The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on October 16, 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
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Palmieri

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairman Morrissey asked if anyone would like to address the board this evening. Suzanne Nally, 150 Ocean Avenue, West Haven, CT addressed the board in regard to the bus stop she discussed when she was here two weeks ago. She said she picked up the minutes but didn’t see anything written in the minutes and it is not on the internet yet either. She wanted to say that she had a hard time finding an email address and wanted to know what the follow through was from the last meeting.

Chairman Morrissey said your request is on the agenda this evening. OK. This will be discussed and voted on by the board tonight. OK. Thank you. Mrs. Nally said she will have to leave right after the vote because they are having a meeting at Bailey about the bus trip to Gloucester and she doesn’t want you to think she was rude by leaving.
Chairman Morrissey thanked her.
There were no other speakers. Public Session closed at 6:04 PM.
REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro pointed out that next week is parent visiting day at all the different schools. Each level has a different day. We are doing this earlier than in the past because we like to do it before the first report card comes out. It is a good idea to get parents in before grading students. Sometimes if you wait too long it is too late. We also felt that November was so broken there wasn’t a full week of school. We felt this was a better way to do it with the calendar and more helpful to students and parents.

Superintendent talked about communications that CABE and CAPSS put out regarding homeless students being relocated from Puerto Rico. We were one of 18 districts singled out the state of Connecticut where they expect a sizeable influx of students. At this point we don’t believe there are going to be any more resources but we believe we will be able to handle students coming in over the next couple of months. We are to treat them as homeless students and will support them as best we can. We may take them without records and we will give them ample time to get physicals. The directive from the State Department of Education is to get the kids in school because they have had enough disruption in their lives. Rosa Richardson asked if most of these students are English language learned or are they taught English in their classrooms. Neil said that is a good question. We are concerned because at the high school because we have a large population of ESL students so we will be able to provide them with resources. Neil is worried about the kids coming with interrupted service where they haven’t been to school. We have seen this a lot with kids coming from Mexico and different islands so it is a good question but don’t have the answer but whatever services they are entitled to we have to support them. Rosa will be at the CABE seminar tomorrow and will ask this question then. Chairman Morrissey asked if there were any questions for Superintendent Cavallaro.

Patrick Leigh asked Neil if they are considered U.S. citizens. Yes they are. Do we anticipate a large volume of new transportation services? If they go to a temporary shelter but have some kind of connection to West Haven and use the West Haven address and then they are relocated. So Neil thinks it may be the first move after they actually register where we could have additional transportation services. If not we would just use our regular school buses and transport them. How do they develop their nexus? Neil thinks someone looked at our population and said West Haven has a high Puerto Rican population and to expect an influx of students.

Rosemary Russo said a lot of students won’t have records and what do we do about students who say they had an IEP with services but we have no documentation. Neil said we would immediately go to PPT and do some kind of assessment. Even if they are not special ed we would have to give them some kind of reading and/or math assessment to get a general idea. Do we have enough special ed classes or do we wait and see what happens. We would assess them immediately and the first thing is to make them feel welcome and go from there. Rosemary said she thinks the challenge will be the numbers. Patrick asked if we know the approximate number of possible students. No there were 18 districts and we were one of them where they expect an influx. Patrick asked what would
be a number we couldn’t handle. It depends; they will be spread out from kindergarten to grade 12 so in schools with high ELL populations if those schools were to get more kids it would be a drain on those services. Patrick asked if the state said if they will be staying. They did not; Neil’s guess is they would rather be home but who knows what will happen. Of course so there is no indication. No there is none. This is something that I felt needed to be brought to the board’s attention and we are monitoring this closely and will keep you posted.

Neil stated that the board may need to have a special meeting prior to the end of this month to approve the next phase of the high school project and the educational specs. The professionals will be here to answer your questions.

Bob Guthrie said the Governor put out another adjustment budget that showed the Alliance Districts losing money and he doesn’t know if they saw the percentage or how much. Matt went through it quickly but thought West Haven gained a little money in the new budget. He will go through it again and send out an email. Bob asked Matt for a projection as to what a status quo budget for next year would look like; with the contractual obligations like insurance etc. Sure. Neil said we started preliminary discussions because we see it coming as well. Patrick said based on the numbers he was looking at today he thinks we gained around $500,000.00 to $1,000,000.00. Bob asked if this was with the cuts to the Alliance Districts. That is what it looked like when Patrick was putting the numbers together today from the spread sheet. Thank you.

Chairman Morrissey asked the status of the student intern. Superintendent Cavallaro said he came here last week and is working with Tammy. He is revising the website and getting us back up and running on social media. He has to do 150 hours in the semester which begins in January and is putting in time now to become familiar with our system.

C.1.b. Student Representatives’ Report

There were no student representatives present tonight.

C.1.c. Board

Karen Pacelli went to the football game Saturday night. Our team looks great and is doing very well. Pat Libero said how did the band sound? The band sounded good. Pat Libero thanked everyone who came out for the Autumn on the Sound Walk that was sponsored by Fisher House and also benefitted Pam Gardner. It was a great day in the rain with a great turnout. They more than doubled their numbers and Pam was able to go for a while and thank everybody.

Sue Walker has been on the committee to choose the State Teacher of the Year for 20 years and the new State Teacher of the Year is Erin Berthold a first grade teacher at Cook Hill School in Wallingford. She uses a lot of technology with the students and also introduces them to foreign languages. She is fantastic. Sue wishes we could get back in the process of electing a teacher of the year every year. There are a lot of opportunities
for district teachers of the year that there were not before and it is a good process. Neil said that was normally done in conjunction with the federation. Yes and they kind of dropped it. Neil said maybe you and I can sit down with Kristen because we do have worthy teachers. Sue said we have very many worthy teachers. Neil knows it is a rigorous process and perhaps we can get a committee together to help with your expertise.

Sue also wanted to discuss the English Department at the High School. She heard teachers left and have not been replaced and she has heard that the numbers in the classes are very high. Sue would like to see what the numbers are in the English classes at the high school being the one subject that everybody has to take.

Bob Guthrie said CABE has their upcoming delegate assembly on Thursday, November 16th from 3 to 6 in Groton and based on size this board is allowed two votes. If there are two members of this board who have the opportunity to go we will have two votes.

Chairman Morrissey attended Autumn on the Sound for Pam Gardner and it was well attended by the faculty, staff, and students from WHHS who came out to support Pam who was there that day. We are praying for her every day. It was a great day. A lot of West Haven people went out there on behalf of Pam. Jim did run in the race and came in first in his division but he thinks he was the only person in his division. (Laughter). Pat asked if he got a trophy; yes he did, Pat said so did Mackenzie. Chairman Morrissey said our thoughts and prayers are sent out to Pam from all the board.

Rosa said we didn’t forget our challenge with the City Council (Who brings the most food for WHEAT). Bags of non-perishable items will be collected until November 6th.

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 Monday, October 2, 2017 at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.a. Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the minutes Karen Pacelli seconded the motion Discussion: Pat Libero abstained as she didn’t attend the last meeting. All other board members present were in favor Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)
D.4. New Business

17-88 The West Haven Penalty Box Club would like approval to begin a brick fundraiser at Bennett Rink. All profits would be shared between the Penalty Box Club and Bennett Rink.

Superintendent Cavallaro said this is something that the Penalty Box Club, Chris Everone and the people at the rink have been talking about for years. They feel this is a nice way to make money and to clean up the entrance. They need over 800 bricks. The Penalty Box Club wants to open it up first to former players and it will then be opened up to Youth Hockey, Board of Education members and Neil may take one as the Superintendent and they agreed to members of the girl’s teams as well. This is a nice thing and will enhance the area and allow the Rink and Penalty Box to make some money and show that Westie Pride. Karen Pacelli asked if by share they know what percentage? 50/50. Pat Libero asked how much are the bricks? This hasn’t been finalized yet. Rosa Richardson asked how the board handles bringing funds in. The Rink has its own account. Because it is self-sustaining they have a revenue account. OK. Bob Guthrie asked who will have the final control as to what goes on the bricks to make sure there is nothing inappropriate. Will that be through Mr. Morrell or whoever the Rink Manager might be? Neil would guess that Joe would oversee the final say and we are not going to put anything inappropriate on a brick. If Joe or Chris leaves who controls this? Do you list it as a staff member affiliated with the athletics at WHHS or do you put the Rink Manager. Neil said if the board were to cover themselves we should say the Rink Manager would have final say and that will always be an employee of ours. Rosa said we can be very specific in our guidelines for purchasing the brick. It can be the student athlete’s name and the year they graduated. Neil said it is the student’s name, the years they played with two blue devils. Patrick Leigh thanked Neil for his clarification as he played youth hockey in West Haven and then attended Notre Dame but that was still his home rink and he felt he would really like to have a brick there. He is glad that this is part of the phase approach. Neil said at the end of the day there will be plenty of bricks to sell and the idea is to make money. Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion.

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the purchase of a brick by former players with their name, years of playing and two blue devils engraved on the brick. Karen Pacelli seconded the motion.

Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro would add with the understanding that before the next phase starts they would come back to the board before allowing other people to purchase a brick.

All board members present were in favor.

Motion carries.

Item 17-88 is approved.

17-89 Request was made to add an additional bus stop on Annawon Avenue and Ocean Avenue.

Chairman Morrissey stated a request was made to add an additional bus stop on Annawon Avenue and Ocean Avenue by a parent at our last meeting. Chairman Morrissey had
asked board members to go there and look at that particular area to get their thoughts and concerns. We would like to bring this up for discussion tonight and have a motion one way or the other. With that said is there discussion on this particular matter.

Discussion: Rosemary Russo went the next day to the bus stop and from what she saw it really wasn’t very different than the bus stop that is in existence now. She also was there when a bus was dropping students off at the existing bus stop and it was very orderly. Students just walked off the bus and went on their way. She doesn’t feel that it is dangerous for a 7th or 8th grader to walk down Ocean Avenue to stand at the corner of Nashawena and Ocean from what she saw. Mrs. Nally said there were six to seven kids at that bus stop which I think has adequate space for six or seven 7th and 8th graders.

Patrick Leigh went there a couple of nights later and thought the inherent risk was the same on either bus stop if we were to move it or keep it where it was.

Rosa Richardson made two trips there and she obviously took note of the brush being overgrown but the issues that were discussed about overgrown brush are not board of education issues but either blight or police issues. Other than that Rosa didn’t see any real need to move the bus stop.

Bob Guthrie also rode by and said there is blight and zoning enforcement could assist if there is an issue in cleaning up the property. The contact for this would be Mr. Withington and the Mayor’s office is the first point of contact. There was no further discussion.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion on this particular matter
Rosa Richardson made the motion to deny the request for an additional bus stop
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
Motion carries

F. Informational

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Karen Pacelli seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary