

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
FIRST INFORMAL TOWN PRESENTATION - NORFOLK
and BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
BOTELLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA
MARCH 11, 2020 – 7 p.m.

APPROVED 4/8/20

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

ABSENT: Ms. Mary Duran (B)

Ms. Sexton Read began the First Informal Town Presentation, Norfolk, of the Regional School District No. 7's Proposed 2020-2021 Budget Presentation, at 7 p.m.

Ms. Sexton Read's Power Point presentation began with highlighting historical expenditure increases, and continued with student PSAT results, testing result rankings within the Berkshire League, AP student scores, and CSDE Next Generation Accountability indicators. Budget drivers, particularly related to Special Education costs and outplacements accounting for 1.94 percent of the overall increase, along with an outline of efficiency measures, retirements and resignations were presented demonstrating Regional School District No. 7's continued ability of providing a high performing school district that meets the educational, social/emotional, and extracurricular needs of all students at an average cost and overall conservative and responsible increase. Further, Ms. Sexton Read provided an overview Object breakdown of Salaries, Benefits, Professional/Technical Services, Property Services, Other Purchased Services, Supplies, Property, Other Objects, Other Funds, Excess Cost Expenditure Offsets, Revenues and change in Average Daily Membership by Towns for a **2020-2021 Proposed Budget increase of \$624,367, or 2.90%. Regular Education Program expenditures account for 0.96, and Special Education expenditures account for 1.94 percent of the total 2.90% increase.** Ms. Sexton Read concluded that Regional School District No. 7 continues to provide a rigorous and comprehensive educational program connecting students with their school and passions, an outstanding facility at costs in line with statewide average and per pupil expenditures in the lower half of the Berkshire League, thanking community members and expressing her appreciation for their support on behalf of all students within the District.

PUBLIC: Questions were addressed by Ms. Sexton Read, Dr. Palmer, Mr. Gaskins, and Mr. Amara from community members pertaining to: reduced enrollment and staff requirements, achievement and A/P opportunities, teacher negotiations, Middle School Math testing results, regionalization, and public relations. Requests were made for copies of the Budget Presentation to be made available at Town Halls. Discussion followed, and both Ms. Sexton Read and Dr. Palmer thanked community members for their attendance and support.

INFORMAL TOWN OF NORFOLK PRESENTATION concluded at 7:40 p.m.

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 7:48 p.m., AND requested that a **MOTION** be made for the inclusion of Correspondence Item to the Agenda.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **INCLUDE** Correspondence Item to Agenda. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC PORTION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2020, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2020, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Mr. Ben Nadeau. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Middle School Principal, Mr. Fran Amara, provided Board updates pertaining to: SEL RULER Conference, K-12 Mathematics Professional Development Day, incoming student planning and parent night, Grade 8/9 transitions, incoming student schedules and parent night. Questions and discussion followed.

High School Principal, Mr. Ken Chichester, provided Board updates pertaining to: National Honor Society, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Training for students and parents, new high school schedule, and A/P course selections for next year. Questions and discussion followed.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Palmer provided Board updates pertaining to: generous and very kind donation of \$10,000 from the Estate of Russell O'Connor of Norfolk for Band Program, Middle School Math, Kindness in Motion projects and planned celebrations, concluding with a coronavirus update, latest information provided by State Department and Torrington Area Health along with preparation plans in the event of school closure, advising that she feels very comfortable with the level of communication being received by both Departments. Dr. Palmer requested a MOTION be made by the Board for the ACCEPTANCE of the Estate of Russell O'Connor's most generous \$10,000 donation.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **GRATEFULLY ACCEPT** the donation for the Band Program from the Estate of Russell O'Connor. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Gaskins began his report by thanking Assistant to the Superintendent, Cheryl DePaoli, Assistant Finance Director, Lisa D'Aprile, and Dr. Palmer for their dedication and work efforts in the 2020-2021 Budget Presentation development, and continued with Board updates pertaining to: current budget, proposed budget, facility cleaning, transportation contract. Questions and brief discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Updates: None.

Budget deliberations: Board questions were addressed by both Dr. Palmer and Mr. Gaskins, followed by Budget discussion, and both Dr. Palmer and Mr. Gaskins advised Board members that they would be happy to respond via e-mail/phone should any further concerns or questions need consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gaskins reviewed the requirement of annual Healthy Food Certification and following a brief discussion, and requested the Board make the ensuing MOTIONS.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ACCEPT LANGUAGE FOR HEALTHY FOOD OPTION as follows:** Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **ACCEPT LANGUAGE FOR COMBINED FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXEMPTIONS as follows:** : The Board of Education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that

do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Sexton Read provided copies of Highlander Basketball Camp letter requesting gymnasium use from July 13 to July 17, 2020, for Basketball Camp, and the following MOTION was made.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** Highlander Basketball Camp Director request for gymnasium use. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Sexton Read, with a heavy heart, gratitude, appreciation, and very best wishes, shared Letters of Retirement from High School Principal, Mr. Ken Chichester; Special Education Department Chair, Ms. Mary Chichester; Guidance Department Chair, Ms. Johanna DeZurik; and, High School English Teacher, Ms. Brigid Stearns. Dr. Palmer and Mr. Amara spoke of extraordinary leadership, remarkable role models, mentorships, dedication to the neediest and most vulnerable students, devotion to student learning and relationship building, and with great sadness but also very best wishes for long, rewarding, and happy retirements, the following Motions were made.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ACCEPT** with gratitude, grateful appreciation and very best wishes, High School Principal, Mr. Ken Chichester’s, Letter of Retirement. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ACCEPT** with gratitude, grateful appreciation, and very best wishes, Special Education Department Chair, Ms. Mary Chichester’s, Letter of Retirement. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **ACCEPT** with gratitude, grateful appreciation, and very best wishes, Guidance Department Chair, Ms. Johanna DeZurik’s, Letter of Retirement. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to **ACCEPT** with gratitude, grateful appreciation and very best wishes, High School English Teacher, Ms. Brigid Stearns’, Letter of Retirement. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS: None.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to **CANCEL** next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting on March 25, 2020. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADJOURN** at 8:50 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa H. D’Aprile, Board Clerk