

Joint Meeting
Town of North Stonington
Board of Selectmen Board of Education Board of Finance
North Stonington Elementary Library
February 19, 2014
6:00 p.m.

DRAFT

A joint meeting of the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance was held on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Wheeler High School Shaw Media Center. Present were Mr. Nero, Mr. McCord, Mr. Carlson, Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Buzzee, Mrs. Wagner, and Mr. Mathwich from the Board of Education; Mr. Spring, Mr. Pavlovics, Mr. Steinhart, and Mr. Main (7:05 p.m.) from the Board of Finance; and Mr. Mullane, Mr. Donahue, and Mr. Testa from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mullane called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. Mr. Mullane welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

Opening Remarks –Senator Andrew Maynard – Will be covered later in the meeting.

Representative Urban – Not able to attend.

Status of the State Budget; including Town Aids and Grants – Mr. Mullane gave a run-down of what he knew regarding the grants. It was requested that the state government not reduce the grants to towns and schools. He elaborated.

Board of Selectmen –

1. Current Year Revenues Estimates vs. Actual – Income is as Projected – Mr. Mullane said they were being very cautious. He read the list of revenues coming in for about \$165,000 but with a decrease of about \$22,000 with Education Cost Sharing. He went over where they were with FEMA and said they are getting about \$200,000. He had further comment and review of revenues.
2. Projected Revenues Fiscal Year 2014-2015 – Mr. Mullane reviewed the projected revenues and explained.
3. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2014-2015 – Mr. Mullane said they have gone over-budget due to all the storms. The Indian issues are a problem area and he elaborated. He explained how the determination for becoming a tribe has changed. He had further comment and explanation. He commented on Senator Murphy's actions regarding this. Mr. Mullane said the general government budget will have to be trimmed. He spoke of the capital budget and explained how they have saved money on the equipment. The new fire station is on track to be on budget and he elaborated. There is some short-term borrowing of \$700,000 which will be converted to a fixed loan. He said they are being very cautious going into this year knowing there is not a large increase in the grand list. The types of increases they used to get are not there anymore.

Board of Education

1. Current Year Performance to Budget – Mr. Nero explained that our budget is performing right on track. He explained about the hiring of new staff with a savings in salaries and benefits' costs. He explained some further savings. He explained the change in the way we are testing our students and he elaborated. Mr. Nero told of the technology grant that was written and said we are getting approximately \$129,000 worth of computers for approximately \$69,000. He said 55 computers come in so far. He elaborated. Mr. Nero said the teachers' contract was negotiated and they are going to a high deductible health plan which will result in budget savings for next year.

2. Grant Revenues and Outlook – Mr. Nero explained the slight decrease in special education grant money due to having more allocated to non-public funds.

3. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2014-2015 - Mr. Nero said negotiations will be under way with the custodians and paraprofessionals. An RFP was sent out for hot lunch services. Mrs. Allen commented that everything coming down from the state is level-funded. Mr. Nero said the budget has changed slightly since it was first formulated.

School Building Study Briefing – Mr. Nero said the Ed. Specs are done. The architect will be presenting to the Board of Education at the next meeting on February 26th. He elaborated and encouraged everyone to attend.

Senator Maynard arrived at 6:41 p.m. and gave his report. He said he doesn't think we are going to see a lot of difference. He had further comment. Mr. Mullane had comment. Senator Maynard commented on the proposed giveback to taxpayers. He elaborated. He said we are fairly flat-funded. Senator Maynard thought North Stonington was getting more in Town Aid Roads. Mr. Mullane had comment. Numbers were reviewed. Senator Maynard and Mr. Mullane spoke on various items. Senator Maynard said they are working on getting some bonding for the town. There was further comment from Senator Maynard and Mr. Mullane.

Board of Finance – Mr. Spring said the audit report came out and it was outstanding. A significant amount of debt was retired. He elaborated. He said the town is in excellent fiscal shape and maintains an A1 credit rating. He said there was a slight increase in the mil rate to accommodate the capital projects that were still left over from the storms of 2010. He elaborated. They have taken on a sewer study and he elaborated. Mr. Spring said a lot plays off the grand list.

1. Grand List 2012 – There had been little growth with less than one percent. Mr. Spring said they would like to see budgets maintained as close as possible without any increases. He suggested prioritizing items and elaborated. He encouraged smart budget development. Mr. Mullane said surprisingly enough, people have been shopping to develop in town. He elaborated. He said the development market is getting people to shop and he elaborated. He said there are capabilities in the community that make us look appealing. Mr. Mullane had further comment.

2. Budget Expectations for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 – Covered in Item 1.
3. Financial Status for the Town – Covered in Mr. Spring's opening remarks.
4. Communication Policy – Not discussed.

Public Comments and Questions – Mr. Nero brought up teacher evaluation. He spoke of mandates. He elaborated. Senator Maynard had comment. He spoke of Common Core and additional items. Senator Maynard said there was a lot of concerted effort to make them aware of the issues with these items. Senator Maynard gave his feelings on SEED and elaborated. He had further comment. Mr. Nero had further comment as did Senator Maynard. Mr. Testa had comment on the audit report regarding the reserves. Mr. Spring answered his questions and had further comment. There were questions asked and answered. Mr. Mullane had comment. There was further comment by board members. Mr. Joe Gross had comment. Mrs. Pat Lewis had questions and comments regarding the dam. Mr. Mullane had further comment on the dam.

The meeting ended at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education