The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on February 6, 2017 in the Board’s Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order by James Morrissey, Chairman of the Board of Education at 6:00 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
Karen Pacelli
Mark Palmieri
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**
Patricia Libero

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

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**
Mayor Edward J. O’Brien

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:**
Evelyn Fabian
David O’Brien

**B. Public Portion of Meeting**
Chairman Morrissey welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone would like to address the board during public session. Dr. Rose Paolino, Department Head School Counseling stated that the first week in February is National School Counseling Week and this year’s theme is helping students reach their potential. As a thank you to the Board of Education and Central Office from all the counselors in the district a gift bag with candy and a graphic designed water cup designed by the Graphic Design Class was distributed. Rose thanked the Board for another great year. Neil, Anne and the board members thanked Rose, the counselors and the Graphic Design Class.
Georgianna Dini, Co-President of the West Haven Paraprofessional Union thanked Jimmy Morrissey and Bob Guthrie for coming to their school and checking it out. She hopes they will be able to go to all the other schools and see what is going on. Georgianna thanked them again. The board gave thanks. There were no other speakers. Public Session closed at 6:04.

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools
Superintendent Cavallaro wanted to bring the board up to speed with what they talked about with the City Council. It was a really good meeting where we were able to share some information and we pledged to work together throughout the budget process. Information was passed out to board members.

We had anticipated that Alliance School Districts would receive another round of grant funding for small construction projects and we did get that and it is about a million dollars. We are putting a plan together to bring to the board. We won’t do anything that involves major school construction or tie it in with bonding. We will look at things like boilers and controls at some of the buildings and other areas that will save us money within our local budget. Our initial list is well over the million dollars so we will prioritize to see how we can get the best bang for our buck and look at projects that will save us money down the road. This was a bit of welcome news last week.

A WHHS Building Committee will take place here in the Board’s Meeting Room this Wednesday at 7:00 PM. We will go over some actual plans and/or the budget. It would be a good thing if you could make the meeting.

There is a Math Certified position that we are asking you to approve tonight. This is not a new position. The person in the position was doing an internship and was finalizing her certification. We are paying that person now a per diem rate and we could not bring her to the board until she received her certification. This was a budgeted position and is not costing us any more money. Fortunately we had a good candidate when the position became open and this person started the job before she was certified.

Under New Business the cheerleaders’ trip to Orlando, Florida is a last minute trip and the kids are going to miss four days of school. This was brought to Superintendent Cavallaro’s attention in November and he was reluctant to approve it because they had gone two or three years in a row and he thought they would miss several days of school. The trip form just came up and Superintendent Cavallaro spoke with Jon Capone who spoke with the cheerleading advisor. Neil asked the board members to approve this tonight and he will speak to them as he is concerned about the time they will miss for the third year in a row. He believes this is a trip that can be taken once every two or three or four years just so everybody gets to go at least one time. If this is approved tonight we will tell them that this can’t be an annual event in the future. This will be my recommendation to the board. To go every year is excessive. They will miss four days of school and it is the 9th through the 14th of February. This has been approved in the past.
Superintendent Cavallaro said we are displaying more student artwork in the main office and in our central office. Anne will talk to you about some of the writing that we gave you a sample of. Mayor O’Brien has asked for us to get some on the third floor and in different areas in City Hall and we will provide him with the artwork. Neil wanted to thank Kathy Card, Dr. Druzolowski’s secretary, who designed, decorated and did a lot of the nice framing that took place. This really has made the place look better and we will invite the people up here to see the artwork that is being displayed.

Superintendent Cavallaro said he and Chairman Morrissey have already had a conversation with Mayor O’Brien regarding our budget. Some things may come up that could dramatically impact our budget for the better. Some preliminary negotiations with some of our unions have gone better than expected. Mayor O’Brien has said if we were to ask for an extension he would be apt to grant it and he is up to speed on where we are. This is very preliminary but some of the conversations we have had have gone far better than expected and could potentially save the board a lot of money. We think it is worth waiting the additional 30 days to submit a budget as we think we will have some good news and let’s be hopeful regarding the budget. We don’t want to publicly say where we are yet because there are negotiations and anything is subject to change. This is a good segue to having Matt discuss the presentation we made to the City Council which we thought was well received. The Council asked really good questions and at the end of the meeting we pledged to work closely and continue to communicate with them throughout the budget process.

Matt had passed out information that had been given to the City Council last week. The meeting centered on this year’s budget, Special Ed costs, and usage of the excess cost grant. It was a very good meeting and at the end of it we were all on the same page regarding going forward and our usage of the excess cost grant. Matt went through each piece of information. The first page shows how the amount of Special Ed students has grown from 2013 to 2017 and the decline in the number of regular Ed students and the percentage of our spend on Special Ed is increasing as well. The far right column is the cost per student which includes the kids in district and the kids out of district. Patrick asked if the majority of the cost is tuition. Yes it is tuition and salaries for our staff. Matt discussed the Action Plan to Reduce 2016-17 Expenditures. The state has cut ECS Funding by about $850,000 so in anticipation of that we know there will be an over expenditure in the tuition line item which will be reduced by the excess cost grant. We are being proactive in trying to reduce the expenditures for this fiscal year. We increased the tuition line item which will make that overspend less. We are forecasting the Special Ed spend on tuition for the remaining year and are almost $160,000 less than what we spent last year. We did not replace AFB which saves us $180,000. We switched Copy Center Vendors which saved us $55,000. We have three open para positions which is about $60,000. We had midyear retirements of an administrator, teacher, secretary and a couple of custodial positions which resulted in $165,000 in savings. We did not fill the Communications Director position which was budget for $40,000. We feel we will have about $100,000 of savings for heat and we feel we can save about $500,000 in Workmen’s Comp which is an unknown but we have never been this low in our spend so far. If there is an injury our union contracts there are provisions where we make them
whole in payroll for four months and pay them their regular wage which wouldn’t increase the bills on Workman’s Comp because they wouldn’t be collecting that yet. Rosa Richardson asked if this was for four months or four week. Four months was the answer to her question. Superintendent Cavallaro said in other municipalities it could be up to a year. The only thing that could throw this number off is if there is a settlement from an old injury and we feel that $500,000 is a conservative number and there is a potential for even greater savings. This total is about 1.6M we will save. Superintendent Cavallaro said we are also trending better in health benefits this year than we were last year. We need to build up some type of reserve as a city because that is what has gotten us into trouble in the past. We didn’t want to anticipate this at this point because these are the types of things that have gotten the BOE and the city in trouble in the past.

Matt discussed the tuition forecast for Special Ed and said we are trending at $155,000 less than we were last year and will update this month by month as bills come in. Rosemary Russo asked Matt what the reduction in Special Ed tuition is attributed to; did kids leave the district or did we pull kids back into the district. Matt said the numbers are about the same so it could be that the kids who left the district might have cost us more than the kids who replaced them. Joe Lucibello said the numbers are about the same as last year but we have a couple of kids that have moved from West Haven that attended some schools where they were getting multiple services. Even though we may have outplaced another student it may be to a school where they are not getting as much or to a different school. Our numbers look the same but our tuition number is a little lower at this point. Matt said the $155,000 number has been pretty consistent for the past few months. Rosemary thanked Matt and Joe.

Matt discussed an opinion from Attorney Thomas Mooney of Shipman & Goodwin Law Firm concerning the Excess Cost Grant and the Board’s ability to use that money. Attorney Mooney is very instrumental in interpreting State Statutes pertaining to schools. The NESDEC Study had previously been gone over in detail and given to the City Council so it was also provided to the board. Superintendent Cavallaro stated that next week Matt would go back to the City Council with Kevin McNabola to continue working on a cost saving plan.

Bob Guthrie appreciates what is being done this year and as we look at next year we read the proposal that Governor Malloy put out about shifting teacher retirement. Bob asked if Matt could give a projection of what the city and district could handle with those numbers. Bob thinks we are in the 17 to 20 million dollar of funding. Matt read that article and a paragraph in the article said a majority of the distressed towns would be forgiven and wouldn’t have to carry that expense and is assuming West Haven would be considered a distressed town at this point so I really couldn’t put a number on at this point. Bob said this would be a huge problem and is not in the best interest of the district, city or teacher’s union to have this switch. If this is something they are going to implement we would have to ask for at least a five year advance warning or phase in. This is a huge number that neither the city nor the board could fund. Superintendent Cavallaro said these are the things that have gotten the larger cities into trouble by not being able to fund pensions. He doesn’t know how this would be to West Haven’s benefit.
or what the state’s logic is other than it is some part of a plan to get small towns to regionalize. This is an impact that we could not take now. We will look into this and keep you informed.

Bob said since the Communication Director’s position is on hold can we get someone to update the website as there are no BOE minutes or any information regarding student activity. Superintendent Cavallaro will talk with Dana Paredes who has been very helpful with this and see if she can help keep the website more current and informative.

Rosemary Russo asked if the open para positions for $60,000 will continue to be left open or will they be filled. Neil said at this point we are not planning on hiring but if an administrator said a position really needed to be filled we would certainly look at that. The last thing Neil wants to do is fill a job now and not be able to live up to a commitment once the year is over. We are doing everything we can to get as close to operating on flat funding as we can in anticipation of not receiving as much money from the state. This will be a challenge. It is not in our best interest to hire now and we don’t feel like any child’s IEP is not being met.

Patrick asked Matt if there was a dramatic savings because of the mild winter and lack of snow planning. Yes our overtime that was budgeted is down and the heat savings is being projected at $100,000 if it continues this way. Patrick asked if the snow removal was from a private enterprise. Neil said no one of the best values we have is in-house snow removal because the only expense we incur is overtime. If it is a snow day the guys are working anyway and if it happens on the weekend or one or two weekends a year it doesn’t hurt us. We own our trucks and get the sand in house from the town barn. If we went out to privatize this it would cost us more money. Patrick asked Neil who has the oversight on the overtime? Mike McGrath and Chris Everone will contact Neil and discuss the plan if they know a storm is coming. Patrick asked Matt to get him some insight on this to see how the structure will be and what has happened in the past. Matt said absolutely and Patrick thanked him. Patrick asked how many people currently fill those roles. Neil said we use our maintenance guys and our tradesmen first and then we have a call list which includes a number of the building custodians who do some of the plowing as well. Patrick asked if we own the plows. Yes we own the trucks and they are in need of some work and will need to start replacing some of that fleet but we are OK. There were no further questions.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski said you will see that writings are integrated in a lot of the artwork. We have primarily done elementary schools with the pictures this time because they are quicker to receive because kids love art. We will be going to the secondary level next to see what they can give Francine Coppola so we can have it framed and displayed. Board members received a booklet from Mackrille’s 4th grade students who have been studying the unit on persuasive writing. All elementary schools are doing this and it is pretty impressive to see the level of writing. Anne said if anyone is interested in becoming a pen pal she can certainly arrange it as it is a nice rich out to kids; Anne has a second grade student as a pen pal. Patrick asked if the artwork is part of the art classroom or is it separate. Anne said in a lot of our schools the curriculum has been changed.
slightly to better incorporate the tenants of writing that they are learning at that time because there are many more types of writing other than persuasive and they try and tie it together wherever it works in the curriculum. This is a nice way to extend their thinking beyond pen and pencil and give color to their thoughts. Anne said these are very nice and neat but she would prefer that they just write for the sake of loving writing and not being corrected when they are very young otherwise they will never get to love to write.

Rosemary Russo thanked Ann for doing this it is nice walking in and seeing the kid’s artwork. Karen Pacelli said they used to have a schedule for the BOE and certain grade levels and certain schools did artwork so we always had it. Neil said we used to do this and will try to get back to it. Anne said when you go to the Arts Festival you will see how alive are artwork is across the district. Patrick asked if they ever partnered with St. Jude’s or Yale or any of those places with kids and communicated and shared their expressions. Anne said no but that is a good idea.

C.1.b. Student Representatives’ Report
The student rep report is located at the end of the minutes.

C.1.c. Board
Rosa Richardson apologized for her absence due to work related meeting that conflicted with board meetings.

Susan Walker congratulated Frank Paolino on his 40 years in West Haven and thanked him for his service. Susan said Frank started the year after me and lasted longer than she did. Last year Sherry Mitchell and Matt DiGioia from Bailey came to a board meeting and presented a video they created that won an award from Harcourt Brace and they received 30 sets of chrome books; close to 500 reading books to the classroom. They have now been asked to go to the National Science Convention in California and Harcourt Brace is paying all their expenses and they will present at the convention. This is a big honor to present at the National Science Convention. Neil said they have already approved the professional days and we are paying for the subs he thinks that is the least we can do. Susan did go to the Spelling Bee and saw quite a lot of the board members there. Susan said the boy who won was in 6th grade and Neil said he is a 5th and 6th grade champion and has two more times to win. Susan said next time we better go out and get humongous dictionaries boy was he incredible.

Mayor O’Brien congratulated Mr. Paolino and said he has known Frank for a long time and he is a dedicated teacher who has done a great job. When Mayor O’Brien’s mother worked at Washington School Frank was a student then and this makes him feel old. Mayor O’Brien asked Chairman Morrissey to send him a letter and he would grant the request for an extension. Chairman Morrissey thanked Mayor O’Brien.

Bob Guthrie attended the Spelling Bee and thanked the staff who put it together; all the students did well. The board members and I shook our heads at some of the words they just rattled off.

Chairman Morrissey said they met with the City Council last week and went over the budget and it was a good meeting. The goal for the City Council and BOE is to work together and not be adversarial and having more of these types of meetings is a good thing. If they want to come to our meetings and talk with us this is fine also; we have to work together as times get tougher. Chairman Morrissey hopes with the new budget
coming in that the state legislature and governor will take it easy on the bigger communities that are really hurting. With what Chairman Morrissey is reading now he hopes that funding will be in place for this coming year and he also knows our state delegation is working hard on our behalf up in Hartford. We need to look for every savings that we possibly can. The bottom line is that we have to make sure our students are getting the proper education. Chairman Morrissey said he and Bob Guthrie went to Savin Rock School last week and met with several teachers and Karen Driend the principal. Our goal is to get to as many schools as possible. We know the situation with the paras and every dollar is really critical and if there is a possibility of bringing a sub in to help out for a missing para in cases where they are overwhelmed and some students are difficult to handle and having fewer paras is obviously not a good thing. There is no easy answer. He thanked the President of the Teacher’s Union Kristen Scanlon for coming tonight and said we want to work together and if you have any way of possible cost savings there is no bad idea. We are here to work on your behalf and want to have better communication as we go forward; we are all in this together. This will be a difficult several months and the lack of money is frustrating at times but as a board we will try to work together with each of you to make the dollar stretch as far as possible. We are trying our best and the Superintendent and I have been talking and hopefully there are certain cost savings measures down the road that will result in positive savings for the board. Chairman Morrissey also attended the Spelling Bee Contest and the winner was quite a speller and Jim asked when he was going to the Regional Spelling Bee Contest. Colette Bennett said they were given a date in March but they are still looking for a venue. Everything has to be in to them by February 11th and then they will announce.

D.1. Approval of Minutes
D.1.a. 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 January 17, 2017 at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a. Susan Walker made the motion to approve the minutes Rosemary Russo seconded the motion Discussion: All board members were in favor. Minutes are approved.

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

17-03 Jason Kirck, Boys Tennis Coach – West Haven High School
Effective: January 30, 2017
Reason: Personal

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-03 Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve item 17-03 Susan Walker seconded the motion Discussion:
All board members were in favor
Item 17-03 is approved.

17-04 Frank J. Paolino, Principal – Carrigan Intermediate School
Effective: August 31, 2017
Reason: Retirement

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-04
Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve item 17-04
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro thanked Frank for his years of service and for being a big part of the administrative team. He does a terrific job of mentoring our new teachers and getting them through the best program. We have a really good success rate and I think that is one of the reasons that teachers stay and are committed to our district because we take them through that process. Neil has known Frank since he came in as an administrator and started off as the Math Coordinator and then became Principal at Thompson. I asked him to take on a daunting task which was to take Carrigan Middle School which was a 6th to 8th grade school and turn it into an intermediate school and in my opinion this was a seamless transition. By all accounts Carrigan is one of the places where kids really look forward to going; it has been that successful. He has built a great staff there and the school has built a great reputation. We are getting the inside of the school to look as good as the climate is there and Frank has been a big part of that. Thank you for everything Frank I have really enjoyed working with you. Applause.

Mark Palmieri said as the Superintendent said the kids look forward to going to school there and he sees Frank quite often going to work and he flies by me and I drive pretty fast so he must really enjoy going to his job. Chairman Morrissey congratulated Frank and said he has known him for many, many years. He is a long time West Haven resident, a great teacher and administrator and has done a great job at Carrigan. I have visited him at Carrigan on several occasions and it will be a big void to fill his position there. Jim wished Frank the best of luck in the future and is very proud and honored that he spent 40 years in education and changed the lives of so many children along the way. Jim wished Frank nothing but the best in his retirement. The board members all thanked Frank.
All board members were in favor
Item 17-04 is approved

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

17-05 Samantha J. Clyne, 42 Birch Drive, New Haven, CT 06515
Math Teacher – Bailey Middle School
Effective: January 3, 2017
Salary: $44,884 (Step 1 BS + 30)

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-05
Rosa Richards made the motion to approve item 17-05
Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
Discussion:
All board members were in favor
Item 17-05 is approved

D.4. New Business

17-06 WHHS Varsity Cheerleaders field trip to Orlando, Florida on February 9th through February 14th, 2017 to compete in the UCA National Cheerleading Championships

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-06
Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion: Mark Palmieri asked if this was break time for students in Florida and that is why they have it at this time. Neil said it is in Orlando and I don’t want to prevent the kids from going to a National Competition as this is a big deal and I’m sure it is a great experience. Neil’s concern is that it has been for three or four years in a row so we have to look at it and re-examine it down the road. Karen Pacelli asked if they do fund raising for it. Mrs. Gardner said yes and they compete and when you win you get invited to compete in Nationals so we have to discuss whether or not they would even compete at Regional Competition in the future or on a cycle as the Superintendent mentioned. They host this at this time every year and they do a significant amount of fund raising to defray the cost. Chairman Morrissey asked how many students were going; 24. Patrick asked if there was a way to align their trip with doing some sort of project for the school.
Superintendent Cavallaro said all the kids who are going are good kids and good students and he has no doubt they will make up the work and the teachers will give them their assignments ahead of time or work with them so they are not behind. This is something we need to look at before we approve it again.
All board members present were in favor except for Rosa Richardson who was opposed
Motion Carries
Item 17-06 is approved

F. Informational

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn
Karen Pacelli made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary
BOE Student Report - February 6, 2017

We are excited to be partnering with Gateway Community College to offer college credit for the nursing assistant course. Students will be taught by a college approved teacher, Mrs. Cosenza, and upon successful course completion, students will earn both high school and college credits.

Congratulations to seniors Mary Luz Heidmann, Alice Li and Adnan Sumra who were selected to participate in the University of New Haven's Outstanding High School Senior Program (OHSSP). They received a full tuition scholarship for the spring semester at the University of New Haven and are currently taking 12 college credits, or 4 courses.

Course Registration is underway for grades 8-11 in preparation for the 2017-2018 academic year. All information regarding scheduling can be found on the WHHS website under 2017-2018 Course registration.

The spring musical, Annie, is currently soliciting ads for their program booklet. Please consider purchasing an ad. Annie will be performed March 23-25th. Tickets are available from all cast members, at WHHS, at Goldworks, and at the pharmacy counter at Stop & Shop.

The WHHS PTSA has challenged the school community to collect 1,000 non-perishable items during the month of May for WHEAT, and earn $1,000 for Senior Scholarships.

“Wishes for Walter” - Blue stars are on sale for $1 with all proceeds going to Walter to help with medical expenses.

The Class of 2020 is sponsoring a Glow in the Dark Dance for Bailey 7th and 8th graders on February 24th in the WHHS gym.

On January 24th, we hosted a Girls in STEM event which included a presentation from two Female Professors from the University of New Haven followed by seeing the movie, Hidden Figures.

On January 26th, we hosted a public viewing of Chasing the Dragon in the evening. Representatives from the Narcotics unit, the West Shore Fire Department, the West Haven Fire Department, and the SRO’s presented current data and answered questions. This was a follow-up to showing the movie in math classes in earlier in the month.

The WHHS Dance team sponsored Go Red for the American Heart Associated on Friday, February 3rd and performed with special guests at the WH-ND Basketball game.

Senior Football Player Byron Dickens signed with Central Connecticut State University on Wednesday.