

**WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**January 22, 2019**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**Board Meeting Room**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on January 22, 2019 in the Board Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman  
Robert Guthrie, Vice Chair  
Susan Walker, Secretary/Treasurer  
Lauren Aceto  
Patrick Leigh  
James W. Morrissey  
Karen Pacelli

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Patricia Libero  
Rosa Richardson

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:**

Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools  
Matt Cavallaro, Finance Director

**CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Mayor Nancy R. Rossi

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRESENT:**

Brendan Carew  
Sumedha Chowdhury  
Julia Walker

Chairwoman Russo said before we start public session there is an item to add. Bob Guthrie wanted to add item 19-06 to tonight's agenda under D.3. New Hire Certified.

**Nathan Wojtyna**, 200 Regan Road, Vernon, CT 06066  
Position: Science Teacher – Bailey Middle School  
Salary: \$45,333.00 Step 1 BS + 30  
Effective: To be determined

Karen Pacelli seconded this

Discussion: Superintendent Cavallaro said this helps us out a lot as we had two openings at Bailey and this is a certified science person and we are eager to get him on board. Thank you.

All board members were in favor of adding this to the agenda. No one was opposed. Item 19-06 is added to the agenda.

## **B. Public Portion of Meeting**

Chairwoman Russo asked if anyone would like to address the board.

Jessica Robinson, 138 Winslow Drive is a junior at West Haven High School. She has two major concerns regarding the new schedule for next year. First and foremost the school is going through a lot of changes and will continue for several years to come. The new building, new principal and new schedule is a lot to take in for many students at West Haven High. As an AP student I realize how packed the curriculum is to prepare for the National Exam in May. As the schedule stands currently AP teachers rush to jam every piece of information in our school year to best prepare each student for success. She is worried that the new scheduling will force extremely rushed unions and students will have difficulty doing well in the national exam. She thanks everyone for listening to her views on block scheduling and hope for the best for each student that is in preparation for college. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo asked if anyone else would like to address the board.

Toni Paine, 7 Woody Crest said she has a question and a concern. Is the federal government shut down going to affect the aid for the reduced and free lunches and if so is there an alternate plan? Superintendent Cavallaro hasn't heard anything but will check with Meg tomorrow morning and will get back to you. Dana said she spoke with Meg and she said no. OK. Toni thanked Dana. Dana said that was this past Thursday anyway. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo asked if anyone else would like to address the board three times. There were no other speakers. Public Session closed at 6:07 PM.

## **REPORTS**

### **C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools**

Superintendent Cavallaro said with the scheduling Dana is in the process of meeting with various students and student groups to give them a better explanation of the schedule as well as address any concerns. Once this is complete we will have a full report for the board. Dana said she has met with the BOE student representatives and they will be touching on this in their report this evening. There will be a full report to the board once all the kinks are worked out.

Superintendent Cavallaro said before turning the presentation regarding the budget over to Matt to answer any specifics in each of the major subject categories, he wanted to talk about the budget highlights on things we are asking for which we have talked about for a long time. This is Neil's 11<sup>th</sup> budget presentation to the board. We have had years with flat funding and we have had years with very little increases. This is one of the smallest increases he has ever presented to the board prior to any discussions with the city. The reason we were able to come in with such a low number is because of the negotiated

agreements between the teachers, paraprofessionals and nurses; all of whom have taken freezes and have changed their medical benefits so we are able to ask for some things which we have put off for a long time because of this. Even though this is Neil's budget that he is presenting these are discussions that we have had over the last couple of years and are priorities which he has heard from the board during CABA meetings, and in some discussions at board meetings or individually with board members.

#### Budget Highlights

- . Additional Security Guards
- . Leasing program to increase technology in our schools
- . Leasing program to replenish our maintenance fleet (trucks)

We have come up with three main areas and because we didn't have to ask for any additional money for salaries these are concerns that need to be addressed and the second bullet is really the most important one.

#### **Leasing program to increase technology in our schools**

We have all agreed that we have not put the money into the infrastructure to upgrade our technology for a long period of time. We had the first round of a technology grant from the state when they went over to the SBAC testing and there was supposed to be a second round but that never materialized and we have not put a lot of money into that. We feel the equipment we have is in drastic need of improvement. We have heard from the Business Network Group and from teachers that we are slow and we need to make sure that our kids have the right tools in their hands to be competitive and more prepared as they go through the school system and more importantly when they leave. We are asking for money to enter into a leasing program which we feel is the most economical way to go where we can implement a program where we would constantly be turning over programs being on a 3 or 4 or 5 year cycle. A lot will depend on what we are able to set aside. We would love to do the elementary schools first and work our way up but it may be a grade or two grades based on the money we receive at our final budget. Based on discussions with the board technology is a priority for all of us and is something we really need to advocate for.

#### **Additional Security Guards**

We have discussed security at our buildings and we have one school resource officer or two patrolling the elementary schools and unless you have one at every building it is not going to make a difference. In January we are not saying to replace we are saying in addition to what we already have. Currently we have one resource officer that covers the six elementary schools and we are asking for one security guard per building and an additional one at Bailey because of the way the building is designed with the two wings and the addition and the hallways we can use another one there as well and also to help with the cafeteria. A police officer would be our preference in all of the buildings but you are looking at \$60,000 a person compared to \$30,000 a person and the reality is we don't know if we can afford them and we don't know if the police department could supply them. Right now we are asking that each building be staffed with a security guard during school hours who is not armed. Questions were asked and responded to.

### **Leasing program to replenish our maintenance fleet (trucks)**

Pictures were sent to board members of the fleet which is in pretty poor shape. We have asked Chris Everone come tonight to talk about what our needs are. We really haven't decided whether the best way to go is a lease program or a purchase program. We thought if we could buy a couple of trucks at the end of this year and purchase a couple next year that may make a little more sense than leasing. Chris and I were not sure if we would take a beating on a lease just because of the wear and tear on a particular vehicle so it may make more sense to purchase the vehicle. Chris Everone said primarily we need to replace some trade vehicles so everyday vehicles our tradesmen drive can be used. Two are out of service because they are not safe and are kept at Malloy. That is two we need to replace. Our plow trucks sit most of the year and are in OK shape and can be replaced down the road. In the grand scheme it is the everyday trade vehicles that need to be replaced to keep our workers safe when driving from school to school because they are in rough shape. Our newest vehicle is a 2008 van that our tradesmen drive right now besides the two Ford Escapes we got back in 2014 and food service drives one of those. We are also looking to replace the food service van which is in rough shape.

Superintendent Cavallaro said the good news on that is we have a surplus in food service and the money we make in food service has to go back so we are looking onto purchasing a refrigerated vehicle with the money we have from food service. Food service will pick up some of the expense of the new cafeteria furniture but we still have enough. There are a couple of other things an oven at one of the schools and a dishwasher at one of the schools. We are hoping to purchase the van in a short amount of time but that is because we are doing very well in the food service department and that money has to be kept in a separate account and go right back into food service. We will look into both options of purchasing or buying depending on what the final budget actually is. A discussion about purchasing or buying vehicles took place. Questions were asked and responded to.

Matt Cavallaro said the total over-all increase of this budget is a little over 1.2M or 1.33% over last year's budget. The proposed budget is \$91,200,421 and is broken down to \$177,100 in contractual raises, a little over \$370,000 in benefits, and in operations \$689,031. This is how the money is allotted and you can see that basically our entire budget is salaries and benefits. Matt discussed the budget for the BOE's 884 employees. Tuition – Special Ed Tuition with an increase of \$138,770 more than last year. This has been something the MARB has keyed on, the funding of Special Ed Tuition basically the Excess Cost Grant, but it is also important for us to do our part and not just rely on State Funding and to increase that line item to keep up with the cost of educating the most needy children in this district. Special Education costs represent 27% of the total operating budget and include costs in tuition, transportation and salary categories. The Excess Cost Grant is no longer booked as revenue in the City Budget and will be used to offset special education tuition costs. There is no projected cost for Transportation this year but will increase by 2% for 2020-2021. Matt discussed Health Benefits & Fixed Charges, Operation of the Plant, Purchased Services where there was no increase for fiscal year 2019 - 20, Instruction, the ECS Grant vs. Local Funding which is starting to get closer to a 50/50 split which is desired. Questions were asked and responded to. The complete budget is on the website. The board gave thanks. Bob Guthrie commented that he thought the 1.33% is just an incredibly responsible budget to present and hopefully move forward with.

### **C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report**

The report will be found at the end of the minutes.

### **C.1.c. Board**

Bob Guthrie attended the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Spelling Bee and he thanked the PTA Council and the Bailey PTA and Carrigan PTA for donating gifts or gift cards for our students. He thought it was nice that it was dedicated to former PTA Council President and Councilman Ralph Eberle which was a nice touch. Bob also attended CAGE's Legislative Breakfast where they talked about the unfunded mandates armed vs unarmed security guards and they also brought up for those officers that you are looking to bring back on municipal retirement that they cannot exceed more than 20 hours in a week. Some of the smaller districts were asking the legislators to change that because they have to bring on double the amount of bodies than they actually need so they don't exceed the 20 hours. Superintendent Cavallaro said that is interesting and he still thinks it is better to subcontract a service like that because they also add to the liability and insurance factor. In those kinds of things hiring outside as opposed to the BOE going into the security business.

Mayor Rossi wanted everybody to be aware that at one of the smaller MARB Meetings when they came on site they will be requesting a more in-depth view of the BOE Budget this year as opposed to just the simple thing. They are going to want some sort of presentation and Q and A and that type of thing and they have some new members already so that is going to be one of their requests. Mayor Rossi just wanted to let the BOE know ahead of time. Superintendent Cavallaro said we will be ready.

Chairwoman Russo thanked everyone in the audience for coming and said it is nice to see the turnout.

### **C.1.d. Committee**

#### **D.1. Approval of Minutes**

**D.1.a.** The **West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting** was held at West Haven High School, 1 McDonough Plaza, West Haven, CT on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 4:30 PM. This was the tour of the construction site.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes D.1.a.

Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the minutes

Karen Pacelli seconded the motion

Discussion: Rosemary Russo abstained as she was not present during the meeting

All other board members present were in favor

Minutes are approved

**D.1.b.** The **West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting** was held in the Board's Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.b.  
Karen Pacelli made the motion to approve the minutes  
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members were in favor  
Minutes are approved

**D.2. Resignations**

**D.3. New Hire: (Certified)**

Item 19-06 was added to tonight's agenda during the meeting by a unanimous vote of board members present.

**19-06 Nathan Wojtyna**, 200 Regan Road, Apt 36D, Vernon, CT 06066  
Position: Science Teacher – Bailey Middle School  
Salary: \$45,333.00 Step 1 BS + 30  
Effective: To be determined

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 19-06  
Patrick Leigh made the motion  
Karen Pacelli seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members were in favor  
Item 19-06 is approved

**D.4. New Business**

**19-04 Appointment of Dana Paredes to Principal of West Haven High School**

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 19-04  
Karen Pacelli made the motion  
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion  
Discussion: Jim Morrissey thanked the Superintendent for recommending Dana to be the next Principal of West Haven High School. Dana is a true Westie through and through. She went through the school system of West Haven starting at Washington then Carrigan and West Haven High School. Jim has had many questions and concerns and every time he talked with Dana she had good answers and she is tremendously thought of by the staff and students. His oldest daughter had Dana as a teacher freshman year and she loved her as a teacher and always spoke highly of her. Jim is so proud that we will name you Principal of West Haven High School tonight. There is not a day that goes by that we don't think of Pam Gardner but Jim is sure she is looking down from heaven tonight with a big smile on her face. Congratulations and this is an honor you certainly deserve. Dana thanked Jim. The board thanked Jim. Applause  
Chairwoman Russo wanted to quote from Neil's letter of recommendation for Dana the one paragraph that really stood out. There is no one more prepared to meet the challenges

that lie ahead of us including the transition to the renovated school, and no one more dedicated to seeing that all students attending that school have the opportunity for success. Chairwoman Russo thanked Dana for all her work and said we look forward to more great things from her. Dana thanked her and she looks forward too. Chairwoman Russo said we will have a vote; all in favor  
All board members were in favor; no one was opposed  
Congratulations Dana  
Item 19-04 is approved Applause

#### **D.4. New Business Continued**

##### **19-05 Discussion and possible action on Superintendent's recommended 2019 – 2020 budget**

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 19-05  
Karen Pacelli made the motion  
Patrick Leigh or seconded the motion  
Discussion:  
All board members were in favor  
Item 19-05 is approved

Chairwoman Russo said the rest is informational but there is one point under informational F.8. the Superintendent's Mid-Year Reflection which we all received a copy of in the mail and she wondered if there were any comments. Bob Guthrie thanked both the Board Chair and the Superintendent for getting back to this schedule. Obviously he is the only employee that the Board of Ed is responsible for hiring so to get back on track both to setting goals and evaluating goals is in the board's interest and the Superintendent's best interest going forward. The board gave thanks. Superintendent Cavallaro said this actually does help focus and the conversation we started back in August stays in the forefront of your mind and it does give you something to work towards. Hopefully you saw this in the status report that was provided to you. Chairwoman Russo said she told Superintendent Cavallaro that she thought his reflection was very thorough and really good. She particularly liked his goal 2 and goal 3 reflections and thinks it is important for everyone to keep in mind and we touched on it briefly tonight with the budget. We really need some capital improvements and we really need more trucks added, we need security; we need lots of things so it is not going to always work to fix the roof of a one hundred year old building and we need to make and start advocating for these changes within our school system. Rosemary knows money is tight but we really need to look down the road at all the school buildings. The other one is the Director of Communication which we touched upon briefly. She gives everyone kudos and thinks it is great that Neil has guided the students and the website is looking much better than it has in a long time. Chairwoman Russo does think we need some type of communication but thinks that everyone has really stepped up and helped out during this time. Neil said including the students they really have helped us. The board gave thanks.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn.  
The motion was made by Karen Pacelli  
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion  
The meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola  
Board Secretary



**BOE Student Rep Report**

**January 22, 2019**

1. Today is the first day of the third marking period.
2. Yesterday was MLK Day. We hope everyone had a nice day off and reflected on Dr. King's legacy.
3. All four days this week are half-days for the high school so that the staff can design the end of the year assessments.
4. Mr. Westie is on February 1<sup>st</sup> from 6pm to about 8pm. Tickets will be \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door.