

Board of Education Minutes
October 28, 2020

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 823 6078 8768. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, 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 6:42 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to add Superintendent's Report and Chairperson's Report as items 4 and 5.

4. Superintendent's Report – Mr. Nero briefly went over everything that has happened within the last few days. He spoke of the community spread of COVID and the quarantining of students. He explained he contacted Ledge Light and they did contact tracing. He explained the time table of events. There are 50-55 students that are quarantining and he explained their timeline. He said we have 7 staff members quarantining and he explained their timeline. He praised Mrs. Wilkison and nurse Astrid Williams for their work. Mrs. Wagner asked Mr. Nero to meet with the staff and he did so on Monday morning. He recommended pushing forward the high school to the 16th of November and the elementary school when we return from Thanksgiving break. He referred to Mike DeMauro's article in "The Day" and said it was excellent. He had further comment. Mr. Nero said this could change again at any time; we are running out of human resources. He said there is a committee to interview for the elementary principal and he explained the breakdown. They will be holding interviews the 21st of November. He is hoping for a special meeting at the end of November or beginning of December.

5. Chairperson's Report – Mrs. Wagner said the administrators contract did not move ahead to arbitration. The Board had a workshop on Saturday. She said there was discussion of giving contract summaries after the contracts are ratified. She attended a webinar regarding virtual meetings and she explained. Mrs. Wagner said there is an all-boards and commissions meeting tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. The timeline for budgets has been discussed. There is a meeting November 23rd. Mrs. Wagner explained the breakout of those that should attend. She was hoping the process would be a lot different this year and she elaborated. She had further comment on the budget process.

6. Old Business – a. School Re-Opening Plan – Mrs. Wagner said all the computers coming from the state are being shipped but we haven't received them yet. Mrs. Wilkison requested 31 desks for the elementary school and Mrs. Wagner explained. She spoke of the dividers and the desks. An updated version of the cleaning protocol was

distributed. Mr. Karpinski asked about the number of desks. Mrs. Wagner asked Mrs. Wilkison about the number of desks and if they needed more because the number requested had gone down. Mrs. Wilkison explained; she said the teachers feel they could make it work. Board members felt more should be ordered. There was discussion. Mrs. Wilkison had further explanation. There was discussion. Questions were asked and answered. There was discussion. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to purchase 128 desks for the elementary school. There was discussion. Further questions were asked and answered. There was discussion of using the non-lapsing account. Mr. Nero had comment. There was further comment. Mr. Karpinski rescinded his motion and Ms. Welborn rescinded her second. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to purchase 128 desks for grades K through 2 from the non-lapsing account. Mrs. Wilkison said her teachers thanked the Board. Mrs. Wagner recapped Mr. Nero's suggestion for having the high school go back on November 16th and the elementary school to return the Monday after Thanksgiving. Mr. McCord made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to have the middle/high school students return full-in on November 16th and the elementary school to return to full-in November 30th. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Wilkison answered questions about the staff in quarantine. Mr. Nero had comment. Further questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Wagner spoke of the new addendum that came out from the state. She quoted part of the addendum. She said it is not spreading inside the school building. Mrs. Wagner said we have to keep in mind that we can't keep coming back to the table every two weeks and changing the date. She said we need to consider the new dates. Ms. Welborn had comment and asked why they were pushing off the high/middle school. Mr. Nero commented that the administrators felt comfortable moving the date and he explained. Mrs. St. Germain explained their rationale. Mr. Nero had comment. Questions were asked and answered about distance learning. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Nero thanked the Board on behalf of the administrators.

b. Strategic Plan – Next Steps – See below.

7. Finance and Facilities – a. September 2020 Financial Statements – Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mr. McCord to approve the financial statements for the month of September 2020. Mrs. Wagner said the finance committee needs to talk about how the budget will look. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Transfer Requests – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to approve the first transfer request memo beginning with \$6,305.76. On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to approve the second and third transfer request beginning with \$17,498.33 and \$3,800.

The Board went back to Strategic Plan – Next Steps - Mrs. Wagner asked how they felt about looking at this again in December and then to have a workshop in January. It was agreed that Ms. Welborn, Mrs. Mastroianni, and Mrs. Wagner will review the plan and come to the Board with a starting place.

8. Policy Votes – Mrs. Wagner said we met on Saturday and went through the policies.

Policy 1230 – other School-Connected Organizations – Ms. Welborn said this is an existing policy with updates. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to approve Policy 1230.

Policy 4118.231 – Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco – Ms. Welborn explained the revisions. This will replace the current policy. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to approve new Policy 4118.231.1. The current regulation will remain in place.

Policy 5111 – Admission/Placement – Ms. Welborn said this is the recommended replacement. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to accept Policy 5111.

Policy 5131.6 – Use/Possession of Tobacco Products/Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia/Alcohol – Ms. Welborn made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Karpinski to accept revised Policy 5131.6. Ms. Welborn explained the revisions. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy and Regulation 5141.4 – Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault – Ms. Welborn explained the suggested revision. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to accept Policy and Regulation 5141.4.

Bylaw 9321.2 – Time, Place and Notification of Meetings – Ms. Welborn and Mrs. Wagner explained the new bylaw. On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to approve Bylaw 9321.2.

9. Public Comment – Courtney Gumbiner, parent, asked about the possibility of having teachers for full distance learners as was brought up before and she explained. Linda Coats, teacher, said they are still nervous and unsettled but thanked the Board for their support with the desks and dividers. She elaborated. Carolyn Howell, citizen, explained that was attending as a Board of Finance member. She said she brought up earlier in the year that they should be discussing how COVID is affecting the different departments and she elaborated. She thanked the Board. Sarah Nelson, parent, asked about the spacing issue addressed by the desks and Plexi Glass. She had further comment. Mrs. Wagner answered her questions. She thanked the Board. Roberta Curry, teacher, thanked the Board for moving back the date and for purchasing desks. She asked the number of people that have to be out before we go full distance. Mr. Nero said this weekend we didn't face that we had to close down at all and he explained. He is not sure if they are the ones that would make that determination and he elaborated. He had further comment. He said there are a lot of districts that are full-in 5 days and week and he had further comment. He said this weekend was a small test for us and we did well. He said we will know – there won't be a number per say and he had further explanation. He said it isn't easy making these decisions. He had further comment. Kirsten Montgomery, parent, thanked the Board for re-evaluating how communication to the public is made about contracts. She had comment on going in full and then having to go fully remote is more difficult on parents. She had further comment on the inconvenience of going in full and back to distance. She asked if parents could change their minds and send their kids back how that would adjust the plan. Mrs. St. Germain said we are managing that

every day. She explained their steps. She said we knew out of the gate this would happen. She explained they asked the parents to limit that to the quarter and she elaborated. Mrs. St. Germain had further comment. She wanted to clarify what people are saying that if there is a COVID case, that schools should automatically close. She said that has happened because it is for tracing if needed. She said it is not automatic. Mrs. St. Germain said there is a lot of misinformation out there and she elaborated. Mrs. Reyes said in surrounding places that have closed, there are so many factors involved and she explained. Mr. Nero had comment. Mrs. St. Germain answered a question about returning students. She said they are trying to avoid the kids changing their mind every day. Mrs. Wilkison said it is the same at the elementary school. Laura Mello, parent, thanked the Board for listening to parents at the last meeting and this meeting. She commented on the spacing guidelines and cumulative contact time and mask breaks. Mrs. St. Germain answered her questions. Mr. Nero had comment. Mrs. Wilkison explained the distancing at the elementary school. A question was asked about winter sports and Mrs. St. Germain explained all the entities have to agree and she elaborated. They are not making those decisions lightly. She had further comment. Sarah Nelson, parent, wondered about the rationale to be either fully remote or full in. What is the difference in accounting for four or two days a week? She said hybrid was not an option on the survey – just to go in full. When they are fully remote or fully in, Mrs. St. Germain said we have adhere to state guidelines; we have to account for them. She said it comes down to management and had further comment. Mr. Nero said this was brought up with the superintendents as well. He had comment.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. The Board will meet on November 10th at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education