AGENDA - Wednesday, October 14, 2026

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
NO. 7 BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUILDING COMMITTEE

5:00 p.m.
Newbury Library Media Center

Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of 6/10/26 Building Committee Meeting Minutes
B. Approval of 6/12/26 Building Committee Meeting Minutes

3.0 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BONDING PROJECTS

4.0 ADJOURNMENT

Enclosures: June 10, 2026, Building Committee Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2026, Building Committee Meeting Minutes

We welcome the public to share their comments via publicinput@nwr7.org.
Your emails will be considered during the Public Comment session of the meeting.
Thank you for your participation.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Building Committee Meeting
June 10, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary Noel Gauthier (NH), Director of Finance & Operations, Mr. James Gaskins, Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Keith Boyle

1. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by James Gaskins at 5:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- **Motion to approve:** Rob Jerram
- **Seconded by:** Keith Boyle
- **Vote:** All in favor; motion carried unanimously.

3. Presentation: Aces Up Solar Initiative

James Gaskins introduced the topic of exploring solar canopies (carports) for the district's parking lots, noting that previous research with municipal organizations yielded cost-prohibitive results. He introduced **Aces Up**, a program under ACES (a Regional Education Service Center), which acts as a public purchasing consortium offering turnkey sustainability solutions.

Background on Aces Up

- **Brendan Sharkey** provided an overview of Aces Up, highlighting that ACES is a forward-thinking, quasi-state agency that has deployed solar on its own buildings and launched the state's first EV school bus.
- **Statutory Framework:** The program leverages a state statute (originally sponsored by Sharkey) that empowers RESCs to run public purchasing consortia, allowing school districts and towns to bypass the traditional RFP process (equivalent to being on a state bid or working with the Connecticut Green Bank).
- **Agnostic Approach:** Aces Up is agnostic regarding vendors, technology (solar, battery, fuel cells), and upfront financing. They run internal bidding to ensure best pricing and partner with the Connecticut Green Bank or utilize internal RESC financing, avoiding the misaligned motives of third-party commercial investors.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** A standard MOU was provided at the top of the meeting packet for review. Aces Up is currently working with roughly eight school districts and municipalities.

4. Project Design & Engineering Logistics

Adam Burkitt and **Jim Daly** shared a presentation detailing the proposed design.

- **Site Selection:** Representatives from Aces Up recently performed a site visit with electrician Ryan Maynard. A ground-mount array was initially explored but rejected immediately to protect the local aesthetics, trees, and the student cross-country path.
- **Carport Infrastructure:** The team highlighted that building carports is a major civil construction undertaking compared to rooftop solar. It requires extensive engineering, geotechnical soil studies, deep concrete footings, structural steel columns, rafters, and purlins.
- **Site Management & Safety:** The layout ensures that the driveway/pathway leading down to the agricultural/shared services building remains fully accessible for vans and small buses. Conduit will run beneath the asphalt, up the side of the school, and cross the roof to connect to the transformers.
- **Parking Spaces:** Aces Up confirmed that no parking spaces will be lost. The structural design deliberately lines up the columns and pairs with the existing width and boundaries of the current parking lot spaces.
- **Weather & Maintenance:**
    - *Snow Management:* The panels feature snow guards at the bottom (similar to the district's Agriscience building) to prevent massive shelves of snow from sliding off onto vehicles or pedestrians.
    - *Production Projections:* The standard generation metrics already factor in standard New England weather/snow degradation.
    - *Water Runoff:* Melting snow and rain will shed directly off the panels into the existing ground storm drains and sewers.

System Technical Comparison:

Specification	Existing Rooftop System	Proposed Carport System
System Size	385 kW (DC)	712 kW (DC)
Panels	Lower efficiency (low 200W range)	1,308 high-efficiency panels (545W)
Inverters	N/A	24 Inverters (with extended warranties)
Project Lifespan	N/A	> 30 Years (Framework lasts 75–100 years)

- **Energy Generation & "Buy All" Structure:** This project utilizes a "Buy All" framework with Eversource. The carport is an isolated generation spot that sells **722,000 annual kWh** directly to the utility. The school is "out of the loop" electrically and continues to draw its facility power normally.

5. Financials & On-Bill Credits

The project financial data was reviewed directly from page five of the informational packet.

- **On-Bill Credits:** In exchange for hosting the generation site, Region 7 receives a direct, guaranteed reduction on its Ever Source utility bill via an "on-bill credit" system. Credits will mirror seasonal generation spikes (higher in summer, lower in winter) with a conservative 0.8% annual panel degradation rate factored in.
- **Zero Capital Outlay:** Regional School District No. 7 will have **$0 out-of-pocket costs**. Traditional financing firms demand 5-to-6-year returns and refuse to touch these complex builds, whereas Aces Up absorbs the long-term payback timeline internally.
- **Financial Risk Mitigation:** It was clarified that because this is a *Buy All* generation credit rather than a PPA buy-back scheme, the district is completely insulated from grid rate drops. The district will pay market rates for its standard $475,000 electricity budget, but will pocket a year-one savings credit of **~$22,000**, totaling an estimated **$410,524 accumulated savings** over the 20-year term.

6. Critical Timelines & Agreement Options

Critical Deadline Notice: July 4, 2026, is the final deadline to "Safe Harbor" the federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) program.

- **The Federal Safe Harbor Rule:** To secure the **$750,000 federal tax credit** on this **$2.5 million project**, Aces Up must execute the agreement and fund a **minimum 5% project deposit (~$175,000)** within the next few weeks. If successful, the district secures a 4-year construction runway, targeting a completed connection in either the Summer of 2027 or Summer of 2028. Missing this deadline risks zero financial viability if utility interconnection studies drag out past program expiration.
- **State NRES Program:** The project will utilize the state's NRES school set-aside program monitored by PURA, securing a specific incentive bonus for carports.
- **20-Year End-of-Term Options:** At the conclusion of the 20-year agreement, the district holds an option to buy out the system based on Fair Market Value (FMV). Historically, industrial buyout structures of this age transfer to the host for nominal fees (often down to hundreds of dollars) rather than premium costs.
- **Framework Longevity:** The heavy-duty structural steel and 12.5-ton concrete footings have an estimated operational lifespan of **75 to 100 years**. If panels hit their end of life, the underlying framework remains intact to host a secondary, updated panel array system.

7. Next Steps & Adjournment

The Aces Up representatives were excused from the room. The committee determined that a full presentation to the Board of Education was unnecessary, as a quorum of the board was already present and capable of accurately conveying the details. The board will take a brief period to process the financial mechanics of the MOU before scheduling a potential vote or special meeting ahead of the July 4th deadline.

- **Motion to adjourn:** Rob Jerram
- **Seconded by:** Keith Boyle
- **Vote:** Unanimous; motion carried. Meeting officially adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
Building Committee Meeting Minutes
Superintendent's Office, RSD#7
June 12th, 2026 – 2:45 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C) via Zoom, Ms. Deb Bell (N) via phone call, Secretary / Treasurer, Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C) via phone call, Director of Finance & Operations, Mr. James Gaskins, Mr. Keith Boyle, and Superintendent Steven K. LePage via phone call.

Absent: Ms. Kim Crone (N), Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Mimi Duran (B).

1.0 Call to Order

Molly Sexton Read called the meeting to order at 2:45 PM.

Building Committee Report – Solar Canopy Project (Direct Ownership Model)

Chair Sexton Reed presented the **Building Committee Findings** to the full Board regarding the proposed **solar canopy project** and the Direct Ownership financing model discussed with **Connecticut Green Bank representative Mackie Dykes**.

Summary of Key Information Provided

1. Financing Structure

- The district would secure an **18-year loan** through the Connecticut Green Bank.
- **No loan payments** would begin until the solar system is fully connected and generating electricity.
- **Construction-phase interest** would accrue during development.

2. Revenue Generation

- The project would be structured with a **125% revenue-to-debt-service cushion**.
- Revenue from selling electricity back to the utility is projected to **fully cover loan payments**.
- The district would receive an estimated **$70,000 in gross annual cash flow**.

3. Operational Requirements

- Direct ownership requires the district to maintain an **Operations & Maintenance (O&M) contract**, estimated at **$8,000–$12,000 annually**.
- After O&M costs, the **net annual benefit** is projected at **$55,000–$60,000**.

4. District Risk

- The district retains **full structural and performance risk**.
- If the system underperforms or fails, **NWR7 remains obligated to repay the loan in full**. The Green Bank reported a **95%–99% historical performance success rate** across more than 100 municipal and school projects, but the **financial liability remains with the district**.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
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Board Discussion

Board members discussed the financial implications, long-term risk exposure, and operational responsibilities associated with the Direct Ownership model. Additional questions were raised regarding comparative models, long-term maintenance expectations, and potential impacts on future capital planning.

Committee Punting: Chair Sexton Reed noted that, due to outstanding questions, the Building Committee chose to "punt" and not vote definitively one way or the other, instead moving the project to the full Board for final deliberation. However, if forced to choose between the Aces Up third-party lease and direct ownership, the committee elements favored the Green Bank route.

Adjournment

MOTION by Noel Gauthier, seconded by Lisa Fragale, to ADJOURN at 3:47 PM. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None.