

Joint Meeting  
Town of North Stonington  
Board of Selectmen                      Board of Education                      Board of Finance  
North Stonington Elementary Library  
February 7, 2011  
6:00 p.m.

A joint meeting of the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance was held on Monday, February 7, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. in the North Stonington Elementary School Library. Present for the Board of Selectmen was Mr. Mullane, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Briscoe. Present for the Board of Education was Dr. Robert, Mrs. Ricker, Mrs. Banker, Mrs. Dame, and Mr. Testa (arrived at 6:23 p.m.). Present for the Board of Finance was Mr. Donahue, Mr. Pavlovics, Mr. Nimirowski, and Mr. Spring. Also present were Dr. Pukas, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Apicelli. Mr. Mullane called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Mr. Mullane explained the purpose of the meeting.

Opening Remarks – Senator Andrew Maynard – Mr. Mullane asked if there was any insight into what is going on in Hartford. Senator Maynard said the Governor will be giving his budget speech next Wednesday. He spoke of the budget cuts and elaborated. He reviewed the history of ECS funding and explained there was growth for six years but now the funding is flat. Senator Maynard talked about the stimulus money which we don't have this year. He spoke of the issue of how to replace a 14% reduction in Education Cost Sharing. He said he felt the Governor does not want to fund this on the backs of the towns. He said the Governor has also talked about not wanting to cut education. He talked about the catastrophic cuts that would be coming. He spoke of possible reductions in other municipal aid such as PILOT, Town Aid Road etc. Senator Maynard said this is a result of a very dramatic and unexpected downturn in the economy. He said the real problem came when we used the rainy day fund. He elaborated. Senator Maynard said this is our reality moment and everyone is aware of it. He hoped the Governor will lay out a very aggressive plan to get out of this.

Representative Diana Urban – Representative Urban said she agreed with Senator Maynard. She told those present she was with a group of economists and they feel it will be 2013 before we come out of this. She said the news from every corner of the United States is the same. She elaborated. She said we have been running a structural deficit for quite a while. Representative Urban said we didn't get there through our own fault—you can't pin it on anyone. She said it goes back to Y2K and elaborated. She said we have a long way to dig ourselves out. She had further comment. She said Senator Maynard gave a very good picture as to what our Governor is looking at and it is a guessing game as to where the Governor will find two billion dollars. She spoke of the impact of day to day life. She spoke of only being able to deal where we have discretionary funds. The places that can be cut are limited. Representative Urban said the Governor has committed to results-based accountability and elaborated. She explained where to find these on the web site. She spoke of moving to a data decision-making model. She had an example of the RBA and explained. She had further comment. She told those present which committees she and Senator Maynard are on. Senator Maynard elaborated on the various committees. He said we will know more

next week about the budget. Questions were asked and answered by Senator Maynard and Representative Urban. Representative Urban had comment on what is happening in other states. Senator Maynard had further comment. Further questions were asked and answered.

#### Board of Selectmen

1. Current Year Revenues Estimates vs. Actual – Mr. Mullane said the taxes and collection rates are about the same. There was a concern that the State didn't have enough money to fund some grants in 09-10. He spoke of the storm damage of March 30<sup>th</sup> and elaborated on the cost to town.
2. Projected Revenues Fiscal Year 2011-2012 – Mr. Mullane said everybody is waiting for the Governor to give projections and they won't be firm until he does. He had further comment.
3. Budget Preparation for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 – Mr. Mullane said we are going to need some guidance from the Board of Finance. He elaborated and said they were looking at everything. He had further comment.

Operating – Mr. Mullane said they took a hit on medical insurance. He said diesel and oil are going to continue to rise. He spoke of the high snow removal costs of the winter for FY 10-11 and damage to the roads from winter damages.

Capital – Mr. Mullane spoke of a new 10-year plan to try to balance costs out. He spoke of some long-term projects. He said they continue to do short-term bonds and explained.

Long Term Capital Projects – Mr. Mullane said what they have been talking about is just what is necessary. He elaborated. He spoke of the Boom Bridge Road project, the village bridge, and the Hewitt dam and elaborated on those. Mr. Mullane spoke of mandates and some of those coming and referred to the CCM alert he had received. He elaborated. He spoke of the 14% increase in health insurance costs. Questions were asked and Senator Maynard and Representative Urban answered. There was discussion and comment.

#### Board of Education

1. Current Year Performance to Budget – Dr. Robert said he foresees spending out the budget and explained.
2. Grant Revenues and Outlook – Dr. Robert read the list of ARRA and other grants expiring. He said Job Creations has one more year and he elaborated.
3. Post Employment Benefits' Liability – Dr. Robert said we still have done nothing with that. He said we have been discussing this with the Town.
4. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2011-2012 – Dr. Robert explained that no decisions have been made yet and he elaborated.

Operating - He spoke of the upcoming high school graduation requirements and elaborated. He said the teachers worked with a 0% increase this year. He said insurance increased 8%. He spoke of upcoming negotiations.

Capital – He thanked Mr. Mullane for getting the boiler project through and he spoke of the flashing project.

School Building Study Briefing – Dr. Robert spoke of the RFP out now for the facilities study and there was discussion. Mr. Mullane spoke of the walkthrough and the timeline. Dr. Robert spoke of the RFP for the feasibility study and the meeting that was held for the public. Questions were asked and answered. Clarification was made on testing. Dr. Pukas explained. There was further discussion. Mr. Mullane had comment on education reimbursement and the formulas. There was further comment.

#### Board of Finance

1. Grand List 2010 – Mr. Donahue said there was a slight increase in the grand list, probably less than one percent and that was probably going to remain flat. He spoke of re-evaluation next year.

2. Budget Expectations for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 – Mr. Donahue asked everyone to come in at the same as last year. He spoke of upcoming debt. He spoke of the lack of new revenue. He talked about what the Board of Finance would like to see in budget presentation including mandated items and services that would be cut or reduced. Mr. Mullane and Mr. McCarthy have been looking at cost savings. Mr. Donahue spoke of the boiler project helping with fuel costs. He had further comment. He encouraged everyone to look in the longer vision and elaborated.

3. Financial Status for the Town – Mr. Donahue said tax revenues are coming in on target. He spoke of the Town's relatively low debt level and he elaborated. He said the undesignated fund levels are acceptable and explained.

4. Communication Policy – Mr. Donahue said talking chairman-to-chairman has been working well. He spoke of the liaison and said that has been working. He reiterated the zero percent increase.

Mr. Mullane spoke of prevailing wage and used the boiler bids as an example and elaborated. He explained the surcharge if prevailing wage wasn't applied. He had further comment. Representative Urban had comment. There was further discussion.

Public Comments and Questions – Mr. Testa asked about the Board of Finance doing a Town-wide efficiency study. Mr. Donahue said he didn't think the Board had discussed that in particular. There was discussion. Mr. Pavlovics spoke of combining the bookkeeping services of the Town and Board of Education and there was discussion. Mr. Mullane spoke of the things they have done over the years to be efficient. He said he and Mr. McCarthy have worked together on items to become efficient and save money. Mr. Mullane had further comment. There was discussion amongst Board members.

Mr. Joe Gross had comment. He thought each department should have a zero percent increase and he elaborated. He had further comment and suggestions on the Town's budget-building process. There was discussion and comment. Mr. Mullane had further comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to  
The Board of Education