

Board of Education

March 11, 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, March 11, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Chairperson DeAngelo, Vice Chairperson Steinmiller-Paradise, Mr. Carey, Mr. Forrest, Mrs. Latina, Ms. McDougall, and Mr. Morris. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Finance, Timothy Howes; Director of Maintenance and Operations, Fred Bushey; Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; Wethersfield High School Principal, Thomas Moore; and Webb School Principal, Michael Verderame.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Latina led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations**

Members of the Wethersfield Engineering Design Team made a presentation regarding their assistive technology invention, *The Path*, which placed first (Best Overall Design) in the national AbilityOne© Design Challenge held in Vienna, Virginia on February 28, 2014. The Engineering Design Team members are: Jason Yanaros, Zachary Angelucci, Gabby Stefano, Sebastian Gulino, Samuel Solberg, Tim Braren, Matthew Burwell, Zachary Martin, Daniel Purinton, Natalie Heavren, Anthony Berry, Richard Bielak, Joe Bodington, Chris Buccheri, Dan Camilliere, Kyle Flynn, Ryan Flynn, Peter Hahn, Jimmy Huynh, Nick Huynh, Kate Lamberti, Anthony Oliveri, Rick Rielnk, Robert Sollima, and Andrew Turgeon. Mrs. Fennelly and Mr. Kess are the Team's Co-Advisors. The Team's Mentor Engineers are Mr. Wysmuller, Mr. Yanaros, and Mr. Smyers. Refer to the following links for additional information:

<http://www.wethersfield.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=2368&newsid=344>

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/HD67dI5wflQ>

Board Comments: Mrs. Latina, Mrs. DeAngelo, and Mr. Forrest commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. February 15, 2014 Special Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. DeAngelo made the following corrections:

Page 1, Paragraph 1, Lines 5-6, add the following: Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Dastoli; Director of Special Services, Ms. Daigle; and Business Manager, Mr. Parker.

Mr. Carey MOVED to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting of February 15, 2014, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

b. February 25, 2014 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. DeAngelo made the following correction:

Page 1, Line 3. Delete “Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise” as she was not present for the meeting.

Mr. Forrest MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of February 25, 2014, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. McDougall and VOTED unanimously, with Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise abstaining.

4. Public Comment

Susan Fennelly, 57 Country Club Road, spoke of the District’s current policy of not allowing District retirees to substitute in the District and asked Mr. Emmett and the Board to reconsider that current policy.

Matt DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, requested the Board give serious consideration in changing District current policy in order to allow retirees from District to substitute in the District.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the Special Education cost budget line item, proposed layoffs, and flat test scores despite past budget increases. He requested more sharing of services within the Town and a decrease in the Board's budget.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on *The New York Times* article by The Editorial Board dated March 9, 2014 entitled "The Uninhibited Press, 50 Years Later."

Kevin Stuart, 411 Main Street, requested that decisions made pertaining to the WHS Class of 2014 Graduation Ceremony are mindful in keeping the ongoing traditions associated with WHS Graduation Ceremonies.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, commented on the contractual obligation portion of the Board's Budget as well as pay increases of District employees. He asked for a decrease in the Board's Budget.

Lisa Stefano, 32 Harvest Hill, echoed the comments hereinabove made by Mr. Stuart. She requested the WHS Graduation Ceremony be held at the Cove with the back-up plan of having it held at CCSU. She noted that if money is an issue for the District to invoke the aforesaid plan, she requested that Senior Class members and their parents be notified in advance as to what it will take to have that back-up plan in place.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett provided an update regarding the WHS Renovation. There is a kick off meeting tomorrow in the construction trailer for the new incoming contractors, and new workers will receive badges. He noted structural steel work is progressing well and that the next Building Committee meeting is Monday, March 24, 2014. The Board approved 2014-2015 Budget will be provided to the Town (pursuant to Town Charter) on Friday, March 14, 2014. Mr. Emmett indicated Central Office and the WPSC held a SBAC Forum on Monday, March 10, 2014 at the SDMS Auditorium wherein Mrs. Dastoli responded to questions from District parents.

Mr. Emmett noted that standardized testing in Science will be administered through CAPT and CMT only and that Science testing began this week for Grades 5, 8, and 10. There is discussion of having a Common Core State Standards Forum in the near future. The forum would include information, including but not limited to the variable of the ever-changing political climate, as to how the District is addressing Common Core State Standards. Mr. Emmett reported that

Mr. Solberg asked him to mention the WHS Drama Club production of *Into the Woods* which will be held **March 14, 15, 20, and 21 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.**; and **March 16, 2014 @ 3:30 p.m.** at the Samuel B. Webb School Auditorium, 51 Willow Street, Wethersfield. Tickets are for reserved seating and are available for purchase at the door or online at www.showtix4u.com. Student tickets are \$8 online or \$10 at the door. Adult tickets are \$12 online or \$15 at the door. Mr. Emmett addressed comments made this evening regarding the WHS Graduation. He indicated last Friday he met with WHS Class Officers from the Senior Class, Mr. Moore, Mr. Komar, and the Class Advisor; and this afternoon met with representatives from Project Safe Graduation. A variety of venues [such as The Bushnell, CCSU, Sports & Medical Sciences Academy (SMSA)] as well as dates for graduation ceremony were discussed. The tentative date (which is contingent upon no additional snow/emergency days) for the WHS Class of 2104 Graduation Ceremony is Tuesday, June 24, 2014. The location is CCSU due to no option of a secondary location, as WHS Gym cannot be utilized. When assessing SMSA as a location for the ceremony, it was realized that logistics prevent both the ability to change locations on the fly and to adequately practice for the graduation ceremony itself. It was learned while discussing the idea of having the ceremony on a Saturday morning that in doing so would negate the intent of Project Safe Graduation, which is to have students go to a safe location immediately following the graduation ceremony. Mr. Emmett indicated the difficult decision to hold the graduation ceremony indoors at CCSU for the 2014 Graduating Class is for this year only. A decision to hold a WHS graduation ceremony at the Cove for future graduating classes will not occur until the WHS Gym is ready for use as a back-up location to that of the Cove. The idea of having the motorcade held at CCSU campus where it is safe from Routes 175 and 99 (Silas Deane Highway) has been discussed. Other opportunities, such as a breakfast for the Senior Class at the graduation ceremony practice, have been also discussed to make the day special.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Leave of Absence for Teacher ID# 904794

Mr. Morris MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the second childrearing leave of absence for ID #904794 under the provisions of Article 5.6 of the current Agreement between the Wethersfield Board of Education and the Wethersfield Federation of Teachers. This extended (second) year request is for the period beginning approximately September 1, 2014 and

continuing through the end of the 2014-2015 school year. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise and VOTED as DENIED unanimously. Board Comments: Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise, Mr. Forrest, Ms. McDougall, and Mr. Morris. Mr. Emmett also commented.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. 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.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Chairperson DeAngelo announced the following meetings: Memorial Day Parade Committee: Mr. Emmett indicated Mr. Spellacy will be notified that an alternative location in the District (other than WHS) is to be sought for the ceremony this year as reductions in the size of Gym A, parking, and accessibility to the gym have occurred due to the renovation project. Mr. Cascio will also bring that information to the Committee. Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative: Mr. Forrest reported there are three (3) concepts the group is working on: 1) the connection of prenatal care and ability to achieve in school has been correlated to the recession years. In 2008-2010 there was a lack of prenatal care, and the statistics show an increase in prenatal care after 2010; 2) Invitations to participate in a Family Fun Night were sent to as many as seventy (70) family-friendly businesses (daycare, dentistry, medical, etc.), and information regarding date, time and place of said event will be forthcoming; 3) creation of a list to identify children in Town who are under the age of four (4) years for purposes of providing information to their families of opportunities to help get children prepared for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Finance and Information Management Committee: Mr. Carey indicated Mr. Howes provided his monthly update for the fiscal year. The pupil tuition line item is at a deficit of \$345,000 which includes the first round of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) State grant. The second round of the grant is expected to be received in May or June. Mr. Howes is projecting the District will be at a deficit of approximately \$100,000 (which deficit has been \$500,000-\$600,000 the past few years), and the District has been doing much better with this unpredictable line item cost. The substitute line

item is in the negative \$35,000 range, and last year at this time the District was in the negative \$157,000 range. Special Education tuition is in the negative \$290,000. There have been numerous submissions RFP for food services, and more information will be available to the Board in April. Cafeteria services upgrades and food presentation improvements were discussed. Food services will not be provided to Corpus Christi School next year. MUNIS and SunGard were discussed, and additional vendors will be looked at as possible replacement to MUNIS. Compliance with IRS, Social Security, escrow accounts and purchasing procedures were also discussed.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson DeAngelo announced the following meetings are scheduled: Policy and Planning Committee; Human Resources and Personnel Committee; Student Program and Services Committee; CREC Council; Policy and Planning Committee; School Projects Building Finance Committee; 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

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented unfavorably regarding on Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise comments pertaining to his exceeding his five (5) minute time limit when he spoke during the first Public Comment session of tonight's meeting. He indicated the rule needs to be changed.

Matt DeAngelo, 16 Dennison Ridge, requested the Board to provide and articulate solid reasons when providing a decision regarding the utilization of District retirees as substitutes. He mentioned that time, place and manner of speech can be regulated as to not infringe on the First Amendment.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on a letter to the editor which appeared in the February 27, 2014 edition of *The Hartford Courant* entitled “Not Surprised By Magnet School Need [\$35M Shock At The Capitol].” He indicated experts used for calculating the cost of Renovation Project should be terminated and that seeking a waiver is a mistake. He mentioned the size proposed in the renovation is too large.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, spoke unfavorably regarding the 2014 WHS Graduation Ceremony being held out of Town. He mentioned students were prevented from speaking at last year’s ceremony because politicians spoke too long.

Frankie Portonova, 88 Harding Street, mentioned his high degree of respect and admiration for Mr. Emmett and Mr. Moore. Despite the Cove as is his preferred location for the Graduation Ceremony this year, he understands the logic behind Mr. Emmett’s decision. He spoke in favor of the size of the proposed renovation and is in favor of his tax dollars supporting the project.

11. Board Comments

Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise inquired and Mr. Emmett indicated the CMT results process will occur as in previous years. She inquired and Mr. Howes indicated that revenue received from WHS productions goes back into the production budget. Mr. Emmett clarified that the decision is to have the Graduation Ceremony at CCSU because there is not a viable alternative location in Town. Additionally, the Graduation budget is \$9,000 and if CCSU is booked and not used, \$4,000 will be lost. The SMSA location would 1) allow only two (2) tickets per family to be distributed, 2) create a re-deployment of Mr. Bushey’s staff to move chairs, etc., from the Cove to SMSA, and 3) complicate ceremony practice. CCSU is optimal this year because the facility has audio/visual capability, air conditioning, accommodations for seating, parking, and handicapped accessibility. Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise encouraged the Board to revisit the current policy put in place by our Interim Superintendent regarding District retirees as not eligible to substitute in the District. She reasoned that other districts send letters to their retirees encouraging/inviting them back to substitute and mentioned the value in having retirees as substitutes especially in specialty areas (science, biology, physics, etc.). She attended the CREC Calendar Committee Meeting, and it is proposed (not firmly decided) that beginning with the 2015-2016 School Year Calendar, there is a minimum of 180 days of school and a start date occurring the last day Wednesday of August, plus or minus three (3) days. She noted there will

be more specifics in the Board's Friday packet, and she will need feedback from the Board as to when Spring Break should occur.

Ms. McDougall inquired and Mr. Howes indicated Corpus Christi School is aware of the District's decision of terminating its relationship pertaining to food services accommodations. She attended the Northern Region Middle School Music Festival held at CCSU this past weekend and the following seven (7) students from Wethersfield participated: Connor Wallowitz (tenor – mixed chorus), Ling Chi (orchestra – violin, 1st seat), Nate Somers (band – trumpet), Katie Ginter (band – alto saxophone), Matthew Lipka (band – clarinet), Grace Conneely (orchestra – violin), and Devon Kleeblat (jazz band – alto saxophone).

Mrs. Latina inquired and Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise clarified that the legislature has indicated the proposed CREC Calendar is for the 2015-2016 School Year, and the Committee has requested that calendar to be pushed to the 2016-2017 School Year. She noted the calendar the District has recently approved for 2014-2015 remains unchanged. Mr. Emmett indicated the 2014-2015 School Year Calendar will be up on line and will be going out to schools. Mrs. Latina mentioned there was an article in *Wethersfield Life* that was dated because the Board voted on a very different budget than the one referred to in that article.

Mr. Carey MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Morris and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Steinmiller-Paradise, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary