

Board of Education

June 10, 2014

Chairperson DeAngelo requested Board Members to turn off cell phones.

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. The tapes are available in the Town Manager's Office.

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, June 10, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mr. Carey, Mr. Cascio, Mr. Forrest, Mrs. Latina (7:25 p.m. arrival), Ms. McDougall, Ms. Moon, Mr. Morris, Vice Chairperson Steinmiller-Paradise, and Chairperson DeAngelo. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Finance, Timothy Howes; Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; Director of Special Services, Emily Daigle; Director of Maintenance and Operations, Fred Bushey; Wethersfield High School Principal, Thomas Moore; Silas Deane Middle School Principal, Steven Cook; Silas Deane Middle School Assistant Principal, Cynthia Fries; Charles Wright School Principal, Glenn Horter; Emerson-Williams School Principal, Neela Thakur; Webb School Principal, Michael Verderame; School Building Projects Committee Chairperson, Christine Fortunato; and Wethersfield High School Student Representative, Sam Solberg.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Bushey led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations

Mr. Emmett recognized Wethersfield High School Student Representative, Sam Solberg, for his achievement, as well as his dedication and service to the Board.

Mr. Emmett recognized the following Wethersfield Board of Education Employees who are retiring this year and commented on their experience and service in the District as he wished them well in their future endeavors: Mrs. Judith Cole (Special Education Teacher - WHS);

Ms. Cammie Hart (School Nurse - SDMS); Highcrest School Principal, Mrs. Maresa Harvey;

Mrs. Margaret Leone (Grade 1 Teacher – Charles Wright); Mrs. Donna Morrison (Social Worker – WHS); Allyson Naclerio (Speech Pathologist – Emerson Williams); Mrs. Patricia Paradee (Grade 4 Teacher – Webb); Mrs. Sandra Sutyla (Supervisor of Special Education); and Mrs. Marianne Zerio (Paraprofessional – SDMS)

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. May 27, 2014 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. DeAngelo indicated the following language found on Page 1, Paragraph 1 in Lines 10-11 is to be deleted: “Director of Maintenance and Operations, Fred Bushey.”

Mr. Carey MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of May 27, 2014, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Moon and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Caroline Fazzina, 19 Fairmont Street, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year and asked that the Board revisit the issue, as two (2) Grade 4 classes would not meet the complex needs for this group of students.

Martha Conneely, 12 Fairmont Street, spoke favorably regarding 1) the recent parent support of Board initiatives at a recent Town Council Budget meeting; and 2) the existence of three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year due to the complex needs for this group of students. She spoke unfavorably of the Board’s communication process with parents regarding this issue.

Laurie Herring Wrona, 16 Fairmont Street, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year. She noted CW has the highest percentage of students in the District: 1) needing special education services; and 2) eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

Steve Cox, 40 Wolcott Hill Road, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year. He noted that CW has the largest amount of students with complex needs than any other elementary school in the District.

Jennifer Hedlund, 480 Wolcott Hill Road, along with her daughters, Bailey and Bryce, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year. Ms. Hedlund's daughters mentioned student conferencing and testing difficulties that would occur with overcrowding in classrooms.

Melanie Goodin, 66 Highview Avenue, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year.

Todd Szwed, 13 Morrison Avenue, spoke in favor of having three (3) Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year. He noted a smaller student to teacher ratio positively impacts student progress.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on anticipated mill rate and tax increases. He is in favor of larger class sizes, and suggested that District schools be consolidated.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett introduced and welcomed to the District Ms. Melissa Cook who, effective July 1, 2014, will be taking the position of Supervisor of Special Education. Ms. Cook is from the Canton Public School District wherein she served as a Special Education Teacher since 2004 and has had various leadership positions in that District. Her experience includes working with Canton High School Administration and the Pupil Personnel Director to develop Canton Academy Alternative High School. SDMS Principal, Steven Cook, will be leaving the District (effective July 1, 2014) to become Principal of Bristow Middle School in West Hartford. Mr. Cook has served the District as an Administrator over the past eleven (11) years and has helped to create an outstanding learning environment at SDMS. This position vacancy has been posted on <https://www.ctreap.net> and <http://www.wethersfield.k12.ct.us>. The position will be featured in the *Hartford Courant* this weekend. A hiring committee is being developed, as well as parent and staff focus groups. WHS Assistant Principal, Holly Herzman, will not be returning to WHS. This position vacancy has been posted, and a hiring committee for this position is also being developed. Mr. Emmett mentioned over One Hundred Twenty Thousand (\$120,000.00) Dollars in scholarships was awarded to students at the Dollars-For-Scholars event on May 28, 2014. He noted that on May 29, 2014, members of the Central Office Team visited Highcrest School to announce that Physical Education Teacher, Kevin Kobelski, was selected as the 2014-2015

Teacher of the Year for the Wethersfield Public Schools. Mr. Kobelski will begin the application process for State Teacher of the Year program. The current Teacher of the Year, Stephanie McKenna, was honored at a reception hosted by the Mohegan Tribe on Thursday, June 5, 2014, with remarks made by Lieutenant Governor, Nancy Wyman, and State Education Commissioner, Stefan Pryor. Mrs. McKenna participated in a professional development program (Integrating Native American History into Curriculum) sponsored by the tribe due to her semi-finalist status in the State Teacher of the Year program. He mentioned the WHS Academic Awards Ceremony was held Wednesday, June 4, 2014, wherein students in the Senior and Junior Classes were recognized for their outstanding achievements. Mr. Emmett noted many residents descended upon the Broad Street Green on Friday, June 6, 2014, to take pictures and share a moment with students prior to the prom. Mr. Emmett noticed the good aim students had as their throws met the target that landed him in the dunk tank when he volunteered at the well-attended Hanmer School Fair on Friday evening (June 6, 2014). He mentioned that Charles Wright School, Grade 5 had its DARE Graduation Ceremony on Monday, June 9, 2014. Other upcoming events include: Webb School, Grade 5 DARE Graduation Ceremony (Wednesday, June 11, 2014), WHS Spring Sports Awards (Pitkin Community Center - Thursday, June 12, 2014), Emerson-Williams School Strawberry Festival (Saturday, June 14, 2014), Step-Up Ceremonies at the Elementary Schools/SDMS, and the WHS Class of 2014 Graduation Ceremony (Tuesday, June 24, 2014).

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of the Healthy Food Certification Statement for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes

Mr. Carey MOVED that for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Wethersfield Board of Education continue to certify to the Connecticut State Department of Education that food items sold to students separately from a reimbursable breakfast or lunch will meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards, including food offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and from all sources (e.g. school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, fundraising activities, etc.); and

FURTHER MOVED that the Board of Education continue to exempt from the above certification, sale of food items that do not meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards, provided

1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on

the weekend, 2) such sale is at the location of the event, and 3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Moon and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Forrest, Mr. Cascio, Ms. Moon, Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise, and Mr. Morris commented. Mr. Howes and Mr. Emmett also commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Presentation by O&G Construction Concerning the Renovation of Wethersfield High School

WHS Renovation Project Manager, Rob Martinotti, O&G Construction, made a presentation to update the Board and public of the WHS Renovation Project's status and ongoing progress.

Board Comments: Mr. Morris and Mrs. Latina commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

b. FY 2013 –2014 Budget Status Report: Period Ending May 31, 2014

Mr. Howes provided a report. Board Comments: Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise, Mrs. Latina, and Ms. Moon commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

c. Summer Facilities Projects Update

Mr. Bushey provided a report regarding the District's summer facilities and maintenance projects for 2014 that are not part of the WHS renovation project. Board Comments: Ms. McDougall, Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise, and Mrs. DeAngelo commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

d. Announcements/Information

Chairperson DeAngelo reviewed the items in Board Members' packets and reminded Committee Chairpersons/Board members to review scheduled meeting dates and times with their calendars. She advised Board members to verify their attendance at Committee Meetings with the Committee's Chairpersons and Administrative Chairperson.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Chairperson DeAngelo announced the following meetings: Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative: Mr. Forrest reported earlier at tonight's meeting (Agenda Item 6: Approval of the Healthy Food Certification Statement) WECC's discussion of good health/nutrition and its

relation to academic achievement. School Projects Building Committee: Mr. Emmett noted there were discussions on project progress, change orders, and committee reports. Policy and Planning Committee: Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise indicated there was a review of the Committee-approved 0000 Series to ensure: 1) the additions received by CABE matched the rough draft of all members present, and 2) that the Board will receive the accurate document. A review of Policy 9125 occurred with modifications made to the language. Board Members are to review that document carefully prior to vote. She emphasized the Board to review the By-Laws, as there are several changes. Finance and Information Management Committee: Mr. Carey indicated Mr. Howes reviewed the Budget Status Report he presented at tonight's meeting. There were discussions pertaining to the: 1) reserve fund and its use in the expense of a burner for Hanmer, 2) MUNIS financial system (possible change to SunGuard), and 3) planning for the 2015-2016 budget. Mr. Maltese reviewed the athletic account. Gate fees and streamlining the WHS event entry process at the gate were also discussed. Pay-To-Play fees will be compared with other Towns in the CCAC, and there will be a discussion in the future regarding potential fee increases. Mr. Carey mentioned Board members will receive a survey in the near future to provide feedback on the budget workshop process.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson DeAngelo announced the following meetings are scheduled: CREC Council and School Projects Building Committee. In order to ensure a quorum at Committee Meetings, Chairperson DeAngelo advised Board members to verify their attendance at Committee Meetings with the Committee's Chairpersons and Administrative Chairperson.

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comments

John Baker, 395 Church Street, is concerned with difficulties in accomplishing educational objectives and complex needs for the group of students with the reduction of Grade 4 classes at Charles Wright School in 2014-2015.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, advocated that the window installation project at Webb be completed rather than completing the Summer Facilities Projects (paving, office) discussed by Mr. Bushey this evening and spoke of larger class sizes as necessary and that parents should 1) send their children to another school, or 2) have addressed the matter during the budget process.

Martin Malicki, 79 Southwell Road, spoke unfavorably regarding 1) a Physical Education curriculum change occurring solely at Emerson-Williams school due to unsuitability of the school's gym flooring for utilizing scooters; 2) the Summer Facilities Project of removing carpet in Grade 3 classrooms (would rather have carpet removal in 4th, 5th, or 6th Grade classrooms); and 3) unlevelled Math instruction in Grade 6 (2014-2015).

11. Board Comments

Mr. Cascio commented favorably of: 1) the Academic Awards Assembly he attended at WHS on Wednesday, June 4, 2014; and 2) Mr. Solberg's accomplishments. He extended well wishes to Mr. Solberg and thanked him for his service to the Board. He mentioned he is concerned with the matter of removing a classroom as indicated this evening by parents of Charles Wright School students.

Vice Chairperson, Steinmiller-Paradise echoed Mr. Cascio's concern and noted she would like to learn the reasoning behind the decision. She mentioned the Adaptive Learning Center's relocation need and realizes the District is aware of that need.

Mrs. Latina inquired of the process in determining class configurations and summer facilities projects. Mr. Emmett indicated the process for determining the number of sections a grade will have involves input from Central Office in conjunction with building administrators and with knowledge of the number of teachers for the District. He noted additional Teachers were not budgeted for 2014-2015 and that the Charles Wright Teacher vacancy was reallocated to Hanmer School. He also noted Administration will continually look at the class size numbers over the summer and is charged with providing each classroom in the District with the best instruction, support, and inclusiveness regardless of the size of the class. He spoke of the unpredictable variation in student enrollment numbers.

Chairperson DeAngelo indicated class size information was included in the working papers utilized during the budget workshops.

Ms. McDougall mentioned she is aware of good teaching and good classroom management skills from District teachers which enables them to differentiate instruction in the classroom. She suggested looking at the skills of teachers in the District and providing ongoing training and support for teachers to help them differentiate instruction in their classroom. She noted that despite Grade 6 Math at Hanmer being non-leveled, her daughter is receiving quality instruction from the math teacher, Mrs. Kenyon.

Mr. Cascio inquired and Mr. Emmett indicated (with Mr. Horter concurring) that it is probable the 2014-2015 Grade 4 class will be located in portable class space with windows and which is larger than other classroom space at Charles Wright.

Mr. Carey inquired and Ms. Thakur indicated that scooters are not permitted to be used in the Emerson-Williams gym. Mr. Carey inquired and Mr. Bushey indicated the plan is to remove the carpeting in one (1) Grade 3 classroom, cut up and bind the carpeting into 10" x 10" squares for student use on tile floors at Emerson-Williams or other District schools.

Mr. Carey inquired and Mr. Emmett thanked Town Council for approving the Highcrest parking lot pavement project, as a sink hole exists in the lot around the storm drain, and a car went into it. Mr. Emmett stated the Webb window replacement has been in the Capital Improvement Budget for many years. Mr. Emmett noted that replacement of the gym floor at Emerson-Williams School was requested in the Capital Improvement Budget and was not approved.

Mr. Solberg spoke favorably of his experience as WHS Student Representative and thanked the Superintendent, Mr. Moore, the Board, District Teachers, and Staff for the valuable lessons and experiences provided to him over the course of his education.

Chairperson DeAngelo extended well wishes to Mr. Solberg, as well as the WHS Class of 2014. She noted the WHS Class of 2014 Graduation Ceremony will be held 6:00 p.m. at CCSU on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. She mentioned tonight's meeting is the last regular meeting of the Board for the 2013-2014 school year and noted the next regular meeting of the Board will occur on Tuesday, August 26, 2014. Mrs. DeAngelo requested Committee Chairpersons to meet with

their Committee's Administrator prior to the August 26 meeting to discuss when meetings can be scheduled for placement on the calendar that will be included in the Board member packet of the first Board Meeting of the 2014-2015 school year. She noted Board of Education Special Meetings will be scheduled over the summer, as a new Principal for SDMS, and a new Assistant Principal for WHS, will be hired. She wished everyone a safe and happy summer.

Mr. Carey MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Steinmiller-Paradise, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary