WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
April 7, 2014
Regular Board Meeting
Harriet North Meeting Room

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Harriet North Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut on April 7, 2014. The meeting was called to order by Patricia Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:
Patricia Libero, Chairwoman
James W. Morrissey, Vice Chair
Betsy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer
Patrick Egolum
Robert Guthrie
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Mark Palmieri

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:
Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
David Cappetta, Director of Finance
Matt Cavallaro, Grant Internal Auditor

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:
Alice Obas
Jesus Yanez
C. REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Chairwoman Libero said before starting the public portion I would like to call Pam Gardner to the front as we have some students to celebrate tonight and we will start with them.

Pam Gardner said the West Haven High School Boys’ Swim Team had a banner year this year breaking four school records, including one that dates back to the 1970’s. On behalf of the swim team she also wanted to congratulate their coaches who are here tonight Coach Erin McCauley and Coach Kevin Dickson. Applause.

Pam then recognized Max Padro who swam his fastest 50 free style ever during the first meet against Xavier and broke the school record in the 500 at the time of 5:05.93. The previous record was 5:08 held by Brandon Pimer and before that Sean McCauley with a 5:20. Throughout the season Max chipped away at the record board. He knocked off the 100 fly next with the time of 54.73 a record that has been unbroken for many, many years. The 200 IM record was only one year old and was held by last year’s Captain Santiago Perez but Max took care of that one too with a 2:03.71 at State Championships.

Pam said please join me in congratulating Max on an exceptional season and on breaking three records.

Last, but certainly not least, Max was a part of the 200 freestyle relay team that also broke the school record this year. The four boys asked Coach McCauley early in the season if they could start practicing the relay together because they were determined to get all of their names on the board. One of them even told her, “I don’t cry very often, but if my name goes up on that board I’m going to cry.” His eyes weren’t the only misty ones at Class L Trials in West Hartford when the relay team broke the record. Gaelen Rhoads, Danny Acosta, Geordann Daguplo and Max Padro worked so hard, and even had matching temporary devil tattoos over their hearts for the race. It was something special to be part of and we couldn’t be prouder of what they have accomplished. They broke the 200 freestyle record with a time of 1.36:08. Pam asked everyone to join her in congratulating Gaelen, Danny, Geordann and Max. Applause followed. Certificates were given to each of the students and pictures were taken of them.

Neil said back in the 1970’s West Haven was a powerhouse with some of the records that you broke. That is one of the reasons we were able to get that swimming pool and it is so great to see that under Mrs. McCauley’s leadership and these guys determination we are on the way back. Congratulations to all of you.
Pam said Pi Day is the unofficial holiday that celebrates the mathematical constant pi (π) on March 14 in the month/day date format because the digits in this date correspond with the first three digits of π (3.14). It has become an international observance that is celebrated live and online and also celebrates Albert Einstein’s birthday.

At WHHS, students asked to memorize the number PI to the highest number they could, (since it has infinite decimal places). The student who memorized the most digits was allowed to pie a teacher in the face and was given a pie as a prize.

4th – Amber Prion (gr 11) with 34 digits – Pied math teacher Mike Golinski
3rd – Mia Talamelli (gr 9) with 41 digits – Pied math teacher – Joanie Amato
2nd – Stephen Osei (gr 10 with 46 digits – Pied health teacher – Ryan Knight
1st – Kara Walker (gr 9 with an amazing 101 DIGITS memorized!!!! – Pied math teacher Yvonne Moore

Kara was rewarded with a Sweet Potato Pie to take home for her job well done!

Chairwoman Libero thanked Pam Gardner for sharing this news with us.

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Tracy Morrissey, 305 Country Hill Drive, West Haven, CT. Tracy Morrissey thanked Pam Gardner and Dana Martinez for all their efforts with the grading system at WHHS. The students and parents appreciate the actual grading system being closer to a 4.0. The second thing I would like to speak about again is levelling and appropriate placement. Please take the time in the next few weeks to visit the high school and speak about this with the teachers, guidance department, parents, current students and past students it is very important to speak with past students because this is an issue that cannot be ignored. She is hearing it more and more. Today she and board member Rosa Richards had a parent asking about levelling and appropriate placement needs to be addressed. She looks forward to an open dialog with this board concerning this. We need to restore the rigor into the curriculum at WHHS. We no longer need wasted periods. We want everybody engaged in learning. This is critical to helping our students maximize their learning experience so please help us improve the learning climate at WHHS you need to address the levelling and appropriate placement there. Hopefully we can work together to resolve this. Thank you. The board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Rd., West Haven, CT. Nancy spoke about the budget. The only money that we were The Board of Ed presented last week before the City Council and we were only able to transfer $23,000.00 which is a step in the right direction but we are going to need more funding than $23,000.00. I am here to ask for all of your assistance with this and I know the Superintendent has pledged his. There were questions during deliberations that need to be addressed. She would like the best estimate of a number that would guarantee no layoffs, no elimination of positions and that sort of thing. When Mark Palmieri was Chairman of the Board of Education we had pledged to give $500,000.00 if there would be no layoffs and that is what she is looking to see if there is
any way you can go back to the drawing board; have a budget meeting and look at things that you only got the million you would have to cut and then build from there looking at personnel and programs and such. This way I could invite you back to speak at the Council Meeting and say we are willing to pledge on the record we can do this with half a million dollars (she is only using that number because that is the number they used several years ago). She did ask that it would not include any new programs and no new positions for the guarantee of no layoffs. She believes this is important because in order to move any money we will have to cut on the city side, the police department and that sort of thing. She said there is no guarantee this is going to happen she is only one person but she said her vote always and will continue to go towards education. It is very important that West Haven have one of the greatest educational programs going and unfortunately you need money to do that. I hope you take this into consideration. The board gave thanks. There were no other speakers. Public session ended at 7:25 PM.

C. REPORTS (Continued)
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools
Richard Weber said he and another teacher at WHHS Mr. Dickson hope that the Westie Day of Hope will become an annual event for years to come. The idea of a Westie Day of Hope was really born about three years ago. Carrigan joined with West Haven High School along with the St. Baldrick’s Association and we raised a ridiculous amount of money to fight childhood cancer. By shaving their heads faculty at Carrigan and WHHS were able to have a great day, get a good haircut and raise over $25,000.00 for the St. Baldrick’s Association and another 3,000.00 for a more local charity organization called Camp Rising Sun. We decided to go back and raise more money the following year. In 2013 Bailey joined in and the three schools raised about $30,000.00 towards the St. Baldrick’s Association and $4,000.00 for Camp Rising Sun. To date the total that has been raised is close to $70,000.00 for the two charitable organizations.

The idea of a Westie Day of Hope came out of benefitting specifically Camp Rising Sun located in Colebrook, at the YMCA Camp Jewell. Camp Rising Sun tends to over 100 campers between the ages of 5 and 17 who have been diagnosed or are still fighting cancer or leukemia. It is a completely self-sufficient organization which means that it supplies for itself. St. Baldrick’s is a nationwide organization and with the exception of the U.S. Government St. Baldrick’s is the #2 donator in fighting childhood cancer. Camp Rising Sun needs money. For the cost of about $180,000.00 to $200,000.00 Camp Rising Sun takes care of between 100 and 120 campers between the ages of 5 to 17 and give them the last week of the summer and have a normal week to be kids and enjoy everything a healthy kid could enjoy at a week long camp. The camp is staffed by nurses and Dr. Joe McNamara donates his time so it is fully staffed if kids need medical attention it is there. The Westie Day of Hope hopes to fund as much as we can. On May 17th we will have a craft fair style day in the quad at WHHS similar what was done for Homecoming. There will be craft booths, possibly along with some involvement by PTA and it will be centered around a head shaving station. Mr. Weber has personally been responsible for getting almost $12,000.00 in donations over the past few years and it would have been very difficult to ask those same people again. For the minimal cost of $25.00 you can have your head shaved on that day. Let’s make this more global and get
more people and students involved. Our totals may not be close to $70,000.00 but if we
can write a check for $4,000.00 to $6,000.00 and funnel that money directly to Camp
Rising Sun we can help defer those costs to take care of those kids this summer.

Over the course of 2012 the American Cancer Association started to withdraw funding
from camps such as Camp Rising Sun and they no longer fund these camps. This means
that through donations, charitable events, head shave drives and their biggest fund raising
event which takes place at the Owenego Club in June, Camp Rising Sun needs to take
care of all their costs from top to bottom in order to have those kids go away to summer
camp and not have to turn anybody away that is our goal. On May 17th the first annual
Westie Day of Hope will take place in the WHHS Courtyard. It will center around that
head shaving station and we hope to have all the clubs at WHHS get involved and local
PTA’s so we will really have a fun day and afford to have these kids go to camp for free.
Camp Rising Sun’s tag line is “Until there’s a cure, there’s camp.” Hopefully this is
something we can do for years to come. This is the official kick off to the Westie Day of
Hope. Assistant Fire Chief Sean Heffernan will speak at both WHHS and Carrigan to get
it going and then hopefully all the charities will start going. The board gave thanks.
There was a further discussion with questions answered.

Superintendent Cavallaro said at our last meeting we presented you with a potential five
year Capital Plan. This is not a funded plan and as priorities and needs change the plans
can change. We have to work hand in hand with the city, finance department and
administration and the council would have to end up bonding for a lot of these types of
projects. We believe we are obligated to let the city know what our long term needs are as
a school district. Al Barbarotta from AFB who oversees our facilities for the school
district and Joe Falzone Facilities Director for the district will give an overview of what
our pressing needs are and will answer any questions. Al Barbarotta said we have in
excess of a million square feet of buildings and just like homes our buildings deteriorate.
At $250 a square foot and a million square feet the value is about 250 million dollars.
Depreciation on boilers, roofs and all the mechanical stuff over 20 years of 5%
depreciation would say that we need to be putting about 13 million dollars a year in our
buildings to maintain a like new building. Last year we received 250 thousand dollars
which we have identified for the air conditioning in the auditorium at Carrigan and we
are ready to do that this summer. Over at Washington we will replace the rubber floors
and the ceiling in the boiler room so that 250 thousand dollars is spent. We did a total
needs assessment at Carrigan and Bailey and we have also worked with Silk Town
Roofing and have pictures and maps of all of our roofs. Some roofs need to be replaced
but we keep patching them and we need to make a commitment. Hopefully the fathers of
the town will see this and understand we need to make an investment. As buildings get
older water penetrates the masonry outside and freezes during winter and you see cracks
in the brick and the problems just get worse.

Space is their number 1 concern. They have to make sure they have a seat for every
student and after that they look at safety. Sandy Hook has changed our world. Doors,
locks, hardware and cameras become top priorities with safety. There are two reports
that Joe Falzone and Mike McGrath worked on with Neil Cavallaro to set our priorities.
A discussion of what is needed continued. There are no frills on the report it is not asking for anything new we need money to focus on this. We don’t have the luxury in our operating budget to do this so this is to make you aware and hopefully we get everybody in the city to understand we are willing to present at any Board of Finance Meeting of the Council to help them understand this. This report does not include the high school. We are hoping that the like new renovation moves forward but if it doesn’t just the roof on the high school is about 3.5 million dollars with the work we need to do let alone everything else that is in there. Al said this is a brief overview and I will be glad to answer any questions you may have. A question and answer period followed. The board gave thanks.

Neil said Dave Cappetta and Matt Cavallaro will give a brief overview of where we are, as we are about three quarter’s way through the fiscal year which closes on June 30th, as we project to the end of this year.

Budget information sheets were passed out which showed what the expenses were at the end of March. Special Ed tuition bills typically normally don’t come in monthly so we can do a projection but everything else is on track. Neil explained the tuition access cost sharing. The City books this as revenue so we don’t actually see the money however when the money goes over the booked revenue we normally will be able to go back to the city and say you booked us when you did your budget and you gave us our total allotment and this year it is 1.8 million but the amount is 2.2 million so conceivably the city is hopefully going to give us the $400,000.00 that is given to them for that purpose.

Pat Libero said we also brought a lot of people back in district because we have a lot of programs in district so we can bring a lot of students back. Neil said we do and the concern we have is that we are in the process of placing 4 to 6 new students that we may have to outplace that have moved into the district and we have a couple of DCF referrals. We are trying to be proactive with that money and project what this will cost us added on to what we have done up to this point. Pat asked if DCF places a child out of district are they the only ones who can move them back in district? Joe Lucibello said when we receive a new student we have a PPT immediately and have that conversation. Once we find out who the kid is we do try to keep them in district. We have that option to bring them back in.

Cebi Waterfield asked for an explanation on the excess cost sharing for Special Ed. Neil said some cities say whatever we get from the excess cost sharing for Special Ed we turn it right over to the Board of Ed. In our case the city projects based on a history an amount that we will get in that grant based on previous history and when they make their budget and give us a bottom line number they take that into consideration. If the money is less than we need we don’t typically go back to the city but if we need more of that money we go back and say here is the difference; it is supposed to be our money. Cebi asked if this money comes from the state; yes it does. A further discussion continued.

Rosa Richardson asked if a custodial parent has the right to say no I don’t want this child to be educated in your system I want them to continue to be outplaced. Neil said this is
called due process. If after a planning and placement team determines this is the best program there is a process which you follow called due process. Neil said we don’t have many that get to that level. We are pretty fortunate that we are able to amicably agree on what a good program is for any child with an IEP.

Rosemary Russo asked how many children are currently outplaced. Joe Lucibello said as of last month it is about 108 students. She said wouldn’t it be cheaper to have sub groups of students with similar special needs to start a program for them in West Haven and hire a special ed teacher for these students. Is it ever considered to initiate new programs that would meet the needs. Joe said we look at this all the time but we have to look at the space in our schools and whether we have a number of students where we could be successful with what we have staff wise. We are always looking at that and at ways to bring kids back and keep kids in district. A further discussion continued.

Dr. Druzolowski said that our pre-school special ed population is growing as we see kids coming in with a lot of needs and space seems to be our biggest problem for making sure that there are not high numbers of kids in any of those rooms. When we talk about Bailey and the high school there is a population that would benefit and we have been thinking through a model that would best take care of them. To answer the question we have to do this because it is prohibitive to keep sending students out. A further discussion took place.

Rosa Richardson suggested that the board might open discussion with the city administration about the use of one of the two schools we have given back to the city or the use of Molloy School to create the needed space. Neil said we need to start looking at long term projection for enrollments and things like redistricting and these are the kinds of things that can be part of any study that we do. We will look into this for you. Neil said we have the Peterson property which is ours for the taking if we need to build a school. A further discussion took place about the budget.

Matt Cavallaro said with the Alliance Grant funding there are currently four districts that do not have all day kindergarten out of 30 and there is legislation to have all alliance districts have all day kindergarten. If this legislation is passed we met with the state and they said that there will be no additional increase in funding. Pat Libero said so we will have to have all day kindergarten with no funding for it. Correct was Matt’s response. Neil said this is a real issue for us right now. We have talked to our legislators about this and they have said there is no additional funding pending up in Hartford for this mandate it would be another unfunded mandate. The proposed legislation is saying that Alliance Districts must offer all day kindergarten which means all the schools. A further discussion continued.

C.1.b. Student Representatives Report
Alice Obas and Jesus Yanez gave a report which is attached as (Schedule A) at the end of the minutes. The board gave thanks to the students.
C.1.c. Board

C.1.d. Committee

D.1. Approval of Minutes
D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting held in the Harriet North Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on March 3, 2014 at 6:00 PM.

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Harriet North Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on March 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM.

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a. and D.1.b.
Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the minutes
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

D.3. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.4. New Hire: (Certified)

D.5. New Business

F. Informational

Chairwoman Libero asked if there was anything to discuss under informational.
There was nothing further to discuss.

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to adjourn.
Cebi Waterfield made the motion
Patrick Egolum seconded the motion
The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary
BOE Student Report – April 7, 2014

Congratulations to the cast and crew on a successful, enjoyable and well attended run of Willy Wonka, last weekend. The musical was lots of fun and had the biggest attendance in the past 10 years.

SADD sponsored an assembly for juniors and seniors last Friday. Bob Anastas, the founder of Students Against Driving Drunk, spoke about challenging yourself and to not be afraid to be a part of the 25% who are leaders. It’s ok to say no.

Congratulations again to Fikri Anuar of the West Haven High School Math Team, who has now been selected for the Connecticut State Math Team for the second year in a row! He will compete with the state team later this year. Fikri previously scored a 108 on the AMC (American Mathematics Competition) and was one of 20 students from Connecticut who made the honor roll (scored 100 or better). He was 9th on the list.

Friday night is the Junior Prom – Hollywood – A night on the red carpet at Villa Bianca in Seymour.

The Spring into Spring Band Concert will be held on Thursday evening at 7:30pm. We invite you to join us.

Mark your calendars for two upcoming pageants – The Mr. Westie Pageant will be held on April 16th in the auditorium and is a fundraiser for the senior class. The Lil Miss Westie Pageant will be held on May 10th and is a fundraiser for Project Graduation.

Congratulations to both Jesus Yanez and Alice Obas on their acceptance into the Yale Global Scholars Program. Alice has a go fund me page to help raise money to defray the costs of attending, gofundme.com/aliceobas

Juniors are testing in SBAC and have completed the English/Language Arts test and are now taking Mathematics. Students have been patient and cooperative during this new field testing. Sophomores will begin testing after April vacation.

Congratulations to the WHHS Unsung Hero – Miss Martinez – who will be honored on Wednesday night with all other West Haven PTA unsung heroes.
The Faculty and Staff are uniting together to support senior scholarships. They are participating in a Westie Walk-Off Challenge to win the golden shoe trophy and to raise money for scholarships. We wish them good luck.

This evening, all spring sports teams are meeting in the café for the season kick-off meeting and will then break up into classrooms for team meetings with coaches. The WHHS Chapter of Girl Up recently participated in a panel discussion at SCSU as part of Women’s History Month. Kaussar Rahman and Mia Ramirez did West Haven proud at this event.

The Academic Integrity Committee is hosting a game night on April 17th in the café.

Girl Up is hosting a “Bring your sister to the movies” night on April 30th and will be showing “Frozen”.