The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on January 20, 2009. The meeting was called to order by Gerald A. Calabritto, Vice Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**
- Gerald A. Calabritto, Vice Chairman
- Eric Murillo, Secretary/Treasurer
- Robert Saley
- T. Sean Maher
- Patrick Egolum
- Howard Horvath Jr.
- M. Toni Paine
- Andrew DePalma

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**
- Mark Palmieri, Chairman

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**
- Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
- Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:**
- Shamsi Aysha

Vice Chairman Calabritto called the meeting to order and began with the Public Portion.

**Public Portion**

Vice-Chairman Calabritto asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Trish Robles, 229 Branford Road, North Branford is here as the Co-Chair of the NEASC follow-up committee. The follow-up committee is in favor of CREC doing a need assessment for the possibility of building a new high school.

Two of the main issues of the NEASC findings in November were:
- to renovate the six science rooms at the high school which would cost about 1.2M
- to renovate the high school library which has all the same furniture since 1963
They feel it would be a wonderful initiative to have CREC come in and do a need assessment to see if building a new high school would be a better option instead of renovating such an old building.

Their special progress report is due February 1st and the board’s decision tonight will be put into their report. Their accreditation is an important part of building a new high school.

The board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road addressed the board. Mrs. Rossi stated that February 20th is the Carroll E. Brown Scholarship Dinner at Fantasia. The social hour begins at 6:00 PM and dinner begins at 7:00 PM with three dinner choices. The ticket price is $50.00 per person. She asked that people make the check out to the West Haven Black Coalition. This is a good time and all the money is used for scholarship which is very important.

This is a historic day in history and the history she would like to see made in West Haven is a fair and equitable hiring practice put in place for all. Every time we take a step forward with a sub list or anything like that which is a fair and equitable practice, we take steps backwards. She then thanked Mr. Cavallaro for getting her the F.O.I. request very quickly which she requested. She spoke about the data processing job last time and her concern is that we lowered the educational requirement (you no longer need a bachelor’s degree) yet the salary was not lowered accordingly and she has a problem with that. She doesn’t understand why the salary amount was not lowered as the educational aspect of the position was lowered. Her understanding also is that people from outside who applied would have come in on a lower scale because the person who received the job went in at a higher step. It seems like you hire from within when it suits your purpose. There is another job on the agenda where you didn’t hire from within; a sub was hired. She thinks it is unfair and it is not the first time she brought this up and she is sure it won’t be the last time because she has a longer term than anyone here. When I see something wrong that is not fair to the taxpayers who pay for everything here I will keep coming. I believe you are part of the problem or part of the solution and I want to be part of the solution.

She commended Mr. Webber for the exercise he began with his students. They write a letter to themselves and then year’s late Mr. Webber mails it to them. Her son who is now 26 just recently received his letter back and was very excited. This is the kind of exciting thing we want for our children.

She thanked Mr. Calabritto for not having the finance meeting on a Monday so Council members are able to attend.

The board gave thanks. There were no other speakers. Public portion closed at 7:15 PM.

C. REPORTS
C.1. Administration:

Superintendent Cavallaro stated that Mr. Webber is here tonight to talk about the very successful Toy Drive that exceeded everyone’s expectations. Marilyn Lynch, a teacher in the library at WHHS and students who participated in the Toy Drive gave a verbal synopsis of their experiences as they participated in this drive. They had a beautiful presentation prepared but unfortunately her computer wasn’t compatible with the machinery in the board room.

Ms. Lynch stated that the NEASC mission statement was really fulfilled. All of the kids here and Mr. Webber along with the faculty and staff really reached out to the community with the West Haven Fire District who helped us raise money and acquire toys for children. This was very successful. Her portion was to oversee the confirmation of what the people called in. Some of the comments from the public were wonderful they felt they were doing something really good for the community and helping people in need.

Another area of success would be the telephone etiquette and professionalism acquired while students were actually speaking on the telephone with members of the community rather than texting them.

Mr. Webber stated there were a few different ways we went about this and there are a couple of representatives here from Peer Advocates and a few students. He asked the students to talk to the board about what they did.

Each student gave a brief description of what they did during the Toy Drive. Some examples were the great time students had in helping to fill orders (shopping) for kids age 1 – 12 and choosing Hanna Montana & Barbie dolls for little girls ages 6 – 8.

One student said kids our age don’t know what it is like to be generous; it is nice to be generous to others. Another student said this year’s drive went much smoother than last year’s drive it was very well organized. The students who fielded phone calls felt appreciation from the person’s tone of voice on the phone and it made them feel good to help others. Another student said it felt wonderful and really touched her heart and this memory will last a long time. Another student said he purchased six or seven bikes for kids and realized there were no helmets. He was told the West Haven Police Department would give out free helmets. They gave out flyers to a few of the families and they came down to the police office and received helmets. Another student didn’t have Mr. Webber as a teacher but joined up for a good cause.

Mr. Webber said the first year he did this they raised $75.00 and were able to donate to WHEAT and they took care of the toys as well. Three years ago he hooked up with the fire fighters and the toys didn’t go to West Haven residents but to the Yale Children’s Hospital. The grand tally for last year was $1,350 and this year $2,400. This was awesome.
One student who graduated last year named Mike came by and asked if the shopping was done yet. He was told they were going today. Mike gave him an envelope with $200 in it which his mother gives him every year to shop with. He said he is not into games and would like him to spend it on kids. He tried to split it with him but he wanted him to have the whole amount. He said it was good what you did last year make it bigger and better this year. The impact these kids have on the community is amazing. A further discussion ensued.

The board gave thanks.

**C.1.a. Status of Schools**

Neil Cavallaro said that at 6:00 PM tomorrow they will do the mid-year transfers for the budget and our three managers will be in attendance to talk about their facilities. We will then talk about funding for next year. If you have any questions both Dave and I are available and have any information you need for the meeting tomorrow night ahead of time. We are only asking for bare minimum increases where we contractually have to go forward.

Neil addressed the letter under informational regarding the pool. There was a new law passed but there aren’t many solutions available right now. Many public swimming facilities are in the same boat as we are. The Health Department told us that because of the type of drain system we have we have to drain the Carrigan swimming pool and the diving well at WHHS. The lap pool at WHHS does not have to be drained at this point but will have to be drained in the next three month period. Prices aren’t available until the pool is drained but an approximate cost would be about $9,500 to install the proper drainage system. We asked for a little leeway with Carrigan and it has not yet been drained but will be done this week and then a cost will be available. Neil spoke with Mark Pain from the Park Department and we are working together as soon as we receive some estimates and solutions we will bring it before the board. By the time our lesson season comes around we will need a solution to address this problem.

Eric Murillo asked what the $9,500 estimate would encompass. Neil said he just received it today and said they would have to change the drainage system and drill a hole in the wall and put a filter on the side wall. Chris Everone will be here tomorrow night with more information.

We had issues with the boilers at Carrigan, Bailey and Molloy last Friday. Joe Yacano has done an outstanding job of working with our plumbers, contractors and maintenance guys to keep them up and running. We are making every effort not to cancel school when something like this happens. Mr. Lopes did a great job with Molloy over the weekend and we had a backup plan where buses would be ready to take those kids to another school. We don’t want to lose school days if we don’t have to. Principals may get a call at 7:00 AM in the morning and be told to expect three bus loads of children. We are going to do everything in our power if we have to close a school because of the boilers to move the kids and get the day in. We should have contingency plans.
Eric asked for more information as to what was wrong with the boiler. Neil stated he was called and told the boiler went out and whether it was a part or what it entailed exactly he couldn’t say. Eric asked if they had a contract to cover this. Neil said we have a maintenance contract but if something breaks and we need a part we pay for that. George Ellis is our contractor and they work very well with our guys and know the systems well. This contract is coming up and will have to go out to bid. The last time they were the sole bidder for this contract.

Neil said that the Magnet School Funding law has changed and we actually need it to change back. The formula was adjusted and now there is a big push to change the formula back. Neil stated we have approximately 750 to 800 students in magnet schools in New Haven. We receive funding for those kids even though we do not have to educate them. This includes students from Pre-K up to through grade 12. Neil’s concerns are twofold. 1. We have to pay tuition for the students to attend magnet schools and this is a drain on our budget. 2. A bigger concern is if the kids come back. We have planned on 6,000 to 6,500 kids and so many teachers for the amount of students. Now we have to take the same amount of dollars we were allotted and hire teachers and make sure we have extra books and materials for these students. This is something we need to watch very closely. These are things that will have a big impact on our final operating number in May.

Eric asked if we didn’t know the number of students enrolling in the magnet schools already so we can put it in our budget. Neil stated we do but currently there is no tuition. Jerry said if the law doesn’t change the state will cut the funding they give to the receiving cities and they in turn will whack us with tuition. If that Magnet School comes to be at UNH we would be paying tuition for West Haven students to go to a Magnet School in West Haven if the law does not change. Neil said he is not so sure we can deny a student the right to attend a magnet school so we have to find the money. I’m hoping the law will return to the way it was previously but I’m not so sure it will.

Patrick Egolum questioned if enough pressure has been exerted to have the law changed back. Neil said they had a press conference with a number of Superintendents and Mayors in attendance and we are making our legislators aware of what is going on and we are doing what we can. It would help if you guy contact the State Senators and State Representatives and make them aware of this. The more noise we can make about how we will be affected the better chance we have of getting the formula changed.

Eric asked when this was changed. Neil stated last year and it was an 11th hour kind of deal. Next year we will be impacted to the tune of about five million dollars. A further discussion ensued.

Jerry said we would be paying for West Haven students to attend the Magnet School at UNH (in West Haven) which is supposed to be built. Eric thought we had a special rate or agreement with UNH regarding students from West Haven attending. Jerry said that
rate was based at that time. Neil said right now we wouldn’t pay. Because the school is housed in West Haven we would receive 20% of the slots.

Howie Horvath asked which would be less expensive for us from the following:

- to pay for the 700 students and have them attend the magnet schools or
- to keep the 700 students here and have the cost attributed to this

This would answer a fundamental question. If it is about $4,000 per student we need to do some math around this. We also have to look at the cost of adding personnel and benefits etc. The other thing is that there are many plans to fund states with this stimulus money some of which could be used for things like this to take care of some of the shortfalls. He asked if Neil had heard anything about this and the timing involved. Neil heard there is a debate as to how the money is going to get funneled (from the Federal Government to the local communities or is it going to be funneled through the State and the State will say how it is to be divided). This argument is going on between Hartford and the Federal Government. Howie said the hope is that they will put off for a year the changes but we do need to know what the actual cost implications are short and long term. Neil is hoping this too and agrees about the need for the actual costs involved.

Neil stated that Anne will talk about the curriculum initiative which she has begun and is doing a great job. We have wonderful feedback from administrators and teachers.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski had promised to give more detail about where we were going with our curriculum and our instruction. K-12 has curriculum but we need to refine what we are identifying as our priorities. A visual was passed out of what we are using and is all researched based. It is from the Leadership and Learning Center. He has gathered over 30 years of research and has over 100 schools in his research. He has been able to identify the characteristics that make schools effective regardless of where the schools are located. There is rural, urban and suburban representation. From this leadership piece the State of Connecticut five years ago adopted using this research base to make changes in schools. They have funded several of these initiatives and we have taken advantage of this funding. Today we had Larry Ainsworth from the Center address all the principals for a full day giving them an idea of where we were going with all of our changes.

A further discussion ensued regarding the diagram. We had a little bit of everything from a variety of people. From the district perspective we are looking at our curriculum K-12 (Priority Standards) Math, Science, Social Studies, English, and Language Arts & Reading. The teachers are learning a process where they examine the curriculum in place and they prioritize those which all students must learn rather than just adding more and more skills to the box they focus to the standards most important. Included in this are the CAPT and CMT and have tried to identify troublesome areas for our kids. The next step would be unwrapping the priority standards and provide teachers with the tool to have ownership of the curriculum (a thin document). This provides the road map for teachers to follow across the district. A further discussion ensued.
The next place we have to move in all of this and I’m anticipating with more involvement from different teachers across the district so they have a better understanding of the process is going to be the common core of assessments. In order for us to validate what we are teaching and all students are learning we have to back into development of assessments. Those assessments must be done frequently and they can’t be long assessments. We are talking about dip sticks to determine if we are doing all of things we are purporting to do in the curriculum. It will take us another year to move forward. Last time I said we are talking about a five years process. We are not talking about something we can sit down and run off and get delivered by September. I do see that the priority standards and unwrapping of those standards and the appropriate information delivered to teachers can be done by September in those content areas.

West Haven is in very good shape relative to where there curriculum is right now. Some areas are better than other areas. Once you start getting regular information on what you are teaching teachers then can meet in small groups and start making decisions using that data. They can make decisions about individualized instruction for all students regardless of what their needs are and they can also start making some changes in what the curriculum is as well as impact the professional development they need to be better teachers of content. It is most important to give teachers those other tools that refine teaching strategies so they are better able to work with all kids.

The Federal Government is requiring us to develop a system where we are doing exactly what we have done here. We are not isolating kids with special needs or isolating kids with different language needs from the general population. We are looking at all kids equally and are setting up strategies that will best serve all students. We are on to a really great start and I expect to see growth in whatever we do within the next year. A further discussion ensued.

Rob Saley stated some concerns from PTA meetings he attended. One concern was the feeling that the elementary schools were a hodgepodge of different things and when you get to the middle schools because you came from different curriculums taught by different teachers they are having a hard time and when those kids enter the high school there seems to be a lot of confusion. PTA members expressed the need for a curriculum taught by every elementary school into the middle schools and then the high school it would be beneficial. Rob felt that this is what Dr. Druzolowski was talking about and she stated absolutely.

Neil said we are putting all the teachers in a room and they are deciding what needs to be taught and how it should be taught.

Anne said if you don’t have common expectations you can’t start seeing growth because it will be different every time I move to a different building or grade level and that really impacts big time when I get kids at the high school. You see the big differences at that point. A further discussion ensued.
Rob asked if we are tracking at the high school. Anne said the AP Courses at the high school are a track. Some of that is a requirement set up by higher institutions. The Freshman Academy is designed to not be what they call tracking or homogeneously grouping. The sophomore level will be moving toward that in the next year and you will see more heterogeneous grouping (a better mix of kids so you have all levels). Our goal is to not look at the kid as a classification but look at teaching and learning. This gets at teaching all kids using a variety of instructionally based research activities and not focusing on dumbing down the curriculum because the expectation has to be very high.

Howie asked about priority standards and if it was fair to assume that the CAPT and CMT are aligned to some subset of standards? Yes, Anne said that grade level expectations have been developed using National standards as well as State standard and the CAPT is a reflection of both State and CMT standards so what you have here is an identical match. A further discussion ensued.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Shamsi Aysha said that DECCA will be hosting their annual Fashion Show 7 - 9 on May 6th and all are welcome to attend. They will also be having their State competition on March 10th at Aqua Turf in which students will put together various projects and be tested in the disciplines within marketing.

Shamsi has received many comments about the new system where the Superintendent calls the home phone or cell phone announcing school delays and closings. Many good comments were received. People have said it makes their mornings a lot easier rather than waiting for the announcement on the television.

C.1.c. Board

Howie Horvath attended the special ceremony to honor Fang, Hui the Principal from China. This was very impressive on many fronts. The Principal from China was very pleased and appreciative. He was kept busy throughout the week. A student from WHHS, Jia Hui Wu, served as his interpreter and she did an incredibly impressive job. We should be very proud to have students like her. She did a wonderful job supporting the program. Mr. Stancil certainly went out of his way to make this very successful as well as one of our teachers, William Reynolds, who also went to China and previously gave a report to the board on his visit.

Eric Murillo commented on the hiring process regarding the secretarial position for the Assistant Superintendent. Members of the Union had a right to that job. I believe that the first chance for this position should be given to people who work in our system, are union members and are qualified before we go to anyone outside because we do have people that are qualified for this position and deserve an opportunity to advance themselves. I am very disappointed that certain individuals didn’t get the position especially when there
were 17 applicants. I have nothing against the person who did get the job but feel she stepped in front of the line and others deserved the chance.

C.1.d. Committee

Jerry Calabritto said that there will be a meeting tomorrow night at 6:00 PM. This is basically our wish list and is the bottom line. Neil and Dave worked hard on this. We will meet and make our wish to the City Council and hope the City Father and Council will be kind to us.

Howie Horvath asked if this budget reflects the concern we have or is it the budget in the next few years. Neil said we are reflecting everything status quo that we are going to get the money from because the money would revert back to the city literally so we are going under the assumption that we will get the same allotment from the City including whatever the City receives from ECS Funding. Howie said then the school law doesn’t really take effect now. Correct.

Rob asked if we will be affected if they start cutting things this year. Neil said we could and the reality of it is this could be a year where they don’t adopt a budget by whatever that deadline is. Once the Mayor makes that appropriation to us then he is obligated to fund us that amount whatever the dollar amount is in May. Sometimes he receives a little bit more money sometimes a little less but whatever the number is we get the money.

Eric asked for a copy of the transfers to the stadium from last year. This will be given to him.

D.1. Approval of Minutes D.1.a

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting
January 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

T. Sean Maher made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes above.
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members in favor
Motion Carries
Minutes are approved

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

09-07 Kathleen Card, 35 Bluff Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Executive Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent
Effective: January 24, 2009
Salary: $37,900.31 Step 1 Annually

Tony Paine made a motion to approve D.6. 09-07
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

Discussion: Rob Saley said I know Mr. Murillo had a question on the hiring. Is there a way you can get the AFSME Contract? Neil said yes but AFSME members have no rights to another union even if they are senior in the system. While they have years in the system you can’t transfer those years of seniority to another union except for a teacher and even then you become a tenured teacher you are not tenured as an administrator.

Rob said in the future would you please clarify this process. Neil said he would do it now. He said this is one of the clearest sentences I can read and the contract talks about promotion and advancement within the CWA Bargaining Unit and there are nine sections. Look at Section 1 through 8 and section 9 says that when a vacancy exists within the secretarial unit selection will be based on the ability as determined exclusively by the supervisor concerned. It also says Section 1 – 8 above are not applicable to the secretarial unit. You can’t get it any clearer and that is what management would want. People can apply for the job but the supervisor has the exclusive pick. A further discussion ensued.

Eric disagreed with the interpretation of the contract that was stated and Rob will re-read the CWA contract for clarification.

Eric said this needs to be clarified because anyone can come in and employees are waiting to advance themselves and they can’t. That is my point.

Jerry said his point was well taken.
The vote will now continue

Eric was opposed
All other board members present voted in favor
Motion carries

D.7. New Business:

09-08  Correspondence from Superintendent of Schools, Neil Cavallaro requesting the board’s authorization of $60,000 for the WHHS Facility Audit (enclosure)

Move To Approve

Toni Paine made a motion to approve item D.7. 09-08 above
Andy DePalma seconded the motion
Discussion:
Rob Saley stated we give these guys an awful lot of power. It says a selection committee but doesn’t say who is on the committee. Neil said the selection committee will be made up of members from CREC, Ed Arum and himself. Rob asked are there are no board
members or administrators from the public involved? Neil said at this point they would take us through the process and tell us when to bring various agencies in.

Ken Carney stated they are heavily vested administrators. This is the first time that we are aware of that an independent organization has done a fair equitable study. In the past studies were done by people who had financial gain.

That is my concern stated Rob. We are giving these guys God power.

Neil said at this point we are giving them the authority to hire the people so we can submit the necessary paperwork in order to get the answers. He feels comfortable with this because this study will give us some options, show us the following:

- all reimbursables
- what you can apply for
- comparison to renovate or build new
- provide us with above options and submit paperwork to the state

Once the paperwork comes back we know what we can do and start from scratch again with no obligations to the particular architect that was used. A further discussion ensued.

Ken Carney said they will conduct a facility audit for WHHS to determine the deficiencies and develop a recommended plan of improvement. They have no authority.

Neil believes this is the information we need to get out to the community so that the community can make an informed decision and let us know what they think is the best way.

Rob said we are paying $60,000 for the job and they are going to own the documents. Is that normal? Ken said yes it is. Rob said we pay for something but don’t get to keep it. Ken said you get copies of it but any changes you want to make you have to go back to them as it is absolutely their property. We are paying for the service to develop a plan.

Neil said last year the legislature passed an energy assistance bill and we received $80,000 and have extra money in that account and will take the money from that account.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Eric Murillo asked if there was a time line when we have to contract with CREC. Neil said Mr. Arum said to try to get the plans in by June 30th which would allow us to know next year by this time to know what our reimbursable rate. Eric doesn’t feel he has enough information to make a decision this evening regarding CREC. If we are voting on it tonight I will abstain.

Howie Horvath said as a rule I think it is wise for us to be able to have information in advance of the meeting so we can make an informed decision. He knows about CREC
and doesn’t have a problem with them but as a fundamental procedure it is not good to have the information on the day of the decision.

Ken Carney said if we wait we can lose the reimbursement money from the State. The Mayor is in favor of the study to recommend improvements to the high school. If we wait much longer we could miss our deadline which would change our reimbursement back.

Neil said a number of projects that CREC did are listed along with actual biographies.

Eric said if we do have a dead line I would appreciate seeing it in black and white. I need to get some facts before making a decision.

Rob Saley suggested waiting two weeks.

Jerry Calabritto said that Ms. Robles report to NEASC is due February 1st and wanted to have our decision that we were proceeding included in her report.

Patrick Egolum said if there is no problem why delay let’s vote on it and let it go forward as we seem to like it. The money has been given to us already.

Howie Horvath said he feels comfortable with this particular company from prior knowledge and has no problem voting today. What I am suggesting is that for anything like this going forward we don’t come to the meeting without the necessary materials in hand and without some of these deadlines in place. The next time Patrick it might be something else and we would say why am I getting it today instead of weeks ago.

Patrick agrees with Howie but said we all seem to like it and why the delay?

Jerry Calabritto said this just happened to be an unusual circumstance. Neil said it is not his intent to give the board something the last minute and he apologized. Neil said he didn’t receive this until late Friday and that was the timeline on it.

Jerry called for the vote to continue
Eric Murillo abstained from voting
All remaining board members voted in favor
Motion Carries
Item D.7. - 09-08 is approved.

**F. Informational:**

Rob Saley stated that this Saturday morning is the PLUNGE for Breast Cancer Awareness at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Savin Rock Conference Center. It is a good cause and we have a great time. Beth Sabo runs a great show.

Jerry Calabritto asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Toni Paine made a motion to adjourn
Andy DePalma seconded the motion.
The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary