

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

May 22, 2012

Special Board Meeting

Council Chambers

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education as a whole for finance was held in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on May 22, 2012. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 6:00 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
Cebi Waterfield

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Murillo

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Chairman Palmieri welcomed everyone to the May 22nd Special Meeting for the 2012/2013 Budget. Chairman Palmieri turned the meeting over to Toni Paine, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

The following are the items of business:

1. Transfer of Funds 2011 – 2012

Discussion:

The present transfers on the first page represent transfers from utilities and unemployment and moves that to a salary account and security account.

61260 had to be increased to cover substitutes, paras and aides. The reason this is so far out of whack is that the payroll code puts it into this account and it should be put under the classification C36. Most miscoded items should fall into this category. Bob said this still puts us over quite a bit. Neil said they bought paras back and Toni said they settled the contract and made the transfer of funds to cover it. Matt said basically the paras were added back in. There was no further discussion.

Chairman Paine asked for a motion to approve the Transfer of Funds 2011 – 2012

Patrick Egolum made the motion

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

No one abstained

The Transfer of Funds for 2011 – 2012 are approved

2. Adoption of Board of Education Operating Budget 2012 – 2013

Discussion:

Chairman Paine said we accepted this last month at a previous meeting. Dorinda asked about the Bailey Construction. Dave said we are taking a more conservative approach on projects. We are doing it in half and half. If a project is delayed we could carry over the money to the next fiscal year. We were able to take \$100,000 out of maintenance. Dorinda said so other projects haven't been sacrificed and we were able to take \$125,000 out of maintenance account that was there but were there any other projects planned for that money that we are taking away from? Dave said nothing planned. Do we build a buffer in each year in case we have a project? If that Bailey project didn't happen there is a list of maintenance that the \$100,000 can absorb. We just prioritized that project.

Dorinda asked if Neil found out about the 1,000 slots the governor approved. They are Readiness Slots and Judy Drenzek did put in for some however they have not been allocated yet but they are dedicated to Readiness. Dr. Druzolowski said there are 1000 slots but are divided up depending on the type of district and size; if you are priority you get more. We are eligible as part of this district for 250 and we may get 60. Dorinda asked if those were additional slots we are adding or would that be funding we get to use somewhere else. Neil said they are additional slots. If the slots aren't used there is the possibility that the money can be allocated to do facility and feasibility studies for universal pre-school and full day kindergarten so that would be something we would be interested in pursuing that.

Dorinda asked about full day kindergarten and getting a cost analysis. She knows we can't afford it but wants to be able to say exactly why we can't afford it. She would like something in black and white. Neil said sure and off the top of his head double the number of kindergarten teachers so it is about 1.2 million and the start up cost because kindergartens aren't set up like other classrooms so it is about 1.5 million.

Dorinda sees the need, but doesn't know where we will take the money from for a grant writer. Her perception is that we missed out on the opportunity for some larger scale grants because we don't have somebody full time and experienced for grant writing. Dr. Druzolowski said there is not much out there right now. Most of the money in the State is targeted for the neediest districts

and they don't consider us to be at that level yet. At the Federal level there aren't any discretionary monies being put out as grants. Dorinda asked about the individual grants the teachers are writing for their own classrooms? Anne said these are usually limited to \$500, \$1000 or \$5,000 they are not big grants and they usually bring money to their classroom. It would not make any sense to have a grant writer for the classroom. Neil asked the board secretary if they had called several similar districts and not many of our size had a grant writer dedicated to the board of education. Yes, we did check on this. Cebi thought this could be something we could tack onto the teacher evaluation process; actively seeking and researching grants for your classroom and this could bring them up to the exceptional level. Anne said we have a City Grant Writer. Neil said he has offered his services to us and we should take better advantage of this. Dorinda said our grant writer is Dave right. Neil said Dave doesn't write grants he manages entitlements. Dave does not seek competitive grants. Pat said four people from the district are going to a grant writing workshop so maybe those four people could meet with the City Grant Writer. Neil said we had a very good response for this and we couldn't send everybody so we tried to pick somebody from each of the levels with the stipulation that they set up workshops and train other teachers.

Bob said he should have asked this before under transfer of funds and apologized. We heard from Councilman Last about the ability to roll over or retain funds. Is there a closeout on the purchase orders in the city? Dave said for our program we close on June 10th. Bob hopes the board would send a letter to the Council Chair to get on their last agenda in June so it is not into another fiscal year. Saying we have X number of unencumbered dollars that we would like to put it towards XYZ project (whether it is Bailey or whatever). He would like this letter dated before July 1st and let it be on their last agenda in June before there is a close out of the books.

Neil said he contacted the Finance Director today to make sure if there were a delay in the Bailey project to make sure we can carry those funds over. He wants to make sure we set this up correctly. Bob said if we put it on the Council's Agenda it makes the City's fiscal authority aware of it. Neil said and they are on record of setting the money aside. Toni said can we send it to Councilman Last and carbon copy the rest of the council? Neil said we should work through Joe Mancini and he will give us a process and we will get a letter over to the council because I do agree with Bob. Let's get them on record as saying yes the money is there and we are setting it aside for you. We don't want to hear that you ran in deficit because there is no record of setting the money aside. Toni said we will send them a hard copy of something as well as a phone call and it will be time stamped. Yes Neil agrees.

Dorinda asked if the City has gotten any better at paying. It hasn't gotten any worse. Are bills being paid on time? No. Is that a problem for us? Dave is sure they are not being paid intentionally but because they are cash strapped. They paid off a lot but vendors are looking for money. We keep hoping that the closer we get to June 30th everybody is going to get paid. Dorinda knows she keep asking this but asked if there is nothing we need to put aside for the high school as far as the project? She knows it is being paid for through the funding but is there nothing we need to pay for on our end or is everything fully paid by the bonding and the funding? Neil said the city will oversee it with the Building Oversight Committee plus whatever additional members are the authority. Neil said the one role the board plays in it is once the design is set we will approve the educational specs for the project.

Dorinda did an aside check on what the Mayor told us last night about the process and the council doesn't have to vote on it. He can go for that bonding pack anytime. He does not have to wait for the council to vote on that. Neil said that is interesting.

Bob said once the building project gets off it is out of our hands. It becomes the Mayor's Building Committee; for lack of a better word Building Oversight Committee and in the past there has maybe been a BOE person on it and traditionally a couple of PTA people from that building. Once it leaves us we don't see it until it comes back around. Neil said Mark is a liaison to the Building Oversight Committee. There is also a commitment from the Mayor to put the high school principal on the committee and I think there will be a PTA representative and I would urge him to do that. There was no further discussion.

Chairman Paine asked for a motion to approve the Adoption of the Board of Education Operating Budget 2012 - 2013

Patrick Egolum made the motion

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

No one abstained

The Board of Education Operating Budget 2012 – 2013 is approved

3. Adoption of Food Service Budget 2012 – 2013

Discussion

Alan Belchak passed out packets with the revised operating budget 2012 – 2013. This includes a weighted average price increase report from the USDA which shows us where our prices should be. The Federal Government is telling cities and towns that the price of lunch should be what the reimbursable price of the meal is. The price currently is \$2.74 per meal from the USDA and with commodities it rounds out to around \$3.00. We have not had a price increase in our elementary schools over the past 10 years. We felt we would bring all up a quarter this year and that would increase our income about \$32,000.00. The new programs cost from the USDA will be 32 cents effective September 2012. With our increase there and the 6 cents from the government it will be like a wash and will help us keep balanced. This report will be done again because we have to put all the figures together and it only affects the paying child.

The PTA is aware of this and has come up with many ideas. When the schools have their open house we will have a food service booth there to help explain to parents what the new programs are going to be and to get the lunch applications in on time because this is one of our biggest problems.

A lot of the changes put in place in the elementary schools this year will be Federal Law next year and we are pretty well prepared. Alan is going to training on Thursday to find out more about the fruit and grain requirements. Juice will be reduced because it is high in sugar and they would rather have children have fresh fruit which has the fiber and other nutrients.

Alan had a very smooth running year and is looking forward to having a great year next year again. The only day they lost was with the hurricane.

Cebi commended the Food Service Staff because she received a phone call stating the menu for tomorrow had changed to something else so advance notice is good. That was the only one they received.

Bob Guthrie asked that the revenue increase (cost adjustment) presented at the meeting tonight that was not on the Special Meeting Agenda for tonight be put on the next regular meeting agenda because you can only vote on items on the Special Meeting Agenda. Everyone agreed with this. It will be put on the June 4th agenda. Neil asked Alan to get him a letter with the specific increase for the next agenda. Certainly.

Chairman Paine asked for a motion to approve the Food Service Budget 2012 - 2013

Mark Palmieri made the motion

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

No one abstained

The Food Service Budget 2012 – 2013 is approved

4. Adoption of Sport Complex Budget 2012 – 2013

Discussion

Neil said the key is the foreman and how we changed Chris Everone's salary. There is no salary for the working foreman his salary now comes out of the Rink's Budget and it is a wash; we actually saved money on that move. There were no questions.

Chairman Paine asked for a motion to approve the Sport Complex Budget 2012 - 2013

Cebi Waterfield made the motion

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

No one abstained

The Sport Complex Budget 2012 – 2013 is approved

5. Adoption of Bennett Rink Budget 2012 – 2013

Discussion

Neil said this is something we need to go over and wants the board to know that improvements to the rink including purchasing the Zamboni within the confines of the purchasing ordinance are being done. It will be done for three years so we do not have to go before the council. Neil asked Jon Capone to discuss this along with other things we are doing moving forward.

Jon Capone said we made a decision to hold on to the rink. The biggest problem there was the workers and the health benefits and salary we had to pay them. We were able to get them out of there and if you look in the budget you will see the cost factor of the help there was the #1 thing that brought the budget down. The rentals were about the same with who we rented to but we had a drastic increase with the people who rented; it went up for everybody down there. The MUNIS report is deceiving; the actual figure that we have taken in is about \$365,000.00 that has been deposited on rentals. It looks like we are going to make a small surplus for the first time ever. Comments were heard stating wow, great, amazing. Neil said a small surplus is nice but

that money needs to go right back into that facility. Jon agreed and there were three improvements that they needed to do down there immediately.

- We needed to have the place professionally painted; we are down to one painter in the BOE and there is no way we had the manpower to paint that. They had quotes on that and we are ready to wrap that up this week and have that finished.
- We were thinking about the Zamboni a year ago and backed off. We are the only rink in the State of Connecticut that runs on one Zamboni; everybody has a back up Zamboni. Neil said that was a smart decision at the time because we wanted to see how the year progressed.
- John said there are deals out there that will set you up with a new Zamboni; they are not cheap \$105,000.00 but you have to have one to run a rink. Where is that money going to come from so if the payments are approximately \$2,600.00 all we did was make the people who use the rink pay for it. What we used to do was to do a transfer and take it out of the education budget to cover the rink. Now the people who are going to use the rink are going to end up paying for it and we slapped a 10% increase on to them. No one person has backed off or complained to us.

Neil said we are still a little low compared to where other renters are and we made it very specific; these are the improvements we are going to make and we would still love to have you as a customer. Jon said as soon as we received their commitment to pay the rent increase we moved forward on the Zamboni which their rate increase will cover. We should have the new Zamboni somewhere around September.

Dorinda asked if there was a warrantee on the new Zamboni and if we had to have a backup one or can we sell it. Yes it has a warrantee but you need a backup if something were to happen to the new one for a couple of days so the warrantee would fix it for free but you would still need a backup because you can't make ice and then you loose all that income money. Bob asked if the current one is 15 years old. Yes. We had work done three times this year but didn't lose ice time. Jon said they will be putting some new things into motion for next year. They have two people next year who have never rented ice before at Bennett Rink. Toni said this is the first time since 1970 the Rink has been in the black. Bob asked if there would be a purpose for adding a line item for Capital Expenditure where you could account for that Zamboni and pay it in a separate line item so next year if the city council see it and asks so you got the Zamboni so how did you pay for it and where did the funds come from. This is something out of the ordinary for an expense. The enterprise fund can hold money over compared to the BOE budget. Dave doesn't think the term enterprise fund really is a true term here. This money just gets jumped into the operating budget for the city; it just gets comingled. Neil said what I think you are saying is that you guys do a better job of monitoring what comes in and what goes out of there. We are more up to date. We don't have a bank account that we take for the Bennett Rink separate from the city in other words. Bob asked if it would serve our interest to have this even if we didn't have control of the numbers; just to look at our capital expenditure. I understand you don't have control of the money but would it serve a purpose. For example I show I have \$20,000 left over and want to use it next year. Toni said that is a double edged sword too. They can say if you have \$20,000.00 left over maybe you didn't need that \$20,000.00. Neil said we pretty much closed out our books on the rink whereas by the time the city does everything it won't be until

August 31st. Mark understands what he is saying because it is more of an entry on our side than the city side so we can justify it. Bob said they are going to show you it zeroed out. Matt said when you bring up the Munis account it shows revenue vs. expenses so it will show how much money you made and how much you lost just by looking at the account in Munis so a separate line item would double book what you made or lost by putting an extra line item into the budget. Matt asked Bob if he was asking for a separate line item for just the leasing payments. Right now just the leasing payments because that is the item we are talking about the capital expense; maybe in four years it is something else. Matt said that is real easy to do we can just add another line item to the budget. Bob said it shows it for us and can be presented in a very straight forward way. Bob said obviously you will look to get a new Zamboni but your old one is ancient and probably has no trade in value but in three or four years do you plan on picking up a used one to back up the new one. Jon said no the one we have is sufficient as a back up one; it is sufficient but you can't run a rink with one Zamboni. Neil said down the road the next project we are looking at are the bleachers; they are in pretty bad shape and that is about \$50,000.00. Jon said we had a quote of \$45,000. Neil said we also need to upgrade the bathrooms. Bob said now you are talking about other capital expenditures when you close out your numbers you are still showing it there but it is gone before you close your books in June. There were no more questions.

Chairman Paine asked for a motion to approve the Bennett Rink Budget 2012 - 2013

Dorinda Borer made the motion

Mark Palmieri seconded the motion

All board members present were in favor

No one abstained

The Bennett Rink Budget 2012 – 2013 is approved

Toni Paine turned the meeting back over to Mark Palmieri. Chairman Palmieri thanked Mrs. Paine and thanked everyone for coming.

Chairman Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn

Cebi Waterfield made the motion to adjourn

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola

Board Secretary