A Special Finance Meeting of the Board as a whole was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on January 22, 2013. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 6:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Palmieri, Chairman
M. Toni Paine, Vice Chair
Patricia Libero, Secretary/Treasurer
Dorinda Borer
Betsy Davis
Patrick Egolum
Robert Guthrie
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Murillo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
David Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT: Catherine DePino

Toni Paine, Chairperson of the Finance Committee stated that tonight’s meeting is for the presentation of the Superintendent’s proposed budget. I will now turn the meeting over to Superintendent Cavallaro.

Superintendent Cavallaro gave a presentation and then questions were asked. Before beginning Neil said to remember this is his budget and at the conclusion you can accept it, make any changes or recommendation or do whatever the board sees fit. Once the board does pass the budget we will formalize it and send it to Mayor Picard for his review. This budget maintains all the levels of service and operation. We are not reducing any staff and we are not closing any school buildings and we are not reducing any of the public availability of our facilities. We are maintaining all of our instruction programs and services. We are asking for a reasonable amount
and feel that we can justify all of it. The Superintendent’s complete presentation is on the website.

Questions
Bob Guthrie asked when we expect Anthem to lock in next year’s increase; late May or late June? Dave said he spoke to Anthem yesterday and they hope to get it out to us by the third week of February.

Dorinda stated she thinks it is a very reasonable budget. There are no outrageous asks in there. We certainly have to honor our contractual obligations and we want to provide the most appropriate quality of education we can. Given the history of what the actual funding was we received .5% last year, 1% the year before and she believes 0% her first year on the board and we are asking for 4.2% so she stated she is not looking for a number but what the communication with the Mayor has been because realistically we are not going to get this 4.2% so we already have to start looking at what we are going to do when we don’t get it.

Neil said he can’t answer this at this point but would emphasize that historically we have been pretty fortunate where we haven’t had to give that step and that raise and next year. He doesn’t have an answer at this point. There is no way he would expect a commitment from them. A further discussion continued.

Dorinda said given the history waiting until May for his final number will be hard for us to turn around some major decisions and she is sure they are being considered already.

On special education we have significant resources that we allocate towards transportation and education outside the district. Can we look at building some sort of infrastructure in house while building the new high school?

Neil said absolutely we are doing that now with the programming needs with the architect and shared the room and spacing needs with our special education department. If they were to get two additional rooms they could create a couple of programs and bring kids back into this district so the answer is yes.

Dorinda asked whose job description has controlling worker’s compensation is that Human Resources? Neil said Jolene does do this but the City holds the contract so they work more closely with the city. Neil’s preference would be one person to oversee it for the city. A further discussion continued.

Dorinda asked what are service contracts for $100,000.00. Dave Cappetta said these are licenses for software and contracts per say. Dorinda asked if we are due for increases because we are almost doubling it? Dave said the licenses for software have gone up significantly during the past three to five years. Dorinda asked if this ties into our smart boards and our classroom technology. Some of it does. Dorinda suggested that everything be defaulted to double sided on copying and we could save so much. Neil said he believes it is the default but sometimes teachers have certain ways that they want things done. Dorinda said yeah well they have to get used to a new way. Neil said we have come a long way from where we were with the copy center and everything else but it has been a process. A discussion about the magnet schools also took place. Dorinda also stated that Neil and the unions have been working well and have done a good job on the healthcare benefits considering the rise in healthcare costs to keep that at a minimum increase given what the trend is in our state. Dorinda asked if Molloy School is being used to the extent that we can; she knows we have the copy center in there. Neil said we have the Community House in there too and it seems like a lot of people are using it. We are doing Odyssey ware and home bounds for the high school and this saved us some money.
Cebi Waterfield agreed with the comments about Worker’s Comp. She asked if we have a company that oversees this. Yes but the city holds the contract and those people who went on before the new company took over are still on the old company that lost the contract and we have to push them a little more is what I am hearing. Cebi thinks this needs closer scrutiny and one person managing this will help. There are high levels of expenditures that certainly could be cut. The overtime for maintenance and custodians I’m wondering how much cause for overtime is there? Extending the shift time differently might help this. Neil said we are locked into the hours for the day shift and the night shift. Dave said we also have events and Neil said they do get minimum three hours overtime. A further discussion took place. Cebi asked about the number of school nurses being 19 and 4 non public. Neil said we have one at each elementary school and two at Carrigan, two at Bailey and two at the high school and one at St. Lawrence, Our Lady of Victory and Notre Dame.

Pat Libero said she is always amazed at the tiny fraction of money that is spent on instruction; it is like the most amazing thing in the world. We are in the business of education and that is the smallest and she understands it she has been in the business a long time but it always amazes her. She doesn’t know where you would cut anything to make that better. Neil said we need to start utilizing our facilities to increase some revenue and use that revenue to put back into the facilities and whatever money you save you would not be able to put towards instruction. Pat said so Chris has to get on the football field a little better. Neil said there are a lot of facilities like us and every high school has a football field. Mark Palmieri said they have done a search and there is not a facility in the state that makes money. Mark said it is for your kids to use. Neil said it is like a classroom and there is an expense to operating a classroom. Dorinda asked if we can look at using our website to bring in revenue. We have over 100,000 hits throughout the year and are sure an organization that is educationally related would want to put their advertisements on our website. Neil said sure why not. Cebi said even local companies can use it.

Bob Guthrie asked when we will be seeing your capital improvement plan. Neil said they are working on that right now and we started last year to go through our buildings and we will probably use that study as a basis to submit this year. Bob said there are still some elementary schools that are looking for flooring for over ten years. Neil said that is one of our concerns and even if we are not getting it we should still make our needs known.

Toni Paine asked if there were any other questions. There were none. Toni then asked for a motion to accept the proposed budget. Mark Palmieri made a motion to accept the budget Bob Guthrie seconded the motion Questions: Dorinda asked if you have to be on the finance committee to vote to take it out of committee. Toni said no this meeting was called as a whole. There were no other questions All board members present were in favor No one was opposed Motion carries The Superintendent’s Budget is approved

Toni asked for a motion to adjourn
Dorinda Borer made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
The meeting ended at 6:55 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary