

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 5, 2018

Regular Board Meeting

Board's Meeting Room

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on March 5, 2018 in the Board's Meeting Room on the second floor of City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order by Rosemary Russo, Chairwoman of the Board of Education who said she was happy to see so many people in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. 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 A. Aceto
Patrick Leigh
Patricia Libero
Karen Pacelli
Rosa Richardson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: James W. Morrissey

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Julia Walker

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Chairwoman Russo asked three times if anyone would like to address the board this evening. There were no speakers.

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro stated that he and Rosemary Russo had a conversation right after the shooting in Florida and they had already been in touch with the Police Department and they had scheduled a meeting with all the first responders along with Dana, several fireman and other interested parties. Chief Karajanis gave about an hour long presentation regarding our plans in West Haven. We work extremely close with the Police Department and we have plans in place for all of the schools should there be an emergency. In light of this tragedy the schools under the direction of the resource officers have been conducting drills. We have five full time police resource officers in

our schools along with a security team at WHHS that also rotates around Bailey. A lot of the presentation had to do with identifying potential candidates, the mental health issue and the signs. Jim Turcio co-chairs a committee it was with Sgt. Dave Tammaro and we do discuss on a regular basis students who we have concerns with as well as former students who we may have lost track of that no longer are part of our school district but are in the community. Mental health is an issue and Superintendent Cavallaro thinks it is important that this board reflects on the things that you over the years have put in place. We have five resource officers to the tune of about \$350,000.00 a year and this started with a grant and a single police officer. We have lost the grant but we have added this to our budget. We have a security team at WHHS and at Bailey which is another \$250,000.00 a year. We have added and upgraded over the years security cameras at all of the schools along with buzzers. When they say you can't put a price on safety we can put a price on what we have invested as far as safety. Can you do more; yes you can always do more. The topic of discussion was that we are pretty good at reacting what we need to do is prevent and how do you secure the perimeter. You have heard a lot of talk about arming teachers and armed guards but Superintendent Cavallaro feels that if we are going to have anybody armed it is going to be a current police officer with a badge; that would be my preference. Superintendent Cavallaro doesn't know what kind of laws will happen as a result of this both at the Federal and State level but this is something he would advocate for more than some of the other options. We are very fortunate in West Haven that we have excellent cooperation and communication with the Police Department. Some of Superintendent Cavallaro's concerns are the less structured events such as graduations, athletic events and field days. When you have these types of activities taking place they also need to be addressed. Whether it is Chief Karajanis, Deputy Chief Perno, Sgt. Tammaro who oversees the resource officers have always helped us out if we have any concerns. They are very well schooled and very well educated and are not afraid to take charge in these kinds of incidents. Ten or fifteen years ago when we would receive a bomb scare we would have people texting and chaos. We have learned a lot from the things that have taken place over the years to where we can secure the perimeter and we have designated sites where people would reunite and we use our reverse 911 to urge parents to stay away from school and to let them know what is going on and their kids are safe. Over the years we have been very proactive and Superintendent Cavallaro is sure there is always more we can do. Safety, security, access and egress are all part of the rationale for redoing the high school and redoing the roads there. On the Carrigan project this board approved putting new doors and windows in and that building has become more secure. There are things we are looking and he feels confident that we have a great line of communication with the police and he wishes he could guarantee everybody's safety 100% but unfortunately he doesn't think any of us can do that but we can and will work to continue to make it more safe.

Rosa Richardson said there are three levels of security glass and she would like an answer as to which one is at the high school because the main entrance should have bullet proof glass in her opinion. Pat Libero said the Building Committee meeting is tomorrow night and she will ask this question for Rosa. Rosa appreciates this.

Superintendent Cavallaro said tomorrow is a primary day and we have put a lot of security in place so we can have school on those types of days. Our resource officers are assigned to the polling places and for all the schools where they vote there is one way in and one way out and there is no reason why anyone should have any type of interaction with any student or staff member from that building. We have taken safety into consideration and have taken precautions. It would be his preference not to vote in the schools but they are community facilities..... Rosa interjected not during the school day they aren't.....and we have done our best to make them as secure as they can be. Our principals are vigilant and to quote his good friend Gary Palermo he said on those days the schools are probably more secure because there is a lot more sense of awareness and they are covered with police officers. One of his concerns is traffic and they will try to keep the traffic flow moving at the beginning of the day and the end of the day but they don't anticipate a high turnout tomorrow. Bob Guthrie said Election Day is not a problem because schools are closed but perhaps our facilities committee can have a discussion about going forward for planning for whether it is a registrar of voters account. Going back to the days there used to be a police officer at every polling place Neil said paid for by the registrars. Bob understands about the SRO's being around but that is not going to be from poll open to poll close. Superintendent's concern is that it should be during the hours of school but after school hours.....Bob thinks it is worth having the discussion about the facilities committee going forward when they decide to make a presentation to the city about justification. During primary days you are disrupting for lunch the outdoor recess and you are also having foot traffic you don't see on a regular day. Perhaps the board should decide whether it is important enough to present to the city as an option for securing our schools on primary days. Rosa said she has been advocating that we find alternate locations for primaries and she believes there is somewhere else that we can go as voters in every single district and doesn't see the need for our schools to be open to the public on primary days.

Superintendent Cavallaro said the last MARB meeting took place last Thursday and Matt and I went up and represented the board. The city is in the process of developing their 3 – 5 year plan and must be approved by MARB. They have not made an official application but anticipate they will do so shortly. They are seeking funds to help with their deficit. When that happens MARB takes a lot more control of the city as far as approvals of the budget and what not. Neil does anticipate this happening but how it will formally affect the normal budget cycle he is not sure. A lot is going to depend on when the city formally submits their application and what funds they make available to the city but clearly the city has to show a plan which is somehow going to bridge that gap which will allow them to operate a balanced budget going forward and that has not formally happened yet. Neil said however the good news is and he thanked Kristen from the Teacher's Union and Georgiana and Marilyn from the Para Union and Teresa Heaney from the AFSCME Union for going to the meeting and supporting the BOE and Matt and I when we made our presentation. MARB was impressed with over the last five to ten years with some of the structural changes that we have made that allowed us to operate on a balanced budget and still offer the type of services that kids are accustomed to. One of the members of MARB clearly knew that the city has been giving us over the last ten years less than 1% a year in the way of increases and our expenses have certainly increased more than that.

The chart that Bob Guthrie made us add to the budget clearly showed that the amount of state aid and other funds has increased dramatically to the point where it is upside down and this was very obvious and apparent to all of the members and pointed out to us. Our enrollment and other numbers only tells half the story we basically restructured our entire school district. We pointed out food service and the rink and they were very pleased with how open we are.

The other topic we discussed with the MARB was the excess cost share. We had an agreement worked out with the last administration and even going forward with the new administration that this money cannot be booked as revenue anymore. It is important to note that we had to fight to show everybody what the intent of that law was and we were able to do that to the point we were able to make that change. You as a board and we as an administration should look at it as this is money that we have in effect, and the law says we are supposed to do this, turn back to the city because we haven't needed that money over the years. Superintendent Cavallaro thinks we did the right thing by bringing this issue to a head and thinks there will be changes as a result but the intent of that money if we don't need it the city could use it but clearly the purpose of the money and the law is to make sure that the kids needs who require Special Ed services are being met and we are doing that. This issue has finally been resolved and hopefully we will not have to talk about this anymore. We put a lot of time and effort into showing that this money belongs to us and showing clearly what the intent of the law was. The committee looked very highly on the things we have been doing. The city is going to present a plan which Neil believes will impact our budget request. It will not be a surprise when we don't get that request because he has had discussion with many board members and we will have to adjust accordingly and what he said is that we are open to working with the city regardless of who the administration is in trying to cut cost but to keep moving forward with giving a good education.

Chairwoman Russo wanted the Board to know that she thinks Neil is being a little modest and that the MARB was very impressed with his and Matt's presentation. Chairwoman Russo has spoken to Mayor Rossi on Saturday and she also brought this to her attention stating what a good job they did and how well prepared they were and how impressed the MARB was with what little money they get from the city that they have made the schools move on. Chairwoman Russo wants it noted and to you for all the work that you did and she is glad that you have received the recognition. Applause followed.

Superintendent Cavallaro said in front of you is a letter from CONNCAN which we received last Friday afternoon. We are working very hard and we are starting to see results. On the second page it shows the growth we have made in math regarding targets we have met for low income students and this is really nice to see. When we talk about closing the achievement gap and providing services to kids and all of the SRBI that we talked about in Rosa's committee meeting and ways that we are able to use the money we have gotten from the Alliance District to add coaches and facilitators. Neil likes to see these things because someone else is recognizing the good work that the district is doing under Anne's guidance and under all of the coordinators and our administrative team and certainly the teachers that deliver the instruction every day. Applause followed. Dr.

Druzolowski said she will hold up on some other good things until they do the presentation on SBAC and you will be hearing a lot of good news all the way through September. Somethings she can't disclose but you will know it when you hear it. Neil said we have received some really good news from the State and Federal Government and we are sworn to secrecy.

Superintendent Cavallaro received guidance from CABA and CAPSS regarding student protests and walkouts. Dana met with Superintendent Cavallaro to get his feeling on students having a walkout or some kind of demonstration. Neil feels like the kids came with some genuine concerns and they were serious. Everything Dana and he talked about was summed up in the guidelines. Neil told Dana he was open to this and would be supportive. The information was given to board members and if they wished to be part of this they can attend. Dana said they had a forum on Friday with attendance by the Police Department, Dorinda Borer, Superintendent Cavallaro and Sean Ronan whose daughter was a part of this. This came out of the concerns of students. Students spoke and their questions and concerns were very valid and the members of the panel did a really nice job of addressing them. One of the things that came out of one of the student groups is that there will be a student walkout on March 14th at 9:45 AM and it will be 17 minutes long. Students came up with a behavior contract that every student who will participate needs to sign. The contract basically says students are doing this because: they believe in supporting victims of the Parkland Shootings, they will not have their phone out, they will be silent, and they will not be taking selfies nor doing any of that silliness. They will be doing this in a respectful way. Two students will read the name and age of one of the slain students. The drummer from the band will beat a drum and tone a bell and then the name of the next student who was killed will be read. One name per minute for 17 minutes will be read to pay tribute to all the students killed in the Florida shooting. At the conclusion of this those students who participated in the walkout will walk from Ken Strong Field back into the building. Extra security and extra police officers have been requested to be present for that short period of time during the day. This should be a really nice way to show their support for Parkland without doing anything that will be disruptive to education on that day. Students are not being required to participate because this is something that has to come from them and they have to have a passion for it. If they don't want to participate they will remain in class as usual. Superintendent Cavallaro sees this more as a mini assembly rather than a walkout. The kids felt really strongly about this and we had to find a dignified way to have them express themselves. Any board member who can attend should attend and hope we can get some change out of this because kids are driving any potential change at this point. Chairwoman Russo asked if the whole nation will be doing this at the same time because she knows it is a national thing Dana knows a number of schools are trying to do this at the time the first shots were fired. Chairwoman Russo said this is nice to hear and is glad you are doing this. The board gave thanks.

Before beginning the update on NEASC Dana acknowledged Wendy Charbonneau and Robin Ferreira who chaired the committee for the NEASC visiting team which happened in September; they are the accrediting body for secondary schools in New England. We had our visit in September and we really look at two different things: Teaching and

Learning and Support Standards. Chairing this committee for their visit is a huge undertaking. It is a grueling and difficult task and they did so well with it and really took the lead and made sure that every teacher did what they were supposed to do and everything down to the smallest detail was handled. This is a volunteered position and they gave so much of their time and effort and did a fantastic job. Dana wanted to thank them for everything they did to make this visit a success.

The NEASC Report is a 150 page report and what it boils down to is a series of commendations and recommendations. Dana went over the report which showed areas that were commendations and recommendations by the team. The team is made up of educators that come from all over New England; some are retired some are current educators and this is kind of a jury of your peers that evaluates what you are doing and whether or not you are implementing everything that you say you are. They come to see that those things are really being implemented and how they are working at the school level. This report needs to be publicized by March 13th and we will be sending it to the appropriate people to make sure it is released by then. The next thing we will be doing is a two year progress report and Pam, Wendy, Robin, Trish and I will be working to submit this report by the deadline. In this report we will address any of the areas that were either deficiencies or warnings and we don't anticipate any problems with that. The complete NEASC PowerPoint is on the website.

Rosa Richardson asked how long before the new school opens. Superintendent Cavallaro said in the fall of 2021. The good news is that library and the media center is the first section that they will start construction on this year. Technology and the library and some of the things mentioned while not specifically tied to the new building the problems will be resolved when the building is up.

Bob asked Dana to give him the highlights from the last NEASC Report to this report. Neil said one of the things that stick out in his mind is the library media center and that is what drove the need to move forward with the new facility. Trish will provide Bob with a copy of the two year special report that addresses the warnings and deficiencies we had last time which will look very similar to what we have right now.

Superintendent Cavallaro wanted to acknowledge Pam's being here tonight because of the work she put in prior. Neil said he is glad to see her and is glad she was here to be part of this. Applause.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

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

C.1.c. Board

Rosa Richardson met with the pupil services committee tonight.

Bob Guthrie said that the CAFE Day on the Hill scheduled for Wednesday has been postponed due to the weather until next Wednesday. Bob asked Superintendent Cavallaro to give him the status of the Community Relations Position because they

haven't seen or heard much from that person since UNH put them forward. Yes, Superintendent Cavallaro said he may be able to provide Bob a summary that has to be submitted for the student to receive credit and hopefully he will send him that before the next meeting.

Lauren Aceto said the next Health and Wellness Committee Meeting will be on May 7th at 5:30 PM because we didn't get to it tonight.

Pat Libero said on March 8th the daytime Wellness Committee is having a mini chop for the kids. Meg sends out a subject area and recipes are submitted and they go through them and pick one from each 4th grade and have a mini chop with people supervising and judging them. This is on March 8th in the West Haven High School at 3:30 PM. Neil is a judge and they usually ask the Mayor to be a judge and Al Greenwood will be another judge along with one other judge.

Sue Walker is a member of the Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee and West Haven High School is returning to the parade which begins at 1:00 PM on Sunday, March 11th. This will also be broadcast on WTNH if you are not able to attend the parade. We are all very proud that the WHHS Band will be marching in the parade.

Rosemary Russo shared a communication from Lisa Eberle to save the date for June 1st at Washington School they will be doing an author's reading event; more information will follow.

C.1.d. Committee

Patrick Leigh will wait until information from the MARB is received before reporting.

Rosa Richardson said the Pupil Services Committee had a very productive meeting this evening and hopefully we can resolve whatever minor issues we have.

Karen Pacelli said our next Curriculum Committee Meeting will be held on March 19th at 5:30 and we will dig deeper into SBAC. On April 2nd we have Attorney Rebecca Adams from CAFE attending our regular Board Meeting and she will be talking about the liabilities of out-of-state field trips.

Rosemary Russo said the Early Childhood Committee Meeting will be held on April 2nd at 5:15 PM.

Rosa Richardson made a recommendation that we find some consistency with when the committees meet so that we don't run into conflicts. Chairwoman Russo agrees and thinks that really good and she wants to address that. A couple of members have asked her when they should meet. There is no need to meet monthly if there is no need. You might want to meet quarterly or every other month. If the Chairman of each committee could set dates that they want we can coordinate the dates. Rosa said that would be great thank you.

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 Monday, February 5, 2018 at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes D.1.a.
Rosa Richardson made the motion to approve the minutes
Patrick Leigh seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.b. The West Haven Board of Education Curriculum Committee Meeting was held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, February 5, 2018 at 5:35 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes D.1.b.
Karen Pacelli made the motion to approve the minutes
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.1.c. The West Haven Board of Education Health and Wellness Committee Meeting was held in the Board of Education Meeting Room, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT on Monday, February 5, 2018 at 5:15 PM.

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve the Health and Wellness Committee Meeting minutes D.1.c.
Patrick Leigh made the motion to approve the minutes
Lauren Aceto seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Minutes are approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

18-09 Joanie Amato, Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach - WHHS
Effective: Immediately
Reason: Personal

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to approve item 18-09
Karen Pacelli made the motion

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor
Item 18-09 is approved

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

D.4. New Business

F. Informational

Chairwoman Russo asked for a motion to adjourn
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Pat Libero seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary

The Student Rep Report follows on the next page.

Board of Education

Student Rep Report

March 5, 2018

1. Last Friday, March 2nd, students, school administrators, members of the security team, Superintendent Cavallaro and State Representative Dorinda Borer participated in a forum focusing on school safety in the event of an intruder. Students voiced their opinions and asked questions regarding the issue. Thank you, Superintendent Cavallaro for attending.
2. Interested students will be participating in the National School Walk Out on March 14th. The Walkout is at 10 a.m. and will last 17 minutes to honor the 17 students and staff members killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on Valentine's Day. The Walk Out is completely student led. Students who are interested in participating are being asked to sign a contract stating that they will follow all school rules and be silent through the memorial part of the event.
3. Lockdown drills were performed in all classrooms and the cafeteria on Tuesday, February 27th throughout all 8 periods.
4. The spring musical, "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee", is March 23rd & 24th at 7:30pm. There is also a 2 o'clock show on the 24th, which is free for senior citizens. Tickets can be bought in advance for \$12 from any cast/crew member. Tickets are \$15 at the door. All students are \$5
5. The girls hockey team previously played in the quarterfinals. Congratulations to the team for a successful season.
6. Wednesday, March 7th, is a half day
7. Juniors will be taking the SAT School Day Test on Wednesday, March 21st.
8. Juniors will be taking the NGSS Science test starting on March 26th. This test replaces the State CAPT Test.