WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
May 7, 2009
Special Board Meeting

The Special Meeting of the Board as a whole for discussion and vote on:

Approval of the July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2013 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education and the Non-Certified School Employees Local 2706 Council #4 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL/CIO and

Approval of the July 1, 2009 – June 30 2012 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education (Cafeteria) and AFSCME COUNCIL 4 LOCAL 1303-410

This meeting was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven, CT on May 7, 2009. The special 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
Gerald A. Calabritto
Eric Murillo
Robert Saley
T. Sean Maher
Patrick Egolum
Howard Horvath Jr.
M. Toni Paine
Andrew DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

Attorney Floyd Dugas was also present

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming and requested Attorney Dugas elaborate on the fact that as he understands it this is a yes or no vote in regard to whether or not we accept or reject the contract. We have 44 days to reject it or it becomes binding.

Attorney Dugas stated that we have 44 days to reject the contract or it becomes binding and we are really down to the end of the number of days and therefore it has to be voted
up or down. If it is not voted down it will go through automatically. If you want to go back and look at other things and have some issues if that is the mindset my suggestion would be then vote no and if that is the majority we will go back but tonight I think the issue we have to address is if we approve the contract or we don’t. If we do we are all set. If we reject it then we go back and sit down. If there is no vote - just to remind you - if it hasn’t been rejected by the 44th day the contract becomes binding.

Toni Paine moved to accept the contract as presented to us. Approval of the July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2013 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education and the Non-Certified School Employees Local 2706 Council #4 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL/CIO

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rob Saley said since we are negotiating on a couple of other contracts what I would like the administration to do is to email copies of the contracts as they stand today this way we save paper and I am trying to go paperless as much as I can.

Neil said he would get the CWA Contract to him right away.

Rob wanted to thank Dave Orio and Joe Iuteri who were involved in negotiations. He did his homework today and is looking at two or three years down the road and his biggest concern is that when he looks at the surrounding towns our ECS Funding is about 41.4M for 08/09, Hamden is 23M, Milford 10M, and Stratford 20M. The ECS Funding grant is based on town wealth, population, children in need and other areas and the bottom line is we are at the bottom and obviously we have needs. We also have an 8 billion deficit with the state. We are going to have to stabilize during the next two years because we don’t know exactly how things are going to be. He has been laid off and it is not a good feeling and never wants to lay off anybody else. That is why I’m always looking at union contracts and looking for things that we can negotiate out of so that down the road we can award people a decent salary with some benefits that are palpable for us to pass. He knows 3/4th of the board live in West Shore and are looking at a $300 - $600 increase in fire taxes. It doesn’t seem like a lot but I have two children in college so it gets pretty expensive.

He would like the contracts emailed in the future so they have more time to look them over. He looked at the contracts and doesn’t have a problem with the cafeteria contract that is not his issue. There were a couple of issues with the other contract and he did bring them up with his conversations with Mr. Orio I know it is not going to be addressed now. He wanted to clarify that the first year the initial savings is $140,000 for step deferments and payroll with no raises, the following year since there is going to be an increase in salary and it will be 10% in co pays (no increase). He asked what the savings would be for next year.

Attorney Floyd Dugas said he doesn’t have the numbers in front of him but the contributions go up from 10% to 12.5%. There are two components. There is the plan design changes - they are bumping up areas - you have seen the contracts and there is a savings associated with that which he estimates is about 2 to 3% based upon prior
experience. In addition to that we are looking at an increase in the contributions which the board is going to pay for and when you talk about savings to be perfectly honest and candid with ourselves is really an offset against the increase in the cost of health insurance so if we didn’t do anything is it a savings – yes but is it a true savings – it is probably more just wiping out what would have been the increase for that year.

Rob Saley said when you look at this there is a 2½% increase in salary and a 2½% increase in the co-pay. Every time we go up 1% it is equal to $1,000. Don’t get me wrong I’m just throwing this out for everybody to look at as it helps us budget better every year for what we are doing. This isn’t about trying to balance the budget but I can almost guarantee that we will be asking for concessions again in the next two or three years. We must look hard at long term costs and try to save where you can. We need better communication and he apologized for becoming a little irate during the previous meeting. If we look at these contracts 3 to 4 months prior to when they come up it will be a much better thing for the board as a whole to do.

Attorney Floyd Dugas thought that was a fair point in terms of looking at this ahead of time to get input into the process. I welcome it. Keep in mind this process was a little unusual in the sense that we thought we were sitting down just to set some dates and the thing took on a life of its own and we ended up with this deal which is pretty unusual for something to happen that quickly. We will get you contracts ahead of time.

Neil said we will get you the contract tomorrow and that is one of the reasons that several years ago we instituted board representation on the negotiating team. Like Floyd said this happened so quickly so we brought it to you that night; usually when we go into negotiations that is the purpose. The board members get to me and go through the contracts and I’ll get you CWA that is the only other one that we will be negotiating now. That is a good point you will have it tomorrow.

Toni Paine stated, that being said, we get the packet on Friday every week. We have all day Saturday and Sunday to look at it. It will behoove all of us to look at that packet and call ahead of time with any questions. I call and ask every time I have a question about anything. The phone works both ways; it works in and it works out. Dr. Druzolowski also is available for questions. I think it would be nice if we called ahead of time and not to wait until the last minute. I know as far as the contracts we had received them awhile ago.

Howie Horvath stated he agrees with that but if you are not there during the process we may not be able to compare it to the last contract. I would just ask for a summary so we can compare what we were looking at previously, like questions, a running list - I don’t care what it is it would be helpful.

Neil said unfortunately during negotiations we gave it to them and then asked for it back that night. I guess we always go back and forth.
Attorney Floyd Dugas said he always puts changes in red line format so it is easier to pick out.

Howie Horvath said he still feels this is a legal document that you look at every day. I think that together with something from a layman’s perspective stating here is where we were, here is what we have done, here are a few things you might consider, and here is the actual document would benefit all board members.

Jerry Calabritto asked counsel if tonight we can only vote up or down. Yes. Would the same conditions apply to the union? Yes, sure. Would I be correct in saying that possibly a month ago when we met upstairs this contract that we are voting on tonight is the same contract presented to us a month ago with one exception you made a mistake on.

Attorney Dugas said he didn’t make the mistake. There was an issue that the union didn’t pick up on at the time that had to do with the grandfathering of the retiree’s piece.

Jerry Calabritto said so this contract has actually been floating around for awhile. Yes.

Mark Palmieri asked if there was any other discussion.

Andy DePalma wanted to say that he made a few phone calls today and all the issues and concerns he had were explained to him and he fully understands it a lot better and is OK with it.

Mark Palmieri asked for a roll call vote.

Eric Murillo – Abstained
Patrick Egolom – Voted in favor
Howie Horvath – Abstained
Rob Saley – Voted no
Toni Paine – Voted in favor
Andy DePalma – Voted in favor
T. Sean Maher – Voted in favor
Jerry Calabritto – Voted in favor
Mark Palmieri – Voted in favor
The July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2013 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education and the Non-Certified School Employees Local 2706 Council #4 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL/CIO was approved.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion for the second contract.
Toni Paine moved to accept the contract as presented to us.
Approval of the July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2012 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education (Cafeteria) and AFSCME COUNCIL 4 LOCAL 1303-410
Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members voted in favor
No Abstentions
The July 1, 2009 – June 30 2012 Agreement between the West Haven Board of Education (Cafeteria) and AFSCME COUNCIL 4 LOCAL 1303-410 was approved.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn.
Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
All in favor
Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary