

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
June 30, 2008
Special Board Meeting

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on June 30, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, President 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
Gerald A. Calabritto
Eric Murillo
T. Sean Maher
Robert Saley
M. Toni Paine
Patrick Egolum
Howard Horvath
Andy DePalma

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor John M. Picard

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

Mark Palmieri requested a moment of silence for one of our best board of education worker's mother. Ray Mulligan's mom, Genevieve, passed away.

B.1. Administration

Mark asked Neil Cavallaro for any administrative reports. Neil stated that Jeff Grande is here from the Business Network Group to talk about a proposal and to update us. He has been working around the building the past couple of weeks. John Lessandrini is leaving us and is our true only tech person that works directly with networks etc. John was hired as an intern when he was still in school. Upon graduation from school he was hired as a full time employee and a position was created for him. As our technology department grew his roles and responsibilities grew and today is John's last day. Jeff Grande has worked with our system for awhile and is somewhat familiar with it, so before we post the position we need to redefine what that position should look like. We already have

people like Fran, and Charlie who are doing a lot of the work but we really want to get them focused back on the education part; the scheduling, reports and those kinds of things. Jeff will give us a report based on his perception of what is going on in the district as far as where we are and where we need to be. It will be my recommendation that before we hire him we allow Jeff to work with us and help us write a job description for that position and set up an IT type department.

Jeff stated that losing John Lessandrini is a sad day as he achieved an incredible amount of work with a small team for such a large district. What was first discovered was that there was one man working with some other folks who were actually doing the job of probably four engineers. This is a credit to his aptitude and hard work ethic.

In simple terms we have software that runs the school system and there is hardware that it all runs on. Our network is an asset. It has grown throughout the district. It was established years ago prior to John's arrival and it kept growing in various directions. Overall my goal in the next six months in working with the staff is to develop a single policy for IT and a single plan for IT as opposed to fourteen individual subsets of a plan that I kind of witnessed in the last two weeks. He explained that every school has a personality; not just on the administrative side but on how it is laid out etc. It is evident in the network itself. In schools such as Forest the network is very finely tuned. They followed our recommendations from the last time he addressed the board with respect to technology deployment for desk top computers and computer labs. It is very well organized and clean and has probably a two year life span with respect to any immediate problems there. Other schools are not so lucky. The Middle Schools need a little more attention. We desperately need to do some infrastructure building which involves things such as switches, servers and things of that nature.

One of the other things we uncovered during the assessment is that some of the folks that are doing the work on a day to day basis probably should be doing some other things with respect to strategic thinking and planning because they are so close to the technology and are close as educators to their teachers. One of our goals is that existing folks who have been here the longest would be able to tutor and mentor existing staff and help us develop that new infrastructure.

We also need to look at standard operating procedures. We need a Help Desk as we have 14 subsets of different policies (various school policies etc.) There needs to be more work done for a centralized support mechanism. There should be a formal process if a problem occurs. An example would be whoever would get to John or Fran first would get their problem solved. Neil stated that this ultimately keep a person from doing what they are in a particular building to do. This is called Scope Creep and this happens a lot. Scope Creep definitely throws off our ultimate goal of strategic thinking. We need to focus more on strategic thinking and planning so we have one unified policy. A further discussion ensued. We need to build a knowledge base of formal procedures which people can pull from and begin to start doing trouble shooting etc. We establish that with

strategic planning and by developing standard procedures so we can get the next group of people in here to run the school district.

Rob Saley asked how the mega line we talked about three months ago fall into place with you. It is basically another item on a check list you would have to deal with. You have to take a close look because when they hand you off a piece of fiber we will make certain there is a home for it that the equipment is properly rack stacked and labeled and in most cases making sure we are utilizing the line properly. Most importantly is to hold the vendor accountable for what is being delivered. Rob asked if this is before or after the cart and was told that it is irrelevant to the cart.

Neil Cavallaro said Jeff is willing to come and let us know what is going on. He will periodically update us on what progress is being made and what he sees.

Mark Palmieri thanked John Lessandrini for all his hard work and stated he was an asset here and wished him well in his new position.

John Lessandrini stated he did start here eight years ago and there was no technology staff at all. Since meeting and working with Jeff during the past few weeks he feels much more comfortable now going on to better my career and knows he is leaving the Board of Education in good hands as they have worked with him during the past four or five years on different projects and they know how our school district runs. The transition will be a lot smoother.

Toni Paine asked if this would be an assessment and recommendation as far as direction. Neil stated yes and they will be running the network for the next six months.

Mark Palmieri stated that Jeff has a whole team that will handle our needs 24-7.

Neil said we need to make sure the teachers in the buildings, the administrators know you are here and how to get in touch with you. We want them to be able to access the HELP Desk. Jeff said they will develop framework in the next couple of weeks to establish a practice and policy and communicate that. We can have meeting with the board and anything else you want to help us communicate this.

The board thanked Mr. Grande.

Mr. Carney who was scheduled to update the board on current building projects had an emergency and could not be here today but he will get back in touch with us and give us an update.

B.1.a. Status of Schools

Neil Cavallaro shared information with board members as to where we were with hiring etc. He stated in a shortage areas such as math and social workers as soon as we get a good teacher we must get them on the agenda and secure them. That is true of all of our candidates. Almost all candidates at the elementary level have had long term experience

and tonight we even have people who are bilingual and who have done long term subbing. There is one item on the agenda #08-117 where that person has accepted a position with another district where she was doing some ELL work. We feel pretty good about where we are because we have had a decent pool of candidates. A lot of the school districts in the area are experiencing some of the cutbacks that we experienced a couple of years ago.

Neil thanked Jeff and his company for doing the work and encouraged board members to allow them to go forward with that plan. As I begin my new job as Superintendent this has to be a priority for not only me but also for the board. Over the next six months it is the next crucial step as to where we need to go in the area of technology.

At our next regular meeting I will show you where I believe we can save some money. The creation of a Science Coordinator position is crucial to all levels; elementary, middle and high school to continue the momentum to build toward that testing which we started in grades 5 and 8 and also is a big part of our CAPT testing. I will show you where I believe we can save some money without creating any new positions. This is a priority of mine as we move forward. Neil will make a presentation at our next meeting. The creation of this position and the IT position are two of my main priorities.

As some of you may or may not know there is always some reorganization in this building and that is natural at the time a new superintendent comes in. I'll be meeting with some of our administrators as well as well as rearranging some of the clerical roles and responsibilities. I will finalize a plan to you regarding the Assistant Superintendent because I think that is going to be important to let them come in and be part of that plan and look at that person's strengths and weaknesses and make some adjustments as we move forward.

Neil stated that all new hire positions except one was an already open existing position. The exception is 08-123 a Part Time Art Teacher. Neil went on to explain how the money for this position can be taken out of IEA funds as it is a Special Ed need.

Neil worked with Ann Valanzuolo because the goal is to bring one literacy teacher back in every school. Last year the board was good enough to give us back two positions. We were going to look at our hiring and see if we saved enough money to by bring people in at lower steps so we could find the money for those positions. The good news is that we contacted a couple of principals where we have two grades at two different schools where we can combine three classes into two classes and get the two literacy positions we need to run the school. This would be a win situation for the four schools that are currently sharing literacy teachers and will help with our test scores. Neil will keep us posted on this.

Eric Murillo asked him to further explain this. Neil said he has a school where there are 3 third grade classes with 14 students in each class. If he closes a class and has 2 classes of 21 students each he can have that extra teacher as a literacy teacher who would service more students throughout the building.

The board gave thanks.

B.1.b. Board

Rob Saley said he knows we do some recycling in the community and asked that the facility committee Toni, Sean and Andy can sit down before we meet next month and talk about some things we can do . We can possibly take one or two schools and begin a pilot program and save some money. We will talk about this at the end of July.

B.1.c. Committee

Mayor Picard wanted to wish Neil good luck; tomorrow is July 1st.

Neil said he has had conversations with the Mayor regarding our IT and eventually sharing a lot of services which will benefit everyone down the road.

Eric Murillo stated that at the Policy Committee Meeting regarding advertising in the school system which was held earlier this evening, he sent out information for board members to look at because he has some concerns. He feels the benefits are much greater and if we all keep an eye on the kind of advertisement we will accept we will be able to make this program succeed.

Mark Palmieri stated that we discussed with the Mayor earlier this evening that we will work with the city too and we will adopt the same policy.

The board gave thanks.

Howie Horvath wanted to thank Mark for his work on spearheading the farewell party it was very nicely done and took a bit of work on your part. He also thanked the Mayor for making it an extra special event by having helped secure a \$50,000.00 donation for Take A Seat. It is a direct reflection of not only the commitment of this group and JoAnn but the kind of work Sean and his wife Margi have done in making this happen.

Neil said we thank the board and council for moving this because this is obviously a time of the year when we can make some headway.

Mark said the Graduation and the Honor Societies were just fabulous. Everything went well.

C. Public Portion

There were no speakers.

D.1. Approval of Minutes:

**D.1.a. West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting, June 9, 2008
6:30 p.m. at the Blake Building**

**D.1.b. West Haven Board of Education Special Meeting, June 20, 2008
5:00 p.m. in the WHHS Auditorium**

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve the minutes with the one correction in the June 9th Minutes deleting Rob Saley's name and inserting Toni Paine's in its place.

T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

All in favor

Minutes were approved

D.2. New Hires (Certified)

08-114 Breanna Wajnowski, 116 Skyline Drive, West Haven, CT 06516
Math Teacher, WHHS
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$36,842.76 (Step 3 B.S.)

08-115 Ronald J. Luneau, 6 Trumbull Street, Derby, CT 06418
Alternate Program Teacher
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$45,911.50 (Step 6 B.S. + 30)

08-116 Jillian Ianniello, 12 Peter Lane, West Haven, CT 06516
Kindergarten Teacher – Forest School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$37,411.34 (Step 2 B.S. + 30)

08-117 Removed

08-118 Ashley Halligan, 220 Richmond Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Elementary Teacher – Grade 5 Forest School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$36,842.76 (Step 3 B.S.)

08-119 Elizabeth Gambardella, 437 West River Road, Orange, CT
06477
Elementary Teacher – Grade 3 Thompson School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$36,842.76 (Step 3 B.S.)

08-120 Allison Wendt, 8 Mountain View Road, West Haven, CT 06516
Elementary Teacher – Grade 4 Forest School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$40,808.54 (Step 4 B.S. + 30)

- 08-121** **Stacy Sutton**, 8 Lynmoor Street, Milford, CT 06460
Elementary Teacher – Grade 4 Molloy School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$40,808.54 (Step 4 B.S. + 30)
- 08-122** **James Turcio**, 16 First Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Full Time Social Worker – Washington School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$48,190.46 + Stipend (Step 6 B.S. + 60)
- 08-123** **Kathleen Conlon**, 48 Soundview Heights, Branford, CT 06405
Half time Itinerant Art Teacher
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$18,035.02 (Step 2 B.S.)

D.3. Resignations: (Certified)

- 08-124** **Jan Nelmes**, Science Teacher, Carrigan
Effective: June 21, 2008
Reason: Retirement
- 08-125** **Joseph Szostek**, Fourth Grade Teacher – Molloy
Effective: July 30, 2008
Reason: Personal
- 08-126** **William Davis**, Special Education Teacher – WHHS
Effective: August 25, 2008
Reason: Personal
- 08-127** **Erin Stevens**, English Teacher – Bailey
Effective: June 30, 2008
Reason: Relocation
- 08-128** **Rita M. Bruno**, Library Media Specialist – SRCS
Effective: July 1, 2008
Reason: Personal
- 08-129** **Clifford Bugyi**, Assistant Football Coach - WHHS
Effective: June 12, 2008
Reason: Personal
- 08-130** **Caitlin Wingardner**, Special Education Teacher – Pagels
Effective: June 30, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.4. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-131 **Kathy L. Barra**, 10 Month Clerk – Blake Building
Effective: July 10, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-132 **Richard Vescovi**, Head Custodian – Bailey
Effective: July 18, 2008
Reason: Retirement

Mark stated that on D-2 there were two corrections: 08-117 was a late scratch and should be removed and 08-121 should read Molloy School (Corrections made above)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.2 – D.4. inclusive as corrected.

Toni Paine seconded the motion

No discussion

All in favor

Minutes were approved

E. New Business:

08-133 **Request from Gary Palermo** for six new para-professional positions in the Pupil Services Department to support our in-district special education programs.

Toni Paine made a motion to approve 08-133

Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion

No discussion

All in favor

Item 08-133 was approved

08-134 **Request from Board Member Eric Murillo** for consideration of new Advertising Policy.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-134

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

Discussion: Neil Cavallaro stated this is something the board will want to follow Chris so we may call upon you for some reports to show what kind of revenue you are generating.

All in favor

Item 08-134 was approved

Mark Palmieri stated to Chris that the letter will be taken care of and sent out this week and a message will also be sent to Mr. Conlan at the rink when he gets back from vacation correct? Yes was the response.

F. Informational:

Eric Murillo wanted to thank John Lessandrini for all his hard work over the past eight years. He has definitely done a tremendous job. I wish him all the best in his future.

The board gave thanks.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to go into Executive Session for purposes stated in the agenda.

Andy DePalma seconded the motion

All in favor

Executive Session began at 6:40 PM.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to come out of Executive Session

Patrick Egolum seconded the motion

All in favor

Executive Session closed at 7:17 PM

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Patrick Egolum. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola

Board Secretary