

Board of Education Minutes
July 14, 2021

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, July 14, 2021, via hybrid format with those audience members attending virtually via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 864 2527 6769. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Ms. Towle-Weicksel and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero and Mrs. Martin. 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 – Mr. McCord had comment on Dr. Robert’s resignation and commended him on his many contributions over the years.
4. Presentations – None.
5. Administrative – a. Minutes – June 5, 2021 Special Meeting – Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to accept the minutes of the June 5, 2021, Special Meeting. Corrections were made and there was discussion. The minutes will be voted on as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

June 9, 2021 – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the June 9, 2021, meeting.

June 28, 2021 Special Meeting – Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Welborn to accept the minutes of the June 28, 2021, Special Meeting. There was discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Correspondence – None.
- c. Personnel – None.
6. Reports – a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero told the Board he spoke with Superintendent Adam Burroughs of Voluntown and he spoke of his discussion with him regarding items such as early dismissals for inclement weather. He also spoke of policy 5114 and the need to revise it to state that a hearing officer will be used for expulsion hearings. He had further explanation. It will be put on the agenda for July 28th. Questions were asked about Preston sending students to our school. Mr. Nero had comment about the need to follow-up with Preston.
- b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said our budget passed and we really want to start on the budget early to get communications out to parents and she had further comment. She asked to add Item 7b. ARP ESSER Funds. On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to add Item 7b. ARP ESSER Funds to the agenda.
- c. Committee Chairperson – None.

d. LEARN Board of Directors' Liaison – None.

7. Old Business – a. Strategic Plan – Mrs. Wagner said they had asked the administrators to report on the strategic plan. She said it looks like a takeaway is that they need more professional development. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero commented on professional development. Mrs. Wagner said this is the district plan and that they will have to come forward with their needs and funding. Mrs. Wagner read a portion of Wheeler's report on the status of the strategic plan. Questions were asked and answered. There was discussion of a curriculum coordinator. Further questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero will ask the administrators about the type of professional development for which they are looking. Mr. Nero commented that a lot of districts are looking at diversity coaches and he had further comment. Questions were asked and answered. There was discussion. Further questions were asked and answered. The administrators will attend the July 28th meeting to speak to the Board about where we are now with this. There was discussion of the difference in "tiered" students. An acronym table will be included for reference. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero had comment. Ms. Welborn wondered if the diversity coach could be shared with a smaller district. There was discussion. Mrs. Towle-Weicksel had comment on the playground, funding, and the need to make it ADA compliant. There was comment. She also had comment on a before-and-after care program. Mr. Nero commented on programs that help the students—not just a homework club. There was discussion. Mr. Nero had further comment. Mrs. Towle-Weicksel mentioned the rec survey that was done. There was discussion. Mrs. Wagner commented on the makeup of the committee associated with the grant. Mr. McCord commented on the Y's program (after-school). Mrs. Towle-Weicksel, Mr. McCord, Mrs. Wagner and Mr. Mendolia will be on the grant committee. It was further discussed and decided the entire Board will be part of the committee. The grant timeline was explained by Mrs. Martin. Mrs. Martin suggested a couple of parents be on the committee as well. Mrs. Wagner will reach out to the PTO for a parent name. Mrs. Wagner asked to shore up with the administrators about their needs. There was discussion. Questions were asked and answered about cost estimates in that timeframe. Questions were asked about how detailed the estimates needed to be on the application. Mrs. Martin had comment and said it needs to be detailed up front but it doesn't mean you can't shift your funding. The committee will meet ahead of the Board meeting on July 28th. Mr. Nero commented that the state has hired a lot of auditors to make sure the funding is spent correctly. Questions were asked and answered. The administrators will be asked to be part of the meeting on July 28th at 5:30 p.m.

b. ARP-ESSER Funds – Covered above in Strategic Plan discussion.

8. New Business – a. Process for Hiring Superintendent – Mrs. Wagner said we need to put together a sub-committee on hiring a superintendent. There will be an Executive Session the first meeting in August to discuss that.

9. Facilities and Finance – a. June Financial Statements to Date – Mrs. Martin explained they have tried to tighten up the encumbrances, etc. She explained there are still a few numbers outstanding. Questions were asked and answered about expenditures. Further questions were asked and answered on anticipated expenditures.

b. Year-End Purchases – These were reviewed.

10. Policy/Bylaw Review – Ms. Welborn wanted the bylaws brought up because they mention policies versus regulations. There was discussion. Ms. Welborn suggested we get out of the regulation business. There was discussion. There was discussion of going through the policies that had a regulation attached to it. There was further discussion. Mrs. Wagner wants to see the regulations required by law and what is not. There was clarification. Mrs. Wagner said Attorney Littlefield had commented on the volume. There was further discussion. Questions were asked and answered. The policies will be “pruned.” There was discussion. Because the high school handbook needs to be updated, there are some policies that need to be looked at. Policy 5114 will also be looked at. Mr. Nero explained he went in and made the hiring procedures specific to each category and he explained. He reviewed some of the categories. He reviewed some of the processes for the categories. There was clarification about whether the Board would approve this regulation. Mr. Nero said they would and explained. Questions were asked and answered on various positions procedures.

11. Calendar – The committee for the grant will meet at 5:30 p.m. on July 28th with the regular meeting following at 6:30 p.m.

12. Public Comment – Mrs. Pat Lewis, of Boombridge Road, asked about the strategic plan and who developed it. She spoke of some of the items that said they could be addressed by adding staff. She mentioned some of the other items listed in the plan and said some are brick and mortar and asked how the Board would address those needs. Mrs. Wagner explained the process used to develop the plan. She explained the breakdown. Mr. Nero commented as well. He said all the comments that were made during the meetings were listed in the plan. He explained the makeup of the committee that developed the plan. Ms. Welborn asked what her concern is. Mrs. Lewis said the brick and mortar part. She also heard the tunnel was in need of repair and who repairs it. She was told the town would be responsible. She had further comment. Mrs. Lewis also commented on the speed limit in front of the school. She had further comment. Mr. Nero had further comment. There was discussion. Mrs. Martin had further comment and explanation of the length of the school day.

13. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Personnel – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:02 p.m. for the Purpose of Personnel.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:11 p.m.

On a motion by Ms. Towle-Weicksel, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education