

Board of Education Minutes
April 21, 2020
Special Meeting

DRAFT

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 976 9101 2782. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord (6:25 p.m.), Mrs. Mastroianni, Dr. Potemri, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, Mrs. St. Germain, and Mrs. Reyes. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.
4. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Contract Negotiations – On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted to go into Executive Session at 6:08 p.m. for the Purpose of Contract Negotiations and to invite Mrs. Martin and Mrs. McCarthy into such session.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:25 p.m.

5. Finance – a. March 2020 Financial Statements – Mrs. Wagner had comment. Mr. Karpinski had questions on the change in technology costs that Mrs. Martin answered. There was clarification. Questions were asked and answered on the anticipated expenses. Board members had further comment. Questions were asked and answered on the list of bills. This will be acted upon at the next meeting.
- b. 2020-2021 Proposed Education Budget – Mrs. Wagner said the Board of Finance asked the Board of Education to show them what the budget would look like at 2.1%. Mrs. Wagner said middle school sports would be cut, the math specialist at the high school and the literacy specialist at the elementary school would be cut, the special education position would not be filled after the retirement and some technology was put back in. She had further comment on reductions. She spoke of technology needs. Mrs. Mastroianni had comment on the budget and said she can't support that and asked if the Board could refuse to support it. Mrs. Wagner said she has asked them to bring it forward to the public and they had refused to do that. She said they will ask again tomorrow to bring it to the hearing to get the feedback from the public. Mrs. Wagner had further comment on the procedure. She said it doesn't seem we are getting that. There was discussion on the budget and its presentation. Board members had further comment. Mrs. Wagner is hoping at the meeting they will look at it and make the best decision they can. She said tomorrow's discussion will give them more direction. Mrs. Mastroianni had comment. She is really concerned about the Board of Education getting behind a budget that is not adequate. Mr. Nero had comment that he was concerned about the shortfall in the town's revenue. He said that shortfall affects our budget. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. She is hoping we can continue with our programs so we can bring revenue into the town.

Mr. Mendolia spoke of the revenue from tuition and will it be mentioned at tomorrow's meeting. Mrs. Wagner said it has been mentioned at all the meetings and she had further comment. Mr. McCord said if we stick with the 2.1% we would eventually have to put together a budget to that amount. He had further comment. Mrs. Wagner said if you look at the cuts prior, we have cut utilities and they asked to cut 20% further, all technology was cut but we put some back in, all other replacement, all maintenance, all the way down to small pieces of furniture have been cut. We have cut everything physical we can. Mr. McCord said he can't see the Board of Education putting forward that budget. He said he doesn't think we should vote for a budget that hurtful. He had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. She said we will meet again next week. She said we need to think of everyone here. We are the large part of the budget but we shouldn't take the air out of it either. The "rainy day" fund was discussed. Mrs. Mastroianni asked if language could be looked at in the email that will be going out. She asked if they could make the direct ask to look at the municipal budget and to also look at the groundskeeper line and would they adjust a bit. Mrs. Wagner said they have had a couple of different conversations on grounds and she elaborated. She said the town is looking at that and she explained. Mrs. Mastroianni had further comment including the undesignated fund. Mrs. Wagner had comment. Ms. Welborn asked about the CAFE item. She said towns across the state are asking where we are going to be and are expecting savings to roll back to the town. Mrs. Wagner said CAFE went out and did a full survey to see what you anticipate your expenses to be and she explained. Mr. Karpinski said he doesn't see a big savings. Mr. Nero said the CFO of the state sent something out to the towns saying the savings belong to the school districts. Mr. Nero commented on special services and said we don't know where we are going to fall on that. Mrs. Wagner said we are on conference calls daily as well as emails and she elaborated. She said the misconception is that we are having big savings and it will be going back to the town. She had further comment. Mr. Nero said if we have a surplus at the end of the year and can buy some items from next year's budget, we could save teachers. The whole reason for the governor's 7r was to help keep people employed and he had further comment. Ms. Welborn had comment on the communication to the Board of Finance. Board members had comment.

c. Compensation to Bus Company – Conversations are continuing with the bus company and she had further comment.

6. Policy Review – Mrs. Wagner had comment on the policies that were sent out. She said we do have to have a policy in place moving forward but she wanted to have the Board look at them. She elaborated and had further comment.

7. Calendar – Tuesday, April 28th at 6:00 p.m. will be the next meeting and Mrs. Wagner said she was hoping to have direction from the Board of Finance on that.

8. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education