

Joint Meeting  
Town of North Stonington  
Board of Education  
Board of Finance  
Board of Selectmen  
New Town Hall Conference Room  
February 17, 2016  
6:00 p.m.

**DRAFT**

A joint meeting of the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance was held on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. Present were Mr. Carlson, Mr. Karpinski, and Mrs. Buzzee from the Board of Education; Mr. Pelland, Mr. Main, Mr. Steinhart, Mr. Pavlovics and Mrs. Howell from the Board of Finance; and Mr. Murphy, Mr. Mullane, and Mr. Donahue from the Board of Selectmen. Also present were Mr. Nero and Mrs. Allen for the Board of Education. Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Opening Remarks –Senator Andrew Maynard - Not in attendance.

Representative Urban – Not in attendance.

Mr. Murphy said he and Mr. Mullane attended a council of small towns meeting at which legislators were in attendance and he gave highlights of the meeting.

Status of the State Budget including Town Aids and Grant – Mr. Murphy said municipal aid will hold for this coming year but future years do not look promising. He reminded those present that the meeting would adjourn at 7:30 due to a Board of Finance meeting.

Board of Selectmen

1. Current Year Revenues Estimates vs. Actual – Mr. Murphy said they were looking fairly good on the general government side. Intergovernmental revenues were on track. He reviewed the PILOT, ECS, and transportation grants. License fees, fines and charges have collected 80% of the projected budget. Recyclables were running short. Mr. Murphy said some accounts are being watched closely. He elaborated on some of the accounting lines. He mentioned the state trooper budget was one that would be real close. He elaborated and said when the additional appropriation was not approved they went back to two troopers. He had further explanation on what was reduced due to the trooper cut-back. Capital budgets are pretty much on track. The Hewitt Dam repairs may go over budget upon completion and he elaborated.

2. Projected Revenues Fiscal Year 2016-2017 – Mr. Murphy reviewed the grand list and said it was a reduction from past years. He said this is a result of the revaluation and had further comment. He spoke of the governor's budget.

3. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2016-2017 – Mr. Murphy said the budget is being formulated at this point. They have not prioritized them as of yet.

Center for Emergency Services and School Modernization Project – Mr. Murphy said these continue to move forward. Hearings have been held on both. The Board of Selectmen has forwarded an additional appropriation request for the EMS building to the Board of Finance and they will discuss it tonight. It will then go to a town meeting on February 29<sup>th</sup> or March 7<sup>th</sup>. It would then go to referendum after that. A special meeting will be posted after the Board of Finance takes action. Mr. Murphy said the committee is still working to try to reduce the total number of the school project. They are looking at some different options to bring the cost down and he elaborated.

#### Board of Education

1. Current Year Performance to Budget – Mr. Nero said the current year budget is performing well.
2. Grant Revenues and Outlook –IDEA is performing well. He spoke further. Title I, Title II and the other grants are trending well. The security grant was finished in the spring. That grant was 42% on the state side and 58% on our side. We were awarded another grant last week to bifurcate out the fiber optics system. This grant award was changed to \$22.00 per student for a total of \$16,302. He elaborated.
3. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2016-2017 – The budget is a work in progress at this point. The Board of Education has met once on the budget and will be meeting again next week.

Mr. Carlson reviewed what has been accomplished over the last number of years. Math interventionists have been hired. He said we had the highest test scores in the state at the elementary level. We scored 4<sup>th</sup> in the state in the science CAPT. He had further comment. Mr. Nero had further comment on our budgets. He said we went to bid on legal, HVAC, sanitation, septic, and even looked at our grounds. We went for food services and he relayed the circumstances that made us go to bid again. He elaborated. Bussing will be going out to bid in two more years. Utilities will be looked at again in the spring. Air quality testing was done and won't have to be done again for three years. A special education audit was done. He had further explanation of that. Mr. Nero spoke of our healthcare consortium and he elaborated. We are on a high deductible health plan and he had further explanation. He said at the budget hearing last year, he told them we gave them two zero increases in a row and would not be able to do it again. He had further comment.

#### Board of Finance

1. Grand List 2015 – Mr. Main spoke of the drop in the grand list. He reviewed the items that make up the drop.

Anticipated Changes – Mr. Main said projects are coming forward that they are looking at such as the EMS building and the school project.

2. Budget Expectations for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 – Mr. Main said they are on target with the current year budget. The audit came through. The financial status of the town seems to be strong. The capital nonrecurring has gone up. They will be starting to ask the Boards to come to review budgets with them. He would like to see as

much level-funding as possible. Mr. Steinhart said the change this year is due to the revaluation. He said a .97 mil increase will be needed to break even. Mr. Pavlovics wanted to stress that the increase does not generate any revenue – it is to break even. He gave an example of a 1.5 mil increase which would basically be only a .5 mil increase and he explained. He had further comment.

Mr. Murphy asked if any of the Boards had questions or comments. Mr. Carlson asked if there have been any changes to an economic development increase. Mr. Steinhart said not at this point but in the next couple of years. Mr. Murphy said the gentlemen that bought the Fisher Controls building has leased space to other businesses. Once Jovial Foods comes online we'll see an increase. There is a food service operation looking at space in town. The Romanella property is being looked at the by the Fisher Controls building owner and he elaborated. A veterinarian is searching for a space for a clinic. The economic development coordinator has been meeting with businesses in town to listen to their concerns. Things are starting to look up a little. Mr. Carlson asked about permits for single family homes and Mr. Murphy said he would look into that. Mr. Donahue asked what the grand list total value is. Mr. Murphy said the gross list is \$519,057,827. There was comment and questions. There was discussion. Mr. Pavlovics asked if any direction had been given to the boards and commissions for their budgets. Mr. Murphy responded. Mr. Pavlovics said the past direction has been a targeting that perhaps some sections do not need to be zero and should be funded at a higher rate. He spoke further of targeted increases. Mr. Murphy said most people's increases were due to labor items and labor increases. A couple departments have significant increases and he listed those departments. Mr. Pavlovics had further comment. Mr. Murphy had further comment on budgeting. He spoke of the capital projects being important to him. He felt it was important to move forward with the infrastructure of the fire house and the schools. If the operating budget could be lower to help the capital side, he would prefer that. Mr. Mullane said it was a little early because they have just started interviewing the departments. He elaborated. He didn't see any large variances in the requests so far. Mr. Donahue said they have been trying to compare the budgets to see if they tie in to what they want to accomplish in the next years. There was comment. Mr. Murphy asked the Board of Finance to get a schedule to them as to when they would like presentations to begin. Mrs. Howell asked about insurance coverage and made a suggestion about the dental coverage. Mr. Nero responded. Mrs. Allen said we are currently going to bid for dental. Mr. Murphy suggested pooling resources for electric and he elaborated. Mr. Nero had comment on food service bids and he elaborated.

3. Financial Status for the Town – Covered above.

4. Communication Policy – There was no discussion on this item.

Public Comments and Questions – Mr. Brian Rathbun had comment. Mr. Rathbun suggested looking at accountability when doing the budgets. Mr. Urgo asked about the grand list. He also asked about the EMS building and commented that at the time the citizens were told it was going to be budget-neutral. He said there were quite a few things coming off the books debt-wise. Mr. Main said they are discussing that tonight. A gentleman commented on appreciating the fact that they were looking at meshing budgets with economic

development. He commented on the presentation of the building project. He said the direction could be how potentially we could attempt to get at the reduction in places that are not as essential as EMS and the school. A citizen spoke asked about the Board of Education meeting with the tribe. Mr. Carlson said they are trying to arrange that with them. The citizen questioned the hazardous materials and where they are in the schools. Mr. Urgo answered that question and said caulking, paint, and mastic in the flooring were some of the areas of concern. There was further comment and explanation. Mr. Murphy clarified the restrictions on the deed. A citizen commented that this was a very important meeting and mentioned the lack of advertising of the meeting. A citizen said he brought up an alternate means of financing the EMS building and Mr. Murphy said it is being looked at. The citizen spoke of the recent revaluation and the mil rate increasing to break even. He spoke of some property going up and some going down and he elaborated. Mrs. Nita Kincaid asked what possible impact the EMS referendum and any school referendum would have on the budget and if it would show up in the 2016-2017 budget. Mr. Murphy said it depended on when it went through. This information has not been in the hearings. At the town meeting level, further information will be available. Mr. Pavlovics said the school building won't have an impact in the upcoming budget and he had explanation. He said the EMS building could have a possible impact. Mrs. Kincaid asked if at the time of the town vote they would see the projections of the out-years as well. Mr. Main said there would be a twenty-year projection. Mr. Pavlovics had further comment. A citizen commented on the EMS building presentation and that he found out after that that the money spent already was borrowed and nothing has been paid on the EMS building yet. Mr. Murphy said there were no payments budgeted for in this budget. Work has been done on short-term notes that will be coming due. He had further explanation. Mr. Pavlovics had further comment and explanation. The citizen said clarity on those issues would be appreciated.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to  
The Board of Education