Board of Education

May 23, 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, 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 Supervisor of Literacy K-12, Darla Miner; Director of Special Education, John Karzar; Wethersfield High School Principal, Thomas Moore; Silas Deane Middle School Principal, Susan Czapla; Charles Wright School Principal, Margaret Zacchei; Highcrest School Interim Principal, Maresa Harvey; SDMS School Resource Officer, Bridget Camara; Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Director, Kathy Bagley; Wethersfield Social and Youth Services Assistant Director, Erica Texeira; and Wethersfield High School Student Representative, Jack Breton.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Sarah and Michael Wrona led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to Table Agenda Item No. 6b. (Recommended Motion: Approval of Revised Operating Budget for 2017-2018.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to Table Agenda Item No. 6b **Recommended Motion: Approval of Revised Operating Budget for 2017-2018**. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

2. Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations

Highcrest School Interim Principal, Maresa Harvey introduced Grade 6 students Lindsey Aglieco, Tommy Daly and Jomar Feliciano, as well as Parent Coordinator, Andrea Aglieco. The students and Mrs. Aglieco made a presentation regarding the Highcrest Garden Project.
Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

Recognition of Retirees

Mr. Emmett recognized the following Wethersfield Board of Education Employees who were present during this evening's meeting. He commented on their experience and service in the District as he wished them well in their future endeavors: Donna Forrest [Grade 3 Teacher – Emerson-Williams (28 years of service; 1 yr. at Charles Wright Grade 6)]; Kathy Harris [Grade 3 Teacher – Emerson Williams (37 years of total service, 28 yrs. as a classroom teacher, 3 yrs. as a classroom tutor; and 8 yrs. as an educational consultant)]; Kathleen St. Onge [Curriculum Specialist – District (44 years of service as a classroom teacher and a Curriculum Specialist in Math and Science)]; and Margaret Zacchei [Hanmer School Principal (37 years total service; 21 yrs. in Wethersfield District as a teacher at Hanmer and SDMS)]. Mr. Emmett also recognized the following retirees who could not be present for tonight's meeting and wished them well in their future endeavors: Mary Fox (Music Teacher – Emerson-Williams); Steve Perry (Music Teacher – Highcrest); Karen Tuscano (WHS– Guidance Dept.); Ellie Hussey (Executive Secretary to Superintendent); John ('Pop") Saccente (WHS–Security Guard); Maureen Sweeney (Executive Secretary to WHS Principal); Diane Chaffin (Paraprofessional– Wethersfield Transition Academy); and Pete Biscoe (Head Custodian– Hanmer School). Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

Keene on Kids After-School Enrichment Program

Caroline Fazzina (Director of the Keane on Kids After-School Enrichment Program), 19 Fairmont Street, made a presentation regarding the Keane on Kids After School Enrichment Program that occurred during the 2016-2017 school year. She thanked the five (5) site coordinators and the Administrators and staff for each school site location. To date, the Keane Foundation provided grants totaling $49,450 this Spring to 1) Wethersfield Public Schools Art Department; 2) Emerson-Williams School; 3) two (2) grants to the Creative Arts Council; 4) Wethersfield Youth Advisory Board; 5) Wethersfield Social and Youth Services; 6) Wethersfield Public Library; 7) Charles Wright School; and 8) Madres Latinas of Wethersfield. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

Student Achievement Award Recognition

Mr. Emmett acknowledged, congratulated and thanked Mr. Jack Breton, as he presented him with a Student Achievement Award for his service and dedication to the Board as WHS Student Representative 2016-2017.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. May 9, 2017 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mr. Forrest MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of May 9, 2017, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Moon and VOTED unanimously.

b. May 18, 2017 Special Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. Paradise noted the signature line on Page 3 is to reflect Mr. Morris as Vice Chairperson – Secretary.

Mrs. Paradise MOVED to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting of May 18, 2017, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Fitzpatrick and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Cascio, Mr. Forrest and Mr. Morris abstaining.

4. Public Comment

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the Board's proposed budget revision and requested the Board reconsider its proposal to cut transportation funding to Wethersfield residents who attend Corpus Christi School:

- Angelo Fasano, 107 Glenwood Drive
- Winchester Brown, 449 Goff Road
- Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street
- Anna Dombrowik, 604 Highland Street
- Leona Clerkin, 17 Hayrake Drive
- Karla Neville (Assistant Principal of Corpus Christi School), 40 Brussels Avenue
- Kim Robinson, 57 Stillman Road
- George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, also commented on cuts to the budget.
- Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, also commented on Town and School budgets/programs and suggested those entities operate as a business.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett reminded everyone that 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 on Friday, June 16, 2017 at Cove Park in Wethersfield.

Mr. Emmett reported the District will be entering into a new, three (3) year transportation contract with Specialty Transportation for regular access routes. On or about July 1, Specialty Transportation will begin the process of analyzing bus routes to prepare for the 2017-2018 school year. Access Transportation will continue to transport students with special needs. A message will be sent to the community by way of *SchoolMessenger* that will describe the transportation process, and Mr. Emmett will provide an update. Mr. Emmett announced that during the Special Meeting held by the Board on Thursday, May 18, 2017, the Board appointed Siobhan O'Connor to the position of Principal of Highcrest Elementary School, effective July 1, 2017. Ms. O'Connor will begin the transition process in June, including spending the day with students and staff on the 12th. Mr. Emmett mentioned that today, newly-appointed Principal of Hanmer School, Ms. Pauline Greer, shadowed current Principal, Mrs. Zacchei, meeting students and staff. Sunday evening, May 21, 2017, Mr. Emmett noted his attendance at the Bosnian Moms of Wethersfield's inaugural meeting held in the Bosnian-American Islamic Cultural Center. This group is an effort from parents who participated in the UCONN People Empowering People (PEP) Parent Leadership Training Program. The evening featured discussion and sharing Bosnian traditions. Mr. Emmett reminded Board members of the following upcoming events: 1) Dollars for Scholars – Wednesday, May 24, 2017, 7:30 p.m. at Pitkin Community Center; 2) Advanced Placement Art Show opens on Thursday, May 25, 2017 at WHS Art Gallery; 3) National Honor Society Inductions for French, Italian and Spanish – Thursday, May 25, 2017; and 4) Memorial Day Parade – Saturday, May 27, 2017.

6. <u>Action Items</u>

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Transfer of Escrow Account 307 to the Town of Wethersfield

Mr. Morris MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the transfer of escrow account Fund 307 (WHS Lighted Sign Fund) to the Town of Wethersfield. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of Revised Operating Budget for 2017-2018 [The Board voted to Table this matter]

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.

7. <u>Reports/Discussion Items</u>

a. Presentation of ERASE School Data Survey

Ms. Bonnie Smith, Evaluator Consultant at ERASE (East of the River Action for Substance-Abuse Elimination, Inc. - one of 13 Regional Action Councils (RACs) established by 1989 state legislation to assess substance abuse needs and plan to fill gaps in services) made a presentation regarding results from the administration of a survey to students in Grades 7-12 (SDMS & WHS) concerning trends for substance abuse and at-risk behavior. ERASE is a non-profit organization. The Board will be a part of the collaboration regarding potential services and pursuit of grants. Erica Texeira, Assistant Director of Wethersfield Social & Youth Services, commented. Board Comments: Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Granato, Ms. Moon, Mr. Forrest and Mr. Morris commented. Mr. Emmett 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

Student Programs and Services Committee: Mrs. Fitzpatrick reported the Tech Ed Department at SDMS presented some revisions to Tech Ed. A curriculum for Grade 8 was created and will begin next year. Course offerings will include: sewing, cooking, music, computer, robotics, design, engineering, "lights, camera, video," arts, and crafts course offerings wherein students will be allowed to take up to three (3) courses. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato and Mrs. Fitzpatrick commented. Finance & Information Management Committee: Ms. Moon reported the Committee acted on the RFP bids submitted for Transportation and sent them to the Board for further discussion. There was an update on the budget for next year, and information pertaining to the escrow account acted on during tonight's meeting was provided to the Board. CREC Council: Mrs. Granato reported the Council met at CREC's Museum Academy in Bloomfield. The President and Chair commented on the budget. CREC's legal counsel reported that the General Assembly was reviewing three (3) budgets and that progress was made. It was noted that all thirty five (35) Towns represented in the CREC Council continue to have the same dilemma of working a Town budget with so many unknown factors from the State. The Council voted Timothy Sullivan as the new CREC Superintendent of Schools. A tour of the Museum Academy (Pre-K to 5) was provided. The meeting followed with a presentation of CREC's Mission, Vision and Core Values. Scholarships were presented to high school seniors

attending college, and the meeting concluded with a performance by the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. Special Board of Education Meeting: Mrs. Paradise reported the Board met to approve Siobhan O'Connor to the position of Principal of Highcrest Elementary School and moved to approve the Transportation contract. The budget dilemma was also discussed in order to follow through with Town Council's directive to provide a $500,000 reduction to the Board Budget. School Projects Building Committee: Mr. Emmett reported WHS is still confronted with some HVAC issues in certain units (chillers tripping off alarms), and those matters are being worked on. The Consultants are assisting with resolutions to the 174 items on the unfinished items list, and dead landscaping needs to be replaced. There are Change Orders that need to be attended to, and the drafting of responses to the State regarding reimbursements is in process.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson Granato announced the following meetings are scheduled: Facilities & Maintenance Committee, Policy and Planning Committee, Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative – WECC, School Projects Building Committee, and Finance and Information Management Committee.

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comments

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on change orders pertaining to the WHS renovation and donation money in an escrow account. He also commented favorably of Wethersfield Town and School budgets, programs, program ticket sales and concessions operating like businesses.

11. Board Comments

Mr. Cascio reminded Board members of the SDMS Memorial Day Presentation scheduled on Friday, May 26, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. and of the Memorial Day Parade on Saturday, May 27, 2017. He also reminded Board members of the Academic Awards Ceremony at WHS on Wednesday, May 31, 2017. During that event, the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce will be presenting four (4) scholarship awards.

Ms. Moon congratulated and thanked the retirees mentioned this evening, commented favorably regarding the Red Supreme Project at Webb School and of having police officer resources in District schools. She thanked the Keane Foundation for the grant made to the Art Department for the Empty Bowl Project. She commented on the budget reduction issue.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick noted 1) extra-curricular programs are offered to help students become well rounded; 2) booster clubs run concessions and are staffed by parents at WHS events, and the profits from those sales go directly back to the respective programs; and 3) she was offended by a speaker's remark (during the Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting) suggesting religion as a factor in the Board's consideration of a proposed cut to transportation.

Mrs. Vasel acknowledged and commented favorably of Mr. Murphy who recently passed away. Mr. Murphy began teaching in Wethersfield Public Schools in 1962 as a 6th Grade Teacher, continued as a Principal [at Greenfield, Emerson-Williams, and Charles Wright schools], and then retired as a WHS Career Coordinator in 2008. She commented that the ERASE Survey results are useful to our community on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Forrest requested Mr. Emmett to make room in his schedule in the next couple of weeks for a Pre-K 3&4 Program Working Group Meeting. Mr. Emmett indicated preschool will be included in the discussion of planning for our elementary schools, with a representative from Collier's International, at the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Meeting on Thursday, May 25, 2017.

Mrs. Granato noted her appreciation in working with the retirees honored this evening, extended well wishes to all the retirees and spoke favorably of Mr. Murphy's impact in our District schools. She noted the Town Council and the Board have continued to work on the budget and agreed to the Five Hundred Thousand ($500,000.00) Dollar reduction figure. She explained that after two (2) meetings, the Board came up with a list of reductions that would have minimum disruption to student learning in the classroom and not eliminate staff.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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John Morris, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary