The Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by Raymond Collins III, Vice Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Raymond Collins  
Howard Horvath  
George Monahan  
Eric Murillo  
Gerald Calabrito  
Robert J. Guthrie  
Mark Palmieri  
Krista Pickering

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chairman M. Toni Paine

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**  
Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

**B. PUBLIC PORTION**

Vice Chairman Raymond Collins asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Helen Smith, 47 Savin Park, a teacher at Forest School passed out pamphlets comparing the basic skill scores of all students who took instrumental music and those who didn’t in an entire school district.

The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores of all 5th graders in the entire district were compared. The scores were taken from students from 75 different schools and were divided between those students who participated in instrumental music and those who did not. The results indicated that the instrumental students scored higher in every subtest of the CTBS.

Students who had taken a band instrument for two or more years scored 10 percentile points higher in reading and 12 percentile points higher in language than did their non-band peers.

George Monahan questioned what is the theory on how reading musical notes impacts reading in general.
Basically in music you have a five line grid where notes are placed. Each line changes the note. In an example from a third grade class students looked at the words cot and cat where one letter changes the word. The same holds true for reading music notes one line changes the note. When students begin noticing what just one line can change they begin looking for other little changes and their brain begins noticing new things and the child becomes eager to learn more. This affects all areas of a student’s learning ability.

The Board gave thanks.

Tamara Mursko, 748 Main Street wanted to know why teachers are being laid off. Teachers buy their own supplies. Is this fair?

The pay cuts should start at the top. No new vehicles should be purchased only used vehicles. With the price of gasoline the way it is department heads should be responsible for overseeing the people who report to them. If a job should be finished in eight hours no overtime should be necessary. City cars should not be used at night they should be locked up to help with the cost of gasoline.

Children should not be allowed to be covered under the City’s insurance plan until the age of 25.

Lowe’s has $5,000 for Grant money and many other stores also offer this opportunity to schools. Why are we not taking advantage of this?

The lunch program is not healthy enough there is too much fried food, pizza, and chicken cutlet. All of these items contain too much fat which is not supplemented by fruit and vegetables.

The newsletter should not be mailed to the parent’s home it should be handed to the students. This would defray the cost of postage.

Teachers need to adapt a zero tolerance. Students are not doing their homework and parents need to reprimand them and help the teacher.

A teacher’s day doesn’t end a 3:30 they bring their work home. They spend their summers getting ready for the next year preparing curriculum etc.

The Board gave thanks.

Michelle Hopecot, 1010 Ocean Avenue suggested that during the firework display the West Haven High School Parking Lot should be open for parking and there should be a charge of $5.00. There is room for 1,000 cars. This would be a windfall for the City.

The Board gave thanks.
Pat Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Road asked to rescind letters to teachers who you know you can’t cut. Namely one fifth of the science teachers and two bi-lingual teachers. Many teachers are already looking for new employment due to these letters. We don’t want to loose these people as we have had a great deal of trouble finding them.

The Board gave thanks.

Saundra McCauley, 86 Richmond Avenue, President of West Haven School Nurses, and a nurse at Thompson School wanted to deliver some good news for the district, in the midst of all the current drama in West Haven.

On Friday, May 5, 2006 from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Thompson Elementary School will be holding its first ever school walk for Diabetes. Last year they had a kindergarten student named Mia. Mia won all their hearts with her bravery and maturity in her daily management of juvenile diabetes. Although Mia has since left Thompson School, we feel the cause to be just as worthy of our efforts. As you may or may not know, diabetes is becoming increasingly prevalent; and we have several students in the system who manage this condition daily.

In our effort to bring awareness, and promote community involvement we have organized this School Walk for Diabetes. The staff, students and families of Thompson will be receiving education on nutrition, the importance of regular physical activity, and the risks, symptoms and management of diabetes. Our walk will be a celebratory culmination of this education, and our fund raising efforts, as well as a display of the unified community that exemplifies Thompson School.

We are fortunate to have the support of several community businesses: Silver’s Drug Shoppe, Shop Rite, Winkle Bus and Anderson Glass; and we would be grateful if any of you could lend your support as well. We will leave flyers with instructions, should you be interested in making a monetary donation; and we invite all of you to join us on this day, to walk or to cheer on the children as we walk along our shore front for this worthwhile cause.

Thank you for your time and attention. We are proud to have Thompson Elementary School represent the Board of Education and the City of West Haven in this manner. We hope to see you on May 5th.

Vice-Chairman Collins thanked all who attended the public hearing and showed their support on behalf of the students.

The Board gave thanks.

Vice-Chairman Collins thanked all who attended the public hearing and showed their support on behalf of the students.

Public Session closed at 7:25 p.m.
C. Reports:

Robert Guthrie and Gerald Calabrito addressed the Board regarding our legal representation. It appears that Attorney Floyd J. Dugas has been replaced and is no longer representing the West Haven Board of Education. In recent weeks Attorney Smith and Attorney Clark have been working on behalf of the Board. At no time was this change presented to the Board of Education.

We would request the Chairman to send a letter to Berchem, Moses & Devlin. P.C. stating that we still wish to have Attorney Dugas represent us. If at some point there is a change it should be the decision of the Board of Education. We should not allow outside individuals to make decisions that we are charged to oversee.

This Board has an obligation to itself and all future Boards of Education not to allow any of its rights or obligations to be bargained away. The Board of Education is not a City Department; the top of the food chain are the nine members of this Board. The Superintendent is not a department head he or she works for us and is an agent of the Board.

The Board should work together with the Mayor and City Council. In closing I would request the Chairman to sit down with the Mayor and relay the same message.

C.1. Status of Schools
Vice-Chairman Collins asked Mr. Cavallaro to discuss the status of schools and public education and anything else that he would like to add.

Mr. Cavallaro thanked all who attended the public hearing on the mayor’s budget meeting last night and reminded that we have a month to go as the council deliberates and can make any changes to that budget. We need to provide as much information to them to received increased funding. People in West Haven are behind education in West Haven.

Second on Wednesday, April 12th the education dept has to go before city council to make a presentation for the budget at 6:30 p.m. Garth and I will be doing the presentation similar to what we presented to you back in January. We will answer questions on how we will be dealing with the % of increase that we are to get from the administration.

Instead of scheduling a finance committee on April 12th since that’s the night of the Budget Meeting at the City Council and the following week will be the vacation, we will be getting the monthly report to you and Garth will come before us during the first meeting in May to give us our status report for the current fiscal year.

Two more items
I wanted to thank the Curriculum Committee at West Haven High School as well as Mike Guarino and John Capone and feel we are well on the way at the high school and am very pleased with the progress made in getting us in compliance for the up-coming NEASC Accreditation Process.

John Capone handed out pamphlets and discussed the following:

We are also working on a project with the University of New Haven and Notre Dame High School.

The University of New Haven wanted to have a good relation with the City of West Haven and decided on doing a Health Fair on May 25th which will consist of the following:

We will have a Field trip with chaperones. 275 of our sophomore health class students will attend this Health Fair. Notre Dame will attend the Work Shops in the morning. Our students will attend work shops in the afternoon. Students will be going to at least four work shops. We have a Grant from Subway which is a very health conscious grant – No soda involved they will receive water and a sandwich and we will all eat together. West Haven students receive lunch first before beginning the fair. Winkle Bus arrives at 11:15 and will drive students across the street to the college gym. They are donating the busses.

In the middle when all students are together there will be over 400 students in attendance. The highlight of the whole program is Rob The Drummer who is a motivational speaker. His program will last approximately one hour. He has performed at the White House. He talks about children making good decisions in life; not only about health and drugs.

We received money through the grant and Notre Dame chipped in some money and we received some money from the Board of Education.

Our students will attend the second half and will return to West Haven High School in time for dismissal. This is an invitation to all Board Members.

George Monahan asked how do you decide which presentation the students attend? Mr. Capone stated students will be assigned they will not be allowed to choose because we don’t want 200 students moving from room to room so we have our speakers move. We have eleven classrooms and our speakers are already assigned their classroom. For example Julie Ciampi’s first period class will hear speakers 1, 2, 3 & 4. Her second period class will hear speakers 2, 3, 4 & 5. The students will stay in the room. Students will hear four speakers every 15 minutes (three minutes for passing).
We are hoping to squeeze in five presentations. There are many interesting subjects. The hot topics will include piercing, steroids - what you don’t know about steroids, Yoga and Stress Management, Tanning and Skin Care, and Oral Health just to name a few.

The Board gave thanks to Mr. Capone

**C.1.a Administration**

George Monahan wanted to know the availability of Paul Tortora this week as Dr. Andrees is in town. Has he been asked to come in? Mr. Cavallaro stated he has been in five times. The Board had a major concern in his involvement with the budget. Neil Cavallaro stated he has been in once or twice a week. He was in on Monday. He did put together this budget and knows if this Board has any questions Mr. Tortora will be glad to speak with any of you.

George Monahan wanted to know the status of the curriculum discussions with Mr. Stancil.

Neil Cavallaro stated that Dr. Andrees and he had a discussion on this and intend on going over some information with Mr. Stancil with regard to this and will create the same report as in years past.

**C.1.b Board**

Board Reports

Gerald Calabritto complemented the curriculum committee for their hard work. He thanked Herlin Press publicly for their work at the high school. Wanted to thank Patti for the fine job she did in bringing out the troops at the Budget Hearing. I would strongly suggest that the next place the troops should appear will be at the City Council Meeting.

Robert Guthrie spoke about a 10% cut across the Board. There was a discussion about taking the overage from Special Education this Bill is still alive in Hartford. Mr. Murillo has been working hard on student wellness policy. On Thursday, April 27th there is a 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. workshop in Wethersfield on student wellness.

Ray Collins wanted to state briefly he is in agreement with Mr. Guthrie and Mr. Calabritto. We are a separate entity and the Education System should be governed by this Board; without any outside influences. However especially during these difficult times we would have no problem accepting advise from outside interests such as the Governor or the Council or the Mayor when it comes to saving some money. In this line we have an item on the Agenda Informational F.6.

Ray Collins requested we set up a sub-committee of Neil, himself, Mr. Palmieri and Mr. Guthrie as the Chairman to evaluate what vehicles are going home to see if it is justified and why there is a need and what are the expenses and what are the options. If it is justified so be it. The committee was appointed and asked to look into it and report back to the Board.

C.1.c Committee
Committee Reports
Krista Pickering asked in behalf of the curriculum committee for a motion to add to tonight’s agenda the following motion. The addition of the following courses for the high school and elementary school curricula:
- Pre-Algebra
- Algebra I (basic and academic)
- Nursing Assistant Program
- Home Health Care
- Acting I
- Elementary Physical Education

Motion to add item 06-33 made by: Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by: Howard Horvath
Motion passed unanimously

Other Committee Reports

Robert Guthrie asked to add an item to the agenda to direct Vice-Chairman Collins to send a letter to Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C. and inform them that the Board wishes to have Floyd Dugas remain their main attorney.

Motion to add item 06-34 made by Robert Guthrie
Seconded by George Monahan
Motion passed unanimously

Gerry Calabritto met with Atty Clark and negotiating team for the paraprofessional union and both sides have agreed to put it off until later after we get a dollar amount from the City.

Mr. Guthrie is our representative on this team since he was the former Chairman of Finance. He had a prior obligation that day but will continue as our representative.
D.1. Approval of Minutes
Motion made by Robert Guthrie
Approval of D.1.a through D.1.d inclusive

Seconded by Gerald Calabritto
Motions passed unanimously

D.2. Resignations
Motion to approve 06-28, 06-29, and 06-30 inclusive
Motion Made by Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by Howard Horvath
Motions passed unanimously
Discussion: Mr. Guthrie asked if any of these resignations were due to letters being sent out?
Mr. Cavallaro stated no.

E. New Business

06-31 Permission from Savin Rock Fireworks Committee to use the parking lot at West Haven High School
Art Gilbert from the committee addressed the Board as to permission to use the parking lot at West Haven High School during the night of the fire fireworks.
Due to the financial situation the City is in we are looking for ways to offset the cost. The over-time cost will run between $40,000 to $45,000 the bulk of this to the Police Department. Approximately $20,000 has been raised by the committee through various means for the firework display.
We are looking at the use of three different parking lots to help defray these costs.
Chick’s Drive In
Parking lot next to Surfside
West Haven High School Parking Lot
The cost would be $10 per vehicle but if you have a beach sticker no charge
We are looking for adults to man all of these places.
There are not enough members on the committee to man all of these places.

George Monahan stated there was a request made to the Board last year. The Board was concerned about the cleanup etc. They didn’t want the taxpayers charged for the use of the parking lot. Last year the committee decided not to use the parking lot. We are responsible for cleaning the lot. We should have a provision that whatever the cost to clean the lot the City would be responsible. We as the Board of Ed are responsible for the cleanliness of the lot.

Discussion continued regarding cleaning of the parking lot. Robert Guthrie was concerned with the cleanliness of the lot and our liability. How do we get the public announcement out ahead of time for the taxpayers to have their beach sticker available so they won’t be charged. How do you identify the people to collect the $10.00?
Art Gilbert said the people will have identification. The public announcement could be through the newspaper but too much publicity is not good.

Gerry Calabritto suggested we should have Beth Sabo and Joe Yacano do a walk through before and after the fireworks. If we can get this in the agreement he doesn’t have a problem at all.

Art Gilbert said if this plan falls through and isn’t approved by the next week or week in a half by City Council we won’t have fireworks. This is the first step along the way.

We have the cost for the fireworks. We are looking to defray the cost of the overtime.

It was agreed upon that the front gate of the school parking lot must remain open to prevent problems.

Ray Collins wanted to know if a license would be able to be used in place of a beach sticker. This would hold up the line of people coming in. Therefore beach stickers only will be admitted.

Art Gilbert asked that the Board address him via letter with all their requests. He will be able to give this to the Mayor.

Motion was made to approve item 06-31 with proper safeguards in place:
Motion by: Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by: Howard Horvath

Discussion: Neil Cavallaro asked that we forward everything to him to so he can let the Board know if this is going forward or not.

Art Gilbert asked that the Board address him via letter with all their requests. He will be able to give this to the Mayor.

Motion passed unanimously

06-32 Approval of the 2006-2007 School Calendar
Motion was made to approve by: Howard Horvath
Seconded by: Krista Pickering
No Discussion
Motion passed unanimously
06-33 Curriculum
Motion to approve the following additions to the curriculum
   Pre-Algebra
   Algebra I (basic and academic)
   Nursing Assistant Program
   Home Health Care
   Acting I
   Elementary Physical Education

Motion was made by: Mark Palmieri
Seconded by: Howard Horvath
Motion Passed unanimously

Motion 06-34 Letter to Berchem, Moses & Devlin P.C. regarding reinstituting Attorney Dugas.
Motion was made by: Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by: George Monahan
No Discussion
Motion passed unanimously

Informational:

Discussion was limited to F.3., F.4., F.6, and F.8

F.1. Special Meeting – Student Expulsion Hearing, March 8, 2006 at 10:23 a.m.

F.2. Special Meeting – Student Expulsion Hearing, March 8, 2006 at 9:23 a.m.

F.3. Letter from Jason Stacoffe to Neil Cavallaro regarding “Mock Crash”.
Assistant Superintendent Cavallaro wanted to make sure the Board knew they were invited to attend this.

F.4. Letter from City Council Regarding Proposal to Eliminate Out of City Students.

Gerald Calabritto had concerns about this but has previously expressed his thoughts.

Mr. Guthrie asked if the verification of residency is handled through Assistant Superintendent Cavallaro’s office?

Assistant Superintendent Cavallaro said the schools do a very good job of this.

Mr. Guthrie said he does not see the need for a hot line for this.

Neil Cavallaro went on to explain the process involving residency.
F.5. Grant Approval – Cosmic Cultures ($141,380)

Gerald Calabritto had concerns about this but has previously expressed his concerns

Robert Guthrie suggested a letter be sent to City Council through Mr. Cavallaro. He stated that the Board of Education is required to set policy on items F4 and F6. He would like to request the employee’s names, type of vehicle, distance traveled, hours of employment, employee’s base salary, overtime, along with how often we call these employees in for overtime. This is requested for 2004, 2005 and 2006 school year.

Mark Palmieri wanted to state briefly he is in agreement with Mr. Guthrie but he however feels we may be looking too deeply into this. We may be taking it personally.

Mr. Monahan was not in agreement with Mr. Palmieri regarding the above and stated the Council should go back and do their job to provide us better tools to provide the proper education and the ability to provide the best possible staff for our students.

F.7. Board of Education Roster

F.8. West Haven Board of Education Committees and Representatives

Chairman Collins asked for a motion to adjourn
Motion was made by Gerry Calabritto
Seconded by Howard Horvath

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Clerk