Mary Lynn, I'm glad to see you back.

Mrs. Brens-Watson stated happy new year. Congratulations to our newest Board member and congratulations to the returning Board members. It is good to have you back. I am always hopeful and excited about a year full of fairness and good work among all of us.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated congratulations to the president, vice president and new Board member. Welcome back to Mrs. Minneci and Mrs. Williams.

Ms. McKenzie stated welcome back to Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Minneci and welcome Ms. Carbonell. I look forward to working with all of you. I have the utmost respect for everyone that volunteers their time for the better man – our students in this district. We will finish this school year very strongly.

Ms. Santana stated working on this Board with minds that are not all alike is how we are going to get all you to advocate for everything together. It is about fairness and what we want for the children and this is how we will get ahead. I commit myself to listening more and learning. I am excited to be in this new year and adventure. Welcome Miss Dixie and the returning Board members and I'm excited to do more work with all my fellow Board members and the administration. I completely support Dr. Taylor and the growth he is giving to this district and it is our duty to have him on our shoulders so he can be great.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Arminio stated congratulations. Our County Commissioners recently decide that they are going to attempt to change the County Seal. Our county seal is somewhat controversial. It is showing Hannah Caldwell with her hands up in the air being shot by a British soldier. Through testimony, she was murdered by a British soldier – she didn't have her hands up – that was the artist's representation of the incident.

Union and New Jersey have been called the crossroads of the revolution. Hannah's death and James Caldwell's work, during the revolution, was very important in our winning the North. After the Battle of Connecticut Farms, there was no more fighting in the North, everything went down south. To change something that has been here for over a 100 years because someone doesn't like what it portrayed without public comment and without the public having input, is not right. As a member of the Historical Society of Union, it is important that we keep Union and what happened here in the forefront of the history of Union, the County and the State.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated UTEA president; I hope we all do our civic duty and make sure that County Seal does not get changed. It is important; it is our Town and it would be like erasing part of us. Happy New Year and I look forward to working with this Board and administration. Congratulations to Madam President and Vice President. Welcome to our newest member. I appreciate all you do and the UTEA looks forward to working with everyone.

Jeffrey East stated congratulations to the Board members. I want to call attention to the athletic fields, Kawameeh field and Kawameeh park – the girls' soccer team and the baseball team use. It is a subpar facility. We have more emphasis on the County coming to mow the lawn on game days or move the facility. It is not a great park. We already moved the boys' soccer program to a different field and I don't think it is right that everyone else has to play there. I want to thank Ann Margaret for the girls' basketball program.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Scott-Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Brens-Watson, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Brens-Watson, Ms. Carbonell, Mrs. Minneci, Mr. O'Shea,
Mrs. Regis-Darby, Ms. Santana, Mrs. Scott-Hayden, Mrs. Williams, Ms. McKenzie

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY