

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7  
NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**

March 13, 2024 – 6 p.m.

**APPROVED 3.27.24**

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

**Absent:** Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Sexton Read called the Board of Education meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Ms. Fragale, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the February 28, 2024, Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** the March 6, 2024, Board of Education Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

### **REPORTS**

#### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT OWEN LANGER**

Mr. Langer began with a winter sports recap, then presented a brief synopsis of the spring sports. Spring sports are starting this coming weekend with practices in softball, baseball and track. The Penguin Plunge for Unified Sports is on Saturday, March 23, 2024. The SAT testing is on April 3, 2024. The High School Band Concert is tonight March 13, 2024. The Mary Poppins Musical will be presented by the theater on the weekend before April break. Mr. Langer updated all on Model UN conferences. The National Foreign Language Honor Society is holding a Top of the Hill Chef competition with the categories of sweet and savory.

#### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT FIONA LEON**

Ms. Leon began with a recap from the swim team. The swim team won the Berkshire League and the regular season league. Six swimmers are moving on to State Opens on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at Yale. The Winter Sports Awards are on Thursday evening, March 14, 2024. At the end of February, NWR7 had National FFA Week. As Mr. Langer expressed, The Penguin Plunge for Unified Sports is happening on March 23, 2024. The students have been raising money at lunch for a teacher to receive a pie in the face on March 14, 2024, because it is PI Day. The marching band will be starting soon for all the Memorial Day parades.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FRAN AMARA

Principal Amara updated all on the transition from 8th to 9th grade. The course selection is almost complete for 9th grade. Amanda Cormier, school counselor, and Thea Davidson, school counselor, have worked diligently to make the selection process as smooth as possible. The nice part of this process is the engagement of the parents in this task. Principal Amara and his team have been gathering data from all of the feeder schools with all the incoming students. Dr. Steve Carvalho has been attending the transition PPT meetings for the students with IEPs and 504 plans. Some specific needs are math. The Middle School will make some teaching adjustments to meet these particular math needs. Principal Amara will visit the Barkhamsted Elementary School to partake in their Professional Development. Jennifer Hurley- Coughlin, the ELA Instructional Leader, will meet with New Hartford's Curriculum Coach, Heather Mathes, to discuss aligning the ELA curriculum in the 5th and 6th grades with the Middle School curriculum. Kindness in Motion kicked off last week with Superintendent LePage creating the video and sending all the information to the students and staff.

## HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARY FRANKLIN

Principal Franklin explained that, in regards to the SAT testing, the High School, in addition to the preparation that is happening in the classroom, is offering a few math preparation sessions. The AG Compliance Review happened this week, similar to the NEASC but in AG ED. Members visited on March 12th and 13th. They interviewed the administrative team, school counselors, Ag Ed teachers, and the Ag Ed students. The AG Compliance Review team reviewed some feedback at the end of the visit, saying that the team was impressed with how all the students - grades 9-12- spoke to the power of relationships and the caring Ag environment and how all students feel supported. The Ag Ed students expressed how they feel united with the Middle School and High School students.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**Budget Updates:** Superintendent LePage expressed that Mr. Gaskins and the team have been working to answer all the budget questions that were addressed at the last BOE meeting and will share this worksheet with the BOE when completed.

**Newsletter Highlights:** Superintendent LePage expressed he really enjoys completing this newsletter, and expressed that the feedback has been very positive. Many students approach Mr. LePage about the articles in the newsletter, and Superintendent LePage said that the impact has been very optimistic. Ms. Crone expressed that the newsletter is great and makes all that read it feel connected with what is happening at RSD#7.

**Educator Diversity Policy and Requirements:** This policy is developed per the legislative requirements and the BOE needs to approve this plan before submission on March 15, 2024. Brief discussion followed.

## DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

**Budget Updates:** Mr. Gaskins explained the 3 headlines for RSD#7 2024-2025 budget is the increase in special education costs, health insurance renewal, and the State of CT underfunding. Special education currently adds 2% to the RSD#7 budget, the health insurance increase of 10.95% adds another .84% to the RSD#7. These two factors alone increase the budget by 2.84%.

**Update On the Gym Floor:** Mr. Gaskins explained that there was a meeting with the insurance company, the contractor, Superintendent LePage, Principal Franklin, Keith Boyle and the Athletic Director, Fred Williams regarding the concerns on the repairs of the auxiliary gym floor. The contractor is in discussion with the insurance company with how to move forward with the repairs of the gym floor.

**Grants:** Mr. Gaskins expressed that the process began in completing the large Federal and State security grants. Mr. Gaskins explained the grants are very competitive because they are nationwide. The total of these two grants are approximately \$960,000.00. Brief discussion followed.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Budget Discussion:** Superintendent LePage reviewed the questions that were asked at the Budget Workshop on March 6, 2024. He reviewed questions in regard to athletics, project updates, staffing, transportation, and enrollment to name a few. Brief discussion followed.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Approval of the State-Mandated Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

**Legislative Mandate: Public Act 23-167 Section 10 (Effective July 1, 2023)**

*(a) Not later than March 15, 2024, each local and regional board of education shall submit the increasing educator diversity plan described in subsection (a) of section 10-220 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval.*

**MOTION** by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** RSD#7 State-Mandated Increasing Educator Diversity Plan, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

### Healthy Food Certification for 7.1.2024 to 6.30.2025

**MOTION** by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE *Participation of Healthy Food Option of HFC*** as presented: pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, **REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7** certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

**MOTION** by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE *Healthy Food Options of HFS*** as presented: **REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7** will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Approval of Highlander Basketball Camp 8.5.2024 to 8.9.2024

**MOTION** by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Kenneson to **APPROVE** the RSD#7 Highlander Basketball Camp on 8.5.24 to 8.9.24, as presented. **AYE:** Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Sexton Read. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADJOURN** at 7:41 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