

Board of Education Minutes  
December 14, 2011

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Band Room. Present were Dr. Robert, Mr. Testa, Mr. Scarchilli, Mr. Hundt, Mrs. Dame, Mr. Mathwich, and Mr. Mendolia. Mr. McCord participated by phone placed on "speaker" function. Also present were Dr. Pukas, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, and Mr. Sandford. Mr. Apicelli arrived at 8:42 p.m. Dr. Robert told those present the meeting was being recorded and that a member will be participating via telephone. Dr. Robert called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to move agenda item 8c Feasibility Study to item 3, add Fundraising Opportunity to item 9d, d, and add item 12 Bargaining Unit Complaint.

2. Community Relations – Nothing other than what was in the packet.

3. Presentations – a. Feasibility Study – Dr. Robert read a statement. Dr. Robert made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Dame as follows: After careful review of all of the information that was provided to us over the past several months, the Board has determined that the best educational opportunities for our students should continue to take place at Wheeler High School. We are unanimously recommending that the Board of Selectmen support this decision and put all efforts toward making the necessary changes for this to occur. Mr. Testa reminded the Board that this study was to get facts and options to be able to answer questions of the public. He elaborated on his statement and spoke of the numbers. He spoke of the Board's goal to get a work product. He had further comment on the number discrepancy, the Board's not advocating to close the school, and the goal to get facts to the public. He elaborated. Mr. Hundt had comment regarding the main goal being to inform the public and he elaborated. He had further comment on what it costs to run the school and about the information not being completely correct. He elaborated on the incorrect information contained in the feasibility study. Dr. Robert had comment regarding Dr. Townsley telling them the numbers are very fluid, that this was never about finances and it is being about what was the best educational experience for our students. Mr. Testa had further comment about members of the public looking at it as a money issue. He elaborated and had further comment. There was discussion. Mrs. Dame had comment about this being a study that had never been done before and elaborated. Mr. Hundt had comment. There was further discussion. Mr. McCord had comment regarding too many variables involved and that they would never get accurate numbers and he gave examples. He had further comment. The motion was clarified. Mr. Scarchilli spoke of the contractual obligation about a three-phase system and approval of each phase that was done. He had comment about the process. Dr. Robert had comment about the lack of feedback from the Board on Dr. Townsley's first presentation. Mr. Testa had comment about not sending the memo to the Selectmen until the numbers are more accurate. There was comment among Board members. There was further discussion. Dr. Robert moved the question. The motion did not pass with four voting in favor and four voting against the motion. Those voting against the motion were Mr. Scarchilli, Mr. Hundt, Mr. Testa, and Mr. Mendolia.

4. Administrators Reports – Mr. Sandford introduced Matthew Worobey and Adam Volack who handed out information on Wheeler Middle School’s Spirit Week. They gave a report on happenings at the middle school including the dance, the food drive, Spirit Week, and the winter sports season beginning. Gabby Dejesus and Ashley Storey gave the report on high school happenings including preparing for their field trips, winter sports, the Hunger Bowl making over 100 bowls which will be part of a supper, the food drive, Rachel’s Challenge (they explained the program), the advisory period, the clubs at school, and work at the food pantry. Mr. Sandford gave further updates at the schools, including the numbers for PowerSchool visits. Mrs. Wilkison spoke of happenings at the elementary school including the Veterans’ Day program, emails of thanks for the program, food drives, the Chikumbuso student being sponsored, and the concerts to be held tomorrow.

5. Administrative - a. Approval of Minutes- November 9, 2011 – On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2011 meeting as amended.

b. Correspondence – Dr. Pukas said she received a letter from the Commissioner of Education regarding not closing schools earlier than 180 days and she elaborated.

c. Personnel – None.

6. Reports - a. Superintendent – Nothing other than what was in the packet notes.

b. BOE Chairperson – Dr. Robert read a letter that everyone received regarding the bullying training. Dr. Robert spoke of the yearbook ad. He spoke of the attendance at committee meetings and suggested reserving the fourth Wednesday of the month for committee meetings to make sure we have good attendance.

c. Committee Chairs – Dr. Robert had comment. Mr. Mathwich said there are two polices and the plan that need to be voted on.

d. PSPBC Liaison – Dr. Robert said the Selectmen asked for an updated list for the PSPBC. He said the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Mathwich and he met with Quisenberry Arcari about timelines and meetings. Mr. Mathwich would like the Facilities and Finance Committee members at those meetings so everyone is involved in the process. There was discussion.

7. Financial - a. October 2011 Financial Statements – Mr. Testa made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mathwich to approve total accounts payable of \$305,200.36, payroll of \$576,200.55, subtotal general fund of \$881,400.91, grant expenditures of \$18,813.28 for a total of \$900,214.19 for October 2011 expenditures. Mr. Testa commented that it was important to know the cost of the holiday and it ended up being \$2,614.82 and not the \$15,000 or so that was reported. The motion passed unanimously.

b. November 2011 Financial Statements – Mr. Testa put forth a motion to the full Board to accept the November statement ending November 30, 2011 that was seconded by Mr. Mathwich for total accounts payable of \$503,299.70, payroll of \$605,077.50, subtotal general fund of \$1,108,377.20, grant expenditures of \$58,006.38 for a total of \$1,166,383.58. Dr. Pukas said the cost of Veterans' Day was \$3,445.98. Mr. Testa commented on the cost. Dr. Pukas thanked everyone for their cooperation regarding the holidays. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. McCarthy explained the journal entries. Further questions were asked. The motion passed with six voting in favor, one opposed and one abstention. Mr. Testa opposed the motion and Mr. Hundt abstained.

c. Transfer Requests – On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted seven in favor and one opposed to accept the transfers in a memo dated November 21, 2011 from the Business Manager. Mr. Testa opposed the motion.

8. Old Business – a. Committee Appointments – Dr. Robert read the committees and their members.

b. Liaison to PHIT (Positive Health in Teens) – Dr. Pukas had explanation. Dr. Robert will be the liaison to PHIT.

c. Vote on Feasibility Study – Covered above.

d. Superintendent Search – Dr. Robert said we put out an RFQ and got no responses. He explained these groups don't look for quotes; people seek them out. Dr. Robert explained RFP's were sent out to four groups and they are due on the 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to add Fire Panel under 9i.

9. New Business – a. New Course for 2012-2013 at Wheeler – Dr. Robert had explanation. Mr. Mathwich explained how this class is offered and how they get credit. There was discussion. Mr. Hundt made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Dame to accept the new course. Questions were asked and answered. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Dormant Class Activity Accounts – Mr. Testa said the Facilities and Finance Committee made a recommendation that notices will be sent out to each class older than ten years that we are liquidating the accounts and give them 90 days to transfer them or they will go into the Clark Fund. On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to send notices to classes older than ten years giving them 90 days to liquidate their account and if they don't the funds will be transferred to the Clark Fund.

c. BOE Policy 5131.911 – Bullying – Dr. Pukas said these are required by law and she elaborated. On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to delete existing policy

5131.911. On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to approve revised policy 5131.911.

d. BOE Policy 6131.913 – Cyberbullying – On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to delete existing policy 6131.913. On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to approve revised policy 6131.913.

d. Fundraising Opportunity – On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to accept the fundraising opportunity.

e. Safe School Climate Plan (as required by law) – Dr. Pukas relayed the committee’s two suggestions and she reviewed those corrections and suggestions. On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Safe School Climate Plan as amended.

f. Annual Report – Dr. Pukas explained the background for the annual report. She thanked the administrators, Mrs. McCarthy, and Mr. McCarthy for the input. She had further explanation. Mr. Hundt made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mathwich to accept the annual report. Mr. Hundt had comment on the annual report. He elaborated. Dr. Pukas explained the administrators contribute to the annual report. She elaborated. The motion passed unanimously.

g. Meeting Dates for 2012 – Dr. Robert gave background of the dates chosen for the 2012 meeting schedule. On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to accept the 2012 meeting schedule.

h. Memo from Selectmen Regarding the Tripartite Meeting – On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to accept the proposed tripartite agenda.

i. Fire Panel – Mr. Testa had questions at the last meeting regarding the cost of replacement parts versus a new system. He elaborated and had further comment. There was comment from other Board members. Dr. Robert had comment and reminded the Board that information requests go through the Chair and to copy everyone on the request. He elaborated. Mr. McCarthy passed out information to the Board. He had comment. Board members had comment.

10. Calendar – a. Future Meeting Dates - December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. the Student Success Committee will meet followed by a special Board meeting at 8:00 p.m. Future meeting dates will be part of the 19<sup>th</sup>'s agenda.

b. Committee Action List – None

11. Public Comment - A citizen commented on the Veterans’ Day presentation. He asked about the superintendent search committee. Dr. Robert explained what could be involved. The citizen spoke of the vote this

evening. He had further comment. Mrs. Ostrout, citizen, relayed comments from a student that had been present at the meeting. Colleen Hawrylik, citizen, spoke of the colleges that will not take our students if we lose our accreditation and she read a list. She elaborated and said it was important we maintain our accreditation. Mrs. Hawrylik commented on the statement she made at the last Board meeting about making a decision on Wheeler and she elaborated. She said the reasons for not voting last month were not the same as this month. Carolyn Bennett, citizen, commented on the feasibility study. She spoke of other actions by the Board and elaborated. Robert Miner, citizen, had comment on the feasibility study and the fire panel and he elaborated. Mr. Miner also asked about when the budget process would start. Dr. Robert had comment in response to his questions. A citizen thanked the Board for their time spent. He elaborated. He commented on the Board's not voting on the feasibility study. He elaborated. He had comment about Dr. Robert's proposed letter to the Selectmen. Another citizen commented on the feasibility study and the accreditation issue. Mrs. Ostrout said as a voter in this Town they are entitled to an opinion at a meeting and she elaborated. There was discussion among Board members.

The Board took a recess at 9:43 p.m. Mr. Scarchilli left the meeting and Mr. McCord was no longer taking part in the meeting by telephone.

12. Proposed for Executive Session – Bargaining Unit Complaint - On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for the Purpose of Bargaining Unit Complaint at 9:58 p.m.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:09 p.m. On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to  
The Board of Education