
2019-2020 Annual Report

TOWN OF NORTH STONINGTON
NORTH STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE



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INTRODUCTION

The Connecticut General Statutes require that the Board of Finance create an Annual Report covering the previous fiscal year.

Information is solicited from each department that receives funding through the annual budget. The responses that were received are included in this report along with the financial statements related to the audit for that same period.

Attached are the reports that were received from each department in response to our request.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

First Selectman: Mike Urgo, First Selectman
Selectmen: Bob Carlson
Nita Kincaid

Contact: 860 535-2877 Ext 112

Administration & Finance Officer: Christine Dias

Contact: 860 535-2877 Ext 119

As the 2019-2020 fiscal year began, the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance had just finished working together to deliver the second version of the 2020-2021 Budget. This proposed budget went to referendum on July 9th as “General Government Operating and Redemption of Debt”, “Capital” and “Education”. The 2020-2021 Proposed Budget of \$20,276,572 was passed!

The 2019 summer was indeed very busy. Negotiations were handled with both of the town union groups and a three-year agreement for the Resident Troopers Program was agreed upon. In addition, new Land Use software was purchased for our Planner, Building Official and Fire Marshall.

At the end of June 2019, a long-desired pavilion was erected at Hewitt Farm on The Green across from the John Dean Gallup House. Committee members and many visitors were happy and excited that there was a comfortable place to stop, sit and enjoy the scenery after walking the trails.

Solar projects began and we made great progress. Greenskies Renewable Energy installed solar arrays on the new Wheeler High School/Middle School, Town Hall and the Center for Emergency Services. These panels are expected to save about 40% on our energy bills and reduce our carbon footprint. Panels will also be added to the old middle/high school, where the school administration is located. We are trying to apply our efforts to get all town buildings on renewable energy. This allows us to continue our goal of being eco-friendly and a “sustainable” town. Incidentally, the town has received our first certification this fall, a prestigious Bronze status that shows we are a “SustainableCT” community.

In the fall we reached out to the community to discuss our historic village area. We held a “walking audit” with a group of village residents and others who visit the village often. What is special? What could be improved? How safe was the village? Were the roads free from danger? We know some areas are tight. This led to a very useful community conversation at the Wheeler Library and some good ideas for the future. One result was to install the large green welcome signs that you now see at the 3 entries from Route 2.

We recognize that water and sewers are important in certain areas, specifically

around Route 95 exit 92, since we have a number of interested developers and parcel owners. We are working towards coming up with viable solutions collaboratively with WPCA, the Economic Development Commission and Planning and Zoning.

Our town has added new staff members due to retirements and departmental needs. Chris Storey retired from the Highway Department after 31 years of service. Charles Cole filled the vacancy at the



highway department. Trooper McCarthy joined the town as our second Resident Trooper, filling a vacancy and joining Trooper Greene. Chelsea Wheeler was appointed as our Assistant Animal Control Office, filling in when Karcher Deshefy is not available.

In highway news, during this year we have taken down nearly 400 dead or dying trees either by Eversource, town, or contract tree crews. This will prove pivotal in keeping power on and people safe as we begin preparing for hurricanes and winter storms. We have also done a great deal of paving improvements and much mowing throughout town. Also, we can't forget to report that the bridge at 49/216 has opened in the fall.

The 4th Annual NOSTO Fest was a great success once again! It is such a wonderful example of our special community. Thanks so much to all vendors, volunteers, event organizers, musicians and neighbors for joining in the fun! This could not have happened – it truly does take a village!

In November, we had a great turnout at the polls for the municipal elections. It was wonderful to see a large turnout, showing that folks care. Once finished, we went back to work!

At the end of 2019, the Center for Emergency Services completed a 3-Bay Garage for storage. This cold store building houses our boat and trailer, UTV and service truck, as well as hoses and other equipment.

As we entered 2020, we looked forward to completion of the Elementary School and the Boombridge Road bridge. We also started preparing the 2020-2021 proposed budget. We were sad about Mark Donahue, our Town Treasure, moving away, but pleased to appoint long-time Board of Finance member, Mustapha Ratib, as Town Treasurer.

All seemed to be going well, but in February there were concerns in the air and soon almost everyone was talking about COVID-19, a new disease **across the whole world!** It was in the news and it became very important over-night. Decisions needed to be made about schools, work, health, businesses – just about everything. Students of all ages eventually needed to work at home, as did many adults depending on their jobs.



In North Stonington, in these last 6 months, many of our lives have changed. A significant issue was the need to stay away from others, since it was difficult to know who was well or sick. Thus, as we approached the end of the 2019/2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020), it was necessary for us to pass our proposed 2020-2021 budget. After considerable discussion between the Boards of Finance, Selectmen and Education, as well as our attorney and folks in Hartford. we knew that Governor Lamont had signed an order that this year's budget had to be passed by the budget-making authority in Town, which is the Board of Finance. Our budget that was adopted listened to feedback and while no budget ever pleases everyone, this was a good compromise after months. The budget passed at a Virtual Meeting of the Boards of Finance and Selectmen on June 3rd, 2020.

Though it remains certain that this pandemic will still be with us for some time, our town has worked hard to listen to the messages of wearing a mask, staying 6' or more from others and staying away from large groups and closed places.

We will overcome this!

BOARD OF FINANCE

Members: Daniel Spring, Chairman
Paul Simonds, Vice Chairman
Anne Akin, Secretary
Carolyn Howell
Dan Smith
Michael Anderson
Brett Mastroianni (Alternate)

Having had a successful year prior to fiscal year 2019-2020 with the Town's audit being given a "best yet" report, and with a "well" executed budget, the year started with great expectations. The budget for the year was met with modest increases but with added debt obligation due to the School Modernization Project. It is noted that this initiative has been the largest capital project in the history of the Town of North Stonington. It is to be reiterated that the project was made possible by the execution of well vetted budgets overtime and a strategy for continuing to strengthen the financial profile of the Town. The approved budget for this year mandated a nominal increase in the levied mill rate which was set at 29 mills.

Just past the midpoint of the year the Town, as well as the country at large, was dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in an economic down turn that lasted the remainder of the year and beyond. Consequences that developed were segments of the budget not being fully executed as aspects of the normal day to day operations of the Town were altered to accommodate criteria for suppressing the spread of the pandemic.

The Town is to be commended for maintaining services, meeting expectations and moving goals of the Town's Strategic Plan forward. As this year closed, major capital projects, specifically the Emergency Management Center and the School Modernization Project were essentially at completion. Debt management was well below Connecticut State statute limitations, the budget again was well executed and the financial stability of the Town of North Stonington enhanced. The audit for the year was conducted remotely, due to the pandemic, and awarded with the comment from the Town's Auditing service as "solid". The Town is in good standing with investments that have improved the vitality of our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Daniel S. Spring, Chairman

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Tax Assessor: Darryl L. Del Grosso, CCMA II
Administrative Assistant: Cecile McGrath

Contact: 860 535-2877 Ext 123
Contact: 860 535-2877 Ext 124

As the year started, the Assessor's Office was preparing for the October 1, 2020 revaluation of the Town of North Stonington. This state mandated quinquennial revaluation of every parcel of real estate is a major undertaking and this time it has proved to be even more. No one envisioned the effect that the COVID-19 virus would have on the way the revaluation would be conducted.

The winner of the contract to conduct the 2020 revaluation of North Stonington was a Connecticut company. eQuality Data Services of Waterbury, Connecticut submitted the low bid and was awarded the contract. This contract called for a full inspection of every home and commercial property. All the preparation and planning would change when the governor's office restricted the revaluation work to exterior inspections only due to the pandemic that was starting to appear across Connecticut in the early spring of 2020. With the restrictions in mind, a data mailer was sent to every household requesting that the information the Town had on record be verified. That information together with the exterior inspection being conducted would be used in the next revaluation of ever commercial, industrial, and residential property. The final values will be based on sales from the current real estate market.

The Assessor's office with COVID-19 restrictions in mind, administrated the State Homeowners program for homeowners over the age of 65 and who qualified under the state income guidelines. This state program reduces the property tax burden on the homes of elderly taxpayers. In addition to the homeowner's program, the office administrated the state renter's program for qualified renters over the age of 65 and who meet the state income guidelines. The renters program allows qualified renters to receive a check from the State of Connecticut to help with their rental expenses. Information on both of these programs can be had by calling the Assessor's Office. Both programs also include disabled individuals who meet the income guidelines and are receiving social security disability payments.

New residents of North Stonington who are veterans are reminded that they must file their DD 214 with the Town Clerk's office in order to receive their veteran's exemption. If you also have a service-connected disability, please let our office know in order for you to receive an increase in your veteran's benefits. Connecticut active duty vets can receive an exemption on their motor vehicle. Applications are available from the Assessor's office.

Motor Vehicles that are sold including the license plate being canceled can get credit on their motor vehicle tax bill. If your motor vehicle is sold between October 1, 20XX and August 30, 20XX and you cancel the registration, you need to bring proof of the transaction to the Assessor's office to receive a pro rate on your tax bill. There is a time limit (state statute) for a credit to be issued. That time limit is 18 months from when the bill is first due. An example is a car on the October 2019 Grand List. The tax bill is due on July 2020. If the motor vehicle was sold after 10/1/2019 you must show proof before December 31, 2021 in order to receive credit on your July 2020 tax bill. Owners of a motor vehicles that have had the license plate transferred from an old vehicle to a new vehicle need to do nothing. The credit from the old vehicle will transferred to the new vehicle automatically. The department of motor vehicles will inform the town the old vehicle was sold and you have a new vehicle with the same license plate. If you transferred the vehicle registration before July, be sure that you pay the taxes on the old vehicle since that is where the credit comes from for the new vehicle's tax bill. The tax bill for the new vehicle will be issued for payment in the following January.

North Stonington's Real Estate Market:

During the time period covered by this report which is 7-1-2019 to 6-30-2020 there were 102 sales over the sale price of \$10. By removing all sales under \$10 I tried not to count family transfers which tend to sell for less than \$10 and would give a false picture of the market. Therefore, those sales were removed from the calculations.

The mean price or average selling price for the time period stated above was \$348,919 for the 102 recorded sales. The median sales price is the center point of all sales which means half the sales were over the amount and half the sale were under the amount. The median price was \$272,500. For all residents who like to keep track of the real estate market in North Stonington the mean price last year was \$252,725. The median price last year was \$219,000. The increases for 2019 to 2020 time period covered in this report show that the real estate market is doing very well. On the subject of affordable housing in the Town of North Stonington, a little less than 20% of market sales or 19 homes sold for under \$200,000. That compares with last year in which 15 homes sold for \$200,000 or less. North Stonington remains affordable.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

Members: Lisa Mazzella
Candy Palmer
Paula Woodward

Secretary to the Board: Cecile McGrath

Board of Assessment Appeals held three meetings over the last year.

September meeting – motor vehicles only
Three appeals were heard and granted

February meeting – special

Elected Paula Woodward as chairperson and to schedule the appeal applicants in March

March

Real Estate – 5 appeals
One applicant cancelled
Two were denied and two were approved

Personal Property – 1 appeal
Approved

Motor Vehicle – 2018 Supplemental List – 1 appeal
Denied

One applicant was not scheduled as the case is continuing in Superior Court

TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk: Antoinette Pancaro, MMC, CCTC

Contact: 860 535 2877 ext 121

The Town Clerk's Office handles a wide variety of tasks involving vital records, land records, licensing, elections, and records management. Birth, marriage, and death certificates are issued and filed in the office, as well as burial and cremation permits. Marriage licenses are issued for couples being married in North Stonington. The recording and indexing of land records, issuance of trade name certificates, and filing of maps, military discharges (DD-214s) and liquor permits are a significant portion of the Town Clerk's job. The office registers Justices of the Peace and Notaries. The Town Clerk also has the important duty of issuing absentee ballots for elections, as well as compiling and keeping election records. Meeting agendas and minutes are filed in the office. The Town Clerk is responsible for maintaining the official record of ordinances, oaths of office, appointments, and petitions. Sporting licenses, such as hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, can also be purchased in the Town Clerk's Office and online at www.ct.gov/deep/hunting. These licenses may be purchased throughout the year and are valid for the calendar year only. The Town Clerk has Hunting & Trapping, Fishing, Boating, and Migratory Bird Guides available in the office. This information is also available online at www.ct.gov/deep/hunting. The Town Clerk issues dog and kennel licenses. These licenses expire June 30th, and a new license must be procured on or before June 30th or a penalty of \$1.00 per month will be imposed. The fee for an unaltered dog is \$19.00 and for a neutered or spayed dog is \$8.00. In order to obtain a dog license, a rabies vaccination certificate must be presented, as well as a neutering or spaying certificate, if applicable. The fee for a kennel license for a kennel with 10 dogs or less (10 kennel dog tags) is \$51.00 and for a kennel with 11 to 20 dogs (20 kennel dog tags) is \$102.00. The business hours for the Town Clerk's Office are 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

July 9, 2019 Referendum Results

The June 29, 2019 Special Town Meeting reconvened at 8:10 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9, 2019 by First Selectman Michael Urgo following the Referendum. A **MOTION** made by Laura Tillinghast, seconded by Shawn Murphy to elect Lisa Mazzella as the Moderator. A **MOTION** made by Toula Balestracci, seconded by Nita Kincaid to close all nominations. **MOTIONS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.** The results were read by the Referendum Moderator Julie Armstrong:

1. Shall the Town of North Stonington approve the estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance with respect to the annual General Government Operating, \$5,008,099 and Redemption of Debt, \$1,065,184 for fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, in the total amount of \$6,073,283, and make specific appropriations and authorize expenditures in connection therewith as appear advisable?

474 Yes

378 No

2. Shall the Town of North Stonington approve the estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance with respect to the Capital budget for fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, in the total amount of \$427,826 and make specific appropriations and authorize expenditures in connection therewith as appear advisable?

471 Yes 379 No

3. Shall the Town of North Stonington approve the estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance with respect to the annual Board of Education budget for fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, in the amount of \$13,775,463 and make specific appropriations and authorize expenditures in connection therewith as appear advisable?

462 Yes 389 No

**Town Election Results
November 5, 2019**

First Selectman	Michael Urgo (Democratic)	798
	Brett L. Mastroianni (Republican)	878
	Michael Urgo (Independent)	109
Selectman	Nita B. Kincaid (Democratic)	738
	Robert A. Carlson (Republican)	997
Town Treasurer	Mark S. Donahue (Democratic)	877
	William A. Mason (Republican)	808
Board of Finance	Carolyn Howell (Democratic)	871
	Daniel J. Smith (Republican)	803
Board of Finance Alternate	Connie Berardi (Democratic)	766
	Anne Akin (Republican)	851
Board of Education	Stephanie Mastroianni (Democratic)	750
	Darren Robert (Democratic)	778
	Alex Karpinski (Republican)	987
	Philip Mendolia (Republican)	785
Board of Assessment Appeals	Paula Woodward (Democratic)	788
	Candy Palmer (Republican)	859
Economic Development Commission (Full Term)	Jennifer Anderson (Democratic)	787
	Nicole Porter (Democratic)	740
	Brett L. Mastroianni (Republican)	919
	William A. Mason (Republican)	825
Economic Development Commission (To Fill Vacancy for Two Years)	Stefan Grufstedt (Republican)	1,258
Economic Development Commission Alternate	Anthony Mazzella (Democratic)	761
	Jennifer Strunk (Republican)	866

Planning and Zoning Commission (Full Term)	Jenn Pensa (Democratic) Connie Berardi (Democratic) Edward C. Learned (Republican) Louis Steinbrecher (Republican)	674 700 946 915
Planning and Zoning Commission (To Fill Vacancy for Four Years)	Mark Leonard (Democratic) Asa Palmer (Republican)	858 794
Planning and Zoning Commission Alternate	Dick Seager (Democratic) Robert Kappes (Republican)	740 828
Zoning Board of Appeals (Full Term)	Breeze Floyd (Democratic) Bruce Smith (Republican) Shawn P. Murphy (Republican)	842 990 994
Zoning Board of Appeals (To Fill Vacancy for Four Years)	Joan Kepler (Democratic)	1,109
Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate	John Varas, Jr. (Democratic) Colleen Thompson (Republican)	866 1,011

**January 13, 2020
Referendum Results**

The January 6, 2020 Special Town Meeting reconvened at 8:05 p.m. on Monday, January 13, 2020 by Special Town Meeting Moderator Bill Ricker following the Referendum. The results were read by the Referendum Moderator Paula Kent:

1. Shall the Town of North Stonington be authorized to negotiate the sale of the property located at 163 Wintechog Hill Road for the development of affordable housing?

314 Yes 347 No

**Distribution Report
North Stonington Town Clerk
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020**

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ACCOUNT TOTAL</u>
State Conveyance Tax	\$225,854.21
Dog License – Population Control Fund	\$1,288.00
Dog License – State	\$3,653.00
State Farm Fund	\$24,876.00
Marriage License – State	\$1,666.00
Sportsman License – State	\$3,332.00
State Restoration	\$5,528.00

State Treasurer – MERS \$21,490.00

STATE TOTAL: \$287,687.21

Town Conveyance Tax	\$70,069.19
Dog License – Town	\$532.50
Land Record Copies	\$3,269.75
Liquor Permits	\$140.00
Map Recordings	\$400.00
Portal Online Copies	\$2,589.00
Marriage License – Town	\$784.00
Notary	\$235.00
Recordings – Legal Documents	\$29,251.00
Sportsman License – Town	\$88.00
Town Clerk Farm Fund	\$1,721.00
Trade Names	\$190.00
Vital Copies	\$5,665.00

TOWN TOTAL: \$114,934.44

LOCIP	\$2,073.00
Town Restoration	\$1,382.00

TOTAL: \$3,455.00

GRAND TOTAL: \$406,076.65

Respectfully submitted,

Antoinette Pancaro, MMC, CCTC
North Stonington Town Clerk

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Registrars: Gladys Chase, Republican
Joan Kepler, Democrat
Paula Kent, Deputy Democratic Registrar
Deborah Barnes, Deputy Republican Registrar

Office hours: 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Monday & Thursday.
Voice mail messages can be left the remainder of the week
Town Clerk accepts Voter Registration cards when Registrars are unavailable.

Registrars' Duties:

During working hours Registrars typically perform the following duties.

- Register new voters
- Delete deceased voters

- Make a variety of corrections and changes to the voter list including, but not limited to: active voters moving within town; moving into town and moving out of town; changes of Name, Party Registration, Contact Information, i.e., Phone Numbers, P.O. Box numbers, Street addresses, etc.
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) updates Connecticut towns re: people who have registered vehicles in other towns or changed their existing town address.

The annual voter canvass is a procedure which takes place January 1st to May 1st. Registrars put information obtained from NCOA into a special Canvass Program. Other information is obtained through sale of houses, telephone or personal knowledge indicating a voter has moved. Letters are sent to voters for address change confirmations and responses are processed.

Registrars attend the following meetings & conferences:

- ROVAC Monthly New London County Meetings
- ROVAC State Conventions (2)
- State Training Class for Registrars and Moderators
- State Mandated Certification Classes (8)
- Connecticut IVS Accessible Voting System Class
- Attend Town Committee Monthly meetings and Town Committee Caucuses

Registrars held state-mandated limited registration sessions before the primary and general elections to allow residents to register &/or correct and update the voter list.

Registrars oversaw the following elections during the 2019/2020 Budget period:

- Budget Referendum: July 9, 2019
- General Election: November 5, 2019
- Referendum: January 13, 2020

Registrars hired election officials, set up equipment to oversee elections and attended official town meetings to verify that voters are registered.

Poll worker election training sessions are held before each election to be sure new changes in election laws are implemented and review procedures.

The registrars are responsible for properly testing each tabulator to be sure that the ballots are printed correctly and can be accurately read by the tabulator.

Annual student registration sessions are held at the local high school.

Respectfully submitted,
Gladys I. Chase & Joan Kepler, Registrars of Voters

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/GIS

IT/GIS Manager: James Russell

Contact: 860-535-2877 ext.133

The IT/GIS Department is responsible for the management of Town Computer Software-Hardware, Project Coordination for Technological Initiatives, Management of the GIS System and GIS Map Production. This department supports all departments - boards and commissions in the Town of North Stonington.

Some of the projects completed in the 2019-2020 fiscal year were:

- **Purchased and installed new PC's for several members of our town hall staff.** The new PC's replaced aging systems and are all a part of the current PC Replacement Plan that I have created to get everyone on a PC that is less than five years old. The following were set up:
 - Building Official
 - Highway Foreman
 - Highway Assistant Foreman
 - Administration Finance Officer
 - First Selectman Surface Pro
 - Registrar #1
 - Registrar #2
- **Upgraded Town Hall Phone System.** Replaced 27-year-old Avaya phone system with new Grandstream VOIP phone system. Savings to Town are being reflected along with the upgraded system.
- **Highway Grage phones upgraded as part of town hall phone system upgrade.** Added wireless phones as well for coverage throughout garage building.
- **Senior Center phone system upgraded as part of town hall phone system.** Added wireless phone as well t cover building.
- **Installed new printer at Senior Center.** Replaced old printer and added back faxing capability as well.
- **Upgraded main town hall server.** Added more hard drives and increased memory.
- **Created Emergency Services website.**
- **Initiated ability to have employees work from home. Set up and installed remote software for seamless transition to working from home during COVID.**
- **Installed and set up Zoom.** Purchased Zoom licenses and set up meeting to happen remotely. We were able to continuously have meetings with no real downtime. Also purchased new Owl 360-degree camera for meeting when they are back in person which will broadcast meetings to Zoom as well.

Upcoming projects for 2020-2021:

- **Make online forms fillable.**
 - Will allow for forms to be filled out and submitted online.
- **Look into replacement for current document management software.**
- **Computer upgrades in accordance with PC Replacement Plan.**
- **Center for Emergency Services building upgrades to current system.**
 - **Additional wireless access points.**
 - **Camera system changes. Indoor and outdoor.**

I look forward to further growing of our towns IT infrastructure and working with you all in the future.

Thank you,
James Russell

LAND USE COMMISSIONS/DEPARTMENTS

Planning, Development and Zoning Official: Juliet Hodge

Contact: 860-535-2877 Ext. 127

Land Use Assistant: Cheryl Konsavitch

Contact: 860-535-2877 Ext. 126

Building Official: Earl Dean/ Timothy Brennan

Contact: 860-535-2877 Ext. 118

Wetlands Enforcement Officer: Wayne Berardi

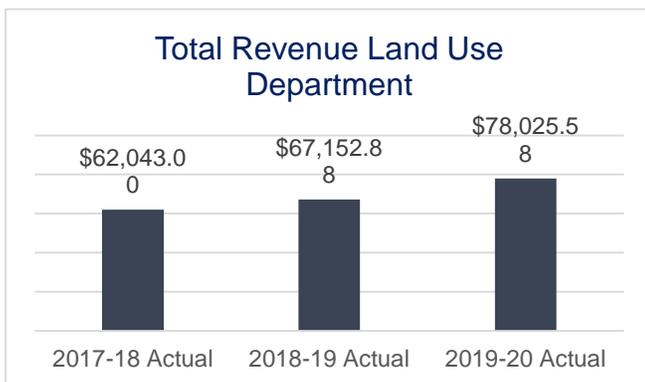
Contact: 860-535-2877 Ext. 126

General Land Use Operating	Approved 2019-2020	Actual 2019-2020
Attorney	\$12,500.00	\$8,657.34
Office Expense	\$4,675.00	\$1,737.81
Advertising	\$4,400.00	\$2,461.10
Expense	\$21,575.00	\$12,856.25

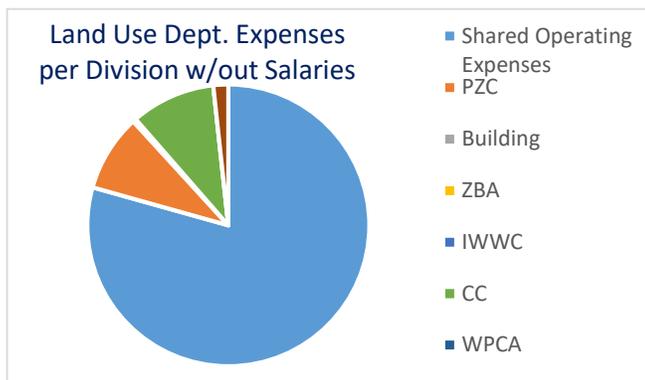
LAND USE ALL DEPARTMENTS	Actual 2019-2020
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$164,234.46
TOTAL REVENUE	\$78,275.58
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	\$(85,958.88)

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES (NO SALARIES/WAGES)	Actual 2019-2020
	\$16,202.28
TOTAL REVENUE	\$78,275.58
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	\$62,073.30

WAGES/SALARIES TOTAL	Actual 2019-2020
	\$148,032.18



A new consolidated budget format was created FYE 2020 and worked very well. All Land Use Commissions shared the general operating expenses (Attorney, Office Expense and Advertising) as these expenses are impossible predict, and end up over-budgeted with unused funds ultimately returned to the general fund. This format was created to demonstrate the extent to which all the departments overlap and share resources – particularly staff.



The Land Use Department staff collectively manage daily operations as they relate to their job duties or Commissions they specifically support. By sharing resources, and in many cases, having multiple job functions, the department is slowly starting to see a reduction in overall expenses. The recent small increase in the Planning and Zoning Fees also helped narrow the gap between revenues and expenses. Building fees are still very low compared to area towns, and have not been increased in over 25 years! As the Building Department now benefits from full-time support staff and oversight as well as shared resources, this expense needs to be reflected in the

building permit fees.

It should be noted that the Planning, Development and Zoning Official's entire salary comes out of the Land Use Department Budget, though half of her time is allocated to Economic Development and staffing the EDC (which has a separate budget). Collectively, Staff facilitated the approval 10 new houses and 12 new businesses for a total of more than 200,000sf of construction activity, valued at over \$9,000,000 (including trades) and collected \$78,275.58 in fees and other revenue in FY 2019-20.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Member	Title	Staff	Title
Lou Steinbrecher	Chairman	Cheryl Konsavitch	Land Use Assistant
Wayne Wilkinson	Vice Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Planning Development and Zoning Official
Pat Lewis	Regular Member		
<i>Alternate until Appointed as Regular Member 2/6/2020</i>		In FY 2019-2020 the PZC met a total of 15 times. One of the meetings was a joint meeting with EDC.	
Mark Leonard <i>Elected 11/2019</i>	Regular Member	Ann Brown <i>Resigned 1/10/2020</i>	Vice Chairman
Ed Learned <i>Elected 11/2019</i>	Regular Member	Joseph Siner <i>Served until 12/2019</i>	Secretary
Robert Kappes <i>Elected 11/2019</i>	Alternate	Connie Berardi <i>Served until 12/2019</i>	Regular Member
Jen Pensa <i>Appointed 2/6/2020</i>	Alternate	Rod Porter <i>Served until 12/2019</i>	Alternate
Vacancy	Alternate		
PLANNING AND ZONING	Approved 2019-2020	Actual 2019-2020	% used
Salary – PDZO	\$ 74,909.00	\$ 75,115.40	100%
Wages - LU Admin Assistant	\$ 42,962.00	\$ 40,008.11	95.2%
Travel Expenses	\$ 500.00	\$ 341.69	79.1%
Contracted Consulting	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -	84.2%
Membership Dues	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	100%
Training/Seminars	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 794.00	90%

The Planning and Zoning Commission had an Operating Budget of \$122,171.00 and spent

The PZC welcomed Ed Learned, Mark Leonard, and Robert Kappes this Fiscal Year and said goodbye, with many thanks, to Connie Berardi and long-time members Joe Siner and Ann Brown.

LAND USE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED		TOTAL
PZC COMMISSION REVIEW		
Site Plans/Modification		5
Subdivisions/ReSubdivision		1
Special Permits		2
Excavation Special Permits		0
Regulation/Map Amendments		1
8-24 Review		0
ADMINISTRATIVE ZONING PERMITS		
Single Family/Duplex Residences		10
Lot Line Adjustment		1
Free Split		2
Home Occupation		6
Change Of Use/User		2
Land Disturbance		3
Accessory Use/Structure		52
Sign		3
Agriculture		3
Wetlands		6
TOTAL LAND USE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FY 2019-2020		98

Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic that struck toward during the final quarter of this fiscal year, there were only 5 fewer Applications received than last year. In total the Land Use Office approved approximately 70,000sf worth of construction, 7 new building lots and 11 new residential units. Five new single family homes previously approved were completed and issued a C.O.



The new Village Commercial Zoning District was created just outside of the Historic Village District, encompassing two existing commercial businesses; Kady’s farm Stand and the Mobile Gas Station and convenience store. This change will remove the “non-conforming” status for both businesses and allow them to renovate and expand. Staff continues to review and propose minor adjustments to the Zoning Regulations to clean up confusing or conflicting language, and better define terms used in the document.

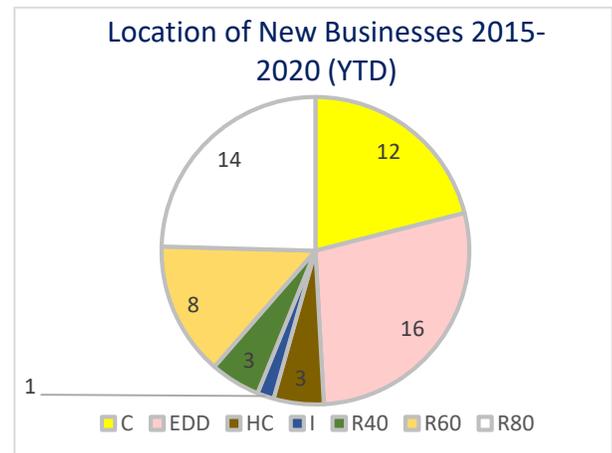
COVID-19

The Land Use office did not close during the Pandemic, but some staff shifted to working from home between mid-March and the beginning of July. An external drop-box was provided for application drop-off, and we are proud to report that disruptions to workflow were very minimal. Inspections were carried out when it was safe to do so. Meetings were carried out via Zoom beginning in March 2019, and the PZDO, 1st Selectman and Admin. Finance Director met remotely multiple times a week. There was no notable drop in the numbers of permits received, if anything, the number of home improvement-type permits increased!

NEW BUSINESS

With respect to new Businesses (including Home Occupations), activity was seen primarily in the EDD, C and R80 Zones.

The PZC approved an Event Barn off of Fowler Rd., The garage at the Center for Emergency Services complex, a 5-acre Solar Farm, an addition and expansion of use at Kady’s Farm Stand, and a 6-lot Affordable Housing Subdivision off Rte. 2.



The Planning, Development & Zoning Official attended the following training/events and worked on the following projects:

- Community Conversation – re: Thoughts about improving, preserving and maintaining the village area.
- CAZEO Meeting/Seminar
- Small Development Workshop – Berlin CT
- SNEAPA Conference (Springfield) (Regional Planning Conference)
- CEDAS Annual Meeting
- NSAHC & KNSA Event – Speaker: Michael Santoro from DOH
- New England Real Estate Journal (NERJ)/seCTer Summit – Mohegan Sun
- SCCOG – Joint Land Use Study – review and discussion at seCTer
- seCTer Annual Meeting and seCTer - Regional Economic Development Officials Meeting; SCCOG Regional Planners meeting
- CT Conference of Municipalities – Annual Conference - Foxwoods
- Water Utility Coordinating Commission (WUCC) Meeting - SCCOG
- FOI Training
- Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT – Business Breakfast – Economic Update w/ DECD and Advance CT
- EDA Grant Webinar
- On-line Sexual Harassment mandatory training and General Economics Course
- APA Policy Briefing and Meeting with Economic Development Chapter of APA
- Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce Zoom Series: Live with Congressman Courtney re: COVID-19 Resources
- 2020 APA National Conference -Virtual
- Advance CT Webinar: Supporting your Businesses and Conference Call with Gov. Lamont and DECD Commissioner David Lehman



Projects:

- Sustainable CT Program – Bronze Certification
- CEDAS Best Practices in Land Use and Economic Development Application (Award Received)
- Certified Local Government (SHPO) Application
- Utility Expansion to EDD and I Zones – Facilities Plan
- 2019 Housing Plan
- Wintechog Hill – Housing Project
- Installing iWorQ Permit Tracking Software

Regional Planning and Development: The PDZO continues to serve as a member on the Southeastern CT Enterprise region (seCTer’s) EDC and also attends quarterly Regional Planning meetings at the Southeastern CT Council of Governments when possible.

The Following Map and Text Amendment Applications were acted on during FY 2019-2020:

Date	App.#	Detail
7/25/2019 Approved	19-045	MA/TA for two (2) existing commercially used lots in the R-40 Zone (1 Mystic Rd., & 339 Norwich-Westerly Rd., to a new zone Village Commercial (VC). Specific sections to be amended/added are: Ch. 1, Section 104 (Zoning District & Overlay Areas); Ch. 4 (Dimensional Requirements) Sections 401, 402.2, 403, 404.1, 405.1 & 406; Ch. 6, Sections 601.1 (Purpose) & 602 (Permitted & Special Permitted Uses
2/13/2020 Approved	20-001	Add or Revise Ch. 2- Interpretation: 202(H) Specifically Prohibited Uses; Ch. 3-General Provisions: 305.3 (A) & (D) Non-conforming Lots; 305.5(C) Abandonment of Non-conforming Uses & Characteristics (typo only); 307.1 A Basis for Establishing the Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA); 312.8 (F) & (G)(6) Signs Requiring a Zoning Permit (Add dimensional requirements for signs in VC Zone); Ch. 6-Commercial & Industrial Zoning Districts: 602 Permitted Uses; 602.3 Commercial; 604.5 Mixed Use; Ch. 7-Overlay Areas: 703.3 Conditional Uses (WSPOA District); 703.3(D); 703.5; 703.11; Ch. 10-Supplemental Regulations: 1001.3(C) Non-agriculturally Related Uses; Ch. 12-Permits by Staff: 1201(D) Zoning Permits/Contents of Application; Ch. 13-Permits by Commission: 1303.4 (F) Special Permit Criteria; & Ch. 16-Definitions: Add/Revise: Agricultural Operation; Aircraft; Burial Ground; Cemetery; Gasoline Station; Graveyard; Restaurant; Use, Permitted by Right; Use, Specially Permitted

The Planning and Zoning Commission focused on the following during the fiscal year:

The Commission continued its work on the possible affordable housing development on the town-owned parcels off Wintechog Hill. After an 8-24 review, the Commission voted to send the proposal to sell a 10ac portion of the property to a non-profit housing developer to develop the project as depicted in the conceptual plans. Unfortunately, the project was voted down – putting an end to a 10-year planning effort funded by grant and tax-payer money.



The Commission was planning on focusing on “Road Classification” this year primarily due to the requirement of some hospitality uses having to be located on parcels accessed by a primary road. The definition of “active agricultural use” was also a topic of interest to be discussed further. The proposed text amendments regarding agriculture were tabled. The pandemic disrupted the PZC meeting schedule greatly, and caused the PZC to essentially put many things on hold. The eventual approval of the Town’s first “Event Barn” on an existing farm took up most of the meetings in the final quarter of 2019.

~Juliet Hodge, Planning Development and Zoning Official

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Members (prior to elections 2019)	Title	Staff	Title		
Charlie Burger	Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Planning, Development & Zoning Official		
James Lord	Vice Chairman				
Robin Hall	Secretary	Cheryl	Land Use Assistant		
Mark Leonard	Regular Member	The ZBA had an Operating Budget of \$100 of which they spent \$0. Under the general Land Use Department Budget, ZBA spent \$2,195 in legal fees, and \$324.90 for meeting notices. ZBA had \$302 in revenue.			
Candy Palmer	Regular Member				
Shawn Murphy	Alternate				
Gary Thompson	Alternate				
Vacancy	Alternate				
Members (after elections)	Title			There was one ZBA Applications for a Variance, but was denied and no appeals to any decisions made by the Zoning Official. One Special ZBA Meeting was held to discuss pending litigation. The lone application was for setback relief at a lake property to allow an already constructed deck to remain. The Variance was denied. There were no ZEO decisions appealed in FYE 2020. ~JH	
Candy Palmer	Chairman				
Shawn Murphy	Vice Chairman				
Joan Kepler	Secretary				
James Lord	Regular Member				
Bruce Smith	Regular Member				
John Varas Jr.	Alternate				
Colleen Thompson	Alternate				
Gary Thompson	Alternate				

ZONING ENFORCEMENT

Staff	Title
Juliet Hodge	Planning, Development & Zoning Official
Cheryl Konsavitch	Land Use Assistant/ ZEO Technician

Progress continued on closing past, enforcement cases that were still “open.” The Town lost a case dealing with commercial services in a residential zone, but prevailed on a longstanding case dealing

Cases opened in FY 2019 - 2020	27	Resolved	14
		Unresolved	13
		Open - Active	6
		Open/Active and Referred to Attorney	1
		Open – In litigation	1
		Open - Inactive	7
Cases Opened in Previous Years	24	Resolved FY 19/20	7
		Still Open - Active	7
		Open/Active and Referred to Attorney	1
		Open – In litigation	2
		Still Open - with ongoing enforcement resolution/ Stipulated Agreements – Monitoring for compliance	5
		Still Open Inactive (3 not likely to be resolved)	7

with unpermitted apartments. Blight continues to be a focus, with 18 of the notices sent being for junk and debris and unregistered or inoperable vehicles. Other cases involved issues with the keeping of animals and unpermitted structures, uses and/or apartments.

In total, 27 new enforcement cases were opened this fiscal year, (9) of which involved junk and debris and unregistered/inoperable vehicles – of which (2) also involved an unpermitted activity; (2) pertained to the keeping of animals; and (14) unpermitted use of a property. ~JH, PDZO

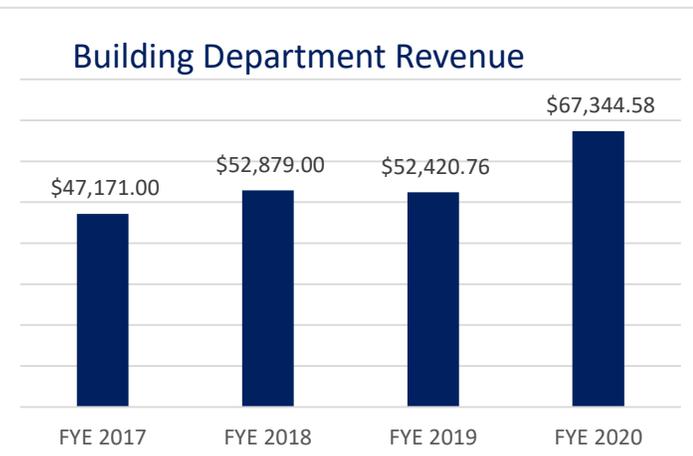
The breakdown for the unpermitted uses is as follows: (1) Unpermitted Apartment, and (1) using an RV as a residence; (2) unpermitted Home Occupations/Businesses and (2) Unpermitted Land disturbance. There were no sign violations for FYE 2020 which is unusual. Of the active cases still open from prior years, (3) related to junk & debris and/or unregistered/inoperable motor vehicles; (1) unpermitted apartment; and (2) Site Plan violations.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Staff	Title
Earl Dean (2/6/19 – 9/27/19)	Building Official
Timothy Brennan (9/2019 to present)	
LLHD/Alyssa Brochu and Chris See	Ledge Light Health District
Cheryl Konsavitch	Administrative Support

Earl Dean left the Building Official position in September, 2019, and was replaced by Timothy Brennan. Mr. Brennan grew up in North Stonington and is familiar with the town. He provides part-time hours Tuesday and Thursday evenings

only as he is one of the full-time Building Officials in Manchester, CT. He has been very well received, and things have been running very smoothly.



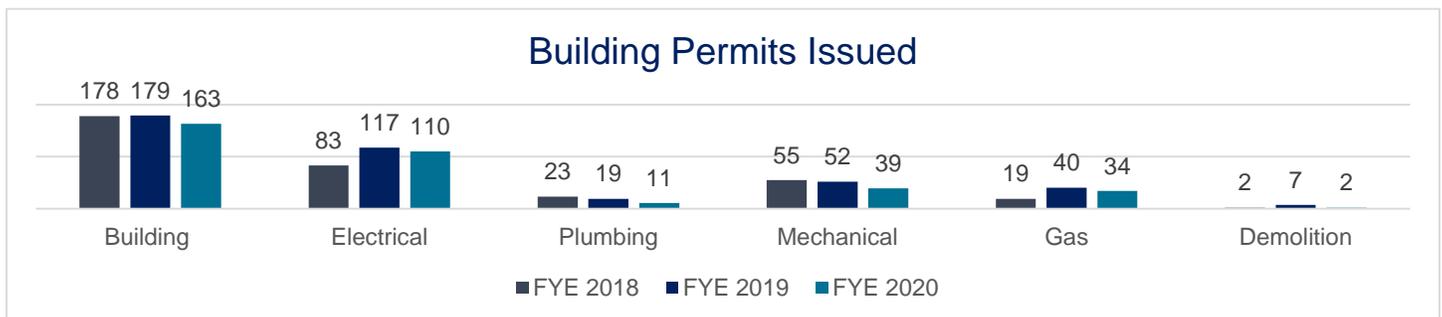
The Building Department used only 52.5% of its allotted budget primarily due to the staffing changes and reduction in hours of the Building Official.

Overall, there was a slight reduction in the total number of permits issued, but an overall increase in revenue due to more oversight with respect to project valuation and accounting/record keeping. Approximately \$9M in construction value was approved in FYE 2020.

Major projects included the school renovations and the changes of use and subsequent renovations

and additional warehouse at the Industrial complex owned by Quinlan Enterprises at 75 Frontage Rd. A 120ac large-scale Solar project was under review during the year as well.

The two demolitions approved were for the former Gary's Restaurant and 95 House Restaurant. Both were completed. ~JH, PDZO



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Member	Title	Staff	Title
Brett Mastroianni	Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Economic Development Coordinator
David Isom	Vice Chairman	<p>The Economic Development Commission had an operating budget of \$10,554.00 in FY 2019-2020.</p> <p>During the 2019-20 fiscal year, the EDC held 11 Regular Meetings, 4 Special Meetings and 1 Workshops. One of these meetings was a joint meeting with PZC, BOS and WPCA</p> <p>Congratulations to Nicole Porter, Jen Strunk, Anthony Mazzella and William Mason who were elected to the EDC in November 2019, and Jennifer Dayton who was appointed in 2020, and many thanks to David Isom, Toula Balestracci and Dugan Tillman-Brown</p>	
Salvatore Cherenzia, IV	Vice Chairman (1/20)		
Toula Balestracci	Secretary		
Dugan Tillman-Brown (until 1/20)	Treasurer		
Paul Simonds	Treasurer (1/20)		
Jennifer Anderson	Regular Member		
Stefan Grufstedt	Regular Member		
New Members: elected/appointed 2019-20			
Nicole Porter	Secretary (1/20)		
Will Mason	Regular Member		
Jennifer Strunk	Alternate Member		
Anthony Mazzella	Alternate Member		
Jennifer Dayton	Regular Member		

EDC	Approved 2019-2020	Actual 2019-2020	% used
Operating Expenses	\$8,400	\$757	9.0%
Memberships	\$2,154	\$2,154	100%
Total	\$10,554	\$2,911.36	27.6%

The EDC proposed a higher budget of \$15,554 which was not fully approved. The BOF approved a budget of \$10,554. \$5,000 of the budget was designated for the Business Beautification program. Other funds were to be used for EDC hosted events, ad boosts on social media, and marketing material. COVID-19 effectively disrupted all plans for EDC



sponsored events and funds had to be re-directed toward assisting businesses affected by the pandemic. EDC created flyers and a radio commercial to help promote the local businesses and lent support to Planning and Zoning's decision to allow more temporary signage, so that businesses that remained open could be more visible to the public. EDC worked with local farmers and the Shunock River Brewery to offer locally grown and sourced products to residents at the "Village Co-op". As businesses began to reopen, Planning and Zoning worked with EDC again to allow more outdoor dining opportunities for our restaurants. EDC provided signage for mask use and sanitizer to retail and restaurant businesses and continues to advocate for and provide assistance to impacted local businesses. Despite the difficult

times, the EDC will continue to help facilitate responsible growth like we have seen in town over the past 10 years.

**TOTAL SF NEW DEVELOPMENT AND/OR RE-PURPOSED SPACE AS WELL AS LOTS AND RESIDENTIAL UNITS CREATED
FYE 2020**

SF Municipal Facility	SF Commercial/Industrial	SF NEW Commercial/Industrial	SF Residential & ACC	New Lots Created	# New Residential Units
2,016	4,360	19,238	43,944	7	11

NEW BUSINESSES:

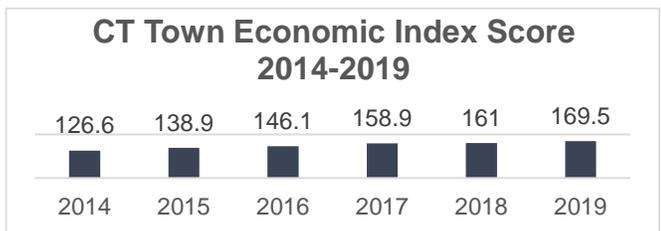
There has been quite a bit of activity. Lots of large parcels have changed hands, and we are working with prospective developers on initial concepts for 4 long vacant properties. A lot of blighted properties are being cleaned up or renovated. Other businesses have also cleaned up their properties and in some cases expanded their footprint, and some vacant commercial buildings are getting new life. Soon we will have 2 new event spaces, one associated with a new vineyard. The Village Green Inn at the rotary was given a complete makeover and renovations were completed in time for the October grand opening of the Shunock River Brewery in the Village Café. A new outdoor dining area was completed at the Brewery in the summer of 2020.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY FY 2019-2020

As of the end of June, just over **\$9M** worth of new construction had been approved including **8 new single-family residences (of the 11 total approved by Zoning)**, a solid indicator of economic well-being and growth. Activity this fiscal year included:

- Construction is beginning on new 4,500sf **machine shop/repair** approved last year.
- Dr. Pecher's **Wellness Center** in Holly Green is open and work has begun on the farm across the street to be run by Veterans.
- **The Red Onion** moved to the former Goodies/El Torillo location due to a fire.
- **Kady's Farm Stand** expanded in size and offerings
- The **Shunock River Brewery** added deck for outdoor dining
- A 1,728sf **Event Barn** approved off of Fowler Rd.
- **Saltwater Vineyards** planting at their new site off Pendleton Hill Rd., will also include a 5,000sf event space
- **6 new Home Occupations** approved
- **Christie Landscaping and A&J Landscaping** increased their footprint in the EDD Zone.
- Other new businesses include: **Nate's Box of Rocks** (Retail) and **Alarming Ideas** (Sales)
- **Quality Propane** has expanded (added new tank)
- A 5-acre **Solar project** was approved.
- Several new **agricultural permits** approved
- New Garage for Center for Emergency Services was built.

The EDC supported the Planning and Zoning Commission's application to rezone the Western End of Rte. 2 to facilitate new investment, and application of Ron Lewis to rezone two currently non-conforming parcels just outside of the Village, from residential to "Village Commercial. Both changes were approved by Planning and Zoning. This latter change will allow the businesses to become conforming and thereby be permitted to make improvements/expansions etc.



Congratulations to North Stonington for having the highest CT Town Economic Index "score" in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 and the second highest in 2016 and 2019.

North Stonington saw the fastest growth among towns with a population under 25,000.

PDZO J. Hodge submitted an application on behalf of the town for the Connecticut

Economic Development Association (CEDAS) certification program which is intended to drive communities to pursue excellence in land use and economic development practices and to recognize the communities that have established best practices. The Town was recognized at the annual CEDAS meeting in October 2019.

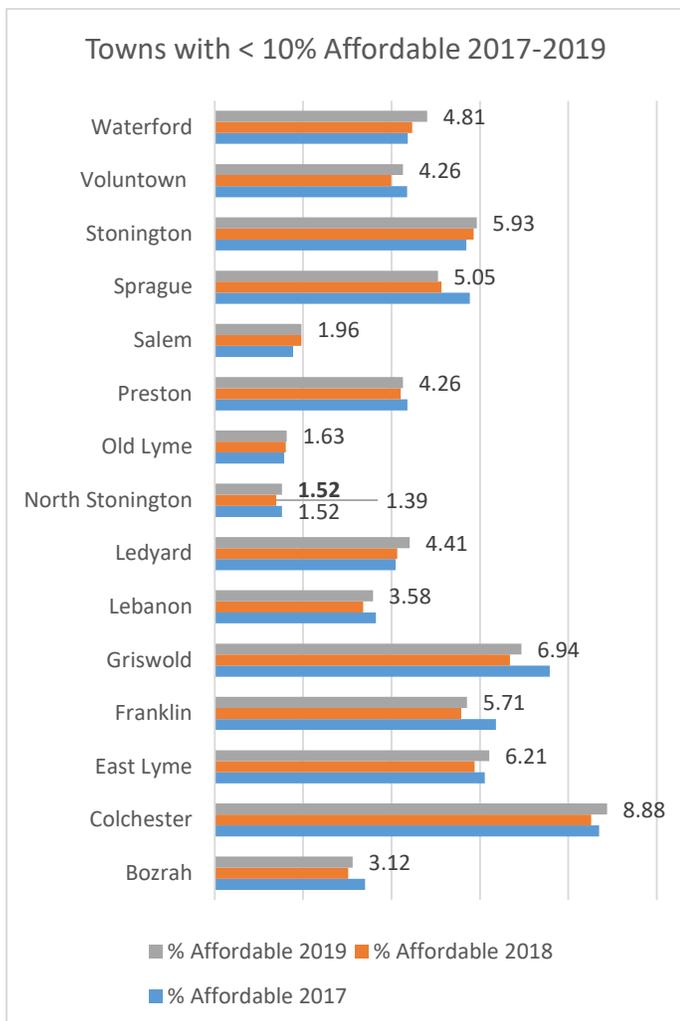
MARKETING EFFORTS:

- The Commission contracted with Miranda Creative to create a marketing brochure for the Town. This was completed in July 2019.
- EDC working on creating a new Business Directory and coming up with initiatives to support local businesses. A buy Local Campaign is in the planning stages.

~JH, PDZO

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

Member	Title	Staff	
Margaret Leonard	Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Planning, Development & Zoning Official
Mary Ann Ricker (<i>resigned 4/29/20</i>)	Vice-Chairman	<p>The Affordable Housing Committee had an Operating Budget of \$930 for FY 2019-2020 of which they spent \$277.02 or 29.8%. The Committee held (6) regular meetings, (3) Special meeting, and hosted (2) events/workshops.</p>	
Laura Degoursey (<i>resigned 6/30/20</i>)	Secretary		
Patrick Colgan	Regular Member		
Ellen Flannery-Schroeder (<i>resigned 6/30/20</i>)	Regular Member		
Betty Ann Russ (<i>resigned 1/3/20</i>)	Regular Member		
Brian Rathbun (<i>appointed 11/19</i>)	Regular Member		
Will Mason (<i>appointed 12/19</i>)	Regular Member		
Paul Buehler (<i>appointed 12/19</i>)	Secretary		
Connie Berardi (<i>appointed 11/19</i>)(<i>resigned 3/20/20</i>)	Regular Member		



The following chart shows the number of “affordable housing units” as determined by the CT Department of Housing and published on the Annual Affordable Housing Appeals List. The majority of units that qualify towards the state mandated 10% Affordable Units are units with CHFA or USDA Mortgages. The “qualified affordable units” consist of (6) deed restricted units, (29) CHFA/USDA Mortgages for a total of (35) Qualified Units, or 1.52%. North Stonington still falls very short of the 10% state mandate.

FY 19/20 PRIORITIES

- Wintechog Hill project - primary focus.
- Identifying town-owned property that could be used for affordable housing.
- Exploring using the vacant lots in Kingswood – Meadow Wood for affordable homes.
- Pursuing a 2nd round of Rehab Grant funding: ECHO and CDGB committed to write the grant proposal.
- Updating the 2012 Housing Plan – as this is now mandatory for towns if they would like to seek funding
- Draft Town Ordinance for a possible tax abatement in exchange for a deed restriction
- Drafting By-Laws

Wintechog Hill Project: After more than a decade planning and investment of time and tax-dollars,

residents voted down the proposal at the October 8th town meeting to send out a RFP to find a non-profit contractor to move the project forward. The development would have provided 75% of all units

as affordable housing units., The project was initially approved by 4 votes (hand votes) but then shot down by 2 votes after a resident requested a paper ballot. The matter was then sent to referendum in January 2020 where it again lost by a very small margin.

Town-owned Properties: The NSAHC proposed building affordable units on select vacant parcels in Kingswood Meadow wood, but that did not move forward as soil testing was needed and never completed. Using the three town-owned vacant lots in the Village was also shot down by residents. Trying to find ways to increase the Town's very low percentage of affordable units continues to be a significant challenge. Public support is simply not strong.

Rehab Grant funding: The Committee voted to pursue this, but a new Housing Plan will first need to be adopted. The Audit results from the 1st round have never been provided to the Town. Training is also required as a condition of applying.

Housing Plan: Work began on the 2019 Housing Plan for North Stonington. A plan is required to be adopted and updated every 5 years per a new State mandate in order to qualify for funding for housing initiatives and outreach. Staff completed a basic draft and obtained permission from the BOS to proceed with an application for a DOH Technical Assistance Grant to have Amanda Kennedy from SCCOG update the data, facilitate meetings with the Committee and interested public, and to finalize the goals and vision. The grant includes funding for printing.

Town Ordinance for a possible tax abatement: Work continued on drafting a town ordinance for a possible tax abatement for affordable housing which would codify Ct. State Law 8-215 and be brought to a town meeting. A similar initiative being discussed is working on a way to incentivize property owners with unpermitted apartments with amnesty in exchange for deed restriction on any unpermitted unit (provided they comply with all applicable Code requirements).

By-Laws: Connie Berardi provided a possible draft for By-laws which the Committee will review.

EVENTS AND SEMINARS:

The Committee continued to focus on education and outreach this year, but were only able to organize one formal public events to engage the community in conversations regarding housing needs in our community. COVID restrictions disrupted planned events for the Spring and summer of 2020.



In October of 2019, the State of Connecticut's Director of the Department of Housing, Michael Santoro, was asked to return and continue former discussions and present additional information about affordable housing. In addition to this event, Laura Degoursey, Maryann Ricker, Betty Russ and Ellen Flannery-Schroeder volunteered to man a table at the 2019 **NOSTO Fest** to hand out information and answer questions. Chairman Margaret Leonard created a "Housing Snapshot" brochure to be handed out at the events.

Margaret Leonard attended the Ledyard Housing Meeting -SECHA presentation and round table in February titled "**Affordable Housing in your Community: Making it work.**" Other members attended the "**Assessing Your Community's Housing Needs**" virtual workshop held on June 25.

~JH, PDZO

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Member	Title	Staff		Approved 2019- 2020	Actual 2019- 2020	% used	
Bill Ricker	Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Planning, Development & Zoning Official	\$1,600	\$1,572.08	98.3%	
Mike Charnetski	Vice-Chairman	The Commission held 8 regular meetings and 2 special meetings. Sales of the 2019 Calendar produced just over \$1,000 in revenue.		REVENUE	\$1,030		
Dr. Steve Colgan	Secretary			ACHIEVEMENTS FISCAL YEAR 2019/20:			
Doug Farrand	Member			Our Conservation Commission has had as stable membership of 5 regular and 2 alternate members for several years. Their enthusiasm and initiative to provide safe, healthy activities for			
Dr. Arnie Vlieks	Member			our public, enhance the beauty of our town, and educate the public on the importance of conservation,			
Robert Degoursey	Member			while overseeing the care of our natural & historic resources, drives these dedicated volunteers. Apart from the 10 regularly scheduled monthly meetings (excepting the March COVID cancellation), several additional “special meetings” were planned. These work days cleared old trails and created new ones, built bridges, researched environmental concerns, and monitored Open Space (public entities) and Conservation Easement (private) on various properties.			
Dr. Jason Mancini.	Member						

our public, enhance the beauty of our town, and educate the public on the importance of conservation, while overseeing the care of our natural & historic resources, drives these dedicated volunteers. Apart from the 10 regularly scheduled monthly meetings (excepting the March COVID cancellation), several additional “special meetings” were planned. These work days cleared old trails and created new ones, built bridges, researched environmental concerns, and monitored Open Space (public entities) and Conservation Easement (private) on various properties.



ACTIVITIES OF NOTE DURING THE YEAR INCLUDED:

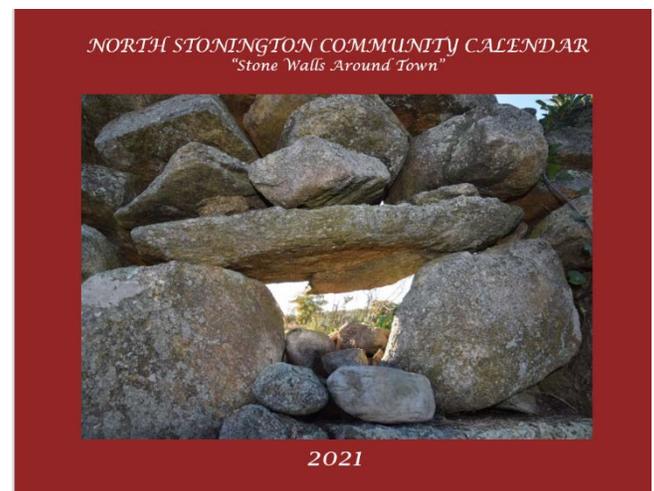
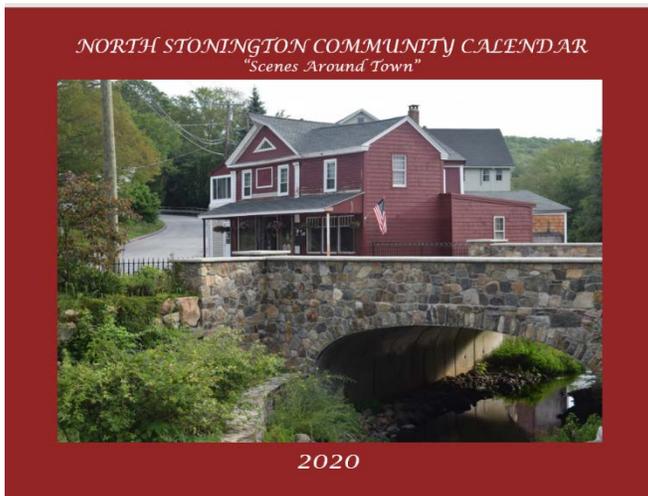
1. Drafted a Land Acquisition Fund (LAF) ordinance for the Board of Selectmen’s revised adoption.
2. Drafted a letter to the BOS on the advisability of donating LAF money to Avalonia for the purchase of a desired Green Falls River bordered property (rejected by town vote).
3. Attended a Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Conference on climate change (500 species will be lost in CT in the next 30 years due to climate change).
4. Changed the signage on a mile of Chester Main Bridle Trail; Assisted DEEP with clearing significant tree falls in Pachaug Forest; and built a small bridge over a stream.
5. Submitted a report with recommendations to the First Selectman on Glyphosate (Roundup) usage along town roads.
6. Reviewed and modified CC by-laws not done since 2010.
7. Completed and distributed a brochure of state, municipal, and private land conservation organizations’ trails in town – and had 2 articles on our trails published in Steve Fagin’s column in The Day Newspaper.



8. Produced the annual Community Calendar; distributed fir seedlings to all youngsters at NoSto Fest; utilized our interactive town trails display at the library which is now housed permanently at Chelsea-Groton Bank at their request, and provided articles for the North Stonington Quarterly.
9. Took the lead in working with Stonington, Westerly, and the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild & Scenic River staff on the removal of a dangerous tree across the river as we continue working toward a kayak/canoe trail along our 3 towns.
10. continued R&M of the Conservation Commission's created Pocket Park (all with private donations).
11. Completed Google Earth monitoring of all OS/CE parcels.

PUBLIC OUTREACH- EDUCATION

The and the interactive trail display map are aides for the public to learn about, recognize the uses of, and appreciate the abundant 7,368 of our towns 35,160 acres, nearly 1/5, in conservation protection (not including 10,421 acres in temporary agricultural 490 Forest and Farm designations). The 2019 Community Calendar theme, "The Trails of North Stonington" provided views from many of our trails as well as information and a small map. The 2020 Calendar theme was "Scenes Around Town" and featured country scenes throughout town. The 2021 Calendar will feature a small portion of the hundreds of miles of stone walls built by pre-colonial native inhabitants, our early colonists, and 18th, 19th and 20th century farmers and landowners and stone walls. All money earned from sales of the community calendar are returned to the towns general fund.



We continue to ask for the restoration of \$20,000 to the budget for land acquisition and the continued request for a GPS guidance system to accurately determine the perimeters of town owned properties.

*Respectfully submitted,
~Bill Ricker, Chairman*

INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES COMMISSION

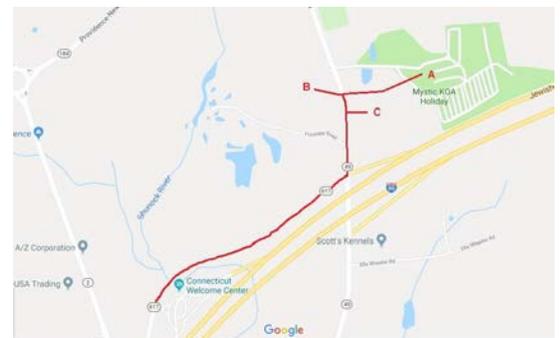
Member	Title	Staff	
Mark Griggs	Vice-Chairman	Cheryl Konsavitch	Land Use Assistant
Ron Lewis	Member	Wayne Berardi	Wetlands Enforcement Officer
Cody Bill	Member	The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission held 5 Regular Meetings, and held individual Site Walk during FY 2019-2020. They reviewed 7 applications. Their operating budget was \$7,606.00 for WEO Salary. A total of \$249.30 was spent for the year on advertising (meeting notices). ~ JH, PDZO	
Kevin Geary	Member		
Marvin Chase Jr.	Member		
Eric Offen	Member		

IWWC	Approved FY 2019-2020	Actual FY 2019-2020
Salary-Enforcement Officer	\$ 7,606.20	\$ 7,606.00
Total B34.07	\$ 7,606.20	\$ 7,606.00
Total Revenue	\$ 606.00	\$31 over projected

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

Member	Title	Staff	
Bradford Currier	Chairman	Juliet Hodge	Planning, Development & Zoning Official
Carl Johnston	Vice-Chairman	The WPCA held 1 Special Joint Meeting, and two Regular Meetings during Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The WPCA had an approved budget of \$1,500, but had no expenses.	
Robert Boissevain	Member		
Andrea Sadowski	Member		
Ryan Mason	Member		

The primary goals during the fiscal year were to continue working on negotiations with Stonington to tie into their Sewer System. For a portion of the year, Weston & Sampson Engineering continued to provide on-call engineering services for the town and provided a series of Technical Memos relating to water and sewer utility expansion to the EDD and I Zones, using a phased approach based on immediate need and committed private investment. A multi-faceted approach is needed to provide the necessary infrastructure to support development in the Sewer District. Weston and Sampson was tasked with drafting a formal facilities plan that begin late 2019. The WPCA continued to work with KOA and the Town of Westerly on a feasibility plan to connect the KOA campground to the existing Westerly water line that terminates at Frontage Rd. currently.



Members of the WPCA supported the creation an informational brochure that went out to all residents in 2020 to help socialize the idea of introducing water and sewer infrastructure into select areas and provide information on the potential benefits to the economy and environment.

~ Juliet Hodge, Planning Development and Zoning Official

HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND

North Stonington purchased the 104-acre Hewitt Farm property from the Mystic Seaport in the fall of 2008 for \$622,890. This was the town's first major purchase of open space and was fully paid for by January 2014.

In December 2008 the Board of Selectmen appointed the "Hewitt Property Committee" to define the rules and regulations for the use of the property. By 2010 the committee's recommendations were approved at a December 10, 2010 Town Meeting and that committee's goal was accomplished.

In May 2011 the current Hewitt Farm Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to manage and oversee the Hewitt Farm. Members of the committee are appointed on an annual basis. The current members are Brian Banker, Jack Brown, Tim Chokas, Ed Harasimowitz, Nita Kincaid and Deirdre Tavares.

The Hewitt Farm Committee's Mission

- ❖ Maintain the property as a fine representation of traditional New England beauty
- ❖ Encourage passive recreational use of the natural environment
- ❖ Initiate enhancements that fit New England traditions
- ❖ Continually encourage community appreciation of Hewitt Farm and seek public input

Further useful information about the Hewitt Farm can be found on the Town's website: <https://www.northstoningtonct.gov/hewitt-farm-committee>, or from signs and trail map boxes on site.

The John Dean Gallup House is a historic building across from The Green.



Accomplishments During Fiscal 2019/2020

Property Maintenance and Improvements

The John Dean Gallup House

The Hewitt Farm was purchased from Mystic Seaport in 2008. A family, related to the Seaport, was living in the interesting old house on the site; they paid rent and stayed for 10 years. The Town made a decision to not renew their annual lease in December 2018. Improvements were definitely needed. It was time to consider how to enhance the house and make it a memorable place on the Hewitt Farm property. The Hewitt Farm Committee had learned the building was a significant 18th century structure, actually related to the John Deed Gallup family.



In the summer and fall of 2019, time was spent on identifying what needed to be done to make the house's interior safe, free of peeling paint, and attractive to live in. There were no questions that the entire inside needed to have walls and ceilings scraped down and painted.

In November the Town posted an RFQ to find a qualified candidate to live in the house and participate in a project to bring the historic farmhouse back to life, but an appropriate person was not found.

As 2020 began, it was decided that specific work needed to be completed, particularly painting and plumbing. We had sufficient funds to move forward. It was important to have the building in use; to do that it was necessary to make it serviceable. The Town put forth another RFP; this time for qualified painting contractors. Four well-qualified contractors responded. The choice was Scholar Painting & Restoration. The job was done very well and in a timely manner. All this work was completed during the early days of the pandemic, but the painters were very committed and did excellent work!

In mid-May, the Committee and Town decided to put out another RFP, looking for a qualified candidate to rent and preserve the historic John Dean Gallup House. The house was in good condition, but there was no responses to the RFP. It was thought that the pandemic had absorbed peoples' interest.

Very fortunately, the Town had hired a grant writer and there were a number of grants being offered by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). These grants usually required a matching sum, but that was not necessary during this difficult time. In June, the Town and the grant writer worked to submit a request for a Survey and Planning Grant: "A Conditions Assessment and Feasibility Study". The Town now waits for the results, as June 2020 ends.

The Hewitt Farm Pavilion

At the end of June 2019, a long-desired pavilion was erected on The Green across from the John Dean Gallup House. Committee members and many visitors were happy and excited that there was a comfortable place to stop, sit and enjoy the scenery after walking the trails - one could get out of the rain, too! We often saw folks bringing food in small groups to just sit and relax.

On Sunday, October 6th, the Hewitt Farm Committee and the Recreation Commission worked together to sponsor a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and a "Pavilion Harvest Festival". All totally enjoyed the good weather, snacks, music, and games.

When spring appeared in2020 (along with the pandemic), the Hewitt Farm Committee became increasingly aware how many new people were using the farm and pavilion to come out and enjoy the fresh air and a chance to appreciate the beautiful outdoors!

The Hewitt Farm Community Garden Association

2019 was a very positive year for the community garden and its members. The removal of the near-by Greene Gables structure last year provides a lovely open entrance that leads to the well-cared-for garden area. People in the area enjoy visiting and the gardeners become a good resource for others to learn more about gardening.

In their 7th year the gardeners have continued to improve how they grow various edibles, always looking for new ideas and overseeing the different plants to help their growth. Each year you will see folks who have been here before, but the garden also attracts new members who fill the 20 plots on site.

For the annual fall potluck supper, members chose the Senior Center to include a guitarist, door prizes, great food, chatter and camaraderie.

2020 started well in the spring, despite concerns about the pandemic. It is wonderful to be outdoors. Following the Covid-19 rules of 6' and masks is easily doable. The plots are filling and plants are coming up – one can't ask for more.

Harvesting the Hayfields

On February 24th, 2020, Farmers Ron Lewis and Mike Daniels delivered their 2019 Annual Report about the 4 Hewitt Farm hayfields. There was a discussion about a lower quantity of the hay crop in 2019. An increase in fertilizer was necessary. The farmers requested to spread dry chicken manure on the 4 fields and the committee agreed.

Inviting Residents and Non-Profits to Enjoy Hewitt Farm

The Hewitt Farm Committee participated in NOSTO FEST-2019 to promote the farm and all that can be done at the site. A 3' x 5' "light map" had been made that contained photos of prominent features

on the farm; these challenged viewers to identify where the features were located. Folks enjoyed the map and hopefully this will lead them to the farm!

Hewitt Farm Financial Overview

Hewitt Farm Income

A Hewitt Farm “Income” line exists in the budget’s “Other Revenue/Rent for Hewitt Property” and this currently provides approximately \$33,000.00 in annual rental income. This decrease is the result of the John Dean Gallup house being empty, while improvements are proceeding. North Stonington has received \$419,871.00 in rental income from Hewitt Farm properties between October 2008 (purchase date of the property) and June 30, 2020.

It is important to record each year that two of the farm’s leased properties have date-related escalation clauses:

- The Southeastern CT Water Authority (SCWA) has leased the Hewitt Farm well field since June 1965, with the right to renew for three successive periods of 25 years - 1990, 2015 and 2040. In addition a rental increase is calculated every five years based on the Consumer Price Index Urban. In January 2020, North Stonington notified SCWA that they would be charged a new five-year rental amount at the beginning of July 2020. It will be based on the June 2020 rate of the CPI (US Bureau of Standards).
- The Buon Appetito lease was signed in June 2011 with an annual rent of \$19,800.00, locked in for five years through June 30, 2016. On July 1, 2016, the rate increased by 15% to \$22,800.00. As of July 1, 2019, the rent increased to \$24,911.00 (a 3% increase). Each year hereafter the rent increases by 3% until termination on June 30, 2050. The new rent on June 30, 2020 will be \$25,656.00 (\$2138.00 per month).

PRIOR YEARS		
YEAR	INCOME	EXPENSE
2018/2019	\$35,577.84	\$5010.71
2017/2018	\$42,021.00	\$5000.00
2016/2017	42,287.00	\$1838.00
2015/2016	\$39,287.00	\$3280.00
2014/2015	\$37,965.00	\$1,739.00
2013/2014	\$41,292.00	\$3,327.00
2012/2013	\$41,286.00	\$5254.00

2019/2020 Actual Income from Hewitt Farm

Sources	2019/2020 Actual Income
Buon Appetito	\$24,912.00 (7/1/19 monthly rent increased to \$2076.00)
John Dean Gallup House/ 1750 Farm House	House was vacated at end of October 2018. Rehabilitation is underway.
SE CT Water Authority	\$7585.84 (Next five year rate increase on 7/1/2020, based on CPU-I)
Hayfields	Annual \$501.00 rent
TOTAL	\$32,998.84

2019/2020 Hewitt Farm Expenses

The Hewitt Farm has had a \$5000.00 budget line item ("Public Works/Highway/Hewitt Farm) since 2012/2013. This is to be used for maintenance and improvements.

By the end of 2019/2020, \$4646.29 had been spent from the 5000.00 budget line. The money was primarily used to begin work on the John Dean Gallup House: testing the water for the house and putting in new toilets and sinks for the 3 small bathrooms. Other normal expenses were heating oil and electricity.

2019/2020 Capital Projects Fund

In 2019/2020, \$10,000.00 was added to the Committed Fund Balance for "Farm1750 House Repairs". In addition, \$13,520.00 was available from the "Town Building Repair and Maintenance" line. These two sources provided funds in April to hire Scholar Painting & Restoration, a company that knew how to clean, patch and paint all the interior walls and ceilings of the John Dean Gallup historic building. This was an important project to start bringing this special house back to life!

Reflections

The Hewitt Farm Committee has been fortunate that many improvements have been made at the property with the help of non-profits and other volunteers. We greatly appreciate the support of these groups.

Sadly, the committee saw the passing of one of its original members, Ellie Banker. Ellie was a dedicated steward of our community. She was very aware of the importance of the farm, its beauty and history. As a committee member, Ellie always presented thoughtful ideas and helped us as much as possible. She was truly a special person, very missed.

Goals for Fiscal 2020/2021

The Hewitt Farm Committee identified the following priorities for 2020/2021:

- ❖ Continue developing important improvements to the historical John Dean Gallop House and the Carriage House.
- ❖ Carefully identify the best use for each of these two structures.
- ❖ Encourage and support activities and events at the farm by working closely with the schools, town committees and non-profits.

HEALTH & PUBLIC SAFETY

NORTH STONINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

The North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company was founded in 1945 by a small group of about forty-five citizens who stepped up with a vision to fill a void in Town – the lack of any organized fire protection. Their tireless efforts and sacrifice have allowed today's members to be part of one of the best firefighting units there is. While today's active firefighting force of about forty remains at about the same level as in 1945, we now respond to around three hundred calls annually, a drastic increase from the approximate twenty calls at our founding.

While the Fire Company is planning events to celebrate our 75th year during 2020, the restrictions imposed due to Covid19 pandemic will likely downsize those activities.

The Fire Company is basically broken down into three governing groups. The Chief and Line Officers oversee all activities related to emergency response and training, while the President and executive officers direct the day-to-day operation of the Company. The Board of Trustees (BOT) oversees all the financial policies and real property of the Company. This separation allows for the appropriate checks and balances when it comes to budgeting and the expending of funds.

Some major achievements occurring during the 2019-2020 fiscal year included:

1. The Fire Company responded to over 260 calls during this period, with the breakdown as follows. Fire/Rescue calls 213 and 47 R-1 responses.
2. Likewise, members attended 42 drills and training sessions during the same time period.
3. Our vehicle replacement program allows for the systematic upgrade of apparatus prior to a vehicle becoming unreliable or a drain to maintenance funds.

The design and acquisition of a replacement tanker truck occurred this fiscal year, with arrival anticipate in early 2021. As a rural community without a fire hydrant system, the tanker is a critical piece in our fire suppression arsenal. With this truck we have increased the amount of water it can deliver to the scene while making the truck safer for our firefighters.

This truck ensures a safe and reliable truck that will serve our community now and into the future.

During the fiscal year of 2019-2020 the taxpayers provided the Fire Company an operating budget of \$129,413.00, along with \$107,000.00 in fixed costs, and \$27,050.00 in Capital improvement funds. Upon completion of the fiscal year the Fire Company returned \$876.58. Considering inflation and other cost increases, future budgets may require an increase in funding to maintain the same level of services.

The members of the Fire Company would like to take this opportunity to thank the taxpayers for their continued support.

We would also remind residents of the continued need for week-day volunteers. As a bedroom community, the majority of our members work outside of Town and are unavailable. Like many other communities in the area, the Fire Company is considering the request for funding for per-diem staff to fill this daytime shortfall.

C. Steinhart V, Fire Chief

K. Bergel, President

K. Bond, Secretary

C. Steinhart IV, Chairman, BOT

NORTH STONINGTON AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

James Tuttle, President

Samuel Burdick, Vice President

During the 2019-20 Fiscal Year, North Stonington Ambulance received a total of 708 requests for service. This resulted in 505 transports to local medical facilities including Westerly Hospital, Backus Hospital, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, and Rhode Island Hospital. The difference in call numbers accounts for medical alarm activations, no transport required, cancelled calls/no patient, patient refusals, and received mutual aid. NSAA had an average response time of 7:30 which is very good when considering the geographical size of our response area.

North Stonington Ambulance continues staffing with a roster of approximately 23 per-diem EMT's. Per-diem staff submit their availability monthly and have no set schedule which can make scheduling challenging at times. NSAA has approximately 8 volunteer members. Not all volunteer members are medically trained and therefore provide assistance with other Association administrative and operational duties. North Stonington Ambulance is always looking to further increase our volunteer base. However, due to the time requirements for EMT training (State requirement), recruiting new volunteer staff has proved difficult.

In the latter half of the 2019/20 Fiscal Year, the staff of NSAA began to deal with COVID-19 Pandemic. NSAA has procured PPE (personal protective equipment) through many avenues including, CT Office of Emergency Medical Services, Regional EMS Office, and through the Town's Emergency Management Director. Through Federal funding with the Town's assistance, North Stonington Ambulance and North Stonington Vol. Fire Co. were able to procure (6) self-contained positive pressure suits to use when dealing with COVID-19 patients. Our staff remains vigilant and dedicated through these exhaustive times, putting themselves at risk daily to provide assistance to the Taxpayers and visitors to the Town of North Stonington.

North Stonington Ambulance receives approximately 60% of our Operating budget from the Town and the remaining 40% from patient billing. With the Town's support, NSAA was able to make Capital improvements in 2019-20 to complete the following;

- Replaced (2) aging portable suction units
- Replace (2) automated external defibrillators
- Purchase the first of two, Panasonic tablet units used to complete patient care reports.

- NSAA also replaced the drivetrain (motor/transmission) in our 2009 Ford E-Series ambulance in an attempt to extend its service life an anticipated five years.

NSAA has been working over the past two years to complete the “Heart Safe” certification for our Town. This certification requires training a certain number of persons in CPR and AED’s placed around the Town depending on a town’s population. We received a donation of (4) refurbished AED’s from our medical supply vendor for this project and are greatly appreciative. We are on par to gain this certification for the 2020-21 Fiscal Year.

North Stonington Ambulance is grateful for the support from the Town and Taxpayers of North Stonington and we look forward to providing the continued professional services with our dedicated staff of employees and volunteers.

Respectfully,
James Tuttle, President
North Stonington Ambulance Association

PUBLIC WORKS

The Town of North Stonington covers fifty-five square miles with sixty-four miles of roadway to maintain. The Public Works Department also operates the Transfer Station and Bulky Waste Area located on Wintechog Hill Road.

Some of the projects the Highway Department preformed this year.

- Snow removal icy roadway call outs = 7 events, from November 15, 2019 to January 30, 2020. Utilizing 222.71 tons of Road Salt and 917.12 yards of sand.
- The town produced 3013 tons of household garbage to Preston incinerator, The Transfer station collected 1925 tons of recyclables, 1925 gallons of used oil, 1520 tires, 23.83 tons of electronics, 64.06 tons of metal, 261 appliances, 882 pounds of florescent light bulbs, 462 mattresses recycled, processed 228 pieces of furniture, 55,250 pounds of paint recycled and 97 propane tanks turned in. Gross income was \$13,503.95.
- House hold hazardous waste day was held on September 9th with 303 citizens utilizing the event which this year include paper shredding.
- A major demolition and reclamation project was completed at the Green Gables property on the Hewitt property was completed with 90 total man hours.
- Rocky Hollow Rd was milled and repaved, Milltown Rd and Hollowell Rd was repaved. Line stripping was completed on all town own roadways.
- New recreation building painting of the interior and exterior was completed with 88.5 total man hours. Also demolition and construction of a new handicap bathroom was completed with 135.5 total man hours.
- Milling and repaving of Rocky Hollow Rd, Milltown Rd and Hollowell Rd.
- The highway department assisted in the new high school building project with 125 total man hours.
- The highway maintains the grounds and assists in repairs within the recreation department. To include taking down setting up volleyball court, Basketball nets, tennis nets and Soccer nets.
- The highway crew maintains the grounds at the New Center for Emergency Services building, New and old Recreation building, Hewitt property, senior center, town property on Clarks Falls

Rd, Hewitt Property, Septic tank behind Bon Appitto restaurant, both new and old town Halls and the old school house property on Clarks Falls Rd. Including leaves removal, mowing and all landscaping.

- The highway crew assists the school department in moving classrooms, parking lot striping, maintaining equipment, generator maintenance, grounds cleanup and snow removal.
- Preparation / Assisting the memorial day parade, North Stonington Fair, 4H fair, and 4 charitable events
- Responded to 6 emergency calls for aid to include icy roads, tree removal and roadway closure issues.
- The highway department assisted in excavation of the site for the new pavilion at the Hewitt Property with 16 man hours.
- Major Gypsy moth damage resulted in 475 dead trees to be removed, YTD 350 trees have been removed, 126 Highway dept., 157 Lewis tree service and 67 Asplundh.

The Department's routine annual projects include road sweeping, basin and waterway drainage cleaning, roadside mowing, placing and replacing signs, painting of stop-bars and center lines, cutting and trimming trees and brush, maintenance of many of the town's cemeteries and chipping brush at the Transfer Station.

The Public Works Department Garage is located at 11 Wyassup Road. The staff works routinely between the hours of 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. If you need to contact us, please feel free to do so at (860) 535-0924 or email highway@northstoningtonct.gov.

The Transfer Station is located at 215 Wintechog Hill Road. The staff works routinely Tuesday 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Wednesdays thru Saturday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If you need to contact the transfer station please feel free to do so at (860) 535-1048.

Transfer station is open to the public:
Wednesday, Friday 12:15 to 3:45
Thursday, Saturday 8:15 to 3:45

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Hill

Public Works Highway Foreman

RECREATION COMMISSION

Recreation Director: Thomas Fabian

Commission Members: Megan Perkins, Emily Mastroianni, Julie McGowan, Michael Delzer, Joseph Potemri, Matt Broneill, Lori Umphlett

The North Stonington Recreation Commission holds regular monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month at the Recreation building (Old Firehouse) located at #267 Norwich Westerly Road and the public is welcome to attend. The meetings begin at 6:15 pm and generally last for about two hours. The agendas and "meeting minutes" are posted with the Town Clerk. Regular meetings are not scheduled during July or August.

The Recreation Commission makes every effort to offer multiple programs and activities for both adults and children of North Stonington as well as non-residents from the surrounding communities.

This fiscal year 2019 / 2020 presented challenges due to the ongoing School Construction Project at the Elementary school which caused an interruption to some programs / activities, while others had to be postponed or moved to different locations. Several Youth Basketball teams participated in regional recreation leagues due to a lack of gym space. The Coronavirus (Covid-19) caused the interruption or cancellation of many programs / activities / events during the Spring of 2020.

There were approximately fifty-three (53) programs / activities offered via the recreation website throughout the fiscal year such as Fall Youth Soccer, Winter Youth Basketball, Youth Tennis clinics, numerous Golf Lessons, youth Basketball camps, Art classes, Volleyball clinics, Yoga, Introductory Chess, Babysitting certification classes, and CPR / First Aid certification classes. There were also three Dance classes for kids during the school year and Pickleball for adults. The Summer Playground / Kiddie Camp was held for six weeks at the Recreation building (Old Firehouse) instead of the Elementary school which went very well and received a lot of positive feedback from parents.

New programs / activities introduced were a Theatre Camp, Lady Lions Soccer Conditioning, and a Kids Soccer clinic. The Recreation Commission came up with several "socially distant" programs / events because of Covid-19 such as Fun Run Club, Rec Commission Challenges (participants won prizes), and the very popular Easter Parade in which Mr. & Mrs. Easter Bunny were escorted throughout the town by the Resident Troopers and the Fire Department. Free Virtual Art classes by our art instructor (Laura Kahler) were made available via the Recreation website. The tennis courts were by far the most used facility during Covid-19. An On-Line Reservation Booking system was utilized because of the high demand to use the courts.

During the month of October the Recreation Commission organized the Hewett Farm Pavillion ribbon cutting event which went well. There were Lawn games, Hayrides for kids, apple cider and donuts from Clydes Cider Mill, as well as musicians providing entertainment.

This fiscal year was the fifth full year in which programs and activities were offered via our recreation website www.northstoningtonrec.com and there were 311 credit card transactions made in the total amount of \$28,511. In comparison, during the previous fiscal year 2018 / 2019 there were 471 credit card transactions in the total amount of \$37,797. ***The reason for this drop off had to do with the Coronavirus (Covid-19) negatively impacting the last four months of the fiscal period.*** Some participants did still register for programs in the traditional way by completing a Registration / Medical form and attaching a personal check or cash, however this was a much smaller percentage of the recreation transactions.

Several improvements were completed at the Rocky Hollow Recreation Area during this fiscal year. The soccer field was aerated, over-seeded and fertilized in April by Volunteer Wayne Coats. This was the second consecutive Spring that this was done. The Tennis courts were power-washed and had two lengthy cracks that were repaired in June. And the new tennis backstop was painted maroon.

At the end of the fiscal year, the Recreation Commission agreed to make a substantial financial contribution to the School Playground Project by purchasing a Tipi Carousel (\$4,358). A Ga-Ga Ball Pit (\$1,489) was purchased as were two new Soccer Goals (\$1,500). Two large fans and a storage cabinet were purchased for the Summer Playground / Kiddie Camp.

The Recreation Commission would like to thank the Board of Selectman, the Board of Finance, the Highway Public Works Department, the North Stonington Public Schools Staff and Administration, as well as the Town Hall employees for their continued support. Additionally, thank you to the citizens of North Stonington for participating and supporting the recreation programs.

Kind Regards,
Thomas Fabian
Recreation Director

SENIOR CENTER

Senior Center Director and Agent for the Elderly: Teresa A. Pensis
Senior Center Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30am-2:30pm

Due to the Covid-19 virus there have been many changes to the center this year. Unfortunately, all activities have been postponed until further notice.

I continue to prepare lunches every Tuesday. Each Wednesday I serve 37-41 lunches. Seniors drive up to the front door and purchase their meals. At the same time, I hand out the food that was donated to the center from Big Y.

I'm also a CHOICES councilor. Open enrollment for Medicare is from Nov.-Dec. From Nov.-Dec 2019, I helped 37 people with insurance questions. Individuals who have a low income may qualify for one of three Medicare Savings Plans. Please call the senior center at (860) 535-8188. I may be able to save you money on your insurance and have your Part B premium stopped. The savings programs may be processed all year long.

There were no AARP driving classes held at the center. Instead, classes were held online.

Flu shots are given by Nurse Debbie and a helper September 2019. Individuals who wanted the shot remained in their cars and had to wear masks.

I processed 35 applications for heating assistance between August. 15, 2019 and March 15, 2020.

There were no trips this year.

Respectfully yours,
Teresa A. Pensis, Senior Director and Agent for the Elderly

EDUCATION

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board of Education Members

Christine Wagner – Chair
Alex Karpinski – Vice Chair
Jennifer Welborn – Secretary
Pamela Potemri
David McCord
Philip Mendolia
Darren Robert
Stephanie Mastroianni

Administration

Central Office

Peter L. Nero – Superintendent
Roberta McCarthy – Administrative Assistant
Deborah Martin – Business Manager
Suzanne Michaud – Bookkeeper
Sue Costa- Special Services Director
Gregory Pont –Director of Technology/ Security/MIS
Guy Boucher – Director of Facilities

Wheeler Middle/High School

Kristen St. Germain – Principal
Allison Reyes – Associate Principal

North Stonington Elementary School

Veronica O. Wilkison – Principal

Annual Report



North Stonington Public Schools 2019-2020

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Wheeler Middle/High School

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North Stonington Elementary School

Veronica O. Wilkison – Principal

was suspended for 2019-2020, therefore, the bulk of this report would normally report-out on our outstanding academic achievement, which we unfortunately cannot.

I can report two-outstanding achievements that occurred in 2019-2020:

In the spring, *U.S News and World Report* announced that Wheeler High School made their list of **Best High Schools in the United States**. There is a tremendous degree of difficulty for small high schools making the list which makes this achievement special.

We are also pleased to report that North Stonington Elementary School, for the second time in five-years, received recognition by Governor Lamont as a **Connecticut School of Distinction** which ranks the school in the **top 10% of all elementary schools in Connecticut!**

Our apologies for the redundancies with the remainder of the report.

Important:

*Due to COVID-19, the entire district moved to a virtual teaching model beginning on March 13th which continued for the remainder of the year. **ALL** state testing*

Introduction

2018-2019 was a year of historic proportions for North Stonington Public Schools! On March 4th the old middle/high school closed and on March 18th the new Wheeler Middle/High School opened on time and on budget! That completes Phase 1 of the town's school modernization project. Phase 2, a

“renovate as new” project of the elementary school will be completed in April, 2020.

It terms of academic success it was another exceptional year. In 2017, Governor Malloy recognized the state’s highest achieving schools-schools in the top 10% of all Connecticut public schools. They are titled, *Schools of Distinction*. Of the over 1,000 public schools in Connecticut, 116 schools received that honor. North Stonington Elementary School and Wheeler High School continue to be recognized for their achievement. We are most proud of our middle school Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores which will be delineated further in the report.

Moreover, there are 170 public school districts in Connecticut, data compiler Niche has ranked North Stonington Public Schools 36th best for the 2019-2020 school year based on last 2018-2019 data. It is also important to note that the district maintains its success while having one of the lowest per pupil expenditures. North Stonington Public Schools ranks amongst the least expensive school district of the 33 school districts in our District Reference Group (DRG).

The Annual Report

Over the last several years, there have been dramatic changes to public education on the state and federal level. The Board of Education (BOE) Annual Report also demonstrates the dedication of the district staff that is committed to academic excellence. With that stated the BOE and the school district administration want to thank the Town of North Stonington and its citizenry for its commitment to the education of its children.

We also would like to thank the North Stonington Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the North Stonington Education Foundation (NSEF) for donating their valuable time and energies to North Stonington Public Schools. In addition, the PTO and the NSEF continually raise and donate thousands of dollars annually to support a wide variety of activities for students and staff as well as innovative programs normally not funded through the annual budget.

A quote that has been used by the Superintendent and BOE in its annual budget presentation states:

“We Believe, that is, you and I, that education is not an expense. We believe that it is an investment.”

*-Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th President,
October 16, 1968*

The 2018-2019 school year was an extraordinary school year with our traditional graduation on the Wheeler Library lawn on June 12th. For the first time in recent memory, graduation was not affected by one snow day. In addition, a number of award ceremonies were held at our elementary and middle/high school. Beyond the outstanding academic success of our student body on standardized tests and in the classroom, our students continue to excel in the performing arts, where their learning and talents were demonstrated at musical events, theatrical performances and at art exhibits. Our students also excelled in the gymnasium and on the athletic field.

Beyond the talents of our students, which were evident through the aforementioned, as always, they gave of their valuable personal time volunteering at school and in the community. Their altruism makes us most proud. Our students exemplify and embody our town’s motto which can be found when one crosses the borders into town, *“We Appreciate Our Volunteers.”*

Major Mandated Educational Initiatives

The No Child Left Behind Act played a significant role in Connecticut and on a national level. A decade of NCLB, as it was known, carried with it many mandates that impacted North Stonington Public Schools. NCLB was conjoined by “The Race to the Top” by the end of the decade.

NCLB was replaced five years ago with the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Like its predecessor, ESSA was a federal, bipartisan supported act which was signed into law by President Obama in 2015 and continues today.

In June of 2012, the Connecticut Legislature passed into law sweeping educational reform initiatives, including a mandate that districts

develop a new teacher evaluation instrument. The North Stonington Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Committee met periodically throughout the year as the district is in the fourth year of fully implementing the *SEED: System for Educator Evaluation and Development*, evaluation instrument.

As a result of ESSA, we no longer measure what we had come to know as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP was used to measure the aggregate of a class or a school's total annual performance. The focus of the ESSA is on individual student performance, especially growth. In order to keep our teachers current in their pedagogy, the district continues to invest resources into Professional Development (PD). Some of the funding was made possible from the general fund with a major portion being funded through our Title II grant.

We believe that North Stonington Public Schools are safe, and student-centered, where teachers and students clearly want to be. Students are challenged by their teachers and their instructional methodology is diversified for all ability levels and learning styles. While test scores can sometimes be complicated to interpret for many, feel free to connect to the Connecticut State Department of Education's website (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp>) where you can compare our test scores to all other Connecticut school districts.

Six years ago, the state converted to the nationally known *Common Core Standards*, referred to in our state as the *Connecticut State Standards* (CSS). The district prepared teachers well for this conversion providing PD beginning in 2012-2013 and it still continues under the direction of our districtwide Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development Committee. The committee is comprised of teachers and administrators.

In addition to the conversion to the CSS in 2013-2014, the test changed. While there is still some testing in the former CMT/CAPT for grades 5, 8, and 10 in science, all English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments are administered through the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium* (SBAC).

Another major change is the method in which the test is administered. The test has changed from the traditional paper and pencil test to our students now being tested online using computers. Our Director of Information Technology /MIS/ Security was also involved in the conversion to the SBAC test, as all our buildings had extensive upgrades in instructional technology and to the internet system. Internet access for all our buildings are now on a wireless internet system as all of the recommendations in the district's Technology Plan have been instituted.

The new state-of-the art middle/high school will serve our students and teachers well with our technological needs, which meet all Department of Administrative Services (DAS) "high performance standards," a requirement for state approval and reimbursement for the modernization project.

Please keep in mind as you peruse through the Annual Report and our standardized test scores, while the results are excellent, they are just one of several indicators used to measure a child, teacher, or school's performance. One only has to walk through the corridors of any one of our schools to sense the warm and nurturing environment that exists and the wonderful relationships between our students, teachers and administrators to realize the high level of education taking place.

In an effort to provide all our students with every opportunity to achieve success in the CSS, the budgets developed over the last eight-years have included funding for the necessary resources. Some of the resources have included, but were not limited to, new up-to-date printed/text materials, computer hardware and software and online programs. Personnel have been added as well to include specialists in math and literacy in 2013-2014 and again in 2015-2016. The specialists teach in our elementary and middle/high school. The positions have provided individual, intensive instruction to those students identified with particular needs. They also provide small group and whole-classroom instruction which is beneficial to all our students. Most importantly, our specialists, through ongoing PD, provide model lessons as they work with teachers and students in the classrooms.

Technology in the Classrooms & School Security

In order to provide and ensure safe internet access and use by students and staff, the BOE, under the direction of the Director of Technology, developed a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to school policy. The BYOD policy provides regulations and guidelines for all to follow.

All of our exterior doors are magnetically locked. All faculty and staff have security badges with key fobs. When the fob is scanned at the point of entry, the door will unlock for the staff member to enter the building; after entry, the door will relock. Visitors to school, once identified via a video system, are buzzed into the building.

A new video surveillance software and camera system was installed as part of the middle/high school project and the same will be installed during the renovation of the elementary school.

Finally, all our buildings' main offices have the Raptor Visitor Management System®. The Raptor system allows for the main office staff to scan any visitor license/ID prior to the visitor attending meetings. The Raptor system scans IDs and matches the person to a *National Sex Offender Database*. It also determines if the visitor has been involved in any criminal activity that may warrant non-entry into our schools. The Raptor database system is updated weekly. All the new security measures along with the Volunteer Policy passed by the BOE have helped to make our schools significantly safer.

School Modernization Project

After several years to consider improving the district's facilities, in May, 2016, residents and voters of the Town of North Stonington, via a referendum, approved a resolution to modernize all North Stonington Public Schools. Another referendum was held in February 2018, in which the voters overwhelmingly reaffirmed moving forward with spending \$38.55 million for the project. The state will reimburse the town at a rate of 46.07% of the cost of the project, roughly \$17.8 million.

As mentioned earlier, the middle high school project was completed in March, 2019, and

the elementary school will be completed in April, 2020.

NEASC Accreditation

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visiting team conducted its decennial visit/evaluation of Wheeler Middle/High School in the fall of 2014. It was an excellent report with numerous commendations. All recommendations in the report have been addressed with a focus on facilities. A required "five year" report was submitted and as a result Wheeler remains fully accredited by NEASC. Wheeler is presently preparing for its next evaluation in two-years.

Mandated Standardized State Testing North Stonington Elementary School

Since 2015, the CT State Department of Education has mandated the administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test for both English Language Arts and Math. Beginning in 2019 the Next Generation Science Standards Assessment was administered to students in grades 5, 8 and 11.

The Smarter Balanced assessments measure student progress based on the CT Core Standards, or learning expectations, for Grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. The scores are used as a ruler to measure the skills acquired throughout the school year. It provides information about achievement in the current grade and growth from year to year. More importantly, the results on the SBAC guides the direction to improve instruction and learning for our students.

In March 2019, the elementary school made the move to the old MS/HS. Even with the great changes and challenges that made, the elementary students continued to perform at the highest levels on the SBAC and the NGSS Science assessment. Below are the achievement scores for grades three through five for the past three years on the SBAC:

SBAC Percentage of Students in Grades 3 – 5 at goal or above

Grade	ELA 2017	ELA 2018	ELA 2019	Math 2017	Math 2018	Math 2019
	% goal or above					

3	81%	79%	79%		98%	93%	89%
4	74%	77%	82%		84%	88%	88%
5	89%	84%	82%		83%	81%	89%

Ranking of North Stonington Public Schools

The state department of education ranks public schools based on the greatest percentage of students who met or exceeded the goals in English and math on the Smarter Balanced Consortium Test.

Of the 170 Public School Districts in the state the North Stonington School District is ranked 15th, placing the district in the top 10% of all Connecticut schools.

North Stonington Elementary School was ranked 28th out of 522 elementary schools in CT based on <https://schooldigger.com> with a 91% average standard score, placing it in the top 5% of all Connecticut elementary schools.

Next Generation Science Standards

For the first time, assessments aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were administered to students in Connecticut at Grades 5, 8 and 11 starting in the spring of 2019. The tests assessed students’ understanding of the NGSS standards and application of concepts taught. Information about the science standards can be found at www.nextgenscience.org.

2019 Performance on NGSS Summative Science Test

Grade	Number of Students Tested	% at goal or above
5	57	79%

Wheeler Middle/High School

The SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium), the standard SAT for high school students in the 11th grade and the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) for grades 8th and 11th graders continue to be the assessments we use to monitor progress at Wheeler. See data below.

The SBAC test is used to measure student progress based on the Connecticut Core Standards for Grades 6-8 in ELA and Math. The scores are

used as a ruler to measure skills acquired throughout the school year. Most importantly, results on the SBAC assessment provide our schools and educators the direction to improve instruction and learning for our students.

The Next Generation Science Assessment was given in 2019 and used as a measured assessment by the State of Connecticut for the first time this year. Students in grades 8 and 11 take this assessment so schools can now measure science growth across grade levels in these standards.

SAT School Day allows our school to offer the SAT to juniors and seniors in school, on a weekday, expanding access to a globally recognized college admission test that’s accepted at all U.S. colleges.

Listed are the achievement scores for grade six through eight for the past two years in SBAC, the first year for our district in NGSS and last year’s SAT:

SBAC Percentage of Students At/Above Goal

Grade	ELA-2019	ELA-2018	MATH-2019	MATH-2018
	% goal or above			
6	75%	65.4%	71.7%	57%
7	85.1%	88.3%	63.8%	70%
8	78.7%	73.87%	65.6%	44.6%

Currently, our Wheeler Middle School students are outperforming most of the ECC schools in ELA and Math. In all areas and in all grades, we are well-above the State averages and we continue to show significant growth each year in English and Math. Much of this success comes from a strong SRBI program as well as the implementation of Literacy and Numeracy interventionists at the middle level.

NGSS Percentage of Students At/Above Goal

Grade	NGSS 2019
	% goal or above
8	82%
11	80.4%

Wheeler’s performance was outstanding on the first report of the Next Generation Science Standards.

8th grade students scored fifth in the State of Connecticut and our 11th grade class also scored much higher than all other high schools in the ECC Conference as well as within our DRG.

A large part of Wheeler’s success came because we have implemented the NGSS standards into our curriculum and have started extracurricular opportunities like Science Olympiad into our offerings.

**Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Goal
SAT – Spring- 2018**

Test	Grade	Wheeler
ELA	11	80.0%
Math	11	66.7.0%

Our SAT success is largely due to the fact that our high school staff is committed to using KHAN Academy as part of their work within their disciplines. Wheeler utilizes this free resource to give students multiple opportunities to work on their PSAT/SAT growth during their entire 9-12 experience.

Wheeler continues to offer Advanced Placement (AP)/Early College Experience (ECE) courses at Wheeler. All students are tested for credit distribution but this year we have a lower number of students taking AP classes. Wheeler still offers classes in ECE Calculus, AP Statistics, AP/ECE English, AP Biology, AP World History, ECE US History as well as other student-selected AP classes through the Virtual High School, BYU online and Keystone Academy.

Other Assessments:

Special Education

(State Special Education data is reported one year in arrears.)

The District Profile and Performance Report for school year 2017-18 indicates a prevalence rate of 8.2% which is below the State rate of 14.5%. There is a balance between the number of students identified for special education each year and the

number of students exited from services. The SRBI model continues to provide appropriate interventions that enable students to meet grade level standards and reduces the number of referrals to special education.

The Annual Performance Report on Connecticut’s State Performance Plan (SSP) for school year 2017-18 indicates that North Stonington continues to meet or exceed the State target requirements for all the SSP indicators:

- Improve Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments.
The district has 100% participation rate for students with disabilities on Statewide Assessments (State target: 95%). In math, 46.15% were at the proficiency rate; State target was 13%.
District has substantial compliance or has met State target for both indicators.
- Increase placement and time with nondisabled peers (TWNDP).
85.71% of our special education students are in the general education setting 80-100% of the time which is significantly above the State target of 68%.
0.00% special education students are in separate schools, residential or other settings (State target: 8.4%).
- Increase time in early childhood educational environments.
100% of special education students are in regular early childhood placements 80%-100% of the time which is above the State target of 77.5%. No students are in segregated placements.
- Full reports can be found at www.edsight.ct.gov.

North Stonington Elementary School Accomplishments

The North Stonington Elementary School Mission: *In a partnership with family, school, and community our mission is to educate, challenge and inspire each individual to excel as lifelong learners and to reach their highest potential as they aspire to become responsible, respectful, and honest members of society.*

- All instruction at North Stonington Elementary School is aligned with the CT Core Standards (CCS). Instructional shifts continue to be made for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math with enhancement of instructional strategies.
- The instructional shifts (expectations) in ELA are below:
 - ❖ Build knowledge through content rich nonfiction text.
 - Reading, writing, and speaking is grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
 - Continual instruction and student work with complex text and academic language.
 - The instructional shifts (expectations) in math are below:
 - Greater focus on fewer topics in each grade level.
 - Coherence: Linking topics and thinking across grades.
 - Rigor: Pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application with equal intensity.
- With the implementation of the CT Core Standards starting in 2011-12, through the alignment of instructional materials, updating instructional practices, providing interventions daily through small group and individual instruction, we are proud to say that the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students scored at the top of the CT school districts on the SBAC test.
- Instruction at the elementary school continually meets the needs of our students with high quality planning, instruction, and assessment in all academic areas to ensure students are learning at their appropriate level as well as developing emotional and social skills.
- Programs in reading and math strive to meet the needs of every child. All grade levels implemented the Daily Five program which supports small group instruction and encourages independence in learning.
- The use of Renaissance Learning STAR Benchmark assessments was implemented to analyze student progress and provide instruction to meet each child's specific needs.
- The remedial reading curriculum includes a variety of programs to meet the needs of our students such as:
 - Foundations for phonics and spelling instruction
 - Wilson Reading Program
 - LiPS-Lindamood Phoneme Sequence
 - Read Live Fluency Program
 - Just Words
 - Lexia Technology Reading Program
 - Remedial Comprehension Instruction
- The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) program, which was implemented in 2010, continues to systematically teach students what appropriate behavior looks like and recognize students who demonstrate the school-wide expectations. Data has shown that behavior choices of our students continually improve.
- The Student Assistance Team (SAT) process utilizes the state mandated Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) model to provide teachers and students with support at the first indication of difficulties academically or behaviorally. Regular education and special education staff worked together to better support instruction, modification of expectations, and student learning.
- The after school Homework Club provides additional support, especially in the math and language arts areas for students in grades 3, 4, and 5, and teaches study skills to all students.
- The New Family Orientation was held before school began to welcome our new students.
- All parents/guardians were invited to the Open House on August 30th where their students served as tour guides of their classrooms and the school.
- On September 17th the students celebrated Constitution Day, the official signing day of the U.S. Constitution, by learning about the document and how and why it was written.
- Our students once again actively participated in the Governor's Summer

Reading Challenge program over the summer. The 128 students who read over the summer were recognized during a special ice cream social and each student received a new book and a certificate.

- Members of the North Stonington Volunteer Fire Department presented a fire prevention assembly to celebrate Fire Prevention Week and teach fire safety. Students entered the poster contest with two students being recognized for their posters at the Fire Prevention luncheon on March 28th.
- The third annual Walk to School Day had all students walking from the Recreation Field in an effort to get our students moving and simulate walking to school.
- The Annual Veterans Day Celebration was held on Nov. 9th to recognize our local veterans and help our students understand the dedication all veterans show during their service to our country. Each child was able to invite a veteran to school for a special breakfast and patriotic assembly with 62 veterans attending.
- Carol Glynn, our Artist in Residence, developed the knowledge of CT history and oral language skills by working with our third grade students thanks to support from the PTO and a donation from a local family. The students learned about local legends and each class presented a musical play for their families.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences were held twice to support building a strong relationship between family and school.
- The North Stonington Drama Club presented Peter Pan, Jr., directed by Kelly Gonzalez. The NSPTO and program advertisements supported the presentation on February 21st and 22nd.
- The Fifth Grade Chorus entertained the school community with a holiday and a spring concert directed by Michael Noonan, the elementary music teacher.
- Two band concerts were held this year. In December, the Fifth Grade Second Year Band students presented a holiday concert and in May the Fourth and Fifth Grade Band students presented a very successful concert directed by Zach Thomas.

- The annual North Stonington Elementary School Art Show was held on January 31st. Art work created by all students was displayed in the museum created in our MPR.
- All grade levels, K – 5, presented concerts for the school and families directed by Mr. Noonan.
- During the school year the students and family members experienced special days in which family members were invited, such as Student Authors' Day, Technology Week, and Field Day.
- The entire NSES community celebrated Flag Day with many special guests on June 7th.
- The DARE program was once again offered by our local State Troopers to grade 5 students. All students graduated with the knowledge to stay alcohol and drug free. The graduation was held on June 10th.
- A bi-monthly newsletter was published and distributed to families to support communication between home and school.
- To help our students recognize the importance of giving to others, fund raising opportunities such as Walk Your Can a Mile food collection, Holiday Food Drive, and Jump Rope for Heart were held. Students also supported our troops by creating cards and letters for them throughout the year.
- Our third, fourth, and fifth grade students were invited to participate in the CT Invention Convention. This year was a very successful year thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Servidio. Six students were chosen to go to onto the state finals at UCONN and one student was selected to present their invention at the National Invention Convention in Washington D.C.
- Each year the CHET program for college savings asks students to either draw or write an essay about what they will do after college. A fourth grader was recognized for her essay and NSES was recognized as the school with greatest participation in New London County and was awarded \$500.
- Sixty-two students involved in our Marathon Club finished their last mile at the annual North Stonington Education Foundation Run.

- The NSPTO continues to sponsor cultural programs for our students as well as the Artist in Residence program, two book fairs, support for field trips, teachers' grants and much more.

North Stonington Elementary School students and staff are enormously grateful to the parents, guardians, grandparents, the NSPTO, the NSEF, and all community members who continue to volunteer in the classrooms and support our school.

Wheeler Middle/High School Accomplishments

- Wheeler continues to provide programs for our students on the dangers of substance abuse as well as internet safety presentations. Every three years, all grade 7-11 students participate in the Southeastern Regional Action Council survey about drugs, alcohol and other mental health issues. Results from this valuable survey continue to be shared with our staff and community. We will survey our students again in 2019 to monitor our continued intervention work in these areas.
- Our Counseling Department continued the tradition of preparing students for the various experiences at and beyond Wheeler, such as: transition activities to the parents and students moving from Grade 5 to Grade 6, and from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Financial aid evenings are held to help educate our parents and students about paying for college in a difficult economic climate. They have also held "Coffee with the Counselors" for parents to meet in an informal setting to discuss college and career topics relevant to juniors and seniors. Counselors and teachers have also created an option after school two days a week where students can work on college applications and Common App.
- The Wheeler school counselors and support services personnel offer classes to help support our middle school and high school students in areas such as study skills. They also teach developmental guidance lessons in our middle school classrooms as well as work with juniors and seniors to help them navigate Common App and other important initiatives such as their SSPs.

- Wheeler's Peer Mentoring Program matches high school students with younger students in grades 3-8, with the purpose of helping with school work and serving as role models. Some of the mentors work individually with students; others volunteer in a whole classroom, and others do both. The selection process for a student to become a mentor includes an application, recommendations, and an interview with members of the counseling department. Once selected, mentors are trained by the counseling department with training sessions, focusing on mentoring skills and responsibilities. After successfully completing the training, the mentor/tutor will be matched with a student and weekly meetings will begin. These meetings will take place during lunch, study hall, or after school throughout the remainder of the year. Families of students in grades 3-8 who wish to have their children matched with a mentor provide permission to the social worker at the elementary school or the counseling department at the middle school.
- The PRIDE PROGRAM (PBIS) continues at the middle school level and receives positive responses from students, faculty and families. Each quarter students are earning PRIDE points and shouts-outs that they receive from their grades or their adherence to our social/civic expectations. Through this program, students have numerous opportunities to earn their way into our end-of-the-year celebratory event. Changes were made to move away from quarterly celebrations so that more students have the opportunity to find success even when they fall down on occasion. Each week on our morning news program, students can be recognized for SHOUT OUTS from their teachers for modeling our social/civic expectations.
- Our School Counseling Department hosted another Alumni visit for all Wheeler High School students. Over 25 alumni returned for this presentation that was created to share information about the college application process as well as to answer questions about life after high school.

- Parents, students and teachers, are offered the opportunity to complete a variety of surveys that provide feedback to help us improve our practices at Wheeler. In years past we have used these surveys to make changes within our school handbook as well as within the structure of our school day. This year we will be surveying parents and students on potential pathway opportunities that we are working to bring to Wheeler in the future.
- As part of our continued health awareness, the Wheeler Food Committee, made up of students, health teacher, superintendent, business manager, and the food service provider, Aramark, met four times per year to discuss the nutrition and food choices that Aramark provides. Since the committee has formed, the food has improved by having fresh fruits and veggies instead of canned. They have looked at farm-to-table for some of these veggies and fruits from local farms. Through this committee, some menu items were eliminated because students explained that they were not popular items because of the food choices. The students wanted more options, so a Panini maker was added and are served twice a week as well as a build-your-own sandwich bar, twice a month. Salads are also now available every day.
- CPR/First-Aid/AED training was given to all 9th and 11th grade students through their health classes. These students go through the training to learn the basic skills to be able to help someone in need. Wheeler staff members continue to provide this training to coaches within our Wheeler community on a yearly basis.
- Throughout the year, Wheeler students participated in ALLI field trips. “ALLI” stands for Adolescent Learning and Leadership Institute. Many students from Wheeler High School work with students from surrounding high schools (Stonington, Ledyard, Waterford, NFA, Montville, Bacon Academy, and Griswold) to be educated on ways to avoid drugs and alcohol in their lives. These students act as school leaders and bring back important information to their peers and school.
- The school successfully navigated our two-year NEASC report. We continue to work on our five-year report and work hard to make changes recommended to us in our 2014 NEASC report. Administration continues to stay abreast of the changes to the accreditation process and has attended numerous conferences and meetings in regard to these changes. Our first visit in the new process will take place in the year 2020 with a team visit in 2024.
- New courses continue to be developed to better meet the needs of all of the students, many of which centered on the UCONN/ECE program which allowed Wheeler students the opportunity to earn transferable college credit. We now have year-long Agri-Science 1 and 2 classes, as well as a Psychology class. At the middle school level we have added a coding class. We are currently looking to add more elective opportunities at Wheeler as we have aligned our graduation requirements to better fit the 21st Learning Expectations that the State has recommended.
- 37 students took the AP exams last year. 72 total exams were taken in all and 61% of those exams taken earned college credit.
- Across the state, last year’s SAT averages were down by comparison to other years. The state average in ELA was 514 and in Math it was 502. Our 2018 junior cohort fell short with a 502 in ELA and a 495 in Math. Although they fell below the state average in both areas, for this particular cohort, they showed 65% growth overall since their last PSAT. This is a cohort we have been watching since they entered Wheeler in 2013 as they have historically tested far below state averages on all of their state testing. With the interventions put in place, however, they have continued to show growth each school year.
- All students in grades 6-8 took the SBAC test in reading and math. This year’s 8th graders (who tested as 7th graders in the spring) tested first in the state in ELA. Students in grades 8 and 11 participated in the NGSS (science) field test. Overall, Wheeler students continue to show gains in reading and math on their SBAC tests. We

will not receive any data from the NGSS field test until next school year.

- In regards to analyzing our performance, we have created various data teams that consist of administration, guidance and faculty and staff. This team analyzes the variety of data points we use, including SBAC, AP, ECE, SAT, PSAT and Performance Series, to assess our students' growth which allows us to use the data to make informative changes to our instruction and curriculum.
- Many students received CIAC-CAS awards. Two middle school students were honored at the Aqua Turf in Southington as Scholar Leaders, and two high school students were honored as Scholar Athletes. We also sent one student on to compete in the Governor's Scholar program.
- We continue to fill all of our VHS (Virtual High School) seats each year. This year we have also had students taking online courses in BYU Online as well as Keystone Academy. These opportunities continue to allow our students to take courses that we are unable to offer due to scheduling conflicts that arise. Last year's courses included AP Music Theory, AP Physics, AP Psychology, Honors Anatomy and Physiology, Honors Philosophy, Kindergarten Apprentice Teacher, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Number Theory and many others.
- In order to better prepare eighth grade students to handle the rigor of high school, the eighth grade team continues the practice of giving midterm and final exams.
- Our math department continues to bring diverse math offerings at Wheeler to better align to the CT Core Standards. Freshmen now start with Geometry and move into Algebra I, II and then Pre-Calculus and Calculus. Middle School students can also earn high school credit by taking Geometry as 8th graders. The schedule is aligned so students can travel up a level in math each day so all of our students now have opportunities to participate in accelerated math courses each day. In addition to these changes the middle school program is now fully aligned to the core and offers an online component of their math program.

We continue to provide advance opportunities for our middle school students to give them opportunities to get on the advanced track whenever possible.

- Working in conjunction with Positive Health in Teens (PHIT) we continue to use our breathalyzer at high school events when we deem necessary. We also work very closely with our local State Troopers when it comes to the safety and wellness of our students.
- The Middle School continues to offer a solid SRBI program to incorporate interventions to students in need. Every day there is an SRBI period where students can receive interventions in math and reading as well as enrichment opportunities that reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. Students in interventions are monitored to show gains and losses in math and reading each year.
- To solidify our SRBI program the school has created a calendar that schedules intervention sessions to better allow staff members to share students that might need interventions in both areas of reading and math. This calendar allows more effective scheduling to take place with our staff members and interventionists.
- Our Middle School "at-risk" population is provided with opportunities to make up or finish work that they did not complete each quarter through our Middle School Academy program. This is a way for our staff members to truly hold students accountable who are capable but making poor decisions in regard to class or homework. Academy takes place every SRBI session as well as during our mid-term and final exam weeks at Wheeler.
- Our Student Study Center (SSC) is now staffed full time with a Wheeler faculty member and a para professional. This faculty member is available to assist high school students who need extra help or organizational help during their school day. Students can now be scheduled into this option during the year as a supervised study hall. Those students scheduled in can receive a .5 credit if they stay in there all year.
- Wheeler uses a full-time math position to serve as the middle school math

interventionist/coach as well as teach one high school math section. This teacher works with Tier 3 middle school students two periods a day, pushes in to three middle school math classes as a math coach, and teaches one section of high school geometry. As the middle school math program transitioned to a new program and model this year, the position has transitioned from strictly math interventionist to both interventionist and coach to support all three middle school math teachers as much as possible.

- Many out-of-the-classroom opportunities were planned which met the various educational needs of the students and provided experiences that the students may not normally have been able to experience within the walls of their classroom. For example, high school biology students received a tour of the Whole Foods Production Company. Middle School students traveled to the Waterford Country School for the Ropes Course Challenge, Battleship Cove in Fall River, MA, the Human Body Exhibit in Providence, RI, and the Connecticut River Museum. 8th graders took a historical tour of Boston and high school AP Literature Students took a tour of UCONN to use their library database. We also sent high school females to the Women in Science program at Pfizer as well as other tech events that promote technology education.
- Many teachers attended regional conferences, such as NGSS in science, ATOMIC and the National Math conference, the National Conference in Social Studies, the International Literacy Association conference, numerous conferences in global language and local regional PD opportunities around the state. Teachers continue to use professional development to bring back new ideas and activities to share with their students and other department members.
- Last year, one of our Wheeler faculty members was selected by the Library of Congress in Washington DC to be their teacher-in-residence. This staff member was

selected as the one and only candidate after a national search and application process.

- Our Wheeler Literacy specialist took a group of five Wheeler students to Texas to help victims recover from the hurricane devastation that took place there. These same students made multiple presentations to the public on what they did, as well as raised money to cover the expenses of their trip.
- Students in both the Middle and High School participate in a daily Advisory homeroom program where they are able to connect with faculty members. Through their advisory program they also participate in numerous charitable opportunities where they are giving back to their communities and practicing our Social/Civic Expectations: Honesty, Safety, Respect and Responsibility.
- Our Senior Project continues to match up high school seniors with members of the North Stonington and neighboring communities. This capstone project allows students to practice and fine tune their 21st century presentation skills, as each senior presents on a chosen topic of interest. Last year we had students study on college campus laboratories, compete in a national horseshow, rebuild a truck and tractor, compose music for a theater production and a variety of real-life hands-on experiences that allow them to explore and fine tune their personal interests. The program at Wheeler is often visited by other school districts for the exemplary program in place.
- The Wheeler debate team competed in the Great Debate, a state-wide competition and placed for the third year in a row. They continue to expand their competition platform and compete against schools in the ECC to prepare for this important competition.
- Wheeler students participated in the Apprentice Challenge and competed against neighboring schools to create a business plan for a local business. Wheeler High School business students have won the championship for three consecutive years. This and the Money Madness trip allow our students to practice their personal finance

skills as well as their business skills in a real-world platform.

- Middle School literacy students organized an annual tribute to our local veterans and emcee the program to reinforce important literacy skills in our Flag Day tribute where they invited in local veterans to be honored by our staff and students. They also presented citizenship awards to students of Wheeler Middle and High School who demonstrate leadership and were voted on by the faculty. Several middle school students entered the essay contests sponsored by the local VFW on various topics including patriotism and the flag. These students shared their essays at our Flag Day program.
- We had another successful summer reading program last year. We read the book, "Hideout," by Watt Key. We celebrated our summer readers, by hosting a breakfast for them in September. Wheeler Middle School students were also afforded the opportunity to SKYPE with author Watt Key.
- In January, our school media specialist and school literacy specialist hosted our annual "Middle Ground Book Club" for students and adults. We read "Refugee" by Alan Gratz. This book tells the amazing story of a Jewish boy living in Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps in sight, his family sets sail across the world. As always, there were rich conversations and this unique book club provided a "middle ground" for students and parents to come together over quality literature.
- Our Middle School and High School literacy coaches hold book clubs for students in grades 6-12. These book clubs are voluntary and students meet during their lunch waves to participate.
- The Wheeler High School Print Shop prints a variety of mailings and flyers for local businesses and has printed various items for town-wide distribution and community groups. Our print shop is also responsible for the printing of the North Stonington Quarterly each season. The print shop also has a 3D printer, which allows our students interested in engineering opportunities to

design prototypes and eventually bring them to fruition.

- Wheeler still participates in the Perkins program and has received a variety of technology to supplement and increase participation in our CTE programs. Grant money was used to purchase new digital cameras and other accessories to support our new photography classes.
- Wheeler students and faculty donated food, canned goods, etc. to our in-house food bank to be donated to local families for the holiday seasons. They continue to donate holiday baskets as well as gift cards to local supermarkets. Our high school students continue to volunteer at the Shoreline Food Pantry on Saturdays, where they serve a hot meal to local patrons and help downstairs in the food pantry on a monthly basis.
- Our High School Band and Chorus participate in several events, with performances at The Dunkin Donuts Center in Providence, the annual North Stonington Tree Lighting, the North Stonington Festival and the Wheeler Arts Symposium. Students from grades 9-12 marched in the annual North Stonington Memorial Day Parade.
- Last year our Wheeler Drama department and our Wheeler band combined for their performances of Rumors. Over 70 students from our middle school and high school were involved in these performances.
- Two students were nominated for accomplishments in the areas of Art and Music and were honored at the AquaTurf in Southington, sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Schools.
- The High School Concert Band and Choir provided some of the ceremony music for senior graduation along with about 20 Wheeler alumni in the annual alumni band. Our band and chorus concerts, as well as art shows, were huge successes and were very impressive for both their quality and for the high number of students participating.
- Last year, some of our middle school students were accepted into the Eastern Region Music Festival, a regional honors festival where top students from the region

performed advanced repertoire under renowned conductors.

- Wheeler High School students were accepted into the Eastern Region Music Festival, a regional honors festival where top students from the region performed advanced repertoire under renowned conductors at the UConn music facility. Students went on to audition at the all-state level.
- The Music Boosters awarded a college scholarship to a student who has gone on to major in music. They also sponsored a Talent Show that showcased diverse talents from our students in grades 6-12.
- The Wheeler Music Program earned gold medals across the board for its performances at the Great East Festival in May of 2019. Each year, the 7th/8th Band & Chorus and the HS Band & Chorus prepare a program for adjudication. They receive scores, comments, and a brief clinic from judges. All four Wheeler ensembles were awarded gold medals.
- The Wheeler band and chorus performed at the North Stonington Tree Lighting and the Wheeler Band performed at NoSto Fest and Memorial Day Parade.
- Many of our students had artwork in an exhibit at NFA that honored ECC artists.
- In the area of athletics, 64% of our high school students played a sport last year, many playing three sports during the year. We had many students recognized as All Eastern Conference First Team Small Division members as well as many honorable mentions. We also received several sportsmanship recognitions from the ECC. We also had two students make All-State as well as Academic All-State recognition.
- Wheeler athletics continue to take part in the Class Act School program sponsored by CIAC. The CIAC's Class Act Schools initiative is designed to empower schools and particularly students to take ownership for all issues related to sportsmanship within the athletics department.
- Our club offerings continue to expand and include opportunities for students to

participate three times a month during the school day in the following clubs: Farm and Garden Club, American Sign Language, Give Back Club, Film Club, International Club, Book Club, Scrapbooking Club, Photography, National Honor Society, Unified Sports, Drama Club, WBC News, Student Government, Math Team, Science Bowl and a variety of other offerings.

- In the Agri-Science I & II class students have explored a variety of agricultural topics and concepts, including: plant morphology, landscape design, sustainability practices / challenges, the aquaculture industry, and macro/micro nutrient cycling. Students have been busy at work applying the topics towards a cumulative aquaponics lab experience. Over the 2017 fall / 2018 winter students collaborated and utilized their diverse range of talents, and skills to engineer a system within our school. With a few koi fish, some artificial lighting, and careful planning, students have gotten the opportunity to see their new content knowledge in action. During the second semester the Agri-Science II class refined the system and harvested different crops through June in their aquaponics closet.
- Last year, our greenhouse continued to be fully operational providing space for the elementary students to plant in their science classes as well as for our MS and HS Farm and Garden students to host their annual plant sale. In addition to the greenhouse, students have also raised 11 laying hens and take care of them as part of the Farm and Garden Club. Students are responsible to feed them, change out their water, collect eggs, and maintain the coop as well as the run area. The eggs are sold to local faculty and staff members and the money is used to continue to buy food for the hens.
- Wheeler has established a cooperative with the Westerly Education Center that now allows our high school students to participate in training that will allow them an opportunity to work at Electric Boat in the future. This training is in the area of sheet metal and will also be offered to seniors next year during the school year for partial credit. Wheeler students may also

enroll in art courses that run at the Westerly Education Center on weekends.

- Wheeler continues to sponsor a Unified Sports Team. Through this peer mentor program, members of our Unified Sports team participated in unified bowling and basketball against other unified teams in the local area. The Unified Sports Team meets three times a month at Wheeler as well as after school to prepare for their competitions.
- Since 2016 Wheeler High School's Student Government continues to focus on involvement in the Wheeler and North Stonington communities. The group organizes voter registration events at the school where our ages 17+ can register to vote. Students work as volunteers at the North Stonington polls and also continue to organize a yearly school-wide spirit week that includes days to support Relay for Life (a purple-out) and honor Memorial Day (red, white and blue day). Student Government also sponsors a "Why Wheeler" program, targeted at 8th grade students with the idea that it might keep more 8th graders in house at Wheeler in the future as opposed to going to other schools of choice.
- Wheeler's Annual Give Back Day provides a wealth of support to the North Stonington Community. Students participated in a variety of tasks, some including reading to our elementary students, cleaning classrooms for teachers, weeding and

cleaning our outdoor gardens, and tending to the yards of the elderly who cannot do so for themselves. Many also hold fundraisers to donate to local charities such as local animal shelters, VFW hospitals and other local organizations in need.

- Students continued to provide meaningful services to our community, which aligns with the mission of Wheeler. They held two blood drives; multiple food drives, and drives for clothing, used sports equipment and toys. Several sports-oriented fundraisers were held, including the Oxfam Basketball Tournament and other National Honor Society hosted events to raise money for other charities.

In Summary:

The 2018-2019 school year was another one of growth, improvement and student achievement. It is hard to capture all of the events and recognition of an entire school year in a few short pages. There is much more that could be said. You are invited to visit our schools in person or via the Internet at www.nortstonington.k12.ct.us. We have much to be proud of!

Mr. Peter L. Nero, Superintendent

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2019 - 20 (1)

SCHOOL	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Elementary School	37	53	51	55	52	60	63	56							427
High School (2)									63	49	54	53	47	48	314
Out-of-District															0
TOTALS	37	53	51	55	52	60	63	56	63	49	54	53	47	48	741

1. Based on October 1, 2019, enrollment data
2. Grade 6 moved to the elementary school beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

STAFF PROFILE 2019-2020 (October 1, 2019 Data)

POSITION	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	CENTRAL OFFICE	TOTALS
Certified Staff Members	40.05	45.2		85.25
Student Support Services (1)	0.8	0.2		1
Administrators	1	1.9	2	4.9
Business Manager			1	1
Network Administrator & Technician			2	2
Administrative Support/Secretaries	1	2.8	3	6.8
Nurses	1	1		2
Health Aide	0.5	0.5		1
Paraprofessionals/ Assistants (2)	14.88	5		19.88
Maintenance/Custodial/Grounds	3.5	4.5	1.75	9.75
Total				133.58

1. Occupational Therapist
2. The numbers include full-time and part-time assistants

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

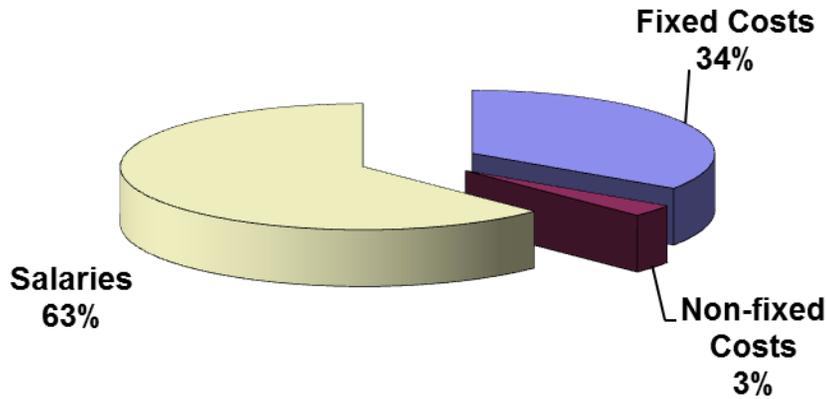
The total Board of Education (non-grant) expenditures for the 2019-2020 school year were **\$13,646,898**.

These funds were allocated across three categories as follows:

Salaries:	\$	8,366,059
Fixed Costs:	\$	4,336,574
Non-Fixed Costs:	\$	944,264

The approved 2019-2020 budget was **\$13,775,463** leaving an unexpended balance of **\$128,565** to be held in a Non-Lapsing Account.

BUDGET DISTRIBUTION



SALARIES

- Administration
- Teachers
- Guidance
- Teacher Assistants
- Library
- Secretarial
- Custodial

FIXED COSTS

- Transportation
- Heat-Utilities
- Social Security
- Employee Insurance
- Employee Retirement
- Tuition
- SPED Contracted Svc
- Lease of Equipment

NON-FIXED COSTS

- Textbooks
- Library books
- Instructional Supplies
- Other Expenses
- Health Supplies
- Custodial Supplies
- Maintenance Services
- Replacement Equipment
- Student Activities
- New Equipment

Fixed Costs	\$	4,743,409
Non-fixed Costs	\$	426,788
Salaries	\$	8,605,266
		\$ 13,775,463