

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7**  
NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**  
March 8, 2023 – 6 p.m.  
**APPROVED** at 3/22/2023 BOE MEETING

**PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Lisa Fragale(C), Superintendent Dr. Judith Palmer, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins. Student Representatives: Ms. Fiona Leon, and Ms. Morgan Plitt.  
**Absent:** None

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the Board of Education meeting to order at 5:58 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** the February 23, 2023 Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED.**

**REPORTS**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

Ms. Leon provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: Ms. Leon expressed the students are half way through quarter #3 in the academic year. SAT and AP testing and are coming up soon. NWR7 had FFA recognition week which consisted of pajama day and daily facts about agriculture communicated through the announcements. Choir and band are practicing musical pieces for the spring concert. Theater is rehearsing for Mamma Mia. Winter sports are coming to an end. Swim finished the 10th season as undefeated and won the 11th consecutive season Berkshire League title. Spring sports are beginning - track and field, softball, baseball, and tennis.

Ms. Plitt provided the Board of Education updates pertaining to: Ms. Plitt expressed that the Seniors are narrowing down their college and career options. Seniors are continuing to apply for scholarships. Winter sports are coming to an end. Swim and boys' basketball are currently competing in States. Girls basketball finished in the quarter finals. Spring sports are beginning meetings and practices- track and field, softball, baseball and tennis. The band is preparing for the Tri-Town Band Concert at the Warner Theatre on March 28, 2023 and the spring concert. The Foreign Language Society is preparing for their cook-offs.

**PRINCIPAL REPORTS**

Mr. Amara provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: In reviewing the Math Interventionist Program, the Middle School team evaluated the data from the past few years and the current year, and concluded there is still a strong need for the Math Interventionist for 2023-2024. As the school year progresses, the Middle School team has been identifying students that are in need of math intervention, placing these students in small groups and working on individualized skill gaps, yet these students are still attending their regular scheduled Math class. Liz Wilcox is the Math Interventionist. She is currently working with a targeted group of 7th and 8th grade students to prepare them for Smarter Balance Assessment. She is pulling these students during study hall time to work on specific skill gaps. Ms. Wilcox is also teaching an advanced section of Algebra I, and collaborating the math curriculum with the Special Education Department. Mr. Amara briefed the BOE that after attending a meeting with the surrounding elementary school principals, they established there is a definite need for this Math Interventionist moving forward. Mr. Amara expressed when the targeted 6th graders transition into 7th grade, the Math Interventionist will be part of the students' schedule, over and above their typical math class. The transition of 8th into 9th grade, all course selections are complete. The Middle School counselors are collaborating with the High School to create a smooth transition. The Special Education team is meeting with the incoming identified 6th graders through completions of IEPs and PPTs. The NWR7 Special Education team is beginning to build the relationships with the incoming 6th graders and their families. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. Franklin provided the Board of Education updates pertaining to: Mr. Franklin discussed AP and SAT testing. The High School is preparing for 12 AP exams. 135 juniors will be participating in the SAT testing. Graduation is Wednesday, June 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Biweekly Graduation planning meetings are in process. Scott Bristol, of Internet Safety Concepts, will be presenting to the Middle School and High School in April. Mr. Bristol will be discussing smart online choices, social media - appropriate use and awareness, and the impact of student communication online. In addition, Mr. Bristol offers a virtual

parent webinar. He discusses applications, programs, and online trends, and how parents can set internet boundaries. Choices Matter presentation for juniors and seniors is happening in April. This presentation takes place prior to prom season to remind students to make safe decisions and practice safe driving. Career Day is happening in late April. Sophomores and juniors will participate. The School Counseling Department has done a tremendous job in recruiting individuals from different career clusters. Northwest Hills Prevention Council will be presenting a workshop on positive childhood experiences, school and community involvement and discuss different youth groups and community organizations. Brief discussion followed.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

Dr. Palmer provided Board of Education updates:

Teacher Evaluation Flexibilities: The CSDE Board of Education is in the process of updating the teacher evaluation plan. While the main components of the design are completed, it is still in draft form. The state is recommending that districts continue with the current flexibilities for the 2023-24 school year. The Professional Development Committee already approved the flexibilities for next year, and Dr. Palmer asked the BOE to vote to continue with our current Teacher Evaluation Plan for another year.

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** the extension of the Teacher Evaluation Flexibilities for the 2023-24 school year, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Kindness in Motion 8.0 has kicked off! Dr. Palmer thanked Principal Amara, Principal Franklin for their assistance. She thanked Mr. Stapleton for filming the video every year. She expressed her excitement to learn about the students' ideas for this year. Dr. Palmer thanked Principal Franklin for all his work on The Food Festival which is set for June 3, 2023. This is a significant fundraiser for Kindness in Motion.

Budget Adjustments: Dr. Palmer discussed that there was a teacher resignation that altered the budget. This resignation position will not be replaced, decreasing the budget salary and benefit line items. There was an update to the Excess Cost offset. A CT House Bill #6671 was passed increasing the Excess Cost reimbursement. Dr. Palmer adjusted the Excess Cost offset. Next, there was contract revenue from T-Mobile that is no longer available. There was also a reduction to student transportation. The net effect of all these changes result in a budget increase of 2.42% with an assessment increase of 2.79%. Brief discussion followed.

#### **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

Mr. Gaskins provided Board of Education updates: Mr. Gaskins thanked Dr. Palmer for the budget preparation, while he was absent due of illness. Legislation changed to FREE School Lunch beginning March 1, 2023. Another legislation was the styrofoam ban in the school lunch program- NWR7 does not use any styrofoam in the school lunch program. The Diesel Fuel Bid is complete, which is a consortium through EdAdvance. NWR7 locked into a fixed price per gallon for 2023-2024. Currently working on the electric bid. NWR7 is currently locked in until December 2023. Vo-Ag Bus bid was awarded after placing it out for bid two times. The order was placed for the Vo-Ag bus and estimated delivery is late September. Currently working on a copier bid. Vo-Ag building committee had the first meeting regarding the roof project. Mr. Gaskins and the architect are currently reviewing the State School Construction Grant.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**UDATES:** None

**BUDGET DELIBERATIONS:** Ms. Sexton Read reviewed questions that she had emailed Mr. Gaskins. Questions pertaining to the Math Teacher salary line item, the electricity increase line, the athletic transportation line, and the Art Department increase in materials. Mr. Gauthier questioned the level and change salary line item. Discussion followed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Jess Varley's Letter of Resignation:** Ms. Varley will be resigning her position on June 30, 2023. She is relocating.

**Motion:** Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ACCEPT** Ms. Varley's letter of resignation, as presented. The BOE thanks Ms. Varley and wishes, with much gratitude, all the best in her relocation and thanks her for many dedicated years of service. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to ADJOURN at 6:51 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett  
Board Clerk