

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2021 – 6 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Theresa Kenneson (C), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Superintendent Dr. Judith Palmer, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, High School Principal Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal Mr. Fran Amara, Student Representatives: Ms. Alexa Carroll and Ms. Morgan Plitt

ABSENT: None.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Sexton Read called the regular Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

PUBLIC PORTION

Cara Nguyen (B), as a proud parent, thanked and expressed sincere appreciation to Board of Education members for their commitment and dedication in helping to make Regional School District No. 7 a place where her children love coming to every day, and a Blue Ribbon Award winning school.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Sexton Read advised of a correction in the September 22, 2021, Minutes as follows: Public Portion Section – **AMEND** Greg Roy to Andre Roy.

MOTION by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **APPROVE WITH AMENDMENT** per above Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2021, as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale.
MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS

STUDENT REPORTS

Morgan provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: athletic team achievements, successful Homecoming Dance, Spirit Week, and excellent decorating done by all classes, and excitement of Blue Ribbon recognition and shirts provided that will be worn by everyone this Thursday in celebration. Alexa provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: great participation in school Spirit Week, Homecoming Dance held outside under tents which everyone loved, very proud of the time and effort students put into decorations making for a memorable experience and community event. Alexa advised that she is very proud to be a Highlander. Board of Education questions, comments, and brief discussion followed.

PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Mr. Amara provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: Professional Development Day, school climate survey, Grade 7 transition challenges, and Middle School student activities. Mr. Amara advised of enthusiastic students with a love of learning, and the unique and special climate within the Middle School. Ms. Sexton Read commented and expressed appreciation to staff and teachers for all their efforts in helping to make all students feel comfortable with the Middle School transitions and expectations that may be different this year. Brief discussion and questions followed pertaining to climate survey.

Mr. Franklin provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: Open House and Spirit Week, upcoming European trips, PSAT administration schedule, and the National Blue Ribbon Award for Exemplary High Performance. Mr. Franklin advised that it was great to welcome parents into the building during Open House, and that Dan Carroll did a great job organizing the outdoor pep rally. Additional information, as it becomes available, will be forthcoming pertaining to the European trips. Questions and brief discussion followed.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Palmer thanked Mr. Amara and Mr. Franklin for their efforts, work and dedication, and provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: ESSER II and The American Rescue Plan Grants, the Football Program with Housatonic joining the GN collaborative football team, Special Education Budget with anticipated additional outplacement costs for the next school year, upcoming school trips to Europe and Washington, D.C., and CAPSS SEL Committee and request for Kevin Case to co-chair the working group along with Dr. Palmer this year. Dr. Palmer requested a MOTION be made to APPROVE the Europe trip that was cancelled and rescheduled to April 2022. Questions pertaining to the European trips were addressed, brief discussion followed, and the following MOTION was made.

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** the rescheduled Europe trip in April 2022. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Gaskins provided Board of Education updates pertaining to: Transportation ongoing changes and bus driver shortage, new Emergency Connectivity Grant application for chrome books and laptops submitted by IT Director, Chris Fray, Ag-Ed bus grant, athletic/maintenance building progress, and provided Board of Education explanations for submitted Transfer Report. Questions and brief discussion followed, and the following MOTION was made.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Bell, to **APPROVE** the Transfer Report as presented. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Dr. Palmer thanked Mr. Gaskins for his continuing work and search for solutions with the ongoing transportation/bus driver shortage.

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATES

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Sexton Read advised that she is currently in the process of scheduling a second district-wide workshop conversation with Town Chairs and Officials pertaining to the Regionalization Study, and welcomes Board of Education input. Questions and brief discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Sexton Read introduced updated Board of Education Policies pertaining to Sexual Harassment, and Dr. Palmer clarified that the reasoning behind the update is that current policies are out-of-date and the changes will include updated language in accordance with the statutes. Questions were addressed by Ms. Sexton Read, Dr. Palmer, and Mr. Amara, with a vote scheduled for the next Board of Education meeting.

6.1 First Reading of Policy 4118.112/4218.112 Sexual Harassment (Personnel)

6.2 First Reading of Policy 5145.5 Exploitation/Sexual Harassment (Students)

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **CANCEL** the second regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting in October. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Lisa Fragale (C), in appreciation and recognition of teachers, administration, all staff members, and in celebration of the honor of The Blue Ribbon Award, advised that, on behalf of the Board of Education, she would like to provide a celebratory luncheon to be held at the school on Teacher In-Service Day, Tuesday, November 2. Ms. Sexton Read thanked Ms. Fragale for her idea, and advised appreciation for Board members willing to donate and/or facilitate in helping with the celebratory luncheon. Dr. Palmer sincerely thanked Ms. Fragale and advised it would be very much appreciated by all staff.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

Jennifer Iacino (B), shared how happy she was that the Homecoming Dance was held outside and students were not required to wear masks, and would like the Board to provide thoughts on mask wearing and the possibility of an outdoor graduation. Additionally, Ms. Iacino expressed concerns with vaccination requirements and students traveling to foreign countries.

Cara Nguyen (B), inquired on Capstone Project mentor opportunities and community participation, and Mr. Franklin responded with updates to follow as additional information becomes available.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADJOURN** at 7:12 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Duran, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa H. D'Aprile
Board Clerk