

Board of Education Minutes
January 23, 2013

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Band Room. Present were Mr. Testa, Mr. McCord, Mr. Mendolia, Mr. Karpinski, Mr. Hundt, Dr. Robert, Mr. Mathwich, and Mrs. Dame. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Apicelli. Chairman Testa called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Nero led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items – Mr. Joe Gross, citizen, spoke of community relations and the budget. He elaborated. He spoke of headlines in the newspapers and what our priorities should be. He had further comment.
4. Community Relations – Mr. Nero said we applied for the Community Grant in September and gave the timeline. He is meeting with ICONS to be part of the planning committee for the grant. He had further comment.
5. Presentations – None.
6. Administrators' Reports – Mrs. Wilkison spoke of happenings at the elementary school including the enrichment programs sponsored by the Wheeler Library, after-school programs including Spanish for Kids and Yoga, the wildcard spelling bee, Technology Week, Science Night, and the math pilots taking place in grades K, 1, and 2 and she elaborated on the pilots. She handed out sheets and explained them. She had further comment. She said they liked the Envisions program the best and would like to meet with the Student Success Committee on that. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Sandford said they finished exams today and he elaborated and spoke of the eighth graders taking the exams. He told of happenings at the middle/high school including the students that went to the Inauguration, the Course of Studies is being written with changes, Congressman Joe Courtney is coming on Friday, Dr. Mama is coming to do a presentation to the sixth grade tomorrow, February 1st is the Renaissance event and February 2nd is the Winter Ball.
7. Administrative – a. Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2013 – Mr. Mathwich made a motion that was seconded by Dr. Robert to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2013 meeting. Questions were asked and answered. The motion passed with seven voting in favor and one abstention. Mrs. Dame abstained.

January 16, 2013 - On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted six in favor and two abstentions to accept the minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting as amended. Mr. Hundt and Mrs. Dame abstained.

On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to move item 14a, Review of Legal RFP's to New Business.

b. Correspondence – None.

c. Personnel – None.

8. Reports – a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero said they have been busy on the budget and he elaborated. He spoke of the insurance consortium and said they are close. He spoke on the projected increase in insurance premiums. He had further comment. He said we are going to advertise for the business manager. He attended the regional superintendents' meeting last week and one of the topics was teacher evaluation and he elaborated. Mr. Nero said he will be attending a seminar on testing on Friday. He thanked Mr. Mathwich for the presentation last week. He told the Board they met today and went over the educational specs. He had further comment.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mr. Testa said he talked to Chairman Spring about the RISSA account. He had comment and explanation. Dr. Robert mentioned Gary Brochu's district using that account. Mr. Testa said he also spoke to Mr. Spring about the budget and relayed that information. The Board of Finance liaison is Mike Uργο and Mr. Testa explained what he would be doing. He had further comment. He spoke to Marc Tate at town hall, the fire chief, and the area commander of the state police regarding setting up a committee and that is moving forward. Questions were asked and answered. There was comment on the potential budget increase.

c. Committee Chairs – Mr. McCord said the Facilities and Finance Committee met and looked through the RFP's for legal services.

d. PSPBC Liaison – Mr. Testa spoke to Mr. Aiello, chairman of the PSPBC, regarding any funds available from them and he was told those monies were already allocated for projects and he elaborated. Questions were asked and answered.

9. Finance – None.

10. Old Business – a. Middle School Boiler Update – Mr. Hundt said they did the walk-through with the contractors and he explained. There was discussion. Mr. Nero had comment and said we need to be consistent as we move forward with the RFP's and elaborated. There was discussion. Board members had comment.

b. Preliminary Review of 2013-2014 Proposed Education Budget - Mr. Nero went over the budget sheet. He spoke of the contractual increases and reviewed those. The total in fixed costs is \$635,282 with only \$135,754 in new monies. Mr. Nero explained and had comment. He explained the reduction in staff. He had further explanation. He told the Board he has already reduced over \$300,000 from the budget. He had comment. He said everything was looked at and there is not much other room to go. He commented by going three to four years with a zero increase that there is nothing left. Board members had comment. Mr. Hundt spoke of community support. Mr. Nero had further comment. Board members had comment. There was some discussion of the legislative meeting and information that was brought forward. Board members had further comment. Further questions were

asked and answered. Mr. McCarthy had comment and explanation on the insurance increase. Further questions were asked and answered. There was further comment. Mr. Nero had comment.

11. New Business – a. Educational Specifications for Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School – Mr. Nero said he has gone through the specs and had questions that were answered today. He had comment on his review of the specs. He said we need to look at the NEASC problems and see if we can find the most economical way to get this done. Mr. Nero was asked to do a two-page summary of his thoughts on the specs. Mr. Mathwich had explanation to comments made. Mr. Nero had further comment. Board members had comment. Mr. Mathwich said right now the ed. specs are in the hands of the Board of Education. Mr. Nero had comment. There was discussion. Mr. Mathwich suggested the Board go through these specs and formulate their own ideas. There was further comment.

b. Review of Legal Services RFP's – On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Dr. Robert the Board voted unanimously to call in three of the five firms – those being Kainen, Shipman, and Siegal. (The motion was made using only the first name of the law firm.) Mr. Hundt was absent for the vote. The firms will be contacted to come in for an interview with the Board.

12. Calendar – a. Future Meetings – February 6th will be for the budget, the 13th is a regular meeting but starting at 7:30 p.m. due to law firm interviews at 6:30 p.m., and the 20th is for budget if needed. (Mr. Hundt left the meeting at 9:03 p.m.) The meetings will start at 7:00 p.m. except the February 13th meeting.

b. Committee Action List – A Student Success Committee meeting will be set up after the elementary staff does the visitation for the math program.

13. Public Comment – Mrs. Lisa Mazzella, citizen, commented on the budget and ICONS advocating for the budget. She elaborated. ICONS is hosting a social at Buon Appetito on February 18th at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Mike Urgo, citizen, asked about another facilities presentation once a plan is in place. Mr. Mathwich and Mr. Nero had comment and said there would be. Mr. Mathwich had further comment. Mr. Urgo suggested looking at “green” options and he elaborated. He had further comment. He applauded the efforts of the insurance consortium and commented. Mr. Joe Gross, citizen, said our biggest concern is communication. He spoke of the budget. He commented on the ICONS group. He spoke of needing everybody on board. He had comment on the middle school boiler. He had further comment on the budget. Mrs. Colleen Smith, spoke of the meeting with the Ad Hoc members and commented on it. She had a question on the state reimbursement. She commented on the early release days. Mrs. Jacquie Spears, citizen, commented on the lack of public participation. She elaborated. She had comment on students leaving the district for other schools. She spoke of last year’s budget season. She spoke of the schools. She spoke of it being crucial to have kids be diverse. She elaborated and had explanation of why there should be more choices for students instead of just academics. Mr. Nero had comment. There was further comment. Board members had comment. Mr. Robert Nee, citizen, had questions on the boiler. Mr. Mathwich

answered his questions. Mr. Nee asked about partnering with other districts on courses and Mr. Nero answered his question and spoke of distance learning. Mr. Nee had further comment. He spoke of communication and transparency. He had comment on news coming out of the district. Mr. Damien Robert, citizen, spoke of generators and had explanation.

14. Proposed for Executive Session – On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Mr. Mendolia the Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 9:41 p.m. for the Purpose of Student Confidentiality and Salaries/Benefits of Non-Bargaining Unit/Non-Certified Staff and to invite Mrs. Costa into such session for the first part. (Review of Legal Services RFP's was already covered.)

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:10 p.m. On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Dr. Robert, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education