

Board of Education Minutes
June 29, 2022
Special Meeting

DRAFT

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, June 29, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. using the hybrid meeting platform. Those attending virtually used Zoom meeting ID 82885257175. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Mazzella, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Mastroianni, Mr. Stefanowicz and Mr. Mendolia. (Attended via Zoom and arrived in person at 6:39 p.m.) Also present were Mr. Nero via Zoom, Mrs. Martin and incoming Superintendent Mr. Hopkins. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to move item 6a to after Public Comment.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.

4. Old Business (6) – a. School Safety- Mrs. Wagner explained we began a discussion on school safety at the last meeting. She referred to Mr. Dillon and she gave his background information. Mr. Dillon is the director of school security for South Windsor public schools and been doing school safety since he retired as a police officer. Mr. Dillon explained the steps he takes for a school safety audit. He starts with the state requirements such as the all-hazard plan. He had further comment. He said there are 12 standards that have to be followed per the state. The all-hazard plan is just one of the standards. He explained. He explained the school drill logs. He had further comment and explanation. Mr. Dillon said he has been doing these since the Sandy Hook Advisory came out. He had further explanation. He also meets with principals and staff about their lockdown drills. Mr. Nero said he is meeting with Mr. Dillon tomorrow and he had further explanation. Mr. Nero had further comment. Mr. Dillon had further comment. Mrs. Wagner said we haven't signed up for anything yet but he does offer a walk-through at no cost. We can decide later how we want to move forward. She wanted him to share his knowledge with us. Questions were asked and answered regarding his walkthrough. Mr. Dillon had further comment. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. She thought it was good to get a baseline as to where we are. Mrs. Mastroianni wants to make sure we are leveraging the resources we have such as the emergency management director. She thought we should talk to them to see what they offer. She wants to make sure we are not reinventing the wheel. Mr. Nero said we just had another drill about 3-4 weeks ago with the town and other agencies. He had further comment. He said he thought Mr. Hopkins would be coming in to a good situation. He had comment. He thought we should have more specific drills with town officials other than weather scenarios. Mr. Karpinski thought it would be good to have someone that has specific experience with schools. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. Questions were asked and answered about the cost. There was further comment.

5. 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 the June 15, 2022, meeting with the corrections outlined by Mrs. Mastroianni and Dr. Towle-Weicksel.

b. Correspondence – Mrs. Wagner read a letter from Jen Welborn resigning her position on the Board of Education because she is taking a teaching position at Wheeler High School as a science teacher. Mrs. Wagner congratulated Ms. Welborn on her position. Mrs. Wagner will reach out to the democratic party about the vacancy. She asked the Board to think about how to fill the vacancy. Because Ms. Welborn was Board Secretary, Mr. Stefanowicz nominated Dr. Towle-Weicksel as secretary. Mr. Karpinski seconded the nomination. The Board voted 7 in favor and one abstention to appoint Dr. Towle-Weicksel as secretary. Dr. Towle-Weicksel abstained.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero spoke of the appointment of Jen Welborn. He gave some of her background having both chemistry and physics certification. He gave further background information. He recommended the Board approve hiring Ms. Welborn at Step 8. On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Jen Welborn for the position at Step 8.

6. Reports - a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero had comment on the transition. They met with Kate Ericson and Jack Cross from LEARN. Mr. Hopkins recognized Mr. Nero for his help with the transition and he elaborated. He appreciates his help and was very thankful to Mr. Nero. Mr. Nero thanked the Board for everything and said it has been one heck of a ride. He had further comment.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said they are working on the secretaries' contract and the transition in central office. She said everything is moving in the right direction.

7. New Business – a. Awarding of Food Services Contract – Mrs. Wagner said we had one bid. Mrs. Martin had the bid and the scoring sheets. Mrs. Martin said there were three that scored the bid and she explained the process. There was an administrator, a secretary, and herself. She had further explanation. She explained the monthly meetings regarding food service. She said Aramark has done well for us in the past. Two companies came in for the pre-bid but only one company bid. Mr. Nero had comment on the history of the company. He said we used to run deficits but it is pretty healthy now and he elaborated. We have not run a deficit in 8 years. He had further comment. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz to continue a new contract with Aramark. Questions were asked and answered. The motion passed unanimously. There was comment on the length of the contract and the process that has to happen every year.

8. Facilities and Finance – a. 2021-2022 Education Budget – The Facilities and Finance Committee met before the meeting. Mr. Karpinski said a lot of the questions were answered. They talked about setting up a committee on transportation. They talked about year-end transfers. He had further explanation. Mrs. Wagner said instead of making transfers they discussed leaving the line items as is so they can see the pluses and minuses. Mr.

Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz to approve the May 1, 2022, to June 10, 2022, financial statements. Mrs. Wagner said we ordered the Chrome Books. She had comment. Questions were asked about the solar. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Non-Lapsing Account – Mrs. Wagner said there are a couple of things prioritized by the administrators. There are two items on there that we pulled from the budget to get it to where we wanted; the interactive boards and the elementary school computer lab. Mrs. Martin said those items have been received but not paid for yet. Mrs. Wagner said we could pay for it this year and not take it from the non-lapsing account. Questions were asked and answered. There was discussion. The priorities are the cameras being installed, the curtain, and the hardware for the elementary curtain. Mrs. Wagner asked about looking at the bullet-proof glass. Mr. Nero had comment. There was discussion about possible funding from federal grants. There was discussion of getting a price on the glass. There was discussion about waiting to see what Mr. Dillon may come up with. Mr. Nero had comment. There was further comment. There was comment on getting an RFI for the windows. There was further discussion. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mendolia to purchase the curtain at the high school, install the cameras, and purchase the hardware for the elementary school curtain. Board members had comment. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Calendar – July will be meeting-free. They will begin with the August 10th meeting. The non-lapsing account will be on that agenda.

10. Public Comment – None.

11. Proposed for Executive Session – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:34 p.m. for the Purpose of Director of Finance Position and Bargaining Agreement between the North Stonington Board of Education and the North Stonington Association of Educational Secretaries.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:02 p.m.

12. Appointment of Finance Director – Mr. Hopkins was excited to recommend William E. Merrill. He gave his background information. He had further comment on Mr. Merrill and recommend the board hire Mr. Merrill. Mr. Stefanowicz explained he would be abstaining from the vote due to him knowing and working with the candidate in his current school district. On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted six in favor and one abstention to approve the appointment of William E. Merrill as Director of Finance. Mr. Stefanowicz abstained.

13. Ratification of Tentative Bargaining Agreement between the North Stonington Board of Education and the North Stonington Association of Educational Secretaries – On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the agreement with the secretaries.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education