The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on January 22, 2013. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:  
Mark Palmieri, Chairman  
M. Toni Paine, Vice Chair  
Patricia Libero, Secretary/Treasurer  
Dorinda Borer  
Betsy Davis  
Patrick Egolum  
Robert Guthrie  
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:  
Eric Murillo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:  
Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
David Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:  
Catherine DePino
B. Public Portion of Meeting

Mark Palmieri welcomed everyone to the January 22, 2013 board meeting and appreciated everyone’s attendance on such a brisk evening. Mark asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Tracy Morrissey, 305 Country Hill Drive, West Haven, CT the West Haven PTA Council President. On Thursday, January 17th the PTA Council met and had several issues regarding security at the schools which were discussed. Parents felt that on Friday, December 14th there should have been some sort of communication sent out regarding Newtown. Districts outside of West Haven did different things to ease parent’s concerns dealing with this tragic event. One district sent a notice stating they were aware of what was happening in Newtown and asked parents to stay calm that their children’s school was safe and in lockdown and not to come pick up their children for an early dismissal. Tracy assumes the policy for school lockdown is that parents are not permitted to pick up their children. In no way are we requesting this we are just letting you know what other districts did and we are suggesting sending out some type of message acknowledging what transpired on that Friday. It would have been nice if parents received a message on Sunday night saying that security was beefed up, they would be running drills during the week reinforcing the safety at each school. It would have been nice if the district told parents that school psychologists, social workers, teachers and principals were available for children and parents that were upset to try and ease these kids back into the school routine and make sure they felt safe. Maybe the board should look at putting some type of policy in place for the communication to parents. This is not a request for the district to reveal their plans just give a general statement letting parent know that it is closely being watched. A further discussion took place.

Tracy invited all the board members to her meetings with PTA Council on Thursday, February 28th, March 21st, April 25th and May 16th. All meetings are on Thursday nights at 7:00 PM. She asked Chairman Palmieri to appoint a liaison to the PTA Council. Tracy said this is her third year and Neil Cavallaro takes her calls right away and resolves the problems and she has no problem with that at all but it is just making the board more aware of what the parents are feeling and their concerns. The PTA is planning on making a better effort to attend these meetings. She knows how difficult it is for parents to take another night away from their families. She can only stress how important it is and how this difference will be how the budget will be sliced up. Communication is not one way. As parents we need to do a better job letting you know how we feel. It was very helpful when Toni Paine sent out the policies the board was considering changing. We were able to discuss it put our input in and she thinks it was very successful. We need to do more things like that. She thanked the board for their attention and said they truly appreciate the board’s time.

Tracy now spoke as a parent and made a few comments. She raised some issues a couple of weeks ago and recapped them.
Her concerns were on leveling at the high school particularly the lack of rigor in the classes. In academic classes there are huge gaps in children’s ability to learn. College is very expensive and it is very important that our children are prepared to take the next step. Is there any data following our seniors after graduation on how our college students compare to other students. This is something we need to look at and she would be interested in that data.

Her concern was the grade rating system at the high school particularly AP and Honors which are weighted the same. She is not suggesting it be changed midstream but probably with the incoming freshman. The current system lacks fairness. It discourages are children to challenge themselves. Why not take the easy A and the better class rank than challenge yourself in an AP class. Later on if kids don’t take the AP class we can’t offer them because class size is down.

Tracy brought up revisiting the requirements to the Bayer Award. She is waiting to hear from board members on the issues she raised. She would like to hear there perspective or reasoning on the issues she raised. She looks forward to speaking to the board and discussing this.

Tracy said she had her first glimpse of the budget tonight but basked on past practices she agrees with Neil and Dorinda and would be interested to see….she said if we get the full amount obviously this budget stands but realistically what would happen if we got the 3.5%, the 2.5%, the 1.5% or the ½%. As a PTA we are going to need to see this impact and we can’t wait until May to make these decisions so she would appreciate it that as soon as you know where we are going to inform them and they would be more than happy to help in anyway. Tracy thanked the board. The board thanked Tracy.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road, West Haven, CT said she just has a couple of comments. She will go home and look at the budget and Neil answers anything she usually asks and also Dave. What she would like to see is similar to what the city has. Once a month or once a quarter a variance report is emailed to them. This has specific line items on what was budgeted and where you are at that point in time. She know this depends on when bills come in but at least it gives you some idea if you are running over a line item and the board members can see it and the City Council. She knows they don’t control it and she understands all of that and you can spend the way you like; however she thinks it is a very useful tool.

The move to City Hall is getting close and on BOE property there wasn’t smoking allowed. Presently there is smoking at City Hall. Is this a statute so when the BOE comes to City Hall will the smoking disappear or will we have to propose it as a city council or can you still smoke on this property? She didn’t know what the policy was.

Neil said it is a state statute. Mark said it is supposed to be 20 feet from a building. Neil said it is a statute and there is no smoking on BOE property. The board thanked Nancy.
Jessica Chong, 403 Painter Drive, West Haven, CT PTA President for Seth Haley and Treasurer for PTA Council. Jessica asked what schools are we buying smart boards and software for with budget money because as PTA she bought two smart boards for their elementary school and believes they paid for the software as well from PTA. She is waiting for an answer back on this.

An IPOD was either lost or stolen over the summer at Seth Haley and they emailed the board that we lost it and we never got a response so the PTA ended up buying that as well. The teachers need it to do the testing for the children.

Several schools in West Haven don’t have heat in the classrooms including Seth Haley. Parents were saying the kids were getting sick all the time. She doesn’t know the rules and regulations but if someone goes in ahead of time like a custodian and you know there is no heat in that classroom what should they do. Her daughter has been in a classroom twice this year with no heat. This happened at some other schools this week as well. The board thanked Jessica.

There were no other speakers.

Public portion closed at 7:20 PM

C. REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro responded to some of the items mentioned during public session. With Seth Haley it is the monitoring of the heat; sometimes they were too hot or too cold. He understands a solution is being worked out and they are in the process of fixing the heat so it stays constant at all times. We are aware of the problem but we have a solution and it is being worked on.

The issues Tracy raised are legitimate and communications have been sent out to the board. We worked all weekend of the tragedy at Newtown and we consciously made the decision not to do a phone message to parents. One of our concerns was that a lot of times when the kids see those numbers come up they answer the phone and we were particularly concerned about young children getting a message. A lot of debate was what is the appropriate age to let kids know or to not let them know about the tragedy. By Sunday night or at least by Monday morning there was a message on the website and we sent home a communication on Monday. Several of the building administrators did announcements especially at the schools with older children. On Friday we received communication from the State Department of Education, CAPSS and other places that they were still assessing what exactly happened so it was difficult for us to say here is what happened and this is what we are doing. Maybe we could have put something out saying the kids are safe but we did get things out as soon as possible. Our pupil personnel department was ready to respond and react on Monday and we did get something out on Monday. Neil felt that we were pro active with having the right responses in place.
should we need to react to any situation. A further discussion took place. Mark Palmieri asked Superintendent Cavallaro to find out the names of the districts that Tracy mentioned and to talk to them to see how they handled this situation.

Neil said with regard to lockdown the Chief’s presentation last week stated that part of their assessment of the buildings was to talk about a standard lockdown procedure for the district. A lot of the principals wanted to try a lockdown procedure but we decided to hold off because we don’t want to practice it and get it wrong. We expect a report from the Chief of Police this week with some standard protocol. Once I approve it the police will go back out to the buildings and work on that procedure. The general practices should remain the same at all schools.

We are in the process of re-issuing sonitrol cards so we have reduced the people who can actually open up the building and get access to it, locks are being checked, keys are being distributed and decisions on who should have master keys are taking place. We have discussed the committee to monitor the mental health issues which is a big component. We are calling it a mental health collaborative solving team and we are doing this in conjunction with the West Haven Police Department. Jim Turcio is heading it up on our side and we have teams in place. The focus is on crisis intervention; students of concern so we can monitor them not only in school but seeing if they are getting help if they need it out of school. Every time a threat or some kind of intervention comes up we need to assess those risks as to what type of level threat that was made and then react accordingly and we do this. Pat and Toni attended the Security Symposium and we seem to be proceeding with a well thought out plan. The police department has access to power school which they had requested so they can monitor things at the police department which is a good thing. These things have been put into effect since our last meeting.

Toni Paine said she and Pat Libero were at the Safety Symposium with the police department and she was very impressed. Mr. Turcio documents everything and is invaluable. You gain a new respect for everyone. They have done such an extensive and investigative role in all of this. They brought up things that I haven’t even thought of. I cam away with a feeling that they are taking really good care of these things. It is probably stuff that can’t be put in the paper at this time but please be aware that there are so many things they are doing right now that we had been doing right along and other people are implementing now. Toni said that many school districts are doing the key card and she believes the Wallingford BOE is voting on implementing this tonight. Toni said that Neil had mentioned this at the meeting. Neil said that is certainly the way to go from a security standpoint. We have Joe Falzone looking at this. Our carpenter was at that meeting and he brought a lot to the table because he knew those buildings as well as anybody and discussed what he thought would be simple solutions and the least expensive that would get us where we need to be. Toni said every department was covered; every single department.

Pat Libero mentioned that Wayne also said every single lock is different because every single school is built at a different time. It is nice that everyone is working together and the police are invaluable with what they are bringing to the table and that Jim Turcio said
he was bringing in West Haven Mental Health and Beers Clinic so that they can talk to those outside agencies also so that the kid is getting services outside we will know about it in school so we can work with them. This is really to help get those kids that fall between the cracks; it is not always the ones that are so loud and raucous that cause the problems; it is sometimes the quieter ones. He is trying to get a handle on all kids that don’t fit under the special umbrella but may need some TLC or whatever and some guidance. This will be a good thing for the city.

Dorinda Borer is very glad Pat brought up the Beers Clinic because she was going to suggest that because Alice Forester who is the director actually was appointed to the Governor’s Council and they have very valuable resources and have been a great partner to West Haven in the past. Neil said we have very good relationships and we work very closely with all our different resources and they give us good advice.

Toni Paine said to show how good a job the West Haven System is doing AFB was picked by the governor to be on the State Task Force. The exact name was not mentioned but it has to do with the school systems of the state and we have our AFB representative on that.

C.1.b. Student Representatives Report

Catherine DePino said the high school is still doing the Made MTV Program which is really enforcing anti bullying and we are having an assembly for all freshmen tomorrow. The new musical Once Upon A Mattress will take place in March. Children’s Theatre will also be having a show on February 9th. Midterms will take place this week and next. The freshman class council and student government created a face book page for 26 acts of random kindness in memory of Newtown and there are lots of boards throughout the high school where kids can write down acts of kindness. The board thanked Catherine.

C.1.c. Board

Bob Guthrie reminded board members that this Friday is the CABE Legislative Meeting at Betsy Ross School on Kimberly Avenue and it begins at 7:45 AM.

Dorinda said she had requested recycling be on the agenda. Mark Palmieri said he has it right here and was going to do it under committee.

Cebi was wondering about how we were moving forward on the technology in schools regarding Bring Your Own Device. Neil said Business Network will be coming the next meeting or the first meeting in March if not the next meeting. We have opened it up at the high school and we are in the process of opening it up with various teachers and people who can take advantage of it and we have made progress with this.

Pat Libero said Bailey Middle School is doing Teens For Jeans. They take any pair of jeans and this is on until February 10th. There are bins at most schools to drop off jeans.
Jeans are washed and distributed to homeless shelters. Whatever elementary school gets the most jeans gets to go to the dress rehearsal for the Bailey Play.

Mark Palmieri thanked Mrs. Paine, Superintendent Cavallaro and Assistant Superintendent Druzolowski, Mr. Cappetta and Matt Cavallaro for the great job they did on putting the budget together and for the great job they did tonight.

C.1.d. Committee

Mark Palmieri attended the Building Committee Meeting on January 8th for the new high school. The architect is in place and the commissioning agent. The construction manager has been narrowed down to four applicants and by the next meeting hopefully the construction manager will be chosen. We were given a tour of the new Board of Ed side of city hall and it is real nice. It is just framed out and sheet rocked and there is a lot of open space and a nice conference room and offices. They did the Savin Rock Library Lighting Project and are waiting for the reimbursement from the United Illuminating. New flooring was also done at Carrigan in front of the library.

In regard to Mrs. Borer and recycling information I have called Joe Falzone and asked him a couple of Dorinda’s questions. Mr. Saley who is with the Energy Commission called and wants to come to a board meeting. He said facilities are working on light bulbs and electronics and so forth and said they were doing a trial with the paper at Mackrille but that was 2010/2011. What is required for these recycling programs should be an on site coordinator and no one has one. The bins cost $160 each and this is something that we can discuss. Each school has two dumpsters and sometimes things are put in the wrong dumpster. One dumpster is for trash and one for recycling materials. Things sometimes get contaminated if coffee grounds or something of that nature is put in the wrong bin. This is why we need a coordinator. The contract is owned by the city and this is a very labor intense program with the emphasis place on education, coordination and monitoring. Mr. Saley and his group will come in and discuss the scope of the program with us. Mr. Saley will get in touch with us when they are ready with their presentation.

Dorinda doesn’t think the PTA was ever going to pay for the bins but we can discuss this. The PTA Groups can bring the recycle bottles to the recycle plant themselves and get the money if they want to do that and they usually do that for a fund raiser and that is an option. Beth Sabo told Dorinda it was a city contract and in the contract for the trash service it mentioned coming to the schools and picking up the recycling separately. Her understanding is that there was a difference of opinion as to who bought the recycle bins to the back of the building for the trash company to pick up. This wasn’t the custodian’s role to separate these bins out and bring them to the back. Neil said he has never seen a custodian refuse to do this and he doesn’t believe this is the case. Dorinda thinks this is moving slowly. She doesn’t think they are recycling paper in the classroom. A further discussion took place. Mark said Mr. Saley is on the Energy Commission and is working with Joe Falzone and he will get everybody together next month. Mark said Mr. Carney will do a presentation on the timeline for the board of ed to be at city hall and update us
on the construction of the new high school. Neil said he will see if a tour of the BOE portion of City Hall can take place for the board members.

Bob Guthrie suggested a joint meeting with the City Council when Mr. Carney comes so everyone hears the same questions and answers. Mark said perhaps we can do a 6:30 walk though and perhaps have him on at 7:00 PM. A discussion took place.

Pat Libero said going back to recycling at Mackrille we did Capri Sun and Elmer’s Glue and the kids helped and we received 2 cents per pack. The kids were really involved with this.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on January 7, 2013 at 7:00 PM

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a. Cebi Waterfield made the motion to approve the minutes D.1.a. Patrick Egolum seconded the motion. Discussion: None. All board members present were in favor. Minutes are approved.

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

13-09 Thomas Klein, Assistant Lacrosse Coach - WHHS
   Effective: Immediately
   Reason: Personal

13-10 Kristen Lugovich, JV Softball Coach – WHHS
   Effective: Immediately
   Reason: Personal

13-11 Julie Ciampi-Nesi, Health Teacher - WHHS
   Effective: End of the 2012/2013 School Year
   Reason: Retirement

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.2. items 13-09 through 13-11 inclusive. Cebi Waterfield made the motion to approve D.2. items 13-09 through 13-11 inclusive. Dorinda Borer seconded the motion. Discussion: None. All board members present were in favor. D.2. Items 13-09 through 13-11 inclusive are approved.

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)
D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

13-12 Christine Potter, 68 French Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512  
    Special Ed Inclusion Teacher - Pagels School  
    Effective: January 22, 2013  
    Salary: $46,715.01 Step 6 BS + 30

13-13 Katie Williams, 900 Beaver Dam Road, Stratford, CT 06614  
    Autism Learning Lab Teacher - Pagels  
    Effective: TBA Pending Certification  
    Salary: $40,214.75 Step 5 BS

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. items 13-12 and 13-13.  
Pat Libero made the motion to approve D.5. items 13-12 and 13-13  
Bob Guthrie seconded the motion  
Discussion: None  
All board members present were in favor  
D.5. items 13-12 and 13-13 are approved

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

D.7. New Business

F. Informational

Cebi Waterfield said that Mayor John Picard and the City Council will recognize  
the Peewee and Junior Midget football teams on Monday, January 28th at 7:00 PM  
(City Hall – City Council Chambers – 3rd floor.)

There was nothing further added.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn  
Bob Guthrie made a motion to adjourn  
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion  
All board members were in favor  
The meeting adjourned 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary