

Tri-Board Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2017

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A meeting of the North Stonington Boards of Education, Finance and Selectmen was held on Thursday, April 27, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler High School Shaw Media Center. Present for the Board of Education was Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Wagner, Mr. McCord, Mr. Mendolia (7:30p.m.), Mr. Carlson (7:52 p.m.) and Mr. Nero; present for the Board of Finance was Mrs. Howell, Mr. Ratib, Mr. Steinhart, Mr. Pelland, Mr. Testa, Mr. Hund, and Mr. Main (7:39 p.m.); and present for the Board of Selectmen was Mr. Murphy, Mr. Mullane, and Mr. Donahue. Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:06

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Governor's Proposed Municipal Revenue Reductions – Mr. Murphy had comment to open the meeting. He explained the handouts to the Boards.
 - a. Latest Information on State Budget Progress – Mr. Murphy said at this time they have two sets of numbers from the State. Mr. Murphy explained the changes in revenue reflected on the handout and said the budget the Board of Finance received reflected these adjustments. He had further comment. He reviewed the budget scenario if there were no reductions. He reviewed another scenario using the GOP version of the budget instead of the Governor's budget. The retirement contribution was pulled out of that scenario. With that scenario they would be short .78 mill if the proposed budgets go through as presented. He thought other scenarios might be considered and he elaborated. He said the Board of Finance wants to build the undesignated account with the school building project coming along. Mr. Murphy asked for suggestions on other scenarios. Mr. Testa had comment about the worst case scenario and having something in the middle. He had further comment. Mr. Hundt had comment on not knowing what is going to happen. Mr. Steinhart commented on the 3 mill increase for the school project. Mr. Murphy commented on that and said it would be looking at something in between.
 - b. Discuss and Decide on Two (2) or Three (3) Municipal Revenue Scenarios – Mrs. Wagner suggested they start with taking out the teachers' retirement. There was comment. There was discussion of adding a mill for the building project and adding in something for the undesignated fund. Mr. Testa spoke of the rationale of adding a .5 mill for the building project instead of 1 mill. Mr. Testa had further comment. Questions were asked and answered regarding the status of the current budget that Mr. Murphy answered. Mr. Murphy asked if we wanted to create different scenarios other than the two suggested. There were questions about approving a budget before the state budget and setting a mill rate. There was comment about different scenarios from the Town and Board of Education budget and if those Boards had come up with ideas. Mr. Nero had comment. He said they have not changed the law yet regarding maintenance of effort and he elaborated. Mr. Murphy commented on the GOP's budget and said they are going to phase in the changes. Mr. Nero had further comment. He said what they need to know is the number from the Board of Finance. There was discussion on maintenance of effort and its status with the state. Mr. Murphy thought if revenue was decreased, the minimum budget requirement would go away. There

was discussion. There was further discussion on coming up with another scenario. Mr. Nero said other towns are laying off teachers and we laid off teachers last night and he elaborated. He said our budgets have not been elaborate. Mrs. Howell had comment.

c. Discuss and Decide on an Acceptable Mill Rate – Mr. Murphy had comment. There was discussion on mill rates. There was discussion of budget scenarios. There was discussion and comment. There was a suggestion of using the GOP budget and adding a mill to it with 1 mill going to the project. That would leave the budgets where they are now. By doing that, you accomplish what people have asked for and put aside money for the fund. There was comment. Mr. Mullane had comment on the reductions and gave his thoughts on what was going to happen. He had further comment. He believes we will have more growth in the grand list and growth in housing. He had further comment. He said he was not willing to look at the worst case scenario. Mr. Murphy said we are here because we are trying to be more prepared. Mr. Ratib said 1% should be included for the school project. The school brings in people and business. He said we need the school to go forward. He said we need to continue to bring business in town because that is the only way to grow. He elaborated and had further comment. Mr. Carlson had comment about moving the Town forward. Mr. McCord had comment. Board members had further comment. Mr. Murphy suggested the Board of Finance come up with scenarios on the worst case, the best case, and something in the middle and then come back to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education with those scenarios. Mr. Murphy said he has met with businesses that want to come here and he elaborated. He said things should get better. Mr. Steinhart said he agrees that we shouldn't just throw out numbers. Mr. Mullane had further comment. Mr. Murphy had further comment. Mr. Main had comment about the lack of information other than the Governor's budget and he elaborated. Mr. Mendolia had comment.

d. Discuss and Decide on Percent of Budget Reductions to be Applied to General Government, BOE and Capital – Not covered.

e. Task BOS and BOE with Preparing a List of Reductions Based on Each Scenario – Commented on in Item 3b.

f. Set Next Meeting Date for Follow up – No date set.

4. Public Comments – A gentleman said there is so much uncertainty here. He elaborated and spoke of his conversation with Senator Somers regarding the construction grants. Mr. Murphy had comment and said the voters said to move the project forward. Right now, regardless, these numbers don't change the direction the people gave the Selectmen to act on. He had further comment. Mr. Hundt asked if Mr. Murphy could contact someone to clarify the issue. There was discussion. Mr. Urgo said it is all speculation. He had further comment. He said there was a concerted effort to turn the building project around instead putting the pressure on our legislators to get things under control. He elaborated. Brian Rathbun, citizen, commented on the building project. He had further comment. He commented on the senior citizens and asked the town to take them into consideration as well. Kerri

Perez, citizen, asked whether the “doomsday” scenario would be discussed with the public. She said some other towns did and did not want to accept it. Mr. Murphy responded. Mr. Nero had comment. A gentleman asked if there is a town official can approach Representative Urban and Senator Somers to get together to get one opinion. Mrs. Howell said she told Heather Somers that the schools should be commended and she elaborated. Mr. Nero had comment on his conversation with Senator Somers. Mrs. Howell said she has reached out over the years to Representative Urban and has given suggestions to save money and she elaborated. Mr. Mullane had comment. Mr. Uργο told Mrs. Howell he appreciated her comments at the meeting. He had further comment. Board members had further comment.

Mr. Murphy adjourned the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education