

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
January 5, 2009
Regular Board Meeting

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on January 5, 2009. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Palmieri, Chairman
Gerald A. Calabritto
Eric Murillo
Robert Saley
T. Sean Maher
Patrick Egolum
Howard Horvath Jr.
M. Toni Paine

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew DePalma

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

Faraz Sabir
Eric Pang

Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone and stated they would change the order of tonight's meeting and have Neil Cavallaro give his report under administration first.

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration:

Superintendent Cavallaro apologized because he knows that he has guests from the United Illuminating here but he will have to leave early tonight as he has a family emergency and Dr. Druzolowski will not be able to attend as she is recovering from the flu. Neil gave a report on what happened today and some financial issues both short and long term.

This morning we were deciding whether or not to have a delayed opening because of the weather we also had a bomb scare at the high school and a couple of boilers out at Bailey.

This all began happening around 5:30 when I received a call from the bus company to see if we were having a delayed opening. The temperature was over 37 degrees and the Superintendent of Milford and we didn't see many shoreline communities calling in with a delay so I felt it was best to proceed. I worry about the A.M. Kindergarten as they have already missed two days as opposed to one day and we are looking at the potential of a delayed opening on Wednesday. We pushed ahead for a full day after talking with the bus company and the City Highway Department we felt we could get the full day in.

I then received a call from the principal of WHHS as there was a bomb scare. We received a call from an anonymous caller that could not be traced, stating that a bomb would go off at WHHS and Notre Dame High School. We delayed the opening and did a walk through and cleared the building. We decided on a 10:00 AM opening since the other schools were not delayed we couldn't transport the students and have them there by 9:00 AM. New Haven was on an hour delay and Winkle also transports our high school magnet students to New Haven so that interfered with our bus schedule so we pushed the opening to 10:00 AM. We did the reverse 911 and by the time I arrived at the high school there were not that many kids there. I must compliment the staff at the high school and Mr. Winkle for their help. Mr. Winkle had kids on the bus, took them home, and then ran the route again to make sure the students weren't outside in the cold. We had very little disturbance and had almost 80% attendance. The reverse 911 is working very well.

In the midst of all this Joe Yacano called me stating that two boilers at Bailey were down. These boilers have been repaired but it was cold there. My feeling is once kids are in school if you don't have to move them let's not. It wasn't unbearably cold and I don't believe the temperature dropped below 54 degrees. I want to thank our maintenance department; Joe Yacano, Mike McGrath, and the staff at the high school and Bailey because you can't plan for these types of emergencies but everyone did a good job in this situation.

We also had an incident at the high school on New Year's Eve. By the shop classes you will notice some barrels and a barrier in front of Gary Grant's shop class. Someone was fooling around with their car on New Year's Eve and the lot was very slippery. They hit the building and put an indentation in the brick wall and windows. That is the bad news. The good news is that Gary has wanted a garage and now it will cost us a little less money to do that.

Mike Ducette and Mike Guarino from the U.I. Company are here to talk about a project we would like to begin down the road which will save us a lot of money. Tonight is more of an informative session. This is an exciting opportunity for our district and Board Member Rob Saley has sat in on meetings so if there is anything he can add or if there are any questions please ask them.

I want to tell you what the process is actually like regarding the new high school. Ken and I were with representatives from CREC Capitol Region Education Council. They are similar to ACES but CREC does assist the school district with building projects and has engineers on staff. They will submit the preliminary proposal to us that we will bring

before the board when we are ready. We will ask for authorization for probably \$50,000.00 to \$65,000.00 in order to do a preliminary engineering study and submit paperwork to the state. We found out our reimbursable on new building projects has gone up to 77% so it is important that we pursue this. If the board appropriates the money we have the current building committee in place and we would need an endorsement from the City Council. At this point we are not authorizing spending any money but in order to get the project underway and find out if we were eligible we have to get the paperwork in. As soon as the proposal is available I will get it to you. We need to bring this out to the community to see what the feeling is and if they are willing to finance it. We are looking at a \$120,000,000 to \$125,000,000 project. At this point we are up to 77 cents on a dollar that we would get back. A further discussion ensued.

David and I have spent a lot of time on next year's budget. Right now we are facing what looks like a very lean budget. An example is that ECS cut is 10%. In West Haven we receive 50% of our funding from ECS money so if we are operating on an eighty million dollar budget 50% is forty million and a 10% is a four million dollar cut. To maintain a status quo budget we are looking at a 3 ½ to 4% increase which is almost three million dollars. We need to find seven million dollars to operate the school system the same way next year as we did this year. We hope to get some type of preliminary numbers out this week and schedule a meeting for possibly as early as next Monday. We need to be realistic and hope for status quo and do the best we can. We have projects with the U.I. Company and our copying company which will save us some money. We are using Ann Druzolowski's expertise because she worked with Title I. I think we will be alright but this is the kind of year we are looking at fiscally.

Dave Cappetta said we are addressing the contractual increases in the budget which are about 3.7%. It will be difficult to maintain any increases but if we work together we can make it work.

Neil stated he will try to get something out to the board and we are thinking of a meeting possibly next Monday and we will get Chris Everone, Alan Belchak and Harry Conlan in here to monitor what they are doing.

Neil received an email from Bob Barron on Friday which said that the Board of Ed budget was overspent last year by approximately \$463,000.00. In talking with Dave we are looking at some issues. We think we are more in line with what we were supposed to have spent. We feel some items were listed that should not have been encumbered. We felt there were some projects that should have been billed this year. We can make this go away by encumbering the money this year but that would put us \$500,000.00 behind this year. We think there are questions as far as the MUNIS System as far as timing. We are not willing to concede this number yet. Dave and I are talking about this and have a meeting scheduled with Bob Barron and Mayor Picard on Wednesday and hopefully by Thursday we will have most of it reconciled and we will have some answers for the auditors. We certainly will have some questions for them as far as their accounting procedures etc.

Dave stated that just a quick review of the encumbered items identified that at least \$250,000 of the encumbrances were counted twice in the actual expenditures and are still open. This is a glitch in the MUNIS reporting system. I believe the \$400,000 number identified \$250,000 which we could substantiate and should come off the encumbered items. This will decrease that number significantly.

A further discussion ensued.

Howie Horvath asked if Gary the former Finance Director would be involved. Neil stated yes we have contracted with him to work a couple of days and he is coming in on Thursday and our ED001 did balance.

Neil said if there were no questions he apologizes but would have to leave as his mother is very ill.

Mark Palmieri had Mr. Van Winkle, Principal of Washington School, come before the board and introduce Marilyn Powers and Patty Scranton. Mark asked Mr. Van Winkle to give the public the information on how these women came to a student's aid in an emergency situation.

Mr. Van Winkle stated that they had a child choking on cheese; mozzarella sticks. Marilyn was in the kitchen serving the children and yelled to Patty that a child was choking and Patty saw the child and performed the Heimlich maneuver and the child expelled the mozzarella cheese. We really think we saved the life of a child and what is important is that at Washington School we feel that safety is first and foremost. All of our people are trained in many different areas. Thank God for full time nurses as our nurse gives professional development and training to our lunch teachers and food services personnel on the Heimlich maneuver and other safety precautions like blood born pathogens. Because of the education provided by our nurses they knew what to do. We practice these procedures and they just did it. I'm very proud of our two workers and hopefully everyone else is too. (applause) Mark Palmieri presented both women with pins and thanked them on behalf of the board members for keeping our children safe. He also thanked our nurses for the great training.

Mr. Van Winkle said that this year the lunch aides received a raise of 25 cents an hour and they are most appreciative and you can see it goes a long way.

The board gave thanks.

Mike Doucette and Mike Guarino from the United Illuminating Company gave a presentation on an energy/cost saving initiative which was informational in nature. Mark stated that copies of the presentation will be put in everyone's packet.

Mike Doucette discussed the first two pages during his presentation. Basically what the U.I. hopes to do is to work with West Haven and the Board of Education as they have done with many other municipalities to help save energy and money.

They hope to work with municipalities and school districts to help them in the following ways: work as a partner and advocate for improving facilities to be more effective etc., deliver programs through the CEEEF Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund that pays financial incentives toward eligible projects by customers, improve facility efficiency with monetary incentives for new or retrofit equipment, optimize the energy usage of facilities with metering etc., enable localized equipment control and centralized energy management with monetary incentives, develop ability to earn a revenue stream for disabling electric loads, and/or running emergency generators within a 30 minute notice, and to become “greener” with technologies that make the most of fuel sources available such as conventional and (wind/solar/fuel cells) etc.

Mike Guarino stated that the programs that he and Mike work in are conservation programs that are run by the State of Connecticut. West Haven residents put a lot of money into this fund from their ratepayer bills. The money from this fund is used to help with energy efficiency. We provide financial incentives to do this work and we as engineers are working for you. Depending on the energy savings we can pay up to 50% of the project costs. We are hoping to get you at least the amount of money you put in if not more.

Rob Saley asked, “What are the incentives for you to lower our costs if you get paid by usage and make less money.” They responded that they are regulated to do it. Years ago the U.I. provided all your service pertaining to electricity before deregulation. Now there are generation companies and distribution companies and everyone thinks electricity is deregulated. However generation is the part of electricity that was deregulated. The U.I. chose to stay in distribution which is regulated as it always has been. We are regulated by the State of Connecticut’s Department of Public Utilities to administrate these programs.

Howie Horvath specifically requested what type of projects and investments are you talking about and how long before there was a return on our investment or when would we break even. Mike stated that page 2 of the pamphlet described this. A brief outline for the 3 Step Plan for Optimizing and Managing Energy Resources would be:

- Reduce existing energy usage without compromising facility functionality lighting, controls & wall switches
- Use Real-time Metering and Energy Management System (EMS) – install real time metering, increase kilowatt-hour savings, participation in ISO Load Response Program
- Customer-side distributed resources (generate your own electricity) – Use waste heat to heat a pool, use renewable technology applications (wind, solar Photo-Voltaic, and Fuel-Cell etc.

The scope and size of the project will be dictated by the Board’s request. A further discussion ensued with more information. The board gave thanks.

Public Portion

The public portion began at 7:45 PM. Chairman Palmieri asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road addressed the board. Mrs. Rossi brought to light that even in the case of noise or a disturbance outside the board room doors must be kept open during a public meeting as it is a violation of Freedom of Information.

Mrs. Rossi heard Mr. Cavallaro state there may be a meeting next Monday. On several occasions she has requested that meetings, especially financial meetings, not be held on Mondays as it conflicts with the City Council Meeting.

There was an honoring program for Take A Seat and she saw the pictures from this as she was out of town for the occasion and could not attend. She was sorry to see that Margi and Sean Maher were not given a plaque because the first time she ever heard about the program was when Margi brought a seat to the board meeting and told everyone about the fund raiser. Nancy thought it would have been a very nice gesture to honor them. She also didn't hear any mention of Dr. Andrees who was also a big part of this and I hope this is addressed in the future. The auditorium is beautiful and I would like to see everyone get honored.

This will be a very difficult year for the budget and I agree with what Dave Cappetta said that if we all work together we will find a good solution.

I was concerned about F.5 under Informational. There is no salary listed and it is a public matter it states per CWA Contract. She stated she will look at the contract and make an FOI Request so she will know the salary and that always should be addressed.

The person this job was given to was involved in a grievance filed over the summer and now we are going into this spot.

She wanted it read into the record she did talk to Superintendent Cavallaro and put in a form of Freedom of Information request as it should be handled timely. She is requesting the present and past job description for the position of Coordinator of Data Processing, all resumes, applications from all applicants for the position, salary for the Coordinator of Data Processing Data Support Specialist from 1/1/07 to present including starting salary for F.5. on the January 5, 2009 agenda. I want to see how much this job has paid historically. As I understand it this salary was of such that it required a Bachelor's degree and now my understanding is that the person who is getting this job doesn't have a bachelor's degree and the salary has not been decreased. Logically I have a problem with this. I am sure you all have investigated this and I also understand the person doesn't have the same seniority as other applicants and there were outside applicants with higher educational qualifications. I also want the resume application for the previous Coordinator who left in June and want to know what his educational qualifications were.

I want all notes, grading sheets and documents used in the interviewing process. I also want to know the names of the people on the interview committee. This is all F.O.I. allowable as it is not a high level position like Superintendent and as far as I know there was not a personnel search committee set up to keep your notes private. I'm looking for this information and then I will revisit this at a future date.

The board gave thanks.

Ken Carney, Over Sight Committee had a point of clarification on the party honoring Yale, Bayer and the Mayor. He helped to set the party up and it went very, very well and was well received. It was not designed to take away any credit from any individual. Superintendent Cavallaro and Chairman Palmieri felt it was an avenue to thank Yale for giving \$50,000 and to thank Bayer for giving us \$10,000. There is another party coming to give credit to other individuals. This was a very elegant and well received party. We invited all the parents of the students who performed and the Board of Education and City Council were also invited. I thought it went very, very well.

The public session closed at 7:55 PM.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Chairman Palmieri introduced Eric Pang who is the newest student representative. The board welcomed Eric and is very pleased to have him as a representative.

C.1.c. Board

Eric Murillo welcomed Eric Pang. He stated he had a lot of questions on F.5. Informational and wanted to know if we could discuss it now or later as there is information he would like to have. Mark Palmieri said he received the information on New Year's Day and at this time due to a grievance we can not discuss it in order to be fair to the parties involved. If you have questions you can ask Mr. Cavallaro but not at this time in a public session.

T. Sean Maher welcomed Eric Pang. He also attended concerts at Carrigan, Thompson, Mackrille, Pagels and the High School during Christmas and Holiday time. The students just get better and better. Kudos to the freshman teachers as I was very impressed by what they have done as well. I also attended the workshop on Unwrapping Curriculum Standards. Some of the points that Larry Ainsworth touched upon comparing our curriculum with other curriculums around the world was very enlightening. The workshop went very well.

Mark Palmieri received quite a few calls from teachers who were very excited about the workshop and knows that Dr. Druzolowski plans on having four more workshops on this with this gentleman and all board members are invited to attend.

C.1.d. Committee

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

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting

December 1, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

Toni Paine made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes above.

Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion

Discussion: Howie Horvath abstained as he was not present at the meeting

All other board members in favor

Motion Carries

Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified) 09-01

09-01 Judith A. Hunter, Special Ed Teacher Inclusion, WHHS

Effective: December 31, 2008

Reason: Retirement

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

09-02 Joann DeLizio, Head Custodian, Forest School

Effective: December 31, 2008

Reason: Retirement

D.4. Leave of Absence (None)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

09-03 Sandra Dickens, 40 Wisteria Drive, Naugatuck, CT 06770

Half time Social Worker for the Freshman Academy - WHHS

Effective: January 12, 2009

Salary: \$22,386.77 + Half Stipend \$2,880.67 Step 5 BS + 60

09-04 Dana Soderberg

Half time Elementary Art Teacher - Thompson School

Effective: January 5, 2009

Salary: \$18,035.02 (Half of Step 2 BS)

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

09-05 Sandra Barnes, 679 West Main Street, West Haven, CT 06516

Full time Special Education Medical Paraprofessional – Betsy Ross
Magnet School

Effective: December 15, 2008

Salary: \$16,973.38 Step 1 + Stipend

09-06 Amy Sitro, 64 Victoria Court, Hamden, CT 06514
Part time Title One Math Aide - Carrigan School
Effective: December 17, 2008
Salary: \$15.54 per hour

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.2. – D.6. inclusive
Toni Paine seconded the motion
Discussion:
All in favor
Motion carries

F. Informational: Nothing to add

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Sean Maher seconded the motion.
The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary