

**UNION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES - JANUARY 8, 2008**

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

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Manuel Figueiredo, Mrs. Linda Gaglione, Mr. Anthony Manochio, Mrs. Versie McNeil, Mr. Francis Perkins, Mr. Steve Ruhl, Mrs. Judy Salazar and Mr. Gary Abraham, President.

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Steven Helmstetter

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Abraham at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Ditri led the board members and the 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. Abraham asked each board member to review the minutes of the Worksession of December 11, 2007; the Executive Session of December 11, 2007 and the Regular Meeting of December 18, 2007. Mr. Abraham noted a correction that needed to be made on the Worksession Minutes of December 11<sup>th</sup> 2007. The correction was noted and changes would be made and submitted for approval at the regular meeting next week.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Damato stated that all communications have been referred to the appropriate committee for action.

**EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE**

Mrs. McNeil stated that the committee met prior to this meeting and she presented the education agenda. Dr. Jakubowski said he wanted to make a comment on the additional pre-school disabled class that is being established at Washington School. He wanted to make the board aware that the district now has nine sections of pre-school for either disabled or autistic students. Dr. Jakubowski said that on the personnel agenda for tonight the board should note that he has already hired an individual for one of the classes and there will be another

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individual who will be spending half time at Washington School in this new class. He said that there certainly was a cost to establish these types of classes but the cost to be sending these students out of district is much more. Dr. Jakubowski said that with regard to the district's pre-school program, there is legislation now that would allow the district to charge for pre-school. He said that the district did charge for pre-school at one time and now the parents just pay a registration fee. Dr. Jakubowski said that the registration fee has not been enough for the past few years to sustain the program and when he met with Ms. Topal, it was decided that the registration fee would be doubled from \$150 to \$300. He said that any student that is on free or reduced lunch will not have to pay this registration fee. Dr. Jakubowski said that there is money available for pre-school programs, but they must be full-day programs. He said that there is a pre-school in every elementary school which takes up six classrooms. Dr. Jakubowski said that the minute the program is made full-time, six extra classrooms would be needed. He said it was not as easy to do as some people would think. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would take a hard look at the pre-school program but for right now, just increasing the registration fee will help for now. Ms. Dunn said that with the passage of the new funding formula for 2008-2009, those districts that have at risk 3 and 4 year olds, it will be required to give them a full day of pre-school. She said that there will be significant changes that the district is already anticipating. Dr. Jakubowski said that he wanted to know how many people are still committed to the district's regular pre-school program. He said that the district has about 250 to 275 students in the pre-school program because many parents work and they require a full day facility. Dr. Jakubowski said that if the district went to a full-day pre-school for all students, it was his opinion that the enrollment would not just double the six classes to twelve but the pre-school enrollment would probably be the same as all of the district's other grades, which is 500+ students. He said that he did not know where the district would find room to house that many students. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district would keep increasing the pre-school autistic and handicapped programs because there are more children with special needs in the district. Mrs. Gaglione asked if this issue could be more fully discussed at the planning session meeting. Dr. Jakubowski said that it could be added to the agenda.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge-Camp Patriot at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts – June 29<sup>th</sup> through July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 - Mrs. McNeil stated that the JROTC goes on this trip annually.

## EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2. Gifted and Talented Educational Field Trip (Students from Burnet and Kawameeh Middle School) to Boston/Plymouth/ Salem, Massachusetts – May 28<sup>th</sup> through May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Dr. Jakubowski stated that this is a trip that the gifted and talented students go on each year. Mrs. Gaglione said that she noticed there was a delay in the board getting the information for this trip and it seemed that the information had already been distributed to parents. Dr. Jakubowski said that he received this information on the day of the board's last regular meeting and it is listed tonight because the trip is not until May. He did not know whether the information had already been distributed to parents. Dr. Jakubowski said that this trip has been done for the past 15 years. Mrs. Gaglione wanted to make sure that this would not cause a problem audit wise. Dr. Jakubowski said he did not think this would be a problem since the trip was not until May.

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Mrs. Gaglione stated that the committee has met and she presented the agenda. Dr. Jakubowski said that the new funding formula bill passed by one vote. He said that Ms. Dunn spent yesterday afternoon with Kathryn Davenport, the Union County Business Administrator. Dr. Jakubowski said that this new formula was discussed and certainly, the district did receive a 20% increase in funding and at least on paper this appears to be good. He said that extraordinary aid for special education (approximately \$900,000) was built into the \$5.2 million which the district is receiving and he was still trying to make sure that all of the additional categorical aids that the district receives, which will no longer exist, is a part of the base when the additional 20% was given to the district. Dr. Jakubowski said that Ms. Dunn felt most of these funds were included. He said that in some respects that the funds are not "categorical" is very good for this district because he felt that the central office administrators can certainly find ways to spend money if it is not absolutely earmarked in a particular area. Dr. Jakubowski said one of the examples that he can give is that the DEPA money that the district has received and used in our schools; one of the things that was done with these funds was that the district ran summer DEPA program because the funds had to be spent on a particular type of program. He said that over the summer he would visit the schools that had these programs running and he would see teachers in a classroom with only two or three children in a class, because once again, if the students cannot get to school, students do not attend. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has

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already had discussions with other administrators who indicate that the afternoon programs should be maintained and the afterschool programs have also been expanded to all elementary schools this year because of TARA aid which was received by the district but was it cost effective to run a summer program when very few students attend. He said that he would rather expand the afterschool programs and because the funds can now be used as the district sees fit, it will be able to be done. Dr. Jakubowski said that Ms. Davenport did indicate that she was comfortable with approving any programs that the district wished to fund with the additional aid but she did indicate that she did worry about some of the districts because they will not use the funds properly. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the County will tell the district how "any" of the funds must be spent. Dr. Jakubowski said he was not sure at this time. Ms. Dunn said that all of the state aids that are known to man and the state combined them into one lump sum and the district was informed of the amount of the total aid for the present school year and then the state realigned based upon about five years of research and history as to what particularly the state feels the district needs. She said that the state decreased the number of aids to one equalization aid which is somewhat detailed based on the district's special education considerations, limited English proficiency, at-risk concentration of pupils, etc. Ms. Dunn said that she would give more details at the planning session on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. She said that the state did indicate that there would be "some" categorical aid; such as for security because based on studies it was determined that each school needs security for its students. Ms. Dunn said that the state redefined "at risk" to be free and reduced, not just free lunch pupils and as the district's concentration of "at risk" pupils increases so does the allocation for categorical security up to a certain percentage; this is a computation. She said the state is not saying that the district has to spend "x" amount of dollars, what the state is saying is that based on what was found in all of the studies, this is a categorical need. Ms. Dunn said that there is also categorical aid for special education students. She said in the past, students were put into "tiers" and the studies showed that students were not being put into the right tier; therefore, the aid is not being distributed. Ms. Dunn said that there was also a category for transportation aid, which has not changed for years and for the first time in 2008-2009 the state is keeping the same computation as the old formula, but the state is not funding it appropriately, it is only being funded at 81% this year, but the new executive county superintendents have to come up with an efficiency idea. She said that there is transportation and special education pre-school aid; pre-school aid is the only aid that will be contained right now that must be accounted for in a special revenue fund. Ms. Dunn said that the pre-school aid

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is mandated for the FDA, which are formerly the Abbott Districts or any district with a high concentration of more than 40%. She said that Union is at 31.6%. Ms. Dunn said that 2008-2009 will be a planning year for pre-school and the district must come up with a five year plan according to what the standards are and then based on certain criteria, the district could receive money in 2008-2009 or perhaps not until 2009-2010. She said that the studies have made a very complex formula in the past and made it very simple. Ms. Dunn said that the state wants transparency; transparency is key. She said that the state wanted to make it so that when Dr. Jakubowski and the rest of the central office administrators sit down and the 2008-2009 budget is created, the district will really have a clue, unless there are mitigating factors with the student population, what the district will be receiving in 2009-2010 and 2011-2012. Ms. Dunn said that the study will come out before 2011-2012 to give the district new base figures. She said that all the base figures that she has been talking about will be adjusted by the CPI. Dr. Jakubowski thought that this district already spends the allotment for security maybe more. He said that he spoke to the Union Leader today about the additional funding that the district was receiving and he told the Union Leader that he thought that Governor Corzine was really trying to equalize education. Dr. Jakubowski said he told the Union Leader that there were funds coming to the district but certainly there is still a focus on property tax relief in one way or another and certainly as the budget is looked at he was committed to come in with a budget that certainly is also sensitive to the needs of the community. He said that he believed that the district would be able to do this. Dr. Jakubowski stated that the district would spend additional money but it would also take a hard look at the tax levy, where it is right now and where he hoped it would be at the end of the year. Ms. Dunn said that the only real aid that needs to be followed according to the legislation that was passed is the pre-school aid. She said that at this time there is no definite accountability for the rest of the aid, the equalized aid and the categorical aid. Ms. Dunn said that the rules usually come after and right now it is very clear that the district does not have to do it. Dr. Jakubowski said that he thought the Governor wants to make school districts accountable. He said that he was very much impressed with the new funding formula because even with the additional money based on what the adequacy formula is, the district should be receiving over \$44 million in state aid to be "held whole" and he said that the district is receiving \$31 million. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district is still \$13 million less than where the district would be to be considered "adequate". He said that this was based on wealth of the community, size and many other things. Mr. Perkins stated that

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based upon what he has read, he would expect that the people who were plaintiffs in the Abbott case will take an appeal on this as they are already questioning the constitutionality of the bill. He said that Ms. Dunn made a good point that between the legislation and the district's implementation comes the rules from the Commissioner which interpret the bill. Mr. Perkins thought that the district had to move forward as though it was going to stay in place because that is what the law is as of right now but he expected that the plaintiffs would be in court as soon as they possibly can. Dr. Jakubowski said he believed that the Governor had already sent it to the State Supreme Court to bypass all of those actions. Mr. Perkins said that he could not do that. Mr. Perkins said that the Office of Legislative Services has done precious little as well. He said that the Office of Legislative Services, while made up of really nice people who make an effort to serve the legislature by advising on opinions such as this, are also sensitive to who signs their paychecks and what the game is. Dr. Jakubowski said that the county average for spending is \$10,717 per student. He said that Union spends less than the county average. Dr. Jakubowski said that the legislation passed by one vote and that is only because a concession was made in special education. Ms. Dunn said that the one vote was someone who was leaving and she wanted to make some special considerations for those districts that had a high concentration of autistic pupils. She said that while the funding formula is key in the development of the budget, there have been significant other changes due to earlier legislation regarding the budget document in and of itself and what is contained in it in advertising and different things and she said that at the planning session on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, she would like to discuss this. Ms. Dunn said that in the legislation regarding school funding, there is a possibility that the March 4<sup>th</sup> usual due date to the county has been extremely accelerated; she was not sure what the date would be but would advise the board.

## OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Ruhl said that there was only one resolution on the operations committee agenda which dealt with the disposal of equipment.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Moved by Mr. Manochio, seconded by Mr. Ruhl that resolution P-1 be adopted:

## P-1. APPROVE PERSONNEL ACTIONS

That Personnel Actions be approved in accordance with the information appended to these minutes.

## DISCUSSION:

Dr. Jakubowski said that some of the board members had asked about one of the individuals listed on this resolution who was terminated. He said that all employees must go through fingerprinting and this individual's fingerprinting report came back and there were issues. Dr. Jakubowski said that the individual has an opportunity to appeal, but while the appeal is ongoing, the individual is terminated. He said that there will be a P-1 resolution on the regular agenda also.

AYE:	Mr. Figueiredo, Mrs. Gaglione, Mr. Manochio, Mrs. McNeil, Mr. Perkins, Mr. Ruhl, Mrs. Salazar and Mr. Abraham	
NAY:	None	
ABSTAIN:	None	Motion was carried

Mr. Manochio presented the remainder of the personnel agenda. He questioned the difference between unpaid medical leave, family leave and unpaid health sabbatical and he asked Dr. Jakubowski to explain these leaves. Dr. Jakubowski said that an unpaid medical leave is for an employee who is asking, because of a medical condition, for a period of time off from work. He said that this employee may not have any more sick days and the employee has probably already taken a family leave. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district does allow employees to take an unpaid medical leave for an extended period of time. He said that every two years an employee can apply for an unpaid family leave which is a 90 day period either to take care of themselves or a member of their family, which allows an employee to retain his or her medical benefits. Dr. Jakubowski said that there are unpaid sabbaticals which employees can apply for and these are listed in the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Damato said that an unpaid health sabbatical is a last resort which allows the district to hold the individuals position for their return. Mr. Figueiredo asked if an individual retains medical benefits while on a health sabbatical. Dr. Jakubowski said that they do not. He said that the difference between a medical leave and a health sabbatical is that the district views the medical leave as a very short period of

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time and a health sabbatical is a longer period of time. Mrs. Gaglione asked if they are all contractually agreed upon with the Association. Mr. Damato said that it is in the contract. Dr. Jakubowski said that the contract gives provisions for paid or unpaid sabbatical. He said in some cases the district does things that it does not have to do but the district chooses to do them. Dr. Jakubowski said that sometimes the district does extend child rearing leave to individuals but after a certain amount of time it becomes a pension issue on how long an individual can remain out. Mr. Manochio asked if the HSPA sessions were for juniors and seniors. Dr. Jakubowski said that it was basically for juniors that the district has determined are "at risk" based upon previous testing. Mr. Perkins said that the district was paying compensation for staff members to present in-service courses as referred to in resolution P-12. He asked if they are expected to develop their preparation outside of the normal workday. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district does not pay these individuals to present on a day of school, but they are paid to prepare.

## APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Abraham stated that at next week's meeting he will ask for approval of bills.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mrs. Gaglione asked what the status of the installation of the new telephone was. Dr. Jakubowski said that Mr. Tatum and Mr. Damato have been meeting with the individuals involved. He said that there are a few glitches that are being worked out. Mrs. Gaglione asked if the new phones are being installed. Dr. Jakubowski said that the new phones are installed. Mr. Tatum said that the majority of the glitches have been ironed out. He said that it was hoped that the turn over to the new system would take place by the end of January. Mrs. Gaglione asked if there would be any compatibility issues. Dr. Jakubowski said there would be some issues. Mr. Damato said that there were no compatibility issues but perhaps operational issues. Dr. Jakubowski stated that by compatibility issues he meant that for example at Burnet Middle School, the secretaries would have to keep the old telephones on their desks because the intercom system runs off of the old telephone line. He said that this eventually can be changed but it would be an additional cost. Mr. Tatum said that the intercom system at Livingston School is also antiquated and there was a concern about it. Dr. Jakubowski said that it was also discussed that the district would get a maintenance agreement so that the district had someone as a troubleshooter. He said that there were some issues regarding the wiring

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functions in the transportation department. Mr. Damato said that Mr. Endrzejewski spoke to Ms. Dunn about this issue and a purchase order would be cut tomorrow. Dr. Jakubowski said that Mr. Peins, the new I.T. person, has worked very hard with the telephone people.

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Mr. Perkins said that he had sent an e-mail to all board members which, among other things, mentioned the application of Aldi, Inc. Food Markets for a site plan approval and variances for the construction of a supermarket at 1020 Commerce Avenue, down the street from Hannah Caldwell School. He said that he had a conversation with Mr. Damato earlier this evening about why the board did not get notice; that there was no requirement for a specific notice to a property owner not having property that is farther than 200 feet from the nearest point between the two pieces of property. Mr. Perkins said that he and Mr. Damato also discussed drafting a proposed ordinance, which would require that the district be notified of applications for things like this districtwide. He said that he would research this issue to see if it is permissible for the board to do it and he would draft the ordinance. Mr. Perkins said that the more important issue is that Aldi, Inc. proposes a supermarket at 1020 Commerce Avenue; for reference it is the property that is located behind CVS on which Multi Chevrolet had formerly parked vehicles and between that property and Hannah Caldwell is Patel Printing and the substations that are owned by PSE&G. He said that the planning board has had one hearing and the applicant has made its presentation. Mr. Perkins said that there were some questions by some of the Planning Board members and among them was the impact on Hannah Caldwell School. He said that some board members might remember when Pathmark sought to put a supermarket in that area, there was large scale opposition. Mr. Perkins said that he was shocked that there was no one coming to meetings to oppose this application. He said that it was his feeling that the board ought to consider having a representative attend to inform the Planning Board specifically of the district's reaction and the impact of the traffic generated by this proposed supermarket. Mr. Ruhl asked what type of supermarket was proposed; he said that the previous supermarket was a Pathmark and the whole reason that plan fell through was because there was inadequate parking. He said that the way Pathmark was getting around that was that Pathmark was going to get a right to use the railroad easement but there was a law that says that at any time the railroad can revoke this permission if the railroad decides to reactive the line, the property would be taken back. Mr. Ruhl wanted to know if this would play into

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effect in this case also. Dr. Jakubowski said that this could be used as an argument but Aldi could counter with the argument that it has been done in the parking lot behind Hannah Caldwell School. Mr. Perkins said that rather than speculate what is happening he said that one of the variances that Aldi, Inc. seeks is a parking variance as there is insufficient parking right now and it is one of the things that Aldi, Inc. is asking the Planning Board to grant a variance on. He said that one of the difficulties is what the local Planning Board and Zoning Board have done historically with respect to inadequate parking on sites is that they have often waived and, notwithstanding the provisions of the zoning ordinances in the Town, the Boards have granted variances. Mr. Perkins said that he did not know what the disposition of Planning Board is because they have not really considered the issue as a board. He said that one of the concerns is that if the Board denies the variance for parking where you have allowed it in other places there is an appeal. Mr. Perkins said that he is familiar with the law firm that is representing Aldi, Inc. and they are one of the largest and most respected in the State. He said that Aldi, Inc. is very serious about this application and he felt that if the district had any concerns at all about this application was to make a statement on the record with regard to what the district feels will be the impact of this would be. Mr. Perkins said at the very least he felt that the board needed to take a look at this matter. He said that the next hearing before the Planning Board was January 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Damato said that when the district did the Pathmark application, the board hired an expert to review the plans and give testimony which became evidence for the record which the Planning Board can then rely upon to base their vote; was this 100% foolproof and will it withstand a legal challenge? He said he did not know the answer to that but it was better than nothing and if the board is serious about challenging this application or at least making at least a diligent inquiry, he thought the board would be well advised to hire an expert to look at the traffic issues, look at the site plan issues and provide expert testimony on the record. Mr. Damato said this would be his recommendation. Mr. Manochio asked if the board had time to do this. Mr. Damato stated that time was limited. Mr. Perkins said that some of the factual information for example the number of bus trips, number of students in the building, are things that are virtually incontestable. He said that it seemed to him that the district ought to be able to provide, in house, either from Dr. Jakubowski or Mr. Damato, some numbers and the Planning Board can do with that what they will in making a determination but he did know that there was a concern from some members of the Planning Board about the impact of this supermarket on Hannah Caldwell School and the response from the expert

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who presented on behalf of Aldi, Inc., was that this would not have an adverse affect. Mr. Figueiredo wanted to know if it was stated how tractor trailers would be going into loading docks at this store. Mr. Abraham said that the only entry way would be off of Commerce Avenue. Dr. Jakubowski said that he did give testimony on the Pathmark and he would like to review that testimony before any more testimony is given by the district. He said that he wanted the district to be consistent. Mr. Damato said that the issue that the district dealt with on the Pathmark application was the issue from a traffic engineering perspective, what is the level of service at the intersection of Morris and Commerce Avenues, what was the level of service at Elmwood and Morris Avenues and what was the level of service at Vauxhall Road and Commerce Avenue. He said that all of those issues were analyzed by the district's engineer and he thought the engineer's testimony gave a lot of weight to what the district was saying. Mr. Perkins said that he recalled one of the proposals of the application in the Pathmark case was the reconfiguration of the intersection and that is not happening in this case. He said that he remembers having discussions with others weighing the advantage of the reconfiguration of the intersection, which was going to be done at Pathmark's expense because the state would not do it, versus the impact of the supermarket and so the issue in that case was not the same issue that is being faced in the Aldi application. Dr. Jakubowski said that the intersection has already been reconstructed. Mr. Perkins said that the construction of the intersection that is there now is not that which was proposed by the applicant in the Pathmark case. Dr. Jakubowski said he did not want the district's testimony to look so much different this time than it looked in the other case. Mr. Ruhl said that Pathmark wanted to reconfigure the intersection at Elmwood, Commerce and Morris Avenues and they were going to level the area where the railroad was for parking. Mr. Damato said that the railroad easement was given to Union Board of Education and the Board gave it to the Town. Mr. Manochio asked if the Aldi market was a big supermarket, as he had never heard of it. Mrs. McNeil said that there is an Aldi's market in Roselle and there is one in Linden. Mr. Manochio said that if it was a big market than there would be a lot of traffic coming onto Commerce Avenue. He asked if the previous testimony would still be available in this case. Mr. Damato said that it would be usable in this hearing. He stated that the only way that the district would be credible would be for it to put on a case and the only way to do that would be to have someone at the hearing testifying as an expert. Mr. Damato said that this would give the Planning Board something to rely upon. He said that the traffic patterns in the area have not really improved and the patterns would not get better with more traffic. Mr. Damato said that he could make an argument

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before the Planning Board but if the Board of Education wants the Planning Board to be able to rely upon testimony, the board needs to hire an expert. Mr. Perkins said he did not know if the district could request an adjournment of the January 24<sup>th</sup> hearing so that it could obtain an expert but at least if a representative of the district gave a statement regarding its concerns with this application. Mr. Damato said absolutely at a minimum the board should do that. Mr. Figueiredo said that the site plan calls for traffic to enter the parking lot from Morris Avenue onto Commerce and exiting in the same fashion. Mr. Perkins said he did not think that the Planning Board could limit the approval of entering and exiting the property. Mr. Abraham said he remembered that this was the big fight when Home Depot made application to go onto Springfield Avenue and he remembered that the Town specifically stated when the application was approved, that the trucks had to come off of Route 78 and had to come in from the backside. Mr. Perkins said he did not know how that type of restriction could be enforced. Mr. Abraham said that Mr. Damato and Mr. Perkins are recommending that the board needs to have at least a strongly worded statement to be presented to the Planning Board on January 24<sup>th</sup> and if Mr. Damato suggests that the district ask for an extension from the Planning Board in order to produce a credible expert at later date and have an appropriate study done. Mr. Abraham said that the board has had several parents at board meetings complaining about the traffic in and out of the Hannah Caldwell parking lot in the morning and in the afternoon when students are going in and getting out. Mr. Perkins said that it was not his position that the board oppose Aldi's application but it was his position to inform the Planning Board as to what is going on and what the board of education's concerns were and it was up to the board of education to determine with the superintendent, whether the board of education should oppose the Aldi application. Mr. Manochio asked if the Deron School would also be impacted by this application. Dr. Jakubowski said that the buses that service Deron School enter and exit on Hendricks Drive and the board of education cannot say that this case would have any impact on Deron School. Mr. Damato said that if the board wished to follow Mr. Perkins' suggestion, he would suggest that a meeting be held with whatever committee would be handling this, Dr. Jakubowski and himself and come up with what the board likes about the plan and what it does not like about the plan so that there is an overall outline as to how the board will approach the issue. He said it was very difficult when the board of education went into the Pathmark hearing because the board never actually said that it was opposed to Pathmark's application but it certainly sounded like the board was opposed to the plan because the board hired an expert to go to the meeting to

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"pick" the plan apart. Dr. Jakubowski said that the board was not opposed to the Pathmark plan because Pathmark was going to do a lot of things that would have helped the board of education. He said that the roadway renovations are done on Morris Avenue but he did not want trucks, etc. that would create more traffic problems. Mr. Abraham stated that it was Mr. Damato's recommendation that a committee be formed to meet with him and Dr. Jakubowski to discuss the pros and cons of the plan and to draft a preliminary response. Mr. Damato said that he would meet with the Township Engineer to go over the plan before this meeting. Mr. Perkins said that the test would be the impact on the public generally and it is for the Planning Board to make a decision based upon that. He said what he thinks the Planning Board wants is some information from the Board of Education on the impact to the schools and the rest is up to them. Dr. Jakubowski said that was what the district did last time and he was very comfortable doing that again. He said that he would get the information on bus traffic to Hannah Caldwell and he did know that there were many cars that dropped off and picked up students at the school as 85% of the students come from the Burnet Avenue area. Dr. Jakubowski did not think that a committee would be necessary. He said that Mr. Damato would meet with the Township Engineer and let the Town know that the board wants to attend the next hearing on January 24<sup>th</sup> and by the January 22<sup>nd</sup> planning session a statement will be prepared to share with the board. Mr. Perkins suggested that the board obtain a copy of Aldi's application from the Town.

Mr. Ruhl spoke about the letter which the board received from Washington Township Public Schools which asked the district to support their opposition to S2249 and A3812 regarding adding a mandate of ten (10) weeks of paid family leave. Mr. Abraham said that it was decided that this issue be put on the planning session agenda so that it could be discussed at length. Mrs. Gaglione said that this matter has been sitting since May and when she went down to the Delegate Session it was discussed that NJ School Boards wants boards of education across the state to work together and discuss issues together. Dr. Jakubowski said that it sounds like a nice thing to do but he could not even "guesstimate" the cost it would be to the district if this went into effect. He said that such legislation will probably make it more desirable for employees to request a family leave.

Mrs. Gaglione said that she had a flyer that was distributed to Kawameeh and Burnet Middle Schools by the YMCA. She said that the YMCA had received funds from the state which has given them the opportunity to offer a special program to 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the district to utilize their facilities. Mrs. Gaglione said

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that this program was open to any 7<sup>th</sup> grader who lives in Union including those students who attend Holy Spirit and St. Michael's. She said that the program was available Mondays through Thursdays from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 7:15 to 9:45 p.m. Mrs. Gaglione said she knew that the program would probably be offered next year to 7<sup>th</sup> graders also. She said that she would bring up this matter at the regular meeting next week. Mrs. Gaglione said that one of the directors from the YMCA did spend an entire day at Burnet to speak to the students. She urged anyone who had a 7<sup>th</sup> grader to take part in this program. Dr. Jakubowski said that he would speak to Mr. Bell and Mr. Salvatore and ask that they have their guidance counselors try to generate a little interest in this program.

Mr. Manochio stated that he attended the Bicentennial Kickoff at Kean University and Dr. Jakubowski gave a very eloquent speech about what the students in the district schools were planning for the Bicentennial celebration. Mr. Abraham said when he became president of the board, he set up a committee for the bicentennial celebration and he wanted to know if the Township was aware that there was such a committee. Dr. Jakubowski said that they probably did not. Mr. Ruhl said that Dr. Jakubowski had mentioned that the district was going to do a float; he wanted to know how that would happen. Dr. Jakubowski said that he has already reached out to a company that will help in preparing a float. He said that he also planned to have one of the schools perform a play called "The Burnet Boys" and he was going to share this with the principals at their meeting next week to see if anyone wants to take a group of fourth graders to do the skit. Dr. Jakubowski said he hoped that each school would have a group of students marching in the parade next October.

Mr. Abraham said that the board meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> is listed as being scheduled for Union High School and this will be the only meeting in the month of February. He said that because there is no worksession, the board does not get a chance to discuss the resolutions prior to the meeting and he asked if it would be inconvenient to move the meeting to the administration building and have committee meetings prior to the meeting. Mrs. Gaglione said that in prior years the board met at the administration building first for committee meetings and then went to the high school. Dr. Jakubowski said that option is always open if board members wanted to come to the administration building first for committee meetings but what Mr. Abraham is saying is that if the meeting was just held at the administration building, it would be easier to have committee meetings and then just have the meeting afterward. He said that the

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only criticism that someone might have is to say that the meeting would not be televised. Mr. Abraham said that it being held on the second Tuesday of the month the meeting would not be shown live because of the Township Committee meeting. Mr. Perkins said that the meeting can be noticed for the Administration Building and if there is an overflow crowd, the meeting can then be moved. Mrs. Gaglione said she did not see the board of education meetings on Channel 34 as much as they used to be on. Dr. Jakubowski said that it was because the sound system is so terrible. Mr. Damato said that the change of the meeting place would be published in the Union Leader.

Dr. Jakubowski said that he received a list of the students who achieved personal honors in athletics for the fall season. He said that the boys' basketball team is off to its best start in a long time; wrestling was struggling but some of the track teams were doing okay. Mr. Figueiredo said that the boys' swimming team was doing very well. Dr. Jakubowski said that the new music teacher at Union High School, Mr. Moser, has already held auditions for the high school spring musical; they will be performing "The Wiz". He said that Mr. Moser has been involved in productions in New York. Mr. Abraham said that Burnet Middle School will be doing "Into the Woods" as their spring show on February 29<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Hall stated that Kawameeh Middle School was presenting "Once Upon a Musical" which is being written by a former Union High School student. Mr. Abraham asked if Ms. Hall knew the dates of the performances. Ms. Hall stated she did not know them at this time. Dr. Jakubowski said that last year, unfortunately, because of scheduling issues, both Burnet and Kawameeh scheduled their performances on the same weekend; he said it was tough but he did manage to get to both performances. Mr. Abraham said that the high school will have eight performances of their play and they will take place the last weekend in March and the first weekend in April.

## COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Donnarumma asked what the district stood to gain from the new school funding formula. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district's state aid will increase by approximately \$5 million provided that all of the other aids are included in the base number, which he believed was the case. Mr. Donnarumma thought that the district could "cover a lot of ground" with \$5 million. He thought that the total district should be looked at first to see what needed to be done, such as repairs, before anything else is done and he wanted to know if this

## COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

was possible. Dr. Jakubowski said that it is possible that some of the money could be used for that purpose. Mr. Donnarumma said that some of the money should also be earmarked for tax relief. Dr. Jakubowski said that he agreed with Mr. Donnarumma. Mr. Donnarumma asked if there was a surplus, how much would be allowed to be deposited into a surplus account. Dr. Jakubowski said that the district is only allowed to have a 2% surplus and anything over that amount must be put into the budget the following year, for tax relief, etc. He said that the community has been very supportive to the board of education and the board was committed to make sure that with the additional \$5 million, the district maintains all of its programs but the board was also committed for the community to see some type of tax relief. Dr. Jakubowski said that until the district receives the rules and regulations from the state and until the district knows what the parameters are with regard to the increase, he could not say much more than what has been said other than that he was committed to see that there is some benefit to the community from this increased aid. Mr. Donnarumma suggested that the board petition the state to raise the percentage that can be held in surplus as he felt additional funds could generate some additional interest which could also be included in the budget. Mr. Donnarumma asked if an individual takes a leave of absence for a year, would they still get credit toward their pension. Dr. Jakubowski said that if an individual does not pay into the pension, they do not get credit for pension. Ms. Dunn said that the individual does not get credit, but after two years of nonpayment of a pension contribution, the individual must either come back to work or withdraw their contributions and all the years of credit are lost. Mr. Donnarumma asked if the additional state aid was a "one shot deal". Dr. Jakubowski said that he did not know; he said that there will be challenges by some districts on this new formula. He said that our local representatives worked very hard to get benefits for their constituents. Dr. Jakubowski said that on paper, the new formula has helped equalize aid for this district.

Dr. Jakubowski said that he hoped that at the mid-year planning session scheduled on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, he hoped to invite the negotiations committee, along with Mr. Clark to meet. He said that Mr. Clark is currently in negotiations with Schering Plough which must be completed by the end of the month and in talking with his secretary today he was advised that Mr. Clark has been working five days per week on this negotiation. Dr. Jakubowski said that Mr. Clark asked if it would be possible to meet in the beginning of February. He said that negotiations with the UTEA has not begun and he wanted to get started as it was his goal to have a new contract in place before the end of the school year.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business before the board, it was moved by Mr. Ruhl, seconded by Mr. Figueiredo, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m. All present voting yes.

Respectfully submitted

JAMES J. DAMATO  
BOARD SECRETARY