

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
March 1, 2010
Regular Board Meeting

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on March 1, 2010. The meeting was called to order by Howard Horvath, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Howard Horvath Jr., Chairman
T. Sean Maher, Vice Chairman
Eric Murillo, Secretary/Treasurer
Dorinda Borer
Patrick Egolum
M. Toni Paine
Mark Palmieri
Robert Saley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew DePalma

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Anne Druzolowski
Dave Cappetta, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Gypsy Garcia
Eric Pang
Brandon Patterson

Howard Horvath welcomed everyone to the West Haven Board of Education regular meeting for March 1, 2010. He then asked if anyone would like to address the board during public session.

B. Public Session

Dana Martinez, 485 Kelsey Avenue, West Haven, thanked the students of AMBIS, a club at WHHS, for all the work that they have done in translating documents that have been going home to the elementary schools. Gypsy Garcia has been very helpful to us. Dana is able to do the Spanish but they have had to call on students to do the Arabic and the Turkish so I wanted to take this opportunity to thank them for doing this on their own time. Sometimes at a moments notice I ask for something that I will need in the morning and they have been great about that. I also want to congratulate the students of AMBIS

because for the 5th year in a row we have received the school ethical education service learning grant and are able to provide foreign language instruction to elementary schools. Mr. Paolino at Thompson and Ms. Prisco at Pagels have been kind enough to invite us over to do this again; hopefully we will be at Haley as well. Special thanks also went out to Joe Winters who has agreed to provide busing at no cost.

The board gave thanks.

Richard Huston, Tyrell Lane, West Haven has a general question about Bailey Middle School just in general as far as bullying. There was a story on WFSB on February 11th. His son had a nervous breakdown in 7th grade. As soon as bullying was mentioned it seemed like we were put off and the principal didn't meet with us. We had a very difficult time and we are still trying to get my son back to health. He has a private tutor that the school has provided. He was so traumatized that he can not be in a classroom with other kids and we are still trying to figure out what happened. This is very upsetting and I think the Bailey Administration took advantage of us because we had a parent/teacher meeting set up for us and we became so upset at that meeting because it ran long and we didn't get to talk to a certain teacher. We have gone to several doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists. He is a great kid with many friends. Three of his friends from Bailey came and spent a lot of time with him trying to help him along. They didn't understand why these kids were picking on my son; verbal, physical and he is a sensitive kid and he didn't deserve that. We are trying to get him back into a classroom. We had the school pay for a private school for six months and we could not get him in the door. For two days we got him to the door and he was white as a ghost and that is why we cancelled the school. He was in the building one day and that was it he had a panic attack and had to run out. He didn't get a fair shake. He met with people from the state legislature. Something needs to change because something is wrong. He called the principal and he set up a meeting two days later; he was in his office with an emergency and didn't attend. The vice principal said do you really think this is school related? We didn't know what to do. Everyone has good intentions the teachers and administrators but not being able to talk to them to try to figure out what happened shouldn't be. I am trying to get a parent teacher meeting set up and if you guys (board) could help me because the governor said it is all you guys it has to go to you the board.

Howie Horvath said he appreciates him coming and will definitely make sure this happens. Neil Cavallaro asked him to call him tomorrow.

Mr. Huston stated he knows the principal didn't get there by being incompetent so he knows he has some redeeming qualities. He comes down hard on the principal but knows the vice principals are usually the disciplinarians. There were five kids that my son named with one or two kids in the middle of everything. Copies of the article were passed to board members.

The board gave thanks.

Patti Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Rd., West Haven reminded everyone that the dedication to Dr. John Karajanis is on Friday evening at 5:00 pm at WHHS. I know there is something on the agenda tonight that I hope you will approve. Dr. Karajanis has had so much influence on all of us. Probably 75% of the staff was either hired by him or worked with Dr. Karajanis. He was a big part of the district for 45 years and he is a wonderful man and a wonderful educator. I hope you will approve the item on the agenda and attend on Friday to show Dr. Karajanis just how appreciated he is. We are also collecting money for a scholarship the Dr. John Karajanis Award for Excellence in Physics. The pledge form is here if anyone is interested. This award will go to a student at our high school.

The board gave thanks.

Lou Persiani, 104 Martin Street wanted to remind everyone that Founders Day is March 10th. He is here to invite the board if they didn't receive an invitation. The doors will be open at 6:15 and we will be going right to the podium. Hope you all can attend.

The board gave thanks.

Nancy Rossi, 12 Robin Road, West Haven thanked Marylou Amendola for retrieving copies of minutes that were not available on the website. She did this very quickly and professionally. I will say that you guys get an A+ for FOI compliance from Neil's office on down and I do appreciate that because when I started coming here it was always a problem getting a document and now the compliance is excellent.

Last time I spoke briefly about the budget meeting and how it was the worst I had seen in ten years. I was chastised after the meeting stating I didn't do my homework and I was trying to micromanage the BOE. I have all the documents now so if anyone would like to look these are the budget meetings for the past eight years. There is one in particular January 14, 2004 when Jerry Calabritto was Chairman of the Board, John Carrano, Robert Guthrie were members. This meeting started at 7:00 p.m. and ended after 11:00 p.m. I was also accused of quoting meetings that happened after the mayor made his contract with the City Council but this clearly occurred in January as I stated. I am not trying to micromanage I do have a problem when things are done behind closed doors and I will always have that problem. It would be more advantageous to everyone if rather than meeting in groups of three or four, a couple at a time with the superintendent; it would be easier to do it in an open forum like it used to be done. Have a presentation like the one from last year from Neil with budget handouts. That is all I am asking for; transparency of government and if that is micromanaging than I am going to continue to micromanage because I think it is wrong for the public not to have a handle on this.

I also wanted to talk about a letter from the Superintendent to Mayor John Picard dated February 10, 2010 that was attached to the budget. It states we will not be adding any new positions to our employment ranks however there are several jobs that must now be covered in next year's budget that are currently being paid through the grants mentioned above (the stimulus money and the federal grants). I have come here repeatedly and asked what are we going to do when there is no money for this and was told then we cut

the position. Now it doesn't sound like we are cutting the position and I'm scared to death that teachers are going to be cut. I would rather see any new positions reduced rather than take the teachers out of classrooms or cut teachers or paras whose direct serve is to our children. I'm sure these positions that were created are worthwhile I'm sure that they are and if we had unlimited money we could do a lot more; unfortunately we don't and I think it is important we do something before....I hate when I hear the first line is the teachers because I don't want to see that I would rather see other things get cut.

The other thing I wanted to speak about was Public Portion in Special Meetings. There are no rules or laws about this and I would like to see this especially when you have a special meeting on a night when there is not a council meeting. There really is no reason why people can't have input before you do the voting as opposed to afterwards.

Lastly, I would like to echo what Patti Fusco said about Dr. K he is just the nicest, warmest, greatest teacher. He taught the gifted program at Molloy School when my sons went there. I do hope that you vote to dedicate the high school I think that would be a wonderful tribute to him.

The board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 7:15 PM

C. REPORTS

C.1. Administration

Neil Cavallaro stated that Buffy Rivera, Bailey PTA President would be speaking tonight. He wanted to thank AJ Palermo and Ann Valanzuolo for going to the PTA Council and making themselves available to discuss the new curriculum and kinds of initiatives we are doing that they have spearheaded along with Dr. Druzolowski. We have pledged to the council that we would get out to the schools and explain things so that people know what is going on in our school system. He thanked them again for giving up so many of their evenings and addressing the council.

We know that Joe Yacono has been out lately. We all wish him a speedy recovery. In his absence I want to thank Mike McGrath and Steve Messina for doing a great job of stepping up and helping with the snow removal especially on the weekends when we have so many different activities at the school. We brought Mike in days so we would have someone in charge of buildings and maintenance and we moved Steven out of his old position temporarily to supervise the custodians at night. They have done a very good job. Joe is returning today for 4 hours a day per his doctor so hopefully we will be able to move Steven back to his position because the stadium and field will be getting busy with spring sports.

We are now waiting for the Mayor on the budget but I want to reassure the board that we have been meeting as an administrative team and looking at various scenarios and what

we can do and what is essential. I pledge to you that we will not just wait and react to the Mayor's budget we want to be ready to go with several plans and options. Hopefully he will come through with some more dollars than we anticipate. We know it is going to be a difficult year but we feel we will be ready and come up with the best plan to keep providing what we believe is a quality education. His budget comes out on the 18th and then we will have our work cut out for us as a board. The administrative team has been working on this since January to the present time. He thanked Anne, the coordinators, Jolene Barnes, and especially Dave and his office for all the help they have given us and all the information that have provided.

At our last meeting we said we would invite a couple of PTA's per meeting and we invited Bailey and Carrigan's PTA to join us tonight but unfortunately Carrigan's PTA President was not able to attend. We did have a meeting at Carrigan a week or two ago. Buffy Rivera is here from the Bailey PTA and has been here several times before. If you have a presentation for us that is fine and if you have some questions for us that you would like us to look into we will try to help you as best we can.

Mrs. Buffy Rivera, President of the Bailey PTA, stated she resides at 9 Cowpen Road and has a presentation tonight. She also has a copy for Mrs. Amendola for the minutes. The presentation is attached at the end of the minutes.

The board thanked her for coming.

C.1. a. Status of Schools

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Eric Pang, Gypsy Garcia and Brandon Patterson began the report with activities taking place at the high school. He also stated that regarding the bathrooms there was a janitorial tour along with Mrs. Gardner and all problems like cracked toilet seats were repaired. There are five bathrooms open during school. There are two in the gym wing; 3 for girls and 2 for boys the bathrooms. If one is not open a custodian will open the one upstairs directly above.

Gypsy Garcia followed gave a great report on the free testing from Kaplan that 20 juniors took advantage of and the state DECA competition. Eric Pang concluded the presentation with information on the Rotary New Generations Conference and Suessical, the Musical and a new initiative WHHS will have for next year. The complete report follows at the end Mrs. Rivera's presentation.

The board gave thanks.

C.1. c. Board

Dorinda Borer said she attended the Carrigan PTA and coming up is WHHS this Wednesday at 7:00 PM, March 9th is Bailey at 6:30 PM and Molloy School on St. Patrick's Day. After attending meetings we do bring any concerns back to the board.

One of the issues that came out of the meeting at Carrigan was the perceived or sometimes existing rivalry or competition between schools particularly in the middle schools. Hopefully we can do something together about this situation. She stated she was very impressed with the Honors Program - a great job!

C.1. d. Committees

Rob Saley said when we sat down a month ago the Superintendent was looking at ways to save money. For example a group AFB which manages New Haven, Stamford and Trumbull would come in rearrange things and organize things to have everyone be the most efficient. After that meeting we discussed putting an RFQ out to see what other companies are out there to give us ideas on where we can save money and what the costs, if any, would be. This is just another way of addressing some of our cost savings measures.

Neil said we don't know where we want to go with this. There is a range of service that may not be available to us. Neil envisions the next step would be to get the board all of the qualifications of companies interested, conduct some interviews and then bring it to the board to see if it is something we want to pursue or not. We can't speak to that until we conduct the interviews or see the actual RFQs. Can we do it more efficiently and less expensively we are not sure yet because no one works for free and we understand we have to respect the union contracts that we have in place. We do need to explore any option we have to try and run our operation more efficiently and effectively.

Rob said Milford is kind of doing that and they are looking at a 5 year capital plan which is something else I want to tie into this project so we know where we will be in the next 5 years. Milford was looking at over 100M over the next five years. We need to address this as a board going forward for the future of the kids.

Dorinda said we don't know if this is an efficiency study or there will be a management company that will be managing.

Howie said what we have done is it's a request for qualifications so it is more just telling us who they are and what they have done. Based on that then there is a conversation with them to say OK – Rob interjected it's not just them it's for anybody who has qualifications but I would also like to tie in a facility study and maybe a 5 year capital plan. I think there are companies out there that could help us with subcontractors or can do this. In material I'm reading it states we actually do need our own people to be involved because those are the guys in the trenches every day.

Howie said would it be fair to say when that comes back and gets disseminated to us you will probably set up the public committee meeting to have these kinds of conversations. Rob responded yes with public input. Neil said we would conduct an interview first. Again our goal is to provide information to you. We will give you the qualifications but at this point we don't know. Howie said so you get it, you have a conversation and then we will have a meeting.

Eric said since you know they are doing this in New Haven, Stamford and Trumbull – I'm still not clear what they do.

Neil said it depends on the city. In Trumbull they actually are a facilities management group; they actually run it themselves. In New Haven they work with managers and supervisors to oversee an operation. I think it is similar in Trumbull. They actually oversee the custodians. They do anything from help with collective bargaining to oversee day to day what you put out like RFP's for work. They would put those kinds of packages together for you. Its not a one size fits all it depends on the needs of the particular system.

Eric said if you interview them you must know what the needs are. In New Haven they are sitting in on negotiations with the custodians. I don't know if we need them for that but it is a service they could provide us with. What we are lacking is when we have to put out an RFP we don't have the people in house that can get it all done. We have people with knowledge but to actually put those kinds of packages together so we can advertise, or set in place a capital improvement 5 year plan I think it is worth pursuing.

Eric asked who is on the committee to interview the companies. Rob said administration will have 2 people, the board will have 2 people, and my committee will have two people and Mike McGrath or a union person will sit in. The RFQ's have not had any responses as yet. Once that happens then we will sit down. They close on March 9th.

Dorinda asked them to explain to her the role between the BOC and Joe Yacono. When a decision needs to be made in a school like electrical things to be done or a boiler needs to be replaced who is making those decisions.

Rob said Joe Yacono is usually the top guy but if there is a problem at any of the schools the head custodian goes to the administration then to Shelley then to Joe and Mike. A big thing like boilers usually goes because it is an emergency thing and we don't have the personnel to do this usually goes to BOC on an emergency basis because the city does pay for it and they have to be involved in it.

Dorinda said so it if is not an emergency and is not major the decisions are not being made by the BOC? Rob said they shouldn't be but they are involved in a lot of the cost saving measures with the BOE like windows, lights, any major projects and emergency project they are involved with. A further discussion ensued. Dorinda asked if this was written anywhere so we can define what is major and who handles various areas. Rob began to explain and Mark Palmieri said he thinks he can make this real easy. What you're asking and what Rob is trying to explain is the reason we need this group. Neil said one of his concerns is that we can manage day to day and when something breaks we can get the guys out to fix it and Joe has a very good history and is on top of everything. What we would like to do is not only catch up but start doing some more long term planning. I feel that this is what we lack with our facilities. I would like to make the role of the BOC to be used for making recommendations for things like capital plans which

have to go before the city. I would like to get to the point where we are doing long term planning. With just the staff of Joe and Mike overseeing the custodians it is hard to stay current let alone plan five or six years down the road and that is a concern.

Rob said the city really should have their own CM or clerk of the works that is paid for by both the City and BOE. I have been advocating this for two years. Now if there is a problem that is the guy you go to.

Eric stated he wants to make sure we continue to work on this and thanked Rob for all his hard work.

Howie thanked him for all his efforts and he is the only one who has had a sub-committee meeting to your credit.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting held

February 1, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blake Bldg. (Enclosure)

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.

Mark Palmieri made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.a.

Sean Maher seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present voted in favor

No one was opposed

Motion Carries - Minutes are approved

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Facilities Committee Meeting held

February 1, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Blake Bldg. (Enclosure)

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.b

Mark Palmieri made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.b

Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: None

Mark Palmieri abstained

All remaining board members present voted in favor

No one was opposed

Motion Carries - Minutes are approved

D.1.c. Special Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole for finance to act on Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2010 – 2011 held

February 1, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the Blake Bldg. (Enclosure)

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.c.

Sean Maher made a motion to approve the Board of Education minutes D.1.c.

Eric Murillo seconded the motion

Discussion: None
Mark Palmieri Abstained
All board members present voted in favor
No one was opposed
Motion Carries - Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

10-11 James Mastriano, Baseball Coach - Bailey
Effective: February 2, 2010
Reason: Personal

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve D.2. Resignations Certified 10-11.
Toni Paine made a motion to approve D.2. Resignations Certified 10-11.
Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present voted in favor
No one was opposed
Motion Carries – D.2. Resignations Certified item 10-11 is approved

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

10-12 Barbara Demsky, Para Special Ed - WHHS
Effective: January 5, 2010
Reason: Personal

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve D.3. Resignations Non-Certified 10-12.
Mark Palmieri made a motion to approve D.3. Resignations Non-Certified 10-12.
Sean Maher seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present voted in favor
No one was opposed
Motion Carries – D.3. Resignations Non-Certified item 10-12 is approved

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Non-Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

D.6. New Hire: (Non-Certified)

D.7. New Business

10-13 Correspondence from Jim Celone and Rocky Tremblay on behalf of the Dr. John Karajanis Dedication Ceremony Committee requesting to dedicate West Haven High School in honor of Dr. John Karajanis Teacher, Friend, Colleague, Leader, Mentor

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve D.7. New Business item 10-13.

Mark Palmieri made a motion to approve D.7. New Business 10-13.

Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present voted in favor

No one was opposed

Motion Carries – D.7. New Business item 10-13 is approved

10-14 Correspondence from Rob Saley, Chairperson of the Facilities Committee, requesting to have the Building Oversight Committee put out bids to appraise the Blake Building and Stiles

Howie Horvath asked for a motion to approve D.7. New Business item 10-14.

Rob Saley made a motion to approve D.7. New Business 10-14.

Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: Eric Murillo would like clarification of the plan. Absolutely Rob said we are trying to set the wheels in motion and he would like to see a funding plan in place. He thinks we need to discuss the move again in more meetings during the next month. We want to go downtown but we need to know where the funding is coming from. We need the real value of the Blake Building and Stiles just to see it because if the state doesn't give us any reimbursement we need to have this money. Mark Palmieri said to get an appraisal and spend any money at this time – they really aren't our buildings once we lose them. I also don't like the fact that the first thing they want to do is sell – we have had Colonial Park, Giannotti, and the Armory where they city gives it up for certain amount today say 1M and then down the road the people that buy it from us sells it for 2M when we could have made that. I don't want to give up buildings that quickly but we only have a year and we should think this out. Appraisals to me mean nothing – you need someone who wants it to come and buy it from you that is the ticket. The appraisal is up to the city council once we give up a building and we are not occupying it for school purposes it is not our issue to be discussing it. Everybody is in agreement with the move to City Hall. We are still saving money if we go to Yale or let the council make the decision do you want us there do you want to save more money. I just don't think we should be spending money on appraisals.

Rob said we are getting a cost to do the appraisals we are not selling anything. I wanted both buildings in there because I need to show the council. Do we have to come up with any money, not that Rob is aware of. Then do it.

Howie said what we are looking for is to get some formal assessment of what the value is at least at this point and as you point out sometimes over time this changes.

Dorinda said when Ken was here didn't he say something about the cost being \$3,000.00 for the cost of the appraisals. Rob said that was just for this building and I'm trying to put in the Stiles building to try and help the city pay for everything.

Eric said right now we are just getting a cost of what the appraisal would cost. Yes. It is not costing us anything right now. Eric said maybe the two building will be worth more two years from now. So this gives us an idea or a figure that we can go back to whether it comes to us a year from now or it doesn't at least we know there is a dollar figure there.

Rob said he also spoke to Chairman O'Brien and Ken Carney about the façade of the City Hall because that is a part of us moving downtown. We will get something on the Council's agenda to discuss the façade, cost and possibly bid. Aschettino who has done the work to date is really the only guy who is qualified for the job. He would design it CM it and guarantee it. This is a part of the whole project.

Rob asked if something is put on our agenda it is just voted on. Neil said whatever a committee does you would be making a recommendation to the entire body so you can handle it any way you want to handle it. If you hold a committee meeting and make a vote and make a recommendation to the entire board you can do this. If you want to pass the information on and do it as a Board as a whole that is really the call of the actual board; but it can be done either way.

Howie said we had a motion and a second and a discussion.

All those in favor

All board members present voted in favor

No board member was opposed

Motion Carries –

D.7. New Business item 10-14 is approved

Dorinda said in light of reports on seat belt use in school busses can we have Winkle Bus give us a report on how many new buses will be coming in and what their thoughts are on this.

Neil said we will get you a copy of the actual bus contract stating the age of the busses and compliance. He offered copies to every board member.

Howie wanted to go back to Item 10-13 and make a quick comment. He thanked the board for their support. He knows everybody knows that Dr. Karajanis is a great man who has made this community better and made a significant contribution to its future so I wanted to say thank you. I also want to recognize Mr. Rocky Tremblay who is a member of the committee, Mr. Ron Conlan and Mrs. Patti Fusco. Thank you all again.

F. Informational:

Howard Horvath asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mark Palmieri made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Sean Maher seconded the motion

All members were in favor

The meeting ended at 8:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary

The information from Bailey PTA President, Buffy Rivera follows below along with the information from the three WHHS student representatives.