WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
April 2, 2007
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by M. Toni Paine, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:15 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Toni Paine, Chairman
Raymond Collins III, Vice Chairman
George Monahan
Robert J. Guthrie
Howard Horvath Jr.
Eric Murillo
Mark Palmieri

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Krista Pickering
Gerald E. Calabritto

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor John Picard

Before beginning the meeting Chairman Paine asked for a moment of silence for the Goldrich family. Two students in West Haven have lost their mom.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

Curtis Jordan, 249 Malcom Road, West Haven, CT. It is very timely for West Haven High School for the reason that he has been following and tracking the West Haven School System through 1999. Every year statistics are printed. There has been no significant improvement since 1999. It seems to follow a pattern up to the ninth grade. Once they leave the middle school and go into the high school it seems like once they get to high school they forget what they learned in the lower grades. This is not true for all students but for quite a few.

Last week he was disappointed in finding out we were going to let 34 teachers go. A while back we had 600 teachers and some 7000 students. Now we have 585 teachers and 6,638 pupils if you divide the students by the teachers that is like 11 pupils to the class. We have 13 buildings and have 700 people working besides teachers; if we divide 13 into
700 that means other than teachers we have 53 people in every building. Maybe someone can tell me why we need 53 people in every building.

He has always been in favor of audits because there has never been any oversight. He doesn’t see how the Board and Union can put a budget together if they don’t know how much money the City has.

What is wrong with this City is politics. There is politics in this board. He has always held teachers in the highest esteem. We all know that policeman and firemen are also held in high esteem but two professions should also be held in high esteem nurses and teachers. We have approximately 120 firemen and 130 policemen and they have put us One Hundred and Fifty Million Dollars in debt. Our debt service in 2003 was Eleven Million Dollars, in 2004 it was Thirteen Million Dollars and in 2005 it is Fifteen Million Dollars.

In looking at the three departments mentioned above he never felt that the second person should be given the position. There should be a search. If there is no better candidate then the second person should get it. It has always been a custom here that the second person gets the job.

It seems like West Haven has been in a state of suspension. This City Council is the only one that has done any oversight whatsoever. We never would have received an audit if it wasn’t for them. I think the community should become involved in education.

The republicans have been satisfied for a decade with one seat on the City Council and now they don’t even have that seat. There should have been some oversight on the part of the republicans.

With the surplus from last year along with the 2.7 Million this year we have Four Million and we should be able to keep those teachers. We should have an audit to see just how this City and the Board of Education is run because there is something wrong.

The board gave thanks.

There were no further speakers. The public portion closed at 7:30 p.m.

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

Dr. Andrees stated we have a new head coach for the chess team Mr. Scott Schevling and we are proud to announce that West Haven is still #1 in the State.

Mr. Schevling thanked the Board for putting them first on the agenda so the students would be able to get home early to do homework etc. Coach is a strong word he prefers faculty advisor he gives much credit to Camron Bishop ‘04 for his coaching and
intelligence in the game of chess. Scott plays well but these boys and girls will beat him. He appreciates the opportunity and there has been a long standing tradition set here thanks to Mr. Jim Celone. He appreciates the opportunity and thanks the Board very much. It has been a long run and he hopes to continue it. They captured the tenth state title in the tournament and the ninth in a row. These young people play well beyond their years. He introduced four of the members of the class. Two were in class and two were working.

He introduced:
Class of ’04 Cameron Bishop true mind behind the chess game.
Freshman Rached Ramadan entering his very first tournament and he performed very well and we look forward to four very strong years.
Junior Michael Mauriello who is a very strong player. He took three of his five matches. 
Junior William Turpin who will clearly be head of the class next year and is better known as “The Beast”.
Senior Captain Christian Antonio who often is found helping the younger participants. Christian was awarded a plaque for top senior in the state.

Pictures were taken and Pins were distributed.

Dr. Andrees said this is another chance to talk about the wonderful things the kids do in the west Haven School System. This doesn’t happen by chance it happens because of the dedicated professionals, teachers, parents, and support staff who give their best to the children to create these kinds of opportunities for our children.

Four students from Styles Alternative School in West Haven had the opportunity to represent West Haven in a session on Saturday afternoon with Dr. Derrick Gordon Psychiatrist from Yale University who presented Social and Emotional Issues impacting Black, Hispanic and Latino male students. This presented an opportunity from educators around the state to come together. As we look at local, state and national data the group that continues to perform at the bottom are Latino and Black males. Four young men represented West Haven:

Corey Johnson
Jovane Galarza
Keith Thomas
Curtis Bennett

The commission of education, senators and representatives from around the state gave our young men a standing ovation. They were very articulate and spoke eloquently. These students were offered four U-CONN summer opportunities all expenses paid by the organization. We will bring before you those students in May along with what we are doing in West Haven to address the needs of the students who are not performing at a level where we are satisfied.
At our last Special Board Meeting we unfortunately gave out renewal letters to 34 of our teachers. It is our hope that once we get our budget report from the City Council we will immediately make the adjustment and bring those teachers back that we do not have to have on that list. Mr. Cavallaro and I along with the staff will be working over spring break so we will be able to let those teachers know so we don’t lose teachers.

We have two principals who will retire at the end of this year from Thompson and Pagels. We will get together postings and we will be following guidelines in order to hire people for these positions. Hopefully this will eliminate the rumor going around that Thompson School is closing. These rumors have created a lot of anxiety for staff and members of the community.

There are positions open in non-teaching areas but we do not want to hire anyone in these positions because if we have to lay them off in the next few months we will have to pay unemployment. We do have concerns about these positions until we get our budget and are able to adequately staff non-certified positions.

We realize that internally there is some movement with some of the positions that are out there. We are not opposed to internal movement just bringing in new staff from the outside at this time is a concern. We do need to do some internal movement.

She wished a happy Passover and Easter to all.

Neil stated that Lou Pershiani from Washington School PTA is here to give us a brief overview of the carnival that will be held at Washington School. Neil stated the Board last year agreed that he would oversee the process and keep Lou posted on any updates that need to come before the board.

Lou stated that the carnival has been going on for three years and this year it is a work in process. We have floor plans for the front and hopefully for the back of the school. This year we hope to create a community based area in the back of the school which is a little more spread out. He passed out floor plans. Lou is trying to add Monday, Memorial Day from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. He hopes to operate the back area just on Saturday and Sunday during the day; there will be no evening activities. The times will be as follows:

Friday 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. for the carnival
Saturday the back area starts at noon and ends at dusk. The carnival starts at 3:00 on Saturday and ends at 10:00 p.m.
Sunday same as Saturday and the back area hopes to have the art show in that area.
Monday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. If we find we are successful on Monday we may drop Friday next year. If we are not successful on Monday at all we will drop Monday and go back to the original way.

Neil said he has worked through the permits and what we have to have in terms of police and fireman.
Lou said he would like a DJ area and would like to contact the parade coordinators and come down and do something and have karate etc. This would take place in the back area.

Dr. Andrees complimented him, the PTA, and members of that community. They have done a great job in getting all parents out to participate. She applauds him for his hard work.

Mr. Pershiani stated that since Mr. Lewis has become president of the PTA he has truly helped bring more people in and is always working on behalf of the students and school.

Mr. Cavallaro will be in contact with him about the Art Show.

C.1.b. BOARD

Bob Guthrie thanked Neil for recouping the money spent on the bomb threat and also thanked Dr. Andrees and Joe Yacono for getting the reimbursement for our water damage from West Haven High School incurred on January 1st.

Bob asked letters to be sent to the Texas Road House and Friendly’s thanking them for their help in fund raisers for the West Haven High School Band and Carrigan School.

He went to Seth Haley vs. Mackrille School on Friday for a Parent Teacher Basketball Game. It was well attended and he thanked the Mayor for being such a good sport. Obviously no one sitting around this table would compete against some of our high school students but the Mayor was a very good sport.

Mayor Picard said he had a lot of fun at the Seth Haley Mackrille Basketball Game and he definitely couldn’t compete against the high school athletes. It was for a great cause and the PTA’s do a great job. He was glad Dr. Andrees mentioned the rumor about Thompson School and he didn’t want to get into how rumors start but most of the time there is no truth to them at all.

He said that the Texas Road House did a great job and he spoke to Eric Blanchard the manager there who said it works both ways. They are normally packed at 6:00 p.m. but that night we were packed by 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Picard congratulated the Chess Team. He also had the pleasure of seeing Bye Bye Birdie and he said he had a great time and they did a terrific job.

C.1.c. COMMITTEE

Howard Horvath said the Curriculum Committee met this evening and approved to have the five curriculums that were presented added to tonight’s agenda. He recommended that they do this.
Howie made a motion to add these to tonight’s agenda:

SPECIAL ED. READING
AP PHYSICS
FRESHMAN CAPT SOCIAL STUDIES
COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE CURRICULUM
AP U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
All members were in favor
Item 07-39 was added to the agenda
Motion passes

Bob Guthrie asked that when Mr. Belchak comes to present the agreement with Living Word would he please break down what the cost will be.

D.1. Approval of Minutes:

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting, March 19, 2007
Bob Guthrie made a motion to approve the above minutes
Ray Collins seconded the motion
No Discussion
All were in favor
Motion carries

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

07-35 Vivian C. Simmons, Math Teacher, West Haven High School
Effective: July 1, 2007
Reason: Personal

07-36 Marjorie Ferguson-Garcia, Math Teacher, West Haven High School
Effective: July 1, 2007
Reason: Personal

Ray Collins made a motion to approve the two certified resignations above (inclusive)
George Monahan seconded the motion
No Discussion
All were in favor
Motion carries
D.3.  Resignations: (Non-Certified)

07-37  Diane D. Arduini, Paraprofessional, Savin Rock Community School  
Effective: August 27, 2007  
Reason: Retirement

George Monahan made a motion to approve the above non-certified resignation  
Ray Collins seconded the motion  
No Discussion  
All were in favor  
Motion carries

E.  New Business:

07-39  Recommendation to add five new curriculum courses

SPECIAL ED. READING  
AP PHYSICS  
FRESHMAN CAPT SOCIAL STUDIES  
COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE CURRICULUM  
AP U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

George Monahan made a motion to approve 07-39 under New Business at this time.  
Ray seconded the motion  
No Discussion  
All were in favor  
Motion carries

George Monahan made a motion to go into Executive Session  
Howard Horvath seconded the motion  
All were in favor  
Executive Session began at 8:00 p.m.

They returned from Executive Session at 8:20 p.m.

07-38  Employee Termination

George Monahan made a motion that the Board instructs Senior Administration, Dr. Andrees Office, to contact Bertram Moses and Devlin to draft a letter informing this individual of our decision to terminate effective May 7, 2007 unless he contacts us at which point we would consider his retirement in lieu of termination.

Ray Collins seconded this motion  
Bob Guthrie was opposed  
Eric Murillo Abstained
Four voted in favor
Motion Carries

E. New Business (Continued)

07-40 Ray Collins made a motion to add to the agenda a motion for a hiring freeze for all non-classroom related personnel until the budget is complete.

Howie Horvath seconded this motion
All were in favor
Motion Carries
Motion 07-40 is added to tonight’s agenda

07-40 Hiring freeze for all non-classroom related personnel until the budget is complete.

Ray Collins made a motion to approve above motion
Howie Horvath seconded this motion
All were in favor
Motion Carries

F. Informational

Bob Guthrie stated we always provided the Chess Team with a banquet and we would hope that this would continue. We always paid for the students on the Chess Team and if family members came they paid for their dinner. He hopes this will continue and we can find a way to put this together.

Bob stated that through the Superintendent and Neil’s Office we can get the plaques and make arrangements for this banquet.

Dr. Andrees agreed and thanked the Board.

Howie made a motion to adjourn
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
All were in favor
The Meeting concluded at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Clerk