

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 – 6 p.m.
Newbury Library Media Center

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), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Superintendent Dr. Judith Palmer, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Student Representative Ms. Alexa Carroll

ABSENT: Mr. Xavier Langerdoerfer

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

PUBLIC PORTION

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Minutes of February 24, 2021, correcting the error in spelling of Ms. Sexton Read's name from Saxton to Sexton on Page 2. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **APPROVE** Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of March 03, 2021, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS

STUDENT REPORTS

Student representative, Alexa Carroll, provided Board of Education updates, including updates from Xavier, pertaining to: boys and girls basketball, undefeated swim team, and general excitement at beginning full, in-person learning starting next week. Alexa advised that there are some student concerns regarding spacing in the classrooms and lunch waves, however, the majority of students are very excited about returning to school full time in-person. Additionally, Alexa shared SAT information and very helpful studying guides and concerns on what finals might look like this year. Discussion followed, and Ms. Sexton Read expressed appreciation for the feedback, student enthusiasm, and concern pertaining to finals, and Mr. Amara provided clarification on student classroom and desk placement.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Mr. Amara provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: further clarification and additional preparation and transition in anticipation of the return to full time in-person learning on March 15, 2021, and custodial staff work to prepare classrooms, SBAC testing schedules, and incoming Grade 7 special education transition planning already being addressed by Special Education Supervisor, Steve Carvalho. Mr. Amara advised there is a plan in place for lunch waves utilizing outdoor spaces whenever possible, and he is very happy with the flexibility and efforts being made by students, staff and families working together. Brief questions and discussion followed.

Mr. Franklin provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: Video reminder prepared by Andy Bakulski regarding COVID healthy practices for students returning to full time in-person learning, AP testing coordinator, Trina McHugh's work coordinating AP testing this year, NGSS schedule, and SAT final preparations underway. Mr. Franklin also advised of special events preparation for the Class of 2021 with details on contingency plans to follow. Questions and discussion followed.

Ms. Sexton Read expressed sincere appreciation and thanks for the challenging work that administration, teachers, and staff have been engaged in to accommodate the COVID pandemic response in addition to their regular, responsibilities and duties.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Palmer began her report with a Power Point Presentation outlining the creative solutions and four-year plan in place to accommodate the mandated High School Reform 25 credit requirement beginning with 2023 student graduates. Dr. Palmer articulated a complex problem that was solved without excessive hiring and utilizing current employees to limit budget impact. Questions and discussion followed pertaining to: complexities of the high school schedule, individualized student programs, internships, independent studies, credit recovery, credit enhancement opportunities, unanticipated Governor Executive Orders, future staffing needs, CAPSTONE credits, shifts in staff, minimal budget impact, and the unknown possible student learning gaps and mental health and wellness needs that may present next year. Dr. Palmer also updated the Board on staff vaccines, with sincere thanks to Andy Bakulski for his work in coordinating this effort. Lastly, Dr. Palmer enthusiastically advised that KINDNESS IN MOTION project process has begun, and she is very happy and optimistic with the number of applications received despite the pandemic.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Gaskins provided the Board of Education with a review of reductions made in the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget, reducing the overall increase from an already responsible 1.85 percent increase to a 1.50 percent increase. Adjustments were made in health insurance, level change, Sprint revenue, and an additional retirement reduction. Questions and brief discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS UPDATES

BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Ms. Sexton Read began budget deliberations acknowledging the reductions in expenses and assessments, and additional Board questions pertaining to auto and vehicle repair, VOAG bus replacement and bus rental expense for event attendance, copier lease information, and custodial repair equipment line items were addressed by Mr. Gaskins and Dr. Palmer. Discussion followed on member town assessments, thoughts on potential long range radical changes as requested by Board of Finance members at Special Meeting on March 3, 2021, and concern with voter turnout due to possible COVID restrictions. Board members shared their overall consensus that the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget is a reflection of a high-value, high-quality education with costs well in-line with the statewide averages.

NEW BUSINESS

HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD CERTIFICATION

Ms. Sexton Read reviewed the Healthy Food Options Motions required for the annual Healthy Food Certification Statement and Food & Beverage Exemptions as provided by Ms. Becky Terrell, Ed Advance Food Director. After a brief discussion, the following Motions were made:

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, 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, 2021, through June 30, 2022. 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. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Duran, 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. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Palmer advised that a Letter of Retirement has been received from Allison Kodz, World Language Department, effective as of June 30, 2021, and that Allison will be very much missed.

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **ACCEPT** with gratitude and best wishes for Allison's years of service and dedication. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **CANCEL** Regular Board of Education meeting on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **RESCHEDULE** Regular Board of Education meeting from Wednesday, April 14, 2021, to Wednesday, April 7, 2021, to follow the Colebrook Informal Town Presentation. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **RESCHEDULE** Regular Board of Education meeting from Wednesday, April 28, 2021, to Monday, April 19, 2021, immediately following the Budget Hearing in order to Adopt Budget to go to District Budget Meeting.

PUBLIC

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **ADJOURN** at 8:03 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa H. D'Aprile, Board Clerk

