REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Regular Meeting
May 13, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
APPROVED 6.10.26

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Ms. Deb Bell (N), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Student Representative, Mia Doyle, Director of Finance & Operations, Mr. James Gaskins, High School Principal, Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal, Mr. Ryan Cornelius, and Superintendent Steven K. LePage.
Absent: Ms. Mimi Duran (B), Secretary / Treasurer, Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH),
Student Representative Amaya Washington.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Ms. Molly Sexton Read, at 6:03 pm.

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION

High School Principal, Mr. Gary Franklin, recognized the Class of 2026's top 10 students: David DeCerbo, Katelyn Harris, Parker Kristhoffer, Nela Leon, Brynja McGee, Emmalina Rivera, Jailyn Rosado, Aubrey Schubert, Mollie Spencer, and Olivia Widmer. An overview of each student's accomplishments, most memorable experiences at Northwestern, and future goals was shared by Principal Franklin, with students' family members present. This presentation was followed by a short reception.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **3.1 MOTION** by Rob Jerram, seconded by Deb Bell, to **APPROVE** the April 20, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **3.2 MOTION** by Deb Bell, seconded by Rob Jerram, to **APPROVE** the May 4, 2026, District Budget Meeting minutes, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Ms. Kenneson and Ms. Fragale.

4.0 REPORTS

4.1 Student Representatives Report (Mia Doyle)

- **Academics:** AP exams are currently underway; students generally feel confident.

● **Athletics:** Spring sports are performing well. Softball held its Senior Night today. Berkshire League Championship track meet scheduled for Saturday.
● **Activities:** National Honor Society (NHS) held its final meeting and elected new officers. The Northwestern Band concert is scheduled for tomorrow (5/14/2026) at 7:00 PM.

4.2 Principal Cornelius' Report

● **Recognition:** Scholar Leader Banquet on Monday, honoring multiple students.

● **Orientation:** 7th Grade Parent Orientation is on Tuesday for incoming 6th-grade families.

● **Events:** 8th Grade Semi-formal is Thursday, May 21st, at Crystal Peak. School-wide trip to Boulder Ridge is June 4th.

● **Promotion/Awards:** 8th Grade Awards on June 12th; Promotion ceremony on June 16th.
● **Academics:** Finalizing state standards testing and makeups.

4.3 Superintendent LePage's Report

● **Communication:** "Highlander Highlights" newsletter had received 414 views since earlier that afternoon when it was released, and typically receives 700-800 views; however, it takes extensive time to write and edit. Exploring new social media formats to reduce the 20-30 hour production time.
● **Staffing Updates:**
    ○ **Director of Athletics/Student Affairs:** A.J. Bunel was selected unanimously following a multi-panel interview process.
    ○ **PE Teacher:** Cooper Fleming hired
    ○ **English Teacher:** Kara Tierney hired
    ○ **Ongoing Searches:** One English position remains open; Career Pathways/STEP coordinator search is in progress.
● ● **Grants & Finances:**
    ○ Received 19 "Kindness in Motion" grant applications.
    ○ The Bored of Ed benefit concert raised $2,500 for Kindness in Motion, Turkey Baskets, and Holiday Angels.
    ○ State Funding: Supplemental grants (ECS and "Dracula" grants) will provide additional funds to member towns (Barkhamsted ~$60k, Colebrook ~$16k, New Hartford ~$172k, Norfolk ~$2.2k).

4.4 Director of Finance and Operations Gaskins' Report

● **Budget:** Budget successfully passed. Noted low voter turnout despite the outcome.
● **Facility Assessment:** Kickoff meeting held; study to be conducted during the 4-day week following Memorial Day.
● **Fiscal Year Savings:** Realized approximately **$450,000** in savings/extra revenue from:

    - Staffing resignations and benefit savings ($63k).
    - Special Education technical services and tuition revenue ($73k+).
    - Specialized transportation ($125k).
    - Excess cost grant revenue ($31k) and Drip Grant ($60k).
- **Summer Projects:** Plan to use savings for **ADA-compliant bleachers** (approx. $300k), carpet replacement, epoxy flooring in athletics entrance and trainer's room, complete renovation of trainer's room, technology server replacement, and track maintenance.

5.0 OLD BUSINESS

- **5.1 Smoking Policy #5131.61:**

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **RESCIND** Policy #5131.61. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **5.3 BOE Goals:** Ms. Sexton Read shared information about proceeds collected from the two raffles and water sales, thanked fellow members for their help, and said that between that event and the prior effort earlier in the year, the Dr. Judy Palmer Kindness Award was now funded for two more years.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

- **6.1 Policy #5131-6 (Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco):** Discussion on updating regulations.

MOTION by Lisa Fragale, seconded by Deb Bell, to **ADOPT** Policy #5131-6. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **6.2 – 6.4 Fiscal Authorizations:**

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **AUTHORIZE** the Director of Finance and Operations and Superintendent to make End of Year adjustments and transfers within the 2025-2026 budget limits. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **AUTHORIZE** the Director of Finance and Operations to borrow up to $500,000.00 in anticipation of receipts for upcoming school projects. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell, to **AUTHORIZE** the Superintendent to fill vacancies already approved by the Board of Education and to hire grant-funded positions for special purposes for the 2026-2027 school year. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **6.5 Bank Sweep Account:**

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Lisa Fragale, to **APPROVE** the creation of RSD#7 Bank Sweep Account. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **6.6 – 6.7 Meeting Schedule:** Discussion to move the July 8 meeting to a Special Meeting on July 7, 2026.

MOTION by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell, to **CANCEL** the July 8, 2026, Regular Board of Education meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Deb Bell, to **SCHEDULE** a Special Board of Education meeting on July 7, 2026, at 6:00 pm in the Newbury Library Media Center. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **CANCEL** the May 27, 2026, Regular Board of Education meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **6.8 – 6.10 New Hires:** Formal approval of Kara Tierney (English), Cooper Fleming (PE), and Aaron (A.J.) Bunel (Athletics).

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Lisa Fragale, to **APPROVE** the hire of High School English Teacher, Kara Tierney. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Lisa Fragale, seconded by Kim Crone, to **APPROVE** the hire of High School PE/ Health Teacher, Cooper Fleming. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

MOTION by Terri Kenneson, seconded by Kim Crone, to **APPROVE** the hire of Director of Athletics and Student Affairs, Aaron (AJ) Bunel. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

- **7.1 Resignation:** Mary Radziewicz (HS English).

MOTION by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell, to **ACCEPT** the letter of resignation by High School English teacher, Mary Radziewicz. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.

- **7.2 Facility Use:** Approval of Highlander Basketball Camp (July 13 - July 24).

MOTION by Deb Bell, seconded by Kim Crone, to **APPROVE** the Highlander Basketball Camp scheduled for July 13, 2026- July 24, 2026, utilizing the gymnasium. AYE: Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Ms. Sexton Read.

8.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MOTION by Kim Crone, seconded by Terri Kenneson, to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:50 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None