REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

Botelle Elementary School
Norfolk Budget Proposal Meeting
March 26, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.
APPROVED 4.9.25

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Secretary / Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), First Selectman of Norfolk, Mr. Matthew Riiska

Absent: HS Principal Gary Franklin, MS Principal Ryan Cornelius, and Student Representatives Amaya Washington and Owen Langer, Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Proposed Budget Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Ms. Sexton Read began the meeting by greeting everyone and thanking them for being present. She then began the presentation by giving a brief introduction of where the budget proposal currently stands. Since the recent adjustments have been made the current 2025-2026 proposed budget is at a 2.29% increase with a 3.31% assessment. This is currently trending to be below a 2.5% yearly increase. She then explained that there were unavoidable increases such as staff medical benefits which increased by 12%, special education continues to be a budget driver, and utilities. She then followed her statement by giving a few potential budget saving solutions such as hiring qualified but lower tiered teaching staff as current higher tiered staff retire or relocate, several capital projects were deferred, and how the transportation contracts were recently negotiated and the district will see a savings. She emphasized how they were creative with where decreases were made without affecting the experience of the students or what classes the district has to offer them. The conversation transitioned when Ms. Sexton Read showed slides of what types of classes Northwestern Regional No.7 is able to offer. This list included special sciences, multiple Vo-Ag programs, and Uconn credit classes. She then presented the budget slides broken down by categories of areas of spending, explaining which areas had the increases as well as the areas that had significant savings. She then gave an overview of the current ongoing Vo-Ag Roof Project and where the current funds come from and how the state and grant will be paying majority percentage. She then broke down the revenues and assessments for everyone present, and explained how the student enrollment affects these numbers. The following slide showed a breakdown of student enrollment and showed the following numbers: Barkhamsted -16 students, Colebrook +1 student, New Hartford +5 students, and Norfolk -10 students. Although we have seen increases in certain areas, the district's budget is currently showing as the fourth lowest proposed budget in the state. Ms. Sexton Read then ended the presentation by opening the floor to the public for any questions, comments, or concerns.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK

A Norfolk resident asked the Board based on this year's graduating class of 179 students what is the expected incoming 7th grade class.

Superintendent LePage responded with the upcoming class is approximately 103 students.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was then called to an end at 6:55pm.

The next BOE Meeting is scheduled for April 1st, 2025 in New Hartford.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Vacila
Board Clerk