

Joint Meeting
Town of North Stonington
Board of Selectmen Board of Education Board of Finance
North Stonington Elementary Library
February 8, 2012
6:00 p.m.

A joint meeting of the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, at 6:00 p.m. in the North Stonington Elementary School Library. Present were Dr. Robert, Mr. McCord, Mr. Scarchilli, Mr. Hundt, Mr. Mathwich, Mr. Testa and Mrs. Dame from the Board of Education; Mr. Pavlovics, Mr. Woodward, Mr. Spring, Mr. Nimirowski, and Mr. Ratib from the Board of Finance; and Mr. Mullane and Mr. Donahue from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mullane called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Mr. Mullane had comment. He thought Senator Maynard and Representative Urban had gotten held up at the Capital and that is why they were not in attendance.

Opening Remarks –Senator Andrew Maynard - Absent.

Representative Urban – Absent.

Board of Selectmen

1. Current Year Revenues Estimates vs. Actual – Mr. Mullane said the data collection was not complete. He said the revenue from the State is coming in as planned and there may be a few plus dollars.
2. Projected Revenues Fiscal Year 2012-2013 – Mr. Mullane said there are some minor changes overall but they are ending up status quo--neutral going from this year to next. He said it looks like they are going to try to keep revenues to the Town as is and he elaborated.
3. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2012-2013 – Mr. Mullane said they have collected most of the department budgets. The budget is up 5% before adjustments and he said they know they have to bring it down.

Operating – Mr. Mullane spoke of an increase in operating costs, storm costs, upgrades to radio systems, and the storm damage from 2010. He said because of the storm damage, there is mitigation that is required. He explained what needs to be done and the dollars associated with those repairs. He elaborated on these items. He said he was concerned about the cash flow with bonds they have out now. He was looking at scheduling and how to balance these out over the years. Mr. Mullane explained they have cut services and he elaborated. He said he is not optimistic about getting more money from the State.

Capital – Covered above.

Long Term Capital Projects – Mr. Mullane spoke of the long-term plans and projects including Boom Bridge Rd. and the bridge in Town and explained. He said they are able to support the budget they are in. He commented that

the weather has cooperated so they have been able to get some of the things that needed to be done accomplished. He said some of the hurricane monies did not come through. He ended by saying the general government is operating smoothly and he elaborated. Some questions were asked and answered. He had further comment.

Board of Education -

1. Current Year Performance to Budget – Dr. Robert said they were predicting \$14,000 in the hole but with heat it should level out. He explained all the unexpected building items. Mr. Mullane said he and Mr. McCarthy have been working together on some items and complemented Mr. McCarthy on his work. Dr. Robert said we have saved on heat and lack of snow has helped. Dr. Robert didn't think there will be much going back to the Town.

2. Grant Revenues and Outlook – Dr. Robert said with the title grants we are looking at a reduction of about \$8,000 and he read the numbers. He said the Federal Job Funds was the \$169,000 one-shot deal. He commented on the Governor's plan and said it looked like we may get an extra \$14,000 and change with the lowest performing schools getting the bulk of the money. Dr. Robert elaborated.

3. Post Employment Benefits' Liability – Dr. Robert said the Board was still waiting for direction; we have never made a plan and he elaborated. He had further comment and explained the report. He spoke of the unfunded liabilities and elaborated. There was comment on this funding.

4. Budget Projections Fiscal Year 2012-2013 – Dr. Robert said there is about a 4.8% increase over this year. He said the Board of Education has not worked with that at all. They will be looking at that this month and next month.

Operating – Covered above.

Capital – Dr. Robert read some of the items on the list. Mr. Mullane said the van is on the Selectmen's list. There was discussion of that item.

5. School Building Study Briefing – Mr. Mathwich said they are working with the architects. He said the school administration is working on the educational specs and he elaborated. He said he was not sure they are going to have the entire package done to submit funding for this year but they will have a plan to go forward. Mr. Mathwich explained if the deadline is missed this year, they can project for next year. He said June 1st is the deadline for submitting the paperwork and explained. There was comment. He said the goal was still to get it done this year. Questions were asked and answered about various aspects of the school building study. Mr. Mullane commented if the date is not made then the PSPBC list should be updated and he explained. Dr. Robert said they were in communication with the Board of Finance regarding setting aside funds for repairs to Board of Education items. Questions were asked and answered. He had further explanation. There was comment from those present.

Mr. Mullane commented that the law is rather muddy and he explained. There was further comment. Questions were asked and answered. The steps were explained that needed to be taken for a building project. There was further discussion.

Board of Finance

1. Grand List 2011 – Mr. Spring, new chairman of the Board of Finance, introduced himself. He clarified what the Board of Finance does and he read their responsibilities. He spoke of the challenges discussed tonight. He spoke of the revaluation and a decrease of 50.88%. He had comment and said the Town is very dependent on the grand list and gave the breakdown. He said the mil rate is 20.229 and a projected increase in the mil rate is needed to maintain the level we are at now. He explained a mil rate.

Anticipated Changes – Covered above.

Current and Future Years – Covered above.

2. Budget Expectations for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 – Mr. Spring said with all these factors they are projecting a flat increase and asked the Boards to look for efficiencies and leverage opportunities as possible. They are most willing to listen and help make recommendations as possible.

Caps for Budget Submittals – Covered above.

3. Financial Status for the Town – Mr. Spring said North Stonington is a very strong town. We have an A1 rating by Moody's. He said that is still considered prime with a low credit risk and he elaborated and explained. From the current audit, North Stonington is commendable on tax collection and debt service.

4. Communication Policy – Mr. Spring said the meetings are posted on the web site. A schedule will be made to meet with each group.

Mr. Mullane opened the meeting for comment. Mr. Testa clarified that if the Boards come in flat that it would still trigger a tax increase. Mr. Spring said they have to take in to account the revaluation and there will be an increase due to the revaluation. Mr. Spring said they will take into account what they hear during the presentations. He said the mil rate would have to be raised to 24.12 to account for revaluation. Mr. Mullane gave an explanation of the revaluation saying that the commercial properties stayed about neutral and the higher end homes lost some value. Mr. Mullane said it was a re-distribution and explained. There was further explanation of this. Questions were asked and answered about the tax redistribution. Mr. Spring explained why the revaluation was put off for a year. Mr. Woodward had comment. He spoke of the mil rate variances over the last number of years and said the town has done a pretty good job. Mr. Mathwich said we have been cutting things to get there. Mrs. Dame commented on the lack of knowledge of the vo-ag tuition until after the budget has been passed. She elaborated about this when you have to do a flat budget. Dr. Robert had comment on that subject as well. Mr. Mullane suggested

coming to some systematical and logical recommendation to go to legislature to change this. He had comment on that as well. Mr. Mullane had further comment on some education reforms that are being looked at. He elaborated. Mr. Mullane encouraged the Board to sit down and suggested talking to Senator Maynard's aide to try to do something about this. He elaborated. Mr. Murphy arrived at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Mullane thanked everyone for coming. Dr. Robert asked if the Board of Finance would be sending out a meeting list. Mr. Mullane thanked the Board and Commission members and all those that attended.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education