

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 8, 2020

Regular Board Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on September 8, 2020 at West Haven High School Cafe, McDonough Plaza, West Haven, CT. Cebi Waterfield, Chairperson of the Board of Education called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Alliance.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rosa Richardson, Vice Chair
Patricia Libero, Secretary/Treasurer
James Morrissey
Anne Heffernan
Andrea Talamelli
Robert Guthrie
Patrick Egolum

ABSENT:

Rosemary Russo

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil C. Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT:

Anthony Ventrella
Mackenzie Gardner

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Kristen Scanlon - 77 Court St - see attached

Surry Schlabs – 56 Greenway St, Hamden, CT – addressed the board regarding windows at WHHS bolted shut and the HVAC system.

Marilyn Halligan – Richmond Ave – Co-President of Paraprofessionals addressed the board regarding being safe at work and asking for plastic trifold shields when interacting with students.

Public Portion Closed 6:15 pm

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro gave a review of the first day of school, enrollment, and bus counts. Every child had a mask on. The union reps, Gilbane Construction and the Chairman of the Building Committee had previously meet to review that all windows in the new WHHS building would be closed because the new systems air is fresher with the windows closed. With respect to the teachers, we have tried to work with them. Saying we have not is false. Issues are handled at the building level. Administrators' had team meetings. I told them to make sure to get the staff involved and address any concerns. Schools had mask breaks and certainly, teachers can take a mask break. Dr. Williams and Jill Grego, Nursing Supervisor have stated that taking temperatures is not recommended. It is the responsibility of the parent to send the kids to school in good health. All kids came to school with masks. This shows me that the parents spoke to their children on the importance of wearing a mask. To say we do not listen is not true. The medical experts have told staff, if you are sick stay home. There are 37 teachers out on maternity, FMLA or COVID related leave. We did deny to work from home. All staff is covered at this time. If we need them, we may call on them. Yes, they are using their sick time because that is what sick time is for. We have certified staff filling in. The last two weeks, we have had HVAC cleaning. Our carpenters made beautiful Plexiglas dividers. We are working with WB Mason on getting more Plexiglas. It is on backorder. Busses are not at capacity or late because New Haven is not in school. We had Reopening Committee meetings to address the union concerns and tried to get all concerns resolved. I was made aware of a positive test last week and another positive test over the weekend. It is not school related. If it is not school related what is our responsibility, it is new territory, challenging. People got defensive when the contact tracer contacted them. The schools are operating at a safe level. Congratulations to Matt Cavallaro, he had a baby boy today.

Rosa Richardson – wasn't WHHS designed with windows that will not open?

Neil – yes, but to replace the ones in the front of the old building because they are less than 20 years old would be a bonding issue and a reimbursement penalty.

James Morrissey – students on Distance Learning 25 %, is that in the same range as other districts.

Neil – people did not log in in a timely manner. Some people are also opting back into school. My concerns is at what point do the students opting out return to school.

James Morrissey – students that opt out are not receiving instruction in the morning. Is there a shortage of nurses?

Neil – do to the subject area being different at WHHS, there is a team for each subject area. The other teachers are working with students at the end of the day. We have a full staff. Jill is interviewing for floaters. The enrollment is down so we are able to spread out.

Patricia Libero – as a liaison for the building committee, I asked Ken Carney about the opening of windows. Ken sent an email with the compliance and fresh air rules. I can share it.

Neil – Ken was going to give an update last meeting but we needed to focus on the reopening. I will invite him to the next meeting.

Anne Heffernan – will the paras get the tri-fold shields

Cebi Waterfield – I received messages from teachers and addressed the concerns with Neil. Thank you to Neil for taking care of the concerns. I would like to thank Chris Everone also for addresses concerns.

Rosa Richardson – Is there a change in the type of masks allowed.

Jill Grego – the one-way valve mask is not allowed

Dana – bandanas have never been allowed at WHHS

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

Mackenzie Gardner – gave update on returning to school

Anthony Ventrella – gave an update on the soccer team

C.1.c. Board

Rosa Richardson – wants to welcome everyone back

James Morrissey stated Rosemary Russo is not here because her mother passed away. Rose and I visited Bailey, Pagels and Washington. Thank you to Mr. Bohan for having us. Teachers want to go back to teaching. Safety is the number one concern. I brought some concerns to Neil. Neil got right on the concerns. Went to Pagels. Mr. Palermo thanks for having us. The heating vents were filthy. Neil got right on that and sent a professional cleaning crew. Glad that was done. Washington is the oldest school, Mike McGrath addressed concerns there. My intent is to get to the other schools. This morning I was at Bailey. I want to commend the staff, they did a great job. All students had masks. I went back in the afternoon, buses were little more crowded. They did a great job getting the buses out. It was little concerning that it took 35 minutes to leave at dismissal. If kids are dropped off late, are they missing learning? Kristen spoke about the administration, there is too much friction going on. It is not easy with the pandemic. It is something we have never seen. We need to try and come together to work all the problems out. Everyone needs to give a little. We need to work things out better; it is frustrating as a board member. My goal is to get to the rest of the schools next week. I pray we all stay safe.

Cebi Waterfield – Thank you to the staff for the great job they are doing. I welcome any comments or concerns. You can reach out to me directly.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1. the West Haven Board of Education Meeting was held in the WHHS Auditorium on Monday, August 17, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

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

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Anne Heffernan seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Abstained: Patrick Egolum

Minutes **D.1.** were approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

All-inclusive: 20-75

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve the resignations **D.2.**

Patricia Libero made the motion

Anne Heffernan seconded the motion

Discussion: none

All board members present were in favor

Resignations **D.2.** were approved

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

All-inclusive: 20-76 – 20-79

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve the new hires **D.3.**

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Andrea Talamelli seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Items **D.3.** were approved

D. 4 New Business

20-80 2020-21 Alliance District Grant

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve **D.4. 20-80**

Robert Guthrie made the motion

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Item D.4 was approved

Informational

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to adjourn
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Patricia Libero seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Mursko