

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 21, 2015

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 September 21, 2015. The meeting was called to order by Patricia Libero, Chairwoman of the Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Patricia Libero, Chairwoman
James W. Morrissey, Vice Chair
Betsy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer
Patrick Egolum
Robert Guthrie
Rosa Richardson
Rosemary Russo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark Palmieri
Cebi Waterfield

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Matt Cavallaro Director of Finance

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairwoman Libero welcomed everyone to the September 21, 2015 board meeting. Public session is now open and asked if anyone would like to speak. Daria Weible, 129 Beatrice Dr., West Haven, CT is here from Save The Shops. The group went to the Building Committee Meeting last week and it was made pretty clear that there was a change to the educational specifications on funding but she wasn't sure as she said Mr. Carney wasn't really very clear. She said they would like to know when they can expect the educational specification change to include the shops. The website seems to show that a portion of that specification is still there that says there will be no more shops and this is causing confusion. We would like to know when this will be updated so people can calm down. If there was a plan submitted to the Mayor we would

like to be aware of the changes being put into place and how that situation will be addressed. The Board gave thanks.

Ade Aminu, West Haven, CT. is here on behalf of his three children and a total of 25 families who have children from this district that are attending Highville Charter School in New Haven. He is asking the board to approve transportation to the school for these children. He spoke to the superintendent about this and was told to come before the board and express his feelings. Board Chairwoman Pat Libero said we do not provide transportation to Charter Schools. Mr. Aminu said the state said that transportation should be provided to them by this district and the state will reimburse the district of West Haven. Chairwoman Libero asked Mr. Cavallaro to address this. Superintendent Cavallaro said the BOE is under no obligation legally to transport charter school students who attend school outside of the city in which they live. For example Notre Dame, Our Lady of Victory and St. Lawrence are located in our city and we are obligated to transport children in the district to those schools and that would be the same for a Charter School located in West Haven. However, we are under no obligation legally to transport students to another district. Superintendent Cavallaro spoke to Mr. Robert Kelly from the Office of Charter Schools and was told there would be no additional money to reimburse us and also checked with the Board's attorney to legally make sure we are under no obligation. Neil was told that if the board should choose to go down this path there are approximately 20 Charter Schools in New Haven and we would be opening up a Pandora's Box. Neil would caution the board not to go down that road because once you open up that window where does it end. He suggested that they see what a bus would cost. A further discussion took place. Chairwoman Libero said this will be discussed and we will get back to you.

The board gave thanks.

There were no other speakers.

Public Portion closed at 7:08 PM.

C. REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro addressed what the first speaker Daria spoke about. There is a plan in place and a letter did go home. We are finalizing some things and we will invite Mr. Rice who is here tonight to come soon with a formal plan. We have followed through and there are some opportunities with Habitat For Humanity and we also went to Gateway Community College and looked at an auto program that we should be able to offer hopefully during the second semester this year. There are field trips scheduled to Sikorsky to look at manufacturing and those kinds of things. We met the fire inspector and we are looking at keeping the G Wing open on a limited basis. If we need to do some limited work there, until they start the abatement process, we actually installed a door from the main part of the building into the G Wing per his recommendation so we can get down there. There are opportunities on the campus to do some work. There is going to be some inconvenience but we feel that over the last couple of weeks we have made a lot of progress in being able to offer more hands on type of activities. Neil feels the needs are being addressed and it is good to hear what some of the concerns are. We all want the new building and are looking forward to what will be there but we have to

also worry about the kids who are in place now. There will be inconvenience in every department. We will be moving science labs and those kinds of things but we will get through this because we are very anxious to get the project off the ground.

Bob Guthrie said some of the board members are just as confused by some of the stuff that has been bouncing back and forth. He thinks it is important for the public to understand that once the project goes forward it is out of the board's control; we are not the ones driving the project and a lot of what people are hearing is also what we are reading in the paper. At the meeting discussed perhaps you can invite all the people who have the ability to drive or change that whether it is the Mayor or Mr. Carney and if it is a joint meeting between this board and the City Council it may be beneficial to have both bodies here at the same time. Neil agreed and said to his knowledge the auto shop was the only space that wasn't included in the original plan and as of now it is not in the specs so at some point someone is going to have to come to the board and say would you consider adding this space back or adjusting the specifications because from Neil's standpoint and hopefully the board's standpoint is what drives the project; what approves the project are the educational specifications. Neil said he has made it clear that we need to be kept in the loop. Neil will pass this along and try to get everybody in the room together. Bob asked when the educational specs were approved what year? Neil said in April or May of 2009.

Rosemary Russo said she is confused. Just now you said that the auto shop is not in the new plans? Neil said you are asking a great question. They were not in the educational specifications in 2009 but they have been put back and Neil doesn't think anyone here is going to argue with that; however prior to it being put back someone should have come to the board because only the board can adjust the educational specifications and I think that is what Bob was alluding to before. Bob said the changes to the original specifications in 2009 have not been approved by the BOE. Neil said correct. The board has every right to want to see what is being done before it is designed and built. Bob said at the last meeting we were asked to approve a project as complete. Now if and when the high school is complete we will be asked to accept the project as complete with a change without educational approvals. Neil understands why both good questions were asked.

Rosemary Russo said during the second term the shop kids will have a chance for more hands on opportunities. Neil said he thinks they will have some opportunities the first semester. The only thing we were really concerned about were the auto shops as that is the hardest thing to replicate without that kind of space especially in the winter time. We are looking at a course to be offered at Gateway where one of their professors will work with one of our teachers and take 16 to 20 kids which is about the size of an advanced auto shop and do a co-teaching type of program where we work with the kids and on Friday they would go there for a 4 hour session. They have some requirements in order to offer a class; for example the amounts of time kids need to be in a lab in order to offer them credit. Chairwoman Libero asked if student will receive high school and college credit. Students will definitely get high school credit and they will at least receive a certificate which can make them marketable upon graduation from high school. It would be similar to the dual enrollment program we have however it would be done during the

course of the actual school day and there may be a little more time in the actual auto tech class shop class. He is really hopeful and optimistic about this.

Jim Morrissey said there is a lot of frustration about what is happening with the shop classes and his phone has been ringing off the wall. You talk about people being inconvenienced and here it is almost October and right now the only people being inconvenienced are the shop people. It seems like we are dragging our feet here. I am hoping we can quickly speed this process up sooner than later and definitely by the second semester I would like to see this program up and running. Jim knows the G Wing was closed down and though there could have been a plan B. Neil stated that is a misnomer that we closed it down. We did not close the G Wing we were advised that by mid-October there would be an abatement demolition phase that would be beginning at the high school. The administration felt a sense of frustration last year because we couldn't get an answer as to whether or not the work would actually be done. We didn't do this until last June and this is out of our control. Jim said these kids don't have hands on approach right now. They have two small classrooms by the cafeteria and there is no way you can do anything in a small environment like that. He was hoping that there would be another plan in place to help these kids out. In the school handbook it was stated that there would be shop classes this year and now there are a lot of frustrated parents and students and there are no shop classes for these kids. Neil said he would disagree with that. Dana asked to address this. Dana said they did another walk through with the Fire Marshall today after meeting last week and he pointed out a few very minor things. We were hoping to actually open tomorrow or Wednesday but he will be out of town for some training on Thursday and Friday so on Monday he will get back to us and we think we have done everything he has asked so we hope to reopen some areas (the wood shop, the metal shop and the area we use for our electronics) in the G Wing on Tuesday. Dana thinks it will open much sooner than the second semester and thinks it will be next week.

Chairwoman Libero asked Dana to address what took place during meetings with all the kids at the high school to discuss the plans because she doesn't think people on the board are aware of those meetings. Pat knows the plans were shown and there was a whole program that was gone over. Dana said they talked to many of the kids not each and every one because it was the second half of the day. Many are excited just to get into a new school with new classrooms but we do have a number of kids who want to be doing something hands on now and we agree they do need hands on opportunity. Mr. Cavallaro has helped us greatly to enable the students to do this whether it is busses to other places, substitutes or anything we needed. We are doing things as quickly as we can knowing that we have to bring in outside people to approve us at every step of the way. Neil said Bailey is definitely a possibility and we worked out some free time where we can get kids there. Neil's understanding is the project is not going to go forward (and we agree with this) until the funding is put in place. We were originally told a mid-October date and he is not so sure that the way bonding has to take place and ordinances have to take place that this is a realistic goal at this point. If someone tells him that he certainly can make more opportunities available within the G Wing. We were going on the assumption that

mid-October abatement starts and you can't have kids down there so he is concerned that this delays it a little bit farther out.

Jim Morrissey asked if more kids have signed up for the Gateway Program. Neil said no not for the after school program. Jim said no during the day. A lot of these kids work and can't sign up for after the after school program and that is why we should offer these programs during the school day. Neil said he would defer to Gateway and can bring them back but based on what he has heard it will be a really nice opportunity for our kids. The afterschool project seems to be going well with the small number of kids who signed up for it. This will be a great chance for our kids to get something really good out of it. Our teachers have professional development opportunities and training with the full time professors at Gateway.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we had a very good, smooth opening of school. He thanked the administrative team and the teachers who are here tonight. The food service department and Winkle Bus have some things to work out in the beginning of the year. He thinks things went really well. There seems to be a very good adjustment to the new schedule at Bailey and we will get some details on that. Our All Day Kindergarten numbers seem to have stabled off. Forest and Washington numbers are a little bit high but we do have more support in place because they are Title 1 Schools. Our central registration was a huge success and we will be working each year to work at different ways to expand central registrations. The quicker we can get kids in school from the start of the school year the better. Neil said Bob Guthrie had asked for the projects that were done and Joe gave us a price so there is a follow up sheet with some numbers. Most of these projects were done in house so it was just a matter of supplies and materials that we had to pay for with a couple of exceptions. The lighting project pays for itself and there are cost effective projects that really will enhance the school district which we were able to get done over the course of the summer.

Superintendent Cavallaro said we received the results of the SBAC Testing and we all know we have some work to do. Our administrative team has done an outstanding job of looking at the results district wide from our elementary schools, intermediate, middle and high school. Our department heads have looked at the results from day one saying what do we do to make improvements. Anne is very optimistic and there are some good signs especially in our lower grades with the kids who started Common Core so we feel like we are making really good progress.

Dr. Druzolowski thanked everyone for their support while we were going through the SBAC testing. The SBAC testing is only one physical exam for a school district. It is one of many but it does tell us what we need to be doing differently. It also did the same at the state level and the Commissioner of Education was very clear that there were some good points and there were other points we had to address rather quickly; not only as a school district or alliance district but more importantly across the nation. It became clear when results came out to the state that there were special populations that require much more support and that poverty is a really prime indicator as well as any of the special needs populations. In saying this, the different organizations across the nation have said

it is OK to be transparent and it is OK to identify those groups and put more resources in there. To that end the Commissioner of Education was pretty optimistic relative to the support on the federal and state level for these pockets of populations. A further discussion took place. The entire presentation is on our website. Dr. Druzolowski stated that the progress that we made has been on the backs of our teachers, principals and coordinators we work as a team and we are moving this forward. The next audience will be their teachers in their own buildings and at that point they will be analyzing the data with them to be able to address parents. We are waiting for the brochures to be ready so we can do a nice mailing to all the parents. There will be lots of questions which we will be ready to answer.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

There were no student reps present.

C.1.c. Board

Bob Guthrie thanked the Superintendent for providing the numbers. It is always interesting to see how the summer shutdown went and to see the projects that were completed. The second annual Pagel's Food Truck Event went well and was certainly a community event. We salute our principal for being the first volunteer to get in the dump tank and he was a good sport about it.

Betsy Davis also attended the event and is excited to see what kind of profit was made from the Food Truck Event.

Jim Morrissey also attended the Pagel's festivities and stated that Gary Palermo did a great job as did the teachers, staff and PTA. It was bigger than the previous year and people had a great time. He hopes a lot of money was made for the PTA projects this year. There was a lot of time and effort put into this and he was glad to be a part of it.

Jim announced that there will be the 2nd Annual David Cappetta Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser on Saturday, October 17, 2015 from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Polish American Club, 194 West Spring Street in West Haven. It will be \$25 for adults, \$10 for children and children 5 and under are free. There will be food, refreshments, raffles, games and music. The goal is to have this scholarship established for West Haven High School students run in perpetuity. Neil asked for a copy so we can get it out in our announcements. Jim said Mark Palmieri asked him to pass this information along. Jim said Dave was a wonderful human being and a childhood friend. He will be missed but we will never forget him. He hopes there will be a big crowd in attendance.

Pat Libero said she went to the first football game and the kids were great. The kids that were interviewed were really intelligent, they spoke well, they talked about their teamwork and they made us proud. The Godfrey brothers did a really nice job. Pat did not attend the Soderman Bowl but was sorry we lost.

Rosa Richardson was at the Soderman Bowl and she said one of the nice parts about this was the standup and respect a veteran. Neil Cavallaro said this has really turned into a nice event. The fact that Notre Dame is our cross town rival and that we work with them on that is nice and we both presented a check. It is a real nice day to honor the veterans.

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 August 17, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve the minutes D.1.a.

Rosemary Russo made the motion to approve the minutes

Bob Guthrie seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present were in favor

Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

15-109 Leonard Fredericks, Science Teacher – Bailey Middle School

Effective: August 18, 2015

Reason: Personal

15-110 Kevin Dickson, Boys Swim Team Coach – West Haven High School

Effective: August 27, 2015

Reason: Personal

15-111 Kara Kaczynski, Girls Head Tennis Coach – West Haven High School

Effective: August 25, 2015

Reason: Personal

15-112 Larry Vieira, Boys Soccer Coach - Bailey Middle School

Effective: August 31, 2015

Reason: Personal

15-113 John Ascenzia, Assistant Hockey Coach – West Haven High School

Effective: September 3, 2015

Reason: Personal

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve resignations 15-109 through 15-113

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

Discussion: Bob Guthrie stated is it just luck of the draw as it seems as though there are a lot of resignations from coaches. Neil Cavallaro stated he thinks it is the luck of the draw. Some resignations were planned and it is just the time of the year over the summer where we receive a lot of resignations all at once.

All board members present were in favor

Items 15-109 through 15-113 are approved

D.3. New Hire (Certified)

- 15-114 Danielle J. Metrano**, 181 Mansfield Street, New Haven, CT 06511
Kindergarten Learning Lab Teacher – Seth Haley
Effective: August 25, 2015
Salary: \$52,000 Step 3 BS + 60
- 15-115 David Pfaff**, 142 Willow Street, Cheshire, CT 06410
Science Teacher – Bailey Middle School
Effective: August 25, 2015
Salary: \$50,000 Step 3BS + 30
- 15-116 Michelle Misiak**, 330 Savin Avenue #25, West Haven, CT 06516
Special Education Teacher – Pagels School
Effective: To be determined
Salary: \$62,500 Step 5 BS + 60
- 15-117 Jennifer Cummings**, 3720 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06614
Half Time English Teacher – West Haven High School
Effective: August 25, 2015
Salary: \$23,500 .5 of Step 1 BS + 60 \$47,000
- 15-118 Aaron Montiel**, 28 Clark Road, Litchfield, CT 06759
Music Teacher – Bailey Middle School
Effective: August 27, 2015
Salary: \$40,020 Step 1 BS
- 15-119 Jon Bellonio**, 126 Northwood Dr., Guilford, CT 06437
Physical Education Teacher – Washington School
Effective: August 25, 2015
Salary: \$44,000 Step 1 BS + 30

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to approve items 15-114 through 15-119

Bob Guthrie made the motion to approve the items

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

Discussion:

All board members present were in favor

Items 15-114 through 15-119 are approved

Chairwoman Libero asked for a motion to adjourn.

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou C. Amendola

Board Secretary

