

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
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BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
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5.27.20

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MAY 13, 2020 – 6 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Mary Duran (B), 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

ABSENT: Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara

PUBLIC: Questions and comments from the Public can be sent to this email address: publicinput@nwr7.org and will be read by the Chair and addressed where possible.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Minutes of April 08, 2020, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **APPROVE** Public Hearing on Proposed 2020-2021 District Budget of April 27, 2020, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

REPORTS

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

In his absence, Dr. Palmer provided Board updates for Middle School Principal, Mr. Amara, pertaining to: supports for school spirit, SEL video check-ins, teacher appreciation and strategies, Grade 6 and 8 transition planning, and close parental contacts with teachers, support staff, and administration.

Mr. Chichester, High School Principal, provided Board updates pertaining to: changes and differences with AP on-line test administration, school spirit efforts, Happy Birthday visits, Surprise Squad opportunities, cap and gown deliveries and virtual meetings with seniors, maintaining virtual contact with students with "office hours" opportunities to address questions and/or concerns that students may have, and this year's special graduation plans. Questions and discussion followed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Palmer provided Board updates pertaining to: Job Posting/High School Principal, and advised of a survey sent to all staff members for their input on the impossible job of trying to replace Ken. Dr. Palmer continued with her presentation outlining broad ideas and thinking on what it will take for school reopening and what it may look like for the 2020-2021 school year, covering 5 basic topics: school operations, supporting the whole child, personnel, academics, distance learning and general considerations. Dr. Palmer advised that specific plans will be developed once guidance is received from the Governor's Office. Discussion followed on perspective and budgetary requirements in maintaining academic integrity along with the need for flexibility in planning and preparing for the unknown in order to respond appropriately and thoughtfully to unexpected events.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Gaskins provided Board updates pertaining to: transportation contracts, facility management, COVID-19 budget impact, and Board Transfer Report review from January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020. Questions and discussion followed pertaining to budget management along with proactive steps for unexpected expenditures and possible further reductions.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Discussion

Budget discussion included items pertaining to: budget reductions reducing overall increase of 2.90 percent to 2.43 percent with special education and regular education breakdown, town input considerations, local Boards of Education efforts to relieve possible financial pressures on member towns, academic integrity concerns, Math Interventionist position, unknown and unanticipated expenses, budget offset for 2021-2022 school year, emails received from member towns' Board of Finance Chairs, possibility of larger credit line accessibility during summer months if necessary, savings due to school closure, student engagement, ideas to communicate to community members of ongoing school projects and work being done within the building and from home for school operation and student support, town tax collection concerns, extraordinary and unsettling, unrepresented times with potential for long term economic ramifications. Following questions and extensive discussion, the Board agreed and requested that Dr. Palmer and Mr. Gaskins, in an effort to maintain the critical Math Interventionist position, provide additional reductions for review at the May 27, 2020, Board of Education meeting when, at that time, the Board will vote to Adopt the Proposed Budget for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Palmer thanked Board members for their support and opportunity of saving critical Math Interventionist position. She and Mr. Gaskins will make every effort to provide, for Board review, additional reductions that will not have a direct effect on student learning and safety.

NEW BUSINESS

In an effort to provide a broader understanding, reduce stress and fear during these **unprecedented** times, and engage in a collaborative conversation pertaining to potential challenges and long term ramifications, continuing to provide the best education possible for all students during the pandemic, Ms. Sexton Read advised that she would like to invite member Town Officials and Board of Finance Chairs to join Dr. Palmer, Mr. Gaskins, she, and other interested RSD#7 Board members in a meeting to discuss what the future may look like and ways to assist all member towns in working together to prepare for the unexpected challenges in the education, health, and safety of our children and our communities. Brief discussion followed, and Ms. Sexton Read advised that she will prepare the invitation for a meeting next week prior to the next RSD#7, Board of Education, meeting on May 27, 2020.

Authorization to make end-of-year adjustments within the 2019-2020 budget limits, allowing Mr. Gaskins to adjust budget to reflect the necessary end-of-year expenditures and accomplish facility and other work.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **AUTHORIZE** Dr. Palmer and Director Gaskins to make end-of-year adjustments as necessary within the 2019-2020 budget limits. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Authorization to borrow \$250,000 in anticipation of receipts. Following Board discussion, and in an effort to prepare for potential and unexpected pandemic related expenses, the following Motion was made:

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **AUTHORIZE** Director Gaskins to borrow up to \$500,000 in anticipation of receipts. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Authorization for Superintendent to fill vacancies already approved by the Board of Education.

MOTION by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **AUTHORIZE** Dr. Palmer to fill vacancies already approved by the Board of Education. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Appointment of Auditors.

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to **APPOINT** KING, KING and ASSOCIATES, Certified Public Accountants, as auditors for the 2019-2020 school year. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Dr. Palmer took a moment to express grateful appreciation and thanks to Mary Chichester, for her great work and dedication as a Special Education Teacher, Department Head, and STEP Principal. She will be greatly missed in her many roles at RSD#7, and is wished the best in her retirement.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT – Ms. Sexton Read advised that no other public input via email address was received.

Ms. Sexton Read advised that she will be drafting correspondence to general public advising of the budget process this year due to the pandemic and Executive Orders received by the Governor, and will encourage anyone to submit thoughts/feedback via the email address available. Also, the first Board of Education meeting in June will include honoring the Top 10 Students.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **ADJOURN** at 8:32 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Mr. Nadeau. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa H. D'Aprile
Board Clerk