

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
ROBERTA S. OHOTNICKY LITTLE THEATER
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2023 – 7 p.m.
APPROVED MAY 10, 2023 BOE MEETING

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (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, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins. Student Representatives: Ms. Fiona Leon, and Ms. Morgan Plitt.

Absent: Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the March 22, 2023 First Informal Budget Presentation-Colebrook Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale.

NAY: None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** the March 22, 2023 Regular Board of Education Meeting-Colebrook Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale.

NAY: None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the March 24, 2023 Special Board of Education Meeting-Student Expulsion Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Crone.

NAY: None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** the March 29, 2023 Second Informal Budget Presentation-Norfolk Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **APPROVE** the April 4, 2023 Third Informal Budget Presentation-Barkhamsted Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** the April 6, 2023 Fourth Informal Budget Presentation- New Hartford Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** the April 6, 2023 Regular Board of Education Meeting- New Hartford Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

REPORTS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Ms. Leon provided the Board of Education updates pertaining to : The Project plan to “revamp” the Media Center by rearranging the bookshelves and tables so there is a divide between students that would like to work quietly and the other students that would like to collaborate with their friends in a more relaxing environment. Ms. Leon explained that the bookshelves will be moved to enhance the privacy space for students, the middle of the Media Center will be computer workstations with chargers, and the other side will have larger tables, and more comfortable chairs. Another enhancement is the school store. It currently sells snacks, juices and school supplies and is run by Mr. Reese and students in the AIM program, located in the lunch room. Ms. Leon and Ms. Plitt’s plan is to move the school store into the Media Center in one of the vacant classrooms. The store will still offer

snacks, juices, and school supplies yet add school apparel and portable chargers. The plan is to work through the summer to begin cultivating these proposed enhancements. A brief discussion followed.

Ms. Plitt provided the Board of Education updates pertaining to: The last day before spring break was the winter pep rally with the Seniors vs. Teachers Volleyball Game. The date of this event was moved because of winter weather issues. Ms. Plitt expressed that the Teachers did “kick the Seniors’ butts.” The most important part of the event was the MVP - Dr. Palmer. Dr. Palmer served in the last game. The other team was not ready for this “epic serve.” Dr. Palmer scored for the Teachers! Juniors took the SAT exams. Feedback from the juniors was it was difficult, yet the juniors were happy it was behind them. In other news, Theater is performing Mamma Mia on the last weekend in April. In May, it is prom season. Senior Prom is May 26, 2023, at the La Bella Vista in Waterbury. The Senior Picnic is the following Tuesday after the Senior Prom. Graduation is on June 14, 2023. The Junior Prom is May 6, 2023, at Crystal Peak in Winsted. There will be a fundraiser on April 19, 2023, at Chipotle in Torrington to help raise money for the proms. The AP testing is coming up in early May. A brief discussion followed.

PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Mr. Amara provided the Board of Education updates pertaining to: Mr. Amara is happy to see Mr. Franklin back. Spring is upon us in Middle School with Smarter Balance and NGSS testing. Testing entails English Language Arts, Math, and Science (8th graders only). The Middle School is looking forward to gathering and reviewing this data. The Middle School is working with the incoming 6th-grade schools to give the Star assessment for Math and Literacy at the end of 6th grade to assist the Middle School in identifying other interventions and plans before the incoming 6th graders attend the Middle School. Mr. Amara is working closely with Laura McBaine, NWR7’s Data Specialist, in completing this process. Middle School Climate update- Spring sports began before April break which includes baseball, softball, and track. Homeroom groups continue to be the foundation of setting the school climate in the Middle School. Daily, the Middle School students meet in homeroom for approximately 10 minutes to complete structured and fun activities. Middle School students just completed a spring door decorating contest. The 7th and 8th-grade Leadership Team called Inspire Ed is working on a project to connect the staff with the students in unique ways. The project consists of the MS staff volunteering an activity of their liking outside of their discipline and spending time with the students who are interested in this activity. For example, Principal Amara has volunteered for fantasy sports, so he and the interested students will get together to discuss fantasy sports. For Middle School, High School, and parents, Mr. Scott Driscoll, founder of Internet Safety Concepts, will be offering a presentation for all Middle School and High School students. Mr. Driscoll is also offering a webinar for parents. Mr. Driscoll began his career in law enforcement in 1989 as a youth officer, then joined the FBI Innocence Task Force which established his involvement in internet safety. He led and assisted in numerous operations involving computer crimes against children and then founded Internet Safety Concepts in 2007 to educate schools, parents, families, and staff about Internet technology and safety. Mr. Driscoll will speak about cyberbullying, sexting, texting, social networking, video chatting, gaming sites, and creating a positive footprint. A brief discussion followed.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Palmer provided the Board of Education updates: Dr. Palmer expressed that it was nice to have Principal Franklin back so soon after his surgery. Dr. Palmer expressed that Principal Franklin had an SAT Testing update showing progress. She explained Principal Franklin will review this progress at a future BOE Meeting.

Agricultural Education: NWR7 VO-AG enrollment numbers are expected to remain stable. We are anticipating an enrollment of 116-118 students in the program next year. The new bus has been ordered and should be here in time for next year’s trip to Indianapolis.

Agricultural Education CSDE Accreditation Visit: Dr. Palmer was part of the state’s 2-day accreditation visit to Shepaug Valley Regional High School at the end of March. Their new facility is extremely impressive. Shepaug had welding stations, dog bathing facilities, a large kitchen and an equestrian facility. Dr. Palmer was able to interview staff, students, and parents about their experiences in the program in order to help set goals for the future. A brief discussion followed.

Special Education: This year’s Special Education budget is running tighter than anticipated, but NWR7 will be ok for the remainder of the year. Next year’s outplacement costs will increase, but the proposed budget and Excess Cost will cover all expenses that are known as of this date.

Legislative Session: This year’s session ends on June 14th, so it is still a little bit early to determine what will actually come out of it. However, it does look like the ECS funding will be increased across the board. There is a proposed bill to increase Ag Ed funding and to remove the cap for the number of students who can attend an Ag Ed program.

Teacher Evaluations: All certified staff evaluations will be completed by June 30th, in accordance with state statutes.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Mr. Gaskins provided the Board of Education updates: He discussed the electrical bid results. Five companies submitted pricing proposals that are higher than the current cost, yet less than the Eversource current market rate. He stated that reviewing the 5-year rate, projecting this rate out based on NWR7's usage, and comparing this to the Eversource current market rate, the 5-year rate would save approximately \$225,000.00 per year for the next 5 years, all things being equal. He also discussed the copier bid is not closing until April 18, 2023, so updates on this will be in the near future. A brief discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Updates: Ms. Sexton Read will be drafting an email of the announcement of the new NWR7 Superintendent that will be emailed in the next few days.

Board Discussion of the 2023-2024 District Hearing Budget: Ms. Sexton Read advised she is happy to take the Proposed Budget as presented to the Annual District Meeting with Referendum, and all Board members in attendance agreed.

BOE Goals: No updates.

NEW BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF BUDGET TO TAKE TO ANNUAL DISTRICT BUDGET MEETING- May 1, 2023:

The Board agreed to move forward to Referendum with a 2023-2024 Proposed Budget of \$23,455,528 representing an increase of \$553,150 and 2.42 percent.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADOPT** the 2023-2024 Proposed Budget of **\$23,455,528 TO TAKE TO THE ANNUAL DISTRICT BUDGET MEETING** on Monday, May 1, 2023. This represents a 2.42 percent increase over 2022-2023 budget expenditures. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

ADOPTION OF THE 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 1, 2023, 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 2023-2024.
- 2) To accept the annual budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023. 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 2, 2023 with hours to be set by individual towns as established by state statutes.

Dated this 17th day of April 2023 at Winsted, Connecticut, and signed by Molly Sexton Read, Chair, Board of Education, Regional School District No. 7."

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **ADOPT** Call for Annual District Meeting on Monday, May 1, 2023, 7 p.m. in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theater, as presented by Ms. Sexton Read. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

AUTHORIZATION OF EXPLANATORY TEXT

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Mr. Jerram, 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 2023-2024 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, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Based on Mr. Gaskins' recommendation, the following Motion was made:

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPOINT** KING, KING AND ASSOCIATES, Certified Public Accountants, as auditors for the 2023-2024 school year. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

APPROVAL OF EARLY RELEASE ON JUNE 21, 2023- LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

No motion needed due to this last day of school, June 21, 2023, being an EXAM day and will automatically be an Early Release day.

CORRESPONDENCE

Updates: None

APPROVAL OF HIGHLANDER BASKETBALL CAMP

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the building use for the Highlander Basketball Camp from July 10, 2023 to July 14, 2023, as presented in the letter of request by Brendan Fritch. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

Brief discussion regarding the next Regular Board of Education meeting scheduled for April 26, 2023, and following Motion was made.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **CANCEL** the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting on April 26, 2023. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Ms. Sexton Read reviewed the date and time for the District Meeting on Monday, May 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., and the next Regular Board of Education Meeting on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADJOURN** at 7:48 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett
Board Clerk