

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 2, 2016

**Regular Board Meeting
Board's Meeting Room**

The Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Board's Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut on May 2, 2016. The meeting was called to order by James Morrissey, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

James W. Morrissey, Chairman
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer
Patrick Leigh
Patricia Libero
Karen Pacelli
Mark Palmieri
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
Matt Cavallaro, Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairman Morrissey welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Teresa Heaney, 98 Cynthia Drive, spoke on behalf of the school counseling office. This Friday they are doing signing day which is an initiative that Michelle Obama started. Last year there were approximately 40 kids and this year we have 115 students who will walk across the stage and it will be announced where they will be going. Their families will attend and there will be a reception at the rink. All board members were given invitations and asked to attend. This is a great day for the kids celebrating who they are and what

decisions they have made to reach out and further their education. A gift will be dropped off to board members later this week. The board gave thanks.

Fran Lytwinnick, Vice President of the West Haven Federation of Teachers and School Nurses, 77 Court Street stated that all board members are invited to the May 4th walk in at Savin Rock School. This event is to promote public schools and public education. The event will start at 8:20 AM. After the program we will walk hand in hand to support public education. The program will be short and the walk in will follow. Refreshments will be served. The board gave thanks.

Public Session closed at 7:05 PM

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Neil said none of the student reps are here tonight because it is a busy time of year for them. Many are studying for their AP exams and there are a lot of activities going on. We have to congratulate Susie Beyl who has been accepted to Yale University. Susie has represented us in our community so well and at the State BOE and everywhere she has gone. We will do something for both the senior board members before they leave.

We sent a letter to Commissioner Wetzel stating our objection to New Haven charging for magnet school tuition. Eight area superintendents signed the letter. Legislation was presented and passed through the House of Representatives which bought us time as they have to give notice by the prior September. We hope to close any loophole in that legislation. Neil thanked many people for their help with this including Susan Misur, Jody Goeler the Superintendent of Hamden who worked his delegation hard and our state delegation was very instrumental in co-sponsoring the language as were many other area legislators including some from New Haven. Passing the burden off to other area communities doesn't solve the problems. Neil thanked Susan, Jody Goeler, our state legislation and a lot of area legislators for the work they did to prevent this as we were looking at approximately a \$750,000.00 tuition bill had it passed in its original form the first year. We are pleased with the outcome for this.

Superintendent Cavallaro clarified what a non-meeting is. You can have a non-meeting for the purpose of discussing where we are with a given negotiation. We are currently in negotiations with the cafeteria workers at our elementary schools for almost a year. There is a long history that we want to bring you up to date on before we reach an agreement. We will discuss this with you in two weeks. This is permissible through FOI. Chairman James Morrissey asked that the attorney give us something in writing about this. Neil agreed he would do this.

Superintendent Cavallaro said the City Council must pass a budget or if they don't the Mayor's budget will go in by default by Thursday night at midnight. They are facing a lot of unknowns right now. What the state does with a final budget passage certainly can impact the city's budget and ultimately our budget. We have been assured by Jim

O'Brien that they will do everything they can to not touch that bottom line that the Mayor has allocated towards us. However there are some unknown factors that may or may not happen in the next three days. By charter the council does have to pass that budget by Thursday at midnight.

Superintendent Cavallaro said that the agreement with AFSCME is one of the most gratifying deals that we were able to reach because there were no formal negotiations, no proposals and none of the formalities of a negotiation. This was a lot of conversation over the last year in a half of understanding the board's needs and the city's financial situation as well as to what we could do to help protect our employee's jobs. Neil feels that this package accomplishes this. We were able to save money and if this package is approved tonight we will save the money we put aside to go into negotiation which is about \$140,000.00 and there will be some employees who will retire and we can either not fill those positions or fill them with part time workers for additional savings. In next year's budget we can save between \$250,000 and upwards of \$300,000 with the agreement we have. More importantly everyone's job is going to be protected. The opportunity to retire is available and a good handful are going to take advantage of it and we are not forcing people to retire. Neil thanked all the members of AFSCME who were in attendance and he feels we did something good for the BOE and the city of West Haven and we did it together as a team. Teresa got an 89 to 2 vote and that is probably the highest vote percentage we have ever had and that says something about the agreement and I congratulate her and everyone here tonight with this agreement.

Dr. Anne Druzolowski said it is an exciting time of the year with the Arts, Graduation and all the other activities at the end of the school year. The Fine Arts Festival takes place on May 4th between 5:00 PM and 7:30 PM at the Savin Rock Conference Center for grades K-12. Part of this also includes band and chorus wherever possible so you have a little bit of everything. On the 5th from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM is the Pre-K and it is the area readiness providers and our own Pre-K Programs Fine Arts Festival. We had to split it up in order to display everything this year. On May 11th between 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 PM there will be a luncheon at Mackrille and Forest. Mackrille beat the state average in terms of closing the gap as well as the district so they are on the top of the heap. Forest beat the district average. All of the schools increased their scores. More information will be explained the next time we meet. You are invited to attend one luncheon or both and if it is not possible we understand. This is a luncheon for the teachers and the staff for this great award. There are only 84 schools in the state that received the School of Distinction and Mackrille is one of them. On May 12th Mackrille has been invited to be a speaker at Success Symposium 2016 from Connecticut Schools Achieve and this is a great honor only 6 schools have been selected in this part of Fairfield and New Haven County. This is one of many invitations our district will be getting over the next few years for all of the hard work they did to move these scores in the right direction. During the next board meeting on the 16th Dr. Druzolowski stated she will be presenting more about the gap and the data and showcase the data from Mackrille and Forest so you can see what this means through examples.

Mr. Hankey has created an opera so kids learn about the storyline behind opera. It was a great performance and the kids participate in the opera. It was a great performance. The art and music teachers create the costumes for the opera and the musical instruments. It is about a 30 minute opera and the kids understand everything that is going on. This is the second year and Mr. Hankey will continue to work with us and bring the opera to us again next year.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

There were no student reps at tonight's meeting. Chairman Morrissey said Susie Beyl is being honored tonight at the Westies Care Dinner. He also stated that getting into Yale is a great accomplishment.

C.1.c. Board

Mark Palmieri said that Wednesday night they are honoring Thomas "Tinker" Blake and naming the women's press box in his honor. Tinker has been a loyal Westie for many years. It would be nice if some of the board members could attend this.

Rosa Richardson has visited Mackrille, her adopted school, and they will be sponsoring a luncheon mid-May which she will be attending and she has been relatively busy with BOE functions.

Pat Libero attended Little Miss Westie and there were 41 girls involved in what was an all-day event. The kids were great and all dressed up; it was a lot of fun. She also went to High School Musical Jr. at Bailey. It is amazing what you see some of these kids do; it was a lot of fun. It is nice to see that arts are alive and well and hopefully next year she will attend the opera; Mr. Hankey is a great guy.

Susan Walker attended the Honor Society Induction at the high school with many of the board members; Susie Beyl was in it and Andrew Gordon and Evelyn Fabian were inducted into it that night. It was very impressive and very well done. Last week she attended the jazz concert at the high school which was fabulous. The Bailey Band, which is run by Rachel Mekeel, led it off and those children have to come after school once a week to practice and you would easily think they were a high school jazz band. Cassie Marcella's high school jazz band was fantastic as always. Phyllis Silver brought two of her choirs that night for a fantastic performance. It was a great evening. It was not like attending a school function it was like going to a concert that you pay big money for they were so good.

Bob Guthrie attended the National Honor Society Induction along with many of his fellow board members. He also attended Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Outlet Store that some of our elementary schools put together. Bob also attended the Disney High School Musical Jr. presentation at Bailey and stated that we have some very talented kids between these two productions. We as a board need to do everything possible to support and encourage this growth in our students. Bob thanked Superintendent Cavallaro and all the Superintendents who actively brought attention to the New Haven Magnet School Tuition Proposal. He also thanked our state delegates and those legislators who

supported House Bill 5553. This is something we will stay on top of going forward as a board and as a region.

Chairman Morrissey also attended the National Honor Society Induction at the high school and wanted to congratulate the students for all their hard work and stated that we are very proud of them. Chairman Morrissey said financially it was a difficult year this year and we want to make sure that we fund education properly. We did a good job with this and worked really hard as a team and he thanked the superintendent and the board for their hard work over the last several months. We don't believe there will be any more cuts by the city council as far as education and that is a great thing.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we will give you an update shortly on where we stand. Assuming the board passes the retirement package tonight we will have a better idea of where we stand and we will present to you a proposed budget which the board can adjust and make some changes. It won't be radically different than what we had passed.

Chairman Morrissey said we have a policy that there is no smoking on school property and he has spoken with Superintendent Cavallaro about this policy and he stated he can't wait to get on this and you will have his full support. Jim stated when he goes by the rink there are people in the front of the rink who are smoking and when you go to the field it is the same thing. He would like the Superintendent to send a letter to the principals to reinforce the policy and have this stepped up for the next school year. There is a sign on the front of the rink on the sidewalk stating no smoking and people are standing next to it dropping their cigarette butts. Chairman Morrissey wants a strong message sent out that this policy will be enforced.

Mark Palmieri added that he had the privilege and honor of being appointed to the New High School Building Committee by the Mayor. There have been two meetings and Mrs. Gardner is also on the committee along with all new members. They had the representative from CREC, the Project Manager Paul Antinozzi, and the architect from Turner there to bring us up to date. We will have a few more meetings but they are really looking at 2017 to get the shovel in the ground. The building will be torn down to the metal girders (studs) and the main problem was that they were going to encapsulate the asbestos and at the time he felt this was just prolonging a nightmare. Now they are going to eliminate all the asbestos and it will be renovated as new. There are a lot of good things happening and we just pray and hope that this will come true someday. Mark will keep the board informed of what is taking place during the meetings.

Rosa Richardson also participated in the CAFE Leadership Institute which was a four week course (4 hours each week) from 4:00PM – 8:00PM. She has learned and grown so much and wants her fellow board members to know that there are a lot of opportunities through CAFE for us and we should take advantage of those opportunities; it was really a great program.

Pat Libero questioned what the consequence would be on the No Smoking Policy. Superintendent Cavallaro said he and Jim had this conversation and he spoke with Jon Capone and we have security guards and pay police officers for over-time events to monitor those games and they have to be more diligent and go outside in the cold weather

and let people know they can't smoke or if they leave the rink they will have to buy a new ticket. There are certainly things we can do to enforce this. Pat just didn't want principals to have to be going out and monitoring the smokers. Neil thinks this occurs more at sporting events. It is important that everybody follows the rules.

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 March 21, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Rosemary Russo seconded the motion

Discussion:

Pat Libero abstained as she was not present for this meeting. All other board members present were in favor.

Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

16-17 Meaghan Vestergaard, Physical Education Teacher - SRCS

Effective: June 30, 2016

Reason: Personal

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.2. Resignation #16-17

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Pat Libero seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-17 is approved

16-18 Marcie Foulke, Elementary Teacher - SRCS

Effective: June 30, 2016

Reason: Personal

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.2. Resignation #16-18

Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the minutes

Karen Pacelli seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-18 is approved

16-19 Cynthia Evangeliste, Science Teacher – Bailey

Effective: June 30, 2016

Reason: Retirement

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.2. Resignation #16-19

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Patrick Leigh seconded the motion

Discussion: Susan Walker stated that she had worked for 38 years in the school system mostly at Bailey and Giannotti before that. Neil said she did a terrific job in her last year teaching a new subject. This year she switched to science after teaching health for the majority of her time.

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-19 is approved

16-20 Robbin Pierz, Family Consumer Science Teacher – WHHS

Effective: June 20, 2016

Reason: Personal

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.2. Resignation #16-20

Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

Discussion: Rosemary is sorry to see any teacher resign and leave and wishes them luck but she is particularly concerned about this position being open in the fall because it is a tech ed position. We are talking about 200 students a year who have this course.

Rosemary finds this concerning and hopes that this position is filled as quickly as possible.

Rosemary Russo abstains. All other board members were in favor

Item 16-20 is approved

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

D.4. New Business

16-21 West Haven Board of Education and AFSCME Council 4, Local 2706 Settlement Agreement

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to approve D.4. #16-21

Mark Palmieri made the motion to approve item 16-21

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

Discussion: Chairman Morrissey stated that Neil said the vote on this was 89 to 2 so as long as the rank and file is happy with the agreement it is fine with him also. We will certainly support this agreement.

All board members present were in favor

Item 16-21 is approved

Chairman Morrissey asked for a motion to adjourn.

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Rosemary Russo seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary