

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

APPROVED 2/26/2020

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Mr. Ben Nadeau (N), Superintendent Dr. Judith Palmer, High School Principal Mr. Ken Chichester, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, Student Representative, Ms. Madeleine Giaconia
ABSENT: Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Mr. Xavier Langendoerfer (Student Rep.)

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. She provided a brief overview pertaining to the Town of Barkhamsted's recent request for, and Regional School District No. 7's Board of Education's Motion to Deny on, the proposal for sewer easement through school property and Route 44 plaza development. The floor was opened for public in attendance to speak on Agenda items, as follows:

PUBLIC PORTION

The following list of people all spoke in support for the proposal of a sewer easement and the benefits to citizens, students, and surrounding towns, respectfully requesting that Regional School District No. 7's Board of Education reconsider their Motion to Deny taken at the December 11, 2019, regular Board of Education meeting and provide clarification along with an explanation on the basis for that decision.

Raymond P. Pech, Selectman, Town of Barkhamsted; Timothy Deschenes-Desmond, Board Member, Barkhamsted Economic Development Commission; Brian Johnson, Board Member, Barkhamsted Economic Development Commission; David R. Moulton, Board Member, Barkhamsted Board of Finance; Stephen Egbertson, Board Member, Barkhamsted Board of Finance; John A. Doyle, Board Member, Barkhamsted Board of Finance; Timothy J. Sullivan, Board Member, Barkhamsted Economic Development Commission; Sharon Neumann-Lynes, Barkhamsted resident and Senior Center President; Virginia S. Apple, Chair, Barkhamsted Conservation Commission and Barkhamsted Economic Development Commission member; Mike Stewart, Barkhamsted resident; and, Thomas X. Brodnitzki, Board Member, Barkhamsted Board of Education. Also, Donald S. Stein, First Selectman, Town of Barkhamsted, congratulated Board Members and administrative staff on once again being selected as a School of Distinction, and respectfully requested that Board Members reconsider their Motion to Deny the sewer proposal with regard to the many benefits and minimal risk presented.

Ms. Sexton Read thanked community members for attending and sharing their concerns and efforts in what they believe is in the best interest of the town and surrounding communities, and advised that she will be providing a written response to their request for clarification and basis for the decision the Board made in their Motion to Deny.

Ms. Sexton Read requested that a Motion to Amend Agenda be made for the inclusion of additional correspondence received with regard to the Sewer Proposal.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to **AMEND** Agenda for the inclusion of additional correspondence received. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2020, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale, Mr. Nadeau. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of January 29, 2020, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Mr. Nadeau, Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

At Dr. Palmer's request, Mr. Amara presented a video and the first segment of the ongoing project, "The Life of a Highlander" promoting the school and showcasing what it means to be a "highlander". Questions and brief discussion followed.

REPORTS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Ms. Giaconia provided updates on the following topics: athletic, Cross Town Challenge, Civil Rights Stories, Robotics Team qualifying for state championship, theater, NHS induction date and activities, student senate surprise squad, and outreach programs for elementary schools with emotional intelligence focus. Brief discussion and questions followed.

PRINCIPALS:

Mr. Amara updated the Board of Education pertaining to Middle School activities and Civil Rights Stories presentation, transition processes, and professional development and workshops for math teachers, Middle School Robotics, and Women in Leadership Conference.

Mr. Chichester continued with additional details pertaining to the Women's Leadership Conference, "Jane Doe No More", mindfulness training for Grade 9 students related to social and emotional learning and academic achievement, and SPR training providing skills and tools needed for referral resource in suicide prevention. Lastly, Mr. Chichester was proud to announce that for the second year in a row, Regional School District No. 7 was recognized with the high honor of being selected as a "School of Distinction". Dr. Palmer credited Mr. Chichester for his leadership and the Board for their support of the administrative team.

SUPERINTENDENT:

Dr. Palmer provided Board updates pertaining to: new Region 7 App with many thanks to Chris Fray for his work, and Rachael Vincent for her design. Agricultural Education Public Speaking contest and promotional video, administrator work on capturing school culture and "what it means to be a Highlander", marketing idea presented by Janet Carlson of the One Eleven Group to attract families into the Region 7 area to increase enrollment. Additionally, Dr. Palmer advised of Charter TV Winsted office closing and grant opportunity for a new studio in conjunction with The Gilbert School, thanking Dawn Osterman for her work in gathering pricing information and Hope Carfiro and Lisa D'Aprile for their assistance in the grant submission. Gilbert has studio space, all equipment is needed for operation, and the grant was submitted for \$140,000 for all equipment in order to continue the work. Questions and discussion followed. Dr. Palmer advised also of budget work with Mr. Gaskins and Mr. Rueckert, Special Education Director, on next year's proposal with special education costs driving the majority of the 2020-2021 budget increase. The budget proposal will be presented at the February 26, 2020, Board of Education meeting. Lastly, Dr. Palmer reported that Kindness in Motion kick off will begin on Friday, with much excitement since it has become a huge part of the school culture.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS:

Mr. Gaskins reviewed Board Transfers, Health Benefits renewal, and transportation contracts, highlighting the work completed for savings in transportation and health benefit renewals. He reviewed negotiated and final transportation proposals, and advised on the small Board Transfers requesting a Motion for approval.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** Board Transfers as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATES:

Board members shared feedback pertaining to Community Conversation – pleased with audience size and conversations, balanced approach, good turnout. Brief discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Palmer proposed Thursday, June 11, 2020, as the Graduation Date for 2020 to be held at the Warner Theater. The last school date at this time is Tuesday, June 16, Lewis Mills is graduating on June 10, 2020, and the cost of the risers can be split. Also, the Granby YMCA is available that night for Project Graduation. Questions and brief discussion with the following Motion.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **APPROVE** 2020 Graduation Date of Thursday, June 11, 2020. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale, Mr. Nadeau. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Sexton Read presented letters from both the Town of Colebrook and the Town of Winchester along with emails received and correspondence received from New Hartford First Selectman, Daniel Jerram. She confirmed that she would be crafting a response that will provide the information community members are requesting pertaining to the Motion to Deny the Sewer Proposal and the reasoning and thinking that went into that decision. Ms. Sexton Read requested Board input, and brief discussion followed on the response format and whether or not learning new facts may justify calling for reconsideration or at this time be nonproductive.

Ms. Sexton Read requested status of a Budget Timeline calendar and was advised that it is in process with dates to be confirmed.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS:

New Hartford First Selectman, Mr. Daniel Jerram, provided clarification and input regarding his correspondence submitted to Ms. Sexton Read. Mr. Jerram commended Board members for their hard work and dedication, asking that they consider their core mission of providing education to students, exercising fiscal responsibility, and collective achievement goals. He briefly shared his experiences and history with various sewer situations in his role as First Selectman for the Town of New Hartford, and asked Board members to consider the reasons why they do the work they do, as well as the process to be followed if veering from the original mandate and core mission of student education. Following brief

discussion, Board members thanked Mr. Jerram for coming to the meeting, and for his input and participation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION** for the purpose of Administrative Assistant Contract Negotiation at 8:05 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale, Mr. Nadeau. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Entered into Executive Session: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale, Mr. Nadeau, Superintendent Palmer, and Director Gaskins.

Exited Executive Session at 8:20 p.m. with the following **ACTION** on Executive Session items.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** Administrative Assistant Contract. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADJOURN** at 8:25 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa H. D'Aprile
Board Clerk