

*Town of*  
*North Stonington*  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
MINUTES  
January 22, 2024

A Special Town Meeting of electors and citizens qualified to vote in Town Meetings of the Town of North Stonington, Connecticut was held at the North Stonington Education Center Media Center, 298 Norwich-Westerly Road, North Stonington, Connecticut on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. and online through Zoom for viewing and public comment only.

Present: First Selectman Robert Carlson, Selectman Brett Mastroianni, and Selectwoman Nicole Porter. Also present at the meeting were North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company Fire Chief Charles Steinhart, North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company Chief Engineer Jason Tagg, and Registrars of Voters Connie Berardi and Emily Lewis.

First Selectman Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. First Selectman Carlson introduced Town officials. He then asked for a **MOTION** from the floor to elect a Moderator. A **MOTION** made by John Gaccione, seconded by Brian Rathbun to elect Shawn Murphy as the Moderator. A **MOTION** made by Jon Bosma, seconded by Dan Smith to close all nominations. **MOTION TO CLOSE ALL NOMINATIONS CARRIED. MOTION TO ELECT SHAWN MURPHY AS THE MODERATOR CARRIED.**

Moderator Shawn Murphy asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Moderator Murphy stated the specific rules and protocols of the meeting and voter eligibility requirements. He stated that all voting at this meeting will take place by written ballot. Moderator Murphy asked Town Clerk Antoinette Pancaro to read the call of the meeting.

Warning is hereby given to the electors and those entitled to vote at town meetings of the Town of North Stonington that a Special Town Meeting will be held at the following location on the date and time indicated for the purposes of transacting the business set forth below:

Location: North Stonington Education Center Media Center, 298 Norwich Westerly Road  
Date: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024  
Time: 6:30 PM

Only those attending the meeting in person will be able to vote. The meeting will be available for comment and viewing through Zoom at the link below. Those attending virtually will not be able to vote.

- 1) Shall the Town approve an additional appropriation from the remaining ARPA Funds balance in the amount of \$90,000.00 to make the final payment and close-out the Old Middle School Wing demolition project?

A **MOTION** made by Charlie Steinhart, seconded by Dan Smith to approve the call for discussion. First Selectman Robert Carlson gave a detailed presentation with background information and

project details regarding the close-out of the Old Middle School Wing demolition project (see attached Demolition Project presentation). Nick Mullane stated that the correct thing was done in carrying out this demolition project. A **MOTION** to approve the question as a verbal vote instead of a paper ballot made by Sarah Nelson, seconded by Dan Smith. **MOTION carried. MOTION to approve question carried.**

- 2) Shall the Town approve an additional appropriation of funds from the Undesignated Fund in the amount of \$50,000.00 for the purchase of a used 75' ladder truck "Quint" from the Town of Colchester?

All supporting documentation will be available on the town website, [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)  
Zoom link for viewing and public comment only:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86970538242?pwd=UHdFRFVDUEExYaGZUbFBMeFA2TWVMZz09>

A **MOTION** made by Colby Sadowski, seconded by Dan Smith to approve the call for discussion. North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company Fire Chief Charles Steinhart gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding background information for the Quint ladder truck. North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company Chief Engineer Jason Tagg gave detailed information regarding the condition of the Quint ladder truck that would be purchased from Colchester. He indicated that he did inspections on the truck and that the truck passed all inspections. He showed detailed pictures of the truck to show its current condition. Discussion, questions, and comments followed, with Fire Chief Charles Steinhart and Chief Engineer Jason Tagg answering questions and clarifying information. A **MOTION** to move the question to a vote made by Joe Cassata, seconded by Steve Sadowski. It was noted that it takes a two-thirds vote to move the question to a vote. Vote by a show of hands to move the question to a vote ending discussion was 73 YES votes (out of 109). **MOTION carried.** Vote by paper ballot to approve the question was 86 YES, 25 NO (out of 111 votes cast). **MOTION to approve question carried.**

A **MOTION** made to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION carried.** Moderator Shawn Murphy adjourned the Special Town Meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Antoinette Pancaro  
Town Clerk  
Town of North Stonington

# DEMOLITION PROJECT

298 Norwich-Westerly Rd.

“Old Middle School Wing”

## Dollar Values - Excluded Work

New Exterior Wall . . . .	\$248,096.00	(Pelletier Construction)
	\$258,000.00	(G. Donovan Assoc.)
Soil Remediation . . . . .	\$75,968.19	(Bestech)
Topsoil and Hydroseed .	\$16,000.00	(Bestech)

## New 2020 Bid Totals w/ added Costs

Using a new wall bid of \$250,000.00

Suchocki & Son Inc.....	\$1,371,291.00
Manafort Bros.....	\$1,589,968.00
Bestech .....	\$1,344,913.77 (no change)
Stamford Wrecking Co. ....	\$1,215,763.00
Inflation Costs .....	\$ ???

## New 2022 Totals with added Costs

Bestech Inc.....	\$1,090,902.70
Stamford Wrecking ...	\$1,329,208.10
Wiese Construction ...	\$1,367,968.00
Suchochi and Son .....	\$1,604,986.10

## Bestech - Invoicing

Original Bid .....	\$689,000.00	PAID
Soil Remediation ..	\$ 75,968.19	PAID
Final Invoice .....	\$347,975.33	NOT PAID
Total Invoicing .....	\$1,112,943.50	
Adjusted after Duplicate Billing	\$294,884.86	
		\$53,090.47 Diff.

Options if the offer wasn't accepted

Option #1 Renegotiate a new pay-off figure  
\$195,000.00 - \$294,065.49

Option #2 Go to Arbitration.



## Reason not to go to Arbitration

Facts that would not benefit the Town's position

- 1) Work wasn't halted when the Change Order wasn't received after multiple requests
- 2) The job has been completed and the quality of work was deemed to be satisfactory. (except for a drainage issue)
- 3) Bestech has documentation and invoicing to justify final bill.
- 4) The Town would have to pay arbitration cost and lawyers fees.

Why wasn't the job stopped when the change order wasn't produced?

- 1) Bestech would have pulled their crew and equipment. The Town would most likely end up in litigation with the contractor.
- 2) The site would look like a "war zone" for an undetermined amount of time. Probably lasting through the Memorial Day Parade, Graduation and Frights and Lights.
- 3) The Town would have to put out an RFP to complete the work and that would most likely come in at a premium price.

# Conclusion

1

The majority of the people that weighed in on the demo project wanted to see the building come down and many believed that it should have happened as part of the original School Building Project. (The building has been demolished)

2

If the additional funds are approved, the project will cost the Town \$239,208.00 less than the next lowest bidder.

## Conclusion (cont.)

3

If the funds are approved, the entire cost of the project will come from ARPA funds with no addition monies coming from the taxpayer or the undesignated fund.

4

Through honest and transparent negotiations with the contractor, the Town avoided litigation and potentially large lawyer's fees.