

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
(Meet and Greet with PTA)

February 13, 2025

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 Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Cioffi's Restaurant, Stuyvesant Avenue, Union, New Jersey 07083.

Ms. Carbonell called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Members of the District's PTAs.

Mrs. Conteh-Mackey led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and 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.

Comments from the Public:

Mayor James Bowser:

I was always interested in education even before I was married. 29 years ago me and my late wife were looking for a home and we chose the Township of Union because of the quality of education and from another standpoint as mayor of the Township of Union, I see the relationship as a partnership going forward. As we know this year has been a challenge and that's when we really bonded together as a group. Moving forward I want you all to understand and know that

we are here for you in this particular year. Thanks for the opportunity to speak and have a good time.

Superintendent Benaquista:

I can be a testament that I and the mayor have met many times over the last 12 months. I would like to thank you and your team for all the support in our schools and the reason why we are progressing is because of the relationship with the town and I look forward to working with you. And to the PTA, I've worked here for 25 years since 2000 and I've built a lot of relationships and got to know a lot and when parents put a lot of time and energy to support our student is awesome. I'm happy the Board came up with this idea and this should continue and stay together and share in this time. I'm excited to take pictures and see everyone's creative tables.

Madam Vice President Scott-Hayden:

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone, and I would like to say welcome to the team and community. I know this crazy idea of a creative table and I know it wasn't popular with my colleagues, but when I walked into the space tonight, I saw creativity in this room and the collaboration and fellowship with everyone. There are some amazing things happening in this room along with things happening in our district and I want to thank each and every one of you no matter what role you play (parent, educator, student, etc.) We all have a stake in what happens to our children so we will be better for it, so thank you.

Madam President Carbonell:

My VP came up with this idea of table creation and we did not know it was going to be this "big", so thank you, this is a great idea. We have our esteemed Senator and I'm going to put him on the spot:

Senator Cryan:

Nice to see you all and thanks for coming out and really came by to say hello and offer my support. One of the things we've learned is that in the past year more than ever before we see how the State is connected to our education, and the opportunity of working together. Having a team that communicates and works and talks about issues directly allows us to be supportive and its most important tonight that we hear from you. Make sure our priorities are tied into what the district's priorities are because that's what's most important. We have to make sure we have the highest opportunity for our students to achieve greatness. So thanks for taking a couple of minutes to meet. Let's continue to make this district better each and every day.

Madam President Carbonell:

Thanks to everybody in this room. From the parents to the staff to the PTA to the Administration to the teachers to the Township leadership to the school leadership and I do not watch a lot of football; but it was what the Eagles coach said that caught my attention. He said "you cannot be great without the greatness of others", and I keep repeating it because we know how special Union is, but we are going to need everybody in this room working together to make sure that our dream occurs. Thanks for being here tonight and hope we have a lot of fun and we look forward to working with you all, so thank you.

Meet and Greet with PTA:

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Yolanda Koon

YOLANDA KOON
BOARD SECRETARY