

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the December 22, 2003 Meeting

A special meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Monday December 22, 2003 in the Board Room at Little Harbour School.

Attendance

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

ABSENT: Mrs. Roseann Vozella Clark, Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Lyonel B. Tracy (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Mr. Adam Irish (Student Representative)

Also in attendance were Forrest Ransdell (High School Principal); Ed Stokel Computer Director); and Tom Lotz (Network Administrator).

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. He thanked Board members and staff for coming to this meeting. A copy of the preliminary minutes of the December 17, 2003 Joint Building Committee meeting were distributed. Mr. LaPage said the Joint Building Committee met last Wednesday and it was discovered then that the full Board did not have a total understanding of the different sources of funding for the technology component of the new high school. Mr. Iafolla stated the request from the Technology Committee would need to go before the School Board for review and approval before the Joint Building Committee would vote on the expenditure of funds. The Chair said he agrees with Mr. Iafolla's recommendation as it will ensure that all Board members have the same level of understanding.

Technology Plan

Dr. Tracy stated the technology program as requested by Mr. Stokel and the Technology Committee needs to be approved by the School Board. Once the concept is approved by the Board, the Joint Building Committee can then move forward with appropriating the necessary funds.

Mr. Torrey reviewed the FF&E (furniture, fixtures and equipment) budget dated December 5, 2003, including expenditures to date and

***Discussion of
Technology Plan
and Funding***

estimated encumbrances.

Mr. Torrey reviewed the various fund sources to implement the technology plan. He said the purpose of tonight's meeting is to review and receive approval for the Joint Building Committee to expend funds of \$480,000 for technology purchases for the high school. Mr. Stokel stated they are not requesting any anticipated funds from the 2004-05 budget; that figure is listed to paint a picture of how the plan will be implemented for when the building is completed. Mr. Stokel said they are looking for approval of the December purchases in order to meet price quotes that cannot be guaranteed after the start of the new year. He said that purchases planned for April 2004 are also included in the \$480,000 figure.

Mr. Stokel said this plan has been reviewed and approved by Principal Forrest Ransdell, working along with high school staff and the Technology Committee. He said they have developed a plan they believe will carry the school into the future. Mr. Stokel said there is a possibility that the media/television broadcast studio may be acquired through outside funding. Therefore, at this time he is withdrawing from the proposal the \$70,000 for that item.

Mr. Vaughn moved the Board approve the Technology Program as presented by the Technology Committee and its associated request for no more than \$410,000. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion.

There was discussion to the motion, and Mr. Stokel and Mr. Ransdell answered questions from the Board. Mr. Tefft, a member of the Technology Committee, also answered questions and provided information to the Board.

Vice-Chair Lyons commended Mr. Stokel for being one of the best in the business of technology and stated he could stand up to any of the technology directors of a Fortune 500 company. He said that Mr. Stokel has done an incredible job for the school system, and we are very lucky to have him in Portsmouth. Mr. Vaughn echoed the sentiments of the Vice-Chair and said that Mr. Stokel is one of the best.

***Expenditure
Approved***

The motion to approve an expenditure of up to \$410,000 for technology purchases was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

***Educational
Narrative Approved***

Mr. Tefft moved the Board support the educational narrative as developed by the Technology Committee and presented to the School Board, and the Joint Building Committee be authorized to implement accordingly. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board 1-13-04.)

Mr. Tefft commended Mr. Stokel for the outstanding job he has done in providing technology in the schools on an extremely limited budget. He said that no business person would attempt to do what Mr. Stokel has done on a budget of \$200,000.

***Discussion of
Political Speakers***

The Chair distributed a copy of a letter sent to Terry McAuliffe, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, from Forrest Ransdell and Lyonel Tracy taking exception to comments made to students at Portsmouth High School. The letter states that Mr. McAuliffe deviated from his offer to inform and enlighten students about the political process in general and on the operation of a major political party. Mr. Ransdell said that, as he visited classrooms the next day, he observed teachers and students discussing the visit. He said this was also a learning experience for the students and they were discussing how some of Mr. McAuliffe's comments were biased.

There was discussion on the process of approving speakers. Mr. Bowles said he has been working on getting the State Republican Chair, Jayne Millerick, to speak to the students. He believes that she has contacted Mr. Ransdell. Mr. Ransdell stated that, at this time, a date has not been scheduled.

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. On a motion by Mr. Vaughn, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyonel B. Tracy, Ed.D.
Executive Secretary