

Board of Education Minutes
January 22, 2013
Legislative Agenda

A meeting of the North Stonington Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education was held on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the North Stonington Elementary School. State Senator Andrew Maynard and State Representative Diana Urban were in attendance. Present for the Board of Selectmen were Mr. Mullane, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Donahue. Present for the Board of Finance were Mr. Spring, Mr. Woodward, Mr. Pavlovics, and Mr. Urgo. Present for the Board of Education were Mr. McCord, Dr. Robert, Mr. Mathwich, Mr. Karpinski and Mrs. Dame. Also present was Mr. Nero and Stonington's First Selectman, Mr. Haberek.

Mr. Mullane introduced Senator Maynard and Representative Urban. Members of the Boards were introduced. Mr. Mullane said the State government was starting their slate of duties and he wanted to pass along our concerns. Mr. Mullane elaborated on meetings of the Council of Small Town Governments. He commented that one concern was to maintain the state aid to municipalities and he reviewed items in the packet that was handed out.

Mr. Spring spoke of the town needing help. He also commented on collaboration with other towns, building the budget, and needing economic development in the town. He said we are asking for help from the State and understands it's not a good time for the State.

Mr. McCord commented about state mandates and the burden on the school system. He elaborated and gave some examples. He spoke of the new teacher evaluation program and elaborated. Mr. Nero also spoke of unfunded mandates and of the teacher evaluation model and explained to those present, based on his knowledge, about the downfalls of the way Connecticut is implementing the program. He elaborated. He spoke of the health care bill and explained about our insurance increase for the next year. He commented that cutting aid to towns has a tremendous impact. He had further comment. He spoke of the talk of taxing the school districts separately. He spoke of the relationship between the test scores and poverty. Mr. Mullane also spoke of taxing the school districts. He explained how the system works now and to change that would cause an enormous amount of chaos and a lot of lobbying for one budget or the other and he elaborated. Mr. Mullane spoke of the idea of taxing state property, hospitals, etc. and said that was not a good idea.

Mr. Haberek commented on some legislative decisions. He had comment on items discussed. He said a lot of time will be spent on guns and elaborated. He commented on teacher evaluation. Mr. Haberek said just because it happens in the big cities doesn't mean it happens to us. He spoke of being near the border and that people will go to the neighboring state for cheaper prices. He spoke of new taxes destroying our small businesses. Mr. McCord agreed that a lot of the mandates that do come down just do not fit here. He had further comment about mandates and not having the economy of scale and gave examples. He elaborated. Mr. Mullane had comment. He said our legislators cannot do it alone and elaborated.

Senator Maynard said that there was not a thing mentioned tonight that they have not talked about. He said he and Representative Urban are on a lot of the same committees. Senator Maynard commented that they have an uphill struggle as representatives to rural communities. He elaborated and said a lot of things they respond to come from legal decisions. He had further comment. He spoke on the level of federal revenue sharing and had explanation. He said he on the Appropriations Committee and he tries his best but it goes to committee and things get changed.

Representative Urban had comment and talked about results based accountability and she elaborated about trying to get rid of the programs that don't work. Questions were asked. Mr. Haberek had comment and voiced concerns about various programs. Senator Maynard had comment and made clarification. Mr. Haberek had further comment. Senator Maynard and Representative Urban had further comment. Mr. Mullane gave a 10-year history of state aid to North Stonington and elaborated. There was further comment. Some of the new programs that are trying to support small business were listed. There was comment.

Mr. Nero spoke of binding arbitration and gave examples of how it hinders. Senator Maynard said the system drives the cost up and elaborated. There were examples given of how to share resources. Mr. Haberek had comment. Mr. Mullane had comment. Insurance rates were touched upon and discussed. Questions were asked and answered regarding revenues and municipal aid. There was discussion. The tax burden was discussed and it was said that the way Connecticut figures it, it gives a false number. Senator Maynard explained. Dr. Robert spoke of results-based accountability and showcasing things that work and referred to the North Stonington Schools. He spoke of reimbursement rates and he elaborated. There was discussion. Mr. Nero had comment and spoke of small communities of learning. He had further comment. Mr. Urgo spoke about moving forward and elaborated and spoke of the good things that are happening. There was further comment and discussion. Mr. Mullane summarized what was discussed during the meeting. Minimum budget requirement was discussed. Mr. Mullane had further comment. There was discussion. Mr. Haberek said we have to look at the whole picture regarding school safety and the possibility that there will be added costs to the school districts and towns. It was noted that Senator Maynard and Representative Urban are on that task force. Senator Maynard commented and said they have to be very thoughtful on this and he elaborated. He commented that we are paying a price for Connecticut's dismantling of the mental health industry and he elaborated. There was discussion. Mr. Haberek said this has been a great opportunity and thanked Senator Maynard and Representative Urban and thanked Mr. Mullane for inviting him. Senator Maynard commented that he was just as frustrated with these things as those present are. He elaborated and said he appreciated being here this evening. Mr. Mullane had comment on the open line of communication and he elaborated.

The meeting ended at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education