Ref. 1
Unapproved

Board of Education
January 14, 2025

The regular session meeting was live streamed on COX channel 16 or Frontier channel 6101 and may also be viewed on: YouTube® Channel, "Wethersfield Government Access TV" at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuf-C0gYVVxmD5iIfFTnsQ

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was streamed from Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Ms. Callan-Carson, Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Hernandez-Williams, Mr. Reilly, Ms. Walters, Mr. Weiner, Vice Chair Laccavole, and Chairperson Granato. **Also present were**: WPS Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; WPS Business Manager, Matt Kozaka; WPS Director of Special Education, John Karzar; WPS Director of Human Resources, Trent Donohue; and WHS Assistant Principal/Athletic Director, Michael Maltese. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

WHS Assistant Principal/Athletic Director, Michael Maltese led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

a. WHS Fall Sports Programs

WHS Assistant Principal/Athletic Director, Michael Maltese commented on the 2024 Fall Sports season at WHS and noted over 350 students participated in the program this past fall in the sports of: cheerleading, cross country, dance, field hockey, football, boys golf, boys' soccer, girls' soccer, girls swimming and diving, and girls' volleyball.

Highlights of the season include:

Varsity Girls Soccer Team captured its fourth straight CCC Championship title.

Varsity Girls Swim and Dive won its 16th straight CCC Championship and the team was the North Meet Invitational Champs.

Varsity Boys Football went 9 and 1, earning a share of a Central Connecticut Conference Championship

Varsity Girls and Boys Cross Country Teams both qualified and participated in the CCC and CIAC Championship meets.

Varsity Boys Golf qualified and participated in the CCC and CIAC Championship meets. The team held a number two State ranking in Division 2 for a majority of the season.

Varsity Girls Volleyball qualified for both the conference and league tournament for a second straight year.

Varsity Field Hockey went to its third straight quarterfinal with an upset victory over Bethel earlier in in November.

Over 25 different WHS student athletes were recognized by our conference for All Conference CCC selections.

11 WHS students were recognized of for All State recognition and in the areas of Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Girls Swimming and Diving, Boys Football, Boys Soccer, and Girls Soccer.

WHS student, Norah Bangs recorded her thousandth career assist in Girls Volleyball, and she was honored at a game this past year.

WHS student and Girls Cross Country Team member, Alexa Nunes qualified as an All-State athlete and was one of the 25 students in CT who qualified for the New England Championships.

WHS student and Girls Swim and Dive Team member, Melena brtz, broke a 38-year pool record at WHS in the 500-freestyle swim event.

WHS student and Football Team member, Cam Righi, earned All State recognition. He also received a special honor uh by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association as a top 26 player.

WHS student and Girls Swim and Dive Team member, Dana Miller was a CCC North Diving Champion.

Mr. Maltese commented on the CIAC Class Act program wherein WHS Athletic Director, coaches, and student athletes work on the mindset of accountability on and off the field as well as sportsmanship. An Athletic Leadership Council through the *We Connect* program has been a result of that mindset. Team Building activities, such as the ropes course at Venture Park in Storrs, CT, have occurred through efforts with the Captain's Council (sports team student leaders).

Mr. Maltese commented on ways the Athletic Department and the athletes at WHS are working on as a more supportive Community. This year was the 24th year of running the 9/11 Memorial Soccer Tournament, which has been done every Labor Day weekend with the Keane Foundation. Mr. Maltese also commented on the annual Thanksgiving Football game with rival team Newington and the fun that game brings to the community. Mr. Maltese commented on "Pinktober" (for breast cancer awareness and fundraising) and "Tackle Literacy" (to encourage younger children to read) as examples of programs student athletes participate in to give back to their community and raise awareness of matters.

Mr. Maltese noted WHS unified sports programs this past fall included Soccer and Corn Hole. Unified Basketball is currently in session, and Unified Bowling is being considered for March.

Mr. Maltese explained that WHS senior year athletes are acknowledged online through WHS social media platforms, as well as on WHS grounds, in the gymnasiums, and at the pool. WHS alumni want to support and pay tribute to WHS senior year athletes for what they've given to the school over their four years.

Mr. Maltese noted the following students who have signed Letters of Intent to play sports at the college level and will be honored in late February (and mentioned there are a few more students who are in the process of submitting paperwork for next year):

Julia Daly – Women's Soccer

Cam Righi – Baseball at UConn

Emily Schneider – field hockey and Women's Ice Hockey

Mr. Maltese gave a special shout out to WHS Senior, Luke Krout, for being the voice of the WHS Eagles and giving countless hours over the past few years in volunteering (announcing, concessions, etc.).

Mr. Maltese commented favorably of the man students who have come back to WHS and have shared what they are doing in the field of Communications (in college and/or in their profession).

Mr. Maltese also gave thanks to a lot of people behind the scenes who make his job easier: Mr. Emmett, Mr. Kozaka, WHS Administration, Stillman Building Administration, and Mr. Donohue. He noted his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the students.

Board Comments: Mr. Reilly, Ms. Callan Carson, Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Walters, and Mrs. Granato commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. December 10, 2024 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Ms. Callan-Carson MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of December 10, 2024, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

b. December 18, 2024 Board of Education Special Session Meeting

Ms. Callan-Carson MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Special Session Meeting of December 18, 2024, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Reilly and Mr. Laccavole abstaining.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett extended Happy New Year wishes to everyone.

Mr. Emmett commented on the breach that occurred with the *Power School* application used in our district and in schools throughout Connecticut. Mr. Emmett had sent out a communication to the public when that event occurred last week. There are school districts who have been impacted. However, Wethersfield school district is fortunate that it did not have any data compromised. This Friday, *Power School* will be providing a forensic report so that a better understanding is learned about how this vendor was hacked. Mr. Emmett gave the district IT Team a shout out for its diligence in making sure that, behind the scenes, the network is secure.

Mr. Emmett indicated that the process of developing the budget for the 2526 school year has begun. Today, he met with the administrative team, including all elementary, middle, and high school principals, as well as department leaders, to talk about their needs to ensure that the group is covering everything needed. There is a cursory number already from Mr. Kozaka with regard to the following items included: 1) 6% increase due to contractual obligations and health insurance (percentage is subject to change pending notification from the town); 2) addition of an ELL coordinator (as strongly suggested by the Student Programs and Services Committee); 3) inclusion of WHS social worker (as grant funded position is ending) into operating budget; 4) five (5) elementary-level security guards in each of our elementary schools. At this point, the district would be looking at an approximate increase to the budget in the amount of approximately 4.25%. Mr. Emmett noted that as a result of this first meeting, the needs expressed by the group are far beyond what has been described herein, and he looks forward to carrying on the conversation, presenting the proposed budget, and seeing everyone roll up their sleeves and completing the important work to make sure there is a budget that supports district students for the future.

Mr. Emmett indicated he met with Dawn Campbell and Kim Bobin last Friday about the YMCA Bell scholar program taking place this summer that will dovetail with the YMCA Summer Program taking place at Hanmer School this summer. Thirty-six (36) students that will get a full day (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) academic Support Program, and WPS staff will have the opportunity to apply (through YMCA) and work at said program.

Mr. Emmett thanked Mr. Maltese for his presentation and commented favorably about the Thanksgiving football game. He gave a shout out to Wethersfield Physical Services Department and the vendor for completing the task of eliminating the ropes and traffic cones set up and having fencing installed over the holiday break. He noted it will greatly assist in maintaining a safe space.

Mr. Emmett noted planning for the summer is occurring and that it's his intention to make sure that everything is set and ready to go as the transition to the next superintendent is made. There is a meeting later on this month with town officials to talk about what summer building use will look like. There is the summer CLASS program (in partnership with the Keane Foundation). There is also the special education programming as devised by student IEPs that will take place

at Webb School. Also, there will be town projects such as the replacement of the Chiller at SDMS, and programs may have to be relocated.

6. Action Items

There were no Action Items.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Announcements/Information

There were no announcements/information matters.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Community & Public Relations Committee (12.11.24 @6:00 p.m.): Ms. Callan-Carson reported the Committee continued the discussion of creating a document containing tips on purchasing, setting up controls, and other information concerning smartphones for parents to use. Jon Weiner is working on said document. There was a discussion about working with Anxious Generation Book Club members and others (such as Kim Bobin) who have been tasked or have agreed to keep it going. There was a discussion about improving the visual appearance of the Board of Education summary document (located on the website), and Liz Walters is now working on that task, which will include having said document translated into different languages. Ms. Callan-Carson noted to the Committee that information/resources obtained from at the CABE convention is posted on BOE websites in other districts and suggested that our district should also post the information/resources (i.e. information sheets from the board chair and the superintendent outlining what's happened the last quarter). There was a discussion as to parents asking what committees do, and the Committee discussed having each committee chair come up with a very small blurb about the purpose and the point of their committee.

Advisory School Building Committee (12.17.24 @6:00 p.m.) – Stillman Building, Lower-Level Conference Room: Mr. Weiner reported the building committee and consultant partners TSKP are continuing to work and proceed towards a referendum by sharing dates on the project plan and going through the different milestones. The biggest milestone coming up (public hearing here in this chamber next Thursday) is in regards to swing space. Swing space is a building that would house students as their current school building is being renovated and/or rebuilt. The

three (3) Parcels of land that are available for swing space are: Standish Park/Stillman area in Old Wethersfield, Kaycia Farm, and High Crest School property. Attendance at the public hearing next Thursday to learn more about those spaces was encouraged.

Board of Education Special Session Meeting (12.18.24): Mrs. Granato reported that a meeting pertained to a confidential student matter.

Human Resources & Personnel Committee (01.06.25 @ 6:00 p.m.): Ms. Hernandez-Williams reported the Committee discussed some budget figures to ensure that teachers can take time off and have good substitutes to ensure students have security in the school and continuity in their learning. Central Office was thanked for providing those figures.

Concerns brought up in the survey results that were done in March mentioned 1) behaviors visible in the classroom, 2) that it is now stressful to raise children in our communities, 3) cell phone use as stressful.

Other matters the Committee discussed were: 1) adopting a civility code to ensure that we are talking to one another in an appropriate manner; 2) having better communication with parents in schools; 3) whether decisions are being made in an appropriate manner; 4) how teachers feel about coming to the classroom -- teachers feel tired and stressed. In order to figure that out, we all have to take responsibility for it by having HR make sure that teachers are wanting to come to work rather than not feeling supported.

The Committee discussed the Connecticut pay Leave Act that went into effect on January 1st. This benefit places an increase to the budget, along with the existing needs of additional money and resources for the schools. This Committee will continue to work on the above matters.

b. Meetings Scheduled

CREC Council (01.15.25 @ 11:30 a.m.), Student Programs & Services Committee (01.21.25 @ 6:00 p.m.), Finance & Operations Committee (01.28.25 @ 6:00 p.m.)

9. Public Comment

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

10. Board Comment

Mrs. Di Roberts commented favorably of the WECC meeting she attended yesterday evening. The group met Town of Wethersfield Social/ Youth/Senior Services Prevention Coordinator, Carissa Peckrul who will work to bring WECC, WPS, and parents together. Tomorrow, Ms. Peckrul will hold a workshop in Newington called "QPR Gatekeeper Training" (which is suicide prevention). WECC is looking for ways to collaborate in celebration of "Wethersfield Plays" on both Global Play Day (February 5th) and on International Day of Play (June 11th) and encourages ideas from the public. Refer to the WECC website for updates regarding same. https://wecc.wethersfield.me/ The group also met Marissa Casarella from Glass and Berry who is Executive Director for Glastonbury/Tri-Town YMCA who is program coordinator for the Bell Program.

Mr. Laccavole noted that budget planning season is soon arriving, asked Board members for their time, and for Board members to be on the lookout for correspondence relating to dates for budget workshops being held on weekends.

Ms. Callan-Carson requested a moment of silence for those affected by the fires in Los Angeles. She encouraged students in Grade 8 and their parents/guardians to attend the Grade 8 Night at WHS. She suggested that parents/guardians work along with students in the process of selecting courses as to better understand opportunities for students (i.e. earning college credits while in high school). She noted community volunteers are needed for Capstone project evaluations scheduled for April 2nd and that those interested are to contact Kristen Mucinskas at WHS.

Mrs. Granato commented favorably of WECC's meeting held yesterday and noted the importance of the WECC organization to Wethersfield. She also noted there will be a contest for WPS 5th and 6th graders. Wethersfield Town Council and Wethersfield Board of Ed are leading a contest to find Wethersfield's kid mayor and kid Board of Ed chair from each elementary school. This contest is to inspire and challenge WPS fifth and sixth graders by having the students explain to the Mayor and Board Chair how they would run Wethersfield's town form of government (i.e. what would they change/add) to make Wethersfield an even better community in which to reside and attend school. She encouraged the public to fill out the community survey pertaining to the next Superintendent of Schools. The survey is due midnight on Friday, January 17th.

12. <u>Proposed for Executive Session</u>

Mr. Weiner MOVED to leave public session and enter into an Executive Session at approximately 7:50 p.m. for the purpose of **a) Discussion and Possible Action on the CSEA-SEIU Local 2001 Secretarial/Clerical/Paraeducator/Tutor Contract**.

The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session:
Wethersfield Board of Education Members:
M. Callan-Carson, J. Di Roberts, C. Hernandez-Williams,
B. Granato, M. Laccavole, J. Reilly, E. Walters, J. Weiner;
Administrators: M. Emmett
Others: T. Donohue; Atty. Murphy

Mrs. Granato MOVED to leave executive session and re-enter public session at 8:13 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Laccavole MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the successor contract between Wethersfield Board of Education and the CSEA-SEIU Local 2001, CTW Secretarial/Clerical/Paraeducator/Tutor group. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Laccavole MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary