WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
February 10, 2014
Special Finance Meeting Board as a Whole

A Special Finance Meeting of the Board as a whole was held in the Board’s Meeting Room in the City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on February 10, 2014. The meeting was called to order by Pat Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 6:05 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:  
Pat Libero, Chairwoman  
Jim Morrissey, Vice Chair  
Betsy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer  
Patrick Egolum  
Robert Guthrie  
Mark Palmieri (arrived shortly after meeting began)  
Rosa Richardson  
Rosemary Russo  
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Pat Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education requested that everyone remain standing for a moment of silence for Bob Law who was a School Psychologist in our school system for many years. He has been retired for a few years but still came back and worked with us. He was a great school psychologist and a great friend to many and an all-around good person who died this past week. I would like to have a moment of silence in his honor please. Thank you.

Pat Libero read the notice that was sent to Debbie Collins stating that the agenda for this meeting is the presentation and action on the Superintendent’s proposed budget for 2014/2015. Mark Palmieri will be a few minutes late and when he arrives I will turn the meeting over to him. In the meantime Superintendent Cavallaro will give his presentation.
Superintendent Cavallaro introduced himself and thanked everyone for their patience. It took a little bit of time to get the budget out this year but he thought they did a good job of providing the board with a lot of information. If there are questions during the presentation or after we will be happy to answer them. If you have questions later you can send us an email and we will get it to the right person. Neil thanked Dave Cappetta, Matt Cavallaro, and Anne Druzolowski who has been instrumental and if you looked at some of the grants we provided you with she has done the majority of those grants and does a tremendous job. Neil reviewed the budget book that was presented to the board members and said we hear a lot about the board’s operating budget as opposed to some of the other funding sources we have so this year we decided to give it all to you. What you will be asked to vote on is a budget proposal to give to Mayor O’Brien. It is important for you to know that we do supplement our budget above and beyond what we get from the City and what we get from ECS Funding. Superintendent Cavallaro went over the six sections of the budget book and thanked all the administrators and staff members for being in attendance to help with the presentation. The Superintendent’s proposed budget presentation has been put on the website. Questions were asked during and after the presentation.

Superintendent Cavallaro said that the proposal presented tonight keeps all current levels of staffing and instructional services for students and provides access to our buildings for community groups. We have always taken this approach and having grown up in this town as a child and student and later on as a coach I know we want our buildings to be community centers and provide access to the groups that need them. This budget does allow for that.

We are putting in an All Day kindergarten pilot program in two of our review schools; Forest and Savin Rock. These two schools are review schools and part of the education reform bill and these two schools are not making the progress they need to make and they are not making the progress they need to make in a sub group. A sub group could be minority students, it could be ELL students, or free and reduced lunch students. We believe we should start with those two schools to implement the program.

Pat Libero said and the long range plan is to try and add programs every year until we get them in all the buildings is that correct. Neil said that is the long range plan and he said he would give some different versions depending on what we receive as funding. We do not have to make those decisions tonight.

Neil said we want to continue to move forward educationally and instructionally and provide our kids with the best. Everyone here needs to keep in mind that when we do a budget in January we assume every employee will be returning at the salary that they will make contractually in the coming fiscal year. This is a variable in the budget that usually helps us. The budget increase for the most part is contractual with the exception of All Day Kindergarten for the two schools that we mentioned. The other thing would be operational increases with some contractual and some are just things that have been neglected that we need to work on as far as our facilities. The total increase is about four million dollars which is a 4.7% increase. We did everything possible to keep this proposal reasonable understanding that we are in difficult economic times but also understanding that we have to keep moving the district forward educationally and meet the needs of a community that needs more and we want to provide them with more.
Cebi Waterfield asked of the 4.7% how much are the fixed costs like contractual obligations? Can you give an estimate of the percentage of that increase like salary and benefits? David Cappetta responded 2.4%. Neil said you are looking at a little over three million dollars being contractual.

Mark Palmieri said that the All Day Kindergarten at those two schools the $709,200 includes set up, teachers, paras etc. Neil said yes and about half a million to sustain the program over time that is with teachers and paraprofessionals and there is another couple of hundred thousand dollars that we are putting in for set ups. Our first priority if we get All Day Kindergarten is to hire the teachers and the assistance they need and with the other money the goal would be to get the program up and running the best we can. Our goals as a school system are to increase Early Childhood Programming by starting the All Day Kindergarten and build towards All Full Day Kindergarten. Since Neil has been Superintendent they have tried to expand some Early Childhood Programs and he believes that is where we should put most of our new resources. They have added a full time pre-school coordinator who works with the agencies around town, we have extended pre-school opportunity so that there is at least one pre-school class in every one of our schools and in most cases there are two. These are special ed classes but they do open up slots for regular ed students. We have tried to increase these opportunities and now we believe it is time to give access to Early Childhood Education for all of our kids in this school district. Through the Alliance District and some of our other funding sources we have enhanced our Early Literacy Programs. We have added literacy coaches to work with kids who are struggling. We want to increase access to technology throughout the district and David has done a great deal of work in this area with our IT people to build infrastructure capabilities and we are in good shape. We are getting almost half a million dollar grant so that we can start with the SBAC Testing. The good news is we were ready to go with the exception of buying the computers that the kids need to take the test with. We have made advances in these areas and feel really good about it. A further discussion continued.

There was a discussion about the extended day program that was started at Savin Rock and the hope to expand that to Forest School and then possibly Washington School which is also a Title 1 School. Stefania Izzo-Larry addressed the board with some statistics regarding the extended time that we are providing the kids at Savin Rock who come after school hours for additional help and support. Stefania said they chose Savin Rock because it is a Review School. Students who were at risk were selected to participate in the after school program. She passed out a packet to the board members. Three skills were continually reinforced on a daily basis; letter identification and sound identification, you will see upper lower and sound and our students have made significant growth. In unit three all the students in our extended day program had 100% mastery under letters and sounds and upper and lower case. We are seeing the benefits of an extended day program. Stefania’s information is attached as Schedule A.

Rosemary Russo asked if this was only available to the PM kids; the AM kids can’t come back? Stefania said they tried to invite some of the AM students but some of our parents found it difficult for them to bring their children back to school for the PM session. Neil said if parents were willing to switch their kids to the PM session we were willing to have that happen. Stefania said unfortunately we had some parents who didn’t take us up on this. If this were part of the
actual school day parents would prefer that. Rosemary asked if most of the kids in the PM session attended. Yes and we have a great attendance rate as well.

Rosa Richardson asked if transportation was an issue. Students are provided transportation and because the program ends at 5:00 PM we have our paraprofessional ride the bus with the students because it is dark outside and we want to make sure that everyone gets home safe. Neil said this is part of the Alliance Grant and based on what we receive for funding we hopefully will be able to do a little more next year. Based on what our final budget is we may be able to put the extended day at Forest and maybe Washington. We will monitor and work with the administration and make our case throughout the next couple of months.

Under the budget Neil said you can see that about 78% of our budget is fixed for salary and benefits and this leaves you roughly 22% for Special Ed tuition. Our transportation received small increases and that has been manageable. Under operational our buildings have some needs and we have some concerns about developing a long range plan and how to best upgrade our schools. Savin Rock is our newest school building (1976) and it is 40 years old and is need of some attention. We are taking money out of our operating budget; money that should be coming from a long term capital plan because we have a break and fix mentality rather than a proactive mentality. This is something that needs to be addressed.

Cebi Waterfield asked from our budgeted amount from 2013 and our actual budget, what was the difference was in spending. She knows there was a surplus but doesn’t know the amount and she wondered if that could be applied to the capital plan. Neil said it can be however you need to be aware that as of June 30th any money that we have in excess is no longer our money so the city would be obligated to turn that money back over to us. This could happen but the reality is it hasn’t happened. One of the issues which have been discussed with prior Mayor Picard and current Mayor O’Brien and Ms. Rossi from the City Council is that the audit doesn’t come back until months later in the next fiscal year and it is difficult to make plans for that money. Also the City of West Haven is a self-insured entity and many times until October or so we don’t have an idea of what that surplus will be because being self-insured the City pays medical bills and claims. This year Neil expressed his concerns to Mayor O’Brien and said he doesn’t mind giving the money back but in a difficult year the shoe may be on the other foot. We may have a bad year of medical claims and we budget a specific amount for that and this is something the Mayor will have to consider. Mayor O’Brien was receptive to this idea. This is something that can throw our budget off one way or the other and is to be concerned about. While $800,000.00 sounds like a lot of money and in a good year it is and in a bad year that could easily go the other way. Cebi asked if that is what we have from last year; that audit is done? The audit is not complete right now and David said they put down February 15th. Cebi asked if there was an estimation of what the surplus would be. Neil said we are pretty sure it is about $800,000.00. Cebi said we get to keep a portion of that right. Yes $200,000.00 is set aside. Cebi thanked Neil and David.

A discussion about what is the contractual and what is the discretionary part of the budget took place. Unfortunately a discretionary part of our budget is instruction and we would like this to be a log higher than 1¼ %.
When we talk about tuition for children who are being placed outside to a special ed facility this is another variable which could affect our budget. If parents of kids move into our district whose children have been out placed we assume the position.

Mr. Joseph Lucibello, Director of Pupil Services, discussed this and said the school with the lowest tuition that we use is about $42,000.00 and that is just tuition; that doesn’t include transportation. He said we are here to present to the Board the current status of our Pupil Services Out of District Placements. Mr. Lucibello provided a handout to the Board members. He also discussed the total number of students Out Placed last year compared to our current number of students this school year (year to date). Mr. Lucibello also discussed what schools (within the district) they came from. In addition, Mr. Lucibello explained that more than half of the students Outplaced this year were students that moved into our district from another town or state and when they moved into West Haven they were immediately outplaced. Mr. Lucibello also discussed the range of tuitions that we pay for Out Placement programs. He described the students that would fall into the highest price range. A further discussion took place.

Neil said everyone who is an employee of the Board of Education is about Fifty Two Million Dollars. This is traditionally an area where we see some savings because between now and then members in most of our unions will retire and that number could come down significantly. There is a chance that we could see a higher number of teacher retirements this year because the contract that will go into effect beginning the next school year changes slightly for retirees in that up until this June when an employee retires they retire under whatever the contract was that they were working under. For example if there was a 10% co-pay they retire and keep that co-pay for the remainder of their lives. Beginning next year when a teacher retires they will get the same coverage and the same percentage of payment as active employees so that may entice some employees to retire this year at a higher number than usual. A further discussion about possible other options continued. We usually have between 12 and 15 retirees a year and we think it will be closer to 20 this year based on the change in the contract. The remaining information that was discussed is displayed on the website.

Cebi asked if we are aggressively managing claims to get people back to work. Yes and we have implemented programs and are making progress on this.

Jim Morrissey asked what the increase in the hourly rates was for the rink. He knows we are one of the lowest in the State of Connecticut. What was the amount we went to per hour? Neil said we did this over two or three years ago Youth Hockey was paying $290 and are now locked in at $340 because we made a decision with our vendors that they gave us money up front to lock in and what we got out of it was a brand new Zamboni which is a $100,000.00 Zamboni. Jim asked about the other tenants that rent ice. Jon said Notre Dame was paying three years ago approximately $330 and is up to $375. Neil said they are locked in because they are long term tenants and they contributed to the Zamboni. Jon said they are locked in for one year and Amity was never locked in and we gave UCONN three years because they are by far our biggest customer; no one is even close to what they pay us in rental. They paid us $25,000.00 of their money up front towards that Zamboni. Jim said and the rink is closed for four or five months from April. Jon said we take the ice up during the April vacation and put it back down the last week in August. Neil said a couple of years ago we tried
and kept it open until June 1st but it didn’t work because we couldn’t rent the hours and the cost of the electric bills and the dehumidifiers can’t run in the summer with the heat. A further discussion took place about what was needed to do at the rink such as the flooring, stands, and painting the outside.

Bob Guthrie asked if the present operation of the concessions is separate; it is not the same operator for the Rink and Stadium correct. Neil said when we put the food service out to bid Sodexo had the first right to take it over when the contracts were up. They have taken over the Fitzgerald Complex and gave us $12,000.00 where we previously received $10,000.00. Next year the concession at the Rink is up so Sodexo will have an opportunity to make a bid on that. The Rink will be more profitable because it will be open so many more hours. Bob asked who sets the hours the Board or the people who bid it. Neil said the people that bid it have a key and open it when they want to open it. If it is slow they have vending machines in the rink but if we found out they weren’t there operating and slipping we would get on them and say you aren’t living up to your end of the contract. We know it is a service you have to provide. Bob discussed creating another entrance on the outside of the rink building like a skate shop or if someone wanted to go in there they could open when the rink doors might not be open. Jon said they had tried this but the person couldn’t make it; there just wasn’t enough flow in there. The skates during physical class need to be maintained and we also use the rink for public skating.

Jim Morrissey said this could also be the reason why we weren’t making money because we were letting all the kids use the ice during the course of the day and if you had a private rink; Neil interjected correct this is such a key factor that during the day our kids use it; not to mention even after school the first two hours of primetime are West Haven Boys and West Haven Girls. We are doing very well there now and are very pleased and we aren’t killing them on the hourly rental; it is competitive and probably under what a lot of rinks charge. Jim thinks the rates should be a little higher for the out of town people because he knows Shelton charges $450 an hour and we are far behind that and ice time is very difficult to get. These tenants are not going to be able to go to Shelton or any other place. Jon corrected what he previously said about the cost for Notre Dame, Amity and the other universities are paying $390 an hour not $375. A further discussion continued.

The time line for submission of the budget and approval took place. The Mayor submits his budget to the Council by March 14th and the Council holds its meeting by April 4th and adopts a budget by May 2nd. During this time we communicate with the Mayor and the City Council to make every effort we can to justify our budget. Neil said any significant cuts to the budget could impact staffing levels and school initiatives. Neil said we are committed to working with the city administration and the council to justify our request and also keep in mind that there is a limit and you don’t get everything you want; it is what the people who live in this town can afford. Neil thanked everyone and turned the meeting over to Mark.

Mark apologized for being late this evening and wanted to thank the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, David Cappetta, Mark Cavallaro and the rest of the administration for working together on this. Mark knows that Superintendent Cavallaro has been working with Mayor O’Brien and his administration and this will be an on-going discussion until the we actually receive the budget and we will continue working together.
Bob Guthrie said it was a great start with the two buildings and All Day Kindergarten and asked if the Superintendent would price out what All Day Kindergarten would cost. He understands it is a best case scenario and is probably not going to happen in September but what are we talking city wide the cost. We agree that we need to do a Capital Improvement Plan and we have heard about the Rink Floor and know that is something that is not going to be done in one or two budgets. Can you price it out to 20 years? Dave is right on target with Anthem; their track history has been running 15 to 16 percent and fortunately for us it has been trending 11 or 12 percent and I think we are on target there. He thanked Dave and the Superintendent for putting it together.

Neil told Bob that they feel they would need six additional kindergarten teachers in addition to what we are asking for and that is roughly $50,000 per teacher so $300,000 and ten additional paras in an ideal situation at about $20,000 per para and you would add the current teachers who would now become a full day kindergarten teacher so you are looking at close to $500,000.00 plus some startup costs but you are talking about almost a million dollars a year to sustain the program after the startup cost and that is more important for everyone to realize. Bob said in two or three years this will probably be mandatory and not an option and wanted to see it prepared.

Bob asked through PTA Council have a parental survey to see how many people would prefer to have All Day Kindergarten. He thinks the larger percentage would be for all day Kindergarten but we might as well ask that question.

Cebi said they are petitioning in Guilford to keep half day kindergarten because parents feel it is really important to have their kids home with them but obviously our population is a little bit different. Neil said as these programs become mandatory we need to start looking at infrastructure; where are we going to house these programs. We think we can make it work in what we are utilizing now for space. Jim and I looked at Molloy as both an Early Childhood Center or as an elementary school. As the discussion comes about for mandatory programs those are the kinds of things that also need to be included.

Cebi said it is important to get out to the taxpayers and parents how important it was that we did the Sodexo Plan. If you look at New Haven and the huge deficit they have it also includes their Day Care issues but she thinks it was a nine million dollars underfunded lunch and day care program in New Haven that they are trying to make up for. Cebi thinks we made a really good move by moving that off of our plates and on to an outsourced budget.

For All Day Kindergarten Wallingford submitted two budgets this year one with All Day Kindergarten and one without. Their budget was 1.27 million dollars for implementing and sustaining and Cheshire’s was 850 thousand dollars to implement and sustain All Day Kindergarten so it is definitely something we need to think about for the long range especially if we do get it in two schools. We need to do this based on the needs of the kids but there will be out cries from parents in other schools that think that there kids also should be afforded that opportunity. If we get what we need this year we should plan to start rolling it out to the other schools. Cebi discussed Universal Pre-School and said it is something we should think about. Neil asked Judy Antignani if there is any indication of how many we may be eligible for yet if we got the spots. Not as of yet they haven’t divided it up but we certainly would be eligible for
some of those. What our problem is with this is that it is within the community and we don’t have that many community spots in West Haven; it is within private day care. We would have to look at where we could do this within the community.

Mark Palmieri asked if there were any questions. Rosa Richardson asked Judy if the Community House and the West Haven Child Development Center that are non-profit organizations are related indirectly to us. Neil said we purchase readiness spots from them. Judy said the Board of Ed is the fiduciary for our school readiness classes and they have school readiness slots so I oversee the school readiness program but the Community House has extended day care and they are able to extend their Head Start with School Readiness Funds and West Haven Child Development Center has roughly 60 full time slots that have school readiness and they have part time slots and 10 school day slots. Rosa asked if those school readiness programs are in the public schools or are they held strictly at say the Community House? They have to be in a DPH Dept. of Public Health licensed day care and they have to be NIAC accredited it is very cost intensive to do that in a public school. Rosa thanked Judy.

Marked asked if there were any further questions and Jim Morrissey said not a question just a comment. Jim said he is a realist and we all know we aren’t going to get the four million dollars; we all know that. I suggest you get your pencils out. I don’t know if you talked with the Mayor on a one to one basis but obviously it would be great if we could get the four million dollars but it is not going to happen especially in this economy and with the finances of the city. I hope the Governor and the State Legislator gives us more money.

Neil said we know there will be an increase in the Alliance money and he doesn’t believe our regular ECS will be affected in any way so we can expect an increase in that area. Jim said that is good news to hear so hopefully we will get more money for the State of Connecticut and hopefully the Mayor and City Council will help us. Jim said he is just being a realist and Neil said listen I don’t think we have gotten 4.7 in the six years David and I have been doing this. Cebi said the towns around us are asking for just about the same amount so they probably aren’t going to get it either.

Mark asked for a motion to accept the Superintendent’s proposed budget for 2013/2014 Cebi Waterfield made the motion to approve the Superintendent’s budget Bob Guthrie seconded the motion Discussion: None All board members were in favor No one was opposed No one abstained The Superintendent’s budget for 2013/14 is approved

Pat Libero asked for a motion to adjourn Bob Guthrie made the motion Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion The meeting ended at 7:25 PM
Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary
**Kindergarten Extended Day Program**

**Location:** Savin Rock Community School  
**Program Length:** October 1 – End of School Year  
**Days:** Monday – Thursday  
**Hours:** 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm (Teachers)  
3:30 pm – 5:30 pm (Paraprofessional)

**Staff:** 2 Certified Teachers  
1 Paraprofessional

**Selection of Students:** Kindergarten teachers administered a universal screening in September. Students attending the PM Kindergarten session who were deemed “at risk” based on the universal screening assessments were invited to attend the extended day program.

**Program Focus:** The focus is primarily on oral language development. Movement Enhanced Learning activities are integrated as well to foster fundamental literacy skills.

**Curriculum:** The teachers reinforce skills and concepts presented in the Kindergarten curriculum aligned to CCSS standards (see attached curriculum overview).

**Progress:** Students enrolled in the program have made significant progress in upper and lowercase letter identification and sound identification. Below is an overview of student growth overtime.

**Student Growth Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Upper Case</th>
<th>Lower Case</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1 (p, b, d, t, a)</td>
<td>80% Mastery</td>
<td>53% Mastery</td>
<td>40% Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2 (c, k, g, f, i)</td>
<td>80% Mastery</td>
<td>87% Mastery</td>
<td>87% Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3 (v, s, z, j, o)</td>
<td>100% Mastery</td>
<td>100% Mastery</td>
<td>100% Mastery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please refer to the charts included in the packet for more information**
| Unit 1 | Reading: Building a Community of Readers and Getting to Know a Book  
| | Writing: Building a Community of Writers and Pictures Tell a Story  
| Dates: | August 29th - October 11th  
| Letters/Sounds: | p, b, t, k,  
| Sight Words: | is, for, a, the, I can, we say at, look  
| Other Areas Assessed: | Dictation, Concepts About Print, Sound and Word Discrimination and Sentence Segmentation  

| Unit 2 | Reading: Fun with Fiction  
| | Writing: Words Add to Your Story  
| Dates: | October 14th - November 22nd  
| Letters/Sounds: | c, k, g, f,  
| Sight Words: | what, like, he, to, said, no, she, are, in, they  
| Other Areas Assessed: | Dictation, Rhyme Recognition, and Syllable Blending  

| Unit 3 | Reading Ready to Retell  
| | Writing: Opinion  
| Dates: | November 25th - January 24th  
| Letters/Sounds: | a, s, z, aj, o  
| Sight Words: | it, go, on, my, you, and, this, that, his, her  
| Other Areas Assessed: | Benchmark, Running Record  
| | Dictation, Rhyme Production, and Syllable Segmentation  

| Unit 4 | Reading: Understanding Stories  
| | Writing: Writing to Tell Your Story to an Audience  
| Dates: | January 27th - March 14th  
| Letters/Sounds: | m, n, w, h, u  
| Sight Words: | am, him, of, have, was, with, be, will, up, down  
| Other Areas Assessed: | Dictation, Onset-Rime Blending, Onset-Rime Segmenting  

| Unit 5 | Reading: Fun with Nonfiction  
| | Writing: Pictures Can Inform  
| Dates: | March 14th - May 6th  
| Letters/Sounds: | l, s, z, s,  
| Sight Words: | do, not, out, there, us, did, from, them, on, these  
| Other Areas Assessed: | Dictation, Initial and Final Sound Isolation, Phonemic Blending  

| Unit 6 | Reading: Main Ideas in Nonfiction and Recognizing Similarities and Differences  
| | Writing: Using Words to Inform and Writing to Inform Your Audience  
| Dates: | May 12th - June 12th  
| Letters/Sounds: | qu  
| Sight Words: | review of sight words from previous units  
| Other Areas Assessed: | DRA, Spring Letter ID, Spring Sound ID (Unit 6 does not have a pre/post)  