

Board of Education Minutes
May 27, 2020

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 834 5226 1290. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Dr. Robert, Mrs. Mastroianni, Dr. Potemri, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Pont, Mr. Boucher, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, Mrs. St. Germain, and Mrs. Reyes. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.
4. Presentations – a. CAFE Scholar Leader Awards – Mrs. Wagner explained the award and the number of nominations CAFE received. She quoted the letter from CAFE. Keiran Boscoe and Rose Tardiff were recognized as the CAFE Scholar Leaders. Mrs. St. Germain read the nomination for Rose Tardiff. Mrs. Reyes read the nomination for Keiran Boscoe. The Board congratulated the students.

Dr. Potemri said there is a revision to the furniture plan. She has a new dollar amount that the school modernization committee approved. On a motion by Dr. Robert, seconded by Dr. Potemri, the Board voted unanimously to add Revision to Elementary School FFE Plan as item 5c.

5. Old Business – a. One-to-One Program – Mrs. Wagner said there has been a lot of discussion on this. We have been doing this with really old technology. She asked the Board if we need a one-to-one program or just to get by with enough equipment. She went around the table to hear from each Board member. Ms. Welborn said she has 97 students that she is doing Google Classroom. She feels it was not setup for distance learning. She says it is particularly challenging for those on the low end of organization. She is in favor of purchasing the Chrome Books but not to send them home to do work every evening as a one-to-one program. Mr. McCord said until Ms. Welborn spoke he was in favor. All the other administrators thought it was good. Mr. McCord said he will go with what the others want. Mr. Pont said he agrees with Ms. Welborn. He explained what a Chrome Book is capable of. He said it is pretty much the standard with what everyone is using. Mrs. Wagner asked Mr. Pont if he could replace the carts and laptops with enough equipment in case we had to do distance learning again. Mr. Pont said he should be able to. Mrs. Wagner asked if we still had over 70 out and Mr. Pont said it is up to 90. Mrs. St. Germain said she heard what Ms. Welborn is saying. She said we had to deploy this program in about a week. If we were to go with a one-to-one, training and getting in-sync would be important. Mrs. St. Germain said we were not afforded that this year. We could definitely make it better for students. Mrs. Wilkison believes there are more technology needs but parents are not asking and she gave an example. Mrs. Wagner said the amount of technology we are looking to purchase should help that. Mrs. Reyes said we have one per home right now and if we did this next year, we would love to have one per child. She said many teachers would be using Google in classes anyway and it would be easier

for them to take home. It would be challenging if they did not have it at home. Mr. McCord asked if they can do the Google learning on a regular laptop. He was told yes. Mr. Pont said they can use it on any platform. He said it's a very glorified internet browser. He said as was mentioned a number of times, this was just a start. He wondered if the software may improve. He felt we should go in as fast as we can and as deep as we can. Mr. Pont said there are always new features coming out but they are also famous for abandoning things as well. He said they seem invested in the product and improving it. Mr. McCord said who knows where we will be in the fall. Dr. Robert said based on the numbers Mr. Pont has presented, it would be cheaper to go with the one-to-one. He feels we will be in the same boat and is in favor of the one-to-one. Mr. Karpinski always felt this was the way to go and listed his reasons. He felt for the kids that struggle and said we could provide some training for them. Mrs. Wagner asked if we went to a Chromebook, can they do it at home on a laptop. Mr. Pont said yes. Mrs. Wagner commented on the item she emailed out about an implementing scenario. She asked if we could buy in to some type of option. Mr. Pont spoke to our rep and said they could work with us. Mrs. Mastroianni said regardless what we decide to use, now is the time to go to a one-to-one program. She had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had comment and said we need to look at our technology needs. Dr. Potemri was in favor of all students having equal access. She commented on Mrs. St. Germain's remarks about student ability and access with the right amount of training. She asked about the numbers. Dr. Potemri asked if we know if we need to have every student have a one-to-one device. Can we provide one-to-one for those that don't have it and the rest can bring their own? Mrs. Wagner gave the scenario about having to provide it to my student when the district would provide. Dr. Potemri had further comment about students bringing their own device. She said security is always going to be an issue. She said we are budgeting for an entire population and we don't know if we need to do that. Ms. Welborn agreed with Dr. Potemri. We shouldn't assume that every student wants one. Mrs. Wagner asked for a motion for a one-to-one program and had comment on whether it is one-to-one or a combination of both. Ms. Welborn had further comment on the one-to-one program. She said as a board member she is looking at having technology available instead of a one-to-one program. Dr. Potemri agreed with Ms. Welborn and said these are implemented differently. She felt we need to get a device in every student's hands. She had further comment. Mr. Nero mentioned equal access under the law. Mr. Nero said we have had a bring-your-own device policy in place for quite a while. Mr. Nero asked how you are going to be consistent with each student. The issue of appropriateness is always going to be an issue. He said we have been doing this for two years. He said he doesn't do anything haphazardly. Mr. Nero said the administrators have felt this was the way to go. Dr. Potemri said equal access is not an issue. There was discussion. Mrs. Wagner wondered how we monitor who has what? What if someone's laptop breaks and they don't have access. She wants the students to have access. She had further comment. Ms. Welborn said we are overthinking it. She said we should purchase for grades 9-12 for year one. We should roll it out and see how it goes. Dr. Robert made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Karpinski to go forward with a one-to-one program. Ms. Welborn was uncomfortable with the terminology. Dr. Robert amended his motion to go forward with Mr. Pont's one-to-one plan. Dr. Robert said it was well-thought out. There was further comment. Dr. Robert had further explanation. Mr. Karpinski seconded Dr. Robert's amended motion. Mr. Mendolia wanted to make sure

the administrators are comfortable with it. He was told they were. The motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Wagner said the next step will be funding and how we go into year-end funding.

b. Graduation – Mrs. St. Germain said they amended their original plan of the drive-through. They decided to go with the NoSto parade route. She said they mapped it out so all graduates can be in groups of five and the town can drive through at 6:00 p.m. At 8:00 p.m. they will have the video event. She elaborated on the plan. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to approve the plan for graduation. Mrs. Mastroianni said it was practical and creative and so NoSto. Mr. Mendolia said a lot of work went into this. He asked why we couldn't do a regular ceremony in August. Mrs. Wagner thought it was because many students will be done with things and we don't know if the regulations will be lightened up. Mr. Nero said they had a call today and the state is not ready to commit. He had further comment. Mr. Mendolia said he understood but it was too bad. The motion passed with seven voting in favor and one voting against. Mr. Mendolia voted against the motion. Mrs. St. Germain said they felt strongly about not taking away from the seniors. She said they will be doing a drive-up for the 8th grade but it won't be the typical ceremony. They are looking at Monday, June 15th, but not sure about what time. She explained what else they will be doing that day. Questions were asked and answered.

c. Updated Elementary School Equipment Plan – Dr. Potemri said they reviewed the plan they had with the state for over three hours. The state had some questions that they answered. On a motion by Dr. Potemri, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted seven in favor and one abstention to accept the elementary school FFE proposal by QA&M dated May 26, 2020, in the amount of \$110,505.46. Dr. Potemri abstained.

6. New Business – Playground Fundraiser – Mr. Nero said the PTO has developed a new sub-committee for fundraising for a new playground. Mrs. Cherilyn Clements, parent, spoke and said she had an idea for a fund raiser. She has been calling it rent-a-fence. They could advertise their business or families could participate. She spoke with Mr. Nero and Juliet Hodge at the town. Mrs. Clements explained. The signs would be up for two months. There was further comment and explanation. Board members had further comment about trying to do this in the past and being told they couldn't. Mrs. Clements had further comment. She said she is just trying to help her community. She was thanked for bringing it forward. Mr. Nero said the first thing she told her was to make sure she goes to the town and she has done that. He suggested there is a sign review committee and he had explanation. Mrs. Wilkison said she is very grateful for that committee. They have planned an amazing pre-school and upper grade playground. The thanked everyone on that committee. Dr. Potemri said they looked at that on the modernization committee and she thanked the committee.

b. Summer School – Mr. Nero said last week they received a document from the state which basically was promoting the fact that we should have summer school they gave a couple of different scenarios. They spoke about it at their superintendent's meeting last week and they are meeting tomorrow again. He said we won't know until the summer what is happening next. He said we can't have graduation but three weeks later we will be bringing our most vulnerable population in for summer school. He commented on that. He felt we should concentrate on

opening up school in the fall. Mr. Nero commented that every superintendent in the state said this was impossible to do. There was further comment. Dr. Potemri said they all want it to be consistent. Mrs. Wagner had comment and asked if it could be clarified it would be virtual for some.

c. School Re-Opening Task Force – Mrs. Wagner said we need to talk about putting together a task force for opening in the fall. Administrators and some Board of Education members will be part of it. She wasn't sure how many members need to be on it. Mr. Pont, Mr. Boucher, a parent with medical background, a police officer, and three parents from the elementary school and from the high school will also be a part of it. She wanted to set a meeting for next week. Mrs. Wagner said we need to get started on this and she elaborated. She talked about getting together on Thursday. Mr. Nero had comment. He said many people are working from home and it could be possible to do during the day for an hour. The first task force meeting will be at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday the 4th. Three teachers from each side of the street will be in the task force as well. Mr. Nero gave a suggested breakdown. A nurse should be on the committee also. Mr. Mendolia asked about guidelines from the state and he was told it changes constantly every day. Mrs. Wagner said she has good notes from her meeting yesterday and she elaborated. She explained the three scenarios we should be looking at. Dr. Potemri asked about transportation in that group and Mrs. Wagner had comment. Mrs. Wagner said it's really important to survey our parents and see if they would even put their kids on the bus. She had further comment. Mrs. Martin said she spoke to Mrs. Buchanan, the bus coordinator, and she is very interested in being on the committee. Mrs. Wagner will get the meeting information out.

7. Community Relations - None.

8. Finances and Facilities – a. April 2020 Financial Statements – Mrs. Wagner said the Committee met prior. Mr. McCord made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Karpinski to accept the financial statements for the period ending April 2020. Mrs. Wagner asked about technology purchases and Mr. Pont explained that it was for the network room at the elementary school. Mrs. Wagner asked about an approximate cost and Mr. Pont answered. Dr. Potemri clarified with Mr. Pont about switches for the project. There was discussion about the switches. The committee will reimburse the Board for the switches and the Board will buy the pads for the gym. Dr. Potemri had further comment. Mrs. Wagner questioned if that was the smart way to go. There was discussion. There was clarification. This will be revisited next Thursday to make sure the transfer is going through. Mr. Nero asked about having to pay prevailing wage. Dr. Potemri said it went out to bid so it was prevailing wage. There was further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. 2020-2021 Proposed Education Budget – Mrs. Wagner said the Board of Finance approved moving forward a 2.5% budget. She asked Mrs. Martin about training until Friday; she wanted to get together to decide what to present at the hearing. Mrs. Wagner spoke a about what will be presented. She said June 1st is the public budget hearing that will be held virtually. There was a suggestion about doing a virtual tour of the new school to put online as well as the presentation the administrators did about the other districts coming to the school. These

items will be done in the near future. Mrs. Mastroianni will help coordinate that. Mrs. Wagner said that brings us up to the lists for year-end. The non-lapsing account will be a huge determining factor on this. She asked for the lists to be put in more order. Mrs. Wagner asked Mrs. Wilkison about her lists. Mr. Nero said if the Board of Finance approves that account, it is a game changer for us and he elaborated. Mr. Karpinski asked for clarification on what that account can be used for. Mrs. Wagner said she will get clarification and she had further comment. Board members had comment. She said we need to take a look at our list and put together a more streamlined list. Mrs. Mastroianni asked who to ask about a cost on the playground. Mr. Nero suggested talking to Tana Brewer. Mrs. Wagner asked for clarification on Mr. Boucher's list. He explained the grounds tractor is between 12-15 years old. The town's highway foreman said it is time to get rid of it. He said we need to find a piece of equipment to use between us and the grounds. He explained about our two Zamboni floor machines. He said he has a quote for \$1,800 to repair one of the machines. He said they are getting old and it is time to replace them. Ms. Welborn said Mrs. Wilkison explained some of her items are in the budget but wondered about the high school items. Mrs. Wagner explained they are marked as such. Ms. Welborn asked questions that Mrs. Wagner answered. Mrs. Wagner had further comment and explanation. Mr. Karpinski asked about putting the cost of re-doing the track on the list to see how much it would be. Mr. Nero said the groundskeeper has been doing a lot of work on it and elaborated. There was comment. The next meeting will be 6:00 p.m. on Thursday the 4th. Executive session will be postponed. A policy meeting will be scheduled.

9. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. McCord, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education