

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
March 3, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on March 3, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, Chairman of the Board of Education at 7:20 p.m. The meeting opened with a pledge to the flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mark Palmieri, Chairman
Patrick O. Egolum
T. Sean Maher
Eric Murillo
M. Toni Paine
Robert Saley
Howard Horvath Jr.
Gerald A. Calabritto
Andrew DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Dr. JoAnn Andrees, Superintendent of Schools
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Shamsi Aysha and Faraz Sabir

Board Member Eric Murillo made a motion to add to the agenda **Motion 08-41** To disavow the actions of City Finance Director Robert Barron in appointing an Agent of Record on behalf of the Board of Education without its approval on or about January 30, 2008, and reaffirm the appointment of Income Inc. as agent of record for all group health, dental, prescription, and AD&D insurance for Board of Education Employees; and further, to authorize the chairman to notify the necessary parties regarding the foregoing.

Andy DePalma seconded the motion
Howard Horvath abstained as he was not present at the 6:00 PM meeting
All remaining members were in favor of adding this to the agenda
Motion carries

Board Member Jerry Calabritto made a motion to add an additional item to the agenda
Motion 08-42 That this West Haven Board of Education directs its agent of record to institute an eligibility census process within the next 30 days.

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All board members were in favor

Motion carries

B. PUBLIC PORTION

Ken Cox reminded everyone that tomorrow is a voting day and there is no smoking on school grounds. Please report if you see anyone doing this.

He talked about the Arts and Ideas Festival on June 14, 15, 21, and 22 in New Haven. This is a call for volunteers. High school students can get credit if they volunteer. Groups can volunteer (cub scouts and girl scouts). It is a great weekend and it is free and he would like to see West Haven involved. This year K-8 will be involved.

Neil Cavallaro said this is being done in collaboration with the annual All City Music Concert this year. We will have an art display. We will get permission from parents to take some of the artwork and allow Ken to display it at the Arts and Ideas Festival.

Public Portion closed at 7:25 PM

C.1. Administration

Dr. Andrees wanted to note for the record that Mr. Carney would not be with us this evening due to an emergency that has come up. He will not be giving a report. We will try to have him back for the next Board meeting on March 17th.

This is truly finance season and on Wednesday night at 5:30 we will be responding to questions from the finance committee at City Hall so if you are available we would love to have you join us. As an administrative team we have met and put together some information for you before we present it and the yellow package on your desk has this information. If you have questions don't hesitate to call.

The public hearing for our budget is set for April 3rd at 7:00 PM at West Haven High School. This will be sent to you in writing as well.

We are working with the Finance Committee Chair from the City to come up with a date where we will present our budget to the Council. This date will be forthcoming.

Mark Palmieri stated that Mrs. Rossi did mention some dates and times and this can be sent out on Friday to Board Members.

There is a field trip to approve tonight under New Business. This is a trip that students from Bailey frequently do so this is not new. This will take place in the Spring.

The preparation for the CAPT testing has been wonderful. Elementary schools particularly have done a lot throughout the week. Parents were encouraged to make sure their children have good meals etc.

Saturday morning the high school students were preparing to take this test and were very serious about it. I am quite pleased with all the preparation our staff has done to get students ready for this. Hopefully we will see this in our results through our teaching and other things we have done.

C.1.a Status of Schools

Neil Cavallaro commented on the ACT Program. He had the opportunity to attend all but one and we had a great time. It was really a nice Pep Rally. All the kids were pepped up about attending college. It is something that we hope will become a tradition the week before February vacation every year. We are very pleased with the initiative that our social workers took and also each school did their own thing with it. Mackrille named all the different colleges they went to and made 100 different footsteps with all college names on it. Forest did a whole presentation which included finances. Every school did something. I couldn't let this meeting go by without acknowledging the hard work of all the staff at the elementary schools.

Professional Development for the Freshman Academy has been initiated. The dates will be sent out. Sean Maher is the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee and has already been invited but all of you are invited to stop by anytime during the training and ask questions.

The next Curriculum Committee Meeting will take place prior to our next Board meeting. This will take place at 6:30 P.M. You will be given the curricula electronically to save paper. There will be five or six different curricula presented. If you have questions contact me or Mr. Maher.

Lou Persiani has done the carnival at Washington School the last three years. Lou will give us an overview. I will work with him to assure that all the policies and procedures are followed.

Lou stated that the carnival will run from Thursday night through Saturday over the Memorial Day Weekend. We will not be having the carnival on Sunday this year. The police will be there all evenings and the school is closed.

Jerry Calabritto said Lou has done a great job over the last few years and he supports the carnival.

Eric Murillo asked if the revenue has increased from the first year to last year. Lou stated that we took a hit last year. We made an extensive effort to make it a community project but it didn't quite go through. It might be a tough time of the month. We end up taking in about \$4,000.00 and I think we can improve on this by cutting overhead costs more. We will be starting Thursday and Friday and Saturday half a day.

Jerry Calabritto asked if ProTraxx was started during vacation. Neil stated we started Tier 1 training where people who will be administering the CEU process and will work out of this building have been trained. Neil's secretary and Linda Haynes have been working back and forth with ProTraxx to iron out some kinks. Tier 2 training for administrators will take place this month and Tier 3 training for most of the people in the district who typically do CEU workshops will then take place. The goal is that by our first workshop next year in August that everything is done in paperless fashion.

Dr. Andrees stated that the turnout for the Ninth Grade Academy has been wonderful. The feedback has been very positive. The turnout from Bailey was great. The key is the professional development that Neil has talked about and the planning that has been going on ahead of time. The professionalism and energy coming from our staff is resonating to our parents. This program is about kids and that is what it should be about. Kudos to the high school and the work that is being done to make this a reality for our kids.

C.1.b Student Representatives

Shamsi Aysha stated in collaboration with UCONN there is a three year study to educate the school about what can be done to solve the cheating problem that goes on and to find out what motivates students to cheat.

Theatre Workshop will present Godspell on March 13, 14, and 15 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door.

Faraz Sabir stated that softball and baseball will begin in a couple of weeks. Tennis and track season start April 1st with practice starting mid March. Schedules will be ready for the next board meeting.

There is a dodge ball tournament tomorrow at the WHHS gym for the sophomore class at 6:30. There are seven teams and we are looking forward to this.

C.1.c Board

Eric went to a Freshman Academy meeting at the high school and it was very informative. He was very impressed and wishes them good luck. They really have gotten this together. He knows this will be a great success for WHHS.

He went to the Washington School Pep Rally and it was phenomenal. What a bunch of great kids; the staff was fantastic in motivating the students for the CMT testing today.

Rob Saley has spoken to about 6 or 8 of people about the Freshman Academy and one parent stated it wouldn't have helped her daughter but would have helped her son. There are kids that may score high on the CMT's or may have a high GPA and it would not be necessary for them. For kids that are doing very well it may not be helping them at all.

He would like to consider formulating something where if kids do well on the CMT's and have taken honors classes – Neil Cavallaro interjected that they have heard the same comments and we are developing some criteria. If students score that goal in the seventh grade mastery we would consider it.

The incentive would be that pulling those kids out of the class in theory we would have smaller sections in order to give intensive help to those who need it. There is a scheduling issue that we are also working on. We would want to keep the same number of sections that we are currently offering to give the kids that really do need it smaller classes and a better chance to be successful. The number of kids involved would probably be 60 – 80 kids. We need a quick resolution because the kids are going to be getting their class selection sheets. We are looking at this for next year.

Dr. Andrees stated that the last thing she wants the Board to do is dictate to the high school so we try to work with the staff on this. The Academy has worked but the teachers have put this together and we don't want to undo all the good work that is going on.

Eric Murillo said the same feelings were mentioned to him by staff members and the staff is working on this.

Toni Paine said that a neighbor of hers said she went to the meeting and her daughter is entering freshman year and she said how comforting it was to her. Her daughter doesn't look like she should be a freshman next year so to put her into a big, huge group without a comfort zone would be difficult. This will be a comfort zone for her and personally I think it will create a community with camaraderie that will become stronger each year.

Mark Palmieri commended Dr. Andrees, Neil and the staff for the Freshman Academy. It is a new way of thinking and doing things and if it doesn't work we can always change it and you can't be afraid of change. I commend everyone involved for their hard work.

Mark also wanted to make a statement this evening. On Thursday, February 28th the City unanimously approved the new email retention policy within the City. The question was asked if this goes for the police department and the Board of Education. He wanted to make a statement that the Board of Education is aware of the obligation under the Freedom of Information Act with respect to emails and we ask the administration to insure that we are in full compliance to the extent the City may adopt a policy regarding the issue. We would not be legally bound by it nor authorized by law to develop our own policies affecting the board and the West Haven Public School System.

He wanted to make note that once again they are trying to chip away our policies but we stand alone.

Eric Murillo did get a packet of information regarding policy recommendations from CABE. He has to pass it along to the Committee and Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and see if we will implement it.

C.1.d Committee

Eric Murillo stated on March 17 we will have a technology committee meeting at 6:00 PM. Neil stated that a curriculum committee meeting will be held at 6:30 PM

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Executive Session Meeting,
February 4, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

D.1.b Regular Meeting West Haven Board of Education,
February 4, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

Sean Maher made a motion to approve Minutes **D.1.a** and **D.1.b.** inclusive

Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion

No discussion

All members were in favor

Motion carries

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

08-32 Nicholas Rascati, School Counselor, WHHS
Effective: End of the 2007/2008 Academic Year
Reason: Retirement

08-33 Tim Nixon, Boys Assistant Outdoor Track Coach, WHHS
Effective: February 11, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.3. Leave of Absence (Certified)

08-34 Lisa Piscitelli, Elementary Teacher Grade 4, Forest School
Effective: March 3, 2008
Reason: Four Week Extension of Child Rearing Leave

08-35 Denyse Miller, Speech-Language Pathologist, Blake Building
Effective: March 3, 2008
Reason: Child Rearing Leave Remainder of the 2007-2008 school year

D.4. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-36 Suzanne Reynolds, Literacy Aide, Molloy School
Effective: February 22, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-37 Donna Mueller, Cashier, Molloy School
Effective: February 7, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.5. New Hire: (Certified)

08-38 Elizabeth Warren, 63 Morris Ave., West Haven, CT 06516
Cross Country Coach, WHHS
Effective: August 24, 2008
Salary: \$1,500.00

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.1. through D.5. inclusive
Andy DePalma seconded the motion
No discussion
All members were in favor
Motions carry

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

D.7. New Business:

08-39 Field Trip Permission Request from Dr. Anthony J. Cordone, Principal,
Bailey Middle School requesting permission for graduating 8th Grade
students to experience a 3 day educational excursion to Rhode Island and
Massachusetts from June 4, 2008 to June 6, 2008

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve above Field Trip Request **Motion 08-39**
Eric Murillo seconded the motion
Discussion: Howard Horvath stated that at the risk of upsetting his daughter and
everybody else he knows this trip is well earned and students are deserving. This trip is
now \$500.00 it was \$400 when his son went and now it is \$500. This is a three day trip
and we should take another look at this to make sure we are being as frugal as we can be
as this price may keep some students from attending.

Mark Palmieri said there was a fund raiser for this trip and they broke the payment down
to help students attend.

Howie Horvath said if this is getting too pricy what can we do to ensure there is a great
trip at the end that includes everyone. A discussion ensued.

Eric Murillo stated we will approve it because we all want the kids to go but what are we
going to do for the future. We can bring this to a committee meeting to help ensure it
will be less expensive so all kids can go.

Patrick Egolum said we should see how many attended last year compared to this year to see if the attendance dropped because of the cost.

A discussion ensued.

All members were in favor

Motion carries

08-40 Approval of Capital Plan

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve the Capital Plan **Motion 08-40**

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

Discussion: Rob Saley asked what exactly are we approving here. Neil stated we are submitting it to the Council and at some point they will make a decision as to whether or not to go forward and appropriate the money in which case we will get involved with the project. We are not appropriating any funds tonight. A discussion ensued.

All members were in favor

Motion carries

08-41 To disavow the actions of the City Finance Director Robert Barron in appointing an Agent of Record on behalf of the Board of Education without its approval on or about January 30, 2008, and reaffirm the appointment of Income Inc. as agent of record for all group health, dental, prescription, and AD&D insurance for Board of Education Employees; and further, to authorize the chairman to notify the necessary parties regarding the foregoing.

Eric Murillo made a motion to approve Motion **08-41**

Andy DePalma seconded the motion

Discussion: Rob Saley wanted to add an amendment that the audit be done annually and a discussion ensued. It was decided to get this one done and see what kind of work is involved and to take it from there. Rob Saley rescinded his amendment.

Howard Horvath abstained as he was not present at the 6:00 PM meeting

All remaining members were in favor of motion **08-41**

Motion carries

Motion 08-42 That this West Haven Board of Education direct its agent of record to institute an eligibility census process within the next 30 days.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve **Motion 08-42**

Rob Saley seconded the motion

Discussion: Rob Saley stated he is shocked that we have never done this before and I am glad we are doing this.

Jerry Calabritto stated he heard this before from Ovation Benefits but nothing was done.

Toni Paine stated she asked this to be done for three years in a row. Each year it was going to be done and never was.

Eric Murillo asked if the company was going to follow up on the scope of work and make sure it is being done for us.

All members were in favor

Motion carries

F. Informational:

Toni Paine suggested that the Board only receive one High School Year Book to keep in the file rather than nine. Some of the kids can't afford the year book. This was agreed upon by the board members. If they have already been printed they can be given to a student who can't afford it. The books cost \$70.00 one will be sufficient to keep in the board office.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to end the meeting

Andy DePalma seconded the motion

All were in favor

The meeting ended at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola

Board Secretary