

## REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER

### Board of Education Meeting

November 8, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

**APPROVED 12.13.23**

**PRESENT:** Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Lisa Fragale(C), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Superintendent Mr. Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Student Representatives Fiona Leon and Owen Langer.

**ABSENT:** Ms. Terri Kenneson (C)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**PUBLIC PORTION:** None.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION BY** Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** October 11, 2023, Regular Board of Education Meeting, as presented: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED.**

### REPORTS

#### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT OWEN LANGER

Mr. Langer expressed that Fall sports are coming to a close. Both girls and boys' soccer team advanced to the second round. Unfortunately, the girls lost today. Volleyball is playing in the first round of the States tonight. The quarter ended last week, so students have the option to turn in late work, make-up work and/or extra credit work before the grades close. With the new quarter, students are beginning their Capstone projects. PSAT testing was held on October 25, 2023. Students expressed that the testing was challenging. The advantage is that the PSAT was completed 100% online, benefiting the students' time management. Students expressed that the test-taking process was more comfortable than the paper booklets.

#### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT FIONA LEON

Ms. Leon communicated that the Seniors participated in the Senior workshops. This included the alumni panel, financial aid, common app, college essays, and interviews. On Friday, November 10, 2023, NWR7 will hold the Veteran's Day Breakfast and Assembly. There are lots of fundraisers happening- the Student Council Turkey Baskets and Operation Christmas Child to name a few. Fall sports are ending, and Winter sports are beginning- swimming, basketball, indoor track, hockey and wrestling. Band and Chorus auditions are this weekend. The Winter Concert is at the end of November. "CLUE" will be performed by NWR7 theatre students on November 17, 18 and 19. A few new chairs have arrived in the Media Center. Ms. Waring, the Library Media Specialist, donated a few tables and chairs to the Media Center.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FRAN AMARA

Teacher Goal-Setting Meetings: Principal Amara has worked closely with Principal Franklin, Assistant Principal Bakulski, Assistant Principal Carroll, and Dr. Carvalho. Discussions include student data, student assessment data, and the movement of students.

Professional Development Day November 7, 2023: CPI training occurred in the AM. Others participated in an AI (Artificial Intelligence) workshop. Teachers participated in a Chili Cookoff.

MS and School Climate Community Building: A week-long Spirit Week began the Friday before the MS Halloween Dance. Over 80% of the Middle School was in attendance for the dance.

Veteran's Day: Middle School participates in the Annual Veteran's Day Assembly. Middle School teacher -Leslie Sullivan's husband (active duty) will present to the Middle School as well as the Veterans and their guests. There is also red, white and blue day to honor the Veterans.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Conferences for the Middle School will be held Monday 11/13 and Tuesday 11/14 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## **HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARY FRANKLIN**

Agricultural School Trip: Principal Franklin attended the FFA National Convention in Indiana. He expressed there were over 70,000 students/persons in attendance. There was a music concert to kick off the convention, and the Secretary of Agriculture and the Mayor of Indianapolis spoke in the Indianapolis football stadium. The National FFA Band and Chorus were also present. He explained there was an app that outlined all events and happenings throughout the convention. There were teacher workshops, student workshops, college visits, employers, and a convention center full of exhibits. Robert Eselby, a graduate of the Ag-Ed program at NWR7, led a workshop.

PSAT Testing Day: A huge "thank you" to Chris Fray, Andy Bakulski, and the entire tech team for allowing the testing to be completed as smoothly as possible. Principal Franklin has not yet received the PSAT scores.

Voice for Change Update: The furniture order for the Library Media Center has been placed. The furniture should arrive in the next 6 weeks.

## **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT STEVEN K. LEPAGE**

Region 5 Table Top Emergency Exercise: Superintendent LePage attended this exercise with SRO Dave Wood at Winsted Town Hall. In attendance were several officials, Chief Ciuci from Winsted, Fire Marshals, local school superintendents and leaders to name a few. It is a simulation of a school threat and how all would proceed. All shared from past experiences, dealing with the situation in that moment, the coming moments, and follow-up after the threat. It was a 4-hour exercise.

October Highlander Highlight Newsletter: Superintendent LePage expressed he had received positive feedback from staff, students, and families. Officer Wood expressed that students approached him after the article in the newsletter highlighting and thanking Mr. Wood for his years of service at NWR7, wishing him the best of luck in his new position. Officer Wood's position has been posted.

Senator Seminara and Representative Case's Visit to NWR7: Superintendent LePage invited them to visit the Ag-Ed program and discuss Agriculture Education funding options.

Veteran's Day: The team has done a tremendous job in planning all activities for the Veteran's Day Celebration.

Superintendent LePage expressed he has added the reading of "In Flander's Field" Poem at 2:00 pm. and have all the NWR7 student trumpet players play "Taps" spread throughout the school. The staff and students were supplied red, white, and blue ribbons to wear throughout the day. There will also be a "Fallen Soldier Table" symbolizing the soldier who never returned home. This entails a small table in the cafeteria with a white tablecloth, one red rose, a place setting, and a candle all representing the soldiers are "here with all in spirit."

## **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS JAMES GASKINS**

Non-Certified Personnel Changes: The Food Service Department has a few transitions. There is a posting for a Food Service position due to a current employee who was out on medical leave. This employee is not returning to this position. Another position is posted due to a current employee who was hired for a position, yet decided only to become a substitute Food Service employee.

### Business and Operations:

2022-2023 Budget: The State release for the EFS report desk audit- great news, there were no desk audit findings. Mr. Gaskins thanked Hope Carfiro for the preparation and completion of the EFS reporting.

2023-2024 Budget: Special Education has three new outplacements. There are mitigating actions put in place to manage this unanticipated cost: freeze on facilities projects, freeze on overtime except for the necessary items like the weekend building checks, and retain 20% of Department Head supply accounts.

2024-2025 Budget: This budget will be impacted by the Special Education increases.

Benefits: There is a preliminary renewal estimate of a 12% increase from Anthem BCBS. Again, this is the first offer with anticipation that this will be adjusted during negotiations. This will have an impact on 2024-25 Budget.

Administrative Assistants Bargaining Unit Negotiations: The committee and the Union reached a tentative agreement. The next step is that the Administrative Assistants' Union will need to ratify this tentative agreement. This meeting is not until November 9, 2023. Once the Administrative Assistants' Union ratifies it, it will then be brought to the BOE for ratification.

Grant Applications: Mr. Gaskins reviewed that the Multi-Media School Security Grant Application now has official approval. The School Security Program Grant was not approved. This was a larger-scope grant. NWR7 will apply for this grant again in 2024. The Federal Grant called the School Violence Prevention Program (\$670,000.00) which encompasses an increase in security yet also updates the outdated infrastructure in the school, has not been awarded to NWR7. Mr. Gaskins explained that they will continue to pursue this grant and apply again next year.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Updates: No updates

BOE Goals: Molly Sexton-Read had a BOE Meeting with the four BOE chairs from the four-member towns of NWR7 on October 30, 2023. Ms. Sexton-Read's goal was to check in with all and discuss the challenges of each BOE and the K-12 Curriculum Community. Ms. Sexton-Read plans to have another BOE chair meeting in January 2024.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Review of Advertising in Schools/ Revenue Enhancement Policy #1325 (first reading):

Superintendent LePage updated the BOE by reviewing the proposed policy to replace the existing #1325 policy. This updated policy would allow for some specific use of advertising funding to enrich and improve school resources. NWR7 would retain close control and limitations to the uses of such advertising. This came about because Principal Franklin met with a company (POWER AD) that generates revenue through advertising of local businesses that would be all approved by the administration to advertise on digital scorer's tables for basketball and scoreboards for 2024-2025. Mr. Williams, Athletic Director, and Principal Franklin have been collaborating with this company to review possible contracts for a new digital scorer's table that would be funded through advertising revenue.

Review of adding a permission form to Policy #6150 Computer System Acceptable Use (first reading):

This current policy only includes a "Notice of Non-participation" which refers to network and internet access and use of student images on school websites or in other media. The new form (add-on) will expand coverage to include: media release permission for Honor Roll (name), media release for events and activities of student images in a school or public media (name and/or image), and media release of information permission for Military recruiters and Higher Educational institutions (name, address, phone number.)

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**MOTION** by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **CANCEL** the Regular Scheduled Meeting on November 22, 2023, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 6:53 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Next Regular Board of Education Meeting: **December 13, 2023.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett  
Board Clerk