

**TOWN OF EAST HAVEN, CT
EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, CT 06513
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2009
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: MRS. VITALE, MR. DENUZZO, MR. HAMMELL, MR. HENNESSEY and MRS. PADUA

ABSENT: MR. INGLESE MR. JOSEPH TRAVAGLINO, DIRECTOR OF BLDGS. & GROUNDS

ARRIVED LATE: MR. FINKLE, MRS. GERACI-ANASTASIO, MRS. VINEYARD

**ALSO PRESENT: MR. ANTHONY SERIO, SUPERINTENDENT
MR. FRANK MEOLI, ASSISTANT SUPT.
MR. ARTHUR MARTORELLA, ADMIN. CONSULT. TO SUPT.
MRS. MARY ACQUARULO, DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES
MRS. PATRICIA LEWIS, FINANCE MANAGER**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Vitale, Chairperson of the Board, called the regular Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at the high school. Mrs. Vitale asked the Board Clerk, Janice Ball, to do a roll call for attendance.

Mr. DeNuzzo – present
Mr. Finkle – not present
Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – not present
Mr. Hammell – present

Mr. Hennessey – present
Mr. Inglese – not present
Mrs. Padua – present
Mrs. Vineyard – not present
Mrs. Vitale – present

2. **MINUTES**

Mrs. Vitale asked for a motion for the approval of the minutes for the Regular Board meeting of May 12, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Padua.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions made to the motion.

Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries. The minutes were approved.

3. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- **Chairperson, Mrs. Marilyn Vitale**

Mrs. Vitale stated she had one item which she believed was their CABA membership.

- **Superintendent, Mr. Anthony Serio**

Mr. Serio stated he had received a late correspondence this afternoon and Janice had handed it out this evening.

Mr. Finkle and Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio arrived at 7:02 p.m.

4. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mrs. Vitale asked if there were any subcommittee reports this evening. There were none.

- **Athletic Oversight, Mr. Inglese, Chair**

- **Building and Grounds, Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio, Chair**
- **Curriculum & Instruction, Mr. Finkle, Chair**
- **Finance, Mr. Hennessey, Chair**
- **Food Service, Mrs. Vineyard, Chair**
- **Grants, Mr. Hammell, Chair**
- **Legal/Negotiations, Mr. Hammell, Chair**
- **Policies and Bylaws, Mr. DeNuzzo, Chair**
- **Personnel, Mr. Hammell, Chair**
- **PTA / PTO Advisory Committee, Mrs. Padua, Chair**
- **Special Education, Mr. Inglese, Chair**

5. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION**

- **SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Serio spoke about the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony which he attended this evening at 6 p.m. He had attended the ceremony for the Junior National Honor Society last week at JMMS. He stated it was always a pleasure to celebrate academic success with parents, teachers and our students. He commended them for a job well done and he hoped they would continue the good work in future years.

- **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE/S**

The student representative, Albert DeCaprio gave a report on some of the activities going on at the high school after public comment. The Board congratulated him on being inducted into the National Honor Society. High School finals were coming up at the end of the year and the clubs were getting together to start planning next year's activities and end of the year parties. SADD had their Spirit Week last week and a good time was had by all. The prom and after proms were fun.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mrs. Vitale asked if there was any communication from the public.

Donna Palmer, French Avenue, spoke about how at the last Board of Education meeting, Mr. Hennessey had mentioned that merging the Academy students with the Middle School students, was not a school within a school, but one school. She stated that Mr. Serio agreed that it would be one school in order to raise the Town's CMT scores. Besides raising the Town's scores, what plans were in place to work with the area neighborhood schools to raise scores?

Second, EH Academy students wear uniforms. Would it be fair to assume that they would have half of the students in uniforms and the other half without?

Lastly, instead of merging in with the Middle School students, was this the Town's way of phasing out the Academy? She felt the Academy should be a free-standing school and change the admission process which seemed to cause so much controversy in this Town. All children were capable learners but not all children learn the same. Mrs. Palmer wanted to stress there was a lot of animosity in this Town and it clearly showed our Town's education system was really in a lot of trouble. Some of the schools were not excelling; rather than blame the ones that were they needed to do what was right for our students and not our egos.

Paul CoFrancesco, 32 Bennett Road, member of the Town Council here in Town supported the Academy but spoke about increasing the CMT scores in all of the schools. The NESDEC report did not say anywhere in it that they should disassemble or dismember the Academy. It talked about relocating it. Mr. CoFrancesco referred to the budget and how it had been said that closing the Academy would save \$1.7 million. According to the Board's budget, it cost no more to run the Academy than any other school in this Town. They all run within 5% of each other and their per capita ran better than most schools. He sat with the Council and went through the budget line item by line item. He felt the money could be found and he abhorred what they do up here.

Mrs. Vineyard arrived at the meeting at this time.

Kathleen Quinn, Cortina Road, stated she was a parent of an Academy child and had been involved for 9 years. She had her doubts

when she was deciding to take her son out of his neighborhood school. She felt the Academy had something different to offer and as a parent she needed to take every opportunity that was afforded to her child. Every student in this district did not have the same opportunity. Mr. Serio stated he doesn't want to close the Academy. She did not believe that. Over the last several years, he had wanted to see their students return to home schools to see a raise in their schools' scores. There was a battle brewing in their community. As parents, their issues were not with one another, but what was best for their children. No one liked the idea of redistricting. They should be holding the district accountable for the low scores. She urged the Superintendent and Board not to use the closing of the Academy for the budget crisis and the parents should maintain a positive relationship with their neighbors for the sake of their children.

Sue Lieto, Richmond Street, stated she wanted to respond to Anita Ruff's letter. Mrs. Vitale stated in fairness, she was not here tonight so perhaps she could give a copy of her letter to each Board member. The Board members had each received a copy tonight. Mrs. Lieto wanted to make a few points. She felt it was the assumption that all of the kids at the Academy were easy to teach and all have support from home. They don't get detentions or suspensions and they come from the same two parent homes. This was all false.

There were the same socioeconomic issues in that school as across the board. They were taking 230 kids and comparing themselves to all of the other kids across the district. The kids were isolated because the administration continued to turn a blind eye to the fact that there was this wedge. She was sick and tired of defending her choice. As a parent she made choices she felt were best for her children. Her children had been given busy work because the teachers had to work with other kids. If they dismantle the Academy, what would the other schools have in place to deal with these children? Would they be able to address that issue if the children go back?

Mrs. Vitale stated that there was no support on this Board to dismantle the Academy. There were a lot of rumors out there; she asked that they give them a chance to work out this plan and they would do the right thing.

Mrs. Lieto stated there was another issue that certain Board members on the Board consistently say the Academy has the best and brightest students in the district. There were other students in the district that were bright and she took offense to that. She was disappointed in the childish behavior by administrators in the district. The children showed more restraint and respect than the adults.

Tia DePalma, 10 Seaview Avenue, stated she was there representing not only the Academy but all of the schools. She was disheartened that she was named along with other people in a letter that they were elitists at the Academy. She felt it was not fair and it should not be. There was opportunity for success available for each and every school in the district. She supported the Academy and stated there was a reason it was a 3-8 building. It was the right school for her children but perhaps not the school for every child. It was not a school for the talented and gifted. It was an Intra-district Magnet School and not only the talented and gifted got in.

Perhaps they needed to look at a new way of testing or look at something different. It was actually an alternative curriculum methodology that encompassed simulation learning in thematic-based units. They should take what works at the Academy and combine models and work out other types of learning environments.

Mrs. DePalma wanted to say how upset she was about the insulting letter from an administrator. She was insulted that she was misrepresented and the comments were uncalled for. They used school letterhead and it was an abuse of their role or authority. **She was asking for a retraction from this person. It was made public; it was written and it contained personal information and was sent to the Board. It also got on the Internet and the letter remains and she would like it taken off the Internet. Mrs. Vitale stated that Mr. Serio would handle that.**

Mrs. DePalma cared about all the kids and schools and thought they should all work together and make East Haven schools the best they could be.

Mr. Serio said he agreed with some of the statements and also disagreed with some of them. It showed that when things were taken out of context, how construed they could get -- such chaos in such a

short period of time. Mr. Serio spoke about the Academy and how it had been just one of many, many recommendations that were thrown on the table. They had several meetings and had made it very clear during the last Board meeting that there would not be a reconfiguration and they would move forward with the Middle School project and the Academy would not be included. It was not a dismantling of that school. He was the one that was speaking and answering the questions and it was not an easy thing. People were happy where they were -- in their home schools. Mr. Serio stated he did not initiate all of this change. He was directed to check out reorganization and also directed to run the school district and try to find a way to run our school system with fewer buildings.

Mr. Serio felt there were some people on the Board that did not even believe that it was the most economic way to go. He was not convinced. He felt they should have a different type of forum in order to get input not from just people here this evening but from all of our schools in the district. There were many that were not in the mix. All students were effected when you do redistricting or restructuring.

Mr. Serio stated he was not saying he was closing, opening, or anything right now. These were discussions that needed to be held to start talking about addressing an initiative. He had these conversations with the Board, the Board of Finance and the Town Council as well as Town Hall. He asked that everyone bear with him for a little while. His best interest was in the Town of East Haven. Opinions were valuable to him; he took direction from this Board and also listened to the public as to what their opinions might be.

At this point in the meeting, we went back to Item 5, Communication from Student Representatives.

7. SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS – None.

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Any questions or comments on Board Briefs of 5-12-09

Any questions or comments?

Mrs. Vitale asked Mr. Serio if the meeting was set to go over the audit with the auditors. **Mr. Serio stated he had nothing definite yet, but he had heard indirectly that there was a Town Council meeting next Tuesday, June 2nd. He would have Janice forward them a copy.**

Mrs. Vitale stated she thought they were going to have a joint meeting with the Town Council on the audit. She thought that Diane Raymo was going to give them a report on how they balanced, where it was going and give them a full report. Mr. Serio stated she had given them a memo for the last meeting they had.

Mr. Finkle asked if they had an update on the lawsuit for insurance. Mr. Serio stated he believed it had been continued until August.

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Ratification of Appointments

- **Fall Varsity Assistant Football Coach**
- **Fall Freshman Head Football Coach**
- **Fall Freshman Assistant Coach**

Mr. Serio requested the Board ratify the following fall coaching appointments:

- **Fall Varsity Assistant Football Coach** – William Baines III
- **Fall Freshman Head Football Coach** - Christopher Taylor
- **Fall Freshman Assistant Coach** – Joseph Foti

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Vineyard.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Hammell asked if they were all new people. Mr. Serio replied yes.

There were no abstentions or objections made to the motion.

Vote was unanimous. Motion carries.

9.2 Request for Approval of Payment of Invoices:

- **Dated May 27, 2009 for Fiscal Year 2008-09 in the Amount of \$660,416.83**

Mr. Serio requested the Board approve the payment of the invoices dated May 27, 2009 for Fiscal Year 2008-09 in the amount of \$660,416.83.

Motion was made by Mr. Hennessey and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no abstentions or objections made to the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion carries.

9.3 Cafeteria Financial Report – D. Spaziani

Mrs. Spaziani, Mr. Gersbeck and Mr. Prunier gave a cafeteria financial status report. There was a program profit of \$30,771.33.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked what last year's amount was. Mr. Gersbeck believed that they had exceeded last year's. He said he could get him a comparison.

Mr. Serio asked how it compared to the projection they had weeks ago. Were they in line with what they thought it was going to be? There was discussion on the extra payrolls and the vacation week and how sales were affected. They had an extra payroll because of the way payroll runs, so they were usually behind.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked how their wholesale costs from last year compared to this year. Mr. Gersbeck responded they had a savings this year compared to last year especially in food costs. The total cost of operation and building experience in the account gets better each year.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked about equipment. Mrs. Spaziani stated there had been a lot of repairs. They had approximately \$30,000 in maintenance expenses so far. The first day of school there had been four freezers down and the high school had been struck by lightning and blew out a compressor. Mr. Gersbeck stated they had big hits this year compared to last year. There was nothing else pending for this year so far.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked about the POS systems. Mr. Gersbeck stated they had gotten a price from each and forwarded them to the district. Mrs. Spaziani spoke about a grant for equipment that they had recently submitted for a few of the schools. Certain schools qualified based on Title I. They put together an equipment plan based on a certain date for enrollment.

Mr. Finkle asked about the overstaff situations and if they had been able to work through those times and had they taken advantage of that. Mr. Gersbeck stated yes, during testing times they had been able to work this out without any rumblings. They had been working with them.

Mr. DeNuzzo asked about the bumping process. Was it based on seniority? Mrs. Spaziani stated if they had any reduced revenue days, they would be cut, but they knew well in advance.

Mr. Serio stated that Item 9.4 was on there for action if need be after the Executive Session. Mrs. Vitale stated they did not need action because no one qualified. Mr. Meoli stated you might conclude that, but they needed to have discussion.

9.4 Possible Action on Medical Incentive Plan for Non-Certified Employees

This item would be acted upon after Executive Session.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS

Mrs. Vitale asked if there were any questions on the informational items. There were none.

10.1.1 Resignations/Retirements – None.

10.1.2 School Newsletters

10.1.3 Athletic Checkbook – Regular – April 2009

10.1.4 Athletic Checkbook – Facilities – April 2009

**10.1.5 Thank You Letter from Principal Mendygral to
Mrs. Hutchinson**

Motion made by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio to go out of Regular Session and seconded by Mr. DeNuzzo. Motion carries.

Adjourned Regular Session at 7:42 p.m.

In attendance: All Board members, Mr. Serio, Mr. Meoli, Mr. Martorella Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Acquarulo

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session convened at 7:50 p.m.

11.1 Discussion Medical Incentive Plan for Non-Certified Employees and Update on Certified Employee's Medical Incentive Plan

The Board and the central office administration discussed the medical incentive plan proposal for non-certified employees and the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent gave the Board an update on the status of the medical incentive plan for certified employees.

11.2 Discussion and Update on Layoffs/Concessions

The Superintendent gave the Board an update on layoffs and the status of concessions from Board unions.

Mr. Hammell made a motion to adjourn Executive Session. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio seconded the motion.

There were no questions, discussions, or objections to the motion. Motion carries.

Executive Session adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Mrs. Vitale called the regular meeting back to order at 8:39 p.m.

9.4 Possible Action on Medical Incentive Plan for Non-Certified Employees

Mr. Serio requested that the Board take no action on this item.

Mr. Finkle made a motion to take no action on a possible medical incentive plan for non-certified employees. Mrs. Vineyard seconded the motion.

There were no questions, discussions, or objections to the motion. Motion passes.

12. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION – JUNE 9, 2009 – EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL, 35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, at 7:00 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Hammell made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Mrs. Padua seconded the motion.

There were no questions, discussions, or objections to the motion. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**MRS. MARILYN VITALE, CHAIRPERSON
EAST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**