

Board of Education Minutes
August 10, 2022

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held in person on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the North Stonington Education Center Media Center. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Mr. Stefanowicz, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Mastroianni, Mrs. Mazzella.

Also present was Mr. Hopkins. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz the Board voted unanimously to move item 7b, David Levanto, Shelter Presentation to after Public Comment.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First* - none

David Levanto presented his Eagle Scout Project for the building of Soccer Field Shelters. Mr. Levanto described the shelters being built over the soccer field benches at the school. Planning & Zoning is complete and Snap Raise is being used for fundraising via email. Further comments were made.

4. Administrative - a. Approval of Minutes – June 15, 2022, Special Meeting – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of June 15, 2022.

June 29, 2022, Special Meeting – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of June 29, 2022.

July 13, 2022 meeting – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz, the Board voted five in favor and one abstention to accept the minutes of July 13, 2022, meeting with the corrections outlined by Mr. Karpinski. Mr. Karpinski abstained.

- b. Correspondence – None

- c. Personnel – none

5. Reports - a. Superintendent – Mr. Hopkins reported that the Central Office is now fully staffed with the additions of the Director of Finance, Bill Merrill, and a new Bookkeeper, Alycia Clemons. Mr. Hopkins gave an update on the Non-lapsing expenditures. The stage curtain for MS/HS has been ordered; the hardware for the elementary school curtain is in process of being ordered; the sound shells were ordered; currently getting a quote for approximately fourteen additional cameras; minor playground equipment that needs to be installed; getting a quote for the parking lots to possibly reseal and painting lines. Mr. Hopkins commented on changes occurring within the IT Department and due to the restructuring will have approximately \$12,000 in savings. Mr. Hopkins reported that due to the hard work of the teacher evaluation committee there will be some savings by eliminating the evaluation software called ProTraxx which is approximately \$6,900. The school administrators agreed that to best

serve the schools, the district will no longer contract with Kelly Services to retain substitute teachers, consequently saving the district approximately \$3,500.

The Department of Public Health updated guidance indicates that we will be starting the upcoming school year the same way that we ended the last one. No mandatory mask or quarantine. That information is available on the website for folks who would like to look at this. Mr. Hopkins explained how the District Leadership Team was working well together. Mr. Hopkins reminded the Board that there is a CABA/CAPS convention and will be attending along with the Chair and one more Board member.

CAPS' new Superintendent breakfast was the first time that was done and was a great support. Further comment.

The Board of Education is reading the Innovator's Mindset. The district's Convocation is scheduled for August 31st and Mr. Hopkins extended an invitation to BOE members. The MS/HS had an early release time of 12:05 p.m. in the past and this was changed to 12:00 p.m. Safety and security that the principals had already set up and we brainstormed better procedures and lockdown drills. We are planning to proceed with the safety audit. The last item is that James Russell will be creating a new webpage and might be up and running before the opening of school. Further discussion.

Further discussion on Kelly Services.

Mrs. Wagner will continue to work on the content of the agenda with Mr. Hopkins. It was discussed that the second meeting will be designed as a workshop. Mrs. Wagner asked members not to have a second meeting on August 24, as it is close to the opening of school. In September bringing CABA back, we will have two meetings.

Mrs. Wagner sent an update after the meeting and will continue to send an update after each meeting. It's exciting to see us moving in the right direction.

b. Ellen Turner – Sports Report – Athletic Director. One of my goals is to be more present at the BOE meetings and keep everyone informed. Have a lot of great things going on in the Athletic Department. We are ready to kick off the fall season. Offer HS Coop with Griswold football team and send 7 boys to play with the Griswold. MS will start on 9/8. HS starts on 8/25. Will have a student intern, a young lady who will do this as her senior project. Coaches will use REMIND, as a communication tool, to send notifications and announcements. Coaches have a binder with all the needed information and forms that are needed. Emergency action plan for athletics. Alison Mullane, Director of Special Services was able to arrange for the school nurse to come in earlier on August 22 and 24 to check off the physicals. Have scheduled the season informational nights – football, swim team. Winter and Spring schedules are posted and the banquet dates are as well. CIAC is the governing body for the state and it set the rules. ECC we are in the fourth division, which is the smallest division because of the size of our school. Two varsity coaching positions were filled with highly qualified internal candidates. Meghan O'Connell filled the Girls Volleyball Coach opening and Steven Bailey filled the Boys Basketball Coach opening. We have a new pixel app camera that is on our soccer field and will be able to film the games. Will be installing our backstop on the baseball field and will be the right distance from home plate. Moving forward I would like to bring some of our athletes.

6. Old Business - a. Appointment of BOE Vacancy – Mrs. Wagner read a letter from the North Stonington Democratic Town Committee endorsing Brian Burdick's BOE Democratic vacancy.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted to endorse Brian Burdick as a Board member to replace Jen Welborn.

7. New Business - a. Mary Beth Tavares, Travel Club Presentation. Mrs. Tavares, who is also a High School English teacher at Wheeler, will be leading the Wheeler Travel Club. After much research, Mrs. Tavares is presenting for approval for a Cruise for 8 days on the Norwegian Cruise Line to Bermuda. From

April 7 - April 14, 2023. This trip will include 4 days at sea and 4 days in Bermuda. All-inclusive, \$1,150 – \$1,200 per student. This trip will be offered to seniors and juniors 16 and 16 on a first come first serve basis. Moving forward, this trip will be offered biannually. Departure will be from Boston, eliminating additional costs due to airfare. This trip will require five chaperones 5 – 3 females, that includes Mrs. Tavares, and 2 males for thirty-two students.

On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel to do an overnight trip that includes travel outside the country to Bermuda, specifically the cruise leaving from Boston on April 7-14, 2023. Questions were asked and answered. The motion passed unanimously.

c. STEAP Grant – the town has an opportunity to apply for a STEAP grant, for shovel-ready projects at 80% reimbursement for up to \$500,000. The project would be the resurfacing of the blacktop at the elementary school. Further discussion. The application is due on August 15, 2022. First or second week in September to hear if approved. Mrs. Mastroianni thanked the Board of Selectmen and thanked Brett Mastroianni for being innovative with the least impact on the taxpayer but benefit our students. Good work.

On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to approve \$140,000 from non-lapsing to fund the paving project pending the STEAP grant process.

d. Appointment of ECHMC Board Members – The Eastern Connecticut Health & Medical Cooperative provides the opportunity for boards of education to negotiate a better rate with health insurance companies. Former Superintendent Peter Nero and former Business Manager Deborah Martin were on the Board and had two votes. Mr. Hopkins is requesting that the Board appoint Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Merrill so that they can attend their meetings and continue to advocate for good deals for health insurance for the district. On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to approve Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Merrill as ECHMC Board Members.

8. Facilities and Finance - a. Resurfacing of Blacktop at Elementary School – no further discussion on the resurfacing of the blacktop due to the STEAP grant. The non-lapsing will be revisited during the September meeting. Further discussion.

9. Calendar – Mrs. Wagner proposed not having an August 24th meeting. Finance will need to meet at the end of August, as we will have the year-end numbers by then. Two meetings in September and on August 31 at 8:00 a.m. the Convocation with breakfast at 7:30 a.m.

10. Public Comment* - None

14. Adjournment – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.