

Board of Education

January 28, 2014

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, January 28, 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. Cascio, Mr. Forrest, Mrs. Latina, Ms. McDougall, Ms. Moon, and Mr. Morris. Also present were: Superintendent of Schools, Michael Emmett; Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Finance, Timothy Howes; Wethersfield High School Principal, Thomas Moore; and Wethersfield High School Student Representative, Sam Solberg.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Cascio led the Board and public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

There were no Student/Staff Recognition/Presentations made during this meeting.

3. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

a. **January 14, 2014 Regular Board of Education Meeting**

Chairperson DeAngelo noted the following correction to Page 3, Section 5. Communications., Line 18. The word "saving" should read "standards". She also noted that on Page 5, in subsection f., Board Comments is to reflect that Mrs. DeAngelo commented. Ms. Moon noted the following correction to Page 6, Line 2. The fourth word "the" is to be changed to "there".

Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise noted the following correction to Page 7, Section 11. Board Comments., Paragraph 4, Line 4. The word, "on" is to be added after the word "met".

Mrs. Latina MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of January 14, 2014, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Cascio and VOTED unanimously.

b. January 23, 2014 Special Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. Latina MOVED to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting of January 23, 2014. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Forrest and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Cascio and Mr. Morris abstaining.

4. Public Comment

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on his attendance at the recent Infrastructure Meeting with Town Council members where a discussion of the overrun pertaining to the WHS Renovation Project occurred and where he reiterated that contractors for the project need to be held accountable in satisfying the overrun. He also commented on responsibilities of the Board.

George A. Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, commented on the definition of legal obligations and accountability of volunteers, as well as volunteerism for personal gain. He questioned whether by-laws should reflect that cell phones of Board Members be deactivated during Board meetings.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett acknowledged and thanked Mr. Carl Christie, member representative of the Rotary Club of Wethersfield/Rocky Hill. He noted the donation of dictionaries was the Club's eighth (8th) consecutive donation of dictionaries made to Wethersfield Grade 3 students. The Club has sponsored *The Dictionary Project*, a non-profit charitable organization, by implementing that program (distribution of dictionaries) in local schools. Mr. Christie spoke briefly of the project and the responses the Club has received from students. Mr. Emmett spoke of the Budget workshop with Mr. Howes held Saturday, January 25, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Stillman Building wherein budget binders and working papers were received by Board members. The next workshop is scheduled for Saturday, February 1, 2014, from

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Stillman Building's Lower Level Conference Room. Mr. Emmett reported the next round of abatement for the WHS Renovation Project is scheduled for the February school vacation week (3rd week of February 2014), and he will be attending a project meeting at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow (Wednesday, January 29) at WHS to obtain additional information regarding that matter in order to provide details to parents, students and staff.

Mr. Emmett attended the Principal's Breakfast for parents at Emerson-Williams Elementary

School on Friday, January 24, 2014, 9:00 a.m. where a Math presentation was made to parents from Mrs. St. Onge, Mrs. Kardys and Mrs. Moore with a demonstration from 4th Graders. Principal Thakur discussed the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) [replacing the CMT]. Mr. Emmett indicated a forum regarding the SBA is scheduled for parents on Monday, March 10, 2014, at Silas Deane Middle School (SDMS). The District is working with the Wethersfield Schools Parent Council (WSPC) to have that forum taped for view on Wethersfield Public Access Channel 14. Mr. Emmett noted the upcoming *DARE* Graduation Ceremonies: Emerson-Williams School Grade 5 – Thursday, January 23, 2014, 6:30 p.m. (at Webb School Auditorium) and Hanmer School Grade 5 – Thursday, February 6, 2014, 6:30 p.m. (at Hanmer School).

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of Leave of Absence for Teacher ID #905832

Ms. Moon MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve a childrearing leave of absence for ID #905832 under the provisions of Article XI E 2 under the agreement of the Wethersfield Board of Education and the Local CSEA/SEIU 2001. This request is for the period January 2, 2014 through March 7, 2014. Leaves without pay may be granted by the Board for periods of from thirty-one days to one year (31 to 365). The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise and VOTED unanimously.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. First Reading: Proposed 2014-2015 School Year Calendar

Mr. Howes provided a report. Board Comments: Ms. McDougall, Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise, Mr. Cascio, Mrs. Latina, and Mrs. DeAngelo commented. Mr. Emmett also commented.

b. 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: CREC Council Meeting:

Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise indicated there was a discussion of regional efficiencies [with

information she will be bringing to the Shared Services Committee (for which she is a member)] and a presentation regarding the International Magnet School for Global Citizenship in South Windsor and the Reggio Magnet School of the Arts in Avon. She noted the legislative session is from February until May 2014, and there is a task force from CREC looking at educational mandates, the regional calendar, and school safety. Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise had included in Board member packets the CREC legislative goals, the CREC uniform regional school calendar task force summary, and the invitation to the Monday, February 13, 2014 Legislative Breakfast.

Finance and Information Management Committee: Mrs. Latina indicated Mr. Howes provided an update on the RFP for food services. She noted there were discussions pertaining to the following matters: 1) Athletic Budget, its status to date, and Pay-To-Play fees; 2) magnet school tuitions; 3) residency officer for the District [currently a half-time person completes residency checks whereas in the past, the District had two (2) people completing residency checks]; 4) new state statutes pertaining to school security and the costs those statutes may incur on the District; 5) overview of Superintendent's Budget (in preparation of the Saturday, February 8, 2014, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. budget workshop) with emphasis on Town Council being invited to workshops, as two (2) Town Council members attended first workshop; 6) proposed budget coming in at an increase of 4.8% over last year's budget with the greatest increases identified as occurring in: Special Education costs, Pension, OPED Trust, Insurance Premium, and Paraprofessionals salaries. School Project Building Committee (01.22 & 01.27): Mr. Emmett mentioned the focus of the meeting on 01/22/14 was to discuss the financial situation regarding the renovation project. No report was made regarding the 01/27/14 meeting. Policy and Planning Committee: Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise noted the Committee is in the process of redoing the policy manual Section 9000 (By-Laws) with assistance and input from a CABA representative. Special Board of Education Meeting: Mr. Emmett reported that the meeting was related to a confidential student disciplinary matter. Special Board of Education Meeting, - Budget Workshop: Mrs. DeAngelo noted new Board members learned of the educational process and the budget process. She also noted the current year budget was discussed and a breakdown of salaries and historical data was provided. She indicated this workshop was one (1) of five (5) being held and that a total of twenty (20) hours or more will be spent in budget completion. She also indicated the next workshop is scheduled for Saturday, February 1, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Stillman Building's Lower Level Meeting Room with Mr. Howes providing the benefits portion

of the budget. She noted additional Workshops will be held at the Stillman Building's Lower Level Meeting Room on Sunday, February 2, 2014, from 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.; Saturday, February 8, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; and Saturday, February 15, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Mrs. DeAngelo stated the Presentation of the Budget is planned for the Board of Education's February 25, 2014 Regular Meeting. Community and Public Relations Committee: Mrs. Latina noted there was discussion regarding the survey completed last year by District parents [the thirty three (33%) percent return rate was perceived from the survey company as a good return rate] and there will be work done with the survey company in preparing the next survey in order to prevent confusing survey questions and achieve an outcome of clear concrete data. The survey results would be posted on line for those interested in viewing the data. Discussion included using data learned from the initial survey and comparing it to the results learned from the next survey for progress tracking and as a good tool going forward. She noted the concept of having newsletters as vehicles for mentioning the work the Board is doing, how the newsletter process would work, and how newsletters would get out to District parents was discussed. Defining communication policy going forward (mindful of the By-Law review process now occurring) was also discussed. Discussion of increasing revenue streams for the District with private pay funding included ideas of before and after school care programs (now occurring in CREC schools) and expansion of the Wethersfield Transition Academy program.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Chairperson DeAngelo announced the following meetings are scheduled: Shared Services Committee; three (3) Special Board of Education Meetings, - Budget Workshops; Finance and Information Management Committee; Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative; and School Project Building Committee.

9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

10. Public Comments

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, commented on the January 17, 2014 *Hartford Courant* Op-Ed by Marcia Marien entitled "State Is Broke – 'Surplus' Is Pocket Change, as well as rising utility expenses. He discussed: 1) Webb School's renovation as unfinished, 2) the options of either

eliminating plans in the renovation project or making the contractors accountable for their project quotes rather than asking taxpayers for more money, and 3) asked for a line item report depicting each expense of the renovation project.

11. Board Comments

Ms. McDougall noted her attendance and learned in a recent committee meeting with Mr. Howes and Mr. Bushey that the Capital Improvement Budget for the entire Town is eight hundred thousand (\$800,000.00) dollars. The Capital Improvement requests from the Board of Education (which far exceeds \$800,000) were provided to this Committee (Town Manager, Town Staff, and volunteer members).

Mrs. Latina indicated the joint meeting recently held with Town Council, Board of Education and the Building Committee was productive, and she communicated disappointment in the reported overrun to the project management Company and design company Managers. She hopes the Town Attorney is reviewing the contract and enforcing it with the contractors. She noted everyone needs to be watchful of this issue going forward and is hopeful of a positive outcome.

Mr. Forrest mentioned discussion at the recent budget workshop of school choice becoming competitive and that perhaps airtime promotion of Wethersfield Public Schools might be of consideration. He noted that over the past several days, he has heard radio advertisements pertaining to promotion of the New Haven Public School experience.

Mr. Cascio mentioned there is a Memorial Day Parade Committee Meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, 6:30 p.m. at the Pitkin Community Center. He noted the flyer invitation provided to the Board regarding the Transition Academy's Open House on

Thursday, January 31, 2014, in the Fireside Room at the Pitkin Community Center. He congratulated the WHS *JETS* Team on their new assistive technology solution invention (<http://www.wethersfield.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=2368&newsid=317>). Mr. Cascio inquired and Mr. Emmett noted that Mr. Kess is the WHS *JETS* Team's new Advisor due to the retirement of former Advisor, Mrs. Fennelly.

Sam Solberg, WHS *JETS* Team member, commented on the Team's invention *PATH*. He enjoyed working with device user, Tyron Hill, during the process as well as the experience of working with CW Resources when taking on this challenge. He recommended the following

link: <http://www.wethersfield.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=2368&newsid=317> to the public as a reference for learning more information regarding the project.

Chairperson DeAngelo acknowledged and thanked Mr. Christie, who represented the Rotary Club of Wethersfield/Rocky Hill, for the Club's continual donation of dictionaries to Wethersfield Students. She clarified that the Wethersfield Board of Education does not select bids, does not accept payments, and does not post invoices on line pertaining to the WHS Renovation Project. She noted the Building Committee is the group who oversees the WHS Renovation Project. She welcomed the public to attend budget meetings and noted the next budget meeting is Saturday, February 1, 2014, 9:00 a.m., in the Stillman Building, Lower Level Meeting Room.

Mr. Morris MOVED to leave public session and enter executive session at 7:57 p.m. for the purpose of Discussion pertaining to the Process for Evaluating the Superintendent of Schools. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Latina and VOTED unanimously. Present for executive session: Mr. Cascio, Mrs. DeAngelo, Mr. Forrest, Mrs. Latina, Ms. McDougall, Ms. Moon, Mr. Morris, and Mrs. Steinmiller-Paradise. Others: Mr. Emmett, Mr. Howes.

Mr. Cascio MOVED to leave executive session and re-enter public session at 9:13 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Morris and VOTED unanimously.

Ms. Moon MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Cascio and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Steinmiller-Paradise, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary