The Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole 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 of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**  
M. Toni Paine, Chairman  
Raymond Collins, Vice Chairman  
George Monahan  
Eric Murillo  
Gerald Calabritto  
Robert J. Guthrie

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**  
Krista Pickering  
Mark Palmieri  
Howard Horvath

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**  
Mayor John M. Picard  
Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent of Schools  
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

**C.1. Administration**

Before beginning the public session Toni Paine stated we were changing the order as we have Mr. Tom Hennick, Public Education Officer for the Freedom of Information Commission. He has to travel back to Durham so to accommodate him we will have him speak first.

Mr. Hennick stated that FOI is difficult to comprehend and understand. He will try to help out and will teach not preach. He usually speaks approximately one hour but will cut his report time down so we won’t be here all night. He gave some background information about himself. He is not an attorney he has a journalism background and has seen FOI at work from a couple of different angles. He also is a member of a Board of Education and if there is a question his board members look to him.

FOI is about open government. It is about making sure the town people know what is going on so they are armed with facts when it comes time for them to make a decision. The more people we serve know the better off we will be when we vote on a budget and other important items. This Act insures that and it is the law. When you violate FOI you violate the law. There are many grey areas. FOI was the brain child of Ella Grasso. She was the first to state that Connecticut will have a FOI Act. This was at the height of
Watergate and there was a lot of mistrust. Then she said it will be approved unanimously by the legislature. Can you imagine guaranteeing that well she did and it was. You can imagine the horse trading that went on. Sometimes the Act tends to meander and is not clear and concise. One of the key components behind all this is that compliance has a lot to do with interpretation. It has a lot to do with you knowing what the law is telling you to do. You might say this is a meeting we should take into executive session because it is proper but someone else might disagree. This is an example of interpretation of the statute. The more you know what the act and what it is telling you to do the closer your interpretation will be to correct so that when the time comes for those tough calls you will make the right one.

FOI is about access. Access to meetings and records. We will mostly talk about meetings and then records. The definition of meeting means any hearing or other proceeding of a public agency, any convening or assembly of a quorum of a multi member public agency, any communication by or to a quorum of a multi member public agency whether by person or means of electronic equipment to discuss or act upon a matter through which the public agency has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power. This basically tells you that any time you gather to do your work as a board you need to have it open to the public and you need to make sure there are minutes. Any group that you create to do the work of the Board of Education is considered public agencies as defined by the FOI Act and need to follow the same rules. You want to make sure that even you sub committees follow the rules. There are three types of meetings: Regular, Special and Emergency. A regular meeting is the one that is taking place right now. Meetings take place the first and third week of every month and the list is sent to the Town Clerk by the end of January every year. Your special meetings are meetings you have when you are not regularly scheduled to meet. You can put anything on your agenda you want to discuss just as long as it is properly noticed.

There are two differences between a regular and a special meeting. For a regular meeting you submit what is called an agenda. The agenda states where the meeting will be held, the time of the meeting, and what you want to talk about.

For a special meeting you put in what is called a notice. If you and I were to pick up an agenda and a notice we would think it is the same. The only difference is that the notice must go to the Town Clerk. The agenda must be on file at your place of business so people can come and look at the agenda and go on their way. For a special meeting when you meet at a time not normally scheduled it must be given to the Town Clerk and must be posted. Both have to be available within at least 24 hours of the meeting.

The following is the second fundamental difference between a regular and a special meeting. On the notice, once that 24 hour window closes, you can’t talk about anything that is not on the notice of that meeting. So, if you are going to have a special meeting make sure you put anything you can think about on the notice. You can’t add anything.

At a regular meeting you can vote by 2/3 of those present to add an item to the agenda. For example at a regular meeting agenda if you use old business and new business that is
fine but you must make sure that when something comes up the Chairman says does anyone have any old business you must vote to add that on to the agenda. It can’t be an open ended old business type of thing. At a special meeting you can’t do that.

Third kind of meeting is an emergency meeting. He doesn’t dwell on emergency meetings because an emergency meeting is held without notice. You must make sure it is a real emergency. The courts and FOI Commission have set the bar for what is an emergency meeting very high. An example of an emergency meeting would be if the district runs out of money, snow over the top of the school roof and things like that. Within 72 hours of an emergency meeting you have minutes on file that outline exactly what the emergency was and what was done to deal with it and that is all you can talk about. Try to avoid the emergency meeting if possible.

After the definition of meeting right after that it says a meeting does not include…and if you read the list of things in that definition it sounds like meetings to me. For example, all your sessions that have to do with bargaining strategy they are not meetings by the FOI. You can take those sessions and have those discussions at Wendy’s or Jimmies or anywhere and they don’t need to be open or noticed. Strategy negotiations with respect to collective bargaining are not meetings you can have those outside the spotlight of FOI. Do not make the mistake of going into executive session to talk about collective bargaining. Even though you wind up in the same place outside of the public eye technically that is not a permitted reason for executive session. Lengthy sessions on collective bargaining do not have to be attached to a meeting at all.

If you form a sub-committee, for example a special search committee for executive level employment that too would be outside the spotlight of FOI. He stated the board he is on went outside the spotlight of FOI in their search for a new superintendent.

Anyone can attend any meeting they are all open to the public. Anyone can audio or video tape the meetings. If you are concerned about disruption while videotaping a meeting you can set ground rules. For example during this board meeting the camera is off to the side and the microphone off to the side so you can run your meeting in an orderly fashion. You don’t have to have chaos with people running around with microphones etc. You have a right to set rules but you can’t stop them.

A common misconception of the FOI Act is that it guarantees people the right to speak; it does not. Who speaks, when they speak, how long they speak is entirely at the Board’s discretion. If you normally have public speaking at your meeting and you have a lot to do and you decide you can’t hear from the public tonight that is the Board’s call. The policy and political ramifications on this are on the Board but the law doesn’t tell you that you have to allow the public to speak. If you want to limit time because you have a large agenda you can do that too.

I spoke about executive session before it is important you know that to go into executive session there are five very specific, clear reasons to go into executive session. To do so you must vote to go into executive session at the properly noticed meeting. Even if you
have a special meeting and the only item on your agenda is an executive session you still have to convene in public and then vote to go in. You have to have at least 2/3rds of those board members present to properly go into executive session. When you go in you have to site the reason specifically and it has to be recorded in your minutes and the minutes need to reflect what board members and whomever else you invited in. The five specific reasons to have executive session have to do with: personnel, pending claims and pending litigation, security, sale or lease of property, and if you have a record, the content of which you believe can not be disclosed. For school boards you have records which identify student’s names which are exempt and you must go into executive session.

He quickly ran through the personnel issue. If you are going to talk about somebody it must be on the agenda. Technically the law states you must identify the person you are going to talk about and that person needs to be given meaningful notice; that is at least 24 hours notice. If you are looking for a middle ground it may be executive session to discuss the performance of a history teacher. He can’t sit here and tell you that if someone files a complaint and it rises to the level of being heard in Hartford that this will fly but a lot of time some sort of middle ground will help you out. After the person receives notice they have the right to come to you and say I don’t want you to talk about me in executive session I want the discussion to be public. If the person does this then you can’t go into executive session. The person has the right to demand an open airing of whatever is to be talked about. The person doesn’t have the right to demand to be in the executive session. Once the person waives the right to the public hearing that person’s rights as to how the meeting is conducted is gone. What frequently happens is that people know this and they say I want a public discussion and we as a board don’t want that you don’t believe it is the right way to do it. You then say what if we invite you in to talk about the matter amongst ourselves before we begin – this is OK because another piece of executive session says you can invite in whoever you want to be a part of the discussion so that you can take evidence and gather the information you need. Once you are through gathering the information and begin deliberations everyone else should leave. Another important piece of executive session is that you should never vote behind closed doors. Have your deliberation and discussion then come out and vote in public session to record who voted and which way. This part of the law is very clear that you have to have every vote recorded. Never vote behind closed doors because if someone finds out you did that and files a complaint our commission could declare it null and void and you would have to go back and do it again. Now you come out of executive session and you make your vote. The other thing you need to remember is about minutes. Minutes need to be on file within seven days. He does his commission meeting minutes and minutes do not have to be by law chapter and verse. A lot of people get hung up on the seven days and state they have a five hour we don’t want to put all that in the minutes what do we do. The law requires you to record basic stuff what board members were there what issues were discussed and what the vote was. This needs to be done within seven days and your votes have to be on record somewhere within 48 hours. That is pretty simple just mark up an agenda and make sure votes are on record within 48 hours. There is no extension on the seven day requirement so you have to make sure minutes are on file within 7 days.
You can’t speak on the telephone and decide how you are going to vote at a meeting and walk into a packed room – all in favor all opposed – and get up and leave and everyone in the audience is left looking around wondering what happened. You can’t have that kind of meeting over the telephone. In today’s day and age electronic equipment also includes computers. You can send things by e-mail but you can’t deliberate over the computer the same way you can’t deliberate over the telephone. Suppose the chairman or superintendent sends you something a position paper that is fine with the understanding that as if it were a piece of paper it becomes a public record. What you don’t want to do is write back to your chairman or superintendent and say I think you are wrong about this what do you think about that and start having a discussion on the keyboard that you should be having in public. There is not a lot of case law on this yet but it is coming. Be very careful as to how you communicate.

Ray Collins stated you originally said a meeting was when there was a quorum of the board. Tom Hendricks said no that is a good point. Meeting means any hearing or other proceeding of a public agency and then it says any convening or assembly of a quorum of a public agency. Many people are under the misconception that you have to have a quorum to have a meeting as defined by the FOI Act. The courts have said different things at the same level. One ruling states no quorum no meeting as defined by FOI. At the same appellate level there is a court ruling that says no quorum you can still have a meeting as defined by FOI. The court has told us separate things on the same issue. My advise is always even absent a quorum be careful because the courts have said that you still could be having a meeting under FOI. We have asked the legislature and the court to give us the third vote on that one. Just be conscious of not making a decision or having the kind of debate or discussion you should have here in private.

Toni Paine stated that would be like a sub-committee it’s a 3 member sub committee it’s not a quorum of the board but it’s a public meeting. Tom Hennick stated no I think Ray is talking about two board members talking to each other on the phone. Its ok to call and ask each other questions and e-mail and say when is the next meeting is this going to be one the agenda. This is fine just stay away from discussions.

Records is usually a very lengthy discussion but the basic premise is this that every record you have is a public record. The law says for starters anyone can come and take a look at it and any one can get a copy of it. If it were that simple that would be the end of the discussion but that is the basic premise. The reason I start with this is because a lot of time people state they are not published records they are the Board’s records or the Superintendent’s records. The law says that as soon as you take a record a piece of paper in City Hall or the Board of Education it becomes a public record as defined by state law. What you have to know then are what we call the three E’s: exemptions, exclusions and exceptions; they are numerous. You need to know what records you have and what categories they fall into so that if somebody comes in and asks for the superintendent’s attendance record you would give it out because there is a State Supreme Court Ruling that says the attendance records of all of us public officials and public officers can be disclosed. No questions asked. If they come in and ask for the superintendent’s medical records there is an exemption for medical records and you wouldn’t give them out. There
is a federal law that covers student records; FERPA – Family Education Right to Privacy Act. This says you should not reveal or release records that personally identify students. You would not release a student’s disciplinary records. If you deal with records you need to know what the records are so that when someone comes in to ask you know how to respond.

If someone comes in and asks for a copy you also have the right to charge up to 50 cents a page. If some asks for a lot of copies you have a right to collect your money up front if the cost of making the copies is going to exceed $10.00. The law says you have to respond to every request for records within 4 business days. Make sure you acknowledge the person’s request within four days; it doesn’t mean supply the records that means that you get something to them because if you don’t get something to them the law says that you have denied their request for records. So make sure you get an answer out within the four days. The question was posed at what point does a piece of paper become a record. Is everything sitting on this desk here a record? When does it become a record? The response was as soon as it is in the hands of the public agency. The next question posed was about personal notes or notes taken during the meeting. The response was one of the exemptions is for personal notes and preliminary drafts. So it is a public record but is probably exempt from disclosure. Under the FOI Act it states these are permissive exemptions. They say you can withhold all these records if you believe the public’s interest is being served. There are 21 some odd of them and you should look at them. You also want to know what other pieces of state statute and law say this is a record that you can’t give out. The next question posed was about e-mails. The response was they are public records but here is the catch. There is also a list outside of FOI for record retention. You need to know what the record retention schedules are this is an entirely separate issue. We only come into play if someone asks you for a record you have. If it’s an e-mail that you deleted because it is transitory you don’t have to get crazy. The question posed next was you said record that you have which means it has to be a definitive piece of paper that has already been created. If someone asks you for an FOI of some data of something but it is nowhere on a piece of paper then that is not a record. The response was not quite. The law also covers computer generated records so if you have a data base and someone asks you for something in that data base technically speaking you can produce the whole data base but you could filter out that one column that the person wants and you are creating the record yes but that might be easier for you and more efficient for you than turning over the whole data base.

We did this quickly there is a lot we didn’t cover but if you know enough about this law and understand what it has been created to do you can understand it can be positive. If the West Haven Board of Education does comply with FOI he would argue that fewer people would look at things you do. The more they see you are open the easier your lives will be. We are there to help and I spend a lot of time answering questions. If you see a problem coming and have a question about an agenda or any item call me up. I’m not an attorney but I will get you an answer. There is also a web site which can be used. He left some FOI highlight cards. On the back is the phone number and web site and fax number along with the address.
The Board gave thanks.

**B. PUBLIC PORTION**

Chairman Toni Paine asked if anyone wished to address the Board.

Sandra Lorusso, 721 Main Street addressed middle school sports. At the last City Council Meeting they voted to send a letter to the board to create committee to take a look at a way to try to restore the funds. Toni Paine said she received a letter stating she would receive a letter about this. Sandra Lorusso went on to state that the logic behind this is that if the Board of Education and the City Council could find a portion of the money we could do something really nice for the middle school children.

She read in the newspaper today that two more children from New Haven shot themselves and that is not what she wants to see for our kids. One of the most dangerous times for children is in the middle school years. They feel a little sense of independence and they start to drift away. If we can keep those kids on the right path because all of them are not scholars and sometimes sports is the only thing that keeps them in school. I would like to see the Board take a look at this. Maybe you will say we don’t have the money and maybe the Council will say they don’t but they have taken the first step and have extended an invitation to the Board to come sit down and talk with them and see what can be done for our children. I hope this Board will take this step. In all honesty this is for the kids please let’s try and do something for them. Thank you.

The Board gave thanks.

Margaret Krzeminski, 1 Robert Street addressed the board and brought with her the budget for the City of West Haven for the year 2006 – 2007. She is disappointed because there are a lot of items that have an amount of money but no people listed. There is a lot of waste in the budget as far as she is concerned. There is no sports in the middle school and her grandson is in the seventh grade at Carrigan and he was dying to play sports. She is very disappointed with the teacher’s union. She works for a company and is a union person and if there was going to be any sort of a layoff she would put her raise aside and help her fellow workers. We are a big disappointment to the kids of West Haven – they have it hard. Her grandson plays for the Pop Warner League and these kids have learned so much from sports and the coaches. They have learned respect and self esteem. Self esteem is what a child needs. Not everyone is a genius but if you have self esteem you can build yourself up with respect and you will respect and help a fellow person. She feels badly for the students in West Haven. Last year the only thing her grandson was able to get into was a sewing class. He did fine and came home and showed her his items. This year he wanted to play sports and he can’t at school. On the Pop Warner League the parents come from different areas and they all get along. There is never a problem with the child playing on that field because they have been shown respect and have to listen to instruction. If you don’t have instructions for a child to learn that child will wander off and become nothing. This is something we have to stop.
You have to think of other things in this budget. You can take an item and list it one way but it is really hitting somewhere else because you have other purposes for it. You need a capable committee of people with knowledge like is happening now with the building committee that is saving us a great sum of money.

She knows that when she went to the open house to visit her grandson at Forest School that the project was not finished because the ceilings were still open because the contractor hadn’t finished. Don’t go by a blueprint from an architect because items are put where they are not supposed to be. Our schools are over crowded and Forest School is one of the most over crowded. One of the teachers at Forest made the comment that 58 teachers were let go. She remembers between 73 and 78 people. She called the Board of Ed this morning and asked the woman who answered the phone a question and she couldn’t answer her and passed her onto another person’s voice mail and that person never responded. People have to start doing their jobs.

You have a new Superintendent of Schools and I understand she came on board in January 2006 but really didn’t show up here until June. How much money was spent for that. She got the contract for the fire department in Allingtown. People don’t realize there are a lot of perks going on but some of these perks should be used for the children in West Haven especially the sports program. She went on to discuss parts of the budget.

The Board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road also discussed the sports situation. She did vote for the letter to be sent from the Council to the Board in order to open up the dialogue with the possibility of bringing back middle school sports. The City Council did not pledge any funds yet for this. She asked the Board to look at some of the cuts Pat Fusco has made in her group and another thing you can do is revisit your attorney because again there should be a little bit of legal room there because expulsions and arrests are down so you shouldn’t have as many attorney charges. I think the attorney charge last year was around $250,000. I think it would be more important to have the children play sports then to litigate against them. I again will mention maybe you should explore hiring an attorney on staff and save money and only go outside for specialty items. A couple of months ago it was stated that we would look into having Mr. Cavallaro’s office do a lot more without the attorney. Again all of this could be explored. As everyone knows no one at this point in time has any money so I really hope that you would revisit this and come up with some possibilities.

She brought an article from a seminar she attended approximately three months ago on a pro-bono school expulsion project. This is for families without funds who don’t know where to turn whose child is in need of legal assistance due to a suspension, expulsion, etc. They will be given an attorney if they don’t have one. She would like to see this be incorporated in the packet that goes out to the home so that they can get legal representation as this is very important.
She thanked Ray Collins, Dr. Andrees and Neil Cavallaro and all of the Board for having Tom Hennick come here tonight. Actually at the last non meeting meeting the board had I called him about it and he told me that actually in the past when the board was doing the executive session to do the bargaining that wasn’t the proper way and the way you did it the last time was the proper way. His talk was very informative and he is always very helpful.

The Board gave thanks.

George Hunkele, 42 Spruce Peak Lane addressed the board regarding sports. His son attends Bailey and is currently in the seventh grade. Upon first entering Bailey he was nervous just like we were a little guy going to a big school. He tried out for the sports team and it made him feel part of the school and made him gain confidence and allowed him to meet the upper classmen. Also we encouraged him as a sixth grader that he wasn’t going to play. He is not here to talk about the next Michael Jordan or anything like that he is here to talk about how sports helps students in other ways besides athletics because I think that is more important. We encouraged him to stick with it because next year you will be a seventh grade and be able to play more. I respectfully request that you consider reinstating if at all possible the middle school sports. The Middle School Mission Statement states that a variety of educational experiences will be provided and it will emphasize the importance of self esteem. Sports builds self esteem. How are we doing that by taking away middle schools sports? He has researched this problem and studies have shown the benefits of athletics and sports participation reduce the drop out rate, it increases self esteem, females who participate in school sports have a strong association with their success in science math and engineering classes, a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in both male and female athletes was noted. Sports participation in the middle school was shown to positively affect the number of African American male students to enroll in academic and college preparation courses while attending high school. There is a drastic increase in GPA there is a decrease in school related severe conduct problems such as fights. There are fewer discipline problems and run ins with the law outside of school. Athletes tend to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco less or not at all and athletes have better school attendance than non athletes. Participation athletics help students build discipline and build self esteem and be able to set goals and organize their time better and develop self confidence. When I was researching this I was thinking I don’t know if you have ever seen the NCAA commercials but many of our student athletes will become professionals but very few in the actual sport event can participate. This isn’t about a student having a pro athletic career this is about developing good human beings. Good coaches say I’m not here to make the best athletes I want them to be good young men and women. That is what we had at Bailey. I think it is a shame to take this away and I hope that sports can be reinstated.

The Board gave thanks.

Anthony Krzeminski, 1 Robart Street addressed the Board to give some suggestions. He came from a school this morning. He stated we have very nice grounds over here well
kept grass cut nice and trimmed. Does anybody go to schools and take a look at how disgusting they look. The grass is unkempt and there are branches are all over the place. His grandson attends Carrigan after school program during the summer. The bus was late and there were two men and one woman trimming the trees having a good time. He couldn’t reach the tree and went into the gym and retrieved a chair and stood on it to trim the tree. There was a gentleman sitting along side him and took a shirt and a plastic bottle off of the tree and threw them on the ground. He never picked up the bottle. Ten minutes later the bus came. There was a lady working and she raked around the bottle and the shirt. He asked her was there any reason you didn’t pick them up. Her response was that is not my job it is the janitor’s job. A week later he went back the bottle was still there.

On the second page of the New Haven Register the question was asked are you glad that school has started again. One person responded no I’m a custodian for the City of West Haven and the Schools are short of help and the school’s going to be filthy this year. Joe, custodian at West Haven. This guy stated in the paper he is not going to do his job because he is shorthanded. My tax money is paying for these people.

Look at Forest Street School you can’t even see it. There is one light that has been out since that school was renovated. Do we have any supervisors to look over these gentlemen who supposedly do their work? That gentleman who was stung by a bee you are probably paying him worker’s compensation. This board should look into this matter. The Board gave thanks.

Daryl Cummings 323 Noble Street stated he appreciates Dr. Andrees, Mayor Picard and his wife coming the other day to the Italian festival where Savin Rock’s PTA had tub racing in Score Board’s parking lot and participated in the fund raiser that we had in selling cotton candy and water and juice. Obviously everyone in this room knows the situation with money this year for the school. The PTA is picking up the slack on some of the things that the teachers may be missing. Some of the teachers in our school take a lot of money out of their pockets to find what they need. We hope that the Mayor, Superintendent and Board will be assisting us in anyway possible. The Board gave thanks.

Richard Shea, 56 Kelsey Avenue spoke about the testing of the new sound system. There have been some discussions in the past on the sound that affects the neighbors. He has collected signatures in the past and they have been working on the issue and he was assured that the new system going in would be designed to take the neighbors into consideration. Tonight they are testing the speakers as we speak the neighbors are out in their back yards and he has a gentlemen who lives two houses up that is hearing impaired and he came out. It was very loud. He is all for school sports and for the kids that is not what this is about. It is about being responsible neighbors it’s about being in control of what is going on. This has the ability to be abused. I think it is in the Board’s best
interest to try to look into this to see if there is some manner in which they can write rules and regulations controlling this.

The Board gave thanks.

Patty Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Rd addressed the Board. She understands the parents and teachers are very disappointed that we have no middle school sports this year however we are also very disappointed that there is 26 kids in several of our kindergarten and first grade classes and we are extremely disappointed that those youngsters may not learn to read this year as well as they would if there were less children. This is not because teachers won’t be working as hard as you would expect them to do but because when you have 26 children in a 2 ½ hour kindergarten because you no longer have an all day kindergarten that is not very many minutes per child. We no longer have as much para professional help. I think we are short changing the children all the way around and I am not blaming the board. Although I do think sports are important if a kid doesn’t learn how to read by grade 3 or they never learn to read well. I think we have an obligation as a community to make sure that our resources reflect what is best for all kids. Although middle school sports may be important there are other ways that kids can play sports. There is Pop Warner there is Little League there is the Shore Haven League. There is lots of other ways for kids to play sports and I know parents have to pay for that but maybe the cookies and so forth can help. Don’t think that I’m against sports because I’m not. If you can find any extra money and I challenge you to do that because I think we were severely under funded by about $600,000 last year. I am working on the legislative end to try and remedy this. I believe education is one of the most important tasks that we have before us. If you can find extra money I think you need to think about what your priorities need to be and I do believe education especially on a primary level because that is 26 kids in a class and I shudder to think of long care special needs students not having the assistance they are going to need.

If you haven’t yet received an invitation you will. CECA which is the Computer Educators of Connecticut Association is having their annual conference on October 23rd and this year they are having a special session from I believe 8:30 to 12:30 and CABE is supposed to invite you all. I am giving you a pre-invitation so you can save the date. They are having a symposium on 21st century learning. This is free and is open to all of you and I urge you to attend to see what is going on. Connecticut did not do very well in the education as far as technology we received a C and D rating. This is quite shocking seeing that we are one of the richest states in the union and we do spend a lot of money on education. Come and find out what we are doing right and maybe get a sense of what we can do better.

The Board gave thanks.

John Lewis, 273 Peck Avenue addressed the Board. His children attend Washington School and he is happy to report that the widows have gone out to bid. It has been a couple of years now but it looks like it is done.
He has a few issues to discuss as Washington is probably the oldest school in West Haven. It has been brought to his attention about the grounds. In some parts of the school there is no grass at all. There should be some care for the grounds. He knows there is a lot of sand and they are close to the water but maybe it could be turned over and somehow get some grass in there. It is not the nicest area to see when parents come to the school. The Mayor saw the grounds on the first day of school. The other thing is that Washington has only one bathroom on the first floor there are no bathrooms on the second and third floor. His daughter is on the third floor in Mr. Keefe’s class and he told us it takes from seven to eight minutes to go downstairs and come back up into the classroom and he has to repeat what was going on during the child’s absence. If there was a bathroom even on the second floor it would help. He mentioned at the City Council meeting about the elevators. He understands they have one at Thompson but he is not sure if it is for voting purposes. He would like some attention given to Washington School. The principal is doing an excellent job and he is glad to see that Dr. Andrees started a newsletter and feels this is very positive. If we could get some grants and focus on this a little more. Maybe there are no funds in the budget but there are grants that I believe we are eligible for. I’m very happy about the things that are going on that are positive.

The Board gave thanks.

Public portion closed at 8:10 p.m.

C.1. Administration

Dr. Andrees began by welcoming Megan Moran and asking her to have a seat. (applause) Dr. Andrees went on to state that it is truly an honor for us on this Board of Education to recognize Megan this evening. Megan is the first student from West Haven Schools to receive the first place ranking in the Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows Statewide Essay Contest Awards Ceremony. The topic Confidential Sources and the Rule of Law is the topic Megan wrote on. The nice thing about this is that this was Megan’s first effort and it is truly an honor for this community to have her represent us. The bonus for all of this is that Megan receives a $3,000.00 bond and I’m sure mom and dad are very proud of her. (applause) Sometimes students are engaged in an essay writing contest and it is cutesy but this is truly not one of those moments. Megan competed with students from across the whole state of Connecticut and these essays were judged by professors and professionals at the University of Connecticut also by some of the justices in our community in addition to legal scholars. We truly would like to extend our congratulations to Megan and Megan’s mom is here this evening would Ms. Patricia Moran to please stand. (applause) Thank you very much and for a photo opportunity we would surely like to have a picture of you with your plaque. Mrs. Toni Paine does have a little memento for you from this Board of Education. Can we get a hand shake photo from you. (Pictures were taken)

Toni Paine gave Megan a pin for the City and it is for the West Haven Public School System in Connecticut and it has our seal on it. Toni congratulated Megan. (applause)
Dr. Andrees continued stating that we are very fortunate that this board of education undertook a project in August to establish a Vision and Mission Statement for our school district. CABE facilitated that process with us we brought that statement and left it here for the community to pick up a copy at various board meetings. We published our Vision and Mission Statement in our newspaper that went out to all the citizens of our community both in English and in Spanish. Tonight we are asking the Board to adapt our Vision Statement which states that the West Haven Public Schools in partnership with the community is embracing a passion for learning. We shall prepare each individual with the motivation, desire, knowledge and skills necessary to meet the challenge of an ever-changing world. I think the whole focus is let’s not prepare students for the world where we are today we need to prepare them for the world that they are going to enter. You know what we don’t know what that is going to look like down the road but I think that as a Board of Education and as a school community that needs to be our effort so that our children can compete on an international level when the time presents itself.

We really liked the Mission Statement that the high school adopted. The high school is going through an accreditation process and that will occur next year so rather than reinvent the wheel since they had done the work we did a little snipping and our Mission Statement for all the schools in West Haven is we the West Haven Public Schools CARE.

C for commit to an ongoing education that promotes critical thinking, communication, and problem solving.

A for advocate the development of student talent, as well as collaboration with parents and the local community.

R for reinforce the values of mutual respect, courtesy and appreciation for diversity.

E for encourage students to develop responsibility, accountability and self-discipline.

Hopefully our Board of Education will vote on this tonight and adopt that as our new Vision and Mission Statement.

There are a couple of items I would like to bring to your attention. One is that Mackrille at this time has a committee in the works which would like to apply for a grant at Lowe’s Home Improvement Store for about $5,000 and this is an ongoing effort from its original blue ribbon committee. They would like to put a blue ribbon sign representing their hard work and effort with the understanding that it would not exceed the $5,000 if they were to receive the grant from Lowe’s. Unfortunately the deadline states it must be submitted by October 1. Our next Board Meeting is not until October 3rd. Therefore I am bringing this to your attention tonight for your consideration so they may have the opportunity to proceed with this effort.
We are fully hired at this point our last science teacher at Bailey Middle School should be coming on board. I spoke with her Superintendent. For once you won’t believe this we have someone who is willing to come and work for us for less because she loves the West Haven School District. This is a young lady who is quite miserable in the school district she is in now and wants to come home. Fortunately the six teachers at Bailey were eager to have her come and relieve them of their additional hour. This young lady will be joining us and we will be voting on that this evening. We only have one position that we thought we would try not to fill in an attempt to save money and that was the position at Carrigan with their alternative programs. We are going to go back and take a look at that because we are not serving students in their best interests in terms of achievement. That position is still there and we continue to look at it.

We will be going on the air for our first television celebration on Friday, September 22nd on channel 26 at 5:00 p.m. and also on Monday, September 25th at 7:00 p.m. on channel 26. We will be featuring celebrating what is right with the West Haven School District with a power point presentation that will highlight the points of pride of every building in a program that features three accomplishments for each of those. This is being done by our high school staff and what a phenomenal group they are that television production crew.

I would also like to extend special thanks to Neil Cavallaro who is here tonight and Frank Paolino and Ann Valanzuolo. They are doing an exceptional job. Our CMT scores have come back. It is so easy to say our scores are back now let’s write a plan. They have taken it a step beyond that this year. It’s not good enough that we write a plan from that we are looking at breaking it down now as to what kinds of things we need to be doing for individual students as well. The ESL students are excited because all the population 23 of their kids passed. In that category they were successful. There are really benefits as we see the results of students being successful when we take their efforts and take a look at them as individuals as opposed to the group. They are disaggregating data down to a finite point and I think this will make a difference for students. These are the kinds of things we must continue to do if we are going to raise our scores.

We are a bit shorthanded in the area of electric work due to the fact that one of our electricians is out on medical. We have computers that have been placed at Savin Rock and at this time they are just placed there. We have been very diligent in not approving overtime however it does not make sense for us to have computers sitting there and not having them in use for the children so we are going to grant the minimal amount of overtime to get the computers installed and have the wiring put in place. There is no wiring at all. We are also concerned about the wiring at Molloy that needs to be upgraded as their computers are continuing to go out. She just asked Joe Yacono to go and take a look at that to see if it cheaper to do it in house or outside. It appears it is cheaper to do it in house as they already know our system and we can get it done right away.
The second place where we have granted over time and truly only in the area where it is needed is technology. I applaud the staff for doing a great job and realizing that this is the time frame that we must work in and respecting that.

September 21, 2006 the State Department of Education will be visiting our schools and they will be selecting intellectual behavior students and they will pull a student’s schedule and will follow that student around for the day and make sure we are indeed following the individual educational plan for that student. Of course after that if there are any discrepancies we will be meeting and have to justify why we are not complying with what we have said we are going to be doing. Gary Palermo has been doing an excellent job of coordinating this and we will have an update for you at the next meeting as to how well we did for this whole process.

Senator Lieberman has contacted our mayor and will be in town tomorrow. I would like to invite any board members who would like to join us at Pagels Elementary School at 8:30 a.m. to tour our facilities. You are invited to join chairperson Paine, the mayor, and myself as we join Senator Lieberman as we tour Pagels School tomorrow.

Tonight you will be asked to vote on a food service issue and Alan happens to be here so before I give out my report tonight I would like Alan to explain to you briefly in as few words as possible something our State Department is not able to do. We have received a ten page document trying to explain to us why we should or should not pass Public Act 06-03 Section I. We are asking our board not to pass that tonight. Alan would you please explain this.

Alan stated there are basically two parts on the agenda one concerns the extra 10 cents offered by the State of Connecticut. We would have to police the PTA on what could and couldn’t be sold for fund raisers. He has polled many of the cities in the surrounding areas and some of the Valley schools are doing this but the larger school districts like Hartford and Waterbury and they are not doing it because of this issue. It is such a large thing to take control over what can be sold during the school day etc. Since we have a Wellness Policy in place I assure you the foods we are serving do fit the health standards and the only technicality would be PTA fund raising. At this point he is asking that the Board deny that offer from the state.

The second part on the agenda has to do with what can be sold at sporting events Public Act 06-63. Any food or drink item sold in the school district must have less than four grams of sugar per ounce. Water can be sold in any variety. If we do not pass this resolution we will not be allowed to sell coffee, soda, soft drinks, or milk drinks at any of the football games. If we are having a school dance I don’t really believe the children should be denied an ice cream treat.

We are going to deny the extra 10 cents from the State at this time and we will pass the resolution.
Eric Murillo would like to see some alternative items added to sports events and dances. Alan stated there will be alternative items such as water and juices.

The Board thanked Alan for his explanation on the above two matters.

Dr. Andrees wanted the Board to know that Mr. Cavallaro is already prepared to include legal assistance on any package where we suspend a student. The fortunate thing is that we have not had to use it.

Dr. Andrees further stated that Mr. Dave Russell is applying for a grant for about $120,000. This is very competitive and we may not receive this grant. The focus of this whole grant was to look at our middle schools with a focus not only on athletics but also on arts as well as combining enriching types of opportunities for our students. We should know hopefully by the end of the year. We will continue to look at what types of other sources might be out there.

**C.1.a. Status of Schools**

Neil Cavallaro thanked Dr. Andrees for her kind remarks but on behalf of Frank Ann and me when we went to the schools we were very pleased that when we got there most were able to pinpoint to us exactly what they were going to do and had a plan ready to present to us. The thing we emphasized the most is that we don’t want just a plan we want to know how periodically they are going to be accessing students throughout the year. We asked the administrators to be able to show us at any time specific data as to where an individual student was and where they currently are at the time we ask for a report. We have gone to the five schools that did not make adequate year progress. All of them are in the process of formalizing a plan. We have asked for a formal plan from all of these schools but we are not required to submit a plan at this time because no school has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two years in a row. We have asked for that and school have gone out of their way to comply with our request. We are now in the process of visiting all the other schools that have made it this year.

We have a meeting set up with WHHS to discuss CAPT results and formalize a plan based on those results to present to the Board at its next meeting.

We are very pleased that this particular science teacher has decided to accept the position in West Haven. This is someone who spent a year doing an internship in our building. We have had very good luck with people who have completed a year in our school buildings and have wanted to come and work for us. I want to mention that we have not taken on any new interns but hopefully I will work with Garth and the Superintendent to see if we have some funds available to be able to bring them back the beginning of the second semester at least at the High School and Middle Schools. While there is an initial expense it certainly pays us dividends.

The bus counts were made available to Board Members in their mail box today per the request of Bob at our last meeting.
C.1.b. Board

Bob Guthrie thanked Mr. Cavallaro for the bus numbers we seem to have a better handle on it this year. There are no glaring large numbers. He requested that for the second meeting in October we see a follow up.

Neil stated that because of the number of magnet schools in New Haven it is putting a drain on the bus company. The more schools they open and more spread out the kids are presents a ripple effect. We are trying to monitor very closely making sure they can do the ones in New Haven and get back to do the second runs in West Haven. At dismissal time we run into the same type of problems. We are monitoring this closely.

George Monahan congratulated Megan Moran for her success in the recent award and not only is she a future leader of society she is a leader today and we applaud you. He would like to ask the Board to consider taking action through Superintendent Andrees in an effort to make Megan’s success contagious. We have these leaders within our school district and especially when we have these kinds of leaders at our high school perhaps we can figure out a way for perhaps a half hour a couple of times during the school year to bring Megan to the middle schools and a few elementary schools and briefly allow her to share her story. How she chose to take a chance and overcome some challenges. She can show that when you do this it can lead to success. Her story shared with younger children might lead them to take some chances. Again we really applaud you.

Ray Collins also congratulated Megan and thanked Mr. Hennick for coming to our Board Meeting tonight.

Jerry Calabritto congratulated Megan and told her he read her essay and it was very enjoyable. Jerry went on to state that at the last meeting he had requested some information about the number of teachers who retired and resigned and the new teachers that were hired to replace them. He stated that when you are right you are right and when you are wrong you are wrong. He congratulated Neil and Dr. Andrees and Jolene for filling 21 positions. Of the 21 positions when compared to the step that the person was on who left 11 of them were at a lower step, 5 were at a higher step, 1 was even and the other 4 were long term subs so the majority of the new hires were at a lower step. Facts dictate and these are the facts.

Eric Murillo asked Mr. Cavallaro how he would get the information from each school that didn’t pass the AYP. Neil Cavallaro stated that there are periodic assessments that take place throughout the elementary level. Each classroom has to submit a report not only to the reading specialist and the principal. We do a lot of monthly assessments. Neil is getting a sample of the report each class makes and Eric requested the Board receive a copy.
Chairman Paine stated that unfortunately we had another parent die suddenly who had two children in the system. She requested a moment of silence for Mr. George Card and his surviving family.

C.1.c. Committee

Bob Guthrie asked to have Joe Yacono come before the Board perhaps in November to discuss some of the concerns we heard tonight about a couple of different buildings. We heard about the outside appearance and some inside issues.

Chairman Paine stated she did read in some correspondence that if we have questions we go through the building committee and not Mr. Kelly directly. Is this the way it has been or is this a change. This is a change per Bob Guthrie but the general upkeep of our buildings and grounds would not have to go before Mr. Kelly.

D.1. Approval of Minutes:

D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Meeting, September 5, 2006
7:00 p.m. at the Blake Building (enclosure)

Approval of D.1.a.
Motion made by Ray Collins
Seconded by Jerry Calabritto
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

06-111 Kathleen M. Anderson, Family & Consumer Science teacher at West Haven High School
Effective: September 15, 2006
Reason: Personal

Approval of D.2. Resignation Certified 06-111
Motion made by George Monahan
Seconded by Ray Collins
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously
D.3.  Resignations: (Non-Certified) Inclusive

06-112  Kim Doran, Literacy Aide at Savin Rock School
Effective: August 31, 2006
Reason:   Personal

06-113  Florence Jefferson, Part-time Cashier at
Washington School
Effective:  September 8, 2006
Reason:   Retirement

Approval of D.3. Resignations Non-Certified Inclusive 06-112 and 06-113
Motion made by Ray Collins
Seconded by Bob Guthrie
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

D.4.  New Hire (Certified)

06-114  Irene G. Checchin, 68 Peabody Street
West Haven, CT 06516
Science Teacher – Bailey Middle School
Effective:  October 18, 2006
Starting Salary:  $35,894.66 (Step 2 BS + 30)

George Monahan stated we also have the correction to tonight’s agenda resignation D.4.
06-121 so we are going to vote on these inclusive.

Resignations: (Certified)

06-121  Kathryn E. Coldren, Assistant Girls Volleyball
Coach at WHHS
Effective: September 15, 2006
Reason:   Personal

Approval of D.4. New Hire Certified 06-114 and Resignations Certified 06-121
Inclusive
Motion made by Ray Collins
Seconded by George Monahan
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously
E. New Business:

06-115 Correspondence from David Russell, Director of Grant Administration to Dr. Agnes Quinones regarding Request for Proposal for the After School Grant Program

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Motion made by George Monahan
Seconded by Eric Murillo
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

06-116 Correspondence from Francine A. Coppola to Dr. JoAnn Andrees regarding the Bilingual Education Program Grant Application

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Motion made by Eric Murillo
Seconded by George Monahan
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

06-117 Correspondence from State Department to Superintendents of Schools regarding Public Act 06-63, An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools. West Haven Public Schools will not participate at this time

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Motion made by Jerry Calabritto
Seconded by Ray Collins
No Discussion: Chairman Paine stated that a vote of yes means we are not participating so a vote of yes means no.
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

06-118 Correspondence from Alan Belchak, Food Service Director to West Haven Board of Education regarding Public Act 06-03 Section 1 and Public Act 06-63 Section 3

Recommendation: Move for Approval
Motion made by Jerry Calabritto
Seconded by Eric Murillo
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

06-119  Employee Termination

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Chairman Paine stated we are moving this item 06-119 Employee Termination to the end.

06-120  Vision and Mission Statement

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Motion made by George Monahan
Seconded by Jerry Calabritto
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

Motion to enter into executive session made by Jerry Calabritto
Seconded by Ray Collins
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously
Meeting closed at 8:50 to begin executive session

**Executive Session**

Pending Litigation
Recommendation For Termination – Donna Rubino

Meeting resumed at 9:00 p.m.

06-119  Employee Termination

Recommendation: Move for Approval

Motion made by Ray Collins
Seconded by Eric Murillo
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously
F. **Informational:**

Nothing to add under informational

Motion made by Ray Collins to adjourn
Seconded by Bob Guthrie
No Discussion
All members were in favor
Motion passed unanimously

The meeting closed at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Clerk