A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education with an Executive Session was held on March 19, 2018 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 Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman  
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair  
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer  
Lauren A. Aceto  
Patrick Leigh  
Patricia Libero  
James W. Morrissey  
Karen Facelli  
Rosa Richardson

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor Nancy Rossi

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Sumedha Chowdhury  
Julia Walker

Before starting the public portion of the meeting Chairwoman Russo said she will turn the meeting over to Superintendent Cavallaro for a moment of silence. Superintendent Cavallaro thanked Chairwoman Russo for allowing him to speak about Nancy Plant who recently passed away and was a paraprofessional. Superintendent Cavallaro stated that he and Nancy went back 20 or more years to Thompson School where he met her during the summer and she also was the PTA President. No one was more energetic or who would do more for any student or for the school. Nancy became one of those people at the elementary school who you would rely on to do just about anything. One day she would be answering the phones in the office, the next day she would be cooking the lunches and the next day she would be working with the reading teacher making up tests and things like that. After I left Thompson we remained close. We hired Nancy as a
Literacy Teacher and then she became a paraprofessional and worked over at Carrigan. Frank Paolino and I nominated her several years back to be a candidate for state wide paraprofessional of the year and we were really disappointed she wasn’t chosen because we thought we had a good candidate. Nancy took ill several months back and she died a lot sooner than anticipated; unfortunately, her illness took its toll on her rather quickly. I know that Nancy will be missed throughout the school district because she was just such a happy, positive person. She worked with the most difficult kids at Carrigan. I am happy to say her oldest daughter who was a student at Thompson when I was the Principal is a teacher in our district and by all accounts a really good one. We are all going to miss Nancy and I thank you for allowing me to speak and now we will observe a Moment of Silence for Nancy. Thank you.

B. Public Portion of Meeting
Chairwoman Russo opened up public session and asked three times if anyone would like to address the board this evening. There were no speakers.

REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools
Superintendent Cavallaro said Mayor Rossi released her budget last week and we had requested approximately 1.7 or 1.8M and we received about $400,000.00. Needless to say that is going to be a challenge to make the budget work. Every year at this time it is a two month long process and we are committed to working with the administration and the City Council to do what we can to try and put together a document that keeps allowing the education system to move forward. It is not time to panic yet but frankly if we had to move forward with the budget Superintendent Cavallaro thinks there would be some reductions in service but again we will leave that as we work through the process. It is getting more and more difficult each year.

We were disappointed because Anne Druzolowski was going to speak to the board and there was supposed to be a curriculum committee meeting about some of the progress we are making and we are looking forward to that. One of the reasons we had to postpone the curriculum committee meeting tonight was because we have Parent’s Visiting Night at the elementary schools so the administrators wanted to be here for this presentation and we are looking forward to that. We have CABE coming next month so it looks like that meeting will take place in May.

Superintendent Cavallaro complimented the three schools that participated in last Thursday’s Walk Out Demonstration Observance for School Safety. The walkout at WHHS went extremely well and was well organized. There was a very serious tone by the students and staff that participated. Neil thanked the students at the high school, our administration, and the West Haven Police Department. When the kids walked out it was a safe environment with plenty of police officers to make sure the event went well and it did go well. Neil respects the kids for the serious tone and the way they handled the event. It is important to mention Rich Weber at Carrigan and Rob Bohan at Bailey; neither of those schools walked out but they did certain events to observe it and make the kids aware and will try to keep the height of awareness over the next couple of weeks.
Neil is very proud of the students, staff and administrators for working with the kids to make it an important event of school safety.

Next month Chairwoman Russo will have an Early Childhood Committee Meeting and we will have finished our kindergarten registration. Superintendent Cavallaro shared some brief numbers that are important. Dr. Stefania Larry will do a breakdown of the numbers again later but these are the numbers Neil received today. We have about 315 kids for registration and currently have registered at Washington School 62 kids with four teachers. These numbers will increase throughout the summer as this is the first round.

Savin Rock has 75 kids with five teachers and there could be some switching around based on the enrollment numbers. Pagels has 34 kids registered with three kindergartens currently. Mackrille has 32 kids with four teachers and Seth Haley has 46 kids with three teachers and Forest 66 kids with four teachers. Raffaela Fronc who is in charge of our ELL Program gave Neil numbers that show out of the 315 students 87 are listed as ELL students whose primary language is something other than English. Our three Title I schools are Savin Rock which has 26, Forest has 22 and Washington has 17 which aren’t the largest numbers. We have about 470 kindergarten students right now and we might not get that high but these are kids who will be in need of service. Stefania will give you more specific data next month. This is something the board needs to keep in mind as we go through our budget process because if we have to cut back those are the services and if we don’t want to lose classroom teachers where do you go. Stefania will break down the special ed kids and who is coming in with an IEP. Patrick Leigh asked if we have gotten the demographics for this year for the forecast for next year and what our total special population will be; is it growing or is it stagnant. He knows it is about 19%. Neil said Stefania will give you that information. Chairwoman Russo asked out of the 87 ELL kids do they have any idea how many different languages there are. Neil has an excel spreadsheet from Raffaela that has an exact breakdown. There are a lot of Spanish and Turkish and some Creole speaking students so it is a wide variety with a high Turkish population. The board gave thanks.

Bob Guthrie asked if there were any expected changes to the budget timeline. Mayor Rossi said the timeline as far as she knows will still be the same. It goes in the first Thursday in May but that doesn’t mean that the MARB isn’t going to change anything until they look at it. Right now we are expecting the same timeline. We are due there April 5th and 10:00 AM is the beginning of the meeting however Hartford goes first so chances are we won’t be getting on until much later. There will be a meeting in May as well. Bob said with the unknown timeline do you think it would be in our interest to have some preliminary meetings about where any cuts can be made. He agrees it is not time to panic but not knowing what may happen with the state or how late this may come back to us. Neil said of course but we are not ready to meet yet. He has spoken with Anne, Matt, Jolene and Joe Lucibello and we are putting together possible areas to make some cuts if need be. Bob knows with this budget getting the communications job back would be the last thing to occur. Would it be an appropriate time for this board, the chairman or the Superintendent to respond to UNH expressing the disappointment with the intern? Superintendent Cavallaro said the intern’s primary supervisor was his assistant Tammy Mursko and she sent a letter as required saying the student had met the minimum
requirements. If it is a pass fail course the student will pass but Neil thinks we were expecting a little bit more.

Jim Morrissey said didn’t we talk about the possibility of having another student from UNH. Neil said we will contact them again we are not opposed to doing this. Depending on whom the candidate is it could be hit or miss. He will see what we can line up. The difficulty is finding a student who can give us the time we need.

Rosa Richardson said why doesn’t the BOE look to the city and see if they can let Mike Walsh their Communications person who is responsible for the city website have the board pick up a stipend for him or something to that effect. Neil said we are open to all types of discussion with the city in an effort to save money and to consolidate services. As long as it doesn’t deal with instruction we are open to any kind of combination of services that we can do. Rosa would like the Chair and Neil to look into this and have that discussion. OK. There were no other questions.

C.1.b. Student Representatives’ Report
The report will be found at the end of the minutes and the Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held March 29th at 7:00 PM. The board gave thanks.

C.1.c. Board
Jim Morrissey said we proposed a 1.7M budget and Mayor Rossi is giving us $400,000.00. You did mention reduction of services and I know we are really lean as we speak right now. So you really haven’t sat down with Anne or Matt at this point. Superintendent Cavallaro said no we have and we have come up with some preliminary ideas and frankly at this point we are concerned however again we have two months to work through the process. Jim is hoping the City Council could find some money because he doesn’t see how we will be able to fill our needs for the educational system in West Haven with $400,000.00. He knows the city has to account for every dollar but it seems like every time we look to reduce the education side of the budget gets killed to be honest with you. Teachers come to meeting all the time and they do a great job on our behalf but I know they are totally stretched to the max. He doesn’t know how they will be able to continue to do a quality job if we keep reducing them all the time. Education will be really hurting in West Haven in the coming year if we are only getting this amount of money.

Chairwoman Russo thanked Jim and said it is important to know when the public session for the budget is. Mayor Rossi said March 27th. She doesn’t set that date the Finance Chair set it for that night at Bailey School she believes at 6:00 PM or 7:00 PM but is not definite about the time as she has so many meetings to attend but it is definitely at Bailey on Tuesday the 27th. Chairwoman Russo said this is an important meeting for all of us to attend to show our support for the BOE.in that

Patrick Leigh attended the Mayor’s budget proposal meeting and was honestly shocked by the amount we were receiving; $396,000.00; especially because this budget was a status quo budget to insure that the contractual obligations were met for next year. The
only thing this means is that we are going to have to reduce our services and our people. As Finance Chair he is going to insure that we have regular scheduled meetings and we will work with the administration and Mayor Rossi to make sure that we can either find more funding or come up with a great plan to make sure no one gets laid off. The board gave thanks.

Rosa Richardson said to the Chair of Finance can I ask for clarification here. We are all under dire straits at this point OK but we got a 0% the year before so the 0% the year before has to have a dramatic impact on the $400,000.00 this year so I just want to clarify that. What was our requested budget last year? Patrick said 1.2 right….Rosa said we got 0 and this year we are at 1.9…. Patrick said and we got lucky with retirements….Right but…..Patrick said and our pool is getting smaller and smaller. Rosa said right I understand but…..Superintendent Cavallaro said the concern is and Bob you lead the charge it has been historically the concern over the last 10 to 12 years. Rosa said we rely more on the state than we do on our taxpayer budget. Neil said the state funding has become lopsided. Rosa doesn’t see this changing overnight but we are looking at an elimination of at least 13 positions just in the labor clerical on the city side so we are all taking the hit and she doesn’t know about management but she can attest to 13 jobs that have been eliminated in the 681 budget and we all have to do our part I get that and I don’t have a problem with that but we saw this coming. Every single one of us as board members over the years has emphasized this over and over again and now this is what we are up against. I hope that this doesn’t impact us in the educating of our children. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo understands Rosa’s frustration and thinks she is right because of the 0 last year and the 2M the year before that. A few years before Ed O’Brien we got 0 and I think as a board we have to look at this; it is not a political thing we have to be vigilant and really attend meetings and figure out a way to move West Haven educationally as a board as a whole. Rosa agrees but whether it is the raising of taxes or increasing the education budget the end all is that you need money in order to sustain your programs whether it is on the city side or the education side.

Karen Pacelli attended the School Counseling Advisory Council Meeting and Rose Paolino shared that in the fall they were trying out a college application campaign and the campaign people were looking for 100% participation in applying for college and in December we had 50% which Rose was very happy with as 50% of the seniors had applied by December. Rose will know by June as to how many students did apply but as of now she has 59% going to a four year college and shows 22% of our seniors attending a community college. She also sees an increase of a lot of our students going to Albertus Magnus. On April 5th there is a college planning night for grades 10 and 11and she would like to see all the parents of the students attend. On May 11th they are having their signing night which will be held in the auditorium this year. On March 23rd they are having a Gateway application day. She is looking to see even more of an increase for the community college by then. Karen thought Rose provided us with a lot of great information.
Bob Guthrie said Founder’s Day is next Wednesday. Marylou will you please get the document and have it sent to the board members again just to confirm the time and stuff like that. OK sure. Thank you.

Lauren Aceto said this is the first time she heard about the budget for the next school year and she hopes that the cuts that come along with this are not with people that are actually working directly with students whether they are teachers or paraprofessionals. You also mentioned that Savin Rock, Washington and Forest are Title I schools and she thinks it would be useful to hire some sort of Grant Writer that can do what they can to get money for the school system especially if we do have Title I Schools because she thinks that there is money that is available for us. Rosa Richardson said Anne Druzołowski is very good at putting the grants out; she does the grant writing for the Title I Schools; OK.

Pat Libero said she would love all of the board members to go to the play because two of our alumni are in the play Mark Hanke and my son Mark Denney and my 14 year old great niece Mackenzie Gardner so it is kind of a cool family thing. They asked three alumni but one couldn’t make it. The two Marks play a gay couple and Mark Hanke has two roles and plays a straight father so it should be fun. Pat has never seen the Spelling Bee so she is very excited about it. Pat also said the grant writing was explored a long time ago but doesn’t know what happened to it. Doesn’t the city have a grant writer? Pat asked if Anne needed help because sometimes she has a lot of things on her plate. Superintendent Cavallaro said we have utilized Eileen who is the city grant writer. Pat Libero said if we utilize that person is it possible to utilize Mike Walsh to help us with the website? I wish we were not in these dire straits because I truly loved it when we had the communications person. That really helped us with the parents and you would see on face book if there was a bus accident etc. It took a great burden off of the principals and secretaries when they were trying to deal with the kids in a situation. Everything was covered and it gives a really nice, positive presence for the school system. This is an important position to have in this day and age. Pat said we have very nice, kind, considerate kids in our community who are very talented and smart kids and she just wishes we got better press coverage to show this and that is one of the reasons she liked it when we had the press person and would like to see if we could get that position back again.

Susan Walker hopes there will be more money in the budget for education. When people go to budget hearings and see how much education takes up on the pie chart but what they don’t realize is less than half of that is the city and the rest of it is the state and federal government so it doesn’t really take up that much of the budget. Susan definitely doesn’t want to see any layoffs because all the people we have provide vital services and she wouldn’t want to have things like math coaches and language arts coaches and things like that cut because our scores have shown that those people are making a difference. Education is the best thing that West Haven can do it produces the future of our town and it is very important that we don’t neglect it and we kind of have because basically if someone leaves they don’t always get replaced and paras can attest to that and several other departments are having the same issues and hopes something positive can be done.
On a positive note as I mentioned last meeting how the WHHS Band was in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and they won second place as best high school band and will be given an award next month. Board members exclaimed Nice! Great!

Mayor Rossi commented on what everyone was talking about. As far as Michael Walsh she would have to find out how many hours we are looking at and whether or not he would be able to do it because although she released her budget it is still a work in progress and we don’t have coverage for IT so that is something I have to look into as well. As far as the Grant Writer obviously she has helped in the past and Mayor Rossi thinks it is a great idea that she continues in the future so long as they don’t go into overtime because if they go into overtime it is costing the city side. Everybody was not at the budget meeting and she wants everyone to understand that let’s hope that the 9M is still coming because had it not been for the cuts she made and the 9M that is now built into that budget the mill rate would have had to go up by 5 ½ mills and we would have a ghost town left. We are trying to do our best and it is in the city council’s hands now and the MARB. Mayor Rossi said just as you feel about your employees and getting cut she feels the same way about the city employees. Each one had a valuable job, each one of them did a hard day’s work and we are losing many positions or hours are being cut not only for the union but for appointed officials as well. We are trying our best to do a balancing act because there were some people who thought she should zero out the BOE because it was done last year and there wasn’t much squawk about it so do it again. She chose not to do that, unfortunately she cannot give us every dollar but thought it was not fair to the educational system to flat line. She welcomes all ideas from the BOE and City Council and will work with anyone and if there is a way of getting more money for education or more money to our city please let her know and she will look into every idea. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo said she has the same concerns as everyone does with the budget for the BOE next year. She thinks everyone in this room is pro-children and pro-education and we don’t have to say that because we wouldn’t be here if we weren’t. As Superintendent Cavallaro said we have two months to work on this and we really will have to go line by line and really dissect this budget to see what we can do so that no positions that directly involve children are cut. We have an up-hill battle and it will be hard but we will succeed one way or another because we have to do it for our children and the future of our children. Superintendent Cavallaro talked about the incoming kindergarten class and the number of ELL students and that is a very needy population. There is a lot of work that goes into and a lot of hours that go into that and a lot of dollars that go into that but under everybody’s guidance and the finance chair we will have to look at this very, very carefully and try the best we can. Yes, we were flat lined last year and yes there is a small increase this year and there was a larger increase two years ago; it doesn’t matter what it was in the past it is what we have right now and that is what we have to move from now onward and see where we go. Thank you.

C.1.d. Committee
Patrick Leigh said that now that the budget has been more formalized we kind of have a number that we are going to hit and I will reach out to Marylou and schedule meetings.
Bob Guthrie said that through the Superintendent and Chair he is requesting a policy committee meeting to start a discussion on crowd funding. We had a policy in place for the 2018 school year.

Pat Libero went to the last high school project meeting and will bring a map next time showing the new rooms that are going to be included. The bids came in and they are working on that and it seems that we are under budget which is nice. Things are going as planned. Rosa asked Pat if she was able to get a clarification on the glass. Yes, the bullet proof glass is in its own frame and it is very expensive and there are three or four different levels. Pat thinks we are the 2nd or 3rd level up and it is shatterproof and you can’t kick it in. Rosa said that is level 1 the vandal proof that you can’t kick in and then you have explosion proof which is level 2 and then bullet proof which is level 3. So they are going to put the lowest level of safety glass in there? No they are not putting in the bullet proof but she doesn’t think it is the cheapest one. She will get more information but with the bullet proof one you have to do your own frames and the other ones will fit into regular frames. Rosa really wants a precise clarification on that. Yes he is getting that for Pat. Thanks. Neil said the next meeting is tomorrow night and the council requested a similar presentation to what the board had a couple of months back. Next Monday the entire project team to the council meeting in case anyone is interested. Good that is great.

Chairwoman Russo said as Superintendent Cavallaro said we will be having an Early Childhood Committee Meeting will on April 2nd at 5:15 PM. Neil told Bob he can come up and he and Bob can get a sample ready for Bob’s Committee Meeting before that is scheduled. Chairwoman Russo said on May 7th we are having two committee meetings Health & Wellness and the Curriculum both start at 5:30 PM. Rosa said if you are attending a committee meeting; you don’t have to attend a different one scheduled at the same time. Chairwoman Russo said correct the committee chair will report what transpired at the next board meeting.

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, March 5, 2018 at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.a. Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
Discussion: Jim Morrissey abstained he wasn’t at the meeting.
All other board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.b. The West Haven Board of Education Pupil Services Committee Meeting was held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, March 5, 2018 at 5:15 PM.
Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Pupil Services Committee Meeting minutes D.1.b.
Karen Pacelli made the motion to approve the minutes
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. **Resignations: (Certified)**

**18-10 David Pederson,** Elementary Music Teacher – Seth Haley
   Effective: June 30, 2018
   Reason: Retirement

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 18-10
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Susan Walker seconded the motion
Discussion: Rosa wished him well. Rosemary said he is a great music teacher and worked a lot of years in the city and taught a lot of children and we wish him a good retirement.
All board members were in favor
Item 18-10 is approved

D.2. **Resignations: (Certified) Continued**

**18-11 Mary C. Moran,** ELL Teacher – Bailey Middle School
   Effective: June 30, 2018
   Reason: Retirement

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 18-10
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
Discussion: Rosa wished her well. Rosemary said she doesn’t know her personally but hopes when anyone reaches the point of retirement we only wish them the best.
All board members were in favor
Item 18-11 is approved

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

D.4. **New Business**

F. **Informational**
   Chairwoman Russo pointed out that Miriam Rivera is retiring and was a paraprofessional at the high school who also was an active PTA mom who I know personally and I know she will be very missed.

The Student Rep Report follows on the last page.
Chairwoman Russo said she would like to have a motion to recess. Motion to recess was made at 6:44 PM by Patrick Leigh seconded by Rosa Richardson.

Chairwoman Russo stated for the record that invited into Executive Session besides board of education members were Attorney Floyd Dugas and Mayor Nancy Rossi.

Motion to go into Executive Session was made at 6:50 PM by Pat Libero seconded by Karen Pacelli.

Present for Executive Session: All nine board members, Superintendent Cavallaro, Mayor Rossi and Attorney Dugas.

Motion to return to public session was made at 8:20 PM by Rosa Richardson seconded by Karen Pacelli.

(Note: door was opened and members of the public in the hall were duly notified prior to the motion to return to public session. A couple members of the public did return to the room.)

8:20 PM motion to adjourn was made by Rosa Richardson and seconded by Chairwoman Russo.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary
Board of Education
Student Report
March 19, 2018

1. The WHHS Theatre Workshop’s Spring Musical, “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee”, is this Friday and Saturday night at 7:30pm. There is also a 2:00pm show on Saturday, which is free for senior citizens. Tickets are $12 in advance and $15 at the door. All students are $5. If you’d like to purchase a ticket in advance, contact a member of the cast or crew (David is selling them).

2. The juniors will be taking the SATs on Wednesday, March 21st. 9th graders will be participating in a field day, sophomores are going on a field trip to see the movie “A Wrinkle in Time”, and seniors will use the day to choose an activity for their senior experience.

3. The WHHS Band spring concert is Thursday, April 12th at 7:30pm. The theme this year is Latin Magic. Admission is $5.

4. The Evening of Jazz featuring the WHHS Jazz Band and Bailey Jazz Band is Wednesday, April 25th at 7:00pm at WHHS.

5. Thank you for allowing us to express our voices during the walkout last week. We appreciate it. The Walkout on Wednesday, March 14th was very successful and respectful.

6. ROV competition this Friday @ CCSU students will be leaving at 7:30 and will be back by 4:00.

7. Spring sports seasons began on Saturday, March 17th.