

January 28, 2019
Tri Board Meeting

A Tri-Board meeting was held on Monday, January 28, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Wheeler High School Shaw Media Center. Present for the Board of Selectmen were Mr. Urgo, Ms. Kincaid, and Mr. Carlson; present for the Board of Finance was Mr. Simonds, Mrs. Howell, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Spring, and Mr. Main (6:55 p.m.); and present for the Board of Education was Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, and Ms. Welborn. Also present was Ms. Dias for the Town of North Stonington, Senator Somers, and Representative Rotella. Mr. Urgo called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Urgo gave a summary of the meeting and Board members introduced themselves.

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

3. Strategic Plan Review – Mike Urgo, First Selectman – First Selectman Urgo said we are in year five of our plan of conversation and development and wanted to get feedback on the Strategic Plan. He read the mission and goals of the plan. He said there are six goals and read the goals. He said there is an emphasis on growth. He explained small towns cannot get by without their volunteers. He had further comment and explanation. He reviewed the milestones and related goals' summary sheet. He said there are a lot of things we need to do to get to the next steps and he elaborated. He spoke of the goals associated with the next steps. He commented on the lack of sewer water in order to get more development. He had further explanation. He continued to review the goals.

North Stonington Development Video – The development video was shown and will be put on the town's web site.

4. Future Strategies – Five (5) Minutes

Board of Education – Mrs. Wagner said the big thing on our plate is the move. The Board is working on their strategic plan and they are hoping to have that in place by fall 2019. Goal setting workshops have been held. High quality instruction, school culture and climate and our athletic program are three areas of importance. Mrs. Wagner said they are hoping to have the town meeting in May at the school and hope to put some tours together. Mrs. Wagner said it's an exciting time for us. Mr. Urgo had comment about the Board looking at their budget.

Board of Finance – Mr. Spring spoke of the financial status of the town in 2010. One of the Board of Finance's strategies was looking at debt management and building their unassigned funds and that is now at 16%. They were able to finance the emergency management center and school project at 2.75% which is unheard of. He

elaborated. The audit for the last fiscal year was in December and we are right on track through proper use of our resources. He spoke of the grand list and the 100 million dollar hit in the 2010 reevaluation. He elaborated. Mr. Spring spoke of the need to bring economic development to town. The schools have had great outcomes. We are very proud of where we have come from in the last 9 years. He said they are always interested in what is happening at the state level and he elaborated. He was disheartened about the proposal to take away the revenue from motor vehicle taxes and he explained. He had further comment.

Board of Selectmen

5. State Capitol – Senator Heather Somers – Senator Somers said she is also against that bill that takes away motor vehicle taxes from the towns. She elaborated. She had further comment on more bills that have been proposed. She said the state needs to look at how to become more efficient and gave some examples. She said she has 57 bills and some of those would be good for North Stonington. She spoke of the microbrewery bill and explained. She spoke of the bill to allow hemp growth and elaborated. She had further comment.

Representative Kate Rotella – Representative Rotella said she is a freshman and explained. She told of the committees she is sitting on. She agreed that there are some bills proposed that are not going to work for us. She said everyone introduces a lot of bills at first. She had further comment. She said what is important is that she and Senator Somers work together and she explained. Representative Rotella also spoke of the motor vehicle tax proposal. She will be starting sessions talking to the public. She urged those present to reach out to her with concerns. Mr. Urgo said one thing on the list is water and sewer. He spoke of the regionalization of the towns. Representative Rotella said it was just a concept and not mandatory. Mr. Urgo said since 2012 the tourism funding has gone down. There is an arts, tourism, and funds proposal that would be good. He already mentioned the car tax. The shared services committee was discussed concerning the bifurcation of the town and school taxes. He said this is a recommendation and urged them to oppose that. Mr. Urgo spoke of unfunded mandates. Recycling initiatives are of importance too. He commented on the environmental bills. Senator Somers explained the proposed education bill and said it was a leader bill and explained those are used as budget leverages. She had further comment. House bill 6448 is a tax on methane on farms and explained. There was also a bill of a 50% tax on ammunition. Mrs. Wagner asked about the ECS formula and they were going to redo it and had comment. She also spoke of collective bargaining and asked if that has ever been approached. Senator Somers said it has come up before but due to the makeup it doesn't get far. She said the teachers union is very strong and with the makeup of legislature you are not going to get far with collective bargaining. Mr. Spring spoke of the concept of wringing the towel dry which will stalemate a town like North Stonington. Mr. Urgo spoke of the welcome centers. Senator

Somers spoke of the tourism industry. One of her bills is that the welcome centers need to be open by July 1st. She had further comment. Mr. Urgo said he reached out to the VisitCT group and they are coming here on February 6th and he had further comment. Mrs. Howell asked if you look to other states to see what is working for them and she had comment. She gave some examples. Senator Somers said they do look at other states. Representative Rotella had comment. Mrs. Howell had further comment. Senator Somers had further comment.

6. Public Comment – Mr. Mullane, citizen, had comment. He said the State of Connecticut is broke but North Stonington is not and he elaborated. He spoke of economic development in the state. He asked if they could come back every five or six weeks to keep everyone updated. Mr. Mullane spoke of fees. He spoke of the lottery being started for education, the ECS, lobbyists, the car tax bill, and town aid and gave examples. He spoke of telecommunications, the vets and disabled and binding arbitration and he elaborated. He spoke of the state police. Mr. Mullane asked Boom Bridge and he had comment. Mr. Urgo said we have done everything on our end. Mr. Mullane also commented on the Council of Small Governments, tourism, the budget being done on time, and looking at the bonding list. Mr. Brian Rathbun, citizen, had comment. He said he heard tonight about more taxes and that we need tax relief. He spoke of the farms. He would like to see some money put in agriculture and he elaborated. Mr. Rathbun spoke of prescription drug prices, and the state and the town need to start thinking about older people and he elaborated. He spoke of education. He had further comment. Senator Somers said she has some bills in to help agriculture. She had comment about bonding. She had comment about getting the money for the veterans' facility and had further comment. Senator Somers said that if you are on a fixed income and collect social security you won't pay Connecticut tax if you make \$100,000 or less and the tax on pension. Mrs. Wagner asked about the new governor and how they felt or is it business as usual. Senator Somers said she is hopeful that he will be true to his word and she elaborated. He has creative ideas. The legislature's dynamic is so different and she explained. She is optimistic and hopeful; it's much more positive. Representative Rotella said it is much more positive. The governor comes from a business background. She had comment on the legislature and said we all have to work together. She is part of the largest freshman group in 20 years and she elaborated. She thinks the combination of a business person and someone with experience in government will be good. Mr. Urgo said he thinks the governor looks to southeastern Connecticut and had further comment. Mrs. Kincaid said a lot of what is happening in this town is because we are all working together here. She said that is the only way you can get things done and she elaborated. With the kind of group we have, we are going to make it. We are going to make our town even better. Mr. Spring told the senator and representative to not lose your voice. He gave an example and had comment. We depend on you to be our voice. Mr. Mullane had further comment. He spoke of prevailing wage.

On a motion by Mr. Urgo, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Boards voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:22p.m.

Submitted by North Stonington Board of Education