A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held on October 1, 2018 in the Board Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order at 5:45 PM by Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Lauren Aceto

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Brendan Carew
Sumedha Chowdhury
Julia Walker

Chairwoman Rosemary Russo said we are very lucky tonight to have West Haven High School students presenting to us. Dana Parades had the West Haven High School Cheerleaders come forward and give a cheer. Applause. Everyone said it was a nice way to start the meeting. Thanks were given to the cheerleaders and their coach Kelly Last for their presentation this evening. Dana said we wanted to showcase our nursing program tonight. Mrs. Valerie Cosenza, RN is the spotlight teacher from the high school and she is an award winning nursing instructor who continually has scores at the top of the charts. We produce more than 30 certified nursing assistants every year in this program and it is one of the programs Dana is most proud of. Two student nurses Adriana and Jerry talked about the program. Adriana said she is part of Ms. Cosenza’s nursing class and also HOSA. Adriana said Ms. Cosenza is a very fabulous teacher. We learn by reading and listening to how the words are pronounced so we understand how the
words work and she makes sure that we know the skills 100% and what a prognosis means and diagnosis and she has us do a lot of other things. She can tell if we are absorbing the material through our composition notebooks which she utilizes. She checks our notebooks for the stuff that we learned and has us bullet point them to make sure we are keeping on track and doing our 30 minutes of learning every night. For HOSA she has us go on trips to an actual class and we also work on skills because she will not allow us to go to clinical if we do not know the skills 100%. Today we practiced putting the patients in wheelchairs and transporting them up and down the ramp in school. The board gave thanks.

Jerry is part of Mrs. Valerie Cosenza’s nursing class and also a part of HOSA. This is probably one of the best classes he has ever taken at West Haven High because it is filled with such diversity, both male and female and a few from all over the world. It is just good and a fun class to be in. It is like an honor to be in this class, we are number 1 in the state and a very good opportunity that all students should take advantage of.

Adriana said we do more than just helping ourselves in this class we help other people. We had a blood drive during HOSA where we all volunteered time out of our school day to help the people that needed blood. Last year we helped Pam Gardner and she really appreciated it; it was really nice to see her smile. The board gave thanks. Applause followed. Dana said they could go on and on all day about our nursing program but since we only have 15 minutes she wanted to thank all of the student nurses for being here. Mrs. Cosenza’s students are very dedicated to her and dedicated to this program because they all came out this evening. Dana said we will showcase another student group this evening and those are students who are participating in the Yale Pathways to Science and we have Sumedha Chowdhury and Miranda Burrows to speak about this. Applause.

Sumedha said the Yale Pathways to Science Program is a program that students from 6th grade onward are recommended to participate in events during the school year as well as in the summer. During the school year they have lectures with Yale professors and they have Engineering Day and have a Chemistry Day and that gets students involved and interested in the science and technology field. When you are in high school they still have this program and also have summer programs.

Miranda is a senior at WHHS and she talked about a program she participated in over the summer the Yale Pathways To Science Summer Scholars Residential Program. This program allows select pathways seniors, selected by an application process, to spend two weeks at the Yale campus. Students experience a typical day for a college student. They are responsible for getting to bed by curfew time, getting up in the morning, making sure classwork is ready and having the assignments given to us and getting to classes on time. This taught them responsibility, time management etc. The classes were taught by former Yale students as well as high school educators. The classes were very informative and we did a lot of hands on stuff with them. The classes Miranda took were disorders of the brain, learning of consciousness and college essay writing and in addition we also had a program just for the residential students which was called College Readiness. They taught us about setting goals, decision making and the dos and don’ts of college and how to get through certain situations that we might see in college. Miranda said she not only became more educated and learned more about the fields she wanted to pursue but she also met many students who had the same career paths and choices that she wants to go in. This made her experience more memorable and more rounded. They also had counselors, BA and RA’s who talked to them about the programs and answered any questions we had about the schoolwork, campus life and what their experiences were. This program was very
well designed in touching the surface of what a college life would be like and what we had to look forward to. She would really recommend this to any high school junior that is involved in the Yale Pathways Program to take advantage of this rewarding program and apply this year.

Sumedha said that the Yale professors and students really helped. She was able to talk to the residential advisor who advises the students that live at Yale during the school year and he talked to her about admission tips and how college works and that is really insightful as she is a senior now and applying to colleges. The summer program is available to freshman and sophomores but they don’t get the residential option. Students are also able to participate in internships in Yale labs so they get to have lab experience and work experience before heading off to college which is really nice for students. Even if you can’t attend the program because it is restrictive and is six weeks over the summer, Maria the coordinator, helped me contact professors who are looking for students and Sumedha was able to get an internship with another professor for the school year and that was really nice. Chairwoman Russo asked how long the summer program is. Sumedha said two weeks and the internships are six weeks. Pat Libero asked if you receive high school credit for this or is it just the privilege of going. It is the privilege of going and if you get an internship they might write you a letter of recommendation. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Dana said the Fall Festival is coming up and this is something that really showcases all that we have to offer in West Haven. We have all of our clubs, sports, and academic classes come together and put on a really nice festival at the high school. We have our Trick or Trunk and to speak more about this and about senior class council we have Jon and Brandy. Jon is involved with student council and has been looking at the upcoming Fall Festival coming up Saturday, October 27th. A sports clinic will begin at 10:00 AM and anyone from West Haven involved in West Haven sports and the partnerships with other schools will come over and get a sense of what it means to be a student athlete in West Haven. This will last until around 11:00 AM. This will take place at the West Haven Gym on the turf at the field. The Mackrille gym will be used for some girls’ basketball, tennis courts and other areas where all the sports will meet and talk and that will last about an hour until 11:00 AM when the festival will start. This is taking place on the field this year because the construction means we can’t use the courtyard like we normally do. Around 75 clubs and activities have been invited to attend and we are expecting around 50 tables for clubs to sit at. There will be some raffles, food trucks, and Rita’s Ice. Activities start at 11:30 with the band, dance group and cheerleader performances. Around 12:15 there will be an obstacle course and there will be challenges between children from the different schools and prizes will be awarded. At 12:30 there will be a singing competition where six students will be judged by four West Haven Alum with singing backgrounds and prizes will be awarded. Before the Fall Festival we will be unveiling the new painted rock for the class of 2019 in front of the field and Brandy will tell you more about the student council. Brandy is part of the student council and they will be having a booth there. You can learn a lot about West Haven High School by going to the Fall Festival with all the groups and organizations there. Hopefully the board members will be able to come. Thank you.

Jon said the 2019 Class Council will have their elections for our running positions that will happen on Friday and on Thursday each candidate will make a speech so that students in the class of 2019 can make a better vote based on what each candidate says. Senior Day is coming up on the PSAT Day where lower classmen will take the PSAT’s. We will have time to do some senior activities and take our class photo on the field and there will be other activities; ice skating
and possibly bowling at the duck pin bowling place. We are trying to get Mr. Westy is something we are trying to get going again because it was always a fun thing to be doing at our school. We are all looking forward towards prom at the end of the year which will be held at Woodwinds in Branford. Senior activities are what we want to focus on because after all this time we have spent fund raising and attending school senior year culminates into this great last final hooray; we want to enjoy our final few days in West Haven and for some of us it may be our final few days in Connecticut so thank you very much. Applause.

Dana said it is nearly impossible to fit all we have to offer at the high school in just 15 minutes so we just took a little snippet for you.

Jim Morrissey congratulated all the students. There are wonderful things that go on at West Haven High School and he knows this is only a small part of it. As a board member I just want to say thank you. There are fine students at West Haven High School who do a great job and as board members we are proud of you. In regard to the nursing program Mrs. Cosenza is a wonderful teacher. Jim’s daughter was in the nursing program at WHHS and because of Mrs. Cosenza’s wonderful guidance being a great teacher his daughter is a nurse at the VA Hospital. She loved her class with Mrs. Cosenza and always talked so highly of her. When she entered your class she came home and said she wanted to be a nurse. Mrs. Cosenza you really made that kid’s dream come true and Jim hopes that the students here tonight go on and become nurses also it is a great profession and he knows you do a wonderful job. Thank you for all the hard work that you do. Applause. Dana said the students have not done their clinical yet but maybe sometime later in the year they can come back and report to you. Mrs. Cosenza is really on top of their skills so that when they go into the clinical setting she is sure they are providing the absolute best patient care. This program has kids from everywhere at every academic level and academic ability and every background and everyone really has an equal opportunity in Mrs. Cosenza’s class and that really speaks to her character as a teacher and that is one of the reasons we chose her as our spotlight teacher. Pat Libero said Mrs. Gardner texted her to see how her peeps were doing and Rosa said we are very proud of all of you. Thank you. Applause.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn.

Karen Pacelli made the motion

Sue Walker seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The Special Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary