

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
May 19, 2008
Regular Board Meeting

The Regular meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on May 5, 2008. The meeting was called to order by Mark Palmieri, President of the Board of Education at 7:00 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
Andrew DePalma
Howard Horvath

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor John Picard

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Lauren Aceto
Shamsi Aysha

C. Reports:

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve Item A.2. on the Agenda which is also numbered 08-76 Appointment of Neil Cavallaro as the next Superintendent of Schools in the West Haven School District which is the majority consensus of the Search Committee.

Eric Murillo seconded this motion

Discussion: Jerry Calabritto stated it was an honor to do this. He had the honor of sitting in Mark Palmieri's chair when Neil was appointed Assistant Superintendent. It is an honor to be in this chair to see him ascend to Superintendent. He has complete confidence in Mr. Cavallaro and looks forward to working with him during his next two years on this board.

Rob Saley questioned the fact that there was no salary negotiated as yet. He was reassured that this board would be in line with the current Superintendent's contract. Neil stated he was OK with this.

Mayor Picard stated that Neil is a person with character and while waiting for Dr. Andrees to arrive he filled the position admirably and did an excellent job. He cares about the Board of Education, the City and mostly about the children. Neil has learned from a different system and a different person and this

only makes him that much better as a leader and Superintendent. He thanked Neil for his patience and for helping out a great deal a few years back and continuing to always do your job with the utmost integrity. Mayor Picard congratulated Neil again.

Mark Palmieri stated we brought this to the first item of business is that this is one of the most important votes that this board is going to make. He stated that Mr. Cavallaro and Dr. Andrees have worked side by side working together very nicely with the best intent for the children of this district. He said that they both learned a lot from each other and have grown through this. He thanked the board for their hard work during the search committee. A great decision was made and he is very happy that Mr. Cavallaro will accept the position of Superintendent.

All board members voted in favor
No one was opposed
No one abstained
Item 08-76 was approved

Neil Cavallaro was appointed Superintendent of Schools.

Congratulations and applause took place.

Mr. Cavallaro's family was acknowledged. His wife Nancy and his three children Lindsay, Catherine and Connor received applause.

Mr. Cavallaro thanked Mayor Picard, Mark Palmieri, and members of the board for their unwavering support and the confidence shown in him in taking on the position of Superintendent of Schools. He thanked Dr. Andrees for the support given him over the past two years. The sign of a great leader is that while they are instructing you they are preparing you for the future. She was performing her duties and making me ready to succeed her when the time came. He stated he will miss her and the support given him and won't let her down. He stated that this will be a smooth and seamless transition and we have already begun this process.

Neil stated he comes from a family of educators and knows they are all proud of him and he wants to publicly thank them because without their support he wouldn't be here tonight. He wishes his dad could have been here tonight to see his son become the leader of an entire school district. He acknowledged the support of his wife Nancy and his three children and that includes his son Connor who was present.

He pledged an open door policy and looks forward to hearing concerns and sharing his ideas. It is OK to have disagreements but it is essential there be communication. It is our job to be responsive to the citizens of the community. He believes we are in for some tough times; money is drying up, taxes are high and while that is the case expectations also remain high. We will be forced to do more with fewer resources. He believes in our teachers, support staff, parents and everyone here who makes up the school system. He believes our city is a great place to live. He pledged to do his best for all and work as hard as he can.

Applause followed and the board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees extended her personal congratulations to Neil and stated it has been a pleasure to work with him the last two years. As a result of working together and sharing ideas I think I learned as much from him as he learned from me. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to work with a young man as talented.

There was never anything we asked him to do that he didn't do and do well. We are blessed to have Neil as one of the 168 Superintendents in the State of Connecticut. This town should be proud. She extended her congratulations to Neil. Applause followed.

C.1. Administration

Mark Palmieri stated we are going to change our agenda and do the administration part before the public session. We have some great programs to show you and young children are here with their parents. are quite pleased and proud of the work that is done by our students

Dr. Andrees wanted to begin the program by showing everyone what the gifted and talented students are doing with their Smart boards.

Tammy Perzanoski introduced the following three students who gave a demonstration of the smart board:

Stephanie Latella, Forest School – The Mary Celeste
Robert Hawes, Thompson School – Lock Ness
Lizi Bowen, Mackrille School – Machu Pichu

Parents of the three students were also acknowledged and invitations to Mystery Day were distributed to Board Members.

Another presentation of this will be held at Pagels School on May 30th and it will be called Mystery Day. The audience and board loved the presentations and applauded.

Patti Fusco took pictures of the students.

Neil introduced Paul Cavanna, Liz Warren and Scott Shand the administrator in charge of The Freshman Academy. They made a presentation on The Freshman Academy. Their goal is to find a way to make high school friendlier and more structured for incoming students and they have succeeded. Questions The complete presentation is an attachment to these minutes.

The board gave thanks.

The following students from Seth Haley were introduced by their Principal Rita Pepe and teacher Kathy Iaccarino:

Thomas Nelson - Henry IV
Thomas Wilkerson – Narrator Chorus
Kyle Cullen - Hamlet
Michael Tran – Richard II

They each made a short, live presentation from their “A Little Touch of Shakespeare” performance and a video was shown. All board members received a copy of the video. The video is also for rent at Tommy K.

Special thanks were given to WHHS students Tim Finoia and Michael Connors who helped greatly with this production. Mrs. Pepe stated what a wonderful opportunity it was to work with the Tim and Michael who also went on location with them. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The student's parents were acknowledged and Patti Fusco took pictures of all the students.

The board gave thanks.

The following students all received recognition from the board for their achievements and pictures were taken of them. Board President, Mark Palmieri distributed pins to each student. Their family members were all acknowledged by the board. A round of applause for each individual student was given.

Thomas Nelson a 5th grade student from Seth Haley has received Honorable Mention in the Connecticut Student Writer, the statewide magazine that recognizes excellence in student writing grades K – 12.

Catherine DePino, a 6th grade student from Bailey Middle School is the 4th place over-all winner in her grade level for the State of Connecticut in the Connecticut Elks State Drug Awareness Essay Contest.

Lauren Aceto, a senior in West Haven High School has been awarded the Excellence in Citizenship Award for 12th grade students by Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz. Lauren is also one of the Student Reps for the Board of Education.

Patti Fusco took pictures individually of the winners and plaques were distributed by Chairman Mark Palmieri. A group shot of students were also taken.

Dr. Andrees thanked the family members of the above students for their support in helping the students to get to this level. Family members were acknowledged with a round of applause.

The board gave thanks.

Dr. Andrees stated that doesn't that make you proud to see how our tax dollars are being used in our community.

Chairman Palmieri said there will be a two minute recess so parents may exit and then we will resume with the meeting.

Mayor Picard stated that he attended the play Annie which was held at Carrigan earlier this month. The play was absolutely exceptional. His ten month old daughter sat on his lap and loved every minute of it. The Cabaret which was done at Westwoods Friday night was incredible.

We all know about the tragedy that happened and West Haven citizens all pulled together to support Ralph Russo's family.

I'm proud of West Haven and all that it has accomplished. Look at what we saw here tonight and the art boards that were up at those two events and the fund raiser for Take A Seat are all things we are very proud of. These are just a few of the things we should be proud of. The Jr. Achievement at Thompson, the landscaping at Sheridan are all things we should take pride in. Neil said that these are tough times and they are. We have a lot of help from our parents, PTA's, teachers, corporate leaders, and friends

etc. who go into their pockets and donate money. We won the Heart Association walk yesterday and that is thanks to a lot of people here. It shows what we have accomplished. He went to the UNH mock crime scene that WHHS shares in and that was a wonderful learning experience. I am very proud of these things and I want to congratulate Neil again. He thanked the board for tonight's presentation.

Everyone is invited tomorrow in front of City Hall at 11:00 a.m. you will see West Haven Connecticut's Friendliest City. We will release the ten rules to live by right now and the students will come up with the last four tomorrow. This is to promote being friendly; this becomes contagious. Tomorrow I will sign this pledge and the ten rules to live by will be released tomorrow. People want to come to a town that is friendly. We know what we have here we want everyone else to know.

Dave Cappetta is the Finance Person you are hiring tonight. He has a strong accounting background and I can tell you it took us months of searching to get the correct person. You have an excellent individual in Dave Cappetta who is a long time West Haven person with a great financial background. He will do an excellent job.

The board gave thanks.

Hooker McMahon congratulated Neil Cavallaro and introduced his son Jim McMahon from Income Inc. who updated the board on the eligibility census. The eligibility census is almost complete. It was decided after a lengthy discussion that there are 44 people who will be contacted by Union Reps to make sure their paperwork is complete. A further discussion ensued.

Jim McMahon passed out an outline of what it entailed to complete this census to date and feels that by the next board meeting we should have 90% complete. A final correct audit can not be made until the enrollment eligibility census is accurate and complete.

It was decided that Jim McMahon and the Board's attorney Floyd Dugas will converse regarding the action of withholding payment of claims for medical services rendered if paperwork has not been completed. Another discussion ensued.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to add the following item to tonight's agenda:

08-86 Ratification of the West Haven Federation of Nurses Contract

Rob Saley seconded the motion

All members were in favor

No one was opposed

Motion 08-86 has been approved

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to add the following two items to tonight's agenda:

08-87 – New Hire – Richard Hemming, Math Teacher at WHHS effective August 26, 2008

Salary \$39,110.74 (Step 3 B.S. + 30)

08-88 – Authorization from this board to authorize Income Inc. to tell Anthem Blue Cross to withhold payment of insurance claims to those 44 non-compliant individuals pending verification approval of our board's attorney.

Toni Paine seconded both motions

Discussion: Jerry said regarding 08-88 this is the first step we do to get the people who have not moved on the paperwork to do so.

All board members were in favor

No board member was opposed

No board member abstained

Motions 08-87 and 08-88 have been approved

C.1.a Status of Schools

All set

C.1.b Student Representatives

Lauren Aceto reminded the board members to fill out the forms for caps and gowns for commencement exercises.

Shamsi Aysha informed everyone that this Sunday May 25th at 2:00 p.m. the WHHS band will have their annual solo ensemble concert. There is no charge for this.

The board gave thanks.

C.1.c Board

T. Sean Maher congratulated Neil and complimented Mr. Paolino and his staff. He went on a tour of Thompson School and was extremely impressed with the facility and the way the staff and Mr. Paolino carry out the day. It was a great time.

Howard Horvath thanked the student representatives. He also thanked Dr. Andrees, Mr. Cavallaro, and Mr. Ogren for conducting an On-line Pilot on Classroom Management which was very valuable.

Rob Saley said that over the last three or four months he always polled his customers and out of the 15 people he questioned not one said we should go out of the district in our search this time. He stated that he feels he made the right decision and congratulated Neil.

Toni Paine congratulated Neil. She attended the concert at WHHS the other night and they did a great job. Last week she went to Washington School and Sen. Dodd was there and was quite impressed with the lunch program there. Donna Kosiorowski spoke in Washington D.C. this past weekend. Sen. Dodd was advocating that schools around the United States would receive some type of program modeled after our program. I was quite impressed by this and wanted to congratulate them for this.

I am also very proud of the NEASC results.

Mark Palmieri congratulated Mr. Paolino at Thompson School for the Jr. Achievement function. It was a great day and the kids were fantastic. He too attended the All City Concert and Choir and saw his son's painting there and he felt good about this. He gets all his athleticism from his mother and his artwork from me. (laughter) It was a wonderful evening.

Mark congratulated Neil and stated that he knows this board and the Mayor and City Council would like to keep the open door communication we have had going and that this will continue. I look forward to working with everyone and the new superintendent.

C.1.d Committee

Nothing more

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1.a West Haven Board of Education Regular Meeting, May 5, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Blake Bldg. (enclosure)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.1.a.

T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

Discussion: Howard Horvath stated he did not attend the last board meeting so he would abstain

Howard Horvath abstained

No one was opposed

All remaining board members approved D.1.a.

Minutes were approved

D.2. New Hires (Certified)

08-77 Tim Nixon, 200 Elm Street, Apt. 418 West Haven, CT 06516
Asst. Football Coach WHHS
Effective: August 18, 2008
Salary: \$3,500.00

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-77

Toni Paine seconded the motion

No discussion

All board members were in favor

No one abstained

Motion 08-77 was approved

08-78 Meaghan Damato, 506 Orange Street, New Haven, CT 06511
System wide Speech Pathologist
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$49,898.40 + Stipend (Step 7 B.S. + 60)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-78

Toni Paine seconded the motion

No discussion

All board members were in favor

No one abstained

Motion 08-78 was approved

08-79 Nomiki Kanakius, 171 Rock Road, North Haven, CT 06473
Special Education Teacher, Seth Haley Pre-School
Effective: August 26, 2008
Salary: \$40,808.54 (Step 4 B.S. + 30)

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-79
Toni Paine seconded the motion
No discussion
All board members were in favor
No one abstained
Motion 08-79 was approved

D.2. New Hires (Non-Certified)

08-80 **David Cappetta**, 152 Richmond Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Director of Finance
Effective: To Be Determined
Salary: Per CWA Contract

Eric Murillo made a motion to approve 08-80
Andy DePalma seconded the motion
Discussion: The salary for this position per the CWA contract will be \$80,629.00 We have gone close to a year now without a finance director. Mr. Cappetta will be hired at the top step per the contract.
No one was opposed
Jerry Calabritto and Mark Palmieri abstained
Remaining board members were in favor
Motion 08-80 was approved

D.3. Resignations: (Certified)

08-81 **Kathleen Braren**, Social Worker, Washington School
Effective: July 1, 2008
Reason: Retirement

08-82 **Jaimie M. Jannitto**, Science Teacher, Carrigan Middle School
Effective: June 30, 2008
Reason: Personal

08-83 **Barbara Abrams**, Speech/Language Pathologist ISSIS
Effective: June 30, 2008
Reason: Retirement

08-84 **Kimberly Boyke**, Spanish Teacher, WHHS
Effective: June 30, 2008
Reason: Personal

D.4. Resignations: (Non-Certified)

08-85 **Albert Capasso**, Assistant Custodian, Thompson School
Effective: May 5, 2008
Reason: Retirement

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve D.3. through D.4. inclusive
Rob Saley seconded these motions
All members voted in favor
No one opposed
No one abstained
Motion D.3. 08-81 through D.4. 08-85 were approved

D.5. Leave of Absence: (Certified)

D.6. New Business: (Items added earlier this evening to tonight's board meeting)

08-86 Ratification of the West Haven Federation of Nurses Contract

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-86
Rob Saley seconded the motion
All members were in favor
No one was opposed
No one abstained
Motion 08-86 has been approved

08-87 – New Hire – Richard Hemming, Math Teacher at WHHS effective August 26, 2008
Salary \$39,110.74 (Step 3 B.S. + 30)

08-88 – Authorization from this board to authorize Income Inc. to tell Anthem Blue Cross to withhold payment of insurance claims to those 44 non-compliant individuals pending verification approval by our board's attorney

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to approve 08-87 and 08-88
T. Sean Maher seconded the motion
No Discussion
All in favor
No one was opposed
No one abstained
Motions 08-87 and 08-88 have been approved.

B. PUBLIC PORTION

Mark Palmieri apologized as we forgot to do public portion earlier this evening.

The Public Portion began at 8:55 PM

Margi Maher thanked everyone here who supported the Take A Seat Cabaret. It was a wonderful night and due to everyone's generosity we raised just shy of \$5,000.00. We thank you. We also want to let you know that this Thursday and Friday night we have our senior directed play called Romeo To Go. The cost is \$5.00 and all the money goes to two very deserving families.

Love Letters by A. R. Gurney on Saturday, June 7th at 8:00 at the Frank Albright Black Box Theatre in WHHS it is about two people who have been writing to each other since they were 8 years old. The cost is \$25.00 and all proceeds benefit the WHHSTW "Take A Seat" program.

Patricia Fusco, 311 Shingle Hill Rd., West Haven reminded the Board of the up-coming retirement party for retirees at Anthony's on Tuesday, June 3rd at 6:00 PM Tickets are \$35.00. Patti has tickets. Save the date!

Patti commented on the fact that she would be remiss in her duties as Union President if she did not point out a couple of things:

- All union presidents were called together and were informed about the audit. She clarified certain aspects of the letter sent out by Income Inc. that were unclear. Some of the addresses may have been incorrect
- The union presidents were told they would be given a list of all the non-compliant people so that we could contact them as perhaps they don't understand the process.
- Many of the members contacted her because they could not get in contact with Income Inc. Patti cautioned the board to be very careful about allowing Anthem to withhold payment when perhaps it is not the fault of the members at all. It could be an incorrect address.

She stated she is concerned about the board going forward and sending out a letter. She hopes the board would give the union presidents a chance to contact their members and make sure they understood the process because a lot of them clearly did not.

Mark asked where the list was that had been discussed. Patti has no idea as he used an old list that Susan Jayne had already done an excellent job of updating. A further discussion ensued.

Mark Palmieri stated that he would get Patti the list so the unions can contact their members.

Neil Cavallaro stated that the McMahan's should contact each union president with the names on the list so they can contact their members. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea.

The board gave thanks.

Public Portion ended at 9:00 PM

F. Informational:

T. Sean Maher said there was a correction on the Love Letters poster that he made. The day is wrong.

It is **Saturday, June 7th** not Friday, June 7th. **Please note this correction.**

Mark Palmieri asked for a motion to adjourn

Jerry Calabritto made a motion to adjourn

T. Sean Maher seconded the motion

All members were in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary