

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
April 2, 2012
Regular Board Meeting
Council Chambers

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on April 2, 2012. 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
Patrick Egolum
Robert Guthrie
Eric Murillo
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
David Cappetta, Director of Finance
Matt Cavallaro, Grant Internal Auditor

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Abdul-Rasak Zachariah

Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone to the Regular Meeting of the West Haven Board of Education.

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Mark Palmieri stated the public portion is open and asked if anyone like to address the board.

Patricia Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Road, West Haven, CT said she is proud to announce that Sandy McCauley a nurse at Washington School and President of the Federation of Nurses was nominated for an AFT Everyday Hero Award. Patti sent an email to everyone requesting they vote for Sandy. She is an excellent choice and does so much for the community besides her work at Washington School and our district.

Patti updated everyone on the Governor's Budget. At the time of the budget meeting the 1.5 Million Dollars had come out of education as 1.3 Million Dollars. When it went to appropriations it came out that all the extra money would be divided among all the school districts so we really have to keep our eyes on this because it is going to require that we really push the City Council to give you extra money because otherwise you have \$500,000.00 right now.

The board gave thanks.

Sean Maher, 403 Center Street stated the following. Tonight you will vote to approve the resignation of Ginny Bauer as Assistant Director of Student Services. Were that it were possible to vote this down and make it impossible. While there are many, many incredible teachers and administrators in our system, losing Ginny is losing a pearl in our oyster. Her dedication and devotion to our student body as well as her steadfast energy and ideological approach to education is exactly what we need in the system, and it is what we risk losing.

She has taken her dedication to special education and made it work 200% for the WH system as well as lending her amazingly creative heart and imagination to the arts for WH. Am I biased, of course, but it is the passion that Ginny embodies that is what we need.

It is with DEEP regret that I witness us losing Ginny, but I am sure her dedication and passion will continue to inspire and benefit many students of her new district and students everywhere.

While I know that the administration is working as hard as possible to keep the best of the best...it is important that those that need to know, are aware that without staying competitive, we risk losing those that are the best. We wish Ginny Godspeed in her new position.

The board gave thanks.

Chairman Palmieri asked three different times if anyone else would like to address the board. There were no other speakers and the public session closed at 7:08 PM.

C. REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro said it is a coincidence that we have Ginny here tonight making her presentation. Ginny is a great loss and he echoed Sean's sentiments about Ginny and

wishes her nothing but the best in her new position. Sean made some really valid points. When you do well financially, contractually in negotiations you run the risk and we definitely need to be competitive to attract the best and the brightest and not only the administrators in our district but also the teachers.

Neil said we are looking forward to Ginny's presentation and knows this is something she believes in and is not part of the normal scope of her job but she has a passion for technology and has done a lot with it in the Special Ed area.

Ginny Bauer said she was here tonight to share the results of the recent survey that was conducted with parents and students regarding a possible BYOD bring your own device policy here in West Haven. A survey was conducted to see what the needs of the district were involving technology in the classroom. This survey took place during the week of March 19th through the 23rd. Parents from K-12 on participated in the survey through the school messenger system and students at Carrigan, Bailey and WHHS were given paper copies of the survey and asked to complete it and hand it back during class time. All surveys were anonymous and the data was compiled by Central Office.

Out of all the households contacted 4,344 total 1,473 households participated in the survey and 2,871 did not respond about 1/3rd of the households participated in the survey. The survey was set up to contact each number four times between the hours of 5:30 and 7:30 on Tuesday, March 20th. From those that responded the data showed support of the BYOD Policy. Approximately 87% of the households reported as owning portable technology with 13% reporting they do not own any. A further discussion took place

Patti Fusco has put the entire survey (Parent's Results and Student's results) on the West Haven Website.

Questions

Bob Guthrie asked where we go from here. Ginny said the committee would gather to review the results and determine where we go from there. Neil agrees and thinks we would start putting some of our concerns down on paper so we can develop the policy. Neil mentioned a workshop from CAFE that might be informative to board members, administrators and committee members and he will send out the information.

Bob asked if there was a hope of instituting this in September with a target audience. Neil said that would be our hope. From the survey it appears that kids have access to the technology.

This seems to be a really popular subject and we received a call from Channel 8 based on the article in the Register today and it seems a lot of other districts are studying this.

Eric Murillo asked exactly what the children will be using the smart phone for. He would like some ideas on this. Ginny talked about this from the perspective of Special Ed. We talked about starting at the high school level with E-readers allowing the student to utilize

their smart phone or the iPad for utilizing access to their books. In terms of special education there are APS from the iPhones, the iPod, and the iPad for enhancing learning for special education students and communication. We started from a small target audience to a larger one in terms of digital books and access. We haven't really gotten into specifics because the committee felt the survey needed to happen first. Now after the survey we can go back and answer those questions.

Neil said we all felt we didn't want to put kids who didn't have that access at home at a disadvantage.

Eric asked if this was to only be utilized for Special Education children. No Ginny was speaking from her background. Neil said there are school districts where all textbooks are now being delivered on Kindles etc. Eric said if you are going to supply readers laptops I understand but you can only read so much on a Smartphone. You might waste time opening up the AP and trying to find what you are looking for. My concern is do we have enough funding of money and enough supplies and hardware for these children. Neil said that was the purpose of the survey and it looks like kids have access to something at least for now. We are hoping that down the road because of the high number of students that have access it will make it easier for us to supply those that don't. Neil said we need to proceed cautiously with this.

The board thanked Ginny for her excellent presentation.

Neil stated that the board asked that we look into an Early Retirement Plan during the last meeting. Dave and Matt presented the plan that was offered in the past. Neil said it is not to say that we couldn't alter this or do something different with it but we wanted to give you an idea of what the actual start up cost would be.

Matt said the first thing was to decide which plan they would like to issue. They decided to use a 3 year service plan and the goal would be to have 10 teachers retire.

Neil said you have to put this out to all certified personnel both teachers and administrators but you can cap it once you decide to offer it.

To buy three years of service from the State the district would have to pay 159% of the candidate's salary. A further discussion took place. Basically the reasons why this plan doesn't work for our situation is that we would need to replace the retiring teachers to maintain the classroom size we have and because of the lack of funds to make the payment to the state with our budget being so tight. To actually carve that much money out of the budget when we are not saving anything offering this plan would not be possible. Patti Fusco put the presentation on the West Haven Website for everyone to see.

Questions

Pat Libero stated she thought when someone took early retirement they didn't get severance. Neil said that is negotiable.

Bob Guthrie said on the previous plan he agrees there was questionable savings on year one but how did years 2 – 5 project out. He thinks we are being given a great capsule of year one but would like to see a reflection of the following years. Dave said the payment stays the same and the new teacher's salary continues to rise so there is minimal savings going forward which is not anything to counteract the loss that we have seen since year one. Dave said the fact that we have to replace the teachers puts this plan as non-suitable to us. If we could do the plan and not replace the teachers then it would be a win for us but the fact that we have to put teachers back into those positions each year really costs us more.

Bob agrees that on our own we would probably not be able to fund this upfront it would certainly have to be a cooperative effort from the City Council and the Mayor's Office but there are other plans out there and he is not ready to give up on early retirement yet as we try to find a way to save money. A further discussion ensued.

Neil said the board made this request at the last meeting and what we wanted to do was to show what was offered and that is not to say there can't be other things that we can look at but we wanted to get back to you with an idea of what the upfront cost would be for a program like this. This option had been offered for a period of 3 to 5 years.

Dorinda asked if we know how many teachers are 52 years old with 32 years of service. Yes we have 10 or more. Dorinda said we sometimes hire teachers above Step the 1st step so we don't know out of those 10 teachers who may retire how many of them we would have to replace higher than at a Step 4 BS. This is a conservative amount and we might even have to spend more. Neil said yes we put together a preliminary list of potential retirees and several of those teachers are in a shortage area so there is a good possibility you would be hiring them at at least \$50,000 as opposed to \$40,000. Dorinda asked if we have looked at other municipalities that have offered early retirement and maybe they could talk to us about it. Maybe they have something creative. Neil said we can do that absolutely.

Neil began his report and thought that Patti made an excellent point and he wanted to emphasize it to everyone. We really need to follow the budget process in Harford very closely it seems to change every day depending on the committee the bill is going to. It needs to go through a number of committees before it reaches final passages. If it stays the way it is the governor won't even sign the bill so we could be back to square one. Please keep an eye on this bill it will affect us dramatically.

April 12th we have a question and answer session with the City Council where we justify our budget requests to them and it starts at 6:30PM. I also want to thank the board members who came when he made his speech before the City Council at the public hearing last week. Neil thought he received pretty good feedback but doesn't know if it will translate into more money but they all seemed sympathetic to his request.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.b. Student Representatives

Abdul-Rasak Zachariah gave a report which follows at the end of the minutes. **Schedule A.** He said that Mark's daughter Samantha, Stacie Hurley and he would be inducted tomorrow.

Neil offered his congratulations to Abdul and the cast of The Wedding Singer; everyone did a great job. Mark said everyone did a wonderful job. The board gave thanks.

C.1.c. Board

Pat Libero went to see The Wedding Singer and as always it was excellent and a lot of fun.

Bob Guthrie went to the Saturday Matinees showing of The Wedding Singer and had a wonderful time. It was also nice to see that open to the residents of the town so they have the opportunity to see what is going on in the schools. Bob also wanted to congratulate Colleen Bradley from Bailey for finishing 3rd in the New Haven Register Spelling Bee.

Toni Paine also saw The Wedding Singer and it was awesome and the Arts Festival was also very good.

Mark Palmieri said that Mr. Cavallaro did a nice job when meeting with the City Council. He reiterated to them the Board of Education's need for money in order to be able to keep the brightest and best teachers. Mark is not trying to upset Ginny Bauer but she will be dearly missed by all.

C.1.d. Committee

Eric Murillo wanted to make sure that he sees a lot of board members at Carrigan when Anita Schorr a Holocaust Survivor will visit on Friday, May 11th from 12:00 to 2:30 PM and tell her story. Eric said this is a really great presentation. Toni Paine had seen it and said it was phenomenal and would go again.

Eric wanted to know if we would be discussing in committee or with the board about what we want to do with the budget itself. What have we thought about as a board to resolve some of the issues we have with the shortage?

Mark said on he believes we will be going on April 12th and then we will wait on the Council. Mark stated he and Superintendent Cavallaro have met with the Mayor and are relying on the governor, state representatives, legislators and what they are going to do about this whole situation and we have spoken with Mrs. Fusco about this also. We are the last ones to know. Eric interjected that he has been on the board now almost seven years and we are continuously getting hit year after year after year and we can not continue to upgrade and higher the brightest and the best of teachers when we only offer them \$38,000 or whatever. How can we continue to improve our district scores if we

aren't funded for it. All of the board members should just stand up and have a discussion with the Mayor as to why this is happening and there must be a solution to this. Dorinda asked if you had a meeting. Yes. Can you share the results of that meeting. Neil said the Mayor is willing to listen and we have the ear of several council members who said they would like to get us money. Part of the process is it is not a question of finding the money because they aren't going to find the money they are going to take it from someplace else and give it to us. That is the dilemma they are in. Neil believes they would give us more money if it were available. Mark understands what Eric is saying because he said the last time why are we always the ones to get cut. Eric said our kids end up paying the price for this. Cebi said at the budget hearing Neil brought all of this up before the Council and the Mayor. Toni Paine said Neil did discuss this and hit on every single point and to be honest with you maybe there were four of us there so if anybody else had anything to say we really needed to say it we really we really needed you there. Eric said unfortunately he was out of town and Toni said no I'm just saying everybody does have a life and things to do but that is when you do it and the next time is scheduled for the 12th and hopefully we will all be there that evening. Eric said that would be fantastic he would like to see every board member there if possible. Mark said everyone is in agreement on this.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Board Meeting held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on March 19, 2012 at 7:00 PM

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.1.a.

Dorinda Borer made the motion

Pat Libero seconded the motion

Discussion: None

Eric Murillo abstained because he was not at the meeting.

All board members were in favor

D.1.a. minutes are approved

D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Health & Wellness Committee Meeting held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on March 19, 2012 at 6:15 PM.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve D.1.b.

Dorinda Borer made the motion

M. Toni Paine seconded the motion

Discussion: None

Eric Murillo abstained because he was not at the meeting.

All board members were in favor

D.1.b. minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

12-21 Virginia Bauer, Assistant Director Pupil Services – Central
Effective: June 30, 2012
Reason: Personal

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve item 12-21
M. Toni Paine made the motion and stated with deepest, deepest regret
Pat Libero seconded the motion and stated we will miss you and the best of luck
Discussion: All board members said they would miss Ginny and wished her well.
All members were in favor
Item 12-21 is approved

12-22 David Oestreicher, Chemistry Teacher - WHHS
Effective: June 19, 2012
Reason: Personal

12-23 Katie Deegan, English/Reading Teacher – Bailey Middle School
Effective: April 6, 2012
Reason: Personal

12-24 Tim Nixon, Assistant Coach Boy's Track Team – WHHS
Effective: March 14, 2012
Reason: Personal

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to approve item 12-22 – 12-24 inclusive
Dorinda Borer made the motion
Cebi Waterfield seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All members were in favor
Items 12-22 – 12-24 are approved

D.3. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

D.4. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

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

D.7. New Business

F. Information

Bob Guthrie said on May 15th there will be the CABA Legislative Wrap-Up of the 2012 General Assembly for the changing of the new laws and policies. Bob said he would most likely be attending and Mark asked that he report back to us.

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn
Cebi Waterfield made the motion to adjourn
Pat Libero seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary