

## NOTICE OF MEETING

## TO ALL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union will be held on Monday, March 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at Union High School, North Third Street, Union, New Jersey for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the proposed 2012-2013 school budget.

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held at the Union High School Library, North Third Street, Union, New Jersey on Monday, March 26, 2012 at 7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice sent to each board member.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Gary Abraham, Mr. David Arminio, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Judy Salazar and Mr. Francis Perkins, President

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden and Mrs. Versie McNeil

Mr. Abraham led the members of the board and the public in the pledge of allegiance.

The secretary read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act", a copy of which is on file in the office of the secretary.

## PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET

Mr. Perkins stated that the purpose of this meeting was a presentation of the 2012-2013 school budget and to give the public the opportunity to ask questions or to make comments on the budget. He said that this public hearing is required before the budget can be approved.

Dr. Martin introduced Mr. Vieira, the district's Interim Business Administrator who will take the first part of the presentation regarding the proposed financial details of the budget.

Mr. Vieira said that he had good news to share with the public as the district prepares financially for the 2012-2013 school year. He said that the district received an additional \$2 million in State Aid and this along with a 2% tax increase and a health fund balance allows the district to move forward with all of its present programs for the next school. Mr. Vieira said that on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2012 the Board passed a resolution changing the board of education election

date from the third Tuesday in April to the first Tuesday in November, which is the General Election. He said that since the district's 2012-2013 budget is under the 2% cap, it is not necessary for the public to approve the budget. Mr. Vieira said that the budget was approved by the Union County Executive Superintendent. He said that the district's cost per pupil for the 2012-2013 school year is \$13,234. Mr. Vieira said that the district has 1200 employees and 7500 students. Mr. Vieira said that the district's total budget for the 2012-2013 is \$123 million; two-thirds of the budget comes from the local tax levy which is \$81 million; a quarter of the budget comes from State Aid which is \$31 million and there is a fund balance which is \$8.4 million. He said that the district gets a little bit of Federal Aid such as I.D.E.A. and N.C.L.B. grant money which makes up the remainder of the district's revenue.

Mr. Vieira said that on the appropriation (expenditure) side he broke the \$123 million into several categories; \$8 million is the district's general, in-school administration, central services and technology; there is \$3 million set aside for capital outlay; \$3 million is for payment of debt service; \$60 million (approximately 1/2 of the budget) for instruction; \$12.6 million for operations and maintenance (what is needed to maintain the district's ten schools, which is over one million square feet of space). Mr. Vieira stated that employee benefits are approximately \$20 million; \$11 million for student support services which includes health, guidance, attendance, etc. and lastly, the transportation budget is approximately \$6 million. He said that the district maintains a fleet of buses and vans which transport approximately 3,000 students daily to the different schools in Union.

Mr. Vieira said that the effect on the average homeowner in the Township would be an increase from the General Fund in the amount of \$118 and from the Debt Service Fund \$10 which totals an increase of \$128.

Mr. Vieira said that the budget information has been posted on the district's website in more detail under the "User Friendly" budget. He thanked the residential and commercial taxpayers of Union for their continued support of the Union Public Schools.

Dr. Martin complimented Mr. Vieira and his staff on the fine job that was done in the preparation of the budget. He said that it was a pleasure for him to address the residents of Union Township about the advantages of the new budget and what it means for the Public Schools and what will the moneys in the budget buy for the students of Union. Dr. Martin said that the short answer to this question is that Union already has a very strong school system and he believed that in the upcoming year things will only get stronger. He said that this has a great deal to do with the financial management that the district has seen under Mr. Vieira and his staff.

Dr. Martin said he wanted to give the public some specifics. He said that the first thing to note on the proposed budget is that there will be no reduction in staff. Dr. Martin said that last year because of some financial hurdles that the district was facing, staff had to be reduced but the district is not in that position this year. He said that education is all about people and to keep the qualified, energetic people that the district has in the schools working for the students is goal number one.

Dr. Martin said that there has been a great deal of study over the past ten years about the importance of the pre-school years in every child's success rate during their educational journey and making sure that the district has a solid, substantial pre-kindergarten program with a true curriculum that is followed, monitored and assessed is something that the district was very proud of. He said that the students enjoy the pre-kindergarten program; they love coming to school and the program is chock full of educational experiences. Dr. Martin said that he was very happy to report that the entire pre-kindergarten program would be maintained and residents who have a pre-kindergarten youngster and they are interested in having that child attend the public schools, they should call their local public school or the district office to get more information.

Dr. Martin said that the district will retain its full-day kindergarten program for the next school year and it, too, has a strong curriculum which is monitored and assessed. He said that by the end of the kindergarten program, students are reading, are doing mathematical operations such as addition and subtraction and are more than ready for first grade. Dr. Martin said that the district is very happy with its kindergarten program and everything is better when you get off to a good start. He said that the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs are up and running and they will be maintained in full force for the next school year.

Dr. Martin said that with regard to maintaining the Comprehensive Academic Program in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12, he stated that the district's academic program will be maintained in full force throughout the high school years. He said that he was happy to announce that the overwhelming majority of standardized tests that were taken last year at this time in the district showed improvement over the prior year. Dr. Martin said that this speaks to the students and their families who are putting in a great effort but is also speaks to the faculty, staff and administrators working together with the students and their families to move the district in the right direction. He said that the district is on the move and the scores are increasing and that will continue because all programs will be maintained for the next school year.

Dr. Martin said that with regard to maintaining the comprehensive program of athletics and co-curricular activities throughout the school district, he said that the district has an outstanding music and performing arts program and

the district also has a wide variety of clubs and activities from chess clubs to a step team to student government and student newspapers. He said that something that the building principals always say to the students in the district is that "if you don't see a club and you are interested in starting a club, speak up." Dr. Martin said that there are many opportunities within the district. He said that as far as athletics goes, they remain a vital component of life in the Township of Union Public Schools. Dr. Martin said that there are over 48 teams that are available for students to participate on in the Middle Schools and the High School and they are baseball, basketball, bowling, cross-country, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, track, soccer, swimming, tennis, volleyball and wrestling. He said that there is something for everyone. Dr. Martin said that Ms. Ionta, the district's Athletic Director's main focus is not so much on winning games, but on the enjoyment of physical activity and the necessity of physical activity in our complicated, stressful lives. He said that the district wants its students to grow not only mentally, socially and academically but the district also wants to see them grow physically and enjoy sports and athletics. Dr. Martin said that there are many students that are involved in the athletic and co-curricular programs within the district. He said that all of these activities will be maintained for the next school year.

Dr. Martin said that he wanted to say a few words about the educational advances that the district has achieved over the past year. He said that it is never good enough to just maintain and to become the "stellar" school district that it is capable of becoming, the district must constantly advance and look for opportunities to make it stronger. Dr. Martin said that with the budget that the district is proposing for the next school year, the following educational advances will be brought to fruition. He said that there will be an implementation of a new teacher/principal evaluation system; the State of New Jersey is requiring that all public school districts adopt a new teacher and principal evaluation system which will be technology based next year. Dr. Martin said that the district must choose a system and purchase it but then comes the training. He said that administrators will have to be trained on how to use the system and the teachers and staff must be trained on how to use the system. Dr. Martin stated that there will be a great deal of professional development in connection with this. He said that this will take time and money but the district is committed to doing it right and not just meeting the letter of the law.

Dr. Martin said that there will be continued funding to be utilized for student manipulatives to support the "Go Math" program at the elementary level. He said that this school year the board of education adopted a new math program called the "Go Math" program for the elementary schools and it is particularly good because it meets the new national standards that States throughout the nation are becoming a part of. Dr. Martin said that the national standards are standards that have been agreed upon by all the States as to what

should be learned in each grade level. He said that "Go Math" is a marvelous math program because it meets the requirements of the national standards that have been set by educators across the United States. Dr. Martin said that the teachers, students and parents have worked hard this year to get used to this new program. He said that the district is proposing that manipulatives or items that the students can work with in the classroom to show that they understand the new math concepts will be brought into the district next year. Dr. Martin said that this will make a good program even more student friendly and will lead to greater success.

Dr. Martin said that there will also be continued funding for professional development supporting mid-year and end-of-year proficiency assessment analysis utilized to establish prescriptive student support instruments. He said that in this school district, every student kindergarten to grade 12 takes a mid-year assessment and an end-of-year assessment. Dr. Martin said that once the students take these tests, it is very important that the district analyze the data to see which questions on the tests did the students did well on and which ones they struggled with. He said this test results analysis will be sent to the classroom teachers so that the students can receive the extra work that they need to bring them up to speed. Dr. Martin said that instruments and workbooks must also be created that teachers, students and their parents can use to help the students in areas of weakness. He said that there are elementary workshops for standardized test preparation happening in three schools the district this evening. Dr. Martin said that he would like to see more of this being done in the district.

Dr. Martin said that allocation of funds for additional faculty members at Union High School to support the Algebra course doubling the length of instructional time to 84 minutes is another way that funding will be utilized in the next school year. He said that the board of education approved the concept of next year's Algebra course at Union High School doubling in length. Dr. Martin said that one of the reasons he brought this to the board was that the district has seen great success in the middle schools when the periods for math and language arts were doubled. He said because the district saw an increase in student achievement, he was anxious to bring that model into the high school and the first place that it will occur will be in Algebra instruction. Dr. Martin said that starting in September, 2012; students will get double the time for Algebra not only to learn but to practice the concepts.

Dr. Martin said that there will also be allocation of funds to support a Physics Pod and a Guidance Pod at Union High School. He said that the "Pods" are groups of computers or technology pods that will be brought into those two areas for the benefit of children to use technology to explore those two areas

further. Dr. Martin said that this is one of the district's technology initiatives which will keep district students on the "cutting edge".

Dr. Martin said that there will be an allocation of funds to support full technology integration into Kawameeh Middle School which will include, SmartBoards, WebCams and Skype. He said that what was really interesting about this is at the end of next year, every single classroom at Kawameeh Middle School and every single classroom will be "wired" for technology. Dr. Martin said that this will definitely put Kawameeh Middle School on the "cutting edge".

Dr. Martin said that there will also be allocation of funds to support new curriculum in textbook web-based support for programs aligned to the common core national standards which is to make sure that the district's curriculum is fully aligned with what is happening on the national level. He said that the district also wants to make sure that textbooks and materials being used in the classrooms that are the most up-to-date, most aligned materials that can be used by the teachers to teach students. Dr. Martin said that when new materials are brought into the district, professional development will be necessary for the faculty. He said that this is a commitment that the district makes year by year to make sure that the students are getting the most up-to-date access to cutting edge materials as possible.

Dr. Martin said that funds will also be allocated for technology integrations at Burnet Middle School – Phase I. He said that SmartBoards, WebCams and Skype will also be installed at Burnet Middle School but because Burnet is a much larger school, it will take a two year commitment to complete this project.

Dr. Martin said that next year will be a "bricks and mortar" year in the district. He said that the physical plants in the schools are going to be addressed and brought up to the highest level. Dr. Martin stated that the following projects will be done during the next school year:

- (1) Replacement of cupolas at Franklin and Connecticut Farms Elementary Schools. Mr. Martin said that the cupolas on these schools are very old and worn and architects have looked at them who have told the district that they are in need of replacement.
- (2) Aged boilers districtwide will be replaced. Dr. Martin said that it is not funny in the middle of the winter if the boiler breaks down and there is no way to get it up and running. He said that the district has been "band-aiding" some of the boilers throughout the district and it is time to make sure that they are all up and running efficiently.

- (3) Replacement of Washington Elementary School auditorium air-conditioning system. Dr. Martin said that this is another system that has been "band-aided" and re-repaired over the past few years. He said that there comes a time when repairs are counterproductive and the district is just throwing good money after bad to repair an older system.
- (4) Upgrade of the fire alarm system districtwide. Dr. Martin stated that the fire alarms are in "acceptable" condition but they are old. He said that experts have told the district that the time is rapidly approaching when it makes sense to move to a modern upgrade for the fire alarm system. Dr. Martin said that when it comes to student safety, the district cannot be too careful.
- (5) Replacement of the snack stand at Cooke Memorial Field. Dr. Martin said that this snack stand has been standing for many years and many committed and dedicated parents and volunteers from the community have worked in the snack stand during athletic events. He said that all of the money raised there over the years has gone back to the school and it is time for the structure to be replaced.

Dr. Martin stated that this completes his comments with regard to next year's budget and he looked forward to a tremendous school year ahead. He said that school districts are composed of many different elements, finances being one, education is another and physical plant is still another. Dr. Martin said that everything that can be done to make all of the pieces work together. He thanked the community on behalf of the board of education and the entire educational community in the district for all that they have done financially for it. Dr. Martin assured the community that he would do his best to make the community proud of the school district.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON PROPOSED BUDGET

None

#### FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Moved by Mrs. Gaglione, seconded by Mr. Arminio that the proposed 2012-2013 school budget be adopted and sent to the County Superintendent for approval in accordance with the information appended to these minutes, and the following:

#### F-1. RAISE GENERAL FUNDS FOR THE 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

That there should be raised for General Funds \$78,490,953 for the ensuing school year 2012-2013.

**F-2. APPROVE APPENDIX E (REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT ESTIMATED FUND BALANCE) FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve Appendix E (Required Documentation to Support Estimated Fund Balance) along with the January 31, 2012 Secretary's Report as required documentation to support the estimated fund balance as of June 30, 2012 pursuant to Exhibit C-1 (Recapitulation of Balances) as contained in the proposed 2012-2013 school budget, in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

**F-3. APPROVE ADVERTISED CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve advertised capital outlay projects in the amount of \$1,727,000 in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

**F-4. APPROVE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE MAXIMUM FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve Travel Expenditure Maximum in the sum of \$75,000 in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

**F-5. APPROVE GENERAL FUND BUDGET BY CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve General Fund Budget by Co-Curricular Activity as follows: Co-Curricular (Athletics)-\$ 855,308 and Co-Curricular (Non-Athletics) - \$208,967 in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

**F-6. APPROVE MAXIMUM LIMIT – PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve Maximum Limit – Public Relations and Professional Services in the sum of \$1,114,000 in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

**F-7. APPROVE STATEMENT OF CAPITAL RESERVE, UNDESIGNATED, DEPOSIT FOR 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the board approve Statement of Capital Reserve, Undesignated, Deposit (Detailed Recapitulation of Balances, Line 01653) in the amount of \$700,000 as contained in the proposed 2012-2013 school budget.

**F-8. ADOPT FORMAL RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR AND TAX LEVY**

That the board adopt formal resolution adopting the 2012-2013 school year budget and tax levy in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.



**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Gaglione thanked Mr. Vieira and his staff for his hard work, for maintaining the budget and for attempting to continue fiscal responsibility within the school district.

AYE: Mr. Abraham, Mr. Arminio, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Salazar and Mr. Perkins  
NAY: None  
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

Mr. Perkins said that on the district's website there was a public notice for a meeting to be held on Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> for purposes of adoption of the budget and that really is a back stop in the event that the Board was unable for whatever reason to adopt the budget this evening. He said that since the Board did adopt the budget tonight there is no necessity for Wednesday's meeting to be held and therefore, the meeting will be cancelled. Mr. Damato said that notice will be sent to the website and Channel 34 so that a notice that the meeting has been cancelled can be posted.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Abraham, seconded by Mrs. Salazar that the meeting be adjourned.

AYE: Mr. Abraham, Mr. Arminio, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Salazar and Mr. Perkins  
NAY: None  
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO  
BOARD SECRETARY