

Board of Education Minutes
May 25, 2022

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, using the hybrid format with those attending virtually via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 847 2950 2022. The meeting time was changed to 7:00 p.m. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Mastroianni (7:07 p.m.), and Mr. Stefanowicz. Also present were Mr. Nero and Mrs. Martin. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – A moment of silence was observed for the lives lost at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

On a motion by Mrs. Wagner, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to add 4a2, COVID Emails and 4a3, Personnel, under Superintendent's Report.

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

4. Reports - a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero deferred his report to Old Business. He is letting Mr. Quiñones give the Board an update. Mr. Quiñones said he completed his third month here. He said HVAC is working. There is still an issue with boiler #3; they thought it was repaired. He is working on different quotes on HVAC and the third boiler. He said the staff has been very welcoming. He reviewed the goals that he set for his staff and he explained. Summer cleaning is being planned. The supply order is in and they will be ready to go. There was an issue with the exterior lighting at the elementary school and he explained. Things seem to be going smoothly. Mr. Quiñones said they are trying to wrap things up this time of the year. Mr. Nero said they met with Hillard who we get our supplies from; they also do training so those have been done. Mrs. Wagner thanked Mr. Quiñones and she had further comment. Questions were asked and answered regarding the lighting at the elementary school. Mr. Quiñones said it would be our cost and not part of the building project. Questions were asked and answered about the playground equipment and the whereabouts of some of the equipment. The equipment will try to be located. Mr. Quinones answered further questions. Ms. Welborn wanted a date as to when they would hear back on that.

a2. COVID Emails – Mrs. Wagner said Mr. Nero has been getting pushback on the COVID emails that he sends out. She had further comment. She would like to stay the course with only a couple of weeks left. She had further comment. Mr. Nero had comment. Mr. Nero said the issue came up when we go away from what the CDC or State recommends. Mr. Nero said the last he knew we still had to report out but Mr. Mansfield (Ledge Light Health District) said it is not mandatory. Ms. Welborn said she does not feel persuaded by one person. Mr. Nero said he just wanted to make the Board aware.

a3. Personnel – Mr. Nero said we have hired an elementary music teacher. Carolyn Ellis is coming from Norwich. Mr. Nero gave her background. She is coming in at step 2 on the salary scale. Mr. Nero read a letter

from Deborah Martin resigning her position as Director of Finance. Mrs. Wagner wished her well. Mr. Nero said all the other positions have been posted. The grade three position interviews are being held next week.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said they are in the middle of secretarial negotiations. Mrs. Mazzella will be doing graduation.

5. Old Business – a. RFP Discussion for Grounds, IT, and Food Service – Mrs. Wagner said the grounds RFP has already gone out. We will have to decide at whether to wait until March and she explained the current employment year. Mr. Nero said they had a pre-bid for food services and they had two vendors come. Mr. Nero elaborated. Mrs. Wagner said we had talked about out-sourcing IT to get support for the department. She thought maybe a full audit before we go for an RFP may be the way to go. Mrs. Martin said it could be bid out or since it is a proprietary service it could just be brought in. Mrs. Martin will get some pricing on that. It will be discussed June 15th.

6. Facilities and Finance – a. Non-Lapsing Account – Mrs. Wagner said we have talked about prioritizing our list. Mrs. Martin is getting some remaining pricing. She thought we were maybe overstepping our bounds by prioritizing the list; it should be sent to Central Office and to the administrators. Mr. Nero said he meets with the administrators every week and they have been talking about this. The administrators are working on lists for other items they need. There was discussion. Mr. Nero will have the administrators speak about the list on June 15th.

b. April 2022 Financial Statements – The finance committee was not able to meet this evening. Mrs. Martin answered the couple of questions that were raised on the statements. There was discussion. Mrs. Wagner said we know we need to purchase Chrome Books. Mrs. Martin said they are working on that. Mr. Stefanowicz said it was decided to purchase school wide supplies. Mrs. Martin had comment on ordering and receiving timing. Mr. Nero said purchasing can't wait until June 15th so they will be moving forward with those purchases. Mrs. Wagner said we try to be budget neutral at the end of the year. Mrs. Wagner said she got a listing of the impact of the five changes we had. She listed those positions and the impact was negative \$61,000. It was a \$61,000 impact for the bottom line. Mr. Nero had comment on some of the positions. There was further comment. Mr. Nero said we had a lot of change this year. Mr. Stefanowicz asked about if we have leftover money does it roll over into this account and he was told yes. He had further questions that Mrs. Martin answered. There was further discussion. Mrs. Mastroianni spoke of investigating sharing services with the town and now would be a good time to look into this since the Director of Finance is leaving. Mrs. Wagner will first talk to Mr. Hopkins and then Mr. Carlson. Mrs. Martin had comment on the position and services. She said it would be necessary for this person to have strong school skills. She said Preston is an 80/20 position. Mr. Nero had comment on self-op services. He had further comment. Mrs. Mastroianni had further comment. She said we need to take the opportunity to look at this now.

7. Policy – a. Policy 6141.51 – Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment – Ms. Welborn spoke to Mrs. St. Germain. Mrs. St. Germain pointed out there are three separate policies. Ms. Mullane

had comment on the gifted and talented policy. Mrs. Wagner explained the edits she would like to see on the Advanced Courses Policy. She looks at these as to how they pertain to North Stonington. There was discussion. These will be discussed and acted upon at the June 15th meeting. Mr. Nero had comment. He hoped we could come to consensus for June 15th. There were further comments and questions.

b. Policy 5141.213 – Opioid Overdose Prevention (Emergency Administration of Naloxone) – On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to approve Policy 5141.213.

c. COVID-Related Policies – Mr. Stefanowicz spoke of a number of policies he felt we could get eliminate. He had further comment. There was discussion of the tele-commuting policy. There was further discussion. Mr. Nero had comment. Board members had comment. Mr. Stefanowicz made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Wagner to delete policies 4118.239, 4118.237, and 5141.8. Dr. Towle-Weicksel asked to keep these in our back pocket in case we needed them again. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Welborn will get clarification on Policy 4113.6. She asked if an administrator could give permission to work from home. Mr. Nero had comment and said he has given permission in rare instances. There was discussion. Mr. Stefanowicz said not actual classroom teachers but special education personnel for IEPs. There was further discussion. Mr. Nero had further comment. Dr. Towle-Weicksel thought to leave it to have flexibility. She thought maybe add language to make it more palatable. There was further discussion.

d. First Read on CABE Removals – Mrs. Wagner said we had a policy audit done by CABE. They suggested we remove 185 policies. There were questions asked and answered. Ms. Welborn said once we clean house, we'll get policies to consider updating. There was discussion. Mr. Nero had comment. Ms. Welborn said at the June 15th meeting we'll vote on deleting the recommendations from CABE.

8. Public Comment – None.

9. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Salaries/Benefits of Non-Bargaining Unit/Non-Certified Staff – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:04 p.m. for the Purpose of Salaries/Benefits of Non-Bargaining Unit/Non-Certified Staff and to invite Mrs. Martin into such session.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:28 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Stefanowicz, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education