

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the August 21, 2001 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, August 21, 2001 in the Board Room at Little Harbour School.

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***Attendance***

**PRESENT:** Mr. Kent LaPage (Chair), Mr. John Lyons (Vice-Chair), Mr. Raimond Bowles, Mrs. Nancy Novelline-Clayburgh, Mrs. Nansi Craig, Mr. Clay Hayward, Mr. Kenneth Muske

**ABSENT:** Mr. John Dowd, Mr. Carvel Tefft

**PARTICIPATING:** Dr. Lyonel B. Tracy (Superintendent of Schools), Dr. Robert J. Lister (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Mr. Alan Robinson (Student Representative), Mrs. Ann Walker (Employee Representative)

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***Non-Public Session***

Prior to the regular meeting, Chair LaPage entertained a motion to go into non-public session, according to RSA 91-A:3 II. (b), to discuss the hiring of personnel. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Board go into non-public session to discuss the hiring of personnel. The motion was unanimously approved. The Board went into non-public session at 6:35 p.m. and adjourned the non-public session at 7:02 p.m.

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***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. Following a moment of silent reflection, Mrs. Connie Carmody, Principal of New Franklin School, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**Correspondence**

The Chair read a note from Mary Loughlin thanking the Board for the retirement reception and photos from the reception. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the correspondence be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Thank You Note***

***Letter from Teacher on Sabbatical***

The Chair referred to a letter sent to Board members by Mr. Joseph Arnstein, High School Latin teacher who is on sabbatical for the first semester, and requested a motion to accept the letter and place it on

***Correspondence  
(continued)***

file. Mr. Lyons made this motion, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh and unanimously approved by the Board.

***Letter from  
Chairperson of  
Clipper Health  
Center***

Chair LaPage read a letter he received from Michelle McCarthy, Chairperson of the Clipper Health Center, requesting the School Board look at ways to fund the Young Women's Leadership Program and a mediator for Seacoast Outright. These programs are currently at a financial crisis. Mr. Lyons requested the Board follow-up on this letter to discuss these issues. The Chair requested copies of this letter be made for all Board members and that it be discussed at the next meeting.

***New Franklin  
School Memory  
Book***

Dr. Tracy informed Board members they have each received a copy of the New Franklin School 2001 memory book. He said it is an outstanding piece of work that is kid-centered.

***Gavel Passed to  
Vice-Chair***

The Chair passed the gavel to Vice-Chair John Lyons, and announced he needed to leave the meeting in order to attend a meeting at City Hall. Mr. LaPage left the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

***APT Officers***

Dr. Tracy reported that he received from Mrs. Walker a list of the Association of Portsmouth Teachers' officers for the 2001-2002 school year. The slate of officers is: President: Barbara Doyle; First Vice-President: Janet Lovering; Second Vice-President: Diane McGee; Recording Secretary: Joseph Wesolowski; Corresponding Secretary: Ann Walker; and Treasurer: Barbara Mace. The Superintendent praised the outstanding relationship the teachers' association has with the school administration and said he does not take that for granted. Mr. Lyons said the APT President wrote a nice letter endorsing the School Board's nomination for School Board of the Year.

***APT Receives  
Award***

Dr. Lister reported the Association of Portsmouth Teachers recently received a Statewide award for the large locals because they have 100% membership, involvement in the community, and they receive many accolades for being involved in a lot of programs that directly benefit children in the City.

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**RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS**

***PHS Graduate  
Places Second in  
National Contest***

The Vice-Chair recognized Mr. John Chagnon, a resident of Portsmouth and owner of a local business. Mr. Chagnon informed the Board that a recent Portsmouth High School graduate, Taras Bouzakine, placed second in a national trigonometry contest. The Trig-Star is an annual competition sponsored by the National Society of Professional Surveyors. The program goal is to recognize and stimulate the best students of mathematics from among school

***PHS Graduate  
Places Second in  
National Contest  
(continued)***

districts across the country. Mr. Stan Lyford, Taras's math teacher at Portsmouth High School, received one of the Richard E. Lomax National Teaching Excellence Awards. Mr. Chagnon presented the Vice-Chair with a copy of the news release and other information, and requested the Board and administration help to publicize the achievements of this student. Dr. Tracy and Mr. Lyons thanked Mr. Chagnon for coming forward and speaking on behalf of this student. Mrs. Clayburgh and Dr. Lister commended Mr. Chagnon for his service to the community through various projects such as PEP 2000 and membership on City committees.

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**RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS**

***Little Harbour  
Indoor Air Quality  
Team***

Dr. Tracy recognized Mr. Peter Torrey, Mrs. Priscilla Santiago (Little Harbour School Nurse), and Mrs. Maggie Cooke (Occupational Health Nurse) as members of Little Harbour School's Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Team. The three recently attended an EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) symposium in Washington, D.C. and received an award on behalf of Little Harbour School. The school was among 19 winners of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2001 Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (IAQ TfS) Excellence Award for creating a healthier indoor environment for students and staff. Mrs. Santiago provided the Board with information on how they became involved in this program. A video on the "Tools for Schools" program was shown to the Board. The team from "This Old House" visited the school during the 97/98 school year and produced a video outlining the process the team used to promote a healthier school environment. Thirty-thousand (30,000) copies of this video have been produced and made available to school districts across the country.

Mrs. Santiago said the team discussed improvements that could be made to Little Harbour School. The following school year, after the improvements/changes had been made, she noticed a decrease in the number of students and staff complaining of respiratory problems and having bronchitis. One student's attendance increased significantly after the carpet in his classroom was replaced with tile. This same student, however, was not able to remain at the Middle School. Mrs. Santiago and Mrs. Cooke said they hope the Middle School will join the "Tools for Schools" Program. New Franklin School joined the program last year. Mr. Torrey said they all want a healthy environment for our students. He said it would be easy to dump a lot of money and still not fix the problems. He commended the Little Harbour team's approach of involvement to correct the problems in their school. Mr. Lyons thanked Mrs. Santiago, Mrs. Cooke and Mr. Torrey for their hard work and for coming before the Board this evening.

**PERSONNEL**

***Professional Resignations***

Dr. Lister presented the following professional resignations: Jay Creteau (teacher at PASS) and Charles Simpson (PHS PM Program).

***Professional Nominations***

Dr. Lister presented the following professional nominations: Deborah Horman (PASS, social studies/special education); Sandra Couture (PHS, Spanish); Marcus Santy (PMS, social studies); Lori Wilson (PMS, English/language arts); Daniel Unsinn (PHS, math); Michael Rowe (PHS, math); Matthew Benkosky (PHS, science); Elizabeth Schlacter (PHS, athletic trainer); Cindy Matthews (NF, reading specialist); Peter Ruel (PMS, science); Michael Lyford (PHS, math); and Stephen Nason (PHS, production/media specialist). Mrs. Clayburgh moved the Board approve the professional nominations as presented, Mrs. Craig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Coaching Election***

Dr. Lister presented the coaching election of Amy Langton for the position of junior varsity girls' soccer coach. Mrs. Craig moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to accept the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

***Fire at PHS***

Dr. Tracy reported on the fire that was reported at the High School in the early morning of August 14. The fire was in an area right off of the gymnasium in one of the physical education offices. Dr. Tracy commended the Portsmouth Fire Department for its quick response and efforts to minimize damage to the building, and the Portsmouth Police Department for their quick response and securing of the building. He said the response is evidence of the outstanding partnerships we have with the other City departments. He also commended Mr. Torrey for his quick action in notifying the insurance company and arranging for clean-up crews to begin cleaning the building. Dr. Tracy said the School Department's maintenance workers arrived and assisted the firefighters with their knowledge of the building. Dr. Tracy said that once the fire was out, the building was turned over to the State Fire Marshall and the Police. Lt. Bob Carbone, Portsmouth Police Department, will be the contact person for this investigation. He said there is a strong sense that arson is suspect. Mr. Torrey said that, prior to the fire, the gym floor had been stripped and repainted, and was ready to be refinished with polyurethane. Some work will need to be done to clean the floor and prepare it for refinishing. He also reported that smoke damage was more intense than originally thought. Even though the smoke fire

***PHS Fire  
(continued)***

was contained and the majority of smoke damage was to three or four rooms, smoke travels everywhere. The clean-up crew from Serv-Pro has been cleaning the vents, and some smoke debris has been found as far away as rooms down the hall on the third floor. He said it is believed the school will be back to normal by the time the kids arrive on Tuesday. Dr. Tracy said we are fortunate in that no one was hurt or in the building at the time of the fire. He said there is a need to relocate some of the activities for freshman orientation. Portsmouth Crimeline has offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the fire.

Vice-Chair Lyons stated that, out of respect to the Chair, he will skip over agenda item VI. A. “Approval of 2001-2002 Goals for Superintendent of Schools” until Mr. LaPage returns to the meeting.

***Summer School  
Report***

Dr. Lister presented a report on the various summer school activities that occurred throughout the school district this summer. He told the Board that even though the school year is 180 days, learning is taking place through other mediums during the summer months.

***Safe Schools  
Training***

Dr. Tracy reported on the safe schools training that was recently held in Alexandria, Virginia. Through the efforts of Police Chief Brad Russ, Portsmouth was selected as one of three communities to participate in this training. The Department of Justice led the training, which was held at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Portsmouth Team has already held a follow-up meeting, and will continue to meet (along with sub-committees).

***Possibility of 8<sup>th</sup>  
Grade Trip***

Dr. Tracy informed the Board that the Portsmouth Middle School is talking about the possibility of taking some eighth graders to Washington, D.C. on an educational trip. This is presently in the planning stages, and he will keep the Board updated.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Joint Building  
Committee***

Mr. Torrey told the Board there are two sets of minutes in the packets from the June 7 and July 18 meetings. The minutes of the latest meeting, held on August first, need to be approved by the committee at its next meeting. The Joint Building Committee is working to put a budget to the plan for the High School. A proposed plan to move the Project Adventure course was given to the Board. Mr. Torrey elaborated on the decisions affecting this program. In addition, the Committee is moving forward with a concept for New Franklin School. There are two meetings scheduled with City people to address issues such as parking and access to and from the building. The next meeting of the Joint Building Committee will be on Wednesday, September 5, 2001.

- Policy Committee*** Mrs. Craig reported the Policy Committee met to review five policies that are presently in the budget section of the policy book. The Committee, with input from Business Administrator Torrey, revised four policies and agreed that one policy may remain the same.
- First Readings of Policies Approved***
- On a motion by Mr. Muske, seconded by Mrs. Craig, the Board unanimously approved to accept the first reading of the “Sale and Disposal of Books, Equipment and Supplies” policy as written.
- On a motion by Mr. Bowles, seconded by Mr. Muske, the Board unanimously voted to accept the first reading of the “Grants, Gifts, and Bequests” policy as presented.
- On a motion by Mr. Muske, seconded by Mr. Bowles, the Board unanimously approved the first reading of the “Local Purchasing” policy as presented.
- On a motion by Mr. Muske, seconded by Mr. Bowles, the Board unanimously approved the first reading of the “Operation and Maintenance of Plant” policy as written.
- Policy Reviewed and Original Wording Retained*** On a motion by Mr. Bowles, seconded by Mr. Muske, the Board unanimously voted to accept the “Safety” policy as reviewed. The Committee did not recommend changes to this policy.
- Updating of Policy Book*** Dr. Tracy said a review and update of the current policy book looks to be quite a task and could go on for quite a while. In some districts, an assistant superintendent has worked on only that project for two years. Dr. Tracy told the Board that the district’s policy book does not conform to the model from the New Hampshire School Boards Association, and he would like to write a proposal for a consultant to do the whole process. Mr. Muske agreed there is a need to update the book, although he would not necessarily use the model provided by NHSBA. Mr. Bowles suggested the Board not act on this until after the September meeting of the Joint Budget Committee. Mr. Torrey said that, although there probably will not be good news at the next Joint Budget Committee meeting, he believes this is the year, if the Board is going to do something like this, to try and get it done and out of the way. Mr. Lyons asked if there was any objection to investigating the possibility of someone coming in to act as a consultant to update the policy book. There were no objections. The Superintendent will report back to the Board.
- Outside Taxes that Affect Portsmouth Tax Rate*** Mr. Bowles said the Statewide Property Tax and the County Tax are going to significantly impact the local tax rate. Because of these taxes, he suspects the Joint Budget Committee meeting in September will be quite different than meetings in recent years.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

***Exchange City***

Dr. Tracy reported that work has begun on renovating the Wentworth School for the Exchange City Program. The negotiated lease went into effect on August first. City Attorney Robert Sullivan has been in contact with Philip Ross from the Cody Foundation. He said there is a good plan in place and they are ready to go. Dr. Tracy said he doubts the program will be ready to take students beginning in the fall, and he will provide updates to the Board. He commended Mr. Sullivan for his efforts in moving along the legal process. Mr. Torrey said School Department personnel have had good conversations with Mr. Ross and the project's site manager. He said they share a willingness to meet us way more than halfway. Mr. Lyons said, keeping in mind what Mr. Bowles stated a few minutes ago about some of the economic issues the City will face, he would hope there would be significant efforts to get the word out on this project. Mrs. Clayburgh said this is a good example of getting a school program at no cost to the school district.

***Ice Skating Rink  
Committee***

Mrs. Clayburgh said the ice skating rink committee met at City Hall last Thursday night. This committee is looking into private fundraising. She expects they will have a report for the Board in late September.

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**FINANCIAL**

***Rates for 2001-02  
School Year  
Approved***

Mr. Torrey reviewed his memo dated August 7, 2001 regarding rates for the 2001-2002 school year, and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Muske moved the Board adopt the rates as proposed by the Business Administrator. Mr. Bowles seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***July Financial  
Report***

Mr. Torrey reviewed the July financial report. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mr. Muske, to accept the July 2001 financial report. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**NEXT AGENDA**

***Superintendent's  
Goals Tabled to  
Next Meeting***

Mr. Lyons suggested that, in consideration of the Board Chair, the agenda item VI. A. (approval of 2001-2002 goals for superintendent of schools) be placed on the next agenda. Mr. Bowles moved, seconded by Mr. Muske, to table this item until the September 11 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

***New Staff Members*** Dr. Tracy stated the new staff members will be introduced to the Board at the next meeting.

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**OTHER**

***Policies*** Mrs. Craig asked for clarification on the status of the budget policies that were previously approved by the Board.

***PEP 2000 Race*** Mrs. Clayburgh reported that PEP 2000 raised \$2,500 at its run/walk that was recently held. She thanked Mr. LaPage and Mr. Stan Lyford for their assistance with the run, as well as Janet Parkinson, race coordinator. The funds raised will be utilized for the after school programs at the elementary schools.

***Adjournment*** There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Bowles moved the Board adjourn its meeting; Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyonel B. Tracy, Ed.D.  
Executive Secretary