

Board of Education Minutes
August 21, 2012

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Tuesday, August 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Band Room. Present were Mr. Testa, Mr. McCord, Dr. Robert, Mrs. Dame and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Wilkison, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Apicelli. Chairman Testa called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Nero led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items – Ms. Karen Veit asked a question on the executive session. Mr. Testa responded. A citizen asked a question about the budget and was concerned there would be more cuts. Mr. Nero said there will be no cuts recommended tonight.
4. Community Relations – None.
5. Presentations - None.
6. Administrators Reports – Mr. Sandford said there was a new student/grade 9 orientation this evening and he explained. He listed future events happening at the high/middle school. He talked about the new sign and thanked the PTO and he elaborated. He thanked Wayne Coats for all his work to get it installed. Mr. Sandford spoke of the guidance office and the interns doing their work in school psychology and school counseling. He spoke of the shifts in the classrooms and he elaborated. He spoke of being one of the schools in the State piloting the Algebra I program. Mr. Apicelli spoke of his experience overseeing summer school and explained. He was impressed with the professionalism of the staff and the students that came everyday to class. He commented further and thanked the summer school teachers. Mrs. Wilkison thanked Mr. Apicelli for his help with summer school. She spoke of the two new staff members that were hired and gave their background. She spoke of events happening in the elementary school. She thanked all the staff working in the building to get everything ready. She thanked Mrs. Gonzalez and Mr. Palmer especially. She spoke about the school climate survey and elaborated. She spoke of piloting new math programs that will align with the Common Core. She passed out the student handbooks. Questions were asked and answered.
7. Administrative - a. Approval of Minutes- June 6 2012 Emergency Meeting – Mr. McCord made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mendolia to accept the minutes of the June 6, 2012 Emergency Meeting. There was discussion about splitting the minutes into meeting minutes and workshop minutes. Mr. McCord and Mr. Mendolia withdrew the motion. Mr. Testa will contact Mr. Hennick at the FOI Commission about splitting out the minutes. On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to table these minutes to the next meeting.

June 20 2012 – On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. McCord the Board voted four in favor and one abstention to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2012 meeting. Dr. Robert abstained.

July 10 2012 Special Meeting – On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted three in favor and two abstentions to accept the minutes of July 10, 2012 Special Meeting. Mrs. Dame and Dr. Robert abstained.

b. Correspondence – None.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero spoke of the elementary staff members we have hired and gave their background. He spoke of the staff members hired at the high school and middle school and gave their background. He thanked the principals and their staff for hiring quality people.

8. Reports - a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero thanked the Board for moving the meeting and explained about his meeting with the Commissioner of Education. He thanked everyone for making him feel welcome. He thanked the administrators and central office staff for helping him to get acclimated. He spoke of his invitation to the public and elaborated. Mr. Nero told the Board about a \$2,500 grant opportunity and he explained. He reviewed items in the packet that are going to have to be dealt with. He had comment on the Connecticut Teacher Evaluation Instrument and elaborated on a number of things in the document. He spoke of adopting the State model rather than building from the ground up. He also included a copy of the 2012 Education Reform document. He urged them to go through the document. He also included a document from the office of legislative research regarding laws impacting education and he elaborated. He spoke of the change in professional development. He had further comment. He told the Board people from LEARN and the State Department of Education have been very helpful.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mr. Testa said he spoke with Chairman Spring of the Board of Finance regarding the statute about putting aside funds for school maintenance and he elaborated. There was comment from other Board members about putting together a list of projects and talking to the Board of Finance to present this. Mr. Testa had further comment. Mr. Nero had questions and Board members answered him. There was further comment. Further questions were asked and answered. Mr. Testa said the FOI training with Mr. Hennick will be at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, the 27th. Mr. Testa said Mr. Spring had asked for a joint meeting at 6:00 p.m. for an executive session regarding the audit on the 27th. Mr. Testa said he got an email from Juliet Lemming regarding the economic development vision of the town and he explained. He asked that any input from the Board members on that be emailed to him and he would forward them to Ms. Lemming.

c. Committee Chairs – Mr. McCord said the Facilities and Finance Committee did not have a quorum so he suggested doing these items in open session since they are on the agenda.

d. PSPBC Liaison – Mr. Testa said the last contact he had from Mr. Aiello was about the sealing and striping of the parking lot which is done already.

9. Financial – a. July 2012 Financial Statements – On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Dr. Robert, the Board voted unanimously to accept July’s expenditure report of total accounts payable of \$213,798.01, payroll of \$113,088.40, subtotal general fund of \$326,886.41, grant expenditures of zero for a total of \$326,886.41.

b. Preliminary 2011-2012 Spending – Mr. McCarthy said the last purchase order was closed today and gave the dollar amount and said it shouldn’t change. There were questions and comment. Mr. McCarthy gave the definition of an encumbrance and elaborated. He had further comment. Mr. Nero had comment on the situation. He said it is a close call when you budget to get to zero and you can’t go below zero. He had further comment.

10. Old Business – a. 2012-2013 Proposed Education Budget – Mr. Nero said on July 10th he had to make recommendations to the Board to cut \$300,000 and he elaborated. He said we had to fill four positions and we created a turnover. He explained we were able to save a significant amount of money on the turnover. He recommended to the Board to add back to full time the high school art teacher, the family and consumer sciences teacher, and the tech education teacher for a total of \$34,418. He had further comment. Mrs. Dame made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mendolia to take the recommendation of the Superintendent to add the teachers back to full time. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero had further comment and said this is important. Further questions were asked and answered about this. Mr. Nero said this will go directly in the classroom. He said if they cut below we have to work accordingly throughout the year. There was further comment from Board members. Further questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero had further comment about reconstructing by priorities. Mr. Testa had comment about priorities and programs and elaborated. The motion passed unanimously.

11. New Business – a. Election of Board of Education Secretary – On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to table this item.

b. Renewal of Aramark Food Service Contract – Mr. Nero gave explanation and recommended a renewal. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. McCarthy gave explanation. Mr. Nero had comment. On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Dr. Robert, the Board voted unanimously to renew the Aramark food service contract.

c. M&J Bus Contract Offer – Mr. Nero explained they met with M&J Bus Co and elaborated. There was discussion and questions were asked and answered. On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to approve a new five-year contract with M&J Bus Co. Mr. Testa recused himself from the vote.

d. Authorization for Superintendent to Sign Documents on Behalf of the Free and Reduced Lunch Program – On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Superintendent to sign documents on behalf of the free and reduced lunch program.

e. RFP for Legal Services – Mr. Testa explained the only thing we haven’t done in a few years was to go out for an RFP for legal services. He explained his reasoning. Mr. McCarthy said CASBO has access to a nationwide

data base of RFP's and he will see what they have available. On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to do an RFP for legal services and to ask Mr. McCarthy to access CASBO for RFP's and get them to the Board.

f. Scheduling of a Building Maintenance Visit – Mr. Testa said he spoke to Mr. Boucher who asked that the Board wait until after school starts to do the visit. He elaborated and said Mr. Boucher will put together a list. There was further comment and questions were asked. Mr. Nero suggested that the building principals also be part of the tour.

12. Calendar – There was discussion on setting up a meeting with the Board of Finance. September 12th is the next regular meeting. August 27th at 6:00 p.m. is a joint meeting at 6:00 p.m. followed by the FOI workshop at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Dame will contact the athletic director.

13. Public Comment - A citizen had a question on the line item they want to add. He had comment on the line item and what he thought the line item would be used for. He elaborated. He said the communications from Mr. Nero have been great and elaborated. He commented on the survey. He felt the finance board was trying to take good action. He had further comment. Mrs. Linda Coats, citizen, commented on the sign. She also asked if we are able to send something home with the kids about voting. There was further comment and questions. She commented on next year's budget about having a grant writer for potential future savings. Mr. Testa had comment about that and how some of those work. He elaborated. Mr. Mike Noonan, citizen, commended the Board of Education for reinstating the positions and he elaborated. Mr. Testa had comment about a lot of the positive things the Board has done. He said everyone that sits at the table does care and is dedicated to that. Mrs. Pat Ostrout, citizen, asked about the FOI training. Mr. Testa said it is open to the public but it is geared to the Board of Education.

14. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Pending FOI Complaint from *The Westerly Sun* – On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 8:35 for the Purpose of Pending FOI Complaint from *The Westerly Sun* and to invite Mr. Nero into such session.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:54 p.m.

15. Possible Action to Rectify Issues in FOI Complaint from *The Westerly Sun* – Mr. Testa relinquished the Board Chairmanship to Mr. McCord in order to make a motion. On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to identify the vote for Board Chair on June 8, 2012 with Mrs. Dame being the one vote for Mr. Mathwich with the seven other members voting for Mr. Testa and to amend the minutes of the June 8, 2012 meeting to reflect the vote.

On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to The Board of Education