Board of Education
October 8, 2024

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 Tuesday, October 8, 2024 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, Mr. Carey (7:35 p.m. arrival), Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Hernandez-Williams, Mr. Reilly, Ms. Walters, Mr. Weiner, Vice Chairperson 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; Emerson-Williams EL Teacher, Karla Calvo-Piedra; and WHS Student Representative, Anxhelika Deda. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Emerson-Williams EL Teacher, Karla Calvo-Piedra led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognitions/Presentations

Emerson-Williams EL Teacher, Karla Calvo-Piedra made a presentation about the Coffee Hour event in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month that was held at Emerson-Williams School on Thursday, October 3, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Students and their families enjoyed traditional entertainment, games, and refreshments. Everyone enjoyed mingling and celebrating Hispanic heritage. She thanked teachers and staff who helped organize and donate to the event. Board Comments: Mrs. Granato, Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Hernandez-Williams, and Mr. Reilly commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. September 24, 2024 Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Ms. Callan-Carson made a correction to Item 8.a., Page 6, Paragraph 3 (Community & Public Relations Committee), Line 7. Change "Mr. Weir" to "Mr. Weiner"

Mrs. Di Roberts MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of September 24, 2024, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Walters and VOTED unanimously.

b. September 27, 2024 Board of Education Special Session Meeting

Ms. Callan-Carson MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Special Session Meeting of September 27, 2024, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Weiner and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Amanda Drew of 340 Wolcott Hill Road asked for Meeting Agenda Action Item 6.b. (Recommended Motion: Approval of the Roles of the Wethersfield Board of Education) to be tabled after Board discussion at this meeting. She noted her appreciation of the idea of providing clear roles and responsibilities for Board of Education officials but believes the document reflects two (2) distinct voices for two (2) distinct audiences and that the document is lengthy. She also expressed concerns of job description-like language (discussing things like grasping time commitments and having the ability to manage multi-billion-dollar budgets as essential) when defining the position of board member in the document. She is not in favor of some language mentioned in the "responsible" section, noting that a culture of unity is created from healthy discussions compromise and respect not forced silence. She also noted the addition of the quotes at the end of the document are not needed because the quotes are not related to or reference the Board, its roles, or its responsibilities. She supports two separate documents being created: 1) a concise one-page document for parents to help them understand who to contact and/or where to go when they have a student or staff is issue, and why they're not getting responses from all Board members; and 2) a document specifically for new Board of Education members to help them navigate Robert's Rules meeting etiquette responsibilities, roles, constituent contact, etc. She thanked Board members for all that they do.

5. Communications

Mr. Emmett noted the district is applying for two (2) grants from the Harford foundation for Public Giving. One grant is for up to $5,000.00 for a Student Center at WHS, and Anxhelika Deda will be the fiscal agent. Ideas will originate from the students and Eagle Crew student members, and Mr. Emmett will submit the grant.

SDMS has the opportunity to earn a grant of up to $2,500, and Mr. Emmett will be working with SDMS student leaders (Lion Leaders) to develop and foster an idea for a grant application. The hope is to have the grant application submission by the end of this month. He thanked WHS Student Representative, Anxhelika Deda for her leadership in this regard.

Mr. Emmett is working to have summer programming in place before his departure next year. He recently met with YMCA leadership and learned that WPS has been selected to participate in a summer Bells Scholars Program next summer, allowing for as many as 35 students to have a full-day summer experience over the course of approximately five weeks. Additionally, the district has its summer CLASS Program which focuses on students that need academic support. More information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Emmett was pleased to report that recent rain did not affect the roofing project going on at Highcrest School. As of Friday afternoon, the Media Center was 100% water tight. This week the roofing company is finishing up on flashing and metal work, and then equipment will be taken down. The project should be finished this week.

Mr. Emmett noted that at the Board of Education will consider a motion at its regular meeting on October 22nd that will set the WHS Class of 2024 Graduation date.

Mr. Emmett indicated his understanding that the teachers ratified the contract today and that the Board of Education would soon be considering. He is very pleased with the collaborative effort from everyone involved.

Tomorrow, Mr. Emmett and Mr. Baribault will be participating in a safety and security webinar training offered by the FBI pertaining to swatting and bomb threats.

Last week, Mr. Emmett enjoyed networking and learning opportunities at the New England Association of School Superintendents Annual Conference, which was hosted by the Connecticut delegation this year. There was a full schedule of workshops, and several superintendents from across the state were recognized for their leadership work. Conference attendees heard from CT Commissioner of Education, Charlene Russell-Tucker. A video clip was played that featured US Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona expressing his message to the conference attendees. Mr. Emmett has been a long-time member of the executive board, as well as a past president of this group. Next year, the annual conference will be held in Vermont.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 School Year Calendars

Mr. Weiner MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 School Calendars. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan-Carson and VOTED unanimously.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of the Roles of the Wethersfield Board of Education

Ms. Walters MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the Roles of the Wethersfield Board of Education. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan-Carson. **Discussion)**: Ms. Walters, Mrs. Granato, Ms. Callan-Carson, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Carey;

Mr. Carey MOVED for a Call to Question in order to vote on the discussion to end. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly. The motion was VOTED (7-2) as AGAINST as follows:
Nay: M. Callan Carson, J. Di Roberts, B. Granato, C. Hernandez-Williams, M. Laccavole, L. Walters, J. Weiner; Yea: C. Carey and J. Reilly.

Discussion Continued: Ms. Hernandez-Williams, Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Weiner, Ms. Walters, and Mr. Carey.
The motion was VOTED (7-2) IN FAVOR OF as follows: Yea: M. Callan Carson, J. Di Roberts, B. Granato, C. Hernandez-Williams, M. Laccavole, L. Walters, J. Weiner; Nay: C. Carey and J. Reilly.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. Announcements/Information

There were no announcements/information matters.

b. Annual Class Size Report Presentation

Mr. Emmett provided the annual report regarding class sizes in the elementary and secondary schools, including Wethersfield Transition Academy for 2024-2025.
Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Carey, and Ms. Callan-Carson commented.

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

Board of Education Special Session Meeting (09.27.24 @ 2:30 p.m.): The meeting pertained to a confidential student matter.

Student Programs & Services Committee (10.01.24 @ 6:00 p.m.): Mrs. Di Roberts indicated there was a presentation to the Committee from Andrew Long and Patricia Berloe, ELL Coordinators for the district. These individuals were asked to make the same presentation to this Committee as was made to BOE in the spring of 2023 for the benefit of new Board members. Recommendations to grow their dream program (in consideration of data provided) were given to the Committee, including a recommendation that EL program planning and modifications districtwide be included in the Board of Education budget annually.

Human Resources & Personnel Committee (10.07.24 @ 6:00 p.m.): The meeting was canceled and will be rescheduled.

b. Meetings Scheduled

Student Programs & Services Committee (10.15.24 @ 6:00 p.m.); CREC Council (10.16.24 @ 11:30 a.m.); and Finance & Operations Committee (10.22.24 @ 6:00 p.m.)

9. Public Comment

Kimberly Miclette of 140 Timber Trail thanked BOE members for all that they do. She asked the Board to keep in mind class sizes when budgeting in the future. She noted that her child's class size at Webb School is too large. She commented on the teaching and learning difficulties when having too many students in one class based her experience as a Grade 2 teacher. She expressed that there is a lot of data and research to support the correlation between smaller class sizes and student achievement. Due to the large class sizes in Webb School Grade 1, she requested that one additional adult be added in each Grade 1 classroom at Webb School to help support the students and allow the teachers to complete their work (which also includes parent conferences, report cards, etc., for 28 students).

10. Board Comment

Mrs. Di Roberts noted the Charles right PTO held their first meeting of the school year on September 25th. The PTO has been busy running the Back-to-School Bingo Night, the fall beautification project, and the Boo-Hoo/Yahoo! Back to School Breakfast event. The PTO held a Welcome Back to School Brunch for the teachers and made welcome back bags containing

tissues, wipes, school supplies, and beverage mugs. The PTO will display a scarecrow on Main Street near the Hart Seed Building. The PTO is planning the Boo Bash Trunk or Treat event and a school colors Tie Dye event on October 25th. She mentioned Charles Wright School runs a weekend backpack program for families experiencing food insecurity, and donations are appreciated.

Mr. Carey noted his attendance at senior night for the WHS Boys Soccer Team and mentioned it was great to see the senior class team members being celebrated at this tied game against New Britain High School. Friday evening was the WHS Football game against Bristol Central High School. He indicated that despite the tough loss in overtime, it was great to see SDMS cheerleaders participating with WHS Varsity Cheer, as well as the middle school instrumental music students playing with the WHS Marching Band on the field during halftime and in the stands during the first half of the game.

Ms. Callan-Carson mentioned that Ms. Hernandez-Williams was the creative brains behind the scarecrow (created by her with some help from Board members) that is displayed in front of the Hart Seed Building as a contribution to the Scarecrows on Main Street event. This scarecrow was created on behalf of the Wethersfield Board of Education.

Mr. Weiner concurred with Ms. Callan-Carson's comments about the scarecrow and reminded everyone to fill out the google form to select a scarecrow contest winner.

Ms. Hernandez-Williams commented favorably of the scarecrow making experience and enjoyed the comradery among fellow Board members while doing so. She reiterated how committed this Board is to district students and their families.

Mrs. Granato thanked district school principals for their Friday updates and noted that principals/ teachers can feel free to invite Board members to their schools/classrooms. She encouraged townspeople to attend meetings and speak with the elementary school building project consultant, TSKP. That firm will visit PTOs, school events, and town events. She noted the more input received from citizens, the better the outcome will be for the project. Additionally, she alerted the public that once the superintendent search service is selected, public input will be sought as the search for a new superintendent of schools begins.

WHS Student Representative, Anxhelika Deda noted NBC Connecticut was on the sidelines during Pink Out Night at the WHS Football game Friday night. Last Friday, there was a news event where students were the anchors and the teachers pretended to be the students. Euro Challenge Team tryouts, as well as National Honor Society student officer elections, are tomorrow (Wednesday). The French and the English Honor Societies are up and running again. This past week, Mr. Moger and Mr. Sasur had their Habitat for Humanity meeting, and students are preparing to start a project in November. DECA will be having its pumpkin painting event and its annual food drive. Interact Club will soon be having its second meeting of the school year.

11. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business discussed.

12. Proposed for Executive Session

Mrs. Granato MOVED to leave public session and enter into an Executive Session at approximately 8:33 p.m. for the purpose of a) interviewing the Superintendent Search Services of CES**.** The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan-Carson and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session:
Wethersfield Board of Education Members:
M. Callan-Carson, C. Carey, J. Di Roberts,C. Hernandez-Williams,
B. Granato, M. Laccavole, J. Reilly, E. Walters, J. Weiner;
Others: Dave Erwin

13. Adjournment

Mr. Weiner MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Laccavole and VOTED (8-0). Mr. Carey left the meeting and was not present for this vote.

Respectfully submitted,

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Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary