REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
Botelle School Norfolk
Board of Education Special Meeting
March 23, 2026 – Following Budget Presentation
APPROVED 4.8.26

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Deb Bell (N), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Secretary / Treasurer, Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Director of Finance & Operations, Mr. James Gaskins, and Superintendent Steven K. LePage.
Absent: Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Mimi Duran (B)

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION: None.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **APPROVE** the minutes for the March 11 meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell, Ms. Kenneson. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Mr. Gauthier

4.0 REPORTS
Superintendent's Report:

- **Recognition:** Attended a ceremony where the CIAC honored Mr. Franklin; the basketball tournament was dedicated in his name.
- **Community Events:** The weekend's mobile "Penguin Plunge" held at Northwestern raised nearly **$9,000** and involved several teams and groups with close to 50 "plungers". A wonderful annual tradition benefitting Special Olympics CT and Northwestern's Unified Sports and United Sound programs.
- **Facilities/Interviews:** Interviews held with two **firms that had submitted bids for the facilities review. Both went very well.**

Finance & Operations Report:

- **ADP Implementation:** Transition continues.
- **Roofing Discussion:** Clarified that the roof is largely flat. Discussion held on the high cost of structural changes to pitch the roof versus staying with flat sections. The study will evaluate all options for the **160,000+ sq. ft.** surface area.

5.0 OLD BUSINESS

Budget Discussion

- **Health Insurance Reductions:**
  - **Decision:** The Board agreed to budget a reduction in the health insurance increase from **11.5% to 9.4%**. It was agreed that the Board must remain conservative given state funding uncertainties (e.g., Excess Cost Grant currently expected to be at 68%).
- **Updated Budget Impacts:**
  - Total Budget Increase: **1.74%**
  - Total Assessment Increase: **1.73%**
  - **Town Breakdowns:** Colebrook (-1.91%), Barkhamsted (2.23%), New Hartford (1.88%), Norfolk (3.72%).
  - **Security Personnel:** A robust discussion was held regarding the proposal for a part-time security officer (**$20,000–$30,000** placeholder in budget).
- **Conclusion:** The Superintendent will conduct further research, speaking with local law enforcement regarding recruitment and efficacy. A final decision will be made at the April 8th meeting.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Kim Crone, second by Terri Kenneson to **ADOPT t**he call of the budget hearing: "The electors and those entitled to vote in town meetings in the towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, and Norfolk, Connecticut are hereby notified and warned that a district hearing for the Regional School District No. 7 will be held on Monday, April 20, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Roberta S. Ohotnicky Little Theatre of the high school building, at which meeting the proposed budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026 will be presented.

Any person may recommend the inclusion or deletion of expenditures at such a meeting. The Annual Meeting of said District will be held on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m."

AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

Motion by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Deb Bell, to **CANCEL** the **March 25, 2026,** Regular Board Meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

Motion by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Deb Bell, to **CANCEL** the **April 22, 2026**, Regular Board Meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

Motion by Deb Bell, seconded by Kim Crone, to **take the RSD #7 2026-2027 Budget to Referendum on May 5, 2026.** AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

Motion by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Deb Bell, to **adopt the referendum questions**, "Shall the Regional School District No. 7 Annual Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026, be accepted?"

"Yes" Vote is for approval. "No" Vote is for disapproval.

AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

MOTION by Kim Crone, seconded by Noel Gauthier, to schedule **a Special Board of Education meeting on April 20th,** as the Regional Budget Hearing: agenda will include the adoption of the budget to take to the district budget meeting, setting the final dates of the district budget meeting and referendum, and to authorize the explanatory text for the 2026-27 budget. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE:

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Noel Gauthier, to accept with gratitude for his service and best wishes for him and his family, the resignation letter from Robert Delaney. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Noel Gauthier to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:30 pm AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier NAY: none.