

Town of
North Stonington
ANNUAL TOWN/BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES
May 6, 2019

The Annual Town/Budget Meeting of electors and citizens qualified to vote in Town Meetings of the Town of North Stonington, Connecticut was held at the Wheeler Middle High School Cafeteria, 297 Norwich-Westerly Road, North Stonington, Connecticut on Monday, May 6, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: First Selectman Michael Uργο and Selectman Robert Carlson. Also present at the meeting were Board of Finance Chairman Dan Spring, Board of Education Chairman Christine Wagner, Superintendent of Schools Peter Nero, Administration & Finance Officer Christine Dias, Planning, Development & Zoning Official Juliet Hodge, Town Attorney Nick Kepple, and Highway Foreman Don Hill. Absent: Selectwoman Nita Kincaid (due to illness).

First Selectman Uργο called the meeting to order and then asked for a **MOTION** from the floor to elect a Moderator. A **MOTION** made by Lisa Mazzella, seconded by Dan Spring to elect Joe Potemri as the Moderator. A **MOTION** made by Nick Mullane, seconded by Mac Turner to close all nominations. **MOTIONS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.** Moderator Joe Potemri stated the rules of the meeting. Moderator Joe Potemri asked Town Clerk Antoinette Pancaro to read item one of the call of the meeting.

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

Location: Wheeler Middle High School Cafeteria, 297 Norwich Westerly Road

Date: May 6, 2019

Time: 7 PM

1. Strategic Plan Presentation

A **MOTION** made by Joe Gross, seconded by Jen Welborn to move the call. **MOTION approved unanimously.** First Selectman Uργο gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Town's Strategic Plan. He explained the mission and goals of the plan, as well as discussing specific programs that have been created and milestones and related goals that have been achieved. He indicated that this presentation with detailed information will be available on the Town's web site and at Town Hall. There was no vote on this item; it was only a presentation.

2. Shall the Town of North Stonington approve the estimates and recommendations of the Board of Finance with respect to the Annual Budget including Board of Education, \$13,825,463, General Government Operating, \$5,067,915, Redemption of Debt, \$1,009,694 and Capital, \$572,716, for fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, in the total amount of \$20,475,788, and make specific appropriations and authorize expenditures in connection therewith as appear advisable?

A **MOTION** made by Joe Gross, seconded by Brad Borden to move the call. **MOTION approved unanimously.** First Selectman Uργο gave a presentation about the General Government budget. Board of Education Chairman Christine Wagner gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Board of Education budget for the upcoming year with budget details and an explanation of the budget process. Dan Spring, Chairman of the Board of Finance, referred to the summary in the Town Meeting packet. He stated that the current mill rate is 28.2 mills and the proposed mill rate will be 29.4 mills, which is a 1.2 mill increase. Chairman Spring emphasized that the mill rate cannot be set until after the Budget Referendum. Discussion and questions followed regarding different parts of the Town budget. A **MOTION** made by Lisa Mazzella, seconded by Dexter Herron to move the question. **MOTION carried.** Moderator Joe Potemri stated that this item will be voted on at the Town Referendum on May 20, 2019.

3. Shall the Town approve the Five (5) Year Local Capital Improvement Plan, as amended for fiscal year 2018-24?

A brief explanation was given by First Selectman Uργο regarding the Local Capital Improvement Plan (LoCIP) money. He explained that every year the Town gets money from the State for road improvements. A **MOTION** made by Joe Gross, seconded by Bill Ricker to move the question. Discussion followed, with Highway Foreman Don Hill answering questions and clarifying information. **MOTION carried.**

4. Shall the Town approve the amendments to Local Ordinances as presented and made available at the Town Clerk's office at 40 Main Street, North Stonington, CT?

Town Clerk Antoinette Pancaro gave a brief explanation regarding the first ordinance amendment dealing with the Board of Finance Alternates. She stated that the purpose of this amendment was to make the Alternate terms expire at the same time and to change the length of the term from six years to four years. First Selectman Uργο explained that the Alternate term length was being changed to four years because it was felt that a term of six years was a long time. Regarding the other ordinance amendments, he indicated that these are rescissions of ordinance sections that are not applicable any longer since North Stonington joined the Ledge Light Health District and Ledge Light collects fees. First Selectman Uργο asked for a motion from the floor for an amendment to the question for the Town Clerk to be allowed to publish an abbreviated version of the legal ad regarding the Notice of Passage of Amendments to Local Ordinances in order to save the taxpayers money in publishing this required notice. A **MOTION** made by Dan Spring, seconded by Shawn Murphy for an amendment to allow the Town Clerk to publish an abbreviated version of the legal ad for the Notice of Passage of Amendments to Local Ordinances, with the question to read "Shall the Town approve the amendments to Local Ordinances as presented and made available at the Town Clerk's office at 40 Main Street, North Stonington, CT, and for the Town Clerk to be allowed to publish an abbreviated version of the legal ad regarding the Notice of Passage of Amendments to Local Ordinances?" **MOTION TO AMEND approved unanimously. MOTION ON AMENDED QUESTION approved unanimously.**

5. To hear and act upon the following Resolution: Resolved: that the Board of Selectmen is hereby, authorized and empowered to obtain loans at current interest rates for loans to municipalities in anticipation of the receipt of tax collections and in anticipation of the receipt of federal and/or state grants with respect to a project or program on such terms and conditions as follows: (a) the amount borrowed shall not exceed \$1,000,000, at any one time; and (b) the Board

of Finance shall receive, as early as possible, prior notification of any borrowing? The Board of Selectmen is further authorized and empowered to execute any and all documents necessary and required.

A **MOTION** made by Shawn Murphy, seconded by Nick Mullane to move the question. First Selectman Urgo gave background information regarding this resolution. He explained that this item appears every year at the Annual Town Meeting, and the intent of this resolution is in the event of an emergency, it gives the Board of Selectmen the ability to quickly obtain money. **MOTION carried.**

6. Shall the Town of North Stonington donate \$40,000 to Avalonia Land Trust for the purchase of permanent open space parcels on Miller Road and Puttker Road from the town's Land Acquisition Fund?

A **MOTION** made by Anne Nalwalk, seconded by Bill Ricker to move the call. First Selectman Urgo gave a presentation regarding the open space parcels on Miller Road and Puttker Road and the benefit to the Town in donating the money to Avalonia for the purchase of the parcels for permanent open space. The question was brought up as to whether this action was legal because it was not brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review. Town Attorney Nick Kepple stated that this matter did not require a Section 8-24 review because the Town was not acquiring the land, which is what Section 8-24 deals with in its content. Discussion and questions followed. A **MOTION TO AMEND** the item on the call made by Shawn Murphy, seconded by Patricia Turner to change "Avalonia Land Trust" in the question to its correct legal name "Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc." The question shall read: "Shall the Town of North Stonington donate \$40,000 to Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. for the purchase of permanent open space parcels on Miller Road and Puttker Road from the town's Land Acquisition Fund?" Shawn Murphy wanted to change the language at the end of the question to read "from an additional appropriation," instead of "from the town's Land Acquisition Fund." It was noted that the motion to amend the question to change Avalonia to its correct legal name was already made and seconded, and additional language cannot be added to that amendment. First Selectman Urgo explained that to change the question to reflect obtaining the money from an additional appropriation was not correct. He strongly emphasized that the time was taken to make sure that this matter went through the proper legal process and that the question to be voted on was completely legal and the correct action to be taken. **MOTION TO AMEND QUESTION carried.** There was commentary that there were still questions and concerns regarding this matter. **MOTION TO TABLE THE QUESTION** made by Shawn Murphy, seconded by Nick Mullane. Vote by a show of hands was 35 YES, 29 NO. **MOTION TO TABLE approved.** Item Number 6 was tabled.

Moderator Joe Potemri adjourned the meeting to the Referendum vote of Item Number 2 on May 20, 2019. This portion of the Town meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Antoinette Pancaro
Town Clerk
Town of North Stonington