The Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by Chairman M. Toni Paine at 6:15 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: George Monahan
Robert J. Guthrie
M. Toni Paine
Howard Horvath – 6:30 arrived
Gerald Calabritto
Eric Murillo
Mark Palmieri – 6:15 arrived
Raymond Collins

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Krista Pickering

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Acting Superintendent Paul Tortora
Assistant Superintendent Neil Cavallaro
Dr. JoAnn Hurd Andrees

Chairman M. Toni Paine asked for a motion to move into Executive Session
MOTION was made by Gerald Calabritto and SECONDED by Raymond Collins

Moved in Executive Session at 6:17 PM

Chairman Paine asked for a MOTION to leave Executive Session
MOTION made by George Monahan and SECONDED by Gerald Calabritto

Moved out of Executive Session at 6:55 PM

Chairman Paine: In regard to discussion on the Budget, we would like to leave the money appropriated for our wish list in there. Also a homework assignment for Paul Tortora, Superintendent Andrees and Neil. We would like for you to give us your description of what the new position for Assistant Superintendent should include. Is a couple of week’s sufficient time?

Acting Superintendent Tortora; yes, we can work it out.

Chairman Paine: no, this is not collaboration; we want each one of you to do your own.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we will have it at the next meeting.
Dr. JoAnn Andrees: not having been had the opportunity to be here long enough to
know the working of every staff member. It would be very hard for me to know what
the voids are in the Administration Team. So it would be very difficult to give you a
total description right now, just based on this week. But I hope not to be held

Chairman Paine: Absolutely not, what we are looking for is three different slants on
one position and hopefully it will be a combination of the three.

Chairman Paine turned meeting over to Acting Superintendent Tortora:
2005-2006 Board of Education Budget Transfers:
We will start on page 14, Tuition, I’m sorry lets go back to the first page. Let me
just say to the new board members. The end of the process which will probably be
two to three more meetings. You will end up with a book; there is a lot of detail in
the book, the end result the book goes over to the Mayor. We will talk about time
lines later. The transfers get really complicated, so just ask any questions that you
feel is fit. We have about three thousand accounts in the Chart of accounts.
Because the state of Connecticut requires us to break things up to function and
object. Those three thousand accounts boil down to what we have here. This is
what is reported by the city. So if you ask the city for a run or you ask Garth for a
run this is what it gets broken down too 130 accounts. It is then divide into seven
categories which are on the front. The yellow and blue columns are simply this. At
the beginning of the year, we start with a budget. An accrued budget, the board of
Ed last May came up with an accrued budget based on what the city council gave
us. That’s the yellow column, it says with revenue because lets say for instance we
had 100 organizations rent out our building and they paid us for the custodians.
This is just one example. That payment comes out of our salary account. But it is
not a budget item. So the way the city has it set up. We pay out of that account and
deposit the money, with a letter to the city asking them to put it back into this
account as revenue. The blue column is where Garth and I are saying we need to
do transfers. We do this ever single year. The good news is the two have to match.
If the blue column is over you are going to have a budget deficit and that’s not a
good thing.

Tuition account: Special Education Tuition for outside placements. Is generally
Students who have been placed after a PPT. It is a very big problematic area in
this district. We gave you a three year history. It goes up because like everything
else the tuition goes up every year at these places. We made an effort to bring
students back. We have some on the second floor at Stiles School. Elementary
Schools we have disabled student we keep in the classroom now. We don’t send
them out. So that helps, but it is a problem area. We made an adjustment here
when we brought back the program from ACES to the High School. We now put
that money in the tuition account.
Transportation: We have tons of busing because we are not racially balanced. We are also obligated by state statute to provide busing to the parochial schools. Then the voc-ed schools, physically hand-capped.

Student Activity: covers the late buses and after school programs, we also picked up the community house. We have a contract with Winkle Bus that’s three percent. The board last year also approved 181 days for students, verse 182. We have one less day. This works to our advantage. We have almost 400 students going to New Haven right now. We transport them. Years ago we used bus tokens; we had a lot of complaints. When we reached the number of students where it made sense. We went to New Haven and said gives us the Grant money, we will supple the busing. So this is what we did. So that why we picked up another $145,000 there. We do get billed for extra services that our children receive there. We are looking into that, because it is getting expensive.

Gerald Calabritto: Do the students get counted as New Haven Students?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we claim them from the number standpoint. But they get the ECS. New Haven gets the money from the state we get the transportation.

Howard Horvath: asked if the Special Education has changed or if it has always been like this?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: the number of students has grown and the needs have changed.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: our administrators are attending those PPT’s, so they are not just adding services.

Robert Guthrie: when we get a reciprocal program off the ground some of those issues may resolve themselves. In theory it is a wash. Why are we going to charge New Haven students coming here, in the same since why would you charge us for West Haven students coming there.

Chairman Paine: This would depend on the services; we can’t mix apples and oranges.

Robert Guthrie: I understand that, but you will have some service lined up.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: Students apply through the magnet school office in New Haven. The student is notified by New Haven, and then we sign off on it. My office keeps track of the students. We have them register at their home school first.
Acting Superintendent Tortora: we don’t have any New Haven Students, because we did not have any room. At the time is was a loophole, based on availability of room. We were able to send students out.

What Bobby was referring to was, the previous board was excited a magnet school. Based around fire and police. The mayor moved it up to next year. Hopefully it will get support again. That was getting 95 cents on the dollar for reimbursement for everything. We need to collaborate with a rural area. Maybe Milford or whatever. It is a long process; New Haven was very excited about it.

Mr. Guthrie: UNH is very excited about it.

Acting Superintendent Tortora:
Salaries: This is the most difficult to explain. When we budget the yellow column for salaries it is done last year. All hiring and retirements happen over the summer. It is not uncommon to see shifts. We have reclassified some people: C12 Assistant Administrators, we have two new administrators, one at the High School and one at Carrigan. The next one we picked up money is where we originally had the Dean of Discipline; John Clifford’s money was there. We paid John; John is just about transitioned out. He comes in once a week or once every other week, just to address non-certified problems.

Classroom Teachers account which you know is millions of dollars; we had 25 or 30 teachers leave last year. We had 25 earlier retirement, 4 or 5 retire. So we always see usage variance in this account.
C20 Adult Ed: there is a 25 thousand variance there; we reclassified the Adult Ed Coordinator, which is a new position. The next thing is the secondary school, sorry no C26 Pupil Services: we had people in grants and we lost that money, so we moved the people there. Teacher’s aide and instructional aides these are the paraprofessionals. Now they are hired on the bases of need. If we have a student that has been identified with a handicap and we don’t want to send them out because of outside tuition. We attempt to keep them in house, but sometimes that means a paraprofessional. We try to control this as much as possible.

Custodians: C58, C60, and C62 – these accounts have a lot of movement, you have workers comp. and a lot of movement.

Mr. Guthrie: asked why the student activity advisors picked up a deficit.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: What happened there was,

Garth Sawyer: said that the cheerleading was re classified from coaches to advisor.

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you
Operation of Plant: Has turned into a real issue this year, due to heat and electricity.

Mark Palmieri: Asked if the regulations were done outside of West Haven. A custodian at Pagels told him, the reason the lights were not on in the parking lot was because they were regulated outside of West Haven.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: That’s not true, they are on timers.

Mark Palmieri: What about the heat? I see this everywhere, you go into a building and the heat is cranking, again because they are on timers. Can this be changed?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: Three years ago we had joined a consortium and locked in a one price. That has expired. Now the city has now locked in again, I was not happy with the way they did it. Now to answer your question, when we have work done at the schools, I do not ask for state of the art computer regulated. Because most of the custodians can’t handle it. Some of the other problems are old systems and new systems in the same building. Years ago we use to say shout off the lights, now they are now automatic. We used to say lower the thermometer; under state guidelines we cannot go lower then

Chairman Paine: At night?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: no, at night there are set backs.

Chairman Paine: did you say we have natural gas?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: yes

Chairman Paine: why does it say only $1,030.00?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: that natural gas D06 is propane. D16 is Heat for buildings. It is hard, we have had meeting in one room it maybe freezing, out in the hall its 20 degrees hotter. There is no easy fix. The city locked in at a 42 percent increase.

Improvement to Sites: we take every building, including the Rink and Stadium. It is basically what we do on the grounds. This year we did a portion of Molloy parking lot. Also at Bailey the grant covered replacing the seats, we replaced and resurfaced the floor. So the project would be done right.
Acting Superintendent Tortora: We are self insured, x amount of dollars goes into the account. As blue cross administers the plan they draw out of that account. Unlike the city, we make good for overages and underage. Some times that means a transfer from another account, but if it is over we get to transfer. We had 8 hundred thousand to the good last year. So we asked the city if we could put in a holding tank and draw off of it.

Benefits & Fixed Chargers: The problem is for next year we are understated for the 8 hundred thousand. Blue Cross sends us an analysis of claims paid; we did great in July, August and Sept. But Oct, Nov and Dec. we had an increase. Now we had two teachers with serious health problems. We are self insured up to 150 thousand.

Mr. Guthrie: Are we still getting to see the actual bill from city hall? For years we were asking for a break down from the city of what we were paying for, instead of you owe me 10 millions dollars, for what? Finally last year through Garth we received a statement of the actual dollar amount. If you look at previous years, you might even say we were funding some of the city side. Based on what we were paying back to them.

Chairman Paine: did they go back last year and have everyone sign up again to up date.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we asked them, but I don’t think they ever did it.

Other: Everything is about the same. Except Consultant Services, just so everyone know it is hard to get that account based on the amount of litigation we had, and on top of that we had four contracts negotiated. Of course the law firm is involved every step of the way with that. Two of the four were extremely difficult. One we went right up to arbitration. So it is days and days of meetings. Even the paraprofessional’s contract that is the only one open right now. We have done five full days and we are nowhere near done.

Garth: we have about a hundred and sixty thousand that go to OTP, occupational therapy and then another couple hundred thousand for the legal bills.

Mr. Guthrie; Garth can you get a break down to us?

Garth: yes

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we will get a full break down to you.
Police and Fire: We have found that at large events we need to have police and fire.

Howard Horvath: asked about service contracts

Acting Superintendent Tortora: all emergency lighting, elevators are under contracts.

Instruction: If we need money from somewhere it comes from here. We try to put as much money in here as we can. You know we picked up some money in salaries. We off set the electrical and we bumped money anywhere we could and put it in here. What I would like to do is give some to art and music. They feel like have been shorted. We will send someone to Art and Music teachers so they can build up on supplies. The credit goes to the board, because you are approving this. Technology: every year we try to roll out another year. Normally we would go to third grade. But this year the money that would normally have gone. We had three schools additions. Forest, Haley and Mackrille. I had to take my normal funds from those schools because they had to have labs. Also we rolled out Power School at the High School and Middle Schools and bought lab tops.

Howard Horvath: you say you asked them to building in technology?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: We ask and then the bids come back and for whatever reason Capitol Improvement has been a nightmare and something has got to go. Because we are short money.

Howard Horvath: so it is built in and when we are short, it goes.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: just so everyone knows tomorrow the state is coming in to audit Bailey.

Robert Guthrie: Are we close to having the outstanding work on the other buildings completed?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: I had a conversation with the building manager and told him the funds would not be released until the board was satisfied.

Robert Guthrie: It was on as one or all, Thompson elevator, Forest School, Haley and Mackrille. Haley has some leaks. Mackrille and Forest still needed some finishing. The board decided not to release the funds or sign off on projects until everything was complete. What else do we have to encourage them to complete.
Acting Superintendent Tortora: the whole process needs to be re-vamped. That concludes the transfers; the good news is we should have a balanced budget.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: we are re-vamping the entire elementary school science curriculum. That is a pretty big investment. I see that as the next major investment as far as instructional supplies and materials.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we need middle school math this year.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: actually the last three years grades five through twelve are all new math.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: We did reading in the middle schools this year and the elementary schools were done the last three years.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: Middle schools social studies are all done.

Acting Superintendent Tortora; all text books have been brought into a five year period. I think science is the only thing left.

Robert Guthrie: a couple of years ago we, had four teachers doing the delivery of Science? Now you’re talking about a Science Curriculum. I know we have a language Arts Coordinator at some point will we need to address a Science Coordinator. We are writing the curriculum without a Coordinator.

Assistant Neil Cavallaro: Actually what we are doing this year, when the board spoke about administrator interns, bringing that program back. One of the things I brought up at that meeting was that we were pulling the department Chair who is in charge of 6 to 12. Remember we reduced them down to two classes. So right now this year and I will ask again for next year. Her classes are covered. This year we are working on writing the curriculum, next year we will work on implementing the curriculum. One of the biggest challenges I see with Science is integrating it with other areas of the curriculum. Because what we want to be able to do is, one is make the teachers feel comfortable with teaching science and number two; we don’t want to put a strain on their day, where they have to fit it in. That’s where I see us going next year. As far as the four science facilitators go, we are trying to jive their curriculum with the classroom teachers are doing. Just like the reading specialists do, as specialist in that building. Now we have one for every two buildings.

Robert Guthrie: is it this year or next year that testing requirements?
Assistant Neil Cavallaro: 2008 grades 5 to 8. that’s where we hope to go.

Robert Guthrie: Thank you

Acting Superintendent Tortora: with that said I would appreciate a motion

Robert Guthrie made a MOTION to approve Budget Transfers as presented: Gerald Calabritto Seconded MOTION. Chairman Paine: all in favor, MOTION passed unanimously

2006-2007 Requested Budget:
Summary – Board of Education 2006-2007 – Handout

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we are going to talk about next year. This is our budget not mine, so I welcome any suggestions. We have worked very hard to change the way budget is done over the years. Last year the Board was specific in they said we needed to address issues relative to expulsions and discipline, the whole social piece. We ended up with the money for security; it is not in place yet. But the money is there. Even looking at a Dean of discipline or Assistant Superintendent.

The time line is in December: Administrators and department heads submit request. They are analyzed and complied by the Central Office. This is the big book you received. We ask for degree changes and any program changes. Today it really becomes a wish list.

January: We meet as many times as is takes. The Board of Education meets to adopt a “Requested Budget” that will be submitted to the Mayor that we are comfortable with prior to February 1, 2006.

February: The Board of Finance on the City side. Usually the board of end does a presentation and reviews Requests

The Mayor works on 'Recommended Budget" that he will represent to the City Council.

Then in February we come back to you with Capital Improvements. Then we send that over.

March: Mayor will submit “Recommended Budget’ to City Council by charter no later the March 16th.

April/May City will hold public meetings no later than April 4, 2006. We don’t present our budget the Mayor presents his budget.

By May 4th the city adopts a working budget. We never get what we ask for. So May and June: The Board of Education will meet to adopt an “Operating Budget”. The city cannot control our line items. So you are looking at the line items. . What they lower bottom line to, it what we need to make it work.
The real challenges lay ahead in May and June. By next week I hope you will have looked at your goals and if there is something you want to add to this. Mid to large size building projects are not in the budget we are dealing with tonight. We deal with that separately on another evening.

Salaries and Benefits it is sixty three million dollars of our budget. Salaries- degree changes, step changes, increments, longevity. We will average about 5%

Benefits: we hope it is not this high, but we can peak at 7%.

When you look at the combined, we are looking at 4 ½ million dollars. That's a 6% increase before we look at anything.

Hand-out – Sample of 2006-2007 teachers Cost Analysis

Health Insurance – handout
The renewal is in March, so we can’t get a figure from them until then. This does not help with the budget process. I have asked that this be moved up. With a ten million dollar account, a swing of 3% can make a big difference.

2004-2005 Function Summary (dollars per Pupil) - handout
Look at third column, School based administration, the black is West Haven Figures, and the red is our ERG. That is the group the state defines us in. State average is in the blue. We spend $531.00 per school based administrators, General Administration $382.00, Pupil & Instructional Support Services $1,333.00, Instructional programs $6,246.00, Plant Services, $1,367.00, Buildings and debt Service $1,034.00, we try to keep the buildings up. Special Education Transportation $7,529.00, this is a targeted area. We need to continue to focus in. Regular Education Transportation 574.00, Total per resident student $470.00. These are the State averages.

Ray Collins- 75.29 is that per Special Ed student or per student when you break it down?

Tortora: it is suppose to be per special Ed student.

Instruction Expenditures: Handout-This is the account that teacher, parents, technology talk about. The thing that happens there is we try to hold some of this money back. Then release the money after we get through the winter.

Net Current Expenditure NCE per Pupil- Handout – This is important everyone wants to know what you spent per pupil. NCEP West Haven in 2004, we spent 10,064, state average was 10,672. The only way to spend more is to get more money.
State Education Grants Deposited to City General Fund - Handout
State money that comes back from the state it goes back to the City, so if the city is giving us 60 million dollars. They are getting back this year $38,580,541. This year they are actually getting back an extra five hundred and twelve thousand dollars back over what they budgeted. When they get the extra bucks, we don’t see it. It is a win fall for them.

State & federal Public Grant Expenditures – Handout
These funds come to us they go back to the City. This is above and beyond. We basically transitioned out. We brought our test scores up, but we need to go higher.

Student Enrollment: Handout – 06 is an estimated. The numbers are all over the place. It is still to earlier. Ron looks at 8th grade in the two middle schools. Enrollment is going down from year to year.

ERG H’s Special Education 2004-2005 State Data –Handout
We are spending 20.69% of total budget to Special Ed and Pupil Services We have gone down and we are working on bring it down more.
With the PG case we obligated to keep impaired in house. In most cases you then need a paraprofessional. Usually a paraprofessional is less expense.

Section B: Budget Projection – Handout
In order to reduce salaries, you must reduce work force. Our most treasured resource is the staff.
Operation of plants, 5% increase. We take whatever the city recommends we use.
Electric 4% increase, Natural Gas 5 % increase, Water 4% increase.
It is too early for benefits, Garth and I figured at 12%, if it comes in at 8% that’s a nice swing of money, we could lower our request. Don’t forgot, it does not matter what we ask for, it is what we get, by the time we get, we usually know and go back here. By the time I go before the city counsel in March, I will have a better idea. I may even make changes to the slide show. Instruction: Garth and I kept it the same. Now the only other thing I want to talk about is the MER.
Minimum Education Requirement, we are required by the state.
It we do not make that minimum spending for each child, we are penalized. It could be hundreds of thousands. The black is West Haven, the ERG is red. This is one of things that you cannot increase your MER unless you increase your spending. Special Education transportation, Food Service expense gets pulled out. We work hard to give us a little of a margin.

Howard Horvath and Toni Paine asked for explanation
WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
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January 18, 2006

Garth: the MER is based on regular programs. The per pupil is based on total. So when we take out food service, special transportation. We spend more on Special Ed and that is taken out.
MER – Handout

Chairman Toni Paine: Special Ed is about 20%

Acting Superintendent Tortora: Special Ed is killing us.
I have one more sheet. I gave you the sheet proposed budget increases for the other towns in Connecticut. In some other towns we have found that the Board of Ed is not responsible for the benefits.
I want to Thank Garth and my administrators, they worked very hard.

Ray Collins: what is the number?

Mr. Guthrie: It’s on the bottom of your spreadsheet.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: this would no reduction in staff, services, and instructional, consulting, no new personnel. Early retirement has dried up so we don’t have that. If the benefits come in lower next year we can adjust or add. If it comes in lower this year, we could certainly request the same thing. So the burden does not fall on the city. This does not reflect the big notebook. We need to draw the line, that’s my opinion. If you look at new personnel. This is not my recommendation this is request from Administrators. We get this in and Neil and I go over it, we meet with the Administrators and can usually drop it to a quarter of what was request. I don’t think we can afford any of this. This is where we are at; we have two more meeting next. You have time to think about what this board wants.

Chairman Paine: feels Math teachers are a necessity.

Mark Palmieri: This piece about security at the High School Did you tell me you are looking to go outside on this, as not to have to pay benefits?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: We have in our current budget this year, to get started. Assistant Superintendent and outside security. These request came from my administrator, I suggest you throw them out. I give you a sheet that says Superintendent Recommendations.

Mark Palmieri: asked about other health insurance providers.
Acting Superintendent Tortora; in the past we have not found it to be cost efficient. The first year they are low, and then the next years are huge increases. We are also are under the city. We can go out if it is equal or better then. The City would have to go out to bid.

Mr. Guthrie: we are piggy backed on what the city does at the moment.

Acting Superintendent Tortora; also when you retire, you retire under your existing policy. Even though we have the right to negotiate equal or better. If Paul Tortora retired under Anthem, you are obligated to give me Anthem the rest of my contractual time. It can be done, but it is not that easy.

Mr. Guthrie: as much as we can sit here, and talk about a Math teacher or a new coach. It bothers me to think you know we have to even want to think or want to accept or swallow a 6.78 as statuesque, anyone leaving has heard about the recent assessments in the last couple of weeks. Based what has been presented by Garth and Paul I make a MOTION to accept the 6.78% and let the City Council and the Mayor know that is a statuesque. That’s does not make us move forward. None of us are happy with this. The odds of seeing this number is slim to none. Raymond Collins SECONDED the MOTION.

Gerald Calabritto: the number basically mean nothing until we get back the number from the Mayor, then we can say can be buy these books, can add the math teacher. Because then we know the number we have to work with.

Howard Horvath: I feel comfortable going with this number. JoAnn do you?

Dr. JoAnn Hurd Andrees: This is a high number; we want to try and preserve the integrity. We still have to look at we have a failing school. The Mayor and the City council need to understand. I think this is a high number, but if it helps us to at least stay statuesque. We will have to try and make the best of it.

Acting Superintendent Tortora; I think we need to work with the Mayor, after all we don’t want to get more then we need either. With Salaries and Benefits this is where we are.

Chairman Paine: all in favor, any opposed, passed unanimously.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: we will have to meet next.

Gerald Calabritto: do you want to pick a day now?
Acting Superintendent Tortora: any day is fine with me.

Gerald Calabritto: How about Monday.

Acting Superintendent Tortora: I won’t be ready yet.

Chairman Paine: did you say two days?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: the only thing is I want to piggyback on this, two new policies. Rose made everyone new policy books, making one book instead of two. These are all the policies that were done through George. There is only one mandatory policy due in January. We would like to bring you that policy before the meeting. Then it can be brought before the Board on the next Agenda. Board as a whole at 6:00.

Gerald Calabritto: Wednesday at six.

Chairman Paine: asked if there is a medical?

Acting Superintendent Tortora: that one is not due until June.

Chairman Paine asked for a MOTION to adjourn
MOTION was made by Raymond Collins and SECONDED by Gerald Calabritto

Meeting Adjourned at 9:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rose McDonnell
Board Clerk