

Board of Education Minutes
June 1, 2021
Special Meeting

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM meeting platform meeting ID 830 9785 8993. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mrs. Mastroianni, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero and Mrs. Martin. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.
4. Old Business – a. 2021-2022 Proposed Education Budget – Mrs. Wagner commented that at the last meeting we were waiting for guidance from Board of Finance. She said Mr. Nero and Mrs. Martin took a look at the figures to see where we're at. She said we have had some staffing changes for next year and it looks like we will see a little lower number. Mrs. Martin said the total savings is \$92,744. The breakdown is as follows: \$65,000 in salaries, \$942 in social security, and \$26,802 in benefits. That represents two staff changes which is the social worker and the choral teacher. Mr. Nero said this is a real number because we have hired the people. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Wagner said this is why she has told the Board of Finance that January is too early to formulate our budget. There was discussion. The budget at 1.13% has a dollar increase of \$158,983 over the current budget. The new budget total is \$14,278,721. There was comment. Mr. Mendolia didn't want to go any lower. Mr. Karpinski asked about any soft spots to be concerned about such as energy and he elaborated. Mrs. Martin had comment on the energy costs. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Mastroianni had comment and she said she is totally in favor of being team players here and she had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had comment. Ms. Welborn wants to take a stand and draw the line at 1.3% and explained her reasoning. She asked about looking at our staffing to confirm our needs in in some data-driven way. Mr. Nero had comment and said we can do that. There was discussion of a 1.3% budget versus the 1.13% budget. Mrs. Martin said \$24,573 would be put back in for a total budget of \$14,278,721 for a 1.3% increase. Mrs. Mastroianni commented that if you asked that last week she would have been in favor of it. She explained why she felt we should go with 1.13%. Mr. Nero commented that this was talked about last week at the meeting. Mrs. Wagner had comment. She said we need to make the Board of Finance understand our needs now. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni to accept the 1.13% budget increase. Ms. Welborn went back to her comment last week about low voter turnout. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. She felt there was a lot we could do for future planning. There was further comment from Board members. The motion passed with four voting in favor and one opposed. Ms. Welborn opposed the motion. Ms. Welborn said in a different year, we would have staff retiring and not think it would come out of our budget. Mr. Nero had explanation. Board members had comment. Mrs. Wagner said she will take this back to the Board of Finance.

b. Update of the progress of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSR) Programs, including the American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER (ART ESSER) programs and Stakeholder discussion. – Mrs. Wagner had comment on the re-opening plan. Mr. Nero explained the grant application and what it entailed. He said we have a lot of work ahead of us. There was further discussion.

5 Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education