The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut on November 18, 2013. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:    Mark Palmieri, Chairman
                 M. Toni Paine, Vice Chair
                 Patricia Libero, Secretary/Treasurer
                 Dorinda Borer
                 Betsy Davis
                 Robert Guthrie
                 Eric Murillo
                 Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:    Patrick Egolum

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:    Catherine DePino
           Alice Obas
           Jesus Yanez
Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone to the November 18, 2013 regular Meeting of the West Haven Board of Education and asked if anyone would like to address the board. Public Portion began at 7:00 PM

B. Public Portion of Meeting
Dina Robinson, 138 Winslow Dr., West Haven spoke in favor of the new food service. Both her children said the food was so good on the first day of school. The next day some students from Bailey, Carrigan and Pagels told her the food is so much better this year. This year her children buy lunch at least three times a week when last year they didn’t buy lunch at all. She said everyone at the Pagels PTA were pleased with the lunch program as were their children. The Carrigan children loved the chili and told her about it getting off their bus. She personally thinks the snacks and the ice cream is great. Once in a while having a snack or an ice cream at school is fine. She thanked the board for bringing in Sodexo. The board gave thanks.

David Carr, Lake Street, West Haven, CT. Mr. Carr was kind enough to supply a copy of what he said during the board meeting. It is attached as (Schedule A) to the regular minutes. The board gave thanks.

Teresa Heaney, Vice President of Local 2706 said she has been asked to read a letter that has been compiled by the 51 employees that you employ (Schedule B). Council 4 has sent this letter to the Parents of West Haven. On a personal note she wished the board members who wouldn’t be back in the next two weeks good luck and gave Dorinda a very special thank you for always being that person who stands up not just for the unions but for the kids and says no is no and means no. She thanked Dorinda and wished her good luck. The board gave thanks.

Gary Grant, 555 Woodhouse Avenue, Wallingford, CT is the Grant Technology Education Department Head at WHHS. Mr. Grant stated that the West Haven Save Our Shops folks have been coming to board meetings for the last eight months. He thinks for the first time we can actually say that we have some small reason for encouragement. Over the past couple of week we have seen some changes in the floor plan and we have a long, long, long way to go yet but we do have reason to be encouraged and are hoping that in the next several weeks we can actually come up with a design for the new West Haven High School that truly meets the needs of all of the students of West Haven High School. The board gave thanks.

Joe Lucibello, Director of Pupil Services for the City of West Haven wanted to inform everyone that at 6:30 tomorrow night at Seth Haley School there will be a Special Ed PTA Meeting and on behalf of the President we are looking for all parents who have children with special needs to participate. We will talk about a lot of the current things that are going on in special education along with any changes and Jim, Stefania and I will be there to answer any questions or to look into any information that may be needed. The board gave thanks.
Public Session ended at 7:25

C. REPORTS
C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Before giving his status report Superintendent Cavallaro introduced Alan Dean from Sodexo who talked about where they are and the status of the program. Any questions from the board can be addressed after Mr. Dean is finished. Unfortunately Meg Kingston who is the day to day director for the program assigned to West Haven by Sodexo could not be here tonight because she is involved in a Confirmation ceremony; she is sponsoring a family member.

Mr. Dean had a power point which he was not able to use. He passed out three hard copies of the power point which is attached as (Schedule C) and is attached to the minutes. He gave an update as to where Sodexo is at the end of October and answered questions from the board. The Board gave thanks.

Superintendent Cavallaro started by addressing the memo that was sent out to all the board members on Friday which he received a copy of. He stated during the previous board meeting he thought it was a pretty productive meeting with the Board of Ed administration and the AFSCME Union. A lot of the issues were put on the table and while they still have a long way to go it was a pretty frank discussion and concessions were probably made. Neil responded to an email he received on Friday after he contacted Joe Faizone our Director of Maintenance once he had seen the letter. This is attached to the minutes as (Schedule D)

Betsy Davis wanted clarification on the letter that AFSCME said was sent to the West Haven parents because she never received it; she only received it as an email through her BOE emails. She asked if it went out to the district? Neil said it did not go out through the schools as far as he knows. Various people said they had children in the schools and didn’t receive it. Someone in the audience (couldn’t see them) said it was emailed to all the board members accounts and is being distributed to parents but not through the school system. They represent a large number of parents who are going to receive it as well.

Neil said we need to say goodbye, good luck and thank you to Dorinda Borer, Toni Paine and Eric Murillo as this is their last board meeting tonight. (Applause) He wanted to thank them for 4 years of service, 8 years of service and 12 years of service. He thanked Dorinda stating she has been a great advocate for parents and kids and said she made him do a better job being more pro-active with communication. Dorinda raised a lot of questions and helped him understand through the office of superintendent the need to get information out so parents are aware of what is going on in the schools. He hopes she has seen an improvement in during the last four years. Dorinda’s questions helped make him prepare himself better for board meetings. He hopes he was able to follow up and get her all the answers to her questions.
Eric we go back a long way 8 years and you have always been very supportive of me as superintendent. It is no secret that Eric has missed some meetings recently because of his workload but Neil said that Eric never stopped seeking input, calling him if there was a question, and certainly just because you weren’t at a meeting didn’t mean you were not on top of the issues being discussed during the day. Neil said that Eric and he have had a great relationship and said Eric would call him as ask what is happening here and what is happening there. Neil said one day we were sitting around the board room after you had been just named the Technology Chair of the subcommittee of the board after we had just been briefed on where we were and where we needed to be and you said, “This is a mom and pop operations.” Neil thinks Eric was surprised at the money we had and the size of our budget of where we were at the time. By our partnering with the Business Network, equipping our schools, adding more computer labs we are ready now for what is going to be the next generation of testing we certainly have come a long way and are very pleased with where we are. This wouldn’t have happened without all your help and assistance and I thank you for that.

Toni you came here when I was the Assistant Superintendent and your support behind the scenes and your encouragement has meant a lot to Neil personally. He doesn’t think people realize but it was just about the time Toni retired that we really put her to work. Every time we were ready to present a budget or policy we knew we could count on you and run it by your first. You were always there and we appreciate all the baked good and all the things you set up along the way. The time that you put in behind the scenes does not go unnoticed and we thank you for everything. Toni said she has worked with four superintendents, six different chairs and it was a privilege and an honor.

Neil said these jackets have now become a tradition. All board members now get a jacket which is just small token of our appreciation because for those of you who don’t know board members do serve without compensation and many times it is a thankless job. Neil thanked all three for their help and support.

Neil said Brenda Calderon and Bill Zacharia are at Yale University and they are encouraged to nominate their former teachers to be recognized by Yale University and the three teachers who were recognized are Holly Benedetti who is a guidance counselor, Emily Grosshuesch, a social studies teacher and Cassie Marcella, a music teacher all received the 2013 Yale Educator Award. As a teacher there is nothing like being recognized by a former student because that means you have really made an impact I their lives and that is what we are here for and we should never forget that. He congratulated those three teachers and said that is really quite an accomplishment.

Last week they had 19 students given onsite acceptance to The University of New Haven with the scholarship that is now in place the half tuition that we pay and some other incentive type scholarships which Neil believes is over $300,000.00 that our kids are eligible for should they attend UNH. This is a great opportunity for our kids. Mrs. Gardner sent Neil the news today that 15 students were accepted to SCSU so we are very proud of that. (Applause)
Tonight on the agenda is an $18,000.00 Immigrant Children and Youth Education Grant that Raffaela Frond had written and we are very pleased with this. We were also pleased that Governor Malloy released the second round of security grant money. In the first round we received about $30,000.00 and we are now fully funded because in the second round we received over $100,000.00. (Applause) In this year’s budget we put in a lot of money for security and this means that we will spend an additional $100,000.00 to make the schools more secure and we are looking into ways to do that.

On Friday the Governor announced $24,000,000.00 worth of technology grants and we are pleased to say, and I give all the credit to Anne Druzolowski and the Business Network for collaborating on that grant, we received almost $450,000.00 worth of grant money to upgrade our technology. We will update you on this during a future board meeting. The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives Report
Catherine DePino, Alice Obas and Jesus Yanez gave a report which is attached as (Schedule E) at the end of the minutes. Thanks were given to Superintendent Cavallaro for finding the funding to provide Theatre Workshop with a new lighting board. Neil says he knows it will be put to good use.

C.1.c. Board
Pat Libero can’t wait for the play It’s a Wonderful Life on December 5th, 6th, and 7th. She and Bob Guthrie went to the CABE Convention this weekend and it was very informative with a lot of good workshops. She will bring more information to the board.

Cebi Waterfield wanted to thank Toni, Dorinda and Eric as she was not originally elected to her position she was appointed in the middle of a term that someone was unable to fulfill and she didn’t get an orientation but all of you reached out to her and made her feel welcome and taught her the robes and what she should do. She wanted to thank each of them because they all brought something to her that she wasn’t aware of in the past. Whether we agreed or disagreed it was always in the manner that we thought was best for the kids and she appreciates them for inspiring her to do a good job.

Mark Palmieri said all four of us came on the board at one time or another together. He thanked Dorinda for always being an advocate for the children and having done a great job by asking a lot of questions, and always inquiring what is best for the kids. He thanked her.

Mark said that he and Eric came on together eight years ago and he said Eric was a huge part of getting the computers in order. When we first saw that we were still paying for computers that we were already thrown out Eric did a great job correcting this. We had quite a few discussions over the years but we always agreed to disagree and we always got along and I appreciate all your help and support over the years and the best of luck to you.
Mark said Toni mentored him a lot and he really appreciates all the help and support she has given him especially with our administration and making some very important decisions over the years for the children of this district. You have done a fantastic job and will surely be missed. We always counted on your for those daytime meetings and we thank you all so much and the best of luck to the three of you. (Applause)

Dorinda thanked the amazing, strong students of our district. She thanked the parents that come forward whether it is for coaching, PTA, volunteering or meetings not only on behalf of the children but for the parents who can’t come forward for some reason or another. She thanked them for always being there. She thanked the employees who put their heart and soul into the district; she sees this in every school and wherever she goes. She thanked the Superindent and administration and said we did not always agree but we had great healthy debates and always for a positive outcome with common goals. She thanked them for all their devotion and dedication. She thanked her fellow board members and said she knows we don’t share the same style but we share the same common goal and it has been a pleasure to serve with all of you and she wishes the new board members good luck and thanked them for serving.

Eric said as the board knows he is not a big talker but he really wants to thank the staff of the school system and the administrators. Eight years is a long time and he said he learned a lot and has given his thoughts to the board about how he feels and the administration. He is very fortunate to have served as a board member in this wonderful town. The people in this town are phenomenal; the students, the workers, the employees and he can’t say anything but good things about them. They try their best because they want their kids to be successful and we as board members all want the same thing for our children. He thinks Neil has done a great job and we have always had a great respect for each other and the same with Anne Druzolowski. My friends Mark Palmieri, Dorinda Borer and Toni Paine it has been a great eight years. He thanked the rest of the board and said he has known Bob Guthrie for many years and thanked all the board members.

Toni Paine went to the Veteran’s Day Ceremony at Pagels and it was absolutely beautiful. On Saturday she went to Quinnipiac University and there was a luncheon given for alumni and Stella Cretella was one of the people who were being honored that day. She was seated at a table where she didn’t know anyone and they made it a point and went on for about 15 minutes about the article they had read in the paper about the six students from West Haven who were acknowledged in the Register. They thought it was such a wonderful thing. It was such a feeling of pride to here this. We have the best students and the best teachers and as I said before it has been an honor and a privilege to have been able to serve and when you are elected to this position you cannot promise everybody that you are going to make decisions that everyone will agree with but you can promise that you will make the best decisions for the students in West Haven and I think I did try to do that. Thank you to everybody. Applause

C.1.d. Committee
Dorinda said we had a committee meeting before the board meeting and it was the Health and Wellness Committee and we reviewed the work of the Advisory Committee which is made up of Sodexo, PTA Council, Members from the PTA Council on the Health & Wellness Committee and the administration. This committee addresses issues like the quality of food and topics brought up by the parents about food services. Maybe we should have a union representative on this committee also. We also reviewed the Health and Wellness Committee. By state statute we are required to meet and review a certain amount of criteria. We reviewed the minutes of those meetings.

D.1. Approval of Minutes
D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on October 21, 2013 at 7:00 PM.
Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a
Toni Paine made the motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.
Pat Libero 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. Unfinished Business

13-123 AFSCME Local 2706 Grievance on behalf of Michele Sullivan regarding upgrade

Attorney Dugas spoke and explained what the grievance was about and gave the administrations’s position stating there was not a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Mr. Murphy explained the Union’s position. A very long discussion took place. It was stated that the Superintendent with the assistance of Attorney Dugas will continue to have a dialogue with the union in an effort to resolve this issue.
Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to deny the grievance.
Toni Paine made the motion to deny the grievance item #13-123
Bob Guthrie seconded the motion
Discussion: There was no further discussion.
Board Members denying the grievance were Mark Palmieri, Toni Paine, Pat Libero, Betsy Davis, Robert Guthrie and Cebi Waterfield
Board members in support of the grievance were Dorinda Borer and Eric Murillo
The Grievance Item #13-123 is denied.

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

13-125 Marcie Foulke, 194 White Street, Stratford CT 06615
Special Education Inclusions Teacher – Washington School
Effective Date: November 21, 2013
Salary: $43,904.86 (Step 5 BS + 30)

13-126 Patrick Toole, 64 Mohawk Drive, West Haven, CT 06516
Assistant Girls Basketball Coach – WHHS
Effective Date: November 7, 2013
Salary: $3,350

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.5. New Hire: (Certified) 13-125 & 13-126
Bob Guthrie made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
New Hire item 13-124 is approved

D.6. New Business

13-127 Immigrant Children and Youth Education Grant Application 2013 - 2014
Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.6. New Business: 13-127
Cebi Waterfield made the motion
Dorinda Borer seconded the motion
All board members present were in favor
New Business item 13-127 is approved

F. Informational

Eric Murillo thanked Marylou the board secretary for the great job she does. He couldn’t leave without thanking everyone for everything. Applause. Nothing more to add under informational

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn.
Bob Guthrie made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
Discussion:
The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola
Board Secretary