Approved 02.14.2023
by B.O.E.

Board of Education
January 24, 2023

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 24, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. and was streamed from the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Healy, Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Reilly, and Chairperson Carey. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli; Business Manager, Matthew Kozaka; WPS Director of Security & Residency (WPS Liaison--COVID-19 Response Team), Michael Baribault; Wethersfield Public Schools Director of Special Education, John Karzar; Webb Elementary School Curriculum Specialist/Kindness Club Advisor, Andrea (Annie) Kuhn; Webb Elementary School Kindness Club student presenters from Grades 5 & 6 (Nadia, Alex, Jonah, Mike, Julia, Macy, Emma and Ari); Town of Wethersfield/Wethersfield Public Schools Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin; WECC Coordinator, Jim Welch; and WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Student members from Webb School's Kindness Club (Grades 5 & 6) led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

Mr. Emmett introduced Webb Elementary School Teacher and Kindness Club mentor, Annie Kuhn and Webb Elementary School's Kindness Club members (Nadia, Alex, Jonah, Mike, Julia, Macy, Emma and Ari from Grades 5 and 6) who then made a presentation regarding "The Great Kindness Challenge" at Webb School and the importance of kindness. The students spoke

of the club's initiatives for spreading kindness in the school. Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Healy, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Carey commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. January 10, 2023 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mr. Cascio MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of January 10, 2023, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett indicated "The Great Kindness Challenge" is occurring in WPS schools this week with a variety of activities planned. The challenge is presented by the Kids for Peace initiative, a global campaign promoting kindness, compassion, unity, and respect in grades kindergarten through 12. More information will be provided to Board members in the Friday update about the activities that occurred in the schools over the course of this week.

Mr. Emmett noted there is new guidance from the CDC and FDA on the expiration dates of test kits, and the CDC has extended the expiration date on covid test kits. As a result of time extension, test kits obtained from WPS have lot numbers allowing for said kits to be used through April or May of 2023. Parents can check the *ParentSquare* communication sent by WPS School Nurse Supervisor, Elda Marcelynas which notes the test kit lot numbers families have from the kits received from WPS. Yesterday, WPS Director of Security & Residency (WPS Liaison--COVID-19 Response Team), Michael Baribault coordinated with the DPH for an additional delivery of test kits, and those kits were received this morning and delivered to the schools. WPS will be able to continue the test and stay mitigation strategy for covid cases moving forward and has an ample supply of kits (due kit expiration date extension) for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Emmett noted that according to the CCHD, the number of flu and RSV cases in the district continues to trend downward. However, one additional surge of the flu is expected later this winter. The district believes Wethersfield is now past the peak of post-holiday break covid cases.

There have been 5-10 covid cases a week at WHS and fewer or none at the elementary school level.

Mr. Emmett noted that the SDMS Encore After-School Program's staff positions (coordinator and 3 support staff) have been filled, and a February start date for the program is anticipated. Program logistics (rooms utilized, transportation, enrollment targets) are now the focus. WPS is one of 16 districts who has received the funding for this program. He thanked Wethersfield Social and Youth Services, Wethersfield Police Department, and The Keane Foundation for their assistance in securing the grant for this program. Mr. Emmett will provide updates regarding the program.

Mr. Emmett mentioned he anticipates the February 1st meeting of the Facilities and Maintenance Committee to discuss the Collier's proposal and whether the district needs to go out to bid for future work on our long-range building plan for the elementary schools.

Mr. Emmett noted RLE, the company that completed the audit of the lighting and HVAC systems in the school buildings, has set a virtual meeting he will attend on February 7th to review findings and opportunities. Mr. Emmett will pass on to the Board the information he receives regarding cost savings and upgrades to the district's lighting and HVAC systems.

Mr. Emmett noted that since the November 9th retreat with the Board and administrative team, the work completed at the retreat has helped lay the foundation for the work by the administrative teams to continue. Today, the administrative teams met, and a survey will be going out to community stakeholders (which includes parents and students). The survey will help determine what the community is looking for as the strategic plan is updated. He noted a lot has been accomplished since the 2018 Strategic Plan, but a blueprint from the community and school district is needed to move forward.

Mr. Emmett noted the Social Justice Coalition met last Thursday with a full group session with Captain Mark Petruzzi, and the subgroups met in break-out sessions thereafter. The subgroup work continues, and the next meeting of the Social Justice Coalition will be held in a hybrid format on Thursday, February 16, 2023, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at WHS or via *zoom*. Sarah Jones from CREC can be contacted for those wishing to register and for a meeting link to be sent if attending remotely.

Mr. Emmett indicated the 2023-2024 budget is being worked on at schools and across departments. Budget workshops are scheduled, and rationale pertaining to budget requests will be explained. The expectation by Town Charter is that a board approved budget must be available to send/transmit to Town Council no later than March 15th. Mr. Emmett noted he looks forward to working with everyone in creating the budget.

6. Action Items

There were no items.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Announcements/Information

Chairperson Carey reviewed the items in Board Members' packets and reminded Committee Chairpersons/Board members to review their calendars with scheduled dates and times pertaining to upcoming meetings and note changes to committee meetings. He advised Board members to verify their attendance at Committee Meetings with the Committee's Chairpersons, the Administrative Chairperson, and Mr. Emmett. He encouraged email use by Board members for communicating meeting attendance and ensuring a quorum for committee meetings.

b. Wethersfield Early Childhood Resource Center (WECC) Update

A presentation was made Town of Wethersfield/Wethersfield Public Schools Family and Early Childhood Coordinator, Kim Bobin; and WECC Coordinator, Jim Welch regarding the continued and important work of WECC, along with Town of Wethersfield, community partners, and parents, as they address education and wellness concerns for preschool and kindergarten aged children (and their families) in Wethersfield. Board Comments: Mr. Reilly, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Granato, Mr. Cascio, and Mr. Carey commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

c. Next Generation Accountability Index Presentation

Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Curriculum and Instruction, Sally Dastoli made a presentation pertaining to the Next Generation Accountability Report and the school-based accountability reports for 2021-2022. Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts, Mrs. Drew, Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Granato, and Mr. Fazzina commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Student Programs & Services Committee: This meeting was cancelled.

CREC Council: Mrs. Granato noted the meeting began with a presentation about CREC's Annual Report, and the Council received an update on the recent financial audit. No issues with the audit were found and information can be found on the CREC website: https://www.crec.org CREC Executive Director, Greg Florio commented on CREC's Annual Report as a summary of CREC for the 2021-2022 school year. CREC Council Chairperson, Lydia Tedone asked council members to share information on the Annual Report with their respective districts, and Mrs. Granato will share the information with Mr. Emmett. The Legislative Breakfast (at the State Capitol Legislative Office) is Thursday, February 16th at 8:00 a.m., and all Wethersfield BOE members and WPS administrators are invited. Mrs. Granato asked that Board members and WPS administrators to let her know if they wish to attend. She noted she'd like a strong attendance at the breakfast because 1) 113 students from Wethersfield are enrolled in CREC schools, and tuition paid from WPS budget is $645,849.00; and 2) the new CT General Assembly has 45 members who are on the Education Committee (which is the largest number ever). She and hopes that this number of representatives on the committee means there is more interest and focus on our state schools. She also noted the event (Legislative Breakfast) is an opportunity to speak with the Education Committee members.

Finance & Operations Committee: Mrs. Drew reported the district is about one (1%) percent under budget at this point. Next year's budget was discussed, and the district would be looking at a 3% increase with salaries and benefits. In addition to the three (3%) percent noted above, increases to transportation, tuition, as well as potential increases associated with contract negotiations, needs/requests from teachers, math program/other curriculum changes, and technology needs have to be explored when creating the budget. The upcoming budget workshops will discuss the matters. Utilizing the two (2%) percent fund for additional long-range planning for the district elementary schools was also discussed, and Facilities and Operations will handle some of the bidding process tasks dependent upon the next steps taken for long-range planning.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Facilities & Maintenance Committee (02.01.23 @ 6:00pm), Budget Workshop – Day 1 (02.25.23 @ 9:00am), Budget Workshop – Day 2 (03.01.23 @ 6:00pm), Budget Workshop – Day 3 (03.04.23 @ 9:00am), and Budget Workshop – Day 4 (03.08.23 @ 6:00pm)

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comment

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

11. Board Comments

Mrs. Granato commented favorably of the Keane on Kids coalition meeting she recently attended. Keane on Kids After School Program Director, Caroline Fazzina reported on enrollment (over 600 students) and noted the on Hands-on-Learning, Science enrichment classes have been added to Kindergarten and Grade 1 in the schools. It was also noted that two (2) elementary schools have begun auditioning for their spring productions. SDMS now has grant money for more after school programs. The Keane Foundation luminaire holiday fundraiser was a success. The golf tournament fundraiser is scheduled for May 15th, and the public is encouraged to sign up. More information about the fundraisers will follow.

Mrs. Granato noted Wethersfield Hunger Action Team (HAT) met with coordinator, Debra Cohen. The WHS group has worked /is working on the charitable project work for hunger, Let's Tackle Hunger (fall), and Hygiene (spring) food/product drives. The Dazzling Dozen initiative (organizations/groups/businesses choose a month to collect food/supplies for the Wethersfield Food Bank) continues with WPS having the month of May for a collection. The Wethersfield Food Bank accepts monetary donations, and Wethersfield Social Services can be contacted for information regarding assistance with utilities. It was noted that SNAP funds have also been received at the Farmers' Market, and there is a mobile *FoodShare* scheduled for tomorrow (and every other Wednesday) at 55 Lancaster Road. Wethersfield Social Services thanks all Wethersfield residents for their continued generosity, and additional information regarding services can be found at The Town of Wethersfield website: https://wethersfieldct.gov/

Mrs. Granato indicated The *Wethersfield Education Foundation* (WEF) recently met and is working on its annual membership drive. Fundraising has been successful for WPS teacher and administrator grants, and applications are going out in March for grants that can be used for the next school year. Mrs. Granato referred to a flyer that will be posted around Town containing information about WEF's mission, and those interested can scan the bar code to learn more information. The information can also be found by accessing the *Wethersfield Education Foundation* (WEF) website: https://www.wethersfieldeducationfoundation.org/

Mrs. Drew commented favorably of the Superintendent's Awards Ceremony she and Mr. Carey recently attended. She congratulated all of the winners, gave a shout out to Officer Silva, and thanked Mr. Emmett for being invited.

WHS Student Representative, Ryan Fazzina welcomed the newest WHS Assistant Principal, Stephanie Jacques who began her tenure on Monday. He noted that course selection for fall 2023 has begun with students in Grades 9 through 11 learning about the process and graduation requirements. Grade and graduation requirements can be found in the student handbook. There is a goal to have all student schedules completed and published before the beginning of summer break. 8th Grade Family Night is scheduled for February 6th (snow date is February 9th) with academic and extra-curricular activities information provided by department leaders and administration, as well as WHS building tours provided by student guides from WHS Eagle Crew and WHS DECA Club. Last week was the end of a pilot program for student internships, and visitors heard about the experiences WHS students had in the job placements and how internships helped them choose a path for post high school. To increase student internship opportunities, members of the public/businesses can contact Mr. Danaher at WHS to learn how can get involved. Mr. Fazzina noted there are Senior Night ceremonies scheduled for WHS Girls Basketball (January 27th), WHS Wrestling (February 1st), WHS Hockey (February 4th), WHS Boys Basketball, WHS Cheer and WHS Dance Team (February 10th), and WHS Boys Swimming (February 21st).

Mr. Healy commented favorably of this evening's Kindness presentation by Webb School students and recognized former Mayor Daniel A, Camilliere as a role model of very kind man

who served Wethersfield for 50 years. Mr. Camilliere, age 100, passed away on January 17, 2023.

Mr. Reilly commented favorably of the December 15th performances of the WHS Band and WHS Orchestra and noted the event was well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

12. Proposed for Executive Session

Mrs. Drew MOVED to leave public session and enter into an Executive Session at approximately 8:27 p.m. for: **a. Review and Discussion of Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation**. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session: C. Carey, J. Cascio, J. Di Roberts, A. Drew, B. Granato, C. Healy, M. Laccavole, J. Reilly; **Administrators:** M. Emmett

Mrs. Drew MOVED to leave executive session and re-enter public session at 9:18 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Cascio and VOTED unanimously.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Granato and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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John F. Cascio, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary