

Board of Education Minutes
February 24, 2021

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 812 1148 7576. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Mrs. Mastroianni, Dr. Potemri, and Mr. Mendolia (6:02 p.m.). Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Pont, Mr. Boucher, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. St. Germain, Mrs. Reyes, and Mr. Cillino. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – Helen Cassata, parent, voiced her concerns about students going across the street to the old building off school property. She had further comment. Mrs. Wagner answered some of her concerns. Mrs. Cassata had further comment. Mr. Nero also addressed some of Mrs. Cassata's concerns. Mrs. Wagner and Mr. Nero had further comment.
4. Old Business – a. School Re-Opening Plan – Mrs. Wagner had comment. Mr. Nero spoke. He said things are going well; better than he expected. He was interviewed by The Sun and he elaborated. He commented on how well the students do wearing their masks. He is thrilled that on Monday, his staff can begin to register for their vaccines. He had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had comment on keeping children home if they are sick. She elaborated.
 - b. 2021-2022 Proposed Education Budget – Mrs. Wagner said the finance committee met last night and she explained. She explained the timeline of reallocations and the percentage of each. She spoke of showing the items to the board of finance and explaining our budget request is actually 4.3% and she elaborated. Questions were asked and answered. She highlighted the revenue to the town that is generated from the school system. Board members had comment. There was comment about the percentage to present to the board of finance. Questions were asked of Mrs. Martin that she answered. Mr. Nero said that 4% was a real number. They started with a zero-based budget and he explained; they worked hard to get it to that point. There was comment on the 3% across-the-board raises for non-bargaining unit members. It was recommended to go with 2% as the town raises are. There was comment and questions. Mr. Nero had comment. Board members had comment and suggestions. Mr. Nero had comment on the raises. Questions were asked and answered. Board members had further comment on salaries. Mrs. Martin explained the overtime line and why it is there. Mr. Nero commented. Board members gave their suggestions for increases. Mrs. Wagner said this is our first go-round; we should show what we have here and see what we get for feedback. She had further comment. Mrs. Martin gave the number \$14,464,285, with an increase of \$344,547 for a 2.44% budget increase. She read the numbers for the 1.7% budget of \$14,371,465 with an increase of \$251,727. Mr. Mendolia made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to accept the 2.44% proposed education budget. Questions were asked about special education tuition that were answered. Board members had concerns about moving forward with the 1.78% increase. There was discussion. Board members had

further comment. There was discussion of raises and bonuses. Mr. Mendolia withdrew his motion. On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Potemri, the Board voted unanimously to accept the proposed education budget with a 1.78% increase to include a 2% raise and 1% bonus for non-bargaining unit staff. The next step will be to work on the presentation. It will go to the Board of Finance next week so they can get an advanced look at it. Mrs. Wagner had further comment.

5. New Business – None.

6. Student Success – Mrs. Welborn would like to do some initiatives for the fall and maybe begin to meet on that in April.

7. Community Relations – Mrs. Mastroianni said things are beginning to roll with it (social media).

8. Finance and Facilities – a. January 2021 Financial Statements – Mrs. Wagner said there were some questions to be answered but it has been busy with the budget. The vote will be on March 10th. The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. and then they will go to the Board of Finance at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Wagner had some comment on the presentation.

9. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Potemri, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education