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, Vice Chairman  
Krysta Pickering  
George Monahan  
Eric Murillo  
Gerald Calabritto  
Robert J. Guthrie  
Mark Palmieri  
Howard Horvath

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

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

**B. PUBLIC PORTION**

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

Laura McManus, 35 Wood Street wanted to revisit something from 18 months ago. She knows most of the members of the Board are new so she will make her request again. We need a bell at the back door of the Blake Building so she doesn’t have to roll all the way around in her wheelchair to find someone to open the back door. There is a wireless doorbell for $22.95 at Home Depot. This is well worth the investment.

There is no way for Ms. McManus to enter the high school without prior notification to the high school that she is on her way. This is disruptive to her schedule and costly to her cell phone bill. Some times she has to make numerous calls requesting to be allowed in stating she is behind the auditorium. Sometimes she is still waiting fifteen minutes later. The bell would make things much easier for everyone.

The entrance for West Haven High School is in need of a ramp. The façade in the front of the school is being redone but she feels the ramp should have been taken care of first before some of the other amenities. She wants the same access to the school as every single person that can walk in there. It is not a lot for her to say it but it is a lot for the Board to take and follow through on it.
She would like to address some problems she is experiencing at the high school that no one seems to address or find out about.

Her daughter, Amanda, wants to become an attorney. She has met with three or four different guidance counselors in the three almost four years she has been there. All of the counselors have been skimming her by stating they will get around to her. She graduates in June, 2007. Her current guidance counselor who stated she is missing necessary classes in order to attend college. She has failed Math CAP Testing so she has to take the remediation coarse at summer school and pay $140 to attend. She questions why she has to take $140 out of her pocket to send her to summer school for something that should have been taught to her properly from grades kindergarten to now. In grades 6, 7 and 8 she told teachers there is a problem with her math that her daughter was not doing well she was getting D’s in Math the majority of the other courses were A’s and B’s. Math was always a D or an F. She went on to discuss various other courses in math and grades received. Both her guidance counselor Ms. Doraz and the athletic director who have told her that she is not smart enough to go to college. Why do they tear her confidence down in five minutes after it has taken her four or five years to build her confidence up? Mr. Capone previously asked her how she can afford to send her daughter to college if she can’t afford summer school. What concern is it of his how she pays for college? There are grants, loans, whatever it takes. If the Board of Education has to pay for it she will find a way. She deserves it and needs it. She doesn’t feel it is the right of any guidance counselor or teacher to undermine a parent and what they have to say. If there is a planning meeting about a child going on to college the parent should be included. They do it during school time. Everyone has her number and she wants to be involved. Why was she never notified about peer tutors for her daughter if she needed extra help in math? She is requesting that the Board ruffle some feathers down at the high school and find out what is going on. She would like her requests considered.

The Board gave thanks

Helen Smith, 47 Savin Park, a teacher at Forest School passed out a sheet with five studies showing how music instruction aids language skills. At the last meeting she handed out studies on how music instruction affects reading skills. She likes to look at studies that cover the most students. In Study #5 it states that high school students who participate in either music appreciation or music performance classes receive higher verbal SAT scores than the national average or students who take no music course work. This was the finding of the College Entrance Examination Board in their 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993 profiles of students who took the SAT test.

Results indicated that students who took music appreciation or participated in a musical performance group had verbal scores which were consistently 19 to 31 points above the national average and a staggering 35 to 54 points above students with no arts experience of any kind.
When you read music you read patterns when you read words you read patterns you don’t read letters. By reading patterns you read more fluently and access the same part of the brain in both instances.

She will be back for the next meeting with more information to share.

The Board gave thanks

Saundra McCauley, 86 Richmond Avenue, President of West Haven School Nurses, and a nurse at Thompson School wanted to remind everyone that 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. All of Thompson school personnel will be looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Ray Collins asked the time of the Walk For Diabetes. Saundra responded from 11:00 until 2:00 p.m.

The Board gave thanks

Helen Smith also wanted to invite everyone to the All-City Concert on May 18th at 7:00 p.m. at West Haven High School.

The Board gave thanks

Vice-Chairman Collins asked if anyone else would like to address the Board for a third and final time.

Vice-Chairman Collins thanked all who attended the public hearing.

Public Session closed at 7:15 p.m.

C. Reports:
C.1.a Administration
Spelling Bee Winners
Ann Valanzuolo gave a brief description of the District Wide Spelling Bee which encompasses 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. This is a very hot contest. Each elementary school determines one fifth grade winner who will represent their school and the middle schools have four winners each per grade. St. Lawrence School also participates in the District Wide Spelling Bee. It is always wonderful to see how well the students perform and how composed they are. They are very competitive. Sometimes there is a real competition between the last two students. The students all did a wonderful job this year and we would very much like to honor them.
Neil Cavallaro and Raymond Collins presented the Spelling Bee Winner Awards to:

Ashley Hatt, Grade 5  
Marisa Sewick, Grade 6  
Shannon Connor, Grade 7  
Krystle Ramos, Grade 8 and Citywide Champion was not able to attend.

Pictures were taken of the recipients receiving their awards.  
The students all did a great job and congratulations were given.

The Board gave thanks

C.1. Status of Schools

Neil Cavallaro had a few announcements to make before the scheduled presentations.  
He stated that Art Gilbert let him know that in order to try and save some money the date of the fireworks display has been changed from July 3rd to June 29th which is a Thursday.  
The rain date will be Friday, June 30th.

Neil Cavallaro stated that Raffaela Fronc came before the Board a few weeks ago to present the Community Profile for the NEASC Accreditation Process and asked all the Board Member to fill out a survey.  
If this survey hasn’t been completed yet please do it as soon as possible and return it to Raffaela or drop it to him at his office and he will turn it in.

Neil stated they have been working all year on the Grades 5 – 8 Math Curriculum and aligning our curriculum with the State standard and frameworks so we will have a Curriculum Committee Meeting before our next Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 15th.  
As a result of the budget hearings which took place at the council last week Beth Sabo contacted me regarding setting up a recycling program at all the schools.  
She, Mike McGrath and Neil met to start a small version of it.  
They will collect cans and bottles.  
The money will actually go back to the schools.  
They will also try to implement recycling newspapers.  
Beth will be at our next Board Meeting if there are any questions.  
We see this as a win – win for both the City and the students as the money will go back to the student activity fund.  
They will be able to use this money to off set field trips etc.

There are two items under informational that Neil wanted to point out to the Board.

The State Department of Education has changed Educational Reference Groups to District Reference Groups.  
Reason behind this is that many groups complained that it looked as though you were comparing towns and scores to scores.  
These are now called District Reference Groups because they want to emphasis the fact the you are not really comparing student performance with individual towns in your group they are categorized
by the demographics of each town. One small consideration being the amount of money being spent on education.

We received a letter from CAUS which is the Urban Superintendent’s Group stating that we are being recognized that our CAPT scores have made significant increase. This is an increase of 5% or more in combination of all of the subjects being taken into consideration.

Although these are small increases I’m sure we are all in agreement that we are heading in the right direction.

Neil also wanted to note that on our Agenda tonight the two coaching positions had starting dates of March 20th. As you know many times with these coaching positions we do not receive the actual letter of resignation until it is close for the season to begin. The two individuals were the only applicants. Jon did an excellent job of trying to seek someone out for these positions but we couldn’t find anyone. The two candidates are full time teachers who coached and worked many activities and sports and are pleased to finally have this on the agenda all though it is late. The effective date was March 20th and we only had one meeting last month so we are appointing them tonight.

The only other item that I would like to call to your attention is that the play at Bailey last week “The Wizard of Oz” was Bob Desautles final performance. For those of you who didn’t know Bob Desautles who actually is in charge of the Drama Club at Bailey is retiring. “The Wizard of Oz” was his final performance. The students did a great job and Bob certainly is to be commended for his well over thirty years of service to the Board of Education and he will be greatly missed.

C.1.b Board

Board Reports

George Monahan stated that the board that was in office prior to this current board had the benefit of a directive passed down by former chairman Carrano in the form of an express desire on his part to make sure there was open dialogue and that information within the district got to board members. Especially if it was of an important nature it should be given to them as quickly as possible. He stated that in the last four months since this new board has been in office and seated the degree of that information disclosure has been weak at best.

On the bright side the last couple of weeks he has and he hopes the other board members have received phone calls involving important information. He understands these were directed through Mr. Cavallaro and he wants to express appreciation that you have recognized that those issues can be improved and he wanted to thank Neil for trying to make sure that Board members are informed of issues in a more timely manner.
Mr. Collins in your short time here acting as Chairman of this body, I want to thank and commend your efforts to engage dialogue of this body in the spirit of trying to build cooperation and to move forward in the best interests of the district, children and the citizens that we serve. You certainly have stepped up to the plate and made some courageous type decisions and actions and I appreciate this.

Several months back this Board made a decision and put into the Budget a desire to appoint an Administrative Intern Position or positions as we grew. We know the need to be able to farm and develop administrators from our system and I would like to ask the chair if he could update us on where the program stands and if maybe we could revisit this and kick it off if it hasn’t progressed since the initial discussions and actions taken.

Neil stated he thought it would be best to wait until we adopt the budget for the simple reason that even though it is an administrative intern program it will require hiring an additional teacher because when we take the teacher out of the classroom to become an intern we need to replace the teacher. This should be dealt with when we do an operating budget and we should have it in place for the first day of school next year.

Ray Collins asked if it is possible to not take the teacher out of class full time? Give him/her administrative experience as an intern and still cover half of the class. Neil said we can take a look at this. We talked about the middle and elementary school level and it will be difficult to do this without actually replacing the person.

Gerry Calabritto wanted to commend Mr. Alan Belchak, Food Service Director, for representing us on the evening news speaking on diet soda’s and carbonated beverages. He also wanted to commend Mr. Collins for doing a fine job as acting Chairman. He has tried to reach out to everyone and he should be commended for his actions.

Robert Horvath wanted to know if there was a follow-up to the Board’s letter to Berchem, Moses & Devlin. P.C. stating that we still wish to have Attorney Dugas represent us.

Neil stated he had conversations with Floyd since then and his understanding is that he is the main attorney and will try to be here and represent us. Everything will go through him. If some lesser issues and matters need to be sent to other attorneys he will do that. Nothing official in writing this is my understanding.

**C.1.c Committee**

Gerald Calabritto stated that the finance committee met prior to the Board Meeting and we discussed status of the operation to date. It appears we are on track.
D.1. Approval of Minutes
Approval of D.1.a
Motion made by Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by George Monahan
Motion passed unanimously

Approval of D.1.b
Motion made by Robert Guthrie
Seconded by Krista Pickering
Motion passed unanimously

Approval of D.2. through D.4. Inclusive
Motion made by Gerald Calabritto
All members Seconded this motion
No discussion
Motion passed

E: New Business:

06-41 Correspondence and Field Trip Permission Form from Betsy Bruneau, History Teacher at WHHS

Betsy Bruneau stated that two years ago students had approached her about this trip but she was in graduate school and couldn’t do both. She is now in a position to be able to do this. Students are all present or former history students. The students have chosen the destination have done research on this and have looked into fund raising for this trip. The trip would take place next April during the vacation and would not require any days off from school. In the event of terrorism and the State Department states it is dangerous there is a full refund. If, for other reasons, there are cancellations they will give a credit to the student to go somewhere else. This could be a domestic. There are six students interested at this point. The minimum number required is six.

George Monahan questioned if we could contact either the State Department or Homeland Security and see if they have guidelines or documentation for parents with respect to school programs and students going abroad. Betsy responded that she believes the tour company keeps the parents advised. George stated that they are in the business of travel and making money beyond that trip so he would go to someone who has an impartial interest.

Motion made by George Monahan for Approval of 06-41
Seconded by George Monahan
No Discussion
Motion passed unanimously
Correspondence from Donna Kosiorowski RN, Co-chair, Wellness Committee

Before beginning her presentation, Donna Kosiorowski wanted to note that two of our nurses are in the running for the “Nursing Excellence in Teaching Award”. The two nurses are Christine Bartley from Bailey Middle School and Susan Marchitto from Washington Elementary School.

The State Department of Education has charged every school district in Connecticut with implementing a Wellness Policy by the beginning of the new school year. She shared the committee member’s names with the Board and praised them for their tireless efforts.

She went on to discuss the Wellness Policy and stated that the intent was to ask for Board approval at this meeting but Mr. Cavallaro has requested that this be postponed until the next Board Meeting. The reason for this is that the teachers have questions about the policy and we want to have other people have the opportunity to voice their opinions and ask questions.

It was mentioned that recess should be considered an integral part of the school day and should not be taken away as a punishment unless there is no other form of punishment. If students sit for long periods of time this affects their ability to learn. They should be allowed to move around as this increases their ability to concentrate. Students should have 100 minutes of physical activity each school week. Physical Education should not be taken away as a form of punishment.

Donna stated that Alan Belchak has taught her a great deal about school lunches and what is coming up. We really appreciate the fact that he does this and we ask the Board to support the programs.

The Wellness Policy was discussed in detail.

This matter has been tabled for further review. We want to get a note out to the principals tomorrow to share it with their staff and if there are any suggestions we will bring them back to the Board for final passage at the next meeting.

A discussion continued about a Federal Mandates that take effect July, 2006.

Alan Belchak went on to discuss the student’s eating trends are changing for the better at the high school. Fruit and healthy foods are being consumed. The elementary school never has had junk food we don’t even have ice cream. When students reach the middle and high school they have a wider choice and they are making the healthier choice as evidenced in the film.

Krista Pickering stated that parents need to be educated in making sure their children have a healthy breakfast.
Gerald Calabritto questioned the effect this would have on the concession stand at the rink and the football field. Alan Bechak said that if West Haven decides to go along with the new soda bill they probably will not be allowed to sell soda at the rink because it is on school grounds. If we go along with the Coke Ban and Bill 373 they will have to offer milk and fresh fruit.

Eric Murillo wanted to commend Donna and the committee we are very grateful. Thank you very much.

Gerald Calabritto made a motion to table this to the Policy Committee for final review before presenting it to the Board.

Robert Guthrie seconded the motion.
All members were in favor
Motion to table passed

**06–43 Adult Education Grant**

Motion for approval made by Gerald Calabritto
Seconded by George Monahan
No Discussion
Motion passed

**06-44 Correspondence from Gary R. Palermo, Director Pupil Services**
requesting that Pagels School be used as the site this summer for the Special Education Elementary and Pre-School 2006 Summer Program

Motion for approval made by George Monahan
Seconded by Gerald Calabritto
No Discussion
Motion passed

**06-45 Correspondence from Gary R. Palermo, Director Pupil Services**
requesting that staffing positions for the Special Education Summer School Program be posted at Pagels School

Motion for approval made by George Monahan
Seconded by Gerald Calabritto
Discussion: Neil Cavallaro wanted to add that the cost last year was about $95,000 we anticipate roughly the same costs this year. About $60,000 came from Title I and we will probably use Title I again. Last year there was approximately a $35,000 cost to the
Board of Education. We believe most of the finds this year can come out of the IDEA Grant and this will actually lower the cost to the Board of Education. All Member were in favor Motion passed

06-46 Correspondence from Neil C. Cavallaro, Interim Superintendent of Schools to Board Members regarding Non-resident students

Discussion: Robert Guthrie has discussed this with Neil Cavallaro requesting the phone line be installed in Neil’s office. Neil will then have the capability of reviewing the message a couple of times for clarity before deciding who will handle the call. George Monahan questioned if there is a problem with our current operating procedure? We have a phone line in place now, we have a means of communication for the public to contact the Board of Education with problems. We know your office has no dispatch available to look into the complaint. Do you feel there is a weakness in the current system?

Neil Cavallaro feels this is best policed at the building administration level who knows the families at the various schools. If he feels the information isn’t worthy then he won’t pass it along.

Gerald Calabritto asked if the line had to be moved into Neil’s office. Neil responded yes. Gerry responded at minimal cost it is worth a shot.

Neil stated that as he passes the information on to the school they will probably educate him as to the status. Many times we don’t like to move a child until a specific break in the school year. For example if Christmas break is two weeks from now the student would stay until the break or perhaps as another example until the end of a marking period.

Gerald didn’t want every call going to the police department. Krista asked if the phone line was to be manned or strictly a voice mail. Neil responded that it would be strictly a voice mail that would be listened to every day.

George Monahan mentioned that anonymity is important to allow a person to disclose a potential wrong doing however it also opens the door for lots of false allegations which would be very costly to this board. He feels we currently do police the system and was under the impression that Mr. Cavallaro thought we were doing a very good job of policing the system. We have been aware of instances where students who were not residents of West Haven but there was specific validation and authorization why they would be in our system as non-residents.
Neil agreed that we were doing a good job and we should not radically change our policy just take our information and give it to the people at the building level to investigate and report back to him.

Mark Palmieri was under the impression this was going to be more of a deterrent to keep people from doing this. Gerry stated that the fear of a phone call may deter a child from entering our schools.

No further discussion.

Motion for approval made by Robert Guthrie
Seconded by Gerald Calabritto
All members in favor
Motion passed

**Informational:**

F.1. Special Meeting – **Student Expulsion Hearing**, March 27, 2006 at 9:35 a.m.

F.2. Special Meeting – **Student Expulsion Hearing**, March 27, 2006 at 9:53 a.m.

F.3. Special Meeting – **Student Expulsion Hearing**, March 27, 2006 at 10.08 a.m.

F.4. Correspondence from **West Haven Community House** to Neil Cavallaro regarding “Teen Job Club Grant”

F.5. Correspondence from **Lynn Gagne** to Neil Cavallaro regarding the Music and Arts Programs in West Haven Schools

F.6. Special Meeting - **Student Expulsion Hearing**, April 4, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.

F.7. Special Meeting - **Student Expulsion Hearing**, April 4, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.

F.8. Special Meeting - **Student Expulsion Hearing**, April 4, 2006 at 12:30 p.m.

F.9. Special Meeting - **Student Expulsion Hearing**, April 11, 2006 at 9:35 a.m.

F.10. Special Meeting - **Student Expulsion Hearing**, April 11, 2006 at 11:07 a.m.
F. Informational: (Continued)

F.11. Thank you note from Toni Paine to Neil Cavallaro and Board Members

F.12. Correspondence from Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner of Education

F.13. Correspondence from Donna Kosiorowski RN, Supervisor School Health

F.14. Correspondence from Donna Kosiorowski, Supervisor School Health

F.15. Correspondence from Robert F. Swift, Professor of Music, Plymouth State University

F.16. Correspondence from Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner of Education

F.17. Correspondence from Dr. Doris J. Kurtz, Superintendent of Schools, New Britain Consolidated School District

F.18. Board of Education Roster

F.19. West Haven Board of Education Committees and Representatives

Discussion was limited to F.1., F.2., F.3., F.6, F.7., F.8., F.9., and F.10.

Howard Horvath stated he would be remiss to not comment on the large number of suspensions. He is concerned about both the volume and the type of suspension. Neil said that most are mandatory expulsions. Howard stated most are dangerous instruments. Three are weapons, three alcohol and tobacco, a couple of insubordinations. Neil said we are still substantially less than last year. He is concerned about the increase at the middle school level. We must find ways to address it. Howard agrees with this. The wisest thing to do is to have Neil sit down with the middle school principal and get a head start on next year.

Discussion regarding F.4.
Mr. Monahan wanted to discuss the letter from the West Haven Community House making sure it was signed. Neil responded yes it has been resolved.
**Other Discussion**
Mark Palmieri also wanted to commend Garth Sawyer and Neil Cavallaro for their presentation of the budget to the City Council. They did an excellent job for four hours. Hopefully it will work.

Chairman Collins asked for a motion to adjourn
Motion was made by Gerry Calabritto
Seconded by Krista Pickering
All members in favor
No further discussion

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Clerk