

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**  
**June 11, 2009**  
**Special Meeting Bd. of Ed. as a Whole for Finance**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole for the purpose of Budget was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board at 5:30 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag. Mark Palmieri then handed the meeting over to Gerald E. Calabritto, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mark Palmieri  
M. Toni Paine  
Gerald Calabritto  
Eric Murillo  
Patrick Egolum  
Rob Saley

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Howard Horvath Jr.  
Andy DePalma  
T. Sean Maher

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

**CITY ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Mayor John Picard

Jerry Calabritto, Chairman of the Finance Committee thanked Mr. Palmieri and stated that because this is a special meeting under the rules there will be no public portion tonight. On the advice of the Business Manager we will take no action on the year end transfers until such times as we can reconcile the accounts for this fiscal year incase there is some overage or underage so we will not take any action on the first item – Action on end of year transfers for 2009.

Before we get into the operating budget I would like to thank Mr. Cappetta for all the work he has done in putting this budget together and would especially like to thank Dr. Druzolowski and all the coordinators and Mr. Cappetta for availing themselves for at least the last 45 days to any of the board members who had any questions or concerns on the budget which we will take action on.

I will accept a motion to accept the 2010 operating budget.

Patrick Egolum moved to accept the budget

M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: Mr. Maher emailed Mark Palmieri and asked to have the following information read into the minutes. "I am unable to attend any meetings during the month of June due to travels to South America for work. I have reviewed the budget with Dr. Druzolowski and Superintendent Cavallaro and am in total agreement with all their decisions regarding the budget. I thank them, Mr. Cappetta and everyone else involved in the process for their hard work and dedication during these tough economic times and they should be commended."

Eric Murillo – If this budget is accepted does it mean that Stiles School will be closed?

Neil Cavallaro - yes it does. We would be reallocating the staff there into other open positions within the school district. We would be moving the program as discussed back to WHHS.

Eric Murillo – Mr. Chairman my apologies but I can not accept this budget. I feel very strongly that Stiles School should not be closed. I feel that these children need a place of their own. It is said that we are moving them and not thinking about their well being in the sense that they need their own place. We spend millions of dollars on the needs of special education children who have needs and these children at Stiles have needs to they need a place of their own where they can be nurtured. We talk about the Freshman Academy and the way we nurture those children and I think this is one example of a school we need to keep open not only for the children that go there now but for the ones that we could send there. If we do go through a high school reconstruction we might need the room, we might need that school, and we might need that building to locate these children in that school. I feel very strongly that we should not be closing the school.

Jerry Calabritto asked Dr. Druzolowski to explain the educational rationale on why Stiles is closing.

Dr. Druzolowski - The resources are not sufficient at the current location. The amount of resources that we would need to be able to do what we want to do would be exorbitant and we don't have funding to be able to do it from that perspective. There is no gym there, there is no library media center, there is no access to the plethora of electives but most important these kids don't have the opportunity for transition that I want to see happen. This program can accommodate more students in that type of a setting.

Toni Paine - is in favor of the budget and it upsets her to see everybody losing sight of the fact that my main reason for going along with the closing of Stiles is that these children are not going to be ostracized they will be part of the system and part of the high school and will have the facilities that everybody has. They will be better taken care of and be a part of WHHS. Right now they are ostracized they are taken and put in another building. They will now have medical facilities, guidance counselors and everything that the high school students are entitled to and I feel as though all the students should be treated alike with the same regard, with the same respect and dignity so I am in favor of it.

Mark Palmieri – has checked on a few different towns and their budgets and what their school budgets have done:

Hamden	.08 increase	8 layoffs
Derby	½ Million Cut	5 teachers cut in their athletic program and text book cuts
Waterford	2% increase	
Granby	1.5% increase	
Simsbury	1.25% increase	
Madison	3.61% increase	
E. Hartford	4 Million Cut	60 layoffs
Amity	.77 increase	
Fairfield	3.5 million cut	5 layoffs
E. Granby	2.5% increase	
Enfield	4 Million Cut	21 layoffs
Trumbull	3.57% increase	

Our school budget right now is at zero % with no layoffs, no programs cut and no tax increase to the taxpayer. I too am in favor of the budget.

Eric Murillo - I don't want to get into a discussion and I respect Dr. Druzolowski's opinion about what she thinks about Stiles School but you have to understand that in our DERG there are 10 cities that have alternative education in offsite schools: Ansonia, Bristol, Danbury, Derby (Alt. program is being developed off site), East Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, Middletown, Norwalk, Norwich, Putnam and Stamford. These schools have alternative education off site and are offered for grades 9 – 12 and that says something right there. If these other towns have it and it works and they have had it from 5 to 25 years I think we are making a decision that is totally irrational. Maybe we need to improve the curriculum and class size and have more students go there but I think closing the school is a big, big mistake.

Rob Saley – I'm not sure if this is like the City Council. Can you ask to move some money to another area? Neil said we didn't do any transfers today and one of the things we want to do is give Dave a chance to look at the accounts before we allocate the funds and there is time to do that. Jerry said the difference between our budget and the council budget is we basically are getting a bottom line for this year and we have allocated it in this manner; but once the city has its line items they are locked. We at any given point during the next fiscal can adjust our line items at any point at any time. Rob asked if it was by majority or super majority – majority was the response. We don't deal with a super majority here. This board always deals with a simple democratic majority. If you do a transfer at any board meeting the following board meeting we can transfer that money out. I don't know what you have in mind but we can transfer money at any given time. Rob said this isn't a major thing and Neil said his other suggestion would be that we have some money at this point left and you should come and talk to us and we might be able to appropriate money within a line item to whatever cause you are looking to help.

There were no other questions on the 2010 operating budget.

All board members present were in favor except for Eric Murillo and Rob Saley who were opposed

Motion carries

Jerry Calabritto said we would now go into the auxiliary budgets and asked Neil if he wanted to say anything. Neil wanted to thank our staff and hoped that all their concerns and question were addressed. He understands Mr. Murillo's opinion and respects all of the questions that were asked and all the concerns that were raised and I thank my team that is here tonight for providing a lot of information and research and doing a lot of homework. We looked at more than the dollars and cents of this budget; we looked at the educational perspective and tried to do what we believe is in the best interest of kids. We are under the gun to create and develop this alternate program and we are accepting the challenge and are hoping to do something that will actually exceed our expectations.

Mayor John Picard thanked the superintendent and assistant superintendent and the board. As Chairman Palmieri read there are a lot of towns laying many people off and cutting services and raising taxes. I think the fact that West Haven is not doing this is a collaborative effort between the board, superintendent and assistant superintendent, city, and city council and we do appreciate this. I have full faith that the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and this board are doing the best for the children of West Haven and I want to say thank you.

Jerry again thanked everyone previously mentioned for their work and effort and asked for a motion to accept the 2010 Operating Budget for Food Service

Mark Palmieri made the motion

Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: Alan Belchak stated status quo we are trying to stay within our budget means that was presented back in previous months. I will be happy to answer any questions pertaining to that budget.

Rob Saley asked if we considered increasing the cost a little. No at this point we are not considering an increase as we are increasing our free and reduced price meals and they pay us more money from the federal government than they do with a price increase. That percentage went up approximately 12 – 13% we should be able to hold the status quo. The DOD was very helpful as we used approximately \$80,000 of produce which did not cost us a dime and this helps to offset our budget. Mr. Cappetta and I worked on this all year and we will stay within our means.

Jerry Calabritto asked if the produce is available again next year. Yes we have put in for \$110,000. Jerry said he understands it is a very high quality produce. Yes it is. We also have put in for \$95,000 of stimulus money that was offered by the Obama administration. We did apply for the grants and they were accepted by the State Dept and we will get something. We put in for new refrigerators at Carrigan, new ovens at Thompson, Washington and Savin Rock School.

There were no other questions.

All board members present were in favor of the 2010 operating budget for Food Service.

No one was opposed

No one abstained

Motion carries

Jerry Calabritto will accept a motion to approve the 2010 operating budget for Edward L. Bennett Rink

Toni Paine made the motion

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

Discussion: Harry Conlan the Rink Manager was available to answer any questions the board might have about this year's budget.

Rob Saley noticed there were some advertising signs at the football field and asked if we had any at the Rink and what the revenue was from them.

Harry said we have Dunkin Donuts and there is \$4,000 worth of revenue. He has three more advertisers coming in next few weeks for another \$6,000 so it will be \$10,000 worth of revenue so far. I have lowered the advertising price. Originally I said I would bring in about \$6,000 the first year and we started only 7 months ago. During the season I can't get much done. I advertise all season and everyone was there and no one came forward to advertise. I have been knocking on doors because things are slow now.

Rob asked if the money goes into the Rink Fund. Neil said yes they have their own revenue generating account where they produce revenue and they deposit it into that account. Can we put that as a line item in the revenue where you have Sacks and everybody can we have advertising so we can see that on a yearly basis? Yes, I will keep a running tab of this. Jerry Calabritto said we all would like to see this down the road.

Rob Saley said he noticed we would be putting in some stuff on the roof. I was talking to the guys from the U.I. how much are we going to save on electricity. The numbers aren't available yet the U.I. is working on it as we speak but by going forward with this procedure we have to pay about \$600 to \$700 a month for the first 3 years before getting our money back but the U.I. told him yesterday that it might not even take that long to recover whatever the money was that was spent on the lighting for the ceiling.

Neil asked if they had to do something about our blowers being positioned wrong. Harry said the moisture is dripping down on the ice from our ceilings and our dehumidifiers were pointing in the wrong direction when installed. The people doing the roof advised us to put them over the ice which will keep our fans from freezing in the stands.

Rob asked if it is a separate entity where they are getting totals from the rink so we can see the last year so we can monitor it for next year. We are talking some serious savings and I would love to see that savings go into the science classes. Neil said Dave and I met

with a company who want to put a fuel cell at the rink to generate the electricity to cool the place and it would actually be used for the rink, Mackrille School and possibly one other of our buildings and we would receive a tremendous amount of savings. We just had an initial meeting but this is definitely a possibility and there is no cost to the board to put it in. You generate the electricity but where you really save is the heating cost.

Rob asked to have the information from the rink for the last two years. Absolutely he has it. Rob asked about the doors at the rink. The custodians said they don't want the doors painted in a semi gloss they want oil paint. It will be done in oil.

All board members present were in favor of the 2010 operating budget for the Edward L. Bennett Rink

No one was opposed

No one abstained

Motion carries

Jerry Calabritto will accept a motion to approve the 2010 operating budget for Fitzgerald Sports Complex

Neil Cavallaro said he will be the spokesperson for the complex as Chris Everone was not at the meeting and would be happy to entertain any questions.

Toni Paine made the motion to approve the 2010 operating budget for the Fitzgerald's Sports Complex

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

Discussion: Neil said they have done a real nice job with the advertising and there are a few more down the pipeline and I think it is a good idea that we show a revenue line for advertising I would agree with that. Jerry said there is a line item for advertising in the budget correct; for advertising revenue. Dave Cappetta said that in going forward we will make sure that it is separated out. Jerry agrees that we should be able to see what they are generating.

Rob Saley said that at the Building Oversight Committee last night they were talking about a lot of school projects and there was \$200,000 that Rosa DeLauro received and they were looking at solar panels for the Savin Rock Conference Center. If we could somehow put a little field over by the facility just to show what it generates so we can get everybody interested in this so instead of being 15<sup>th</sup> in the New Haven County for doing green products we might be up there as #2 or #3. This is a good opportunity.

Neil said at the meeting the other day they felt there were a lot of funds available and if we were to get involved with this fuel cell project they would assist us in pursuing things like solar panels and energy efficient items. Jerry Calabritto said maybe like that DEBT Clock that is in New York City. A further discussion ensued.

Jerry asked if there were any other questions and sensing none asked

All those in favor of the 2010 operating budget for the Fitzgerald's Sports Complex aye

All board members voted in favor

No one was opposed  
No one abstained  
Motion carries

Jerry Calabritto thanked everyone again for their hard work in putting this budget together and thanked his colleagues for their due diligence.

Mark Palmieri said that the WHHS baseball team is playing Saturday night at 7:00 PM at Palmer Field for the State Championship. He hopes everyone will come and support them.

Jerry Calabritto said that tonight is the senior concert at WHHS at 7:00 PM.

Toni Paine made a motion to adjourn  
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion  
All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary