

Board of Education

June 13, 2017

Chairperson Granato requested Board Members to turn off cell phones.

This meeting was videotaped and can be seen on the
Wethersfield Board of Education website.

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Forrest, Mr. Hill, Ms. Moon, Mrs. Paradise, Mrs. Vasel, Vice Chairperson Morris and Chairperson Granato. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; Business Manager, Matthew Kozaka; Wethersfield Public Schools Director of Special Education, John Karzar; Emerson-Williams School Principal, Neela Thakur; Webb School Principal, Michael Verderame; and Wethersfield High School Student Representative, Jack Breton.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Academy Think Tank members Justin, Jacklyn, Lorien and Nazanin led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to Add Agenda Item No. 6d. (Recommended Motion: Revised Award of Transportation Services Contract 2017-2018 through 2019-2020).

Mr. Forrest MOVED to add to tonight's Board of Education Meeting Agenda as Item No. 6d. Recommended Motion: Revised Award of Transportation Services Contract 2017-2018 through 2019-2020. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Morris and VOTED unanimously.

2. Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations

Mr. Emmett acknowledged and thanked WHS Student Representative, Jack Breton, for his service in 2016-2017, as tonight's meeting is the final meeting of his tenure with the Board. Mr. Emmett introduced Justin Bianchi as the 2017-2018 Wethersfield High School Student Representative. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. May 23, 2017 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Ms. Moon MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of May 23, 2017, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Hill abstaining.

4. Public Comment

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, read for the record a letter submitted to the Board (and forwarded to Town Council) from Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street. In that letter she thanked the Board for not cutting funds to and commented on bus transportation of Wethersfield students attending Corpus Christi School. She also commented on voters and the education budget. Mr. Ruhe commented that transportation allocation to Corpus Christi School will be an ongoing issue.

Gail Stewart, 411 Main Street, inquired and Mr. Emmett explained, after deferring to Chairperson Granato, that status (process, timeframe) of the bids and specifications for the new blocks at the WHS Swimming Pool. A consultant has looked at the space, has prepared bid specifications and is reviewing requirements related to the diving board and the pool depth of ten (10') feet. It has been determined that the diving board will not be altered, as doing so will affect our grandfathering status. Mr. Bushey reached out to an environmental services company that has tested the diving block area and has found that area free and clear of asbestos. After meeting with Mr. Maltese, Mr. Moore and Mr. Bushey, it has been determined that the starting blocks will be replaced. WHS Swim Coach, Lee Schwartzman, was brought into the discussion regarding obtaining the proper starting blocks, and the bid for the project is expected to go out after July 1st. The expectation is for the blocks to be ready for the start of the swim team season. Baffles for sound attenuation will be installed next week (after the last day of school) by the construction company. The Record Board will be installed by Five (5) Maintenance Staff members [utilizing two (2) lifts] prior to the draining of the pool for maintenance (per OSHA standards). The Record Board will be located on the wall opposite the spectator area. Once the pool is drained, the starting blocks will be installed, maintenance will be performed, and the pool will be refilled. The plan is to have the pool ready at the start of the athletic season.

Mike Rell, 57 Broad Street, as a Town Councilman and Corpus Christi School parent, thanked the Board and Mr. Kozaka for 1) looking for different ways in finding budget savings despite Town and State budget uncertainty and 2) working on the transportation allocation matter with new bus contracts that have helped prevent a cut in transportation funding for Wethersfield families who have students attending Corpus Christi School.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett reminded everyone the last day of school will end with a minimum school day schedule on Monday, June 19, 2017, with Breakfast and Lunch programs being offered at District elementary schools as well as SDMS. WHS will have make-ups for finals on Monday, June 19, 2017. The WHS Class of 2017 Graduation Ceremony will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16, 2017 at Cove Park in Wethersfield. Weather conditions/forecast will determine if the ceremony will be held outdoors or indoors, and the graduation program schedule will be changed, if necessary, to accommodate each venue. Mr. Emmett spoke of the new transportation contract (Agenda Item 6.d. Revised Award of Transportation Services Contract 2017-2018 through 2019-2020) that will be voted on during tonight's meeting due to a costly fueling issue that has surfaced with the transportation carrier previously approved. There is no on-site fueling tank at Specialty Transportation in West Hartford, and Wethersfield's fuel provider, Dime Oil, does not provide "wet-fueling" service (sending a fuel truck to a site). As a result, Specialty Transportation cannot meet the tenets of the contract. After reaching out to second bidder, Autumn Transportation, said company has placed in writing the pledge to maintain the same bid (as Specialty Transportation) and to provide the fuel. This new contract for transportation would pertain to In-Town Regular Education; In-Town Special Education; In-Town Magnet; In-Town Parochial; Athletic Late Bus; Summer School and Field Trip transportation. Mr. Emmett also spoke of the proposed revised 2017-2018 Operating budget (Agenda Item 6.c.) that the Board will also vote on this evening. He explained the previously proposed reduction to Corpus Christi School's in-town transportation allocation was not included in tonight's proposed Five Hundred Thousand (\$500,000.00) Dollar budget reduction scenario, as the previously proposed reduction allocation figure to the Corpus Christi transportation allocation has now been taken in another area of the budget through the loss of the District's Supervisor for Literacy. He also noted that Corpus Christi Administration has been informed of the Board's future intention to fund transportation for in-town Corpus Christi students at the appropriate statutory level. Mr. Emmett cautioned the Board may have to convene in the coming months if Town Council requests the Board to further reduce the Board budget upon the determination of State and Town budgets. Mr. Emmett congratulated and extended well wishes to Wethersfield Instructional Supervisor of Literacy, Mrs. Darla Miner, on her new position as Director of Innovation, Curriculum and Programs in Fairfield Public Schools. He also noted that WHS Band Instructor, Dave Dion, will be taking over Stephen Perry's Music Instruction position at Highcrest School due to Mr. Perry's retirement. Mr. Emmett commented that 1) Siobhan O'Connor (new Principal) visited Highcrest School yesterday, 2) on Saturday, June 10 WHS Class of 2017 held the traditional Senior Prom gathering on the Broad Street Green, and 3) the Emerson-Williams School's Annual Strawberry

Festival held Saturday, June 10 was great and thanked the Emerson Williams School PTO for their efforts in making the event a success. Mr. Emmett reminded Board members of the Step-Up Ceremonies for 1) SDMS (to be held at WHS) this Friday morning and 2) the District Elementary Schools this Thursday evening. Mr. Emmett noted the past school year has presented economic challenges, and Mr. Kozaka anticipates a balanced budget by the end of the fiscal year with no surplus returning to the Town. He thanked Department Leaders, Principals and Teachers with their efforts in addressing the budget freeze implemented earlier this year.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Cancellation of Regular Board of Education Meeting for June 27, 2017

Mr. Cascio MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education cancel the regular meeting scheduled for June 27, 2017. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of Rescinding Non-Renewal Notifications of Non-Tenured Teachers

Mr. Morris MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education rescind the action taken on April 25, 2017 regarding the non-renewal notices of the following sixty (67) non-tenured teachers, I.D. #s 906194, 905564, 906126, 906179, 906180, 906182, 906183, 906184, 906185, 906186, 906188, 906196, 906156, 906016, 906124, 906032, 906083, 906084, 906086, 906090, 906093, 906094, 906097, 906100, 906104, 906058, 906045, 905960, 905863, 905985, 906001, 906002, 906007, 906015, 906022, 906025, 906110, 906009, 905675, 906169, 906171, 906175, 906187, 906190, 906192, 906193, 906199, 906201, 905979, 906146, 905967, 905965, 906085, 906087, 906098, 906099, 905660, 905893, 905894, 905907, 905912, 905914, 905915, 905917, 905926, 905927, 906335. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Mr. Cascio commented.

c. Recommended Motion: Approval of the Revised 2017-2018 Operating Budget

Ms. Moon MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the 2017-2018 revised operating budget of Fifty Seven Million, Seven Hundred, Seventy-Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred, Eighty-Two (\$57,777,882.00) Dollars. . The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED 8-1 IN FAVOR as follows: Aye: J. Cascio, M. Forrest, K. Hill, P. Moon, E. Paradise, J. Vassel, J. Morris and B. Granato; Nay: D. Fitzpatrick. Board Comments: Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Cascio, Mr. Morris, Ms. Moon, Mrs. Paradise and Mr. Hill commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

d. Recommended Motion: Revised Award of Transportation Services Contract 2017-2018 through 2019-2020

Mr. Forrest MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve a three (3) year contract for In-Town Regular Education; In-Town Special Education; In-Town Magnet; In-Town Parochial; Athletic Late Bus; Summer School and Field Trip transportation services to Autumn Transportation, commencing on July 1 2017. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Moon and VOTED unanimously. Board Comments: Ms. Moon and Mr. Hill commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Academy Think Tank Report

Mrs. Dastoli, WHS Teacher, Mr. Martin; SDMS Teacher, Ms. Abrams; WHS students Justin and Jacklyn; and SDMS students Lorien and Nazanin, made a presentation regarding topics discussed by the Think Tank Committee throughout the year and possible next steps relative to 1) increasing career awareness/exploration; 2) increasing “soft skills” or “21st Century Skills;” and 3) engaging the community/business in education. Board Comments: Ms. Moon, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Morris, Mr. Breton and Mrs. Vasel commented. Mr. Emmett and Mrs. Dastoli also commented.

b. Announcements/Information

Chairperson Granato 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, the Administrative Chairperson, and Mr. Emmett.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

School Projects Building Committee: Mr. Emmett reported the meeting was cancelled due a lack of a quorum. Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative – WECC: Mr. Forrest reported WECC held a Community Baby Shower with some other Towns for expectant parents to learn of resources for education readiness. Approximately fifty (50) Wethersfield families attended. A preschool “boot camp” will occur for those families to help get their students ready for Kindergarten. Book donations will be distributed to ELL learner families for school readiness. \$5,000-\$10,000 was raised at the Mayor’s Charity Ball for Preschool scholarships. He encouraged the public to utilize WECC’s on-line, virtual family resource center for school readiness resources by accessing the following link: <http://wethersfieldchildhood.com>. Finance & Information Management Committee: Ms. Moon

reported the Committee discussed the current fiscal year's budget (deficit is currently \$3,188), which is expected to be balanced by the end of the fiscal year due to the deferring of maintenance projects, technology hold backs, postponement of textbook replacements, and the freeze on purchasing of supplies. She noted Mr. Kozaka learned that the donation from the Class of 2009 in the amount of \$5,000.00 is to be used for another purpose in the future rather than using it at this time for the turf at Cottone Field. Athletic bus, Pay-To-Play and fees for sports events/participation are matters that will be reviewed in the near future by the Committee.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson Granato announced the following meetings are scheduled: Facilities & Maintenance Committee, CREC Council, Memorial Day Parade Committee, Policy and Planning Committee, and School Projects Building Committee.

9. Unfinished Business

Mr. Cascio noted there is a parade wrap-up meeting of the Memorial Day Parade Committee on Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 7:00 p.m. at the Pitkin Community Center.

10. Public Comments

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented favorably of and concurs with Mrs. Fitzpatrick's vote, as well as her point made, regarding the revised 2017-2018 Operating Budget (Item 6.c. of tonight's meeting agenda). He also commented unfavorably regarding a May 26, 2017 article in the Rare Reminder newspaper entitled "Board Holds Off on Budget Vote in Light of Busing Overpayment." He is concerned of possible unknown costs to the Town for the Academy Think Tank.

11. Board Comments

Mrs. Fitzpatrick commented favorably 1) on *CT Mirror's* series this past week regarding English Language Learners, 2) of Jack Breton's service to the Board (and wished him well), 3) of parent volunteers of 2016 & 2017 WHS Classes (thanked them), and 4) of WHS Teacher and Marching Band Director, Mr. Dion's impact on the District school system.

Mrs. Vassel suggested that the preschool census mailed to Wethersfield homes be published in the paper, as residents may inadvertently disregard the mailing. She commented favorably of WHS Teacher and Marching Band Director, Mr. Dion.

Mr. Forrest asked Mr. Emmett to 1) look into the preschool census matter that was brought up by Mrs. Vasel; and 2) provide the Board, on a weekly basis over the summer, updates in the Board packets regarding class size numbers in order that the Board may address matters prior to the start of school.

Mr. Cascio wished Mr. Dion success at Highcrest, as well Mrs. Miner well in her new role. He commented favorably of 1) WHS Sports Awards Ceremony; 2) WHS student, Dalis Irizarry, singing the National Anthem; 3) the Chamber of Commerce Academic Awards Ceremony [four (4) Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollar scholarships were given]; 4) 2016-2017 WHS Student Representative, Jack Breton's work at WHS and with the Board (wishing him good luck in his future endeavors); and 5) working with 2017-2018 WHS Student Representative, Justin Bianchi.

Ms. Moon commented favorably of 1) the Music Department and of the WHS Chorale Concert she and Mrs. Granato recently attended; 2) continued follow up with the ERASE Survey; and 3) Debra Murphy's smooth transition following Ms. Hussey's recent retirement. She noted that Jack Breton will be missed and that she looks forward to working with next year's WHS Student Representative, Justin Bianchi.

Mrs. Granato thanked Mr. Cascio for all his efforts in organizing the Memorial Day Parade. She commented favorably of the Dollars for Scholars event and, on behalf of the Board, thanked those involved in organizing that event. She explained that compromise helped the Board and Town reach the Five Hundred Thousand (\$500,000.00) Dollar reduction to the 2017-2018 Board Budget and that the Board looked for this reduction to have a minimum disruption to student learning in the classroom and not eliminate staff. She and Ms. Moon attended three (3) meetings of the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) (Prevention, Response and Treatment) as a stakeholder's forum follow up to address the opioid crisis. The follow-throughs will be on the Board's Agendas this summer, and meetings will continue through the summer regarding this serious matter. She mentioned WHS Class of 2017 Graduation will be held on Friday, June 16 at Cove Park and encouraged all to attend. She commented favorably of Mr. Breton and wished him the best of luck in the future.

Mr. Breton commented favorably of the Senior Prom held at Aqua Turf on June 10th. He thanked the Board for what he described as an amazing opportunity (serving as Student Representative) and that those involved in working on the school budget, including the Board, care for student education in this District. He wished 2017-2018 WHS Student Representative, Justin Bianchi, good luck in the position.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John Morris, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary