WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
March 6, 2017
Regular Board Meeting
Board’s Meeting Room

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on March 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
Patricia Libero
Karen Pacelli
Mark Palmieri
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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: 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.
Dwight Knowles, 20 Woodmont Road, West Haven, CT. Mr. Knowles said tonight the BOE will be asked to review the revised plans for the new high school State Project #156-0138EA. In 2015 the BOE approved and accepted the plan for the new high school with the same project name. On August 25, 2015 the WHHS Building Committee had a permit in hand to begin the high school project. The G Wing was empty. The demolition of the G Wing was put out to bid and came in at 9.5% under budget. The total budget was $124,697,700.00. At this point in time the Mayor put a stop to the project. On January 14, 2016 the Mayor wrote a letter to DAS terminating the project. He wrote that in the
study of the current project design it is clear that we are not getting the quality of building
that is necessary to serve the needs of our students at a justifiable cost to the taxpayer. He
stated that there were additional problems with the design. Eighteen months later the
Mayor’s new version of the high school project is the same design from 2015 minus 14
classrooms. The Mayor’s revision has also resulted in the removal of all interior block in
exchange for cheap sheet rock. The mechanicals have been reduced in quality. All of
these reductions in quality and size have resulted in a more expensive project at
$130,000,000.00 vs. the original $124,000,000.00. Is this what the Mayor intended when
he wrote in his study of the current project design it is clear that we are not getting the
quality of building that is necessary to serve the needs of our students at a justifiable cost
to the taxpayer. Why did the Mayor wait 18 months to approve the construction of a high
school plan that was permitted in August 2015? What is the City getting for the extra
6M? The answer is nothing. A further discourse continued. The board gave thanks.

Mayor O’Brien made a quick statement and stated that there are a lot of people who have
worked very hard on this high school project over the last year or so. The Superintendent
and I along with the Assistant Superintendent, board members, finance people, and legal
people have been on the phone every Friday planning this project; it wasn’t just the
Mayor and his friends. The answer to what we are getting for the difference is we have a
school that has no asbestos in it. Before the school was going to have asbestos which
would be encapsulated. Now, all asbestos will be removed because the state refused to
pay for a new school with asbestos. The state also told us they would not pay for space
that we didn’t need. If we didn’t cut those 14 classrooms, the state actually wanted us to
cut 21; anything above the number which we have right now we would have to pay for.
The Superintendent, the state and the committee all decided that 14 was the number we
could live with. Superintendent Cavallaro stated we actually went to the high school and
worked with Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Paredes who is in charge of the scheduling to make
sure we could accommodate this. Mayor O’Brien said yes this was something everybody
agreed we could do. We have full shops; Tech Ed is fully in there (not parts of it). We
have a full metal shop, woodshop, auto parts shop. The biggest misunderstanding or
misconception or misinformation is the dry wall. There is no dry wall. We decided to cut
out the dry wall option and go back to the block walls. There is a lot in this school. For
the money we are getting, and for what we are getting for that school there was an
advantage to the price increase which was 142 M when we started before cutting down
and we are at 129.9M now. The school is going to be built and the start date is June or
July. It will be built to a tune of a financial cost that is something we can afford within
the City of West Haven and that taxpayers can afford. This is something that will fit the
needs of all students; arts, sports, and academics. It will fit the enrollment now and in the
future. Unfortunately there is a lot of misinformation out there but there are a lot of
people who have met throughout the years and you are always welcome to call me and
the Superintendent. This is the clarification on the new high school. The board gave
thanks.
There were no other speakers. Public Session closed at 6:12 PM
REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro said the project team is here to give the board some details regarding the project. We started work in mid-December and have been advocating for someone to come and update the board. The members of the team who have been involved in the project are here to give the board an update as to where the project stands right now. We have Ahmar Shamas from Gilbane Construction; we have Rich Snedeker and Elizabeth Craun from CREC and Michael LoSasso from Antinozzi Associates who is the architect. A presentation was given to the board along with a representation of the floor plan for the high school as it appears today. This will be put on our website. The shops and cafeteria are intact as was depicted in the 65% set that we completed in November 2015. The auditorium and gym facilities also stay intact and supporting sports locker rooms remain the same. The science labs are also the same. The southern portion of the C Wing has been modified by reducing the square footage as the Mayor has mentioned to represent 14 classrooms. The existing Wing is going to be retained and the sequence of construction is essentially the same as it was previously.

Pat Libero said she knows we had to get rid of rooms because of enrollment but asked if we have space to move or add on incase enrollment goes up. We always envision this portion as being the ability to expand or contract and obviously it will be dictated by the available budget and reimbursement by the state. This portion of the building will be the later part to be removed so if circumstances change toward the later phases of construction it could be possible to salvage that.

Patrick Leigh asked where the front of the new school and the back. It is actually the same as it was originally. Neil said there are some board members including Patrick who were never part of any presentation so they are really starting from the very beginning. Mr. LoSasso went through the entire set of plans.

Questions

Patrick asked if the location of the pool is it a separate building now. Yes there is an overhead walkway that currently connects it which will be disengaged; it will stand alone.

Patrick asked if you are adding a road to the side of the school. Correct. The plan actually has a road that rings the entire facility now which was a significant improvement that the emergency responders were looking for in the original project.

Chairman Morrissey said you will maintain the existing boiler (as pictured) but obviously it will be upgraded. Yes it is a significant part of the phasing for the project but as new portions of the building come on line existing boilers will be replaced with new boilers.

Rosa Richardson said one of the huge issues we have in our current school is the number of doors and the fact that you can actually go out one door and go in another door. By continuing to have a courtyard there are students still going to be able to do that kind of stuff? No, the new scheme has reduced the number of doors considerably. The primary
goal is to make sure that all public access is here. In terms of the courtyard it would only be as means of emergency egress from the stairway in this location. Rosa asked why then do we have that open area there. It allows light and air to be brought into the interior spaces to rooms which would otherwise be landlocked and if we built right up against it you wouldn’t have the ability to have light in those classrooms and that is a significant requirement for any classroom space. OK. It is necessary for the sequence of construction you have to be able to get around it in order to build a new addition so both aspects play a factor. Rosa just sees it as a place for loitering to occur when school is not in session; it is a pretty isolated area. There is a gate that is located which we can lock from ingress for this location. The future project will have cameras located as well.

Patrick Leigh asked when the second phase would begin. Ahmar Shamas from Gilbane Building Company the construction managers for West Haven High School addressed the question regarding phasing. Our goal is to remove the existing G Wing (shop area) this summer and roll right into the auxiliary gym to also develop this Fall. Our goal is to start the construction of the new addition which will encompass the new cafeteria, new shop area and also take into consideration the auditorium space as well. This will take about a 15 month duration for that and then we will roll right into the gymnasium space addition as well. Before we do the gym addition we will demolish the existing cafeteria as well as the media center above that space. We will renovate the entire C D Wing and the last phase would be the renovation of the F and the E Wing and removal of the existing auditorium itself. The project is a renovate as new project and it is going to be an impressive looking project by the time it is completed. Our goal is to start this summer and substantial completion will be the Spring of 2021.

Michael LoSasso said the specific question was actually the span of the phases. Ahmar Shamas said we are looking at about a 15 month duration to compete the cafeteria as well as the auditorium addition and about a 12 month duration to complete the gymnasium as well as the C D Wing renovation and our goal is to grab that as a one piece. Safety is a priority to us and each area will be fenced in and all the areas will be completely segregated; the construction area from the occupied student/faculty spaces. A lot of meetings with the building officials and Fire Marshall will take place during construction to make sure as we develop the phasing that they review and are also on board with it.

Michael LoSasso said another important aspect of the project is to not burden it with portable classrooms; temporary classrooms which would be rented and then disposed of. The current school is roughly 300,000 square feet which is overbuilt for its current occupancy. The intention is to utilize the existing facility for swing space activity. One of the first activities is going to be to modify the auxiliary gym and accommodate the shop spaces during the first phase of construction. Pat Libero said this is the girls gym right. Yes that is correct. That space will be modified to accommodate classrooms in other phases as well.

One of the differences in the project today from the original is that originally the project had office or dryvit (essentially stucco applied over insulation) that was incorporated as a
budget savings but with the changes to the project there will all be brick interior and exterior to the courtyard areas.

Mayor O’Brien asked the cost of the brick versus the office. Generally speaking around roughly 2.5M or 3M.

Patrick asked if there were any concerns because of the marshland. Sure lots of them but we are staying outside of the marshland. We are not making any changes that would impact the buildings construction relative to water tightness or underground water mitigation requirements.

Mark Palmieri said if this project starts in June or July he would hope in May that we could have a city hall meeting at the high school to let the public know what is going on and have an hour presentation by these gentlemen and have time for questions. Mark has asked for this a few times and he thinks it would shut down rumors and any other issues. This is his only concern. He is all for this project and everyone knows this. Mark would like the board to know that a real big thing going into this is how the front of the school is set up now. Coming into the school now if someone is approaching the school there will be cameras and doors will be locked. They can’t just drive up like they can now to the front of the school. They have to part and walk at least a hundred yards. Mark asked if this was correct. There will be some parking that is relatively close to the pool area but the main entrance is buffered by a large green space. Right so it is very difficult to just drive up if there was an attack. Superintendent Cavallaro said we worked very closely with the fire and police department over the last several years and those were specific concerns that were addressed. Mark said unlike it is now and just get out of your car and walk in this has a distance which is a safety precaution. There are new board members who have never seen this before and Mark thinks this is a big concern. That is why he would like a city hall meeting in the high school so people do understand what is going on. Let’s get everybody on the same page and stop rumors and confusion so we move forward. Mayor O’Brien said we will have that meeting. Superintendent Cavallaro said during the interviews one of the comfort levels when we bought Gilbane in was their experience in working with occupied structures and being able to utilize technology to inform the public and their experience in working on these kinds of facilities.

Mayor O’Brien said one thing about Gilbane that stood out for him was the number of schools they have done with phasing like this. He asked Ahmar the total number of schools. They have been in the state 60+ years and most of the workload is with public school and public projects and have done at least a dozen plus high schools probably 30+ middle and elementary schools. Mayor O’Brien asked the number of times they went past the timeline. They have not had any school go past the timeline all schools did open on time. Mayor O’Brien asked how many times they have gone over budget. They have always been on budget for all of their projects. Mayor O’Brien said for those 30 plus schools they have never gone over the time limit or over budget so there is not really a concern of running late or going over budget.
Questions
Pat Libero asked if the entrance is a double entrance; you buzz in and show your ID or it just walk in. Now you just buzz and walk in. The intent is that the inner vestibule would be secured and it would have to be activated by someone observing the vestibule. Rosa Richardson said so there will be a security area in the main entrance. A drawing was shown to board members. An area has a window that views into the vestibule and the person who sits there, adjacent to the security desk, would actually activate the entrance. Pat asked if all the other entrances were alarmed. Yes either alarmed or exit only except for the night school and rink. Bob Guthrie asked how they control after hour access to the hallway; if you only want access to the auditorium how do you shut down the rest of the building; how are you controlling that. The building is designed so that there are common spaces that are the areas that can be utilized after hours for large events like the auditorium and the gymnasium. There is actually a fire barrier separation that separates that connection. So this portion of the building can be utilized after hours without ingress or egress or need to egress through that point. A further discussion continued. Bob asked with the reduction of 14 classrooms what is the square footage number. Roughly a little over 18,000 square feet is the square footage number. Pat Libero asked the size of the auditorium. The exact number wasn’t remembered. Sue Walker asked if it the same amount of seating as there is now? There is a difference in the seating capacity. The state will reimburse the school for half of its total population which is projected at 1,450 students and we would provide seating for half of that number 725. Bob asked the occupied capacity for students and staff for the building; do you have a total number. They are designing for 1,450 in terms of students. He believes the staff is around 200. Sue asked if the auditorium would be air conditioned. Superintendent Cavallaro said yes, as of now the entire building is air conditioned. Bob said the driving force in the 6M more with 14 fewer classrooms is asbestos removal? Mayor O’Brien said there is also 3M with the office. Bob said with the contract will there be penalties if the project is not completed on time. Mayor O’Brien said we do have that. Bob said presently we don’t have the capacity to bring back our magnet school kids to our current building. Superintendent Cavallaro said we tried to make that argument and we said the enrollment may increase as a result of building a new facility however the state said if that happens and we see that it is filled to capacity we would then have to apply for an addition; they are not going to build based on numbers that aren’t there. There is no way we could put a number to that right now. Bob said then based on the size of that we would have to be vocal at not let the state change the magnet school formula or how they bill other districts for kids; not only could we not afford to send them somewhere we don’t have the space to put them here. Neil said you are correct and that is something we watch very closely every budget year. Mayor O’Brien said with the 14 classroom that is where we would apply for an addition. Neil said this would be reimbursable. A further discussion continued. Board members thanked everyone who came and discussed the high school project with them. Everyone is very excited to work with the team. Rosa also thanked the City Council for giving the board the opportunity to better educate our students; without you it would be very difficult.

C.1.b. Student Representatives’ Report
The student rep report is located at the end of the minutes.
C.1.c. Board
Susan Walker went to Savin Rock School for Dr. Seuss’s Birthday and read to Mrs. Hayden’s kindergarten class and they were delightful. If you need anyone to read next year Susan will gladly go.
Bob Guthrie shared with everybody a copy of the Bailey newspaper. He thanked the staff and students who put it together; they did a nice job on it.

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 February 6, 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: Pat Libero didn’t attend the previous meeting and abstained
All remaining board members were in favor
Minutes are approved.

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

D.4. New Business

17-06 Approval of the West Haven Department of Education School Calendar 2017-2018
Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-06
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion
Discussion: Neil stated these are the same start and end dates as discussed in the beginning of the year with ACES recommendation. We filled in the additional two non-certified holidays and when the visiting days are and those kinds of things.
All board members were in favor
Motion Carries
Item 17-06 is approved

17-07 Architect to present plans and specifications for the May V. Carrigan Intermediate School Roof Replacement Project
Roger LaFleur of PM Resources gave a presentation of the project along with Tom Hibbard from Hibbard and Rosa Architects. Questions were asked by board member and responses were given to them.
Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-07
Rosa Richardson made the motion accept the plans and specifications for the May V. Carrigan Roof Replacement Project as stated
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion
Discussion: All board members were in favor
Motion Carries
Item 17-07 is approved

17-08 Approval of Field Trip to Barcelona, Spain April 8th – 14th for five 8th grade students from Bailey Middle School who will be accompanied by two math teachers from Bailey Middle School

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-08
Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve
Susan Walker seconded the motion
Discussion: Bob Guthrie asked Dr. Cordone if this trip was already booked and paid for. There was an informational approval for the two teachers to gather information; which they did get. Once the agenda was fulfilled it would come before the board. There was a lot of unstructured time where we wanted the two teachers in charge wanted more structure to do different things and the company agreed to do this but had to look into it. This agenda wasn’t finalized until mid-February and at that point the two teachers sent over that agenda to the Superintendent. Bob asked if there were students who wanted to get that didn’t have the funds to go. Dr. Cordone said not to his knowledge. Bob Guthrie said this originally started in May of 2016 and now here the board is being asked to approve something at the 11th hour with a couple of weeks’ notice. This puts the board in a bad position maybe without the board fully vetting it. Dr. Cordone understands that and the teachers understood it also from the very onset of this project and that is why when they asked permission to go forward they did get it and then the agenda wasn’t completed to the specifications that they wanted for middle school kids until February and that is when they submitted the agenda to the Superintendent asking for permission. You are absolutely right it should have come earlier but we couldn’t come before you without knowing exactly what was going to take place. One of the teachers was in the audience and said they are working with EF Tours and West Haven High School has used them many times traveling. We wanted to gear our itinerary more towards a middle school age group and there were a few things on the itinerary we didn’t agree with. We wanted a little bit more of a cultural experience for the kids. We met with parent and students and they are very excited about the trip. We apologize and understand the lateness in the game. Chairman Morrissey thanked her. Rosa Richardson asked if the teachers are being compensated for this trip and what is the purpose. In May we opened it to every 7th and 8th grader and had an open meeting at Bailey and had about 30 to 35 parents and students attend. Dr. Cordone put in also put in an All Call so we had that as well. Of those students and parents who did come we had the five who went ahead. They are not being compensated salary wise but part of the trip is being paid; just like the high school when they travel. They are going to Italy this year.
Chairman Morrissey asked if there were any more questions from the board.
Seeing none all those in favor.
Bob Guthrie was opposed
All other board members were in favor.
Motion Carries
Item 17-08 is approved

17-09 2017 Alliance Grant Application

Roger LaFleur said West Haven qualified for a second year of Alliance Grant. Last year it was 2.7M and this year it is 1.08M. He met with the administration and Mike McGrath and Chris Everone and a lot of thought went into how to best pick the projects that will benefit the schools. The rule of this is that you can’t pick a project that also qualifies for school construction grant money. They have eleven projects. He said there is a possibility that not all eleven will be approved by the state. What will happen is the money scheduled for projects not accepted by the state would come off the list and we would get two more months to resubmit on the alternate projects. So it is not that you lose the money we would have another bite at the apple. A further discussion took place. Questions were asked by board members and responded to. The board thanked Mr. LaFleur.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-09
Rosa Richardson made the motion to accept the Alliance Grant Application
Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
Discussion: Neil said we will hear within 30 days and that way we will have plenty of time to submit a second round should we need to.
All board members were in favor
Motion Carries
Item 17-09 is approved

F. Informational

Pat Libero said we have a retirement letter from Maria Giovannini a Data Support Specialist and one of the people I have worked with throughout the years. I am glad for her that she is retiring but I am sorry to see her go. She is a great lady and she will be missed. Pat said you will have big shoes to fill for that position. Neil said this is a pretty important job in our school district. Everything we submit to the state is recorded and money is based on that so it is certainly a job we will have to fill one way or another.
Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Karen Pacelli seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary
WHHS is gearing up for the Connecticut SAT on April 5th and Sophomore CAPT testing in April. There will be a free diagnostic SAT offered on March 11th and SAT and CAPT Prep Session on both March 25th and April 1st from 9am - noon.

Good luck to the Boys Basketball team playing in the first round of the state tournament tonight at 7pm in Darien.

Good luck to the Boys Hockey team who will play in the first round of the state tournament on Wednesday at 6:30pm.

Tickets for the spring musical, Annie, are on sale now for the March 23, 24, and 25th performances.

The Mock Trial team is on a winning streak and played in the third round of quarterfinals today.

March 18th is the Boys and Girls Swim Team Alumni meet at 4pm at the Pool. Tickets are $3.

Congratulations to boys hockey coach Joe Morrell on being named the Southern Connecticut Conference Division I Coach of the Year and to hockey players Pete Richeletti and Alex Lynch, who were named to the SCC First Team, and Brendan Serenson and Max Lynch, who were named to the SCC Second Team.

Congratulations to the West Haven Sacred Heart Academy Girls Hockey Team on winning the Southern Connecticut Conference Division II championship!

Congratulations to Girls Hockey Coach Erin Blake (SCC Division II Coach of the Year) and Gabi Prisco (SCC Division II Player of the Year). Taylor Nowak was named SCC Division II Most Outstanding Player. Gabi Prisco and Veronica Lynn also named to the All SCC First Team.

The PTSA is hosting Bingo at Cielo tomorrow night at 6:30pm. Doors open at 6. Please join them in this fundraiser for Senior Scholarships.

WHHS collected over 1000 cans in the Food Drive Challenge for WHEAT and earned the Senior Scholarship Fund $1,000 due to the generosity of the Law Offices of Vincent Amendola, the Ed Marcus Law Firm, the Law Offices of Jerome Lacobelle, Jr. and the Law Office of Anne R. Leavitt.

The Dance Team placed 7th in the States.

The Cheerleading team placed third at their national competition in Florida.