

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the August 12, 2003 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, August 12, 2003 in the Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Municipal Complex.

Attendance

PRESENT: Mr. Kent LaPage (Chair); Mr. John Lyons, Jr. (Vice-Chair); Mr. Raimond Bowles; Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh; Mr. Clay Hayward; Mr. Carvel Tefft; Mr. Charles Vaughn

ABSENT: Mrs. Nansi Craig

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Lyonel B. Tracy (Superintendent of Schools); Dr. Robert J. Lister (Assistant Superintendent); Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator); Mr. Adam Irish (Student Representative); Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

Prior to the regular meeting, the Board met in non-public session to discuss the hiring of new personnel and clerical negotiations. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (b) and (d).

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the School Board to order at 7:03 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection, and asked people to keep in mind those less fortunate than us and those serving in the armed forces throughout the world. Mr. Forrest Ransdell, High School Principal, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the July 8, 2003 meeting. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the minutes be approved as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

Prescott Park

The Chair reminded the Board they will be collecting donations at Prescott Park tomorrow evening, August 13.

“ED”ies Awards

Chair LaPage said the ballots for next year’s “ED”ies Awards are now available and are available from either the Board Chair or the

Superintendent of Schools.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

No one had signed up to address the Board.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

New Staff Members Chair LaPage stated it is customary for the Board to meet new personnel in September; however, this evening two new staff members will be introduced to the Board. The Chair introduced Mr. Forrest Ransdell, Principal of Portsmouth High School. Mr. Torrey introduced Mrs. Patricia Laska, Director of School Nutrition. Mr. LaPage and Mr. Torrey both stated that Mr. Ransdell and Mrs. Laska “hit the ground running” when they arrived in Portsmouth. Mr. LaPage asked them to come forward to meet the Board. The Chair then invited them to address the Board.

Director of School Nutrition Mrs. Laska told the Board she is very excited to be part of the Portsmouth staff, and she began working in Portsmouth with the Group Workcamps at the Middle School. Mrs. Laska said the National School Food Service Association set goals for school and nutrition services. In an effort to meet these goals and to promote nutrition, Mrs. Laska said the name of the department will be changed from Foodservice to School Nutrition, and there will be continuing education opportunities for staff. She said her department serves the schools in many different ways.

High School Principal Mr. Forrest Ransdell thanked the Board and the entire community for the opportunity to come to Portsmouth to work, and said he is very excited to be here. He said it has been a very busy time with the new construction, but that also makes it exciting. He said the construction company is doing a terrific job, and it is expected that phase one will be completed in February 2004. Mr. Ransdell said Portsmouth High School has a strong tradition, and he wants to continue that tradition as well as create new, strong traditions. He met with parents to look at different issues and concerns, and he has talked with the Student Representative, Adam Irish. Mr. Ransdell said he looks forward to working with the staff, the students and the parents, and gave the Board his word that he would do his best.

Rules Suspended to Take Up Agenda Item Mr. Bowles stated he has a family member visiting and, therefore, moved that agenda item VIII. A. (Method of Filling School Board Vacancy) be addressed at this time. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Bowles asked the Chair to review the recommendation that is before the Board.

***Filling School
Board Vacancy***

Chair LaPage said the Board met in non-public session with Counsel to discuss filling the vacancy created when Colleen Montminy resigned from the School Board to move to Florida with her family. He said the procedure used by the City of Portsmouth is that the balance of Colleen's term would be filled by the next highest vote-getter. Mr. LaPage said the next highest vote-getter, and only other candidate from that election, has not been located by the City Clerk's office and it is possible that he no longer lives in the City of Portsmouth.

Mr. LaPage said the Board, in its non-public session of July 17, 2003, came to an unanimous conclusion as to how best serve the City of Portsmouth in filling this vacancy. A special election would cost the City approximately \$11,000. The Board did not feel that would be a logical expense, especially when the registration period for the November elections opens on August 25. The Board also chose not to appoint someone to the Board, who might then be perceived as having an inside edge during the elections. The Board chose to leave the seat vacant until the general election in November. Chair LaPage said he will formally notify the City Clerk and City Attorney to use the process where the fifth highest vote-getter in the November election will, immediately following the election and taking the Oath of Office, begin serving the remainder of Colleen Montminy's term. Mr. LaPage also stated that the Chair gets the last vote on all motions; however, he will abstain from voting on any item that will lead to a divided board.

The Chair encouraged Portsmouth citizens to run for the office of School Board, and said that registration begins on August 25th. Chair LaPage said he appreciates the assistance of City Attorney Robert Sullivan and City Clerk Kelly Barnaby in assisting the Board on reaching a decision.

Mr. Bowles said he believes the fifth highest vote-getter filling the two year vacancy diminishes the importance of the two year term, and he would prefer there be a separate ballot question for the two year term. He suggested the Board get a written opinion from the City Attorney that the recommended procedure of filling the two-year term with the fifth highest vote-getter is okay. He reminded the Board there is a better way to go. In closing, Mr. Bowles lobbied for the two-year term being a separate ballot item. The Chair stated the ballots are not the Board's decision, other than a recommendation to the City Clerk who would then take it to the City Council. The Chair said he will ask the City Attorney to check with the Attorney General's Office to be sure the Board is in compliance with State law.

Mr. Vaughn said that Mr. Bowles has a good point in that the two-year term might encourage someone who wanted to test the waters as

***Filling School
Board Vacancy
(con't.)***

far as serving on the Board, and there could be a big turn-out for the two-year term. Mr. Vaughn said, were it not for the August 25 registration period, he might ask to table the decision; however, the Board does not meet again until September 9th and there would then not be enough time to get names on a ballot.

Mr. Lyons said the Board chose not to hold a special election because it would cost the taxpayers of Portsmouth approximately \$11,000, and they chose not to appoint someone who would then be perceived as a favorite candidate and give that person an advantage at the polls as an incumbent. Mr. Lyons said the Chair stating he will abstain from voting if his vote would skew the results is commendable, and he hopes citizens of the City of Portsmouth appreciate Chair LaPage.

(Mr. Bowles left the meeting at 7:34 p.m.)

PERSONNEL

LOA Approved

Dr. Lister presented a request for a one year leave of absence from Heidi White, third grade teacher at Little Harbour School, for the 2003-04 school year. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the request be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Resignation
Accepted***

Dr. Lister presented the resignation of Valerie McKenney, Dean of Students at Portsmouth Middle School, effective July 18, 2003. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons to accept the resignation. Mr. Tefft, Mr. Hayward, Mrs. Clayburgh and Chair LaPage commended Mrs. McKenney for her ambition and accomplishments in Portsmouth and expressed sadness that she is leaving, and they wished her well. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Professional
Nominations***

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Linda Beal to the position of reading recovery teacher (50%) at New Franklin School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Kathy Birse-Siegel to the position of physical education/health teacher at Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Tefft, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Misa Brautigam to the position of first grade teacher at Dondero Elementary School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Professional
Nominations
(con't.)***

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Maureen Callahan to the position of after school coordinator at Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Michelle Fijalkowski to the position of third grade teacher at Little Harbour School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Tefft, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Matthew Gladu to the position of high school math teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Amelia Jones to the position of third grade teacher at Dondero School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Tefft, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Lisa Pepe to the position of high school English teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Gail Nicosia to the position of fifth grade teacher at Dondero School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr Lister presented the nomination of Immaculee Niwemugeni to the position of high school French teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Julie Scammon to the position of second grade teacher (50%) at Dondero School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Kimberly Puglia to the position of high school math teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Lauren Robitaille to the

Professional Nominations (con't.)

position of fourth grade teacher at Little Harbour School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Jonathan Moss to the position of high school science teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Lynne Pallarino to the position of English As A Second Language (ESL) teacher at Dondero and Little Harbour Schools. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyons stated that he is pleased to see a number of Portsmouth residents being hired to teach in the Portsmouth schools. He also stated that he is personally pleased to see that Lauren Robitaille has been hired. He said Ms. Robitaille grew up in Portsmouth and attended Portsmouth public schools.

Mrs. Clayburgh said that Maureen Callahan is being hired with funds received from a three-year grant. Ms. Callahan will work with students who have difficulty completing their homework.

Coaching Elections

Dr. Lister presented the coaching election of Martin James to the position of varsity boys soccer coach. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the coaching election of Linda McGurin to the position of junior varsity cheerleading coach. Mr. Tefft moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Interview Process and Filling of Vacancies

Mr. Tefft commended the administration on how far along they are in filling professional vacancies, and noted that there are only three positions left open at this time. Chair LaPage said this is the best he has seen, in his 11 years on the Board, for positions being filled and being ready to start the new school year. Mr. LaPage congratulated Drs. Tracy and Lister for the outstanding interview process developed over the last three years. The Chair also commended department heads and administrators who have worked through the summer to review applications and conduct interviews.

Dr. Tracy said the following positions are still vacant and interviews will be taking place for: 50% school psychologist position, Middle School English teacher, and Middle School Dean of Students. Dr.

***Interview Process
and Filling of
Vacancies (con't.)***

Tracy acknowledged the School Board's authorization to declare the Superintendent may employ candidates made the District's offer of employment more attractive to candidates. Dr. Tracy commended the Association of Portsmouth Teachers for negotiating a creative three-year agreement that addressed the City's financial crisis yet established competitive teacher salaries. The Superintendent said the teachers' association agreed to accept last year's salary for the first half of the school year, and then go to the new salary schedule. He said this has tremendously helped the budget. Dr. Tracy thanked the Board and the teachers for working together.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

***Joint Building
Committee***

Joint Building Committee: Mr. LaPage reported the Joint Building Committee met on July 16, 2003 and will meet again on August 20, 2003. He said the construction is progressing and he encouraged Board members to follow along with the construction. At this time the auditorium is gutted. Mr. LaPage said the Joint Building Committee received an update from the Clerk of the Works, Bill DiBartolomeo; heard reports about the bid status for the auditorium and furniture; received an update on the HVAC report for New Franklin School; received a report from Technology Director Ed Stokel and Network Administrator Tom Lotz about the technology layout and needs for the new high school; received information from Mrs. Clayburgh about a fundraiser scheduled for November 15; and received a report from Mr. Torrey about a \$20,000 rebate from Public Service of New Hampshire and that the State has approved full funding of \$6 million for the Portsmouth Voc/Tech Center with a match of 75% (\$4.5 million).

Mr. Torrey elaborated on the State funding for the Voc/Tech Center, and he complimented Pamela MacArtney, Career/Technical Director, for her efforts in applying for the funds. Mrs. Clayburgh spoke about the auditorium seats that are available to be "purchased," along with a brass plaque.

(There were no other Committee Reports to come before the Board.)

NEW BUSINESS

***Tentative Clerical
Agreement***

Dr. Tracy said it is his pleasure to notify the Board that its representatives and representatives from the Portsmouth Association of Clericals in Education (PACE) have reached a five-year negotiated contract agreement. The Superintendent stated that although the terms of this contract will not be made public until after it is ratified by the City Council, he wants to acknowledge that the clericals, the

Tentative Clerical Agreement (con't.)

same as the teaches, shared the same sensitivity for the City's financial crisis and agreed to delay salary increases until January 2004. He said throughout negotiations both sides were looking out for what was in the best interest of the City while, at the same time, trying to reach an agreement that was respectful to the clericals.

Ratification of Clerical Agreement

Mr. Vaughn moved the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and the School Board's negotiating team, ratify the tentative agreement between the School Board and the Portsmouth Association of Clerical Employees (PACE) and forward it to the City Council for consideration. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. Mrs. Clayburgh, a member of the Board's negotiating team, said this was the first time she had served on a negotiating team and she was very happy to see that both sides were very professional and very courteous to each other at all times. The Chair thanked the two teams and City Negotiator Tom Flygare. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

First Reading of "Fund Raising" Policy

Mrs. Kathleen Dwyer, Assistant City Attorney, addressed the Board on the new policy for Fund Raising. Mrs. Dwyer worked with Mr. Torrey to draft this policy, and stated it would be placed under the "Community Relations" section of the policy book. She presented it to the Board for first reading. Mr. Tefft moved the Board approved the first reading of the "Fund Raising" policy. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. After some discussion, Mr. Tefft moved the question. The Board, in a roll call vote, unanimously approved first reading of the policy.

Revision to "Harassment" Policy

Mrs. Dwyer presented a revision to the third page of the "Harassment" policy to update the names of the Title IX Coordinators. Mr. Tefft moved the Board approve the policy as amended; Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Tefft said the Board has been reviewing its policy book for two years. He said it is important that the Board has a meaningful policy book and that people understand the Board takes its policies very seriously and will enforce them.

Early Release Request Approved

Dr. Lister reviewed the District's "Staff Planning and In-Service Time Request." Four early release dates are being requested. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, the Board approve the 2003-04 early release request as presented. Dr. Tracy told the Board that when he arrived in Portsmouth, the Board had already approved six early release dates for the 2000-01 school year. The number of early release days has since be reduced to four. The motion to approve the early release request was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Policy Committee Chair LaPage stated that Mrs. Craig, Chair of the Board's Policy Committee, has requested a Board member be named to replace Colleen Montminy on the Policy Committee. The Chair asked for a volunteer. Mr. Tefft volunteered to serve on the Policy Committee. The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be Tuesday, August 19, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.

Formal Vote on Process to Replace Board Member Dr. Tracy stated the City Attorney had requested a formal vote from the School Board regarding the filling of the vacancy on the School Board. The Chair asked if there was a motion or a declaration from the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board agree with the program and plan as outlined earlier in the meeting by the Chair in which the fifth highest vote-getter in the upcoming November election will fill the vacancy; Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL

FY 02-03 General Fund Financial Information Mr. Torrey reviewed his memo of July 24, 2003 regarding the preliminary FY 02-03 general fund financial information. He said the combined anticipated financial impact to the City's fund balance is \$187,223. The Board commended Mr. Torrey for his fine work in ensuring the fiscal year ended on a positive note.

July 2003 Financial Report Mr. Torrey reviewed the July 2003 financial report. He pointed out the funds in line items 211 (health insurance) and 239 (retirement) are transferred to the City on July first to be included in the respective funds. Mr. Torrey also said funds in the transportation account are encumbered in total at the beginning of a fiscal year.

2003 – 2004 Rates and Fees Mr. Torrey reviewed the proposed fees and rates for 2003-04 as outlined in his memo dated August 5, 2003. Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the 2003-04 rates as set out in the Business Administrator's memo of August 5, 2003; Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

NEXT AGENDA

Next Meeting, September 9 The Chair stated the next School Board meeting will be held on September 9, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. He said school will have been in session for about two weeks at that time.

OTHER

X-Country Races Mrs. Clayburgh said PEP 2000's "2003 cross-country races" will be

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board 9-9-03.)

held on August 30th beginning at 9:30 a.m. Application forms are available at Central Office.

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyonel B. Tracy, Ed.D.
Executive Secretary