

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 03, 2021 – 6 p.m.  
**Newbury Library Media Center/Virtual**  
**APPROVED 3/10/2021**

**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), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Superintendent Dr. Judith Palmer, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins  
**ABSENT:** Ms. Mary Duran (B)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Ms. Sexton Read invited represented town officials to provide their input and/or comments pertaining to the District's 2021-2022 Proposed Budget. In attendance virtually were: Ms. Regina Wexler, New Hartford Board of Finance, Mr. J. Michael Sconyers, Norfolk Board of Finance, and Mr. Matthew Riiska, Norfolk First Selectman. Mr. Richard Winn, Barkhamsted Board of Finance attended in-person.

Member town officials unanimously shared concerns pertaining to the substantial decline in enrollment and continual increases in the District's budget, which, despite the excellent performance of the District's student population and education received, they feel is unsustainable. Encouragement for creative resolutions to address the enrollment reductions were advised with perhaps some radical changes if necessary, and Ms. Sexton Read and Dr. Palmer advised of reductions that were made in the Middle School staff and teams this year along with staffing changes to accommodate the mandated High School 25 credit requirement. Questions and discussion followed, and Ms. Sexton Read expressed sincere appreciation for their input and participation, advising that the Board will continue their budget review process with thoughtful consideration for any possible reconfigurations. She advised that particular concern with this budget is the unknown, following the significant educational COVID disruption, of the supports our students may need in the fall, and it is the Board's goal to be prepared to address those needs.

Review of the Budget Timeline followed, discussion pertaining to virtual/in-person Member Town Budget Presentation, and Ms. Sexton Read again thanked everyone for joining and expressed appreciation of their sharing viewpoints and community concerns.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED BUDGET**

General Board discussion followed and questions were answered by Dr. Palmer and Mr. Gaskins pertaining to: regionalization opportunities, per pupil expenditures, Middle School staff decreases and shifts in staffing to accommodate high school credit requirements, reduction in health insurance cap, additional retirement, A/P opportunities, special education costs, teacher schedules, additional Middle School Math support, revenues, and some line item clarifications pertaining to legal fees, general summer work, Appendix A, FFA bus, level and change. Dr. Palmer advised of budget reductions that can be made for the additional retirement and revised health insurance cap and outlined the net town assessment decreases.

A review of the workshop budget process was provided by Ms. Sexton Read along with the status of the Budget Timeline and what still needs to be determined following feedback from town officials and official Referendum determination.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **ADJOURN** at 7:40 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.  
**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa H. D'Aprile  
Board Clerk

**Next Board of Education Meeting: March 10, 2021, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board of Education meeting.**