

Board of Education Minutes
November 10, 2010

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler Gymnasium Music Room. Present were Dr. Robert, Mrs. Ricker, Mrs. Banker, Mr. Scarchilli, Mr. Hundt, Mr. Testa and Mrs. Dame (7:17 p.m.). Mr. McCord was absent. Also present were Dr. Pukas, Mr. McCarthy, Mrs. Wilkison, Mrs. Costa, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Apicelli. Chairman Robert called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

Dr. Robert told those present the meeting was being recorded.

2. Community Relations – Three more articles were at the Board’s places. Dr. Pukas commended the administration for contacting the press for continued coverage. Mr. Scarchilli commented on whether the meetings should be video-taped. There was discussion. Questions were asked about who would record this. Mr. Scarchilli explained the process. The question was raised about who would supervise the students that were recording the meeting. There was discussion. Dr. Robert said there needs to be an investigation on this. Mr. Scarchilli will look into this and it will be on the next meeting’s agenda.

3. Presentations – a. New Initiatives in Reading – Mrs. Wilkison gave an introduction and said it is getting more complicated to teach reading. She passed out a handout and read the five elements of reading instruction. She read statistics and also went over some of the programs that are being used. The first grade teachers spoke of “The Daily Five” program. Jeanne Dionne, grade one teacher, reviewed the program. Renee Bennett, grade one teacher, spoke of a supplement to The Daily Five which is the Café Menu and explained. She told the Board how that portion of the program worked. Linda Coats, kindergarten teacher, explained another portion of the program. Sheri Tardiff, kindergarten teacher, spoke of another component. Mrs. Wilkison had comment. Sharon Thompson, reading teacher, spoke of the Wilson reading program and said it was very intense. She spoke of the other interventions. She told the Board about the Wilson Just Words program and she explained. Heidi Mehringer-Macina spoke of the Rave-O program and explained. Questions were asked and answered. There was comment on the programs and further questions were asked and answered. The Board thanked the teachers for coming.

b. PA 10-111 Part II – Dr. Pukas gave background information and spoke of the presentation made by Mr. Sandford and Mr. Apicelli. She said this information was gathered from the Superintendent’s Back-to-School meeting in Hartford. She reviewed different components of this act including certification through ARC for administrators, public information system data, teacher evaluation, low performing/achieving schools, school governance councils, and that a task force to study the achievement gap in CT will be established. She explained each of these components. Questions were asked and answered and comments were made. She said the two top issues are high school reform and teacher evaluation and linking it to student performance. She had further comment. There was comment from the Board.

4. Administrators Reports – Mr. Sandford explained the profile that was currently sent to colleges on Wheeler and the re-worked profile that they had worked on and will be sending out. He handed out a copy of the NEASC response that was sent. Mr. Apicelli spoke of happenings at the high school including the 2010 varsity baseball team receiving a Sportsmanship Award, November 5th was the middle school Renaissance event with 150 students qualifying for the event, November 16th is the high school Renaissance breakfast, 10 eighth grade girls will participate in the Multiply Your Options program to take place at UCONN, November 17th grade 7 students will be serving Thanksgiving luncheon to senior citizens, and the middle school dance was held with a lot of participation from the faculty and students. Mr. Apicelli also told the Board that Marc Tardiff and Rebecca Schilke are bringing 8th grade students to read to Kindergarteners once a month, a Veterans’ Day brunch at the Senior Center is on November 13th, and the Horns for Kids program awarded us a saxophone and a trumpet. Questions were asked and answered. Comments were made. Mrs. Wilkison told of happenings at the elementary school including the Family Fun Runs with the Turkey Trot being the last of these, and the first trimester is over with report cards going home December 1st. She gave information on gender. Mrs. Wilkison said they started the Foundations program in grade 3. Karen Lungren, grade three teacher, explained a little about the program. Mr. Testa asked questions about items brought up to the PTO for funding. Mrs. Wilkison responded to his questions. There was comment. Questions regarding this will be sent to Dr. Robert and a representative from the PTO will be asked to attend a meeting to answer questions.

5. Administrative - a. Approval of Minutes – October 13, 2010 – On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mrs. Banker, the Board voted six in favor and one abstention to accept the minutes of the October 13, 2010 meeting. Mrs. Dame abstained.

c. Correspondence – Dr. Pukas explained the yearbook ad scenario. On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mr. Scarchilli, the Board voted unanimously to take out a yearbook ad and to have full participation by the next meeting.

d. Personnel – None.

6. Reports - a. Superintendent – Questions were asked about the regional calendar. Dr. Pukas wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and wished Mr. Hundt a happy birthday, referring to the Marine Corps.

b. BOE Chairperson – None.

c. Committee Chairs – Committees met and will report later.

d. PSPBC Liaison – On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Mrs. Ricker as PSPBC liaison.

e. Committee Action List – None.

7. Financial – a. October 2010 Financial Statements – Mr. Testa said the Finance Committee met earlier and voted to send the October 2010 finance statement forward. On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mrs. Ricker, the Board voted unanimously to accept total accounts payable general fund of \$878,324.07, grant expenditures of \$25,164.30 for a total of \$903,488.37 for the month of October 2010.

b. Request for Transfers – Mr. Testa made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Ricker to forward the memo dated November 2, 2010 from the business manager for approval for the requested transfers. There was comment and questions asked. Dr. Pukas responded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Old Business – a. RFP's – Dr. Pukas explained that Mr. Mullane dropped off this memo and she explained the comments from Mr. Mullane. She clarified some of Mr. Mullane's questions. She told the Board that her understanding was that they were going forward with the feasibility study and the school facilities study but not at the same time. Mr. Mathwich had comment and explanation. There was further comment.

b. North Stonington School District and School Goals for 2010-2011 – Dr. Pukas said this was an FYI for the goals approved on October 13, 2010.

c. Board of Education Goal for 2010-2011 – Dr. Pukas suggested a representative committee look at suggestions received by the Board tonight. There was comment.

d. Board of Education Committee Structure – Dr. Robert explained the background for narrowing down the committees. He told the Board one of the reasons he asked to do this was because of the limited hours and limited people on the committees. He said it would be easier to do and the off-Wednesday would be used to meet. He explained the breakdown of the new committees. There were comments made. Co-chairs were suggested for the committees. A breakdown of three committees was suggested and there was discussion. On a motion by Mrs. Dame, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to change the structure of the committees after the policies have been changed.

9. New Business – a. Report on Board of Education Pension Plans – Mr. McCarthy explained the Board maintains two pension plans and he explained them. He gave the background and history of the plans with the former company, F&G. He explained the problems we were experiencing and that we had to find another financial agency. He said Lincoln Financial was the only group that would take this type of plan. Mr. McCarthy explained the charges that were being incurred. He explained the type of fund the plans were in. He told the Board questions were raised by some of the participants about investing their own funds. He had further explanation including that the funds would still be in the same account; participants could not withdraw the funds to invest in other ways. Mr. McCarthy told the Board if they ended up approving this, participants would have to sign a waiver that the Board was not liable for any losses. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Ricker made a motion that was seconded

by Mrs. Banker to allow the pension plan participants to manage the investments in their accounts. Questions were asked and answered. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Three Rivers Community College for Early Childhood Education Contract – Dr. Pukas said there is a student of Three Rivers that is at the elementary school and she explained. She said there is a resolution that Three Rivers needs to be signed. On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mr. Testa, the Board voted to approve the Three Rivers resolution.

c. Liquidation of the Class of 1980 Activities Account – Dr. Pukas recommended this per the new policy and she explained. On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mrs. Dame, the Board voted unanimously to allow the Class of 1980 to liquidate their funds.

d. PSPBC List – Dr. Pukas reviewed the Facilities Committee meeting. She said a memo will be sent asking the PSPBC to notify the Board before these projects are undertaken. She will report to the Board on any projects involving PCB's and that the PBPBC would bear the cost. On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Facilities Committee's recommendation for the PSPBC work list.

e. 2011 Meeting Calendar – Dr. Pukas explained the reason this is being brought forward now. She explained the schedule. On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to accept the 2011 meeting schedule.

f. Discussion of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Education Budgets – Mr. Testa had some questions on these budgets regarding certain expenditures. Dr. Pukas answered the questions. She explained the process for a search for an administrator. There were further questions asked regarding the consultant and Dr. Pukas answered. There were additional comments from Board members. Grant monies were discussed. Other Board members had comment. There was clarification on items. It was decided that at the next meeting a presentation will be done on what Title IIA monies can be spent on. Dr. Pukas would like to know tonight if she should continue to retain this consultant and she elaborated. There were questions asked. Dr. Robert suggested having a Personnel Committee meeting to hear what the funds have been used for and then a reasonable discussion could be had with some direction. There was further comment. A Personnel Committee meeting will be set up. Other questions were asked.

10. Calendar – There was discussion of meeting times. A Policy Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 1st at 6:30 p.m. and a Personnel Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 1st at 7:30 p.m.

11. Public Comment – Mr. Mathwich had a question on the RFP's. There were questions asked and answered. Sarah Marsh, employee, had a question on budget returns. Dr. Robert answered her question. There was further comment and explanation.

On a motion by Mrs. Ricker, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to extend the meeting beyond 11:00 p.m.

12. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Discussion of Collective Bargaining Negotiations/Strategy – On a motion by Mr. Testa, seconded by Mr. Hundt, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 11:08 p.m. for Discussion of Collective Bargaining Negotiations/Strategy.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 11:27 p.m. On a motion by Mr. Hundt, seconded by Mrs. Ricker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education