WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 1, 2014
Regular Board Meeting
Board Meeting Room

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Board Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut on December 1, 2014. The meeting was called to order by Patricia Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Patricia Libero, Chairwoman
James W. Morrissey, Vice Chair
Betsy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer
Robert Guthrie
Mark Palmieri
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Patrick Egolum

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
Matt Cavallaro Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor Edward M. O’Brien

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Alice Obas
B. Public Portion of Meeting
Mr. Andrew Miranda, 161 West Spring Street, addressed the board and thanked Matt Cavallaro for responding to his request about billable hours for the Board’s attorney. He is interested in his son’s class ranking in regard to the TAG Program for the fifth grade. He wants to know if it counts now or next September. He would like clarification on this. He would like a breakdown of the students who have been accepted and are currently involved. He also would like to schedule a meeting at Carrigan with Patti Fusco. A further discussion took place. The board gave thanks.

Cebi Waterfield, 70 Seaview Avenue said that we have three Seahawk Teams traveling to Nationals this year. Many of the kids were also recognized here last year in the Spring as scholar athletes for the Pop Warner Program. The principals of Bailey, Carrigan and WHHS were kind enough to announce the names of these kids over the loudspeakers. Everyone at the schools made a big deal out of this. These kids not only have to be good athletes but they have to maintain a grade point average in order to participate. Students must maintain a grade average of 70 and many of these kids are also in the top 10% of the country with a 96% or above. The teachers have been very accommodating in providing them there classwork prior to them going on their trip. A further discussion took place. The board gave thanks. Public session closed at 7:08

C. REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro said today was the first day of All Day Kindergarten at Forest School and it was a successful day. He commended Mr. Hunt and the staff at Forest for all the planning involved to make this happen. They did a terrific job. We will keep you informed of the progress here and at Savin Rock. The success at these schools will help us move the program forward. We did receive the million dollars and Neil thanked Anne Druzolowski and Mayor O’Brien and his administration and Senator Slossberg. When the money is available we have a plan to start making the purchases by the end of this fiscal year. We are investigating other funding sources to sustain the program which is most important in funding the additional teachers. We are looking at ways to do this. The grant application was given to the board members. Budget requests for the next fiscal year are being reviewed. We will present the board with a document to review so we can get it to the Mayor by February 1st. Matt Cavallaro has sent out requests to all of the schools and departments and that process has begun.

Neil complimented all of our school’s students for help in raising money and bringing in food for needy families. Dave Orio has delivered 240 turkeys to needy families throughout the school district by a program started by AFB. It is very gratifying to see all that people in our schools do to help others in need at this time of year.

Anne Druzolowski said teachers had to make an alignment with the common core standards and they could apply for a grant where they could get up to $2,000. There were 18 teachers who applied and 15 received all their funding and that is awesome. This is
the first time teachers have had this opportunity. This will encourage them to do more writing of the grants. Chairwoman Libero asked to have them come to a future meeting.

C.1.b. Student Representatives Report

Alice Obas said three of the Peer Advocates from WHHS are here today to talk about some of the activities they have been doing. Ahmad Mohd Azhar said they are currently doing Toys for Joy. This is for families that can’t afford to buy toys for their children. In previous years we have had a sponsor from Walmart but this year they are having an issue with that so they are going to local West Haven businesses for donations of money or toys. Maria Nahuatlato said it would mean a lot if West Haven supported this cause because a lot of kids want presents during Christmas and it would be a really nice gesture to give them a gift. Franny Pena stated that every family has a dream to be able to have a gift for their children to bring them joy and to make them feel happy. It is really important for good parents to have gifts for their children. All the help you can give to these children is appreciated. It is a really good cause to give these students gifts. They will be collecting until the 21st. You can donate toys or money.

Alice then read the student report which is attached at the end of the minutes.

C.1.c. Board

Bob Guthrie asked if she had an idea of the amount they would be short this year because of toys that normally come through from a previous donation? They were not sure but Walmart usually brings in a lot of money and last time it was about $2,000 to buy toys. Cebi Waterfield said the West Haven Fire Department has always been good about letting us stand on the corner of Elm Street because Chief O’Brien has been very good to the Seahawks. Bob Guthrie also said that Adams which is just over the line in Woodmont has also been very good with the local sports teams. Cebi Waterfield said the new McDonalds also has reached out to them and also the one by Notre Dame.

Cebi Waterfield attended the Lairamie Project at WHHS last week and was very impressed with the level of talent at WHHS. This was a really tough subject and a very serious play and the kids were phenomenal. She is extremely proud to be a member of this community that is as open and accepting we are of people’s diversity and differences.

C.1.d. Committee

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Board of Education’s Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on November 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM.
Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.
Cebi Waterfield made the motion to approve the minutes
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2.  Resignations: (Certified)

14-117 Leila Mustakos, Music/Choral Teacher – Bailey Middle School
    Effective: November 18, 2014
    Reason: Personal

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve Resignation: (Certified) #14-117
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion
Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro said this is a difficult time of the year to lose any teacher but Leila had a big opportunity. Fortunately Mrs. Silver and the teachers at the high school are assisting so that the concerts at Bailey will go on uninterrupted which is really important. Ms. Mekeel has done a great job and we hope to fill the position as soon as possible. Chairwoman Pat Libero and Board Member Cebi Waterfield praised Mrs. Mustakos and wished her luck in her new job. It is hoped they will find someone with her energy to work with the kids at Bailey.
All board members present were in favor
Resignation (Certified) #14-117 is approved

D.3.  Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.4.  New Hire: (Certified)

D.5.  New Business

14-118 Immigrant Children and Youth Education Grant Application 2014-2015

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve Item 14-118
Mark Palmieri made the motion
Rosemary Russo seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Item 14-118 is approved

14-119 Approval of Superintendent’s Goals and one year extension

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve Item 14-119
Cebi Waterfield made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion: Bob Guthrie’s concern is the one year extension when the board hasn’t lived up to their promises of goals and evaluations as far as process. Jim Morrissey concurs with Bob and believes Neil has another year and a half left on his contract and he doesn’t understand why we are rushing into this at this point right now. He wanted to wait until the school year is over and go from there. Jim asked for a motion to table this but there was already a motion and second to approve on the floor so it could not be tabled. A further lengthy discussion took place. Rosa Richardson made a motion to close discussion and Cebi Waterfield seconded it. A vote was taken and a roll call vote was requested. The vote was 5 to 3 to approve the goals and one year extension. The three board members who voted against the motion were Rosemary Russo, Bob Guthrie and Jim Morrissey. Motion passes 5 to 3 Item 14-119 is approved.

Jim Morrissey discussed the cancellation of two board meetings one in June and the other in November due to lack of a quorum. As Vice Chairman he never received a phone call about attending. He is disappointed that two meetings were cancelled in the last several months without his receiving a phone call. He said we owe it to the public and the people of West Haven to have these meetings. He hopes this doesn’t happen again. Jim was told that other board members had called in to say they couldn’t make the meeting and there was not the necessary number of members attending to make a quorum so an email was sent to board members and all agenda recipients stating the meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. Mayor O’Brien said he thinks the point Jim is trying to make is that everybody didn’t get called before cancelling the meeting. Chairman Libero said she will make sure phone calls are made in the future to make sure everyone is contacted. She didn’t think that two meetings during the year were a lot of meetings to cancel. She thought they had very meaningful meetings with great presentations. A further discussion took place by board members stating their reasons for not being able to attend. There were also questions about how people were notified of cancellations. Neil Cavallaro stated that Susan Misur will put this up on facebook and our website. It was also stated that whenever there is a cancellation everyone who receives an agenda through an email also receives notification that the meeting has been cancelled through their email address.

F. Informational
Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to adjourn.
Mark Palmieri made the motion
Rosemary Russo seconded the motion
The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary
Schedule A

Board of Education Student Report – December 1, 2014
The Mock Trial Team has two upcoming competitions on December 3 and 10.

The Urban Debate League has a competition on Friday, December 5th at Dwight Hall Chapel. The public debate will take place at 7pm with Mayor Toni Harp and New Haven Superintendent of Schools Garth Harries as judges.

The Peer Advocates and the West Haven Professional Firefighters are once again joining forces to college toys for their annual Toys for Joy Drive.

The PTSA just sponsored a successful Barnes & Noble fundraiser this Saturday, featuring the Dance Team, the Hockey Team, Lil Miss Westie 2014 and Mrs. Ferraro as a guest reader. You can still support the PTSA in the store or online until Thursday, using code: 11399201. They are also hosting a Leslie’s Jewelers fundraiser on Friday, December 12th.

The Choral Concert will be held on December 10th and the Band Concert on December 18th.

The School Counseling Department is hosting Financial Aid Night on Wednesday, December 3rd at 6:30 pm.

DECA is hosting the winter formal, the Winter Wonderland Dance this Friday from 7 pm until midnight at Cielo (formerly Westwoods).

The WHHS School Counseling Department organized a trip for more than 25 students to the Historically Black College and University Fair in New York, giving students a chance to hear from colleges, receive on-site admissions decisions and scholarships, and attend college preparation workshops. Senior Thomas Britm, was accepted into three schools: Virginia State University, Tuskegee University and Morgan State University with scholarship money in excess of $15,000.

30 seniors were accepted during On-site Admissions Decision Days at WHHS to the University of New Haven and SCSU.

Four students were officially accepted into the Connecticut Music Educators Association’s Southern Region Festival, which takes place January 9 at Middletown High School!
- Samantha D’Amico, bass clarinet
- Charlotte D’Inzeo, clarinet
- Rose Silver, chorus
- Jay Silver, chorus
- Taylor Turner, chorus

Kayley Carr and Justin Tuschhoff are the November SCC Scholar Athlete of the Month honor for November. Kayley is a four-year member of the WHHS volleyball team with a 4.5 GPA. Justin is a four-year member of the lacrosse team with a 4.02 GPA. Both students are also members of the National Honor Society.

Tune in to AM1200 WQUN tomorrow morning to hear about the WHHS Nursing CAN program at 6:04, 8:04; 10:04, 12:04, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30 and 5:04.