

UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSESSION MINUTES – DECEMBER 10, 2013

Meeting held at James M. Caulfield Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. David Arminio, Dr. Guy Francis, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Richard Galante, Mr. Thomas Layden, Mr. Vito Nufrio and Mr. Francis Perkins, President

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Ms. Susana Cooley and Mrs. Versie McNeil

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Perkins, at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Layden led the board members and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Damato read the statement required under the "Open Public Meetings Act" a copy of which is on file in the office of the Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Perkins said that the minutes of the October 15, 2013 meeting will be adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

All communication has been referred to the appropriate committees for consideration.

Mr. Arminio commented on the resignation letters from Mrs. Olas and Mrs. Grillo and stated that the district would be losing two outstanding teachers.

PRESENTATION

Food Recycling Program - Sergio Panunzio, Superintendent of Public Works for the Township of Union thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to address the board regarding a program that the Township would like to start. He said that the Township has a great relationship with the Board of Education over the years and one of the things that is happening in the solid waste industry is the control of solid waste. Mr. Panunzio said that throughout the State of New Jersey electronics can no longer be put with regular garbage to divert hazardous materials that would normally have gone to a landfill and polluted the water, etc. He said that the next trend that is happening is recycling of food waste. Mr. Panunzio said that the Public Works Department is looking into how to divert some of the food waste that would normally go to a landfill and producing it into

something that can be recycled into materials such as fertilizer, etc. He said that one of the principals of the recycling program is to target the highest generators; schools, in this case, are one of the highest generators of food waste besides supermarkets, restaurants or catering halls that are already on board with this program. Mr. Panunzio said that the Department of Public Works has done some research within the district and it was decided to start the program in one school, so that any problems can be ironed out before other schools are included in the program. He said that the number one problem that he sees is educating the custodial staff as well as the teachers and the students in the building. Mr. Panunzio said that educational services are provided free of charge. He said that that he has discovered that Livingston School has a very progressive and very recycle-oriented administration and this is the school where a one year pilot program will take place. He said that the primary numbers indicate that 70% of the waste generated at the school is food waste. Mr. Panunzio said that not having had the privilege of looking at the Board of Education's solid waste contract, he said that the normal contract in the educational industry has a collection for a bin, whether the bin is full or empty and every time a truck stops by, there is a collection charge. He said that he believed that currently Livingston School has three collections per week and he thought that could be cut down to one every two weeks or perhaps one per week. Mr. Panunzio said that this would be a substantial savings to the Board of Education.

Mr. Panunzio said that Union is one of the first 43 municipalities to start with the program called Sustainable Jersey. He said that Union is spearheading one of the Sustainable Jersey communities and regain recycling numbers based on the producers within the town. Mr. Panunzio said that whether the Board of Education produces more recycling or not, the Township gets credits and applies for funding. He said that the Township of Union is willing to sit down with the Board of Education and work out whatever minor fees there may be. Mr. Panunzio said that the Township has a recycling grant that can be utilized for this purpose. He said that the County Recycling Coordinator is also willing to look at other grants that might also be applicable to this program. Mr. Panunzio said that the Township also has a contractor who is willing to start the program at no cost to the Township or the Board of Education. He said that the contractor will provide the bin and the educational component to the teachers, students and the janitorial staff.

Mr. Panunzio said that his proposal was simple; reduce waste cost so that next time the Board of Education goes out to bid for disposal the board can reduce its waste stops. He said that he believed that the program will work and this is a win-win situation. Mr. Panunzio said that other communities are doing this and he believed that Union will be the first district in Union County to have an educational institution participating in a food recycling program. He said that he was willing to come back to the board with any follow up information that is requested.

Mrs. Gaglione said that it was her understanding that the Township will receive "money" for recycling the food waste. She said that Mr. Panunzio said the Board's

reduction would be a reduction in the amount of truck traffic. Mr. Panunzio said that the Township gets "credits" not money for the waste that is diverted from a landfill to a recycling plant. Mrs. Gaglione asked what the food would be collected in. Mr. Panunzio said that the Township has a contractor who collects organic foods. Mrs. Gaglione asked where the bins would be put. Mr. Panunzio said that the bin could be put outside the school in a selected place that is comfortable for the board and the janitorial staff and a shed will be built around it. Mrs. Gaglione said what happens when the temperature outside starts getting up to 80 or 90 degrees and the food waste starts to smell; she asked if Mr. Panunzio will guarantee that the students, teachers, staff and the people in the neighborhood will not have any odor from the rotten food. Mr. Panunzio said that he could not guarantee anything and he felt there would be some odors. Mrs. Gaglione asked what about the rodents that will come to visit. Mr. Panunzio said that the bin is 1,000% enclosed and sealable; no liquids will leech out and they are designed for this specific purpose. Mrs. Gaglione asked how big the bin was. Mr. Panunzio said that it is a 32 gallon bin.

Mr. Nufrio asked how will all the food be able to be enclosed in a 32 gallon bin. Mr. Panunzio said that the school may be getting several bins depending on a survey that will be done at the school. Mr. Nufrio asked if the waste is compacted. Mr. Panunzio said it was not.

Mrs. Gaglione asked who the contractor was that would be doing this service. Mr. Panunzio said that contractor is located close to Union County but he could not remember the specific name. He said that he could invite the contractor to do a presentation to the board at a future meeting. Mr. Panunzio said that this contractor is presently servicing Pingry School. He said that this will be a pilot program at only one school in the district and the contractor sees the potential.

Mr. Nufrio said that the first part of the program is gathering the food; the logistics of that does not seem as simple as putting excess food waste into a food can. He said that there have to be individuals to do that. Mr. Nufrio said that probably half of the food students have on their lunch trays winds up in the garbage; there is a whole mechanism that will have to "evolve". Mr. Panunzio said that the students will be involved in the program as well as the janitorial staff. He said that it has been found that students in grades five and under work better in this type of program. Mr. Panunzio said that the program may not work in the high school.

Mrs. Gaglione asked if students don't recycle in their own homes, what makes Mr. Panunzio think they will do it at school. Mr. Panunzio said that the recycling program in the Township has grown so much and it will be the Township's challenge to educate the children. He said that there are spot checks done around the town to see if citizens recycle or not. Mr. Panunzio said that if it is determined that a neighborhood's recycling is decreasing, this may be caused by an influx of new residents that need to be educated about the recycling practices in the Township. He said that five years ago the Township

was getting \$110 per ton for cardboard and now the Township only gets \$.30; he said that it is a supply and demand market. Mr. Panunzio said that the Department of Public Works keeps a vigilant eye on certain neighborhoods. He said that new residents of the Township need to know the rules.

Mr. Arminio said that he would like to have someone from the contracting company come to the January meeting to speak to the board so that the board could questions him directly about how the program works. Mr. Panunzio said that was not a problem and he will ask that the contractor bring a storage bin with him so that the board can see it. Mr. Arminio said that he would like the contractor to address how he will educate the custodial staff and the students. Mr. Panunzio said that this contractor has serviced other school districts.

Mr. Panunzio said that Waste Management has just made application to the Utilities Authority to open a site to accept organic food for recycling in Elizabeth. He said he felt that this is the next industry that will "take off". Mrs. Gaglione asked what is made from the recycled organic waste. Mr. Panunzio said that fertilizer is produced through composting the material and mixing it with leaves. Mr. Nufrio said that he saw some problems with transferring the "food waste" is transferred from the building to the outside containers. Mr. Panunzio said that he would contact the contractor who will be able to answer all of the board's questions. He said that he did not want to provide incorrect information as he wants this program to go forward and be successful.

Mr. Panunzio thought that this program could be incorporated into a science curriculum for students and he believed that there was a component that could be added to the curriculum. He said that the Township is willing to invest time and money in order to benefit both the Township and the Board of Education.

Mr. Perkins asked that Mr. Panunzio put together a written proposal so that the board could review it. Mrs. Gaglione said that she thought the vendor should provide the board with a list of other sites that are already utilizing this program. Mr. Panunzio said that he took a trip to Pingry School a school that is using this program to talk to the custodians. He said that the custodians commented that there is always resistance to a new program but if the principal, teachers and students are "on board" it is much better.

Mr. Layden said that he can envision this being a very good program for the school district down the road but there are a lot of unanswered questions at this time. Mr. Panunzio said that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered and that is why the Department wants to start with one school and do a one year pilot program. He said at the end of the year the program will be reassessed to see if it works.

Dr. Francis asked about a communication received from Mr. Magliacano about the use of Jefferson School gym on Friday nights. He said that at the last meeting there were several community members who were requesting the use of the gym on Friday nights for the use of the children of the Vauxhall community. Dr. Francis said that Mr. Magliacano's request would be in conflict with this request. He felt that this needed to be addressed. Mr. Perkins asked if there was a formal request from any other group. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Magliacano came in with the request for the Friday night use of Jefferson School and he told Mr. Magliacano that there were several people who came to a meeting and made a request for Friday night open gym. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Magliacano commented that he could not recommend that request. Dr. Francis said that when the individuals from the community made the request, they commented that open gym in that area was Monday, Wednesday and Thursday but these individuals would rather have open gym on Friday because this is a good time for the younger children to come on a Friday night since there is no school on Saturday. He said that when he was young, he can remember being allowed to go to Jefferson School on Friday nights. Dr. Francis said that this is for the children in the community and he wanted to know why Mr. Magliacano is not recommending the Open Gym but is recommending the traveling basketball team to use the Jefferson gym on Friday nights. Mr. Perkins asked if the Board had any formalized relationship with the Recreation Department. Mr. Damato said that historically, the board has granted all of the Recreation Department's requests which predominantly are open gyms at the various schools. He said that the Recreation Department does have other programs but most of what they do in the schools is open gyms. Mr. Perkins thought that there should be a meeting set up with Mr. Magliacano to discuss this issue. Mr. Damato said that the Recreation Department hires people to monitor the open gyms. Mr. Arminio wanted to know if the individuals who came to the meeting last month were the people who were running the program. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Foster, who came to the meeting, used to work for the Recreation Department as a monitor in one of the schools on open gym night. Mr. Arminio asked if they would do their program through the Recreation Department. Mr. Damato said that they were talking about having an open gym for younger children. Mr. Layden said that it was kind of funny that the request for the traveling basketball team came in around the same time as the individuals came in to request open gym at Jefferson School on Fridays. Dr. Francis said that he wanted to bring this up because he thought that the individuals would be coming to another meeting in the near future to find out why they did not have their request honored. Mr. Perkins said that since this is a Recreation Department program, they should have made their request to the Township Committee and not the Board of Education.

Mrs. Gaglione asked if the request would still be on for approval next week. Mr. Perkins said that between now and next week there will be conversation with the Recreation Department. Mrs. Gaglione said that the requested period of use was from December 6th through March 21st. She hoped that the group had not used the gym already without approval and she asked that someone confirm this with the Recreation Department.

Mr. Perkins asked Dr. Francis if the gym at Jefferson had been used on Friday nights in the past. Dr. Francis said it had been. Mr. Perkins said that he was not aware that there was a traveling basketball team in Union.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Martin said that the Union High School Varsity Football Team did play for the State Championship last Sunday and although they were not successful, it was a great honor to be in the Championship game. He thought that special mention should go out to Mr. Grasso, the Head Football Coach. Dr. Martin said that it was Mr. Grasso's first year as the football coach and he brought the team to the State Championship; he thought that was a great accomplishment. He said that the district was very fortunate to have a talented football coach like Mr. Grasso. Dr. Martin said that although the team was not victorious, the boys fought hard and the district is very proud of the team.

Dr. Martin said that the Union Center National Bank and the Union Education Foundation are presenting the "Union's Got Talent" show on Saturday, December 14th at 7 p.m. at Union High School. He said that he saw some video clips that had been put together of the show and it looks like it will be a special show. Dr. Martin recommended that everyone attend.

EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Mr. Arminio said that the committee met and he presented the agenda.

Mr. Arminio stated that resolution E-3 deals with a new half-year course that will be established at Union High School which requires in-class support.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the teachers who were assigned to teach this course have a background in math. Dr. Lishak said that the teacher either had to be certified in Social Studies or Business in order to teach this course.

FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Gaglione said that she did not attend the committee meeting, but the committee did meet. She presented the agenda.

Mr. Vieira said that he is in the process of starting to prepare the budget for 2014-2015 school year and on the revenue side the district has \$1 million less revenue for the next year versus the current school year. He said that the budgets are due to him on Friday for non-salary expenditures. Mr. Vieira said that after he has reviewed all the returned budgets, he will report back to the board.

Mr. Nufrio asked if the eventual analysis of the budget will be based upon student or staff population. Mr. Vieira said that he asked the schools to try to minimize increases because the district's revenue will be down by approximately \$1 million. He said that health benefits and salaries will be increasing. Mr. Arminio asked how much

of an impact did non-budgeted items affect the \$1 million reduction in revenue for next year. Mr. Vieira said that in this year's budget, the district added approximately 32 positions which equaled approximately \$1.5 million in additional salaries. Mr. Arminio asked if this impacted how much surplus the district has going into next year. Mr. Vieira said that the surplus going into next year was based upon the prior year's budget and the 2012-2013 with a \$3.9 million surplus. He said that new positions increased salaries by \$1.5 million. Mr. Arminio asked if these were non-budgeted new positions. Mr. Vieira said that was correct. Mr. Arminio asked if that amount included benefits. Mr. Vieira said it was \$1.5 million in salaries plus benefits which adds up to close to \$2 million. Mr. Nufrio asked if they were all classroom positions. Mr. Vieira said that they were not only classroom positions. He said that three security officers were hired for Jefferson School; there were some new teachers and teacher assistants; and a position was created for an Assistant Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds.

Mr. Nufrio said that the number that is assigned to each building is an important issue that the principal has to deal with. He said that student population and staff should be the two most important items. Mr. Nufrio asked if the district was using that method of assigning a "number" to the individual school. He wanted to be sure that there was parity. Mr. Vieira said that each principal will send him their proposed budget and as long as everything is in line with the trends of what they have been spending each year. Mr. Nufrio said that those trends change and if there is an increase in student population and staff in the building, one affects the other. He said that Mr. Vieira's numbers should be flexible to realize that a particular school may need extra money in their budget. Mr. Nufrio said that "whispers" are that there currently is not a proper assignment of numbers. Mr. Vieira said that he could take the building's budget and divide it by the number of students in the building to get a cost per student to be used as a guideline. Mr. Nufrio said that is the first way to approach it but there may also be changes in staff and instructional changes. Mr. Vieira said that as far as curriculum, that is uniform throughout the elementary schools in the district. Mr. Nufrio said that curriculum may be the same but within the curriculum there are other cost factors that come into play; for instance, the new class that is being instituted at the high school.

Dr. Lishak said that when it is a new program that is sustained at the district level, the costs are not assigned to the building. She said the only assignment to the building for instructional fees is replacement of lost texts or novels. Dr. Lishak said that other than that all new materials come from the district level. Mr. Tatum said that number can be based upon a higher population of students as well. He said that if a new class is added, the replacement costs for the next year may be higher and so is the amount of money that is needed to replace the textbooks. Mr. Tatum said that traditionally, the principal has to go back and reallocate funds to offset the increases. He said that one of the conversations that was had was putting into the budget for the following year some of the costs that are fixed that are anticipated; for example, the chapter books. Mr. Tatum said that this year it is proposed that this money will be in

the budget based upon the number of students that are currently on the rolls. He said that there are a number of times that the district gets an increase in students and the money is not budgeted for them. Mr. Tatum said that he has been looking at some of the existing teaching staff that the district has and the actual teaching load that each teacher has, particularly at the elementary level to see if there is parity in terms of what the district is spending versus the number of students that each building has.

Mr. Arminio asked Mr. Vieira if the rationale was the same for non-instructional as instructional items. Mr. Vieira asked if Mr. Arminio meant maintenance supplies. Mr. Arminio said what about pencils, paper, etc. Mr. Vieira said that is considered instructional. Mr. Tatum asked if Mr. Arminio meant a principal's account could be used for general supplies for the building. Mr. Vieira said that would be administrative costs. Mr. Arminio asked if that might be \$80,000 or \$70,000 or \$100,000; how much would a school get for something like that. He asked if Mr. Vieira could supply him with the amount that was allotted for each school. Mr. Vieira said that it is not what is given, but it is what each school requests. He said that he would supply Mr. Arminio with a budget report. Mr. Nufrio asked Mr. Tatum if he would be comfortable in saying that there is parity. Mr. Tatum said that when he meets with the principals, they have a little interpretation of what "parity" actually is. He said that the way the budget process works is that the building principal determines how much money will be put into their account. Mr. Tatum said that the funding is usually "flat" and the principals might have different amounts in their accounts based upon how they maneuver their money and what the needs of their buildings are. Mr. Arminio asked if there is an adjustment for class size or student population. Mr. Tatum said that a couple of years ago, the principals budgeted based upon the enrollment and they developed a formula but because of the way the budget has been in the past couple of years and there has been relatively "flat" funding, that same amount of money is taken and maneuvered around. He said that the principals have more money to work with than when he was at the building level. Mr. Vieira said that historically speaking a principal will budget \$100 for something but only spend \$80, so there is definitely enough money being appropriated for each building. Mr. Nufrio said that it is important for the principal to feel that he or she is not receiving less than someone else.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Layden said that the committee did meet earlier in the evening. He reviewed the agenda item.

Mr. Perkins said that resolution O-7 will be subject to or contingent upon he and Dr. Francis talking to Mr. Magliacano. Mr. Layden said that resolution O-7 may be amended, changed or dropped off the agenda for next week.

Mr. Nufrio asked if there was a program in the district for recycling of books that have been discarded. Dr. Lishak said that any books that are ten years old or younger must be posted on a textbook share website and nine times out of ten they are taken

by another district for use. She said that when Mrs. Salazar was on the board, she would come in with a community group and ship any books that were being discarded over to the Philippines and the district has not had any textbooks in the past two years that Mrs. Salazar has not taken. Mr. Nufrio said that he hated to see textbooks go to waste. Mr. Arminio said that he would get in contact with the Filipino group in Union and ask them if they can use the discarded textbooks. Dr. Lishak said that if textbooks are under ten years old, they must first be posted on the textbook share website for 90 days. Mr. Perkins asked who participates in the textbook share. Dr. Lishak said that every district and every private school in New Jersey can participate.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

Use of Union High School Cafeteria on March 29, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for second annual Family Resource Fair – Mr. Layden said that this is a program that was started by Mrs. Ahern at Union High School. Mr. Perkins said that this is a very successful program in his view. Mr. Layden said that this would be put into the form of a resolution to be voted on next Tuesday. Mr. Perkins asked if anyone had any objection to this. There were no objections.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Mr. Galante said that the committee met earlier and he presented the agenda items.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Mr. Arminio stated that there are three items on the policy agenda. He said that the committee met and reviewed the 5000 series of policies which is POL-1. Mr. Arminio asked if the Suicide policy was included in this packet. Mrs. Ditri stated that it was included however that policy was in the process of being reviewed by Mrs. Conti and an amendment of it will be voted on at the January meeting. Mr. Arminio said that resolutions POL-2 and POL-3 dealt with teacher and administrator evaluations. Mr. Damato said that the model policies regarding evaluations were prepared by New Jersey School Boards and they have been modified for this district.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Perkins said that the payment of bills would be approved at next week's meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Arminio said that each board member has a copy of the IDR (Individual Directed Reading) implementation for 2013-2014 school year. He said that Mr. Ghiretti gave a presentation at the Education Committee meeting and for the board's benefit discussed how the IDR was being implemented this year in each classroom grades K-5. Mr. Arminio said that there are survey forms included in the packet which have been filled out by third, fourth and fifth grade teachers. He said that there was also

information included about Mr. Ghiretti's plan for monitoring independent reading in the classroom. Mr. Arminio said that there is also a schedule of how the program is being implemented in the classroom along with all of the other curriculum items that the classroom teachers have.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Perkins asked the board members to review the meeting dates for 2014 and if there are any serious problems on the part of any board member, they should contact him before January 7, 2014.

Mr. Perkins said that with regard to the special meeting that is scheduled on Thursday, December 12th will deal with approving the chaperones that will be going on the Academy field trip to Philadelphia. He said that attached to the agenda which is posted on the website. Mr. Perkins said that there are also two other agenda items which he did not think needed to be approved by the board. Mrs. Gaglione said that she would not be able to attend the meeting on Thursday because she would be teaching a class at that time but if there is not a quorum in attendance for the meeting, she would be reachable by cell phone.

Mr. Perkins said that there are 15 chaperones in addition to staff that will be going on the Philadelphia trip that will be approved at the meeting on Thursday.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Mr. Galante, seconded by Mr. Nufrio that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 10:4- 2b*. The Board will disclose the discussion conducted during the executive session, with notice to the public, when the disclosure will not result in unwarranted invasion of individual privacy or prejudice to the best interests of the Board of Education and provided that such disclosure does not violate federal, state or local statutes and does not fall within the attorney/client privilege.

AYE: Mr. Arminio, Dr. Francis, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Galante, Mr. Layden,
Mr. Nufrio and Mr. Perkins

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION WAS CARRIED

THE BOARD RETURNED TO PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board it was moved by Mr. Arminio seconded by Mr. Layden that the meeting be adjourned. All present voting yes.

Respectfully submitted

**JAMES J. DAMATO
BOARD SECRETARY**