

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021 – 6 p.m.
Newbury Library Media Center
APPROVED 9/22/2021

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kimberly Crone (N), Ms. Lisa Ann Fragale (C), Superintendent of Schools Judith A. Palmer, Director of Finance and Operations, Mr. James Gaskins

ABSENT: Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C)

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

Ms. Sexton Read, Board Chair, opened the meeting by reading a statement reminding attendees that Public Comment has always been, and will always be, an important part of the RSD7 Board of Education meetings. The intention is to provide community members with the opportunity to speak about a decision that the Board may be considering. It is not a public forum. In her responsibilities for the running of an efficient and effective meeting, comments will be limited to 2-3 minutes.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Gina Maroney (NH) commented on senior parking and inquired about an opportunity to paint spots.

Rebecca Welsh (NH) expressed concern about adults being asked to wear masks when entering the building and students' mask-related needs while in school.

Denise Mancini (Winsted) stated concerns about students wearing masks while in school.

Denise Wells (B) voiced concerns about reliable COVID information and requested consideration of a compromise for students wearing masks while in school.

Sydney Wells (B) expressed concerns associated with the mask mandate and questioned how the schools will handle students who will not wear a mask.

Rose Yacawych (B) cited several studies regarding the effect of COVID on children and offered information on the efficacy of the vaccines.

Cari Boucher (NH) commented on the vaccine mandate for school employees and asked the Board to consider a compromise for students wearing masks while in school.

Jennifer Iacino (B) expressed concerns regarding the mask mandate and encouraged the Board to consider a compromise for wearing masks while in school.

Joe Bieluch (NH) voiced concerns about a violation of his freedoms as an American. He questioned the health experts and the effectiveness of wearing a mask.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: by Mr. Jerram and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to APPROVE the Board of Education Minutes of July 14, 2021, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, and Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REPORTS:

Middle School: Mr. Amara provided an overview of the 7th Grade Orientation to be held on Thursday the 26th. He spoke about the Administrator's Retreat and the review of school and district goals. He also provided an overview of the Professional Development days with a focus on continuous adult learning. He also provided some highlights from the New Staff Orientation.

High School: Mr. Franklin reported on the Link Crew's highly successful Freshmen Orientation with 150 students in attendance. He provide an overview of the start of the school year in the following areas; fall sports, the use of lockers, student activities, and the new schedule. He shared information about the new online NWR7 apparel website, "Sideline Store" through BSN Sports that will launch on September 3rd.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Palmer stated her appreciation for the NWR7 school community, including the members of the public in attendance. She also expressed her gratitude for the NWR7 administrative team, teachers, and support staff for the educational experience they provide our students and their support of one another.

Dr. Palmer expressed her appreciation for the facilities crew for preparing our schools for the new school year. Health and safety of staff and students remain the first priority. All of the COVID mitigation strategies are in place and the staff feels well prepared to handle COVID-related concerns.

RSD7 will offer professional development in the area of adult learning in the coming year. George Mitesser, HS Math Department Chair, will provide professional development for all middle school math teachers, including special education teachers, before the start of school. Mr. Mitesser will also attend PLC meetings, discuss instructional strategies, and review learning outcomes with the middle school math teachers and district administrators.

The Federal Government awarded \$213,128 to RSD7 in American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding. There are five categories that qualify for funding: Learning Acceleration, Renewal and Enrichment; Family and Community Connections; Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and Staff; Strategic Use of Technology including Professional Development; and Building Safe and Healthy Schools. Learning outcomes for our Middle School mathematics students have been a consistent concern over the past five years. Funding from the grant will fund Mr. Mitesser's extra time in his expanded role in the Middle School Math Professional Learning Community through 2024. Funding will also support Mr. Knox's role as ELA and SEL

support for students in the Middle School through 2023. Money for supplies and a new math textbook were also included in the grant. This plan will be re-evaluated every six months and can be adjusted going forward, should student needs change.

HIRING REPORT: Michael Bucci was hired as a High School Art Teacher. Mr. Bucci comes to NWR7 with six successful years as an art teacher in Litchfield. He replaces Bridget Grady who resigned.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS:

Mr. Gaskins expressed his appreciation of the Business Office and the Facilities Crew. He provided an update on his annual Back to School Transportation Meeting and an overview of the food services program. He also secured tents for the use of outdoor space for lunch and mask breaks. The Business Office is also preparing for the yearly audit.

OLD BUSINESS: Ms. Sexton Read updated the Board on her invitation to the Region 7 elementary school superintendents, Board of Education chairs, and Board of Finance chairs to meet and discuss possible district efficiencies. The meeting will be held on September 9th.

NEW BUSINESS: None

CORRESPONDENCE: Ms. Sexton Read acknowledged an email resignation from High School Art Teacher, Bridget Grady. **MOTION** by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Bell, to accept the resignation with regret and appreciation for a job well done. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Denise Wells (B) offered a contribution of pocket United States Constitutions for all 11th grade students for the 2021 school year and every five years moving forward.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion and possible action on the Food Services Contract and invite Dr. Palmer and Mr. Gaskins to join. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Exited **Executive Session** at 7:12 p.m.

Action on Executive Session Items: MOTION: by Mr. Gauthier seconded by Ms. Crone, to accept the terms of the Food Services contract as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Noel Gauthier and seconded by Rob Jerram to **ADJOURN** at 7:14 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale NAY None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Next Meeting: September 8, 2021

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith A. Palmer, Ed.D.