

## **WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Monday, February 5, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

(For the February 13, 2007 Board Meeting - MINUTES ATTACHED)

### **COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Board of Education Committee meetings were held on Monday, February 5, 2007 at Bucks Hill Elementary School, 330 Bucks Hill Road, Waterbury, Connecticut, starting at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** President Hayes, Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Geremia, Harvey, Petteway, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, Uriano, and White.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendent Cullinan, Assistant Superintendent Sequeira, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, Attorney Maurice Mosley, and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

Reports were submitted to the various committees of the Board and discussed.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:59 p.m. to discuss the appointment, employment, health or evaluation of a public officer or employee and returned at 8:41 p.m. No votes were taken or cast. All Commissioners were present along with Dr. Snead, Assistant Superintendents Cullinan and Sequeira, Director of Personnel Frost and Attorney Mosley.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee meetings adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie A. Swain, Clerk  
*Board of Education*

## **WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### *MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING*

Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Aldermanic Chamber, City Hall, 235 Grand Street, Waterbury, Connecticut

**PRESENT:** President Hayes, Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Petteway, Stango, Sweeney, Theriault, and White.

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Geremia and Uriano.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent Snead, Assistant Superintendent Cullinan, Assistant Superintendent Sequeira, Chief Operating Officer Paul Guidone, Director of Personnel Ron Frost, School Business Administrator Paul Mazzaccaro, Attorney Maurice Mosley, and School Inspector Herbert Greengas.

### **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m. I'd like to acknowledge our Commissioner Charles Stango prior to the silent prayer.

STANGO: Thank you Mr. President. Sadly I'd like to make note of the passing of yet another longtime Waterbury educator. Nina Primini passed suddenly last week at a young age. She taught in Waterbury for 32 years having retired two years ago. Nina's career was spent in elementary education – teaching in Bucks Hill, Maloney, and Bunker Hill Schools. After retirement she still found time to help the students of Waterbury by substitute teaching. Let us remember here this evening in our silent prayer.

HAYES: Thank you. Dr. Snead, please lead us in silent prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Dr. Snead proceeded to lead the Board in silent prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

HAYES: Before we do the roll call, Commissioner Uriano did contact me, he's under the weather. He was sort of hoping we'd postpone because he didn't want to miss, just to let everybody know where he is.

### **ROLL CALL**

CLERK: Commissioner Flaherty-Merritt.

FLAHERTY-MERRITT: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner Geremia – ABSENT.

CLERK: Commissioner Harvey.

HARVEY: Here

CLERK: Commissioner Petteway.

PETTEWAY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Theriault.

THERIAULT: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Uriano – ABSENT.

CLERK: Commissioner White.

WHITE: Here.

CLERK: President Hayes.

HAYES: Here.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner White and duly seconded by Commissioner Petteway, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the following communications:**

1. Communication dated January 26, 2007 from Barbara Wheelahan regarding rescinding her resignation.
2. Communication dated January 29, 2007 from John Jedrzejczyk, Director of Finance, regarding Capital Funds and Special Revenue Funds Status Report.
3. Copy of communication dated February 5, 2007 from NEAS & C regarding Crosby High School.

HAYES: All in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 18, 2006.**

HAYES: Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed. We have no one on the sign-up sheet. Is there anyone here to address the Board?

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** As you know, Tinker School was used as an emergency shelter on Sunday for the victims of the fire at Bradley Gardens. Tinker Principal Lauren Elias reports that she and other staff members, including her secretary, office aide and the PTA president, all came down to the school to help out. They spent several hours handing out personal essentials such as toothbrushes and deodorant. The school was even able to offer juice and snacks that were left over from a dance at the school on Friday evening. Both McDonalds and Frankie's helped out with food donations. Many families took refuge at the school, including families with children still in their night clothes and barefoot, and even a one month old baby. There were also residents with medical needs that came to the school. Lauren has high praise for the Red Cross, who managed the disaster relief efforts. "They really did a fantastic job of taking care of the needs of these families," she said. Unfortunately, this huge disaster has really depleted the local Red Cross' emergency fund and new donations will be needed to provide for any future emergency. The Red Cross will be starting a new drive to solicit funds and other donations to help replenish the Disaster Relief Community Fund. Potential donors should be aware that this is a local fund and all money raised here will stay here for relief efforts in this community. We would also like to commend our custodial staff who worked through the weekend assisting the Red Cross and the individuals displaced from their homes during this fire.

Last week we filed an application to the federal government for an E-Rate discount on our telephone service. The application is projected to save the city over \$600,000 over the next five years. Louise Allen Brown and Paul Mazzaccaro assisted Purchasing Director Rocco Orso in this effort.

Police Chief O'Leary is just beginning a new Police Athletic League program at St. Lucy's School. He has invited me and the members of my cabinet to attend a kick-off event at the school on Feb. 19 at 3 pm.

Last week's special education compliance review went well. The State Department of Education visitors were impressed with our staff and their enthusiasm. They said our faculty exhibited mutual respect and pride toward our schools and our students, as well as excellent collaboration among staff. The visitors went into seventeen schools over the course of the week. They made a point of saying that they were pleased with Wilby High School and its staff.

I had Anne Louise Thompson from the State Department of Education as a guest on my show today, along with Ann Marie Cullinan. We spoke about responsible inclusion and Waterbury and Connecticut's partnership with The Netherlands. That should be coming on the air on Channel 16 this Friday at 7 pm.

National consultant Larry Ainsworth was here last week helping to provide professional development on data driven decision making to our administrators.

Last Tuesday I went to the U.S. Attorney's office in New Haven, along with students and staff from the Enlightenment School, to participate in a special Black History Month program in his office. The program was sponsored by the U.S. Attorney's office.

Congratulations to Crosby High School in its victory over Torrington last Tuesday. This puts Crosby into a three way tie for first place in the NVL league.

I held my monthly Administrators Meeting last Wednesday. Kristina Elias Staron gave a presentation on some of the new initiatives she is working on in secondary reading / language arts. Ann Begley also gave an update on Buck's Hill School.

I met with Pat Ospalek on Friday last week as part of our regular meetings to update each other on issues and concerns.

I attended a Department Head meeting last week in which the details of the new personnel structure were discussed. The old chief of staff position will be eliminated. The responsibilities of that position will now be divided up among three staff people. Joe Geary will now serve in a new chief of operations position. Terry Caldarone and Ofelia Matos will take on additional responsibilities. Joe Geary will be in charge in the Mayor's absence.

We have reports of significant snowfall for tonight through Wednesday. Our staff has met today with Public Works and Police and Fire officials regarding the significant event. We will watch the weather later this evening and make a judgment regarding school for tomorrow.

**PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:** Thank you Dr. Snead. I'll just make a couple of quick comments I hope. First, we've had a lot of revisions with regard to that Waterbury Prevention Policy Board student survey; I hope we have the support tonight so we can get on with gathering the information because I think that's a vitally important group that can help us with a lot of problems we face on a daily basis in the school system. Secondly, I want to make a comment about the newspaper story regarding our letter to the City Plan Commission. One of the things that we found out is that there's probably about 2,000 units that have already been approved and we're talking about beyond that, a moratorium beyond that. I believe, I would like to, and any other Commissioner, attend a City Plan Commission meeting when I have an opportunity. If nothing else just to read the letter into the record to let them know what our concerns are. Because again with 2,000 units with two or three bedrooms we're possibly looking at another 2,000 to 3,000 kids, so that's five or six schools. So somehow that's got to be considered somewhere. I think the City Planner's comments were basically sort of keep our nose out of it which I didn't really like his comments on but I think it's based on the fact that he has no authority to do something like that. So it might be something that if we just start getting together and going down to the City Plan and just remind them of this situation there might be some consideration even at the State level to get some involvement there because any of us that have been around this City for a long time have seen, the unfortunate fire at the former Villa Sol Dor, those were supposed to be luxury apartments that turned into something less than that and again there's a lot of kids there, a lot of people that are in our school system and I just think the City is at a time now where we can't afford to continue to overrun our schools. We got the support

to build those three new schools and that's basically gonna keep up where we can have our schools at 80/85%, hopefully. And then you still have a little bit of room for growth. But, like I said, if anybody wants to go down, I'm just asking for your permission to go down and represent you basically on the content of the letter we sent to them. Not necessarily to tell them what to do but to tell them to please consider this, it will make it a lot easier for us to continue to do what we do.

SWEENEY: There's one tomorrow night and some sort of complex proposed for my block so my intent is to be there tomorrow night so I'd be happy to make comments if that's okay with the Board.

HAYES: Chances are they probably won't have the meeting tomorrow night based on Dr. Snead's...

SWEENEY: Well whenever it's postponed to I'll be there.

HAYES: Let us know. One other thing that I don't know how we get the word out but we're short on our maintenance staff and I think the guys are really getting to the point where we're a little bit on overload. I know Commissioner Uriano asked for some help up at Wallace and we're shifting people around but when we ship someone from one place to another chances are it's gonna be difficult to keep wherever they came from up to snuff like we'd like it. And I think we saw in one of our communications we're short 16 people, that's a lot to expect our guys to continue to do the job that they're doing. Again, talk it up, if anybody is willing to come in and work for us, get the word out. It doesn't have to be relatives, it could be anybody you know of that's looking for work. But it is something that we need to do. And finally just a brief comment for the Kennedy girls' basketball team that I'm hoping to go see tonight, they sort of . . . radar and this is the team that hasn't had many wins over the years and they've turned it around and they're up to 14 wins right now and they've only lost to Torrington and Holy Cross. They're playing Holy Cross tonight. But it's a young team, they have a young coach, Junior Varsity Coach, and I'm hoping that they do well in the State Tournament so I just want to wish them luck on the record then I'll go up and chair them on. Hopefully they're still in the game by the time I get there.

## **REPORTS**

### **1. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

#### **1.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school year calendars.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion?

PETTEWAY: I noticed on the calendar in February of 2008, we had a discussion of February 19 of that calendar and I just wanted to make sure that the 19<sup>th</sup> winter break was excluded. The date isn't blocked out but the explanation on the bottom is there as if it is and they probably would want to correct that.

HAYES: It will be fixed. Any other discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**1.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve for select grade six and nine students to participate in a student survey as administered by the Waterbury Prevention Policy Board.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded – any discussion?

STANGO: At the Workshop when this survey was originally presented I voiced some concerns pertaining to the scope and appropriateness of some of the questions. My concerns and those of others were addressed by Mrs. Brown when she stated that an opt-out letter would be sent home to parents so that their children could be excused from the survey if they wished. This is the opt-out letter, it's an excellent letter, it tells parents about the survey, it tells parents that the survey is designed to help Waterbury better understand the needs of our youth. The letter informs parents that the survey will cover topics like student attitudes toward school and family. It tells parents some questions will include student views on drugs, alcohol use, and sexual activity among their children. It also states that the survey is anonymous. This letter tells parents that a copy of the survey is available for review in the principal's office of their child's school. The letter also states that if you do not want your child to participate in the survey you must sign and return it to school. And finally it states that the form need not be returned unless you want your child excluded from the survey. This is a very fine letter indeed except for one thing, most of them will never reach the targeted audience for which it is intended. By nature, pre-teens and early teens want to be included in everything not excluded. These letters will never make it home; they will be shoved into the backs of lockers, stashed into the bottoms of book bags and lost in the abyss of school bus floors. If some letters do manage to get home and are signed by parents through the protest of their children crying that surely they will be called nerds and babies, they most likely will never survive the hurdle of the return trip back. No young teen wants to suffer under the peer pressure of their mom or dad wanting them excluded from a controversial issue. In my opinion it would be far better if this fine informative letter went home and returned only if permission is granted for the student to take part in the survey. An opt-in letter, if you will, an opt-in letter instead of an opt-out letter, there is a huge difference. An opt-in letter will give parents a true choice, a right to make an informed decision about the pressures of "but Mom, all the kids are doing it, I'll never be able to show my face in class again". While recognizing all the good the Policy Prevention Board does and the value of many of the questions in the survey, I must remain consistent in my belief that there are some questions which continue to be inappropriate in language and content for six, seventh and eighth graders. Thank you for your consideration.

SWEENEY: My thanks to Louise Brown for her diligence in addressing all questions and concerns surrounding the survey. I appreciate the preview of the opt-out letter and the addition of the note instructing parents on how and when they can view the survey if they wish. As always opt-in is my preference. The fact that some parents will pay no attention to the issue regardless whether the letter is opt-in or opt-out is exactly my point. Children of parents who are providing no backup or support at home may well be best served by not participating in classes or presentations on sensitive issues. With

opt-out a child participates even if the parent tosses the letter. At least with opt-in the child of a parent who tosses a letter can not participate. The purpose of this survey is to identify the social strengths and weaknesses of Waterbury's children. The largest gathering of children occurs at school making our student body the best available pool to survey. The results will be used to identify those outside agencies best equipped to deal with any of the myriad of issues faced by children today. I feel that schools are too often charged with fixing social ills that impact students' school lives but are born of what happens or doesn't happen when they are not in school. I don't believe school staff is best equipped for this and it should not be their charge. So by allowing the survey we instead equip school staff with the appropriate information to recommend social agencies to best help students. And as these agencies do their jobs schools will hopefully see a decline in negative impact on learning. School staff spend more time doing what they are charged with and what they love to do – teach and educate. I find some discomfort with the intensity of some of the issues the survey covers but for many a child's life today is, at best, uncomfortable. The decision on those type of questions is best left to parents and the Waterbury Prevention Board has complied with all requests to allow parents to make that decision. I will therefore support the participation of Waterbury sixth and ninth grade students for this survey. Thank you.

WHITE: I too had some misgivings about this but after reading the sample report that we received, the complete sample report, I was very pleased with what was in there and how thorough it was and how it could be used. And I have to, I do thoroughly agree with a lot of Commissioner Sweeney and Commission Stango's remarks, it can be a very positive things. And I think if we receive a report such as this sample report and then use it, I then think it can't do anything but make us a better system.

HAYES: Anyone else? Roll call please.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Yeas: Commissioners Flaherty-Merritt, Harvey, Petteway, Sweeney, Theriault, White, and President Hayes - 7  
Nays: Commissioner Stango – 1

HAYES: Motion passes seven to one.

## **2. COMMITTEE ON GRANTS**

**2.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve to apply for the State Education Resource Center (SERC) "Best Practices Initiative – Scaling-Up Evidence Based Practices" grant.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**2.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve to apply for the Community Development Block Grant for the Young Parent's Program.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**3. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

- 3.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner White, it was voted unanimously to approve of the release of Jeanette Villano Gumbulevich to serve as teacher-in-residence for the 2007/08 school year with the State Department of Education's BEST Program and if applicable, contract for the same.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**4. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

- 4.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner White, it was voted unanimously to approve the use of school facilities by school organizations and/or City departments.**

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve items 4.2 through 4.7, as listed:**

- 4.2 The use of school facilities by outside organizations with fees as outlined in their attached Use of Building Permit and subject to the receipt of all necessary deposits, insurance information, and/or lifeguard/CPR certifications, as listed.
- 4.3 The request of Waterbury Parochial Basketball for a waiver of custodial fees in the approximate total amount of \$3,920.00 for their use of Crosby, Kennedy, and Wilby High School's Gymnasiums on various dates is approved.
- 4.4 That permission be granted to J. M. Porzio, WMS/FOCUS, and five chaperones to take 50 students to Boston, MA on May 9, 2007 to visit the Museum of Science.
- 4.5 That permission be granted to N. DeCarlo, KHS and four chaperones to take 50 students to Lenox, MA on April 26, 2007 to attend a performance at Shakespeare & Co.
- 4.6 That permission be granted to A. Egan, MMS, and nine chaperones to take 84 students to Sturbridge, MA on April 26, 2007 to visit Old Sturbridge Village.

- 4.7 That permission be granted to J. DeLeon, CHS, and one chaperone to take 12 students to San Juan, PR from April 13 – 22, 2007 to visit various historical sites.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Commissioner White.

WHITE: Item 4.7, that particular field trip is during our school vacation, do we necessarily have to give permission?

SUPERINTENDENT: We're liable even though it's during school vacation for anyone that goes out of town and spends more than one night so it would be best that we give permission.

HAYES: Any further discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT: If it were not school sponsored, if it was sponsored by an outside agency or organization perhaps you wouldn't have to give permission but this happens to be school sponsored.

WHITE: How is it school sponsored if everyone is paying their own way? It does have academic reasons.

SUPERINTENDENT: And the teacher is one of our teachers and these are our students.

## **5. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD**

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway and duly seconded by Commissioner Flaherty-Merritt, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 5.1 through 5.4, as listed:**

### **5.1 Grant funded appointments effective immediately:**

Calabrese, Robert – Network Specialist, MMS, 35 hours per week, 10 months per year, \$19.00 per hour with benefits governed by the SEIU contract.

DeNucci, Andrea - Childcare Worker, Chase FRC, 10 hours per week, 10 months per year, \$8.00 per hour without benefits.

Dooling, Eileen – Assistant Tutor/EHCY Grant, Salvation Army, maximum of 10 hours per week, 10 months per year, \$15.00 per hour without benefits.

Fleming, Sonya – ESH Teacher Substitute, Bunker Hill, salary according to contract.

Flinter, Rhonda – Childcare Worker, Chase FRC, 10 hours per week, 10 months per year, \$8.00 per hour without benefits.

Lopez, Debra L. – Parent Liaison/Title I&V, Wilson School, 20 hours per week, 180 days per year, \$13,000 annually with benefits governed by the SEIU contract.

Nixon, Andrea – Payroll Clerk, Educational Grants, 35 hours per week, 12 months per year, \$12.82 per hour with benefits governed by SEIU contract.

Recchioni, Debrah – Pre-k Classroom Assistant, ECEP, 35 hours per week, 10 months per year, \$7.65 per hour with benefits governed by SEIU contract.

5.2 **Resignations:**

Wheelahan, Barbara J. – Special Education Teacher, NEMS, effective 2/28/07.

5.3 **Academic achievements:**

Gwiazdoski, Helena – from 6<sup>th</sup> year to 6<sup>th</sup> +15, effective 8/28/06.

5.4 **Adult Education appointments effective immediately:**

Barbieri, Stephen – PT Instructor, substitute as needed @ \$24 per hour.

Galvin, Martin – Administrator as needed, Way to Work TANF Grant, \$35 p/hr.

Giuffre, Maureen - PT Instructor, Way to Work TANF Grant, 10 hrs p/w @ \$29 p/hr.

McCasland, Donald – Facilitator, Way to Work TANF Grant, 8 hrs p/w @ \$24 p/hr.

McCasland, Maureen - PT Instructor, Way to Work TANF Grant, substitute as needed @ \$29 p/hr.

Washington, Janeen - PT Instructor, Way to Work TANF Grant, 10 hrs p/w @ \$29 p/hr.

HAYES: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none – all in favor, opposed, motion passes unanimously.

***ADJOURNMENT***

**Upon a motion by Commissioner Petteway, and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:12 p.m.**

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Carrie A. Swain, Clerk  
*Board of Education*

Resolutions signed by Mayor Michael J. Jarjura on February 16, 2007