The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on May 1, 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 4:00 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:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Andrew Gordon
David O’Brien

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairman Morrissey asked if anyone would like to address the board this evening. Dana Paredes, 54 Barbara Lane, West Haven, CT is here as a representative of the West Haven High School Attendance Committee. Each year they invite two board members to serve on our panel when we do our attendance hearings. It really adds something to the panel to have the unbiased perspective of members of the board who are not familiar with the student. It is a nice peek into the high school. The board gave thanks.
Chairman Morrissey asked Rosa and Patrick if they would like to be on the panel again this year and both responded that they would like to be. Chairman Morrissey asked three times if anyone else wanted to speak. There were no other speakers. Public Session closed at 4:03 PM.

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro thanked the board and those in attendance for changing the time of the meeting to allow him, Anne, several administrators and some board members to attend the retirement celebration for Steve Lopes; we do appreciate that.

Superintendent Cavallaro introduced Kristen Naiden and Maria DelVecchio who talked about the trip to Spain they took along with five students from Bailey. They showed an overhead with pictures of the places the students visited and various buildings and museums. Saturday was the travel day and Sunday they arrived in Barcelona and met up with another group with 35 students from Washington D.C. who they traveled with. On Tuesday they changed their schedule to go to the Dali Museum and the Nou Stadium as all of our students were soccer players and wanted to see the Stadium. They were able to go on a tour and go into the locker room and sit where all the interviews take place. They were able to get close to the field and the kids really enjoyed this. All the kids worked very well together and helped each other out. It was an amazing time. A few of the places they visited in addition to the Dali Museum were the Picasso Museum, the Mercat de la Boqueria, the Picasso Art Workshop, the Spanish Guitar workshop and bike and walking tours of Barcelona. This was a very kid related educational trip. The students said they wouldn’t change anything about the trip. They are looking into another trip next year. The board gave thanks.

Pat Libero gives them a lot of credit for taking students to another country. She has been on the band trips and Disney trips but you are somewhere in the United States. The students learned how to use the Metro and the map so they were navigating the city and they talked about currency exchange. It was a great learning experience.

Chairman Morrissey asked if next year they would be returning to Spain again. They said they were possibly looking at Peru but they wanted to get more information and the price. Peru seems to be similar to the Barcelona trip as you are in Lima and do the historical part of Lima and then you go to Machu Pichu to see the countryside and learn about the culture and history there. These students are taking social studies and Latin America plays a big part along with all of the places we talked about that are on this tour. The board gave thanks.

Superintendent Cavallaro stated they went before the City Council last week to talk about our budget. We received a large amount of support from all the different employees. We had close to 200 people in attendance supporting education and our budget. The deadline for the City Council to pass a budget and adopt a mill rate is Thursday, May 4th. There is
no way at this point that the state will have any final numbers. Neil said if he had to pick whether it would look more like Governor Molloy’s proposal or a status quo budget he would say more in the line of a status quo budget. We were hoping that the Special Ed formula would change which would give us a little more money directly. We were well received and the City Council appreciated some of the cost saving measures we have implemented. We have worked closely with the City Council and the administration and will continue to do so.

Matt Cavallaro stated that it is more likely as this plays out that our budget will be made up of ECS and the Excess Cost Grant again like this current year. We have prepared to operate next year with no increase added and we are working to get to that number and we are confident we will be when July 1 rolls around. If any additional money does come to the city in the form of a Special Ed Grant we stand to benefit. We are in good shape now and we will be ready to go come the next fiscal year.

Patrick Leigh asked what the state deadline is for the budget. Neil said the legislative session is supposed to end June 6th. Patrick asked then how long do they have? Neil said they can go into special session and it may even go past July 1st which is when the new fiscal year is supposed to start. Patrick asked when you usually get funds from the state; July 1st? Matt said for ECS it comes twice a year sometime in July, August or September and the second time it comes around in March, April or May. Neil told Patrick that this is revenue that the city anticipates when they give us our amount so it is not going to affect us as much as it will affect the city. Patrick said that is if they even go with the cost sharing like they have today right? No, Matt said ECS will still be in play regardless if it is the same way they are funding education currently or if we go with the governor’s proposal; there is still an ECS component to the revenue for education. The only thing that would change is if the governor’s proposal is adopted then special education will be funded differently. There will be a new stand-alone grant which will be pretty significant for West Haven but if that doesn’t come to fruition we would just go back to the excess cost reimbursement style from the state.

Karen Pacelli said you stated you are not quite there yet with the no increase but you aren’t looking at any cuts or anything are you? No, it is still pretty early and some of the retirements haven’t come in and that is how we balance our budget every year with retirements and some teachers taking positions in other towns and we will start receiving this in the next few weeks and that is how we get to that number.

Bob Guthrie asked what we receive for funds for Medicaid funding for services provided. Matt said it varies year to year and we are trying to be more aggressive and hired a company who helps us with our Medicaid reimbursement and we are trying to claim transportation and have them go after the services that are provided for students that are outsourced to ACES etc. We are looking to get our revenue up and this year it is around $300,000.00 – $400,000.00. Bob said that National School Board brought it up today as an alert that if the Affordable Care Act is appealed that funding is eliminated starting July 1 for any school district. Neil said this has been huge for us to see the money increase over the last several years. Bob is looking at it from a local level and if it is not coming
from somewhere else how is it going to be made up? Matt said it can be made up through our federal grants. The IDA and the IDA Preschool Grant is where we would make up the majority of that lack of funding but if it goes away we will see some pain. The good thing about the company we use is that we don’t have a contract with them and they only receive a small percentage of the money they generate for us and if we aren’t generating any money we don’t have to pay them.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we are hiring a math teacher for next year who is an experienced math teacher and is currently working in another district. We are hiring her because we knew about the resignation from the person who is resigning tonight. This is a shortage area and if you can get a good teacher now it is to our advantage. Math teachers are more marketable than an elementary teacher so it is in our best interest to get this job filled.

Superintendent Cavallaro said the Healthy Food Initiative is done a little differently this year. We have always done the Healthy Food Initiative where we receive reimbursement on the lunches we serve. Tonight we also have to pass an exemption which allows us to sell food at the rink and the concession stand at the stadium and for after school activities beyond school hours. This is a new process this year and that is why we sent home all the information.

Dr. Druzolowski said this week we have the Arts Festival. The first one is always K-12. We have all of the schools participating with artwork for each grade level in each school. In one room you will see the senior artwork set up separately and you will see the rest all divided up by schools and grade. This is a beautiful experience and is being held at the Savin Rock Conference Center from 4:30 to 7:30 on May 3rd. The highlight is the art but we also show off some of our other talent; the jazz bands, dancing, and opera in our schools. On Thursday, May 4th is the Pre-K which includes all the readiness sites that participate so this is a great way for Pre-K children and their families to experience different arts and art forms in the program while they are walking around and looking at their art work. There will also be chalk art outside.

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

C.1.c. Board
Rosa Richards thanked the board, Marylou, Neil and Anne for the beautiful arrangement she received while she was recovering. Chairman Morrissey said it is good to have you back.

Pat Libero attended the WHHS Band Concert which was fabulous. She also attended the play at Bailey and her great niece was Mrs. Potts. The kids were fabulous it was a great play and they did a great job. This is a nice introduction to the high school drama classes and they did a nice job.
Rosemary Russo said she, Jim Morrissey and Susan Walker were able to tour Bailey and Carrigan and we mainly focused on Special Ed classrooms with learning labs and saw classes with inclusion. It is always good to see how hard teachers and paraprofessionals in those classrooms work. Some of the behaviors in the classroom are very, very challenging and they are kind and considerate and demanding of those children to what they can do. Rosemary thanked Dr. Cordone and Frank Paolino for allowing us to visit your schools. Rosemary was also at the budget meeting last week and said it was nice to hear all the City Council members thanking Neil and the board for working so diligently on the budget and for all that you and the teachers and paraprofessionals do. It is Teacher Appreciation Week and you all are appreciated. It made me feel good to hear council members talk about how great West Haven education is. Neil agrees and thinks the public meetings they had really went a long way in giving them a good understanding of what we do, how we develop our budget, along with the things we have tried to do to save some money.

Sue Walker also went to Carrigan and Bailey and has always thought through her years of teaching it takes very special people to work in Special Ed and she gives them a whole lot of credit; she is sure there is a special place in heaven for all of you. It was very interesting to see the classes and how they work. She also attended the Jazz Concert last week which featured Rachel Mekeel directing Bailey’s Jazz Band which is incredible for a band that practices after school; they were so impressive. Phyllis Silver had her Bel Canto and Camerata Choirs perform together and they sang a few songs. Phyllis was not done yet because when the keyboardist from the WHHS Jazz Band (which performed magnificently) had an accident that day and had a concussion Phyllis ended up filling in at the very last minute. This shows you what kind of a musician and magician she is to get that done. It was a fantastic job. Next year Sue recommends everyone attend. Sue was at a book club with some teachers from Bailey and they really loved the cupcakes.

Bob Guthrie attended the Bailey School Governance Council with a presentation by Dr. Henry Lee. Bob thanked Dr. Lee and the Bailey PTA and UNH for giving the parents of students that wonderful opportunity. He also had the opportunity to attend the Bailey Middle School Production of Beauty and the Beast Jr. and it was a job well done. Bob also attended the budget meeting and he thanked all the staff that was there that gave support to Neil and the board. He did take notice that only 9 out of 13 council members found their way to attend that meeting to discuss the Board of Education’s Budget. Bob asked the Superintendent if they could receive enrollment numbers twice a year September 1st and June 1st showing where the Magnet School numbers will be so we know if those kids in district had to come back what we would be looking at with both classroom size and building size. Neil said he will get this from Maria.

Jim Morrissey said last week Kathy Johnson received the PTA Teacher of the Year for the State of Connecticut and he attended the dinner which was quite a dinner. He is so proud of her for being PTA Teacher of the Year. Jim has known Kathy since first grade at St. Lawrence Grammar School and they graduated WHHS together. He always knew she would be a special person and it showed by the PTA honoring her as PTA Teacher of the Year. Two of her students also showed up that evening and surprised her which was
really nice. He knows how hard all the teachers work on behalf of the school system. The PTA statewide recognizes the hard work of our teachers also and we are very proud of Kathy for this achievement. He congratulated all the teachers on Teacher Appreciation Week. He did get a call and this is no fault of anybody but only the teachers received the cupcakes and he believes we should also have them for paras. He witnessed firsthand the wonderful job our teachers and our paras do in our schools. Perhaps we can do something for the paras also this week; they do a great job. There was no slight intended. It was a good deed that the board and administration did. He has a great respect for the paras and wants to thank them for their hard work.

Pat Libero said she agrees with Jim and thinks the paras do a really hard job and it is not one she would want to do. They put up with a lot of things especially in some of those classrooms it is difficult.

Chairman Morrissey said we are working together with our teachers, paras and administrators because unfortunately it is getting tougher and tougher out there with the dollar and it is not easy. He wishes he could wave a magic wand and get some more money to appear. He is not sure about the state budget but thinks it looks a little more positive than negative with money from the state so if we can somehow help our staff out that would be greatly appreciated.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Bailey Middle School cafeteria, 106 Morgan Lane, West Haven, CT at 5:02 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.a. Karen Pacelli made the motion to approve the minutes Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

Discussion: Rosa Richardson abstained as she wasn’t present at the previous meeting.

All other board members were in favor

Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

17-18 Sharon Salem, Math Teacher – West Haven High School
Effective: End of the academic year
Reason: Personal

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-18
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion

Discussion:
All board members were in favor

Motion Carries
Item 17-18 is approved

**17-19 Valerie Esposito**, Elementary Teacher – Carrigan  
Effective: June 30, 2017  
Reason: Retirement

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-19  
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve  
Pat Libero seconded the motion  
Discussion: Rosa wished her well in her retirement. Pat worked with her at Carrigan and said she is a great teacher who will be missed.  
All board members were in favor  
Motion Carries  
Item 17-19 is approved

**D.3. New Hire: (Certified)**

**17-20 Lauren O’Brien**, 24 Central Avenue, Milford, CT 06460 
Math Teacher – West Haven High School  
Effective: August 24, 2017  
Salary: $63,562 BS+30, Step 6

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-20  
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve  
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members were in favor  
Motion Carries  
Item 17-20 is approved

**D.4. New Business**

**17-21 West Haven’s NEDP Expansion II Grant**

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-21  
Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve  
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members were in favor  
Motion Carries  
Item 17-21 is approved

**17-22 Approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099) Healthy Food Certification Statement; Consideration 1 – Healthy Food Option**
Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-22
Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion
Discussion:
All board members were in favor
Motion Carries
Item 17-22 is approved

17-23 Approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education
Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)
Healthy Food Certification Statement; Consideration 2 – Exemption
for Food Items

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve item 17-23
Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion:
All board members were in favor
Motion Carries
Item 17-23 is approved

F. Informational

Pat Libero said Linda Miller is retiring and I want to thank her for all her years of service. She is a great lady and was great with all the kids she has ever worked with. We are going to miss her.

Chairman Morrissey said she is a wonderful woman and his three kids went to Mackrille School and she did a great job on behalf of all our students. She is a kind and caring person and she will be greatly missed. We wish her the best of luck.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn
Mark Palmieri made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary
SADD presented Grim Reaper Day on April 26th.

Congratulations to the WHHS and Bailey Jazz Bands and Bel Canto on an amazing concert last week.

The Junior Spring Fling Semi-Formal Dance was held Friday at Cielo. A good time was had by all.

CAPT testing for Sophomores and SAT testing for Juniors was held in April. All testing has been complete and the WHHS has exceeded the 95% participation goal.

AP Testing began today and will last for the next two weeks. Good luck to all students taking the AP tests.

The School Governance Council is looking for new members - teachers, students, parents and community members. Applications are available this week in the main office, on our website and on facebook.

The Senior Art Show will be held on Wednesday, May 3rd from 4:30pm-7:30pm at the Savin Rock Conference Center, featuring Chalk Art by the WHHS and Bailey Middle School Art classes.

WHHS is holding College Signing Day on Friday, May 12th at Cielo during periods 7 & 8. Partnering with the Reach Higher Initiative, we will be recognizing all seniors who have committed to a 2 or 4 year college or a branch of the Armed Forces. Students must sign up through Naviance. We invite all BOE members to join us.

The Charging Ahead initiative allows WHHS juniors and seniors to take one class for free in the spring or fall semester at UNH. Applications for the fall semester are due May 12.

Academic Integrity Students will begin performing skits at the elementary schools this month. They are also hosting karaoke night in the café on May 12th.

The Senior Directed play will be held on May 12th – Carnations & Caskets. Showtimes are 6pm and 7:30pm. Tickets are $5.

Westie Day of Hope and Westies on Wheels is hosting a Family Bingo Night on May 24th at 6pm at Cielo. Admission is $5.

The Senior Prom will be held on Thursday, May 25th at Cascade in Hamden.

Graduation will be held on Thursday, June 14th. Blue & White: Up All Night will be held following graduation at the Sports Center in Shelton. We are always looking for volunteers, so come join in on the fun!