

TOWNSHIP OF UNION BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WORKSESSION MINUTES – MAY 14, 2019

NOTICE OF MEETING:

The worksession meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Union was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, 2369 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey pursuant to the notice sent to each member. Action was taken.

Mrs. Minneci called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Sherry Higgins, Mr. Ronnie McDowell, Mrs. Nancy Minneci, Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Mr. Vito Nufrio, Mrs. Nellis Regis-Darby, Mrs. Linda Richardson, Mrs. Kim Ruiz

ABSENT AT ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Mary Lynn Williams

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Mr. Gerry Benaquista, Mrs. Annie Moses, Mr. Gregory Brennan, Mrs. Kim Conti, Mrs. Ann Hart, Mr. Craig Wojcik, Mr. Barry Loessel, Mrs. Maureen Guilfoyle, Mrs. Sandra Paul

ALSO PRESENT:

Afshan T. Ajmiri Giner, Esq. (left meeting at 7:32 p.m.)  
Mr. Lester Taylor, Esq. (arrived at 7:32 p.m.)

Mrs. Regis-Darby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brennan read the statement required under the “Open Public Meetings Act”, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Board Secretary.

Mr. Nufrio read the District’s mission statement.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON RESOLUTIONS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes will be approved next week.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications are part of personnel and operations.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Mr. Tatum stated tonight we have presentations by our food services companies. There was an RFP process for a food service company for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Brennan stated three food service management companies that are finalist. We had four responses but we chose three of the four who do a lot of business here in New Jersey and surrounding districts in the County.

Presentation by Aramark Food Services – presentation appended to minutes.

Mrs. Ruiz stated thank you for the presentation. How much that is included in this proposal, or what elements that are included in your proposal, are already existing and implemented in our school district or is this an entirely new system that you are going to implement if you are so selected. Representative from Aramark stated it is about 15%. We already have some aspects that are included – we are already running food courts. Our expectation is to take that food court program and take it to the next level – through enhance marketing, enhanced menu selection – there are some baseline items that are already there but our proposal has a number of items that we look to enhance.

Mrs. Higgins stated we know in the past that we had shortage of staff to accommodate the children – you addressed the speediness and the efficiency but do you plan to put in place any measures that schools are staff adequately? Representative from Aramark stated staffing has been a challenge across the country. A recognition and training platform that we had and are enhancing as we move forward – we have added dedicated recruiters in New Jersey – one to focus on getting the best candidates, scholarship money and other benefits for the employees to increase the retention of our employees. The other part is training. Rachel stated I'm passionate about training and development – it is going to start with ensuring that we get the right candidate but also training them and developing them and coaching them. Helping them see how important their job is and getting them to understand the importance of making food quickly but still taste good and in a large amount.

Mr. Nufrio stated I'm impressed with the food court selections. Of these items have you set your guidelines for elementary, middle and high school? If so what are they in terms of what is offered? I'm not so sure the elementary kids would be so impressed. Aramark representative stated what we found is that every grade level wants to eat up a grade level. The high school kids of today are really focused on what they get in a retail street and what they are eating when they get to college. Our middle schoolers are focused on eating like high schoolers. When we develop some of our menus it is based on those insights and we have seen the changing demographic over the course of the years. The menus do reflect that.

Rachel stated it is all about what I hear – what they want to try and having those meetings with them. You will be surprised with what the students will ask for. It is all about talking to them and finding what they want and putting that on the menu. Aramark representative state what we like to highlight is where we get the feedback from a classroom through an interaction. We go into a classroom and ask if they have picked a menu – it is opportunity to teach them how to make balances – make sure there is a fruit, a vegetable – what role protein plays in a balanced diet. They pick it and it is their selection. As part of our commitment with the American Heart Association, the number of items that are meat free continues to increase. You will see dedicated vegetarian items on all of our menus next year.

Mr. Nufrio stated when I child comes to a line and the money is not there, what are you going to present to that child in terms of a substitution for that day? Aramark representative stated we typically partner with the school district because it is your policy.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated concurrently we have an outstanding balance with parents – how are you planning to work with the business office to collect that outstanding balance. Aramark representative stated we are already working with the district to fix that. What we are doing is just being the collection part of it. We are writing receipts for the parents and the students that come to pay those balances. We are here just to help you collect the money. We are passing out flyers with MySchoolBucks to collect those funds. It is easier for the parents because it is credit cards where at the school we can't accept credit cards. A lot of the negative balances come during the gap period when their free and reduce application has expired and they might not have applied for a new free and reduced. As we watched Union's need to continue to increase, that is a critical need and that is something that needs to be watched closely. Where we have been successful in other districts and would implement here, a lot of times having a back-to-school celebration. Getting that application before it ever expires so the parents are re-enrolled and have the free and reduced eligible benefits. I would estimate at least 70% of that gap is that expired application of students in need. Ms. McCleod has a great system – you can't leave the building without that application which I would love other principals to do.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated a lot of kids consume with their eyes, how are you planning to market especially to the elementary students? Aramark representative stated part of our proposal includes changing some of the merchandizing. It has to be desirable for me the students come through the line. We will also have tastings because our younger students are afraid of something new.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated will you be available for September 1<sup>st</sup>? Aramark representative stated yes, we will commit to that.

Mr. Brennan stated thank you. Before I bring in the next food service company, I just want to touch upon the unpaid meal charges. The district is working on that with Aramark. Meg Berry has been working with all the principals, the district administration and she really has a good system that we will roll out at the end of the school year and maybe we can have Meg come in to show the Board what we are going to do.

Presentation by Pomptonian Food Services – video shown at meeting.

Mr. Brennan stated thank you.

Mrs. Ruiz stated thank you for presentation. It sounds like you would be keeping the current staff than bringing in your own staff – is that correct? Mr. Vidavitch stated that is what we hope that everyone would want to stay with us. Finding good people is priority.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked would that include extensive training? Mr. Vidavitch stated absolutely. In a new district we also bring over some people that know what we need to

accomplish so they work side-by-side with someone who has the vision so we can coach them through the transition in what it is that we are looking for. People go to work and want to be proud of what they are doing.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated if you were awarded this contract – would you be ready to start on day one? Mr. Vidavitch stated absolutely. We only take on a limited amount of new clients because of our hands on management style. We are ready to go. You can visit our other districts.

Mrs. Ruiz stated I did that because I have friends that live in other districts and I asked parents' point of view and our your kids happy – because they are eating the food. We here use MySchoolBucks – will you be able to continue that. Mr. Vidavitch stated we have experience with that system and eight others so we are well versed in the different systems. We would encourage the parents to take advantage of the pre-paid because it is much faster for the students.

Mr. Nufrio asked about the staffing – the current staff being ready to accept a new employer, in the districts that you have taken on, what incentives did you present to those employees that they would want to stay? Mr. Vidavitch stated we use the rates of pay that they earned which is reflected in the position that they hold and their years of experience. We are not proposing any change. We are talking about making increases in their rate of pay and teaching them some new ways to do things. We offer competitive benefits and we know how lucky we are when we have them.

Mr. Nufrio asked how prepared are you to meet the possible legislative changes that will impact the hourly wages? Mr. Vidavitch stated this proposal includes the biggest and most sweeping one which is the minimum wage law. We went by person by person making salary adjustments and if they were below the new minimum wage becomes \$10 in July and \$11 in January – we made those adjustments. We are only making a proposal for one year but we are working with our clients on the strategies on how we can remain in the black so budget neutral for the district for many years to come with a surplus that we are forecasting here it shouldn't be an issue. Every one of our districts is running in the black.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated you spoke about student feedback. If awarded this contract, would your company make a commitment to having surveys at least twice a year to parents and students regarding the quality and product of your food? Mr. Vidavitch stated we absolutely can do surveys. Our favorite is to meet in a focus group where we can have a give and take and ask them more specific questions. Our hope is to do those in October. The more feedback the better.

Presentation by Sodexo Food Services – presentation appended to minutes.

Mrs. Ruiz stated you mentioned the technology and the apps and you mentioned one of the apps had a pre-ordering capability. Does that mean a student can order and pick it up? Sodexo representative stated we will work with principals if there are different locations because of congestion – maybe we can set up some kiosks where they can pick up. The vision you have is it doable by September 5<sup>th</sup> for all the schools. Representative of Sodexo stated that is why we

put together the transition teams together. We have plenty of people that will make these things come to light.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we currently use School Bucks are you guys set up to transition into School Bucks for the parents to prepay for their meals. Representative of Sodexo stated absolutely.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated you implement a lot of ways for the students to generate feedback. Do you actually incorporate that feedback into your menus? Representative form Sodexo stated we want them to enjoy their meals and feedback is how we can ensure that.

Mrs. Ruiz asked if selected will you be bringing in your own staff or keeping who we have? Representative of Sodexo stated we definitely want to make sure that the team you have now we want them to be Sodexo team member. Not just transition into our team we want to invest in our team members because we want them to grow.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the other two companies had the farm to trade – do you also have that? Representative of Sodexo stated absolutely.

Mr. Tatum stated there will be a lot more next week. We will have a presentation by Connecticut Farms Elementary School, Burnet Middle School, recognition of staff from the Google Parent at Jefferson School, UTEA support staff will also be recognized.

#### EDUCATION/STUDENT DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Regis-Darby gave an update from the Education Committee meeting. Tonight we had the districtwide committee planning team present to the Education Committee. They spoke about the grade level configuration and the impact on SDL. The current consideration design can meet the need of the student. We want to take the district into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Developing the philosophy of the district – what do we want for our students; the whole child vision. Also the changes that are taking place in the district. We talked about development changes of our students, configurations need to be aligned, transitioning difficulties for students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and looking for a model for Kawameeh and the elementary schools from a pre-k to 6<sup>th</sup> grade; a freshman academy at the high school and the middle school being 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. We also talked about financing this type of project. More to come on this particular initiatives. I think it is a really good way to start bringing our district to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is the first phase of the engagement of the Board and the community will take place next. Just wanted to give everyone here on the Board and everyone who is here from the committee a chance to hear it first from the district. The district wants to take the buildings and our students in the right direction and move from the 1969 environment into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mrs. Regis-Darby presented the Education/Student Discipline Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

Dr. Morgan asked is there a timeline? Mrs. Regis-Darby stated there is no specific timeline. They mentioned a date but there is no actual timeline. The parents and other stakeholders have to be involved in the discussion before an appropriate timeline can be set. I

think this is the preliminary stage and we just wanted the community to know that this is the first phase of the 21<sup>st</sup> century makeover for this district.

#### FISCAL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Richardson presented the Fiscal and Planning Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Ruiz stated F-17 – submission date is April 25<sup>th</sup> for the 21<sup>st</sup> century grant – why are we approving a back date? Mr. Tatum stated there was a deadline and it was submitted on that date – it was in between meetings. We still have to have it approved so the actual grant can move forward.

Dr. Morgan stated I see that there are five different companies for bedside instruction. Mrs. Conti stated there are different bed sides – some are for students in a hospital setting or other facility settings and then that is different from our district staff that provides home instruction. Dr. Morgan asked is there any way we can use one company and a discounted rate instead of using five different companies. Mrs. Conti stated some companies service different facilities. We can look into how we can condense things and Mr. Benaquista sent me something about virtual home instruction as well. We are always looking at different ways.

Mrs. Ruiz stated F-11 – there is an advertising fundraiser and it is for the scoreboard. I remember that the scoreboard was on the agenda and we pulled it and there were questions about the cost. What is the cost? What is the goal for the fundraiser? Is the district funding any portion of the cost of the scoreboard? Mr. Benaquista stated I know we spoke about trying to get sponsorship from the outside to help with the cost. These are two major purchases that the athletic department needs and she wants to advertise to different local companies to see if they would donate money to offset the cost or the whole cost. Mrs. Ruiz stated what is the cost? Mr. Loessel stated \$140,000. Mr. Benaquista stated I can get the information and send it to you. Mrs. Ruiz stated I am assuming if they can't raise all the money, they are going to ask us to pay for the difference. It would be nice to know what the scoreboard cost.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I noticed in the backup that there is some research being done on the scoreboard – can someone speak to that? In the legal bills, there was research being done on the scoreboard. Mr. Taylor stated I don't recall at the top of my head but I do believe when the issue first came up there was a question about procurement because of the cost issue raised on the agenda that evening. I spoke to Mr. Brennan as a follow-up and I was directed to stop that because you were not pursuing it any more.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, for adoption:

#### F-7. PRE-APPROVE DISTRICTWIDE STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Pre-approve districtwide student field trip destinations and purposes pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.8 in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**F-9. APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTS/PURCHASES (STUDENT ACTIVITY)**

Approve the attached list of contracts and/or purchases pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(21) (paid by funds raised by or collected by students), in accordance with the information appended to the minutes:

School	Account/Department	Vendor/Description	Amount
Union High School	2072/Science	Whitewater Challengers – end of year trip – 5/31-6/2/19	\$3,157.67
Union High School	2041/French Club	Paname French Restaurant/payment for student’s lunch at Paname Restaurant in NYC	\$1,400.00
Union High School	3220/Athletics	Collins Sports Medicine/sports drinks and water sale at field house	\$2,000.00 (estimate)
Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	Student Activity	Somerset Patriots Baseball – field trip to baseball game for 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> graders	\$2,500.00 (not to exceed)
Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	Student Activity	Rizzo’s Wildlife World – 1 <sup>st</sup> grade field trip	\$1,064.00
Hannah Caldwell Elementary School	Student Activity	Artome – art club fundraiser	\$2,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2025/AP Testing	College Board – pay for AP exams	\$20,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2214/Class of 2019	Oak Hall – senior class cap and gowns	\$8,000.00 (not to exceed)
Union High School	2045/Music	Gregory Duncan – full refund of Disney trip for Student	\$1,350.00
Union High School	2214/Senior Class	2K Printing – senior shirts	\$3,424.00

**F-13. APPROVE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL SOLUTIONS, LLC**

Approve Effective School Solutions, LLC (ESS) to provide therapeutic mental health services through licensed professionals to students in our District for the 2019-2020 school year (not to exceed \$392,700) [Account #11-000-216-320-01-19/7043], in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated F-13 – about a month ago I asked about this being approved in isolation and it was removed from the agenda – so I thought this was supposed to be in the budget. I don’t know why we are approving it here again. I remember it was recommended that it be placed in the budget and approved within the budget but it is being approved here. Mr. Taylor stated at the last worksession, the question came up why was this item on the agenda prior to the Board adopting the budget. The budget has since been adopted and this amount is encumbered in the budget so there is no procedural flaw with it being acted on tonight so that the services can be in place.

Mrs. Ruiz stated F-9 – calls for a full refund of the Disney trip for a particular student. So I’m just wondering why are we refunding? Mrs. Cappiello stated he didn’t go. Mrs. Minneci stated his mother died.

Mr. Nufrio stated F-13 – a question to Mr. Taylor and I certainly understand that it was budgeted and planned on. Doesn't it still require Board approval to renew a contract? Mr. Taylor stated correct. Again the issue last month was twofold. Why is the Board being asked in March/April to approve a contract that is doesn't start until July – it isn't out of the ordinary. More importantly how and whether the Board could approve a contract prior to it be encumbered through the budget. Since the budget has been adopted, the recommendation is for the Board to approve this contract. Mr. Nufrio stated it still requires the Board's action. Mr. Taylor stated yes and if the Board votes it down you won't be utilizing the services of ESS.

Mr. Nufrio stated a question for Mrs. Conti – I asked earlier whether ESS provides services in the summer because the question was why are we doing it now as opposed to June and the answer was that it requires us to notify them if they are being renewed or not. Do they offer services in the summer? Mrs. Conti stated that was part of the issue. We were trying to get it Board approved as early as possible so we can plan for those students that need those services for the extended school year. If there is any busing, any type of calendar considerations, location and all those logistics that you need to implement. Since we are returning customers, they have been very generous on not charging us for the extended school year if we approve it by a certain date and they did extend it for me to accommodate the later Board approval.

Mr. Nufrio stated so it wasn't just a contractual requirement that we needed to let them know before June so that they don't go elsewhere. Mrs. Conti stated the piece of the extended school year and honoring it for no charge – there was a date in April in the first contract but then it was discussed that the contract go on after the budget was approved – I did talk to them and they were willing to extend to May.

Mr. Nufrio asked have they given you services in the summer? Mrs. Conti stated yes.

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### OPERATIONS COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mrs. Richardson presented the Operations Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

None

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Regis-Darby, for adoption:

#### O-3. APPROVE UHS STUDENTS AS STUDENT BOE LIAISONS

Approve UHS students as Student BOE Liaisons for 2019-2020 school year, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I read the back-up, who should the students submit their essay to? And is there a deadline? I know this will be implemented for next school year. Mrs. Moses stated we are looking to have it on Google Docs and it will be read by administrators. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated the students will write it with their names and you will edit out the names. This initiative was borne out of the Education Committee because we believe that the students should be part of the Board because we work for them and we want to know what it is that they have to bring to the table, what are their needs – so that is why we want a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, 10<sup>th</sup> grader, 11<sup>th</sup> grader and 12<sup>th</sup> grader to sit on the Board and to let us know what their concerns are and their needs.

Mr. Nufrio stated it is also a recommendation by the State that districts include students to take part and extended to Board meeting – which would be a worksession meeting but the same process it is followed just as the public is included in various aspects of the meeting. Mr. Taylor stated student representative of the Board, they are a public member; however they do not have voting rights and they cannot have access to confidential information.

Mr. Tatum stated normally what they do is they deliver a report to the Board of Education. Every month they are presenting information so we are aware of what their cares are. I don't know about their ability to comment on things. I have seen in another district that I worked, we did have a student liaison it was just a member of the senior class – usually the senior class president at the public meeting they gave a student report. Mr. Nufrio stated this is just formalizing it. Mr. Taylor stated this process is perfectly fine.

Mrs. Richardson asked the elementary principals would pick? Mr. Nufrio stated the selection of the candidates from the list of applicants that submit their composition will be selected by elementary administrators as opposed to high school administrators. I thought it was to preserve the integrity of not having a bias opinion.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked is there a deadline? Mrs. Moses stated we have to approve it first, send it out next week and we have to advertise it and put it out there. They will need to time to read it and then we will come to the table and narrow it down and have discussion. Mrs. Ruiz asked is there a due date? Mrs. Moses stated June and then they will be notified by an official letter. Mrs. Minneci stated you just have to formalize everything. Mr. Nufrio asked how are the incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders going to be made aware of it. Mrs. Moses stated in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

AYE: Mrs. Higgins, Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Regis-Darby,  
Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Minneci

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:**

Mr. McDowell presented the Personnel Committee agenda.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated P-13 – is there a date? Mr. Benaquista stated June 14<sup>th</sup> so we will be voting on it in the worksession in June.

Mr. Taylor stated procedurally I will give an overview of P-5 – the legal and procedural requirements pursuant to law and then the Board can make a motion and a second and discuss the merits of it if there are any questions. Before there is a motion I would suggest that the floor be opened to the public for any comments because there is a required public hearing process prior to the Board taking action to alter or amend an existing superintendent contract.

By way of background, Mr. Tatum was operating under the terms and conditions of his employment contract that expired on or about June 30, 2018. Pursuant to law a Board of Education has an obligation to give notice of its intent to non-renew a superintendent if the Board fails to do that the terms of the contract automatically renews. This Board of Education being an entity not any individual did not give Mr. Tatum notice last year so the terms and conditions of his prior contract automatically renewed for the same term.

Interestingly he was appointed for an off term – 3.5 year period – statutorily a contract is supposed to be between 3-5 years. Because of his mid-year appointment it resulted in a 3.5 year contract being renewed which would have ended prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> so that triggered a conversation amongst the Board with and through Mr. Tatum and his attorney to consider altering or amending and/or rescinding his contract so that the Board could entertain approving a new contract. Key word “rescind” because there was a pending case out of Wall Township that essentially challenged whether a board of education could essentially get around, not for any ill intent, procedurally make it swifter to rescind a contract and thereby not having to do the public notice, advertisement – which adds a two-month process to the whole thing.

I won't get into all the legal interpretations – long story short – the appellate division ruled, overturned a prior commissioner decision and said that even if a board of ed wants to rescind a contract, it still has to comply with the public notice requirements. This Board has done that. This process goes back to November-December of 2018.

Pursuant to NJSA 18A:11-1 the board of education has to give 30 days' public notice prior to its taking action to alter or amend a superintendent's contract. This Board has done that through Mr. Brennan and Mrs. Cappiello. You have it all in your possession. On or about April 11<sup>th</sup> a notice was published in the applicable newspapers for the 30-day notice. A notice was subsequently published in accordance with the statute 10 days before today's date. It is a two-step notice requirement process and that was also complied with.

The general terms and conditions of the contract – each Board member has – but just so the public is aware – Mr. Tatum currently earns \$177,500 per year. Under the terms of the proposed, altered and/or revised contract which the intent is for it to be retroactive to July 1, 2018, it is a 3-year contract – July 2018-June 30, 2021. The caps for superintendents no longer apply. The salary numbers are a bit higher now. Year 1 – as proposed would be \$189,000, each year has a \$5,000 stipend for the high school pursuant to statute. Year 2 – would be \$193,725

and Year 3 - \$198,568.13 – each of those increases represent a 2.5% annual increase on salary. The majority of the terms and conditions of his contract remain the same regarding travel expenses, reimbursement for various dues, vacations, sick days, etc. There is only one statutorily a board of ed can still do – up to five qualitative and/or quantitative merit goals. Each of those goals can have a percentage attached to them – not to exceed 14.99% of the superintendent's salary. Mr. Tatum with his attorney has proposed and with the applicable committee of the Board who is reviewing this – only one goal for 2.5% to be included in the contract. That goal will be agreed to annually and is subject to review and approval by the Executive County Superintendent. There has not yet been a goal approved for the 18-19 school year.

On March 13, 2019, your Executive County Superintendent did approve the terms and conditions of the draft contract that was submitted to him. The agreement is in proper legal and procedural form for your consideration.

Mr. Taylor stated there is public comment on the agenda – the invitation for the public to speak is just on this issue not on the other items. This is akin to a budget hearing. You have your budget hearing, you advertise the budget, you set aside a separate portion of the meeting for the public to comment on the budget. It is not a dialogue back and forth. It is not an inquisition. It is not a trial. Because of the personnel nature of this action, it is something that you as Board members cannot and should not respond to. This is not an evaluation of the Superintendent's past performance in public. He has been riced. He has not exercised his option to have the terms and conditions of his appointment discussed in public so if you want to have that dialogue whether he was good, great, horrible in the past and whether you should vote for or against this item, those who were not conflicted, that would have to be in closed session. The action has to be in public.

The purpose and intent is for the public to express their support, opposition and what have you for this item for you as a Board member to take that into consideration when you cast your vote.

#### COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC ON P-5:

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I wasn't sure but the \$5,000 is just because we have a high school in the district? Mr. Taylor stated that is in statute. It can be a \$5,000 stipend.

Ms. Shannon stated the 2.5% - I am a math teacher – 177 to 189 I don't see as 2.5. Mr. Taylor stated the 177 is representing his old salary. The 189 is not taking into account the 2.5 – just the subsequent numbers.

Ms. Shannon asked do we have merit pay in this? Mr. Taylor stated that is controlled by a separate statute and do allow for merit bonuses – not merit pay. If the superintendent achieves certain goals and objectives that are mutually agreed to by him and his employer, after the evaluation process, and he meets those goals he is eligible for bonuses. There can be five bonuses – qualitative and quantitative. Each with a certain percentage attached to them – not to exceed 14.99% of his base salary. In this instance the parties have opted to only have one bonus at 2.5%.

Lynn Cornaccia stated Livingston School representative – I would just add that the Board would actually consider to renew Mr. Tatum’s contract. I have known him since he was a principal at Jefferson when he first came to this district. He has been an outstanding administrator. He was there when my daughter had difficulties in Jefferson. As my boss, he has always been there to listen even though we have had some slight disagreements on certain things, he has always been able to come back and we have been able to talk. I think he has brought Union forward and hasn’t pushed us back. I think his vision that he has for us is to continue to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and I think it would be a disgrace if the Board does not issue you this contract.

Jill Hall stated what Lynn said times ten – I have had the very good honor of knowing Mr. Tatum since his days in Hillside. I couldn’t agree more with what Lynn said. I had the opportunity to work with him on a variety of committees. He always has the best interest of the kids at heart and you can’t ask more from a superintendent than that. He deserves this contract and it is about time.

Dr. Francis stated I just want to bring back some historical to this situation that we are in. I was on the Board with Mr. Arminio, Jeff Monge, Nellis, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams and we were the ones that weren’t conflicted – so we were the ones that had to come to a decision on what Mr. Tatum should be compensated for. His contract already renewed back in March 2018. We spent a couple of months trying to hash out what we wanted to think was a fair price for his contract and we had a lawyer, Paul Griggs, who sat here – who basically stonewalled us – in my opinion he acted like he was the tenth board member. He purposely held out on sending this contract to Mr. Tatum’s lawyer so that we could get this done. We shouldn’t be here a year and three months later. It is insulting. We decided that we wanted to give him something and we felt that was what he should have taken because we were the board members. But Mr. Paul Griggs decided that we had to vote on it to give him permission to go speak to Mr. Tatum’s lawyer. He is our lawyer why do we need to give him permission so we spent 2-3 months fighting over this. We finally did give him the vote that he wanted and then the next day he turned around and nullified our votes. Things you should have when you have a lawyer that is as crooked as Mr. Paul Griggs who is representing the best interest of a couple of people – one a board member and another one a senator and it was wrong. My thing is we already have a lot of lawsuits in this district already and we are paying legal fees for other things including these lawyers – we are wasting more money on that then giving him a misally raise that he hasn’t had in over six years and all the work that he has done. When you have someone like Mr. Tatum and he really has the best interest of the district. I always tell him you have to do what is right, what is best for the kids, it is nice to be loved and liked but I rather you be respected. Do what is best. They are not looking out for you. You have to look out for yourself. You have to fight for yourself. You are going to fight for these kids, including my kids and everybody else’s kids and that is all I got to say.

Catherine Lewis stated Burnet Middle School – I have to be very fair and I have worked with Mr. Tatum in several capacities. I don’t always get the answer I want but I do get an honest answer from him and I know sometimes that frustrates some people because we have tunnel vision and we want what we want but sometimes it is not what is necessary and it’s not like it shouldn’t happen but sometimes as parents, teachers, children we don’t understand that there is

processes and there are ways that things need to be done and sometimes that takes time and sometimes we have to give people a chance to go through the proper steps because if you rush through things sometimes it doesn't happen properly. I have a lot of faith in Mr. Tatum and I understand that sometimes processes are slow but I do have faith that he has the best interest of our children and the district as a whole – that is what I personally believe even though we don't always get what we want as fast as we want it.

Cathy Sharpe stated I have stood here many times and looked at that face and we haven't agreed on a lot of things but I have to say that he has always listened to me not only here in public but if I caught him in another school or in the hallway, he would always listen to me. He would say "I don't think I can" but I kept going back and we found ways to do things. I found him not to be someone who made up his mind at the minute, he would take it back and think about it. Battle Hill got a parking lot out of it. I just feel that I don't always agree with the decisions that he makes but I think he has been fair to all of us and tries to work around and come up with the best solution for the district and I admire you for that.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I was so intent on the numbers that I was hearing, I work closely with Mr. Tatum and we don't always agree but he does meet with us. It is hard for me to stand up here when I have 91 people who are going to lose their jobs tomorrow. Nobody deserves not to get a raise. I wish we could take some of that money.

Mr. Tatum left worksession meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Dr. Morgan, for adoption:

**P-5. APPROVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR**

Approve the employment contract of Gregory Tatum, Chief School Administrator for the term of July 1 2018 to June 30, 2021, in accordance with the information appended to the minutes.

**DISCUSSION:**

None

**AYE:** Mr. McDowell, Dr. Morgan, Mrs. Regis-Darby, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Ruiz

**NAY:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mrs. Higgins, Mr. Nufrio, Mrs. Minneci

**MOTION CARRIED**

**POLICY COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Ruiz stated we met yesterday to discuss the policy that deals with non-resident students attending our school district. We made some revisions to the policy pursuant to a memo we received from Mr. Taylor and his associates. We discussed the revisions and made some amendments to the policy. I sent it to Mrs. Williams today. I don't know if they were forwarded to you Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor stated I haven't seen an email. Mrs. Ruiz stated I can forward to you but I figured that since she is the chair I sent it to her. I guess the next step would be Mr.

Taylor and his associates would review the proposed revisions. We did use some of the language that you suggested and then it would come before the Board for a vote.

Mr. Taylor stated to manage expectations what is the timeline of the committee for me to turn it around and get back to the Board – next week? June meeting?

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated we didn't specifically set a timeline we will have to get back to the committee to discuss that. Mr. Nufrio stated not to disclose private matters, Mrs. Williams will probably be out the rest of the week. Setting a timeline without her presence may not be correct. There were also legal questions that I threw on the table for the committee. Mrs. Ruiz stated it is there, it is in a comment box. Mr. Nufrio stated if it is not next week, we can do it in June. Mrs. Ruiz stated to be fair it would probably be better for June. Mr. Nufrio stated that is the absolute deadline in order to accommodate – this is the issue that was brought to the table that staff members' children come to the schools but don't reside in Union which currently and has been in the past practice and they were able to bring their child or children to a school if they were full-time employees of the district. It is not just regular non-residents, these are children in the category of staff members. In order to give them ample time to decide whether or not they want to, if the policy is approved, it will take two meetings and we want to give those staff members enough time to make decisions so that they can effectively enroll their students within their own district where they reside. It is imperative and at the very least the worksession should be first reading and the regular meeting should be the second meeting which is already kind of late. What we would ask of Mr. Taylor is to send us his comments with regards to our questions and the language changes. Mr. Taylor stated I'm familiar with the issue that we already proposed so it will be a quick turnaround.

#### RESIDENCY COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. McDowell presented the Residency Committee agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

None

#### TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:

Mr. Nufrio stated we were unable to connect the committee by phone. We met tonight. I will highlight the fact that the district is moving positively towards a future ready school district and we achieved 95% of the required criteria. We are complying and the technology department is working feverishly to get us to that point.

Mr. Wojcik stated I want to give credit also to the high school – Ms. Bossard and I know a lot of the teachers are working hard and diligently. Mr. Nufrio stated that is part of the leadership component. Not only the technological end is being addressed as best we can given the size of the purse that we have. There is another component and I want Mrs. Paul to go into and it is the Family ID.

Mrs. Paul stated Ms. Ionta and I starting going through on how can we get some of these forms that student participate in sports – physician report, etc. This year Ms. Hart met with Ms.

Ionta and Ms. Hart actually uses this program for her son in her school district and she made the recommendation.

Mrs. Hart stated the Family ID company is used by many districts. It is not very expensive and it replaces the 20-page packet for sports that you have to fill out. You go in and fill out once and it lasts forever but every year you go and update it. You still need to bring in the physician report but all the documentation is there. The nice thing about this company is you can set who can see what and who can do what. We can add coaches so they can take attendance on their phone when they are out on the field and send the parents an email saying that their kid did not show up to practice today. They can also email parents if something happens and they would have the parents' phone numbers if there is an emergency.

It has a mobile app – the attendance tracking, you can send email that game is cancelled – they have all different notifications. It is a great program. It keeps everything legal and aligned with the State requirements. They have the concussion test, the eye sight test and all the other things that the athletes need to get on the team. My favorite part, once you sign up he can play three sports and you only have to do it once a year and hit update now and apply for track or whatever. The only thing a parent would have to do is once a year have that physician paperwork done.

Mrs. Higgins stated you also talked about how low cost it is? Mrs. Hart stated very inexpensive. It is a count by person, not sports, for our 1,000 athletes which is middle school and high school, it would be less than \$3,000 for the year to keep track of all these sports. This is picking the things I think would be very good. Once this goes well, then if we get state funding back we can get it for the programs – like trips, the parents can sign the forms and things like that but that would make it more expensive. We want to wait and make sure the other part works well first.

Mr. Nufrio stated the third-party that will oversee the data that they are State approved because the privacy and confidentiality of the children is important.

Mrs. Hart stated with many of my programs go back and forth with Genesis, the school messenger, it is not going to talk to anything. It will talk to the nurses and the people that need to see it. I can pull some of the data and bring it in but it won't automatically go back and forth.

Mr. Nufrio asked what is the method? Mrs. Hart stated most of these forms won't be in Genesis for sports. The only part in Genesis is when they had their last physical or things like that.

Mrs. Paul stated right now we need to try to look at this immediately because the kids are getting ready for their sports. The kids are coming in for the applications at the athletics' office. We brought it up at our tech committee to actually talking about the possibility of putting this on the Board agenda for next week.

Mr. Nufrio stated if we put it in for next week we will need a ceiling number of the cost. Some of the cost will be absorb by the athletic department and the technology department. We

do need to have the Board informed of what the cost will be – about \$3,000 for now. Mrs. Higgins and I were the only two members of the committee that were able to meet with them. We are totally on board. We encourage that this be put on as a resolution next week.

Mr. Nufrio presented the Technology Committee agenda.

#### APPROVAL OF BILLS

Bills will be approved next week.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked what is the leadership plans for the high school for the 2019-2020 school year? Mr. Taylor stated that gets into the area of personnel. Mr. Benaquista stated within the next two weeks Mr. Tatum said we will all meet and discuss all district needs.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked does the district have a bed bug policy? Mr. Taylor stated I don't think there is a bed bug policy.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I know in the past we talked about Hamilton and that is just a building that we have – as we are moving forward to this 21<sup>st</sup> century – what are the pros and cons of keeping that building? Mrs. Moses stated I think the pros and cons has to go into the needs of the district and I also believe with collaboration with all Board of Ed committees it should be discussed. Two years ago we decided to move some of the supervisors out to start discussion about the building. Mrs. Minneci stated there have been communications with different areas. Mrs. Moses stated that needs to be discussed more.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked does anyone know how much it costs us per year to upkeep that building? Mr. Benaquista stated when we were looking at the budget cuts previously, I know it was roughly \$150,000. Mr. Loessel stated \$20,000 a year – we have one custodian, we have the gas and electric. Mr. Brennan stated he's just talking about the utilities. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated tell me the actual number to maintain that building for 2018-2019 – salary, benefits and everything to maintain that building. Mr. Loessel stated salary is about \$50,000. I would have to go back and take a look.

Mrs. Regis-Darby asked do we have enough space in our other buildings to move the staff that is currently at Hamilton and back into our regular buildings. Mrs. Moses stated no. We moved some of our staff out of that building and with a lot of kids coming back into district. Mrs. Minneci stated we can't close it right now. Mrs. Moses stated with the expansion of the pre-school we have other staff that is moving in too. Mrs. Regis-Darby stated I'm just looking at a nice way to articulate why we are keeping that particular building. I'm just thinking about our 21<sup>st</sup> century plan and what we can do with that space.

Mrs. Richardson stated Connecticut Farms – we have a traffic study and we saw that the bridge isn't really the problem. The problem right now is the safety of the children entering and exiting the building and the parents being lacks in taking the children to the school and letting them cross from the parking lot and telling them to run across the street. I know we need to do something for September where we have the buses entering a certain way. We talked about

making a yellow line. Mr. Brennan stated restriping the parking lot to get the flow of traffic and parking configuration. Mrs. Richardson stated I mentioned something to Director Ziesser and I know in West Orange and South Orange they do have courses so cars can't come off of certain streets. Mr. Loessel stated we restriped the upper lot already so we can fit about 30 cars if we had to. We are not putting the buses in that parking lot. They will stay right where they are. Mrs. Richardson asked how are we going to prevent the parents from letting the kids cross the street. Mr. Loessel stated I have been there a couple of days looking and I haven't seen any parents crossing in the middle of the block – they cross at the crosswalk where the guard is. He'll yell at them if he sees that.

Mrs. Richardson stated we know we can't do courses because the Director of Public Safety said he wouldn't do courses for the cars coming off of 22. We did talk about doing some speed bumps. Mr. Loessel stated we have to talk to the Town about that to see if we can actually do it. Mrs. Richardson stated the traffic study really didn't address the bridge that is going to be fixed, it addressed mostly the safety of the children. We have a problem right now and that is my main concern – the children are at risk. The bridge is delayed until 2020 – I'm thinking about today. We don't want anything to happen to our children. Mr. Loessel stated they are going to paint a crosswalk across the street – from the parking lot. We have to talk to the Town about a crossing guard.

Dr. Morgan asked did you ever consider putting a police officer there. I was there today. I was leaving at 2:45 p.m. and the parents were already lined up. Mr. Loessel stated the police have been stepping up their patrols around the schools and they are giving parents tickets – some are warnings but otherwise tickets – I hear it on the radio all day. Mr. Benaquista stated I will reach out to Mr. Ardito and he can reach out to the police to see if they can send someone over.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Ruiz stated the 21 project which is an organization that does fundraising; it was borne out of the need for fundraising post hurricane Maria is having a diamond donate fundraiser May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Fifteen percent of all meals will go to a scholarship that was started in memory of Anthony Stickers. I'm taking off my Board of Ed hat right now – on behalf of the 21 Project – can the PTA president post the flyer on the PTA website at the respective schools. Mrs. Moses stated it has to come up to Mr. Tatum for approval and then he will give the principals direction.

Mrs. Regis-Darby stated when the Board makes changes to policy, I think as a community we need to educate everyone especially all of the educators of the changes in the policy. I know we made changes in the dress code and still students are being punished for certain things within their dress codes. I think all the stakeholders need to know those changes within the policy. It is not being implemented the way it should be implemented and the students are being punished for that.

Is there any plans to have a dual language kindergarten class in September? Mrs. Moses stated we have our world language but as we move our kids through that is a high consideration.

Mr. McDowell stated I just want to remind everyone to sign up for Relay for Life – June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mrs. Minneci stated this past month I went to a couple of things in the schools. Last week I went to the talent show at Hannah Caldwell – the kids were adorable. I also went to the Battle Hill pinwheel project, autism with bubbles and the down syndrome program that they have there. There are so many nice things going on in our schools. Everybody in the schools are involved and it is nice to see.

Mr. Nufrio stated last week Mrs. Minneci, Mrs. Richardson and I attended the Union County School Board's dinner meeting at the Westwood and it was one of the most informative meetings that I attended. It had to do with social, emotional learning. There was a presenter who did a fantastic job on presenting what social, emotion learning is all about and how it should become part of the everyday processes that teachers in their daily activities, lessons should always incorporate that. We are going to get the actual power point from the NJSBA. It was very affective and informative. It is an important component that should be part of the curriculum even though it is not mandated. We are missing a lot of situations because teachers tend to shy away from or they make a referral which in most cases is required but some of the things could be prevented or possibly addressed earlier so that we don't have these crazy situations occur within buildings and schools. Social, emotional learning is a lot more than I thought it was. Last year when I addressed the staff on opening day, I told the teachers something that resonated because I had a personal experience because I'm a new grandfather and I said to the entire staff, approach your kids as if you are a grandparent. Approach the kids in a certain way and greet them with a smile. It start the whole day differently for the kids. It is a crucial part of what we do to educate our kids and to get our kids in a better mental state for the day. I got the unsung hero video – we can forward to the board members.

Mrs. Minneci stated they highlighted our student – they showed our video. Mr. Nufrio stated they showed our student. It was impressive. I'll ask him to send a power point and we will get it to everyone at this table.

Mrs. Higgins stated I'm liaison to Jefferson School and last year I went to their leadership day and was blown away. This year it is on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The kids serve you breakfast. Amazing kids.

Craig Wojcik stated we have an event coming up next week – the 4<sup>th</sup> grade G&T is having their business competition next week at Hannah Caldwell. All students prepare a business with a business model, financials, create a product or service.

#### COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Dr. Francis stated the teachers that bring their children back into the district, do we get any State aide for those students? Mr. Brennan stated I believe so. Dr. Francis stated the reason why I asked, unless they have an IEP or some other special needs, it may cost us a little more but if we are getting money back I don't think it is a situation.

This is for the UTEA leadership – I know we have a few paras in here and they are concerned about their jobs. I was part of the bargaining for the teachers' contract last year and I was the chair and we gave the teachers a 2.7%. I give you a challenge – if the leaders go back to

the membership and ask them for a freeze and ask them to give back the 2.7% from this year and save the paras – how much would that be about \$2 million? And we are \$2 million short – that would be a good way to save the paras.

Jill Hall stated Mr. Nufrio I would like to let you know that Officer Smith did come in and had the heroine, opioids, weed education for our junior classes. The kids were very receptive to what she said. The fire department brought in a program called “After the Fire” for our seniors and it was two of the survivors of the Seton Hall fire that came in to speak to our seniors. It was perfect timing because they weren’t just talking about fire safety they were talking about situational awareness and paying attention to your surroundings. For our seniors and senior events it was timely. You should read the book, it was really good.

We had training today for HIB for administrators and counselors that was probably the best professional development we had in a really long time. It was informative. Strauss Esmay did a great job. I don’t know if they do other things but we should have them back on all the things they offer because they were very informative.

Friday night is Mr. UHS – it is a fundraiser for our senior class. We have a group of students called Me To at the U – last year when the Me To movement at the high school – I was approached by a bunch of students and we created a focus group to talk about sexual assault, harassment, rape culture, consent and what that means and we have been pushing that movement forward and doing a lot of discussions in the classroom and they will also be presenting a piece during Mr. UHS.

Mr. Benaquista stated it was really Chief Scanio who called me and donated the program to us. It was a free program to the district. The feedback and faculty members it was a very powerful program. We are talking about it for next year. Mrs. Minneci stated our kids are getting ready to go to college so they need to know.

Mr. Nufrio stated I would urge all the Board members to keep an eye on the School Board’s calendar for the County meetings. We are not really represented all that well. It would be nice if more Board members could come, especially when it is at the Westwood. Mrs. Richardson stated it is also networking as well.

Mr. Nufrio stated Mrs. Minneci and Mrs. Richardson received awards for having attended a certain number of academies.

Sienna Boku stated O-3 – a couple of suggestions coming from someone who is younger. You are talking about the timeline for the application – you put it up next week and then you are looking at the third week of June – you are not going to have the time to go to a full Board meeting while they are writing their essay. If I was applying for something and never attended a Board meeting, they are going to be writing on something that they don’t know what they are talking about. Maybe think about structuring the timeline to after Tuesday so you can invite them to go to a meeting. You also said that they would do presentations beforehand and they wouldn’t have any voting power but I think that them asking questions pertaining to the RFP’s would also benefit you guys. If I was sitting with you guys I would ask each of the people

presenting what do you think about sustainability because that is something important to young people. They would have a different perspective. We are not necessarily looking at the money aspect of it but things matter to us differently. If they are unable to vote you should include them in the discussions.

Mrs. Higgins stated they are recorded so they can watch them. Ms. Boku stated I watch them. Mrs. Richardson asked is there someone who can be mentoring these students? You have been active in what is going on in the Board of Education. Ms. Boku stated I wouldn't have been if I didn't come to the first meeting. Mrs. Richardson stated maybe a mentor the first year and then the senior person. Are you up for that? Ms. Boku stated of course. It is not just what you say to you guys, it is the questions that we ask.

Rich D'Avanzo stated UTEA vice president – the gentleman who made the comment, Dr. Francis, took a shot at the UTEA and left. At negotiations we fight for all our educators, paraprofessionals are part of our bargaining – they got 3% over those three years and we got 2%. As negotiations chair on the other side, Dr. Francis brought absolutely nothing to the table as well as their team. It was run by the predecessor to Mr. Taylor – Tony Scarillo and all it was dictating about how to save money through health benefits and that is how we spent the entire summer. For all of our work that we did as a negotiations team for the most part bargaining was not taking place – being dictated to. We are the ones that came up with the savings. We saved the Board money and moved into Direct 15 and saved a couple of hundred thousand. It would have been put in place sooner if the previous attorneys did not stall for whatever their reason was and cost the Board several hundred thousand dollars because by the time it was implemented, with the change to Direct 15, it saved the Board money as well as our members and they lost a couple of months of savings right there. This stuff about blaming the association, the UTEA, for the fiscal problems of the Board of Ed is a complete low blow and it's got to stop. We fight for our members, we do what is right. Absolutely nothing was ever brought up to the table regarding anything fiscally responsible. The fiscal status of the Board for the most part they probably didn't know it until we were done negotiating. If they did, maybe something would have been presented. This stuff about going after and saying that the UTEA should have offered this to the paras – we are in a middle of a contract – that contract is binding, nothing was ever from that point on presented to save the status of our members. We can't control the rising cost of healthcare. It is as simple as that. It is a problem throughout the State. There are districts going through huge cuts and this is all stemming from the State Senator down in south Jersey who is playing hardball with the governor and that is what caused the almost government shutdown last year with the school funding formula. The first year was eased in, we got a little bit more than usual - \$300,000 – same this year but if you haven't seen the papers there are districts that have been cut substantially. Jersey City is looking at 400 members. Paterson about 300. This is not just a Union problem. This is a Statewide issue and myself along with our leadership, we do what we have to for our local legislatures. We were recently down in Washington and that was my story in each office that I went to – the lack of funding that the federal government provides for states when it comes to IDEA funding, the special ed population is rising in New Jersey and those are the things that we fight for – we fight for racial social justice in our schools as well and for our students. They come absolutely first so this pinpointing of salaries and benefits. The comparison for many of members over seven years – people are bringing home less money in their paychecks – you tell me professions that are going through

that and that is the problem that goes on here in this State from the after effects of that governor, I won't even say his name, who practically tarnished public education and it goes on throughout the country in different states. Can you imagine working in a right-to-work state? Where specific school districts – they don't have custodians. Their responsibility is cleaning their own classroom. They don't get lunch. It is continuous.

Lynn Cornnaccia stated rep for Livingston School. We already said that you are going to privatize the paraprofessionals. Tomorrow is the 15<sup>th</sup> – those who are six years and under may or may not get the letter that they are not going to be hired back as a board employee. Have you guys looked into the companies that are going to be the center of the privatization and if not how long before you have a company in place so those paras who are affected can come in and see what packages they are offered to see if they are going to stay in Union or they are going to apply somewhere else?

Mr. Taylor stated I would advise the Board not to answer that question respectfully – it is a procurement related issue and that information may and/or can be made available at the appropriate time – if and when there is an RFP or bid to procure a selected vendor to provide that service; if that is the decision the Board goes in.

Ann Margaret Shannon stated I want to reiterate something that Rich touched upon – Dr. Francis talked about the teacher union – there is no such thing as a teacher union it is an education union – it is secretaries, security, paraprofessionals, it is everybody so I wish people would stop calling it a teacher's union.

Policy update on non-resident students – when you consider what you are doing, obviously you didn't get into details but when it is done, it is done. I don't care if it is December 30<sup>th</sup>, January 1<sup>st</sup> or May 1<sup>st</sup>, they have to go. I don't know why we let them finish to the end of the year. I don't know if you try to get back the tuition. I hope you do – collection – we have to start making some moves. They got to go – so they don't graduate from Union High School – so what – they have to go.

As far as the employee, I did like Dr. Francis' comment about the employees' children because if you take out 10-12 kids, because I don't think it is 100, you are not reducing any class sizes, utility bills, salaries – you are doing nothing but lowering your enrollment and we lose that State aide. It is just this student and that student – it doesn't matter who the parent is and they all get State aide. You really have to reconsider.

About the RFP, we know there is no RFP out there yet for the privatization company. Where is it, when is it going to happen? This is not fair. Our paras are traumatized. They have no information about what is going to happen to them. They are just sitting ducks and they don't know what to do. They need information. They call me and I have no answers. It is not fair to the UTEA. They are looking to me for answers and I have no answers. It is not fair to our members, not fair to the UTEA, they are going to be getting letters tomorrow and nothing else but a letter. They are going to be in limbo and it is not fair.

Let me be clear I still think it is the wrong way to go; I think we should scrap this whole plan. We need to cut costs in other lines. For instance, ESS – almost \$400,000 that is 20% of the money we are looking for the paras – one-fifth – just get rid of that company. I don't know if they are really doing any service to us. I don't work in Burnet so I'm not sure but get rid of it - \$400,000.

Rich and I have talked to Mr. Tatum quite often lately – there are at least three administrative positions that we question and their secretaries – those six people with benefits that could be roughly another \$675,000. So we are talking over a million right there. You just found half the money. Now Mr. Tatum doesn't want to do it piecemeal – I understand that it is nice and easy to go to the biggest line on the budget and try to get that whole chunk from that line. You might not like piecemeal but what is wrong with piecemeal - \$400,000 here, \$500,000 there, \$200,000 here – find 10 lines and take out \$200,000 from each of those lines but do something else don't get rid of these people. We have to find another way. We have to save these people; we have to save our students and in so doing we need to save our Town.

Denise Palacastro stated I am from NJEA – I'm the associate director of research and economic services. It is part of my job to review audits and budgets. I wasn't going to speak tonight and then half way through and leaned over to Ann Margaret and said is it o.k. if I speak. Because I am worried, I am worried about a lot of things. I am worried as I'm looking through the audit again; trying to compare with budget, the numbers aren't making sense. I know as an individual if I have a budget for the year and I overspend it, I readjust for the next year and I don't overspend it. I know when I look back to the audit – the audit is showing for the last five years we have overspent on this budget with varying amounts but in the 17-18 audit that just came out in March of 2019 it was overspent by \$11 million. I don't understand why we are spending more money than we are bringing in.

I am also worried about even looking through this agenda and I don't know this answer – it is my first night here – I will be back next Tuesday but when I look at F-4 and it just says “transfer appropriation”. What is it talking about? Is it \$1.00? Is it \$1 million? Is it \$5 million? I don't know that answer. I don't know if it is in the minutes. I don't know if I'll see it next week but I think we need to see that number.

I'm also worried about the budget presentation that was put online. As I'm flipping through the PowerPoint – one slide is in percents, the next slide is in dollars, the next slide is in generalities – it did not make sense to me as an outsider looking in when we say we are decreasing our surplus by \$1 million – 1.2 reflect – why isn't that number there?

I know as I leave here tonight and I'm looking through everything, I have more work to do. I am going to reiterate what Ann Margaret said – you need to come up with a different plan because as I'm diving through these numbers and we finally get the RFP's, I think we will be able to find the money. It is a matter of are we willing to do it. That is all I'm going to say tonight.

Sherry Maloney stated I work at Washington School as a paraprofessional and I'm about to lose my job. The non-distribution of funding always falls upon taking it from our paras. Paras

– the people giving the most time and devotion for the betterment of their students. But we are paid the very least of everybody. The notice that the Board is sending that we are disregarded and devalued. Morale is being affected. You are expecting us to take less with the loss of current benefits. You are sending us to an agency with no current information on any benefits and an agency we have yet to know anything about. This is insufficient planning. The reasoning and rationale to outsource us is counterproductive. We keep our salary for the upcoming year but you have to pay an agency. There are transition fees. An agency is a business that also wants to get paid. The only savings you have is benefits and loss of pensions of the people that work for you. This is our future retirement. This agency can change their rates next year. What happens if it is no longer cost effective for the Board of Ed to keep us with an agency? Will you take us back? What happens with our current unused sick and personal days that we haven't used so far? Are you going to give us money for that? Or are you going to make us lose those? You get what you pay for. An agency can lead you on with little cost but it also includes costs over time. When the Board of Ed can no longer afford this plan again you are going to be at risk losing all the good dedicated workers that you once had. You are putting numbers on paras and you are putting numbers on our students. I was only notified less than 2.5 weeks ago on this supposed plan. There was no prior discussion with any of those involved. You are not just taking time and doing what is right for us; you should be researching instead and what is the most deemed able solution. As evidenced right now you are showing your inability to let us know where we currently stand. You don't have any regard for our unused days nor do you have regards to our health and pension. As paras we have obligations with our students. We are expected to give immediate attention. You are not giving us the same. You are not doing anything in a timely fashion to meet our needs. We are tax abiding citizens and most of us live in the Township of Union. We have bills to be paid; we have families to feed and health concerns to be addressed. We can't wait until the last minute to learn of our fate. I feel that I am being stripped away of my livelihood and most of all my pride of working for Union Board of Education. It always was my prize. Now our jobs are the ones that are always on the line for bargaining. This wasn't the first year that this happened. It happened last year as well. Our positions are being created with an agency. I don't want to work for an agency I want to work for the Union Board of Ed. Positions are being created for other people in administration, they get their own secretary. Their salaries far surpass those of a para. We make peanuts – 91 of us are now inquiring you to please reevaluate – not using an agency. Our students and us, we deserve better than this. Please reconsider.

Katherine Lewis stated teacher at Burnet Middle School. First with the three companies that we are talking about – ARAMARK had a great presentation. They had something on there about apps and students being able to track their food and energy level and I just wonder with them offering that – is that something they can give to the health teachers where they can work together with some app or lesson plans. They made it like there was this whole program where you can track your food intake and nutrition rate and what is happening and I thought that would be interesting if they were offering something that could work with our health teachers and help the kids.

Sodexo – I thought that they gave a very nice presentation. I like that they mentioned the three different levels – the very different plan for elementary schools. However, I felt that company was too big and not as personable. That is my personal opinion. Their apps and the

things with their phones – here in Union we don't allow the students to have their phones or be on their phones in middle school. We give them Chrome Books so I think that is a useless service for them. I know at the high school that would work well.

Pomptonian – there was something about them that I just thought that was really interesting and two of the students that were sitting here – they both said that they liked that company the best. The guy was prepared and he was exact to the time. As teachers we expect our children to be prepared. He made a comment that in order to have the respect of the people that you are trying to manage, you should work with them in their job and know their job before you try to tell them what to do. I thought that was such an important thing for anyone and everyone to learn.

Comment about middle school being 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade – I think that is an excellent idea. If the kids are already together in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they should just stay together through high school. I think we would eliminate so many of the problems that we have with this side and that side and who has what. I think it would be a really great thing to unify the Town. If that is something you guys are thinking about I think that is excellent. I can't speak for other teachers but I can only speak for me and students because we talked about it.

Bedside instruction – my understanding is that we have these companies and we approve them but it doesn't mean you are going to spend all that money or you are going to use all those places. It means that they are available to you. How can you tell a parent what hospital they can go to and you don't know what health insurance they have or what they can have for their child. Therefore we have to be prepared with 5-7 different types of bedside instruction. I thought that was a normal thing.

The scoreboard – that was on the agenda a while back for \$140,000. Everybody was upset about the money so they pulled it. We are not spending \$140,000 on a scoreboard. On here they are trying to fundraise for the scoreboard. I think that is an excellent thing. We pull things from the agenda, students and staff say we still need it, let's try to get some fundraising activities and be proactive – I don't understand why people are upset. I think that was a positive thing.

UHS liaisons – are we going to have interviews? I feel uneasy about the fact that the children will need some guidance. They are children, not adults and if you have a child from each different grade levels they will only know their world. If you have a child in sports, they will be focused on sports.

Lynn stated I'm a paraprofessional at Hannah Caldwell – our concerns, some of us do not husbands and have kids and need health insurance. We do want some answers. Where are we going? What are we doing? Are we staying with the same person we have been working with? Are we being changed? Do we have any say?

Suehay Monge stated the food service presentation – I want to thank the Board for having them come and I think it is important for parents and everyone to hear what is to be offered. The gentleman from Pomptonian said, kids in New Jersey know the difference between good food

and bad food. I urge the Board members to take a look at the surveys that were sent out by the Board and Aramark, who has been part of the district for 50 years. The surveys were really bad. Look at the student surveys, they are saying the food is disgusting. There is no way to sugarcoat that. What I heard from Aramark is that they are going to start doing this and that – why haven't they been doing that. They knew this RFP was coming. Parents have been complaining for years and their contract kept getting approved. My kids eat this food – it is important you guys make the right decision. Way all the options and I'm going to put in a little for Pomptonian – I thought that their presentation was wonderful. The gentleman was very prepared and he had the answers.

If I'm not mistaken, we have owed to us \$180,000 from parents that have not paid the lunches. We need to get that money back. What is the plan to recoup that money? Is it Aramark or the Board of Ed recouping that money? Going forward, whoever is chosen, that game plan needs to be set. Mr. Brennan stated Meg Berry is putting together a plan and she has been working with administration, principals of every building – she is getting everyone on board and we are going to roll this out at the end of the school year. We are going to take a snapshot of everything that is owed to us and we are going to proceed right from there. It will be the Board in coordination with the food service company – working together. The Board has to collect the money but they need to cooperate with us. We have a very good plan and that is an accumulation of 5-7 years.

Mrs. Monge asked School Bucks – I heard complaints from parents that they have been getting emails that money they put in was being depleted rapidly and few got feedback that there was something wrong with the system and it was being fixed. Mr. Brennan stated that is a separate service and we don't run that. It is just available to the parents.

Mrs. Monge stated students who are being pulled out – a comment was made if they don't graduate from Union High School, they don't graduate. I think if you have a student for whatever reason their parent chose to lie and enrolled them here and it is may, does it cost money for them to finish out? To do something like that to a child and say that, you don't care for them if you say that. It is not their fault that their parents chose to lie and put them in a school where they don't belong. We are here about the kids.

James Fraizer stated Hamilton School – it does not pay to get rid of it. Regarding ESS and paras – I believe you said ESS was \$400,000 – that service is for 7-12 kids; whereas paras that you are looking to get rid of 91-92 paras – that is 91-92 kids that won't get the same services. With that \$400,000 you can roll that into your paras.

Cathy Sharpe stated I just feel that people have to have answers. Can you tell me the number of professional staff teachers that will be rifted as of tomorrow morning? We were always told how many would be rifted. Mr. Benaquista stated I met with leadership today and they know how many teachers.

Mr. Taylor stated finish your comments, questions and at the end the Board or administration will respond if they have the information readily available to respond. I would

point out for point of information that there is a significant difference between a RIF and non-renewal.

Mrs. Sharpe stated paras – I asked this question at the last meeting and I didn't get an answer and I think it is important. We were told 91 from 6 years down. I asked are we following the seniority list. By contract paras are covered by seniority when there is a layoff. I think we have the right to know – are we following the seniority list because there has been rumors out there that there are people in the pre-k program that are not going to be sent out of district because they are in the pre-k program. To me this is a breach of our contract. I don't know what all this secrecy is this year. These people sitting here and 80 people in their homes are sitting and wondering what is happening to me. You tell me I have to go – tell me where am I going. What am I getting? Do I keep my sick days? Do I keep my personal days? People have to know and plan their lives. They have been giving you many years of service. They don't say tomorrow I'm walking away. We have to tell you in advance. Tell these people what are their lives going to be as of the end of this school year?

Mr. Taylor stated if the administration has the information in regards to the number of employees being non-renewed by all means you can share. It may have already been shared with union leadership but you can share it publicly.

Mr. Benaquista stated we met with four people today – non-renewals. Mr. Taylor stated I would advise the Board and administration not to answer some of the questions/assertions/allegations regarding compliance or lack thereof with the contract. Union leadership can look at that and meet with your members. I will also remind you that all non-certificated or non-tenured staff members are appointed on an annual basis and are not entitled to reappointment for this succeeding school year and pursuant to statute the legislature sets the date not the school district and pursuant to statute all boards have an obligation to provide notice before May 15<sup>th</sup> of the superintendent's intent to renew or non-renew a contract. Some of the questions you asked about the applicability of leave or time – that is all in the labor agreement and the UTEA is also equipped to help share that information with its membership to help them better understand and if they can't they can always meet with the administration to do that.

Ann Branco stated I also have been employed by the district for 20 years and I was a kindergarten assistant for 18 years. Mr. Tatum has always said that we are so important to the district. Right now I'm not in jeopardy but all my other colleagues are here. You guys are all o.k. You guys don't have to worry about tomorrow whether you are going to pay your bills, mortgage or have health insurance. It is really not fair to the paras. I have asked questions to the UTEA, they cannot even answer us. Are we entitled to our sick time? Personal days? Because you guys can't answer those questions. You haven't even took out a bid to get us privatized. You say we are going to get the same exact benefits and same exact pay – we are not – we are not getting paid when the school is closed. They can put you wherever you want. You are not going to work with the same child. Is it fair to the children who suffer from these cuts. These kids are the ones being affected. None of you guys – the kids are – come to the classrooms and go inside and see how these kids come to us every day and hug us and tell us how they love us. They aren't going to be able to do that next year because maybe they won't have that same person. Do you think her coming into a room working with me, she is going to have the same

respect that I am – no because I’m being paid, I have my benefits – she is not. Do you think she is going to give 120% because why should she – she has nothing to do with the Town anymore. You guys have to consider all this stuff. You are not putting the kids first here. You keep saying the kids are first – they are not. Come into the classroom. Spend time and you will see how these kids are going to be affected with you laying off 91 of us then you can tell us that it is not going to change and it is not going to be different next year. It is and there will be a big difference. These kids are going to suffer horribly. You guys need to consider this. Thank you.

Bernadette Watson stated I am not a para, I’m just a secretary at a school and I am not in jeopardy but she used me as an example because my friends here are in jeopardy.

**MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Dr. Morgan, that the Board go into Executive Session at 10:52 p.m. to discuss the following subject matters without the presence of the public in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b.

- Matters rendered confidential by state or federal law – residency.

Please take notice that minutes will be taken of the discussion conducted during the executive session and the Board will disclose the minutes of the executive session 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.

Action may be taken when the Board reconvenes in public session.

All present voting YES MOTION CARRIED

The Board returned to public session at 11:07 p.m.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

There being no further business before the Board in public session it was moved by Mrs. Regis-Darby, seconded by Mrs. Ruiz, that the meeting be adjourned at 11:07 p.m. All present voting YES MOTION CARRIED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

GREGORY E. BRENNAN  
BOARD SECRETARY