The Meeting of the Food Service Committee was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on December 18, 2006. The meeting was called to order by Ray Collins at 6:00 p.m.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ray Collins, Chairman  
Gerald A. Calabritto  
Eric Murillo

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** Krista Pickering

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** M. Toni Paine  
George Monahan  
Robert Guthrie

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Howard Horvath  
Mark Palmieri

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Joanne Andrees, Superintendent  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent  
Alan Belchak, Food Service Director

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Ray Collins, Chairman of the Food Service Committee asked Alan Belchak to begin the discussion.

Alan stated we should talk about whether we want to have a hiring policy or don’t want to have a hiring policy. He and Ray Collins have discussed this. He will do whatever the Board wishes but we have never had a hiring policy and we have never had a problem with it. If we did have a hiring policy there should be some kind of a system of a person that shows dedication of coming through the ranks of having an opportunity of getting a job.

Ray Collins interjected we had talked about this well before this all happened in the press. We just couldn’t get our schedules together to have a meeting. One of the concerns I had with the hiring policy or the lack of is how does it affect morale? What if you have a long term sub for six months to a year and somebody comes in and gets a job over them. The other aspect I was looking at was hiring from the sub list like we do with custodians and maintenance workers if you bring someone in you get to evaluate them
before we buy them. If you bring in an employee off the street and hire them you don’t
know what their work ethic is and after probation we own them. Whereas if you have a
sub you have an idea of how they are working and you get to evaluate them and then you
can offer them a job.

Alan stated he did some research and checked with other cities and towns and basically
when it comes down to food service they do not have a hiring policy. However they even
have, which I am impressed with when it’s a union position, they have a scoring system
where being in the union you only have 50% of getting the job you apply for. That is
another thing we are talking about. I’ll give you an example. Let’s say someone in the
unit applies for the job just because you are in the unit doesn’t mean you are going to get
the job that’s only 50% of it. There is still another 50%. That is something down the
road we can look at. I can have a job opening for someone that wants to take a transfer.
They might not be fit to qualify and the same thing with food service. With food service
there are many different characters coming in to play; sanitation is very important. They
all have to be certified within a certain amount of time unless they are being hired for a
cashier’s job.

Another thing I believe is that most of the people coming through food service and I
always hate to look at my ladies as being just entry level I believe their job is just as
important as anything else. Food Service is beginning to certify people and that is what I
would like to put forth. Like Mr. Collins said it does hurt morale but a lot of times the
person that has applied for the job and I could use for example a person at the high school
when those high school bids came out. One of the women said I can’t work but I have
been subbing for 3 or 4 years but I have difficulty working on the cash register. Before
we own them either you can do the job or not do the job. I think we should have some
parameters but I don’t know what those parameters would be. If we took those
parameters out of place then the phone calls have to stop. I mean you can’t have
somebody calling me saying I want so and so to get a job and so on down the line.

Toni Paine interjected that she looks at it this way, we have all our teachers in West
Haven and we have a lot of subs on a daily basis don’t we? We have some that are long
term subs. We don’t hire off the list. You do get to see them and if they are a sub it
gives you the opportunity for their supervisor or Neil or whomever to evaluate and say
they can do this and they can do that but we don’t necessarily hire them just because they
subbed. I would go on a recommendation anybody that subs give you the opportunity to
evaluate and I hold you in high esteem in your position and I would go with your
recommendation. Do you understand? So if you give us the recommendations for the
job so I don’t know why we need to say this next one Alan interjected what I feel we
should do is that we should have a procedure in place. If there is a position open I do the
initial and I think I should contact the chair of the committee which is Mr. Collins and
from that point he should take it to the Superintendent and say I am comfortable with
this. I don’t know if you want the same policy that the custodians have or if seniority
rates. I don’t know if it is good or bad. Ray interjected he is partial to seniority just
because of the morale thing and you get a chance to see how the person performs but you
can’t base it just totally on seniority. It should be based on seniority and being qualified.
Just because you are the senior person in the job if you can’t do the job then you shouldn’t get the job.

Alan interjected it might be physical some of these ladies that substitute for me, and I’m not trying to use age as a discriminating factor, they physically can’t do it. Ray stated that is what I am saying, with the custodians we drew from the sub list and then we were able to get a look at them and we really haven’t had that many problems with the new hires.

Neil Cavallaro said he didn’t think anyone was here the last time they went through the negotiations with the kitchen AFSCME not the big regular AFSCME you know the kitchen workers at the elementary schools. I just want to put this out there to the board, one of the things that they had asked for was to be considered in using their time to get into the other AFSCME. We didn’t want to go there because we felt that that could be a conflict when you have two separate unions you don’t want to put one union against the other but that has come up but I don’t know that it wouldn’t come up should you put some kind of procedure in place. In other words these gals that work these three hour kitchen and cashier jobs in the elementary schools one of the things that they really tried hard to get was seniority status so that they can bid into the other AFSCME union when food service jobs come up. I felt this was something I should mention if you are going to put anything in place.

Jerry Calabritto stated that if you go on the logic that you just used then if we hire a custodian Joe Yacano or Mike McGrath should be in contact with the Chairman of the Facilities and Maintenance Committee. You are our Food Service Director period. You make a recommendation, you make a decision to hire, and we make a decision based on your recommendation. I have the utmost respect for you and in your recommendations. These are people you are going to hire who are going to work for you. This should be your decision. As far as seniority lists go like Toni said we don’t hire teachers off the seniority list. Somehow we have a seniority list and I don’t know the history of that but I don’t see that getting in Alan interjected well I can see it at the point where I really feel that since we have a food service committee if there is a job open the chairman of that committee and I should discuss it. I don’t even know if we need a seniority list. Jerry stated if you use that logic then the chairman of the facility and maintenance should discuss when we are hiring a custodian if you want to use that logic.

Toni Paine stated we already have that there are already things in place right for the custodians? Ray stated he is just looking to piggyback with the same thing in place we had for the custodians. While there is no press here let’s skip to the chase he doesn’t get pressure to hire people anymore and I have the utmost respect for him too but bottom line jobs have been going to the people who really deserve them and I’m not saying that hasn’t been in the past but It’s saying someone who has proven themselves and has gone through the system and not have political handouts. Whoever is in charge I don’t care I’m going based on a set policy and it stopped everything when we did it with the custodians now you have less people calling up saying I need a favor, I need a favor, I need a favor and that is going to happen no matter who is in charge that is the nature of
the beast. I'm just making it fair and ethical for anyone who has the ability to get a job should have that opportunity not based on who they know. That is why we had it set going off the sub list if somebody wants to help somebody get a job well then help put them on the sub list and let them prove themselves. It doesn’t mean that every person on the sub list is going to go through. Some of them may just want to work one or two days a week and they are not available for that full time job or they might not have the ability to do that job. This gives us a basis of checks and balances. Alan interjected it doesn’t give them 100% seniority though just being on that list. Ray stated I’m saying qualified in working from there so they have a better shot.

George Monahan stated Mr. Chairman I’m not a member of your committee but I was Chairman of the Policy Committee in the previous two years when this new rule was put in place hiring practice and procedure for the maintenance and custodial non-certified side. I’ll give everyone a brief background, obviously there were clear hiring abuses that took place and they continue to take place in other areas. We put this procedure in place for non-certified custodial maintenance staff and it solved the problem as Chairman Collins indicated. What the policy says is that anyone can apply to be on a temporary or a sub hire list. That list is kept with seniority records associated with it and anyone that is not hired off of that list in a 90 day period is removed from that list. They are allowed and invited to reapply again and be put back on the list but they start at ground zero for hiring. When a person is hired off of that sub list and they are temporary employees now they are not full time employees these are temps. When they are hired on that sub list the procedure also requires that the direct supervisor and the director of that department in this case Mr. McGrath to fill out a document report analyzing their effectiveness. What kind of quality worker were they while they were a sub. It now gives the Director, Mr. Yacano and it would give the Director, Mr. Belchak a tool to have not only his opinion but the opinion of the direct supervisors on his staff that works with these employees on a day to day basis. A record to say are they a quality employee is this someone we would consider to hire full time. Any person should always have the final say. If there is a list of equally qualified people he looks at that list and they hire the best person. Well according to Connecticut State Statute you don’t have to approve the only thing that the Board of Education has to approve are certified teachers. You can check that status. Jerry stated no you are absolutely 100% right. Alan stated you made the biggest mistake in the world as a board saying we are going to control all the hiring well this is what the mess has come to. If I ran Food Service Department for North Haven or Wallingford I wouldn’t even be bringing you my hires. I would have the job done. There would be a certain number of slots but since we hire and fire the Board has to make a decision.

Eric Murillo stated that he feels the person in charge of the department should do the hiring and firing of who he wants. If he is given a part time job it is a part time job it is my choice whether he is going to stay or not. If he is doing a good job fine. I think the qualified person should get the job. Ray stated that is what we are talking about. Eric stated if you are going to start a list it should start now not a list that has been hanging around. George Monahan stated but that is what does happen ever 90 days that list is refreshed. Eric stated he has seen the list and the list seems the same to him. Alan asked if he saw the list in the custodial department. No Eric stated in the food department. Alan
said there is no program right now that is why you see the list. We don’t have a system yet. Toni asked how come they have their list with somebody with seniority then. Eric stated yes that is what I am saying. George Monahan stated there is no sub list. Jerry said hypothetically if the sub list is the panacea to fix all problems maybe this board should hire every job and every position and create sub lists for everything. Dr. Andrees should hire teachers off the sub list. Secretaries should be hired off the sub list. If sub list is the answer to everything all or nothing. George stated you are looking at someone a little different than a teacher you are looking at a non-certified position. Jerry said you are saying the problem is the sub list so that we can see the performance. What is the difference be it teacher be it secretary what is the difference. George said we do try to hire teachers who are subs. If a sub is doing a great job and we have an opportunity and a position opens up we do try to hire them we also try to hire student teachers when they come in and intern with us. If they do a great job we try to keep them here in West Haven; that practice does exist Jerry. Anytime you see someone perform and you witness it first hand why would it be the best way to hire somebody? Ray said let me jump in a minute and get a little control back here. He understands the argument with teachers and the argument with secretaries. Secretaries are different because you can actually give a typing test and evaluate a secretary. Eric stated don’t even go there because you and I know that people still get hired. Ray has seen a lot of people not get hired because of the typing test. All he is trying to do is give some kind of a test in before we hire this person. If it is an outside person we don’t have their credentials to look at so the only thing we can judge on is their performance. A secretary can take a test and perform on a test a teacher is certified it is alright will they be the best teacher who knows but they are certified to do the job and they are trained to do the job. I’m talking about somebody coming here fresh off the street having maybe no ability to do the job at all. Eric said do you think just because you can type 50 words a minute you can become a clerk or secretary? You still need to be able to interact with people and answer the phone. Ray said this is a parameter. Alan stated just to be on our list you need the police check list which is a drug test and FBI fingerprinting the only thing we don’t do is the physical test. Then they can get on the sub list. According to Jolene we can not use anybody unless those three things are met first. If we do have them apply for the job then the Board should pay. We don’t want to pay $125 to physically test some people who can not physically pass. For example some of the lady subs have been there awhile but probably can not pass the physical test like lifting a crate of milk and doing things like that. One way or the other if the board pleases we will mirror image basically the custodian. But I don’t want the custodians because already I’m having custodians apply for jobs and they are telling me I’m on a sub list. They want the job because they are going to be a secretary or go into maintenance or something else. I would say probably 75% of your secretaries out there worked for me because everybody told them that is the way to get in. Some of them had taken the typing test five times until they finally passed it. Ray asked him why you would be opposed to a sub list if as he said being on a sub list already you have gone through the police check. Eric interjected because their might be a better qualified person with more experience and training. Ray stated I’m not saying we are going to give this person a definite job we are going with the most qualified but based off the sub list then the most qualified. Toni asked what happens if somebody is on the sub list and they are a pretty good worker and show up every day and are never late and
George’s cousin who has credentials and has nothing to do with the system and applies for the job. You don’t think someone is going to call up and say something then you know what happens. George stated because we tell everyone who is interested in applying for those positions that there name needs to be on the sub list. Toni stated we just said if somebody is more qualified you don’t have to be on the sub list that is what was just said. George asked how can you do that when they are qualified from the food service. Toni said I can see doing this and having the sub list and everything but I think you need to tweak it. I think you need to have Eric interjected the same thing for a more qualified clerk besides 50 words a minute. Alan stated you still need a personality there are a million factors. Toni stated it’s a great idea but I think you have to have a few more guidelines to take care of the what ifs and I can’t vote on it I’m not on the Food Service Committee.

Dr. Andrees posed a question to Alan, if you have a sub list and a person on the list can’t lift or make the qualifications you would go off the sub list and hire someone else. Alan said that is if no one met the qualifications. Ray stated so if someone is a long term sub and does a good job they have a fair shot if they don’t know anybody. Dr. Andrees said if someone comes in and the pool is a weak pool and you don’t have someone for that position Ray interjected then go with the person from the outside. Dr. Andrees asked how to you balance that and make that work. George stated as soon as they apply for that job their name gets placed on the list that is what happens. They are the lowest seniority ranked but that still gives you the freedom to say this is the most qualified person and you should be able to substantiate that. You know why you are hiring this person who was put on the list just a day ago and is being hired. That is something you can easily do if the person is the qualified person for the job. When everyone looks at that list and says wait a minute this man or women went on the list today and this person on the sub list has been doing this exact job for a year why are you picking the new person then you have the answer for that. You can do that you know. I would hope you could do that.

Alan stated he would take the heat. I mean this time I blame someone else but you know that the calls have always come from the top above the Superintendent if there is an above and I don’t think there is because basic law is the Superintendent of Schools runs the Board of Education and when you folks are in session you run the Board of Education she is just subservient to you. But we get the political games thrown in there if I had three balls I could juggle them and name who they are and whichever ball falls that is the one taking the shot at that time, Jerry interjected you have always been a good soldier Alan. Yeah that is basically it who wants to carry the ammunition that is what it is. George said but if you have this list Alan and all applicants get placed on the list and if a person hasn’t been used in 90 days just to look at what we did in the other program and the other program has been working phenomenally and everyone is satisfied with it. If your list gets refreshed and people that aren’t being used and people that don’t get adequate reports when they are subbing their direct supervisor states that this person could never do this job in the food service department you have the right to purge them from the list they are just not a qualified candidate so they go off the list so you constantly have a quality pool of names. I would think that your job to be able to pick a good qualified candidate any time you need one would be as good or better as what you
do now. Alan said so what you are saying is that when they apply for the job in Jolene’s office that is the list. George stated that name gets added to whatever list exists currently and if someone hasn’t been used in 90 days then they go off the list. Alan said an example is the hire before this hire there was a woman that has probably applied ten times per job and always got overlooked and it goes right back to what Mr. Collins said what does it do to morale. It looks terrible.

Toni Paine asked Alan a question. She stated you actually have somebody who can’t lift the 50 pound milk crate, Alan stated he thinks it is 32 pounds, Toni said whatever it is who is lifting the carton? Alan responded usually two will but the example being…Toni stated she is worried because then you throw your back out and then somebody is out on comp. Alan said the job that was hired as a cashier the only thing she does is the cash box that is not in her job description. When it is a cook the cook is sent out for a physical test. That is part of their job description. Mr. Cavallaro helped put that in.

Ray asked so how do you feel about that a revamped type list that when they apply to put on the list then we can evaluate that way. Jerry stated that status quo is fine by him. George said then we will get what we always got no accountability. Ray asked Eric and Eric stated credentials and references really matter. There are a lot of good qualified people out there that have a lot of experience. Eric would just leave it as it is. Ray stated we will put it to a vote as we will argue all night.

Ray Collins made a motion to bring it to the Board as a whole to amend the policy we have on hiring. He would add a Sub List for Food Service to try and take the so-called politics out of it.

George asked if he had a copy of the procedure we used for the custodians. Ray responded, “No I don’t.”

All those in favor.

Toni stated there are only three of you on this committee present.

Opposed

Jerry Calabritto and Eric Murillo were opposed.

Ray stated I guess we are shot down.

Alan stated he wanted to talk about some good things.

1. There was an increase in Summer Lunch for the School year 2005 – 2006 - $28,000
   For the School year 2006 – 2007 - $45,000

2. Application Process:
   A. Code Compliant per Last audit, all applications are stored in one office facility
B. Verification process was complete and done within a timely fashion.
C. Students status is easily checked and corrected
D. Only fall back is that Winmaster which approves the application must be changed – manual in Power School

3. Elementary needs to be computerized:

A. We are planning on using Power School, Cost in hardware approximately $6,000 and $2,000 to drop the cables. Will test at Pagels then a school a week until complete.

B. This would enable efficient in student counts and deposits. This would also allow us to retrieve data directly in the food service office. No more paperwork.

C. High School and Middle Schools are to be set up with the IP address to receive data electronically.

4. Change Positions/High School 8 Hour Head Cook.
   Currently paying an employee one hour overtime to supply the students with after school availability to receive a lunch. Need one person to direct the daily operation. This will be subject to union approval.
   Dr. Andrees hopes that this will not lead to a grievance. This is more like manager status without the title. Ray stated if there is more responsibility we need a job description and you can work this out with Dr. Andrees. Dr. Andrees and Alan will come back to the Board with a job description title. One person is receiving the overtime because he can’t teach all the employees.

   Bob Guthrie stated it is bad to change a job description in mid contract. George Monahan questioned the change of hours and pay.

   Alan stated the hours would be from 7 hours to 8 hours straight time no longer the hour overtime. $1,000 stipend. This will be discussed with the union. A further discussion ensued.

Ray Collins thanked Mr. Belchak for his presentation and asked for a motion to close.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn
Eric seconded the motion
Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Marylou Amendola
Board Clerk