

Minutes
Regular Board Meeting
Monday, March 7, 2016
Carrigan Intermediate School

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at Carrigan Intermediate School, 2 Tetlow Street, West Haven, Connecticut on March 7, 2016. The meeting was called to order by James Morrissey, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:04 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

James W. Morrissey, Chairman
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer
Patrick Leigh
Patricia Libero
Mark Palmieri
Karen Pacelli
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor Edward M. O'Brien

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

Evelyn Fabian

B. Public Portion of Meeting

There were no speakers.

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Chairman Morrissey stated that tonight we have the UNH Jazz Band here this evening and Board Member Mark Palmieri is an employee of UNH and he asked that we have the UNH Jazz Band attend a meeting and showcase their talents. We are honored to have them here this evening. Chairman Morrissey asked Mark to introduce the band. Board Member Mark Palmieri thanked Chairman Morrissey and stated it is an honor to have this group of students and band members along with their director, Jason DeGroff with us

tonight. Mark stated he has been at UNH going on twelve years and can remember when the band first started there were only 10 to 20 students in the band but after Mr. DeGroff arrived this band has taken off like wildfire and there are over 250 members now. Mark had wanted to see more students from West Haven attend this meeting because students that qualify and are accepted to UNH only have to pay half tuition. Mark thinks there are a lot of band members and students within our three schools whether it is Bailey, Carrigan or the high school that should have this opportunity. Mark thanked everyone for coming and stated it is great we can showcase this university. He feels like UNH is the diamond in the rough in this area. Sometimes people talk about Yale and Quinnipiac and don't realize how great UNH is. Marked thanked Mr. DeGroff and the band members again for coming and asked them to play another one of their fine ballads and then give their presentation.

Mr. DeGroff had most of the Jazz Band at the meeting and they played a new tune called "Don't Stop Until You Get Enough," by Michael Jackson. Mr. DeGroff filled in for one of the trumpet players who was not available. Mark Palmeri said you need to see this band during football season. Mr. DeGroff said that UNH has a jazz band, a concert band which he started five years ago with 65 members, a wind ensemble which is a smaller chamber type group, an orchestra, an acapella group and their pride and joy their marching band. The marching band is one of the nation's fastest growing collegian marching bands in divisions 1, 2, or 3. In 2010 there were 20 members; we just finished with 250 in the fall. We have 180 returning students for the fall. We have a freshman class of about 100 which is almost 10% of the entire freshman undergrad enrolment. Those numbers are not met anywhere in the United States. Over 5% of the entire UNH undergraduate student body is in the marching band. This is outstanding and a dream come true. State schools like UCONN are .2%. We are doing a lot of local recruiting in the West Haven area and also have students from California, Texas and Florida in the band. School support is tremendous. On Saturday 65 families came to the campus and a bunch of them made deposits immediately. Mr. DeGroff also had showed a power point and a video presentation. The board gave thanks.

Superintendent Cavallaro stated that we are very pleased to have Sherry Mitchell and Matt DiGioia here today. Chairman Morrissey and Neil were over at Bailey when they received their honor. They are to be congratulated; they put our school in the spotlight. Sherry and Matt won second place in a contest that was sponsored this fall by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt a book publisher. Teachers were asked to submit videos about unique, engaging lessons they developed for their classrooms. Matt and Sherry submitted one they created that combined both English and science based on the book called The Martian. Our teachers are always looking for ways to collaborate and incorporated multiple subjects into a lesson so they can show students how academic areas relate to each other, and this was a perfect, and now award-winning, example of that. Students were tasked with writing a story about Mars, creating a podcast about the science behind the novel to work on communication skills, and working in groups on its historical, social, political and economic themes. In science, students learned about gravity, conducted research about Mars and the book, and then used that research to take

on the “NASA Challenge,” which asked participants to find ways Mars’ natural resources could be used to sustain human life.

Houghton Mifflin visited Bailey last month to present Matt and Sherry with their prize: 30 Chromebook laptops for their classrooms and more than 450 books for Bailey classroom libraries, which are used for Bailey’s popular independent reading periods.

Congratulations, Matt and Sherry, for winning the contest, and we know it’s just one example of the many ways you inspire kids throughout the year.

“The HMH video will be posted on Bailey’s website as soon as it’s officially released.”
The board thanked Sherry and Matt for their presentation.

A short intermission took place and Chairman Morrissey called the meeting back to order at 7:53 PM

Superintendent Cavallaro said we are here in the Carrigan auditorium and one of the things we submitted the grant for, and hopefully we will hear on this shortly, is to redo the auditorium which would include new seats, a new curtain and a basically refurbished auditorium. They do a great job of keeping Carrigan clean but it is also in need of some updating. We will notify you when we know if we receive the money for this project.

Pat Libero asked if lighting was included. Yes it is.

Patrick Leigh asked if this is separate from the Carrigan upgrade project. It is part of that. This is part of the Alliance Grant. This is not part of the bonding which is part of the roof project. We applied for almost \$170,000.00 and were approved for about \$130,000.00 and since we couldn’t do some of the windows and doors we wanted to do that will be moved to the Capital Project for next year and we applied to refurbish the auditorium out of the remaining grant money and we should hear by the end of this month because there is another round that you can apply for. If we get the funding we will have used our allotment if we don’t they we will try to find another project to do. Patrick asked did you bid or estimate what it would cost. We did; Roger LaFleur came in and got prices for the seats, curtains and other things needed. The HVAC and the air conditioning is also included in this. Patrick asked if the amount of seating in the auditorium fits the whole student body. No it doesn’t it fits about half the student body. So would you be looking to add more seats or keep it the same? No it is the same Matt filled out the paperwork to apply. Excellent. Hopefully we will hear on this soon.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we are committed to work with the administration, with the members of the board, with all of the labor unions and anybody who has a suggestion regarding the budget. We will make it through this process and work really hard. There are no magic bullets that can fix our problems these have been building for years and are not easy fixes but we are very committed to working right up until the last minute. If any city official has any questions or concerns we will do everything we can to provide them

with the information so that we can all make responsible decisions and keep the school system that we are proud of.

Patrick asked Neil if he gave a date for when the Alliance Grant has to be in. Yes there was a deadline of February and the third round is due at the end of March. Once you apply do you know when you hear back. We are hoping to hear back prior to the next deadline just in case the project is not approved because we can certainly spend all of the money we are allotted. Perfect.

Neil said the Mayor is here tonight and he might add some information about West Haven High School because there has been some conflicting newspaper articles. To summarize where we are right now, in the West Haven Voice it spoke of a letter that the Mayor and I spoke about with regard to starting the project new and forgiving the money. We were advised by the state that what was best for our project was not to scrap what was done before but to keep the design they had been working on. We feel very confident the state is supporting that particular project and they are committed to working with us because they see the need for the project to be done. Our kids shouldn't settle for second best and we are committed and ready to move the project forward. We have been asked to rewrite or update the educational specifications which Anne Druzolowski has taken on and I am assisting her. Our job as a BOE is to approve those educational specifications. The education and the needs of the students of West Haven is really what drives the project. We have been meeting with contractors and have a meeting next week with the State of Connecticut. They want to see the revised specs before taking them to you the board. Pricing is still a factor and we are working on that. Neil took the meeting as a very positive, supportive one and feels like the project is going to move forward.

Patrick asked is it renovate to new or brand new. Neil said based on what the State advised us to do we wrote a letter that said we would like to start it again and if you can forgive the money that we spent that would be an ideal situation. When we went up there we decided it didn't make sense to scrap what was going on. We liked the design. We were concerned about encapsulating asbestos; none of us liked that idea so we are going to try to figure out a way to remove it. The state will work with us on helping to remove the asbestos and helping to pick up some of the cost. Patrick said is that what the scare was; it's the cost. or is it the actual thing that we saw asbestos in the building. No, the architect at the state didn't seem as concerned about it. He felt that there are buildings where as long as it is safe and it falls within code it is OK. Our feeling was that you are really delaying the cost in case work has to be done and you have to go into a wall. If you are doing something new how could that be a good sell to the community if you are encapsulating asbestos. We felt that would be penny wise and pound foolish so if there is a way to do it; do it. We are keeping the same design and the architects are still working on the project and they know the Mayor's office and Kevin have spoken to Turner Construction the construction manager. They will be finalizing the team and we will be working with the state to move the project forward. Neil asked Mayor O'Brien if he would like to add anything else.

Mayor O'Brien said he thinks Neil summed it up the way it is going to continue to go. Their concerns were the asbestos and if they are spending that kind of money; 124M+ they want an asbestos free building and the board did also. They will help us deal with that asbestos. The only thing that will be left of the old school are the two wings and we will have the foundation, the slab and the steel and the cinderblock and everything else will be new.

Pat Libero asked if it is still considered renovate as new then. Yes it will have the same project number. What is the reimbursement then? It is still 75% and that was one of the things that convinced us to renovate this project. We were able to keep the same reimbursement rate. Pat asked the timeline. It is not going to change. What is the timeline? Mayor O'Brien said he would think in the spring of 2017 we will start. Mayor O'Brien said their concerns were that there were a lot of redundancies in teams; there were a lot of people involved that they didn't think we had to have involved. We are looking at shifting around the team. He is sure Turner Construction will stay and Antinozzi. There were a lot of subcontractors that we will have to do away with but that work is picked up by Turner Construction so there are some big savings in redundancies. Patrick asked if you are keeping the pool or are we redesigning that too. Neil said they received special legislation that classified the project as renovate as new and we also have special legislation that exempts our athletic fields that would include the stadium, pool and rink because that is all included in what you can spend if it were a completely new project and we don't have to bring them up to what the new code would be and that will save us probably millions of dollars and those are pretty safe facilities. Patrick said so those are going to stay as is no new building around it nothing. Correct we have special legislation to exempt those. Patrick forgets in the building plans he saw will the pool be a separate building or still attached? What they will do is the cover that connects the gym to the pool will be removed and it will be a stand-alone building.

Mayor O'Brien said the talks with the state have been very advantageous to the city and he thinks Neil agrees. Yes, after we left that meeting he felt very good about the meeting they had. Mayor O'Brien said they are also giving us an architect to work with on the state level so that architect will work with our architect and the grant person from the state will work with whoever is doing our grants here in the city so we will work collaboratively with them. It is the largest school construction project in the state and they want to get it right. They had some changes at their administrative end also. Patrick asked if they forecast any changes to the plan because he knows with the Haven they flip flopped the parking lot to the other side because the ground wasn't going to hold the weight. He knows the high school is on a swamp. Board members stated a marsh. Neil said there is a flood plain there but we are keeping the design and existing project number because those issues have been addressed by the architect during the course of the project so there is nothing there that would be out of compliance. So they already did their preemptive strike. Correct. OK perfect. Chairman Morrissey asked if there were any other questions from the board. Rosa thanked them for the update. Neil thought it was important especially seeing some conflicting reports.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we received a grant for schools in need of improvement. Assistant Superintendent Anne Druzolowski worked with our administrators over at West Haven High School along with Mr. LaFleur who also helped us with some pricing and we are going to try and create a reading lab and math lab so kids can work on a computer, sit and read and get tutoring if I am leaving anything out please let me know or...Patrick interjected Neil, this is part of the new construction. No, but we thought since that project is four or five years from full completion we needed to do something to expand and give kids more opportunities, places to go and read, study and get some tutoring and whatnot...so you are saying basically the money you use it or you lose it. We are not guaranteed the money it is a competitive grant...Anne Druzolowski said it is bonded money and it is under the Alliance Grant umbrella so it is limited as to who can apply for it. We decided it is a great addition that is portable so that we could move it to the new rooms in the high school that is being built. There is nothing there that is stationary; that would be fruitless in doing. Patrick wanted to make sure it wasn't something we were building to knock down. No, it is mostly computers and furniture like that which we can put in an existing classroom that can be moved. Excellent. Anne said the program design is really targeted to a group of youngsters that are in the mid group of the data and people always say you are not doing anything for that group in the middle so this is one of the ways where we will work with that group and push them to another level of performance. It is also giving them another opportunity to work with their teachers in a lab setting. It is a lab setting and it is in addition to English, Language Arts, and in addition to the mathematics that they currently are receiving. Anne thinks we have a good chance and she has no idea when that will come to fruition. It is similar to the technology grant we just received for \$128,000.00. The start date would be September 1 and we are focusing on 9th grade. We can write up to \$500,000.00 and this first year we wrote up to \$380,000.00. Patrick said but you aren't guaranteed that right. Well pretty much if we do get it they will give it to us. The track record has been pretty good with this. Awesome. If not we are prepared to cut back; we are talking over 200 pieces of technology to not only outfit the room but also to experiment a little with what a new instructional design might look like in a high school setting rather than the typical desks and smart board. We are anticipating good news from that and we will see what happens. Thank you. Karen Pacelli asked if the current technology we have can handle all of this. Yes we sat down with the business network that handles our IT to make sure. Anne said we are prepared to handle all of this and also to move it.

Neil said with the Carrigan roof project we do anticipate a bonding package going before the council that would include that project this month. If this happens we should be on target to get everything out to bid so work can begin on the roof this summer and we will be working on what we receive from the other grant the 1.3M this summer also. Neil said to Kevin McNabola we don't want to put the pressure on you. You have been great and we know you have a lot of other things and our bond is a small piece of what he is putting together but obviously an important one for this school. Thank you.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski received notice that the 2014/2015 test results for SBAC are out and there are twelve indicators that feed into it; it is not just one score anymore. They look at a variety of variables. Because of teachers like Sherry and Matt we are where we

are today. We only have one school in need of improvement and in only one area, versus the three we had before. In all of the schools the gap between those that are in the subgroups most needy are so slight that when we give you the analysis of it all you will see that. If you start moving the lowest group everybody moves with it. If you don't move that lowest group everybody sinks and we are seeing such success we can't be happier. Of those schools Forest School, which is one of our largest schools, has some of our largest subgroups as well as Special Ed and economically they also have a large group. Their high need students, identified as any of those variables, outperformed the district average and that is phenomenal. Mackrille did the same thing. Their scores outperformed the district average and Mackrille is also a school of distinction because they were in the top 10% of the state in terms of their scores. West Haven High School instead of having needs in both English, language arts and mathematics has a focus on mathematics. This is not a surprise to us we have been trying to work on mathematics. When compared to the rest of the state you will see where we are falling. We are doing well in our DRG and across the state. Anne told everybody it would take time and it has taken time and as we move up and increase our resources as we have done through the Alliance Grant we will see much more progress. Once things calm down Anne will bring all of this to the board. Three areas we need to bring up and focus on are physical education, Fine Arts, and chronic absenteeism which is always a big issue. In terms of academic points we really were the bomb. Anne thanked all the teachers and stated they will give out more information shortly. Applause. Chairman Morrissey thanked Anne.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

The student rep report is located at the end of the minutes.

Chairman Morrissey said you were quite busy over the last couple of weeks. A lot of great things have been happening at the high school and I'm very, very proud of our students.

C.1.c. Board

Mark Palmieri thanked Jim again for having the UNH Marching Band here this evening. He also thanked Frank Paolino and Rich Weber for their support and for letting us use Carrigan. Rich worked very closely with Jason DeGroff.

Rosa Richardson said kudos to Anne Marie and the Carrigan staff for that wonderful performance of Alice In Wonderland it was absolutely wonderful. Board members Pat Libero and Rosa Richardson attended CAFE Day on the Hill last Wednesday with six or seven high school students and it was a fun, interesting and very educational day for all.

Karen Pacelli attended Literacy Night at Pagels School that was sistered along with Seth Haley. There was a wonderful turnout; the children really enjoyed themselves and were able to see The Cat in the Hat movie and were able to do writing and craft activities and take home a book. It was nice to see families and students together along with our teachers.

Pat Libero said her great nephew, Kevin Gardner, was a cardsman in the Queen's garden painting the roses red in the Carrigan Play she attended. On April 8th and 9th Bailey is performing the high school musical, "Junior" and her great niece Mackenzie Gardner is in it so come see her. Pat said when she and Rosa went to Day on the Hill in Hartford they took a diverse group of students with them who were very interested and we learned about the new legislation. We had lunch in the legislative building and Charlie Ferraro arranged a tour of the Capitol. Some of the kids who were with us had never been to the Capitol so she and Neil talked about introducing this in fourth grade because some of the kids had never been to a play and it makes her sad that kids don't get to experience those things. Pat also thanked Craig Winkle for giving them a larger bus because more kids had signed up. He always comes through no matter what. Susie Beyl stayed with us for a while before she had her own meeting. It was a good day for these kids to learn about legislation and listen to their legislators and see the Capitol in action because it was very busy. She thanked Pam Gardner for getting the kids to sign up.

Bob Guthrie also attended the Carrigan Play, "Alice In Wonderland." Thank you to all the staff and parents who made it possible. It was an enjoyable production. Bob also attended the Black Heritage Celebration at City Hall and he thanked the Savin Rock Chorus and Mr. Scanlon for the outstanding job they did on very short notice.

Susan Walker said we lost a former West Haven school nurse last week, Gloria Bonci who was a school nurse at Molloy for many years and substituted after she retired. She was a delightful person who was a lot of fun. She will be missed.

Jim Morrissey thanked all the teachers, custodians and paras for coming to the meeting on Friday. We are doing the best we can with the budget and he knows everybody in this room wants what is best at heart for our children and our city. As Neil said we will keep on working and will do the best we can with the amount of money that we have.

Jim said he will save himself a phone call to Kevin McNabola since he is here now. One speaker said the city has added two million dollars by filling jobs from last year and that sort of struck him. Kevin said he doesn't know where that figure came from it kind of struck him as well. Since he and the Mayor have been here we have been working hard on the budget and if you ask any of the department heads we have 6 – 8 open jobs throughout the city that haven't been filled this year; so he is not sure where that 2M figure came from or how it was derived. Jim was just curious and was going to call him on this. He wanted to make sure on this because we are trying to be as fair as possible and spread the money evenly throughout the whole city. Jim thanked Kevin.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Curriculum Committee Meeting held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on February 1, 2016 at 6:30 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Karen Pacelli seconded the motion

Discussion: Pat Libero abstained because she did not attend the meeting. There was no further discussion.

All board members present were in favor

Minutes are approved

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on February 1, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.b.

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

Discussion: Pat Libero abstained because she did not attend the meeting. There was no further discussion.

All board members present were in favor

Minutes are approved

D.1.c. A Special Meeting of the Board as a Whole for Finance was held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on February 10, 2016 at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.c.

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Susan Walker seconded the motion

Discussion: Patrick Leigh stated the following, "While he was reading through the minutes he remembered during that meeting we had a very lengthy discussion on the use of employee vehicles and their cost and he wasn't able to find that anywhere in the minutes." The board secretary stated she doesn't have to do the minutes verbatim so she really can't get everything but she would give him the CD so he could listen to it. Would he like her to do that. Patrick stated that he wants the public to see the discussion we had around this because there was a lot of feedback from it. The board secretary said she can get the CD because once the minutes are done that is all she has. Patrick stated OK so this will be typed up and added to the minutes and be reapproved next meeting. Do you want it added as an addendum? Patrick stated yes this discussion should have been added and he didn't see this anywhere in the meeting minutes. OK from the February 10th meeting what part did you want. When we were talking about the employee use of vehicles and the cost...OK I'll do that and add that to the minutes. Patrick said but I think there was a motion right. Chairman Morrissey said there was a motion to approve and a second. If someone wants to take back their motion. Superintendent Cavallaro suggested we approve the minutes and then amend them it at the next meeting. Chairman Morrissey said we can do that. Patrick Leigh said yes it works for him.

Chairman Morrissey asked all those in favor

All board members present were in favor

Pat Libero and Mark Palmieri abstained because they did not attend this meeting.

Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

16-10 Kellsie H. Reimondo, 45 Coolidge Avenue, Newington, CT 06111

Preschool Teacher - Mackrille

Salary: \$44,000 Step 1 BS+30

Effective: February 17, 2016

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 16-10

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve item 16-10

Patrick Leigh seconded the motion

Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro reminded the board that this was the position where we hired someone in a shortage area in Pre-School Special Education and then before the person actually started the job they decided not to take it so it is that job; this is not an additional job. Thank you.

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-10 is approved

D.4. New Business

16-11 Vote on the West Haven Department of Education School Calendar for 2016-2017

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 16-11

Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve item 16-11

Karen Pacelli seconded the motion

Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro said as Bob mentioned before this is based on the common calendar that ACES put out. All board members present were in favor

Item 16-11 is approved.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn

Rosa Richardson made the motion to adjourn

Karen Pacelli seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola

Board Secretary