

Board of Education Minutes
Special Meeting
March 4, 2009

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room. Present were Dr. Robert, Mr. McCord, Mr. Testa, Mr. Briscoe, Mrs. Ricker, Mrs. Banker, Mr. Keane, and Mr. Secchiaroli. Also present were Dr. Pukas, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Wilkison, Mrs. Costa, Mr. Susi, Mr. Sandford, Mr. Devine, and Mr. Boucher. Chairman Robert called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

2. Public Comment/Request to Comment on Agenda Item – None.

3. Action Regarding Salaries/Benefits of Non-Bargaining Unit/Non-Certified Staff –The following are for the 2009-2010 year. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Business Manager a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted seven in favor and one abstention to grant the Administrative Assistant a 1.5% increase. Dr. Robert abstained. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted seven in favor and one abstention to grant the Bookkeeper a 1.5% increase. Dr. Robert abstained. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli the Board voted seven in favor and one against to grant the Special Services Secretary a 7.9% increase. Mr. McCord voted against the motion. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Maintenance Supervisor a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Groundskeeper a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Network Technician at 2% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the High School Nurse a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Elementary School Nurse a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to grant the Nurse Aide a 1.5% increase. On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Secchiaroli, the Board voted unanimously to accept the negotiated salaries of 2% for the Secretaries' Bargaining Unit. Mr. Testa was absent for that vote. The Superintendent's and part-time employees' salaries were tabled.

4. Proposed Education Budget for 2009-2010 – Dr. Pukas gave some background information. She referred to the list she passed out and asked the Board to review the third item, a middle school reading teacher. Dr. Pukas told the Board she was changing her recommendation from a 2.98% budget to a budget of 2.49%. Mr. Susi explained that after the last workshop he and Mr. Sandford looked at other ways to do the same job (reading teacher) keeping in mind long-range cost savings and thinking outside the box. He elaborated and said they were looking at reading through professional development. He explained. He said he would like \$10,000 put in professional development to teach the teachers to teach reading. He elaborated. Dr. Pukas said in addition to the

\$10,000 in the Town budget for professional development she will be looking at the Title II money to supplement that. She reiterated that further reductions would mean further staff reductions and program reductions. Dr. Robert reviewed the first item on the list regarding class size, offerings, and switching teachers. Mr. Susi said they have looked at staff reductions. He elaborated. He said the next cuts would have to come from staff. He explained staff reductions would impact programming. He reviewed the physical education/guidance scenario. He said he needs all the physical education personnel to meet the requirements. There were questions asked about the English teacher reduction impacting offerings. Mr. Susi answered the questions and gave further explanation. He reviewed different scenarios. He told the Board what offerings will not be available for the students in their core courses. He had further explanation and gave examples of each subject area. There was comment and questions from Board members. There was a question on the guidance position which Mr. Susi answered and gave explanation. There was further comment from Board members regarding any further reductions seriously impacting the children. There was further comment about staffing and where the larger impact would be. The graduation requirements were brought up and it was noted that a meeting had already been scheduled for next week. It was thought any further discussion regarding a curricular issue should come from the Curriculum Committee. There was further comment on that. Mrs. Wilkison explained how the students are placed in the classes at the elementary school. She elaborated. She reviewed different classes and the standings of children in some of those classes. She went over some of the State initiatives and said it would be a major concern if staff was reduced. There were questions and comments from Board members. Mrs. Costa explained the placing of paraprofessionals comes from a PPT meeting. She said there are already two paraprofessionals eliminated from next year's budget. She elaborated on the paraprofessionals in the one-to-one positions and said there are 14 of those positions. She explained the classroom paraprofessionals and the support they give the teachers. She spoke of having about 4 students per class in the regular setting. There were questions and comments from the Board. Mrs. Costa said there are 11 classroom paraprofessionals. There were questions answered from the Board about students being mainstreamed. Mrs. Wilkison spoke about the cafeteria aide and explained those duties. There were questions asked and answered. Mrs. Wilkison said there are 383 students and one full time secretary. She explained the office paraprofessional's job duties and that her support is truly needed. There were questions asked and answered. There were questions asked and answered concerning the cafeteria aide. There was further comment from Board members. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Susi said they have reviewed the athletic program. He explained. There were questions asked and answered. There was discussion of bringing revenue into the system. Mr. Susi gave his opinion of pay to play. He asked about the equity piece in drama or band. He elaborated. There were questions asked about community service to participate. There was discussion of that and the concern about the management piece of that. There was further discussion of athletics. There was discussion of after-school activities. Dr. Pukas commented that she had spoken to Mr. Mullane about reviving the program that was in place through recreation years ago. There was further discussion of athletics. Mr. McCarthy reviewed some of the cost savings that are happening in the district. Dr. Pukas reiterated that thanks to Mr. McCarthy's hard work and the Central Office in general that there is no increase in the CIRMA rates. CABE and CAPSS have also kept their dues the same for

next year. Dr. Pukas commented that we are looking at every possibility and resource to save money and to share resources and staffing. Mr. McCarthy said he did ask the Town if we could do their payroll. There was comment. Mr. Devine reviewed the items of cost savings for the IT department. He spoke of how he puts his budget together and how he prioritizes. He elaborated. There was positive comment about how we are managing our resources. Mr. Boucher spoke of his department's cost savings. There were questions from the Board that Mr. Boucher answered. There was discussion of substitutes. Dr. Pukas spoke to the long term savings and how they have worked as a team on this. She said the budget of 2.49% is about as low as we are going to get without cutting further staff and programs. There was a question about the heating assistance money. Mr. McCarthy explained. Dr. Robert would like to put the heating assistance on next meeting's agenda. Mr. Secchiaroli had comment. There was further discussion of various items. There were questions for Mrs. Turner on the athletic budget that she answered. Mr. Secchiaroli made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Ricker to accept the budget of 2.49% as presented by the Superintendent. There was discussion and comment. Mr. Secchiaroli withdrew his motion and Mrs. Ricker withdrew her second. Dr. Pukas thanked the Board for the motion. She clarified that the budget they were requesting is the one without the reading teacher and it included the salary decisions. There was comment from the Board chair. There were questions that were asked and answered. There was further comment from Board members. Mr. Secchiaroli thanked Dr. Pukas and the staff for their work on the budget. He elaborated. Mr. McCord had comment. Mrs. Wilkison had comment. Mrs. Banker had comment. Mrs. Ricker had comment. There was further comment from Board members and administrators. Mr. Keane left the meeting at 9:34 p.m. Dr. Pukas thanked the Board for allowing them to go through the process. She elaborated. Mr. Susi said he and Mr. Sandford present the budget but the staff members are the ones that put it together. He elaborated.

5. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Briscoe, seconded by Mrs Ricker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education