

# Annual Report



## **Ad-Hoc School Building Committee & North Stonington School Modernization Committee 2015-2016**

The North Stonington School Modernization Committee officially began meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup> of 2016 with the objective of providing our community with a state of the art educational facility in the most cost effective manner possible. Prior to June 7<sup>th</sup> 2016, members of our committee were functioning as the Ad-Hoc School building committee. For this report we will summarize the work of both groups.

In September of 2015, an Ad-Hoc School Building committee was appointed by the Board of Selectman and with direction from the Tri-Board in North Stonington to look at the options for modernizing our aging schools. At the beginning of 2015, the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance agreed that improvements to North Stonington school facilities were necessary. They decided to hold regular Tri-Board meetings to identify what needed to be done to modernize the schools. In August 2015, a new Ad-Hoc school building committee was appointed to further study priorities outlined by the Tri-Board. That committee consisted of town residents: Michael Urgo (Chairman), Jay Peterson (Vice Chair), Walt Mathwich (Secretary), Michael Anderson, Brad Borden, Michael Osborn, Pamela Potemri, Dan Spring and Tyler Dibrino (Wheeler High School Senior). On November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015, the committee presented a proposal for school modernization to the Tri-Board. The proposal encompassed renovation of the Elementary school, construction of a new Middle/High School, and upgrades to the Gymnasium. It addressed all of the essential educational upgrades, security/safety problems and significant building code issues the current facilities faced. The committee spent many hours weighing different approaches, including everything from swapping buildings to fixing things in a piecemeal method among other options. During the subsequent months, this committee held many meetings. Each time the committee met and reported to the Tri-Board, the meetings were recorded and posted on YouTube and our town website so members of the public who were unable to attend the meetings could remain informed about the process. On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the town voted to approve the school modernization proposal developed by this committee. The proposal was recommended by the Boards of Education, Finance, and Selectman. The committee was provided a budget of \$25,000.00 to research, analyze, & develop plans to remedy these school deficiencies. We came in 10% under budget expending only \$22,555.52 of those funds.



In May of 2016, the existing Ad-Hoc School Building committee was re-appointed to serve as the School Modernization Committee. Four members were added, and two members did not return. The current committee is made up of Michael Anderson, Bob Carlson, Sam Cherenzia IV, Walter Mathwich, Secretary Michael Osborn, Mark Perkins Jr., Vice Chairman Jay Peterson, Treasurer Pamela Potemri, David Sellins, Dan Spring, & Committee Chairman Michael Uργο. Since being appointed, the committee has been meeting most Monday evenings and at times two times per week to prepare for the projects commencement. We anticipate beginning construction at the conclusion of the school year in 2017, pending confirmation of funding from The State of Connecticut.

There have been many accomplishments of this committee in a short period of time. The committee began by developing a detailed scoring rubric that has been used for ranking the partners the town is hiring to help us design, bid, & build the schools. To date, the committee has used this rubric to choose the firms of Quesenberry/Arcari Architects to design the building, Downes Construction LLC as the Construction Management firm to lead the project teams, & Eagle Environmental to manage any hazardous materials/PCB's and abatement in the schools. The committee has also secured financing of 23.4 million dollars in direct loans from the US Department of Agriculture at a historically low interest rate of 2.75% which will be used to fund

the cost of the project that the State of Connecticut is not reimbursing us for. Additionally the committee received word from the State that our project has been moved forward for legislative consideration as an “A” priority project. This makes us among the highest consideration for State funding. Immediate future strategies for the committee include development of final specs and designs for the building with input from our project team, teachers, parents, & students. Additional meetings will be held with State officials to keep us on target to break ground upon being awarded State reimbursement around June/July 2017. We hope to create a webpage connected to the town website where we will communicate updates of our continued progress. The town authorized expenditure of 1.59 million dollars to help us perform the actions needed to make us shovel ready when grants are awarded. This is the maximum that can be spent until commitment for grant funding is confirmed at by the State. At the time of this report, the committee has spent \$36,302.71 .We look forward to breaking ground in 2017.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the School Modernization Building Committee,

Signed,  
Mike Uργο  
Committee Chairman

