

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7  
ROBERTA S. OHOTNICKY LITTLE THEATER  
**DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING and BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**  
MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.

**APPROVED 5/12/2021**

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

**ABSENT:** None.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the **DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING** to order at 7:11 p.m. requesting an Amendment to the Agenda to reflect three additional Motions that had not been made at the April 07, 2021, regular Board of Education meeting: (1) Adoption of Budget to take to Budget Hearing on April 19, 2021; (2) Adoption of Call of Budget Hearing, and; (3) Adoption of Referendum Question.

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **AMENDA THE AGENDA** to reflect: (1) Adoption of Budget to take to Budget Hearing on April 19, 2021; (2) Adoption of Call of Budget Hearing, and; (3) Adoption of Referendum Question. 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.**

**ADOPTION OF BUDGET TO TAKE TO BUDGET HEARING APRIL 19, 2021.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **ADOPT** Budget To Take To Annual District Budget Hearing on April 19, 2021, as presented with a 1.50 percent increase. 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.**

**ADOPTION OF CALL OF BUDGET HEARING.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Bell, for **ADOPTION OF CALL OF BUDGET HEARING** as presented by Ms. Sexton Read, “The electors and those entitled to vote in town meetings in the towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, and Norfolk, Connecticut, are hereby notified and warned that a District Hearing for the Regional School District No. 7, will be held on Monday, April 19, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theater of the High School Building at which meeting the Proposed Budget for the Fiscal year commencing July 1, 2021, will be presented. Any person may recommend the inclusion or deletion of expenditures at such meeting. The annual Meeting of said District will be held on Monday, May 3, 2021, at 7:00 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.**

Dr. Palmer provided confirmation that the meeting had been posted appropriately in all towns, and Return of Notice certifying that the Notice of the District Budget Meeting for Regional School District No. 7 to be held on Monday, May 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theater was posted on the public signposts in the Towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford., and Norfolk, Connecticut, and will be signed and dated by Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier.

**ADOPTION OF REFERENDUM QUESTION**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADOPT REFERENDUM QUESTION**, “Shall the Regional School District No. 7 Annual Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2021, be accepted?” “YES” vote is for approval, and “NO” vote is for disapproval. 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.**

**PUBLIC PORTION:** There was no Public in Attendance, therefore, the Proposed 2021-2022 Budget was not presented, and Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read closed the District Budget Hearing at 7:17 p.m. and Called to Order the Regular Board of Education Meeting at that time.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION** by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** New Hartford Informal Budget Presentation of April 06, 2021, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** Barkhamsted Informal Budget Presentation of April 06, 2021, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** Colebrook Informal Budget Presentation of April 07, 2021, as presented. 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.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes of April 07, 2021, as presented. 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.**

**REPORTS:**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

No updates due to school vacation closure week, however, one question pertaining to contact tracing and fully vaccinated staff was addressed along with possible student vaccination clinic with more information to follow.

**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT:**

Mr. Gaskins provided an update on health benefits consortium increases for the 2021-2022 school year and an adjusted renewal rate from the tentative 6.95 percent increase to a commitment of 5.36 percent. He is very pleased with the work of Brown and Brown, and advised that this will reduce the 2021-2022 expenditure budget from a 1.50 percent increase to a 1.33 percent increase and overall assessments to member towns from a .57 percent increase to a .38 percent increase. Questions and discussion followed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**UPDATES:**

**BOARD DISCUSSION ON 2021-2022 DISTRICT HEARING BUDGET:**

Ms. Sexton Read advised that correspondence was received from the New Hartford Board of Finance requesting that Regional School District No. 7 take dramatic action in reducing the 2021-2022 school year budget due to declining enrollments. No other correspondence has been received from other member towns, and based on the responses at the individual town presentations, the 2021-2022 budget was well received. Discussion followed, and all Board members were in agreement that the 2021-2022 Budget Presentation is well constructed, with a modest increase and does reflect changes due to reduced enrollment. There was concern expressed that students, due to the pandemic and dramatic changes experience during this past year, may have unpredictable needs requiring unprecedented support during the 2021-2022 school year, and all were in agreement that now is not the time to make radical budget reductions.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ADOPTION OF BUDGET TO TAKE TO ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING – MAY 3, 2021:**

The Board agreed to move forward to Referendum with a Proposed Budget increase of 1.33 percent for the 2021-2022 school year.

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADOPT** the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget of \$22,354,846 **TO TAKE TO THE ANNUAL DISTRICT BUDGET MEETING** on Monday, May 3, 2021. This represents a 1.33 percent increase over the 2020-2021 budget expenditures. 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.**

**ADOPTION OF CALL OF ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING WITH REFERENDUM:**

**Notice of DISTRICT MEETING as read by Ms. Sexton Read:**

“A District Meeting of Regional School District No. 7 will be held on Monday, May 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., at the school building in Winsted, Connecticut, for the following business:

- 1) To authorize the Regional Board of Education to apply for, accept, and expend, in addition to the regular school budget, any state, federal, or private grant money which may be available for special purposes during the fiscal year 2021-2022.
- 2) To accept the annual budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2021. Copies of the budget are on hand in the offices of the Town Clerks of each of the member towns.

**The Board of Education for Regional School District No. 7 has designated that the vote on the motion to adopt the budget shall be by a “yes” or “no” vote on the optical scan machines in each of the member towns on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, with hours to be set by individual towns as established by state statutes.**

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021, at Winsted, Connecticut, and signed by Molly Sexton Read, Chair, Board of Education, Regional School District No. 7.”

**MOTION** by Ms. Duran, seconded Mr. Gauthier, to **ADOPT** Call for Annual District Meeting on Monday, May 3, 2021, 7:00 p.m. in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theater, as presented by Mr. Gauthier. 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.**

**AUTHORIZATION OF EXPLANATORY TEXT FOR 2021-2022 BUDGET:**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson , seconded by Ms. Fragale , to **AUTHORIZE** the Secretary of the Board of Education to prepare and cause to be printed and disseminated a concise explanatory text with respect to the 2021-2022 budget referendum question that will be submitted to the District’s voters, subject to any necessary further legal review and approval by District legal counsel, and which shall otherwise be prepared, printed, and disseminated in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 9-369b and the Secretary’s discretion, and to be amended as necessary. 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.**

**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS:**

Following Mr. Gaskins’ recommendation, the following Motion was made:

**MOTION** by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPOINT** KING, KING and ASSOCIATES, Certified Public Accountants, as auditors for the 2020-2021 school year. 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.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADJOURN** at 7:41 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Jerram, 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