WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES  
May 14, 2007  
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 M. Toni Paine, Chairman of the Board at 5:30 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag. She then handed the meeting over to Gerald E. Calabritto, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:  
M. Toni Paine, Chairman  
Gerald Calabritto  
Robert Guthrie  
Raymond Collins  
George Monahan  
Howard Horvath Jr.  
Mark Palmieri

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:  
Krista Pickering  
Eric Murillo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:  
Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent of Schools  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent  
Garth Sawyer, Director of Finance

Jerry Calabritto, Chairman of the Finance Committee asked Dr. Andrees if she would like to make comments now. Dr. Andrees started by thanking the finance committee, board members and the administrative staff. The budget is being presented in three stages.

Garth and Dr. Andrees will discuss the budget transfers for the 2006 – 2007 year. The 2007 - 2008 budget and its implications will then be presented.

2006-2007 Transfers – Food Service

Alan Belchak states the Dr. Andrees and he will be looking for board approval on a couple of items for next year.

Living Word Ministries will be added to the elementary program. This needs to be approved by September 1, 2007. They are eligible for free breakfast and lunch in the
summer program. This will need more approval but the Superintendent and Alan did all
sign offs on summer lunch.

Most important item for June agenda is the Healthy Food Initiative in which West Haven
will committed to a change after watching other schools. Only 52% participated in the
State. After watching other towns, Alan feels it is something West Haven should do.

Need to control all fund raisers. This need will be approved through Alan’s office. That
is a grant and that grant is worth about approximately $52,000.00 to the budget. That has
to be approved by July 1, 2007.

Garth Sawyer states revenues are down by $30,000.00 but that was made up and did not
have to ask for anymore.

Jerry asked for a motion to approve 06-07 transfers for Food Service
Ray Collins made the motion
Toni Paine seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in agreement
Motion carries

2007 - 2008 Food Service Budget

Alan Belchak states as far as revenues for 07-08 we dropped the operating revenues back
down to what they actually were. The increase was to the reimbursements. This is going
to be mandatory in 2009. The main issue is fundraisers. The PTA councils will be
brought on board. As far as expenses the union had increases for the salaries.

Jerry asked for a motion to approve the 2007-2008 Food Service Budget
Mark Palmieri made the motion
Ray Collins seconded the motion
All in agreement
Motion carries

2006-2007 Transfers – Edward L. Bennett Rink

Garth Sawyer spoke. He states the rink did well in revenue. The rink public skating
went down a little due to the mild winter. His revenue was up and expenses were down.
A further discussion ensued

Jerry asked for a motion to approve the 2006-2007 Rink Transfers
Toni Paine made the motion
George Monahan seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in agreement
Motion carries
2007-2008 Edward L. Bennett Rink Budget

We increased the electricity for the first half of this year. The rink rental was factored in due to 20% increase in rates. Also had to factor in a loss due to Hamden hockey. Next year their rink will be completed. When you factor in those lose of revenues we are down by 20%. After factoring it all in this was a conservative number.

No questions for 07/08 Rink Budget
Jerry asked for a motion to approve the 2007-2008 Rink Budget
Robert Horvath made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in agreement
Motion carries

2006 – 2007 Transfers – Sports Complex

Chris Everone states that there is not much of an increase from the (Yellow) 2006 – 2007 Budget to the (Blue) 2006 – 2007 Revised Budget. Small increase in the part time security.

No questions for the 2006 – 2007 Stadium Transfers
Jerry asked for a motion to approve the 2006-2007 Sports Complex Transfers
Bob Guthrie made the motion
Ray Collins seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in agreement
Motion carries

2007/2008 Sports Complex Budget

Garth states that increasing rates are factored in by 10% on the March 5th meeting. That affects the rentals and CIAC accounts. Bob Guthrie asks where the 10% will be going. He questions the electricity. $5,000 increase in electricity. The 10% accounts a little over $2,000. Is 10% sufficient at this time. Dr. Andrees questioned when did we raise the cost of the admission ticket? Only football has been raised by $1.00. It is now $5.00. The key factor is the CIAC events.

Bob Guthrie requested that Garth put little footnotes down the bottom of the page to job people’s memory when rates are increased.

Jerry asked for a motion to approve the 2007-2008 Sports Complex Budget
Mark Palmieri made the motion
Toni Paine seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in agreement
Motion carries

Board of Education - Budget Transfers

Garth stated we are going back to 06/07 – Yellow – Budget Revenue and the Blue
2006 – 2007 Projected.

2007 – 2008 Budget Worksheet

Tuition - We received a check for reimbursement for services provided and that increased
our budget by that amount.

Gerald Calabritto stated we will go page by page and approve the whole thing at once.
If there are any questions we can go back page by page.

Student Transportation – B04 slight increase B12, Special Education transportation.
Jerry stated that there are several homeless people that we have become responsible for.
It was taken out of this budget. We are responsible for their transportation

Salaries – Only 2 more payrolls that will be hitting this year’s budget. We have a good
idea where we will be at the end of the year. This is a good estimate. Jerry stated he is
pleased to see the overtime has come way down.

Operation of Plant – Yellow column is when transfers were down in January. At that
point we have July – December figures for utilities. So the remainder of the year had to
be estimated. The weather was in our favor so we did pick up some savings in the
electricity.

Dr. Andrees stated some of the things that were accomplished. These items typically
would have come out of capital projects. We have gas fired hot water heaters at Pagels, a
library compressor was added to Bailey, we retubed the first boilers, we retubed two
federal boilers, and we finished the gym floors at Savin Rock etc. The money has been
used to cover areas of need.

Bob Guthrie asked for a copy of the expenditures and items taken care of.

Benefits – Minor changes with security and Unemployment compensation. Bob Guthrie
asks about E-14- health insurance certified how did you come up with unbudgeted
revenue. As of Friday the city did the transfer for the $559,000 and this is the
requirement the state dictates. Bob stated they don’t have the right to dictate one line item
they pass across $559,000 and that is the requirement that the state makes them complete.
The City can not dictate but they can certainly ask for a line item. For clarification
purposes he is not sure whether it is appropriate for it to be there for discussion purposes.
Jerry said it had to go somewhere to get into our budget. What happens to it then is up to this body. They could have put it anywhere but they chose to put it there. Bob stated this board is set with a budget that was prepared almost a year ago and the unfortunate thing is now the City is passing this money along on May 14th and this is a disadvantage to the school district because the fiscal year basically closes June 15th. How do you fix a Washington School floor or something else when you have to go to building oversite, get approval, and get specs in this amount of time? We can not even spend it if we wanted to spend it in this time frame. In my opinion to look at the $559,000 in the spirit of cooperation it is all well and good to give back to the City – we are all taxpayers. Discussion continues. We were promised it’s been bonded $200,000 for technology. His opinion would be to turn back $559,000 minus $200,000 to go further with our classroom technology program. The City will still be at the same dollar amount of what they are looking to do. When it gets time for a vote we can discuss it.

Dr. Andrees stated when we are looking at that amount of money internally I think we are going to have that amount plus to be able to do what we want to do in technology. So I think we are going to be OK with this.

George Monahan echoes Mr. Guthrie’s comments and states everyone needs to understand that the $559,000 is money that the State Board of Education and State Statutory requirements say is money we should have spent on educating the children of the city of West Haven. The fact that the mayor and city council chose to forward an illegal budget to this board this past year and are now coming forward with this because the State basically instructed them because they were under penalties if they didn’t do so is why we are here today. The fact that we were fortunate and had reduced expenses with a mild winter and lower fuel costs etc. and the fact that we as a Board and Senior Administration monitored expenses very very closely; especially at the first half of the year helped us. We did not spend money that maybe we should have been spending to make sure we did not run out of money prior to the 180 day requirement. Now we can adjust for the second half of the year and provide the education that West Haven children deserve. So he agrees that maybe a portion of the money can be sent back but feels a portion of the money should stay here to enhance what the money was intended to be spent on not by our definition but by State definition.

Jerry Calabritto stated originally we told the City fathers that that line item was not going to be enough. We entered into an agreement with them that that amount would be the total amount of what our obligation to benefits would be. We also told them that that money was due us and they should have given it to us and they were informed months ago they needed to transfer it to the Board of Ed. A further discussion took place.

Other

The big factor in there was the photocopy service. A big reduction was established with that. We went in with the City with the IKON equipment.

Instruction
This is where we would like to transfer some of the money because it affects the kids. The three main areas to transfer the money to would be teaching supplies, textbooks and technology/equipment.

Dr. Andrees states she is proud to say in the area of technology that we have new labs at Washington and Pagels. She states there are new computers in every 4th and 5th grade classroom as we move to the fall. We plan on having labs complete at Bailey and Carrigan. With any additional funds our goal would be to have computers at grades 2 and 3. She also states there are holes in areas in terms of technology. First, having calculators at the high School is not a part of the advanced math classes and those are skills they should be developing prior to entering college and also being sure that all elementary schools have a science kit.

George Monahan stated that the feedback from the community has been tremendous. Parents, PTA’s, and teachers themselves are responding. Our old equipment is suddenly being brought up to modern age and makes an instant impact in the classroom. This is what we are here to try and do and it is great we can do that.

Mr. Guthrie makes a motion to allocate $200,000 out of that $559,000 from E 14 health insurance to G29 technology to further enhance our technology in the elementary grades. George Monahan seconded the motion.

Discussion on the motion:

Garth stated we did some transfers already with technology with grades four and five. Dr. Andrees states with the money we have still not spent we are looking at moving to grades 2 and 3 and we will still have money left over to be able to do textbooks, science program and supplies for the end of the year. She feels we still have a sizeable amount of money left over before our June 23rd cut off date.

Toni Paine can appreciate what Bob and George are saying but the fact of the matter is however we are pretty solvent now and I just think it would be a disservice to the taxpayer. If we can help I think we should.

Howie Horvath asked if we are to allocate a line item and it doesn’t get spent are we better off for having done this? What is the net effect if this comes to pass? If we do this, it doesn’t get spent and therefore we decide to give it back to the City.

George Monahan stated that last year the board presented a budget that we felt was appropriate based on needs. That was in advance of the year that is closing and we couldn’t forecast the expenses with regard to weather and issues that impacted it so we did luck out. However the state determines what the next year’s budget will be for a school district and it is basically equal to the previous year’s budget at a minimum plus the increase in what they are getting in educational cost sharing funds. Every school district is going to have increased expenses from year to year. We see this in payroll and health expenses that require upwards of 5% a year. Last year’s budget was under funded.
and this year they claim they are giving us 2.7 million more than last year. We must remember that last year we were under funded. This is really a two million dollar increase over what last year’s minimum budget should have been. A discussion continued. We are still going to give $329,000 back to the City.

Bob Guthrie stated we are looking at $200,000 and there is still that $200,000 sitting on the City side for technology that has never been passed across. So they may send a letter tomorrow or the next day passing it across they are still at that number of $559,000 returned by the Board of Education. The students could have benefited by some of that money. Again, in the spirit of cooperation we could sit here and spend every penny which is our right but I’m not saying to do that.

Howard Horvath said there are a lot of variables that we just don’t know about. What I am looking for is confirmation that if we do this we can be sure the money will be spent on something concrete that will benefit the students.

Bob Guthrie stated the amending was to allocate it to technology which is the goal of everyone here. This would be more concrete than a one year or 12 month fix. A further discussion ensued.

Ray Collins stated they prepared the budget and you always want to throw more money towards education but we also pay taxes in this city. This is a decision we have to make.

Bob Guthrie asked for a roll call vote. Jerry Calabritto asked for a roll call on Mr. Guthrie’s motion to allocate the funds as his motion describes.

Bob Guthrie - Yes
George Monahan - Yes
Ray Collins – No
Toni Paine – No
Jerry Calabritto – No
Mark Palmieri – No
Howard Horvath – Yes

Motion is defeated.

We will accept the appropriate motion to pass the 06 – 07 transfers as presented.

Toni Paine made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion: Bob Guthrie stated that the City dictated where the line items will go. I hope it doesn’t set a precedent for future boards.
All in favor of the 2006 - 2007 transfers as presented
Bob Guthrie and George Monahan were opposed
No one abstained
Motion carries
2007 – 2008 Budget

Dr. Andrees states to Mr. Calabritto as we prepare for this budget, she regrets that they will be losing a single individual as a part of this process however, our goal is to keep that at a minimum. The primary goal was how do we construct a budget that would provide the least impact on the delivery of instructions under the circumstances and she feels they were deliberative, collaborative and consistent in this process. The Board requested $80,372,329.00 The city appropriated $77,872,706.00 and the budget we will present to you tonight will reflect the $2,550,622.00 difference. Increases were made by taking this year’s actual and closing out our budget in various areas.

Transportation - Transportation was the one area where we had an increase due to zero percent increase that was negotiated last year. An increase in the routes this year in the 2007-2008 budget. $72,689.00 is the increase in the transportation for the 2007/2008 year. There are several decreases. One being the tuition. The tuition account was reduced by $147,007.00. This reduction was based on the actual budget for the 2006/2007.

Salaries - There was a reduction in salaries in the amount of $1,568,980.00 The adjustment was made on the actual year in closing. The accounts were reduced based on retirement and proposed staff reduction. The reductions were based this year on the basis of dollar amount as opposed to positions. There was also elimination of all day kindergarten and we roughly cut about 15.5 positions.

Neil Cavallaro states he and Dr. Andrees really pushed hard at the secondary level schools. That being Carrigan, Bailey and West Haven High School to look at areas to reduce. They felt that the enrollment was decreasing especially in those areas. There is no reduction to staff at elementary schools. Neil states we will eliminate 5 positions at WHHS. He states he is also looking into eliminating an academic team at each of those schools. Primarily in the 6th grade at Middle schools. At this point we have the smallest 5th grade class system wide going up to our 2 middle schools. We have approximately 435 children. So as one school had 3 academic teams another had 2½ we are asking they reduce those two six grade teams per middle school. So that is where we can eliminate 5 teaching positions from each school. We also need to eliminate a physical education position. That person will not lose their job because we have a teacher retiring at the elementary level. Neil states we are trying to look real hard on where to move people opposed to laying off people. Neil states it looks like all but a handful of teachers will be recalled back. The goal is to get it as close to zero as possible. Neil is anticipating a small number of teachers retiring due to the change of contract. At this point we have eliminated 15 teaching positions and were able to reduce the number of staff for the most part and plan on calling back as of today all but a handful of teachers. A question was emerged for the cut-off retirement. Neil states that there is really no cut off retirement. You can retire at any time.
Operation of Plant

Dr. Andrees states this is due to the reduction of the repairs of the building account and a slight increase in utilities we are looking at reducing by $32,138.00. Medical benefits are also reduced by $260,960.00 Those reductions are due to removing the all day kindergarten out of our account.

Other Benefits

 reductions were based on decrease on unemployment claims, and workman’s compensation. That was reduced $172,375.00. Other areas that we made reductions are copiers $74,191.00 and that is reduced on the savings on the new contract that we have. Lastly, we were reducing in instruction. The overall instruction will be $398,681.00. Dr. Andrees states there are some givens. We have added $200,000 as a line item to the budget to address our technology needs going forward. We will continue to reduce overtime accounts and monitor it very closely. We will initiate re-enrollment plan with Blue Cross and Blue Shield that will start in the summer. We will aggressively promote health choices through Blue Cross and we will have at least 3 budget review meeting next year. The first being in September. We will continue to monitor all problematic areas. Dr. Andrees states if we are not laying off teachers we may be able to bring back sports in the middle schools. It was brought up that it was not only middle school sports that were cut but extra activities that were also cut and if anything is considered to be brought back it would be that group as a whole not just middle school sports but other extra activities as well. George Monahan asked if where we were forecasting savings on the benefits side have we taken into account newly negotiated contracts etc. Yes, this is part of the savings.

Bob Guthrie said it was listed here that there is still no all day kindergarten and stated there is still no middle school sports correct? Jerry said at this moment there is not. Dr. Andrees said if we are not laying off teacher for other than attrition that may be an item we may bring back. We will only bring it back if we know we are not laying off teachers to cover classes.

George Monahan said there were other extracurricular activities that were cut not just middle school sports. This group as a whole will be considered to be brought back not just middle school sports. A further discussion continued.

Dr. Andrees is looking at a broad area of middle school activities so all can be a part.

Toni Paine stated that Park Rec was thrilled and asked if there was a way we could get the information out to more people. Dr. Andrees states we will continually work with Park Rec.

We need to go back and take a look and make sure that the positions that are remaining after that are probably no later than the first week in June. So we should know where we are with that. Jerry asks so by the end of June we should know where the landscape for
next year will probably look like. Yes possibly the beginning. Neil stated that we are in a hiring process because different teachers have different certifications and we can save some money by bringing people in on lower salaries. A further discussion ensued.

Jerry Calabritto asked if there were any questions 07/08 Operating Board of Education Budget. He asked Garth if he wanted to go over the Budget? Garth declined as Dr. Andrees has pretty much covered everything.

Jerry will accept the appropriate motion to approve the 07 – 08 Board of Education Operating Budget as presented.

Bob Guthrie made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Discussion:
George Monahan wanted to thanks Chairman Paine and Chairman of Finance, Jerry Calabritto, Garth Sawyer and especially Dr. Andrees. The importance of dialogue and the spirit of cooperation on a board like this is second to none. He states that once again Dr. Andrees reaches out to every Board member individually and gave them a forum where they can go through this budget in advance for tonight’s meeting in great detail and be very clear what we were faced with this evening and that is how it makes it more comfortable to make a decision on something so important. George thanks them for all their effort.

Mr. Guthrie thanks the administrative team for the work they did for the 06-07 year. Obviously they got us through the year with a band aide approach. Obviously 07-08 was short of what the Board had hoped for goals but obviously with the administrative team working cohesively we are headed in the right direction. We hope this time next we will be in a position to have more money left over.

Mr. Horvath stated he would like to take the opportunity to thank the team, superintendent, and especially Garth Sawyer who even in the midst of bringing a child into this world that and all the other challenges related to this years budget did a wonderful job. Thank you all for a wonderful job.

Sensing no other comments he asked for all those in favor.
All in favor
No one opposed
Motion carries

Mark Palmieri stated he would like to make a motion to allow the superintendent to extend any excess untransferred funds at her discretion on any line item in the instruction section as she sees fit.

Toni Paine seconds the motion
Jerry Calabritto reserves the right to speak on that. That motion is we just gave the city $559,000.00. In my opinion if there is any excess money that we have not transferred enough of it that it goes to instructional and the superintendent spends it as she sees fit. I don’t want to give the city back a penny out of this year’s budget.

Gerald Calabritto states the intent of that budget to allow the superintendent to expend it on instructional. Bob Guthrie asked is that is 06 – 07 you just voted that down and you closed out with a vote that passed that budget. You will have to go back and readdress that vote — no yours (Bob’s) was specific. No he already took a motion and a second and the vote past to accept that budget as presented. But what Jerry is saying is if there are any addition funds that we did not transfer and a line item comes up with excess funds we are giving the Superintendent the discretion to spend it on the kids. That is the intent of this motion. Bob feel this is not a legal motion. George stated you already past the budget as is. Jerry stated we past the transfers and what I am saying is after the day is done – say we find additional funds in a line item. Rather than give it back to the City I would rather her spend it on textbooks or technology that is the intent of the motion. They received $559,000.00. The motion is to allow the Superintendent to spend any excess un-transferred funds at her discretion on any line item in the instruction section as she sees fit. A further discussion ensued.

George Monahan said the argument was the same on the original motion. We could have found ways to spend $200,000 on things to benefit the students and we chose not to and if came to the end of the year and we didn’t spend the $200,000 this board could have given the surplus money back to the City but it would have given us the option to spend that $200,000.00 on children.

Any other discussion on the motion

Ray Collins has to agree with Bob and George although I would love to take that money I think we can’t we said we were going to do this now we can’t. I want the money but it is contradicting what we past before.

Toni Paine asked if we could read back what was done before. Jerry stated the previous motion was line item specific. Now Jerry stated he is just generalizing what he is doing. Bob Guthrie stated you already addressed that budget now moved on to 07 -08 and George stated you are now trying to go back and reopen an 06 -07 budget. Jerry stated then if the motion goes down it goes down the excess funds can go back to the City if we don’t spend them. No problem.

All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye
Bob is abstaining because he feel it is improper motion
George too agrees it is an improper motion
Jerry Calabritto asked for a roll call

Bob Guthrie – Abstains
George Monahan – Abstains
Ray Collins – Abstains
Toni – Yes
Jerry – Yes
Mark – Yes
Howie Horvath – Abstains

Motion carries

Jerry stated what this is telling you is that at the end of the day you will spend every penny in this budget and the City will not get a penny back.

Jerry asked for a motion to adjourn
Ray Collins made the motion
Mark Palmieri seconded the motion
Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola