

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the July 11, 2006 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, July 11, 2006 in Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

Attendance

PRESENT: Mr. Kent F. LaPage (Chair), Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh (Vice-Chair), Ms. Sheri Ham Garrity, Mr. John Lyons, Jr., Mr. Brendan Ristaino, Dr. Mitchell Shuldman, Mr. Carson Smith, Mrs. Ann Walker

ABSENT: Mr. Raimond Bowles

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zadravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. Stephen T. Bartlett (Business Administrator), Miss Elisa Loeser (Student Representative), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative), and Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

The Board met in a non-public session at 5:30 p.m. in the Legal Department Conference Room. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (b), and was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the School Board to order at 7:20 p.m. in Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall. Superintendent Lister called the roll. The Chair called for a moment of silent reflection and asked people to remember: those less fortunate; those serving in the military protecting us at home and abroad; and the students and staff who are on summer vacation. Mr. Dan Parr led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved

The Chair called for approval of the June 13, 2006 minutes. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Chair called for approval of the June 27, 2006 minutes. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be approved.

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Thank You Note

The Board received a note from Marcia Ryan, retired teacher, thanking them for the retirement reception, plaque, and kind words to the retirees. Mrs. Ryan thanked the Portsmouth School System for a wonderful career. Mr. Ristaino moved the correspondence be accepted and placed on file; Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

Support of Athletic Director

Mr. Peter Bresciano, 101 O'Leary Place, Portsmouth, told the Board that he supports an athletic director at the high school, and he understands from newspaper articles that it will be Rus Wilson, Recreation Director. Mr. Bresciano said he whole-heartedly agrees with Mr. Wilson's appointment. Mr. Bresciano expressed his concern that, because of the funding, there is not enough money to fund that position and that Mr. Wilson and his staff may not receive full compensation for all they will be doing. He said that Mr. Wilson will be undertaking a monumental job, and he asked people to keep an open mind and to look at this again next year. Mr. Bresciano encouraged the School Board to again send letters to Senators Gregg and Sununu and Representative Bradley asking why the school district is not receiving the 40% reimbursement for special education promised by the Federal Government. He said the Government continues to mandate programs, yet does not follow its own mandate for reimbursement.

There were no other speakers to address the Board. The Chair declared the public commentary session closed.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

PASS Overnight Field Trip Requests

Mrs. Nancy Roy, Principal at the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School (PASS), and Mr. Bryan Mascio, teacher at PASS, were in attendance at the meeting. Mr. Mascio presented a request for 13 students and four staff members to participate in a three-day, two-night program at Overlook Farm, in Rutland, Massachusetts on September 26 – 28, 2006. Mr. Mascio said the cost per person is \$90, including overnight accommodations, educational programming, and most meals. He said that Overlook Farm has agreed to award \$40 scholarships to students that may need this assistance. When questioned by Board members, Mr. Mascio explained how the students raised the money in the past, and plans they have to raise the

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

***PASS Overnight
Field Trip Requests
(cont.)***

funds this year. Mr. Mascio said the students will report to the Board on their trip, but this year's presentation will be different in that the students will be responsible for production of the video. Mr. Ristaino moved the Board accept the request for the PASS field trip to Overlook Farm in September, 2006. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Mascio presented a request to take four students and three staff members to an overnight field trip to the Lost River Campground in Woodstock, New Hampshire. Mr. Mascio said the trip is for the students involved in the summer program, and the students will do research on the different aspects of the environment. He said the overnight trip is requested because the driving distance is out of reach for a day trip, and staying overnight would allow the students to visit more parks in that region and see how water carved the landscape. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, the overnight field trip to the Lost River Campground be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chair LaPage asked if the students in the summer program are Portsmouth or SAU 50 residents. Mr. Mascio said the students are out-of-district and tuition is being paid for them to attend summer school. He said there is no cost to the Portsmouth taxpayers for those students to attend summer school.

PERSONNEL

***Professional
Resignations***

Mr. Zadravec presented the following resignations:

- Sherri Carver from her position as media teacher at Portsmouth High School. Resignation accepted on a motion by Mr. Lyons, seconded by Mr. Smith, and unanimously approved.
- Amy Danusis from her position of Title1/Reading teacher at Little Harbour School. Resignation accepted on a motion by Mr. Lyons, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, and unanimously approved.
- Stephanie McSherry from her position of grades two and five teacher at Little Harbour School. Resignation accepted on a motion by Mr. Lyons, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, and unanimously approved.

***Professional
Nominations***

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Lisa Salter to the position of earth science teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Amy Beaudet to the 33% position of visual arts teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Lyons

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

**Professional
Nominations (cont.)**

moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Kimberlee Torres to the position of social studies teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Jo Orise Dodge to the position of computer integrator teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyons stated the School Board has reviewed these nominations in detail with the administration during non-public session. The Chair stated the non-public session was held in accordance with State RSA pertaining to personnel.

Mr. Zadravec nominated Kathleen Casperson to the position of Middle School nurse. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved; Chair LaPage abstained from voting.

**Coaching
Nomination**

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of James Mulvey to the position of varsity basketball coach. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Update on PHS
Principal Search**

Dr. Lister informed the Board that a second round of interviews was held yesterday for the high school principalship; four candidates who are presently either principals or assistant principals were interviewed. The Superintendent said the selection has been narrowed down to two final candidates. Background checks will be done on each of the finalists, as well as final interviews to determine if they are the right fit for Portsmouth High School. Dr. Lister said he will keep the Board informed.

**PHS Athletic
Department**

Dr. Lister said he appreciates all of the input he received from the community in reference to leadership in the athletic department. He said they were all working toward the same goal. He said finding a solution was not an easy task given the budget and our needs to provide athletic services to our students. The Superintendent said they are all excited about the transition from Class L to Class I, and they are in the process of getting things ready for that. He said there will be some challenges to go along with that transition, such as transportation, additional uniforms, training, etc. Dr. Lister acknowledged the Athletic Committee that recently completed work on a student athletic contract and coaches' handbook. He said there

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

***PHS Athletic
Department (cont.)***

will be discussions involving coaches and the development of a system for evaluating and training coaches. Dr. Lister thanked the following people for their assistance to the committee: Dan Parr, Rick Hugener, and Shirley Navelski. He thanked the following Board members who served on this committee: Nancy Clayburgh, Carson Smith, and Brendan Ristaino.

Dr. Lister said the School Department is very excited to enter into a collaborative agreement with another City department, and he thanked City Manager John Bohenko for his assistance and input to make this successful. He said the School Department already collaborates with the City's Legal Department and pays a portion of the salary for Assistant City Attorney Kathleen Dwyer. Dr. Lister said the City is providing additional resources towards the High School Athletic Department.

Dr. Lister said there is \$23,000 in the budget for an athletic director, and they all know that is not a fair amount of money for what they are asking people to do. He said the School Department was able to enter into an agreement with the City, and he is pleased to nominate Rus Wilson as Athletic Director at Portsmouth High School. The Superintendent said he looks forward to working with Mr. Wilson and his staff; he said the high school does not get just Mr. Wilson, but all of his staff in the Recreation Department. The Superintendent thanked Mr. Wilson and his staff for their assistance in scheduling the use of fields. He said they will work on the transition from Class L to Class I, and he feels confident this will work with help from everyone. Dr. Lister said this provides an opportunity to provide a competitive athletic program and lots of interaction with athletes and students at the High School, as well as an opportunity for feeder programs. He said people need to be involved in becoming part of the solution and not part of the problem.

***School Board to
Enter Into An
Agreement with the
City of Portsmouth***

Dr. Lister requested the School Board enter into an agreement with the Portsmouth Recreation Department and nominate Rus Wilson as the Athletic Director at Portsmouth High School. He said the agreement would allow Mr. Wilson to be athletic director for the School Department and the City.

Mrs. Clayburgh moved the School Board approve Mr. Rus Wilson as High School Athletic Director and that Mr. Wilson and members of his Recreation Department staff would work alongside the High School Athletic Department in a collaboration agreement as negotiated by the Superintendent of Schools and the City Manager. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion.

Chair LaPage said he has had the good fortune to know Mr. Wilson both professionally and personally over the years. The Chair said the

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

***PHS Athletics
(cont.)***

the City of Portsmouth is breaking new ground by doing this as there is no other municipality that does this, and the City has the right person in Mr. Wilson to do the job. The Chair stated the School Board will review this 90 days prior to the one year anniversary. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Wilson approached the podium and thanked the Board. He said that Portsmouth High School athletics is in critical need of reorganization. He and his staff will work on a plan, along with the High School, to restore pride in PHS athletics. Mr. Wilson said the new High School Principal will not have to worry about athletic issues; the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent can go back to their jobs; and the School Board can go back to setting policy. He thanked the Board for the opportunity and said they will not be disappointed; his department strives for a level of excellence. Mr. Wilson thanked Shirley Navelski, Dan Parr, Rick Hugener, Steven Zdravec and Dr. Lister for their efforts this past Spring. He said he looks forward to seeing members of the Board at some of our games.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

***Athletic Committee
Report***

Mrs. Clayburgh walked to the podium and thanked the members of the Athletic Committee for a job well done in revising the athletic contract and coaches' handbook. In addition to Mr. Ristaino and Mr. Smith, Mrs. Clayburgh acknowledged the following who served on the committee to review and revise these documents: Rus Wilson, Rick Hugener, Cindy Fitzgerald, Bob Herold, Boyd Morrison, Brittany Conway, Dan Parr, and Steve Zdravec. Mrs. Clayburgh said the Committee met seven times throughout May and June. They reviewed agreements from 16 school districts.

Mrs. Clayburgh said the Committee discussed whether the contract should be for student athletes or for all students. She said that Mr. Zdravec stated the Committee was charged by the School Board to revise the student athletic contract, and he suggested that a future committee be established to develop a student contract. Mrs. Clayburgh said the Committee members agreed that a copy of the contract should be placed in the student agenda book with a form to be signed by the student and parent/guardian and returned to the school. However, it is too late for the 2006-2007 agenda book.

Mrs. Clayburgh said the major changes to the student athletic contract are that it is now in force for 365 days, thus eliminating the issue of an incident occurring between seasons, and a student cannot get more than one "D" on his/her report card.

Mrs. Clayburgh said the Committee was formed during the time there

***PHS Athletic Dept.
(cont.)***

was no Athletic Director, and she suggested the School Board table action on the student athletic contract in order to allow Mr. Wilson the opportunity to review it and make changes. She said the contract would have to be signed by student athletes before the fall season sports begin on August 14th.

Mrs. Clayburgh said the Committee's second charge was to develop a coaches' handbook, which the NHIAA has requested be forwarded to them in August. She said that Mr. Parr reviewed the coaches' handbook that was approved in 2001 and along with Mr. Zadravec, Mr. Hugener and other staff members, revised that edition. Mrs. Clayburgh requested the Board approve the handbook this evening so that it may be forwarded in time to the NHIAA.

Ms. Garrity asked if the student athletic contract had to be forwarded to Mr. Wilson since he was on the committee. Mr. Wilson said the Committee was very eclectic and they all did not agree on all issues but did come to a consensus. He said that he does not like every single thing in the contract, but that does not mean that he is right. He said the final consensus was what is best for the student athlete. There was discussion of the contract concerning language, length of duration (365 days), and consistency. The Chair stated the Board has no policy regarding the athletic contract and this agreement would not be considered a policy. Dr. Shuldman suggested the contract be in effect from mid-August through the end of the school year and stated the School Board should not bear responsibility for student actions during the summer vacation. Mr. Wilson said the reason for making the contract valid for 365 days is to avoid the problem of students violating the rules whether it is two weeks or two days before the start of a season. He said they are striving for consistency. Mrs. Clayburgh said an athletic disciplinary committee will be formed to deal with infractions. Mrs. Clayburgh, Mr. Wilson, and Committee members answered questions from the Board. Mr. Ristaino said the Board did not have an athletic director when the Committee began discussing the student athletic contract. He said now that Mr. Wilson is on board, the contract should be reviewed and discussed every year. Mr. Smith stated that he was also on the Committee and did not agree with everything in the contract. He stated that if Mr. Wilson is able to achieve his goals, then perhaps within a year or two it would be possible to do away with the student athletic contract altogether. He said that some of the questions that are being asked tonight are questions that committee members brought up and discussed.

Mrs. Kathleen Dwyer, Assistant City Attorney, suggested the student athletic contract be sent to the Policy Committee for review, with a report to be made to the Board at the August meeting. She said this would still allow time for students to sign the contract before the start of practice for the fall sports.

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

PHS Athletic Agreement

Mr. Lyons moved the student athletic agreement as presented be forwarded to the Policy Committee for their review with a report back to the full Board at the August 8, 2006 meeting, and if approved, the contract would be reviewed in one year. Mr. Ristaino seconded the motion. Mrs. Dwyer cautioned the Policy Committee may make some changes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Coaches' Handbook

Mr. Lyons moved the Board accept the proposed coaches' handbook and that it be reviewed by the new Athletic Director with a report back to the School Board in a year. Dr. Shuldman seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Chair LaPage thanked the members of the Athletic Committee for their hard work and the time they put in to revising these documents.

Recess

The Chair recognized Carson Smith, John Lyons, Rai Bowles and Patty Wojnar for celebrating birthdays this week. He declared a recess at 8:26 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 8:42 p.m.

First Reading of Policies

Ms. Garrity presented the first readings of policies for approval by the Board. She requested the first reading of the Public Health and Safety Agencies be approved. Mr. Ristaino made this in the form of a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walker. The motion was unanimously approved. The Chair explained that approval of first reading still allows for changes to be made to the policy before second reading is passed. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Ms. Garrity presented the first reading of the Advisory Boards policy and requested it be approved. Mr. Lyons made this in the form of a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Ms. Garrity presented the first reading of Access to Records and requested it be approved. Mr. Lyons made this in the form of a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walker. Mr. Lyons requested the Policy Committee review whether or not the Board has to approve a policy if it is State law. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Second Reading of Policy

Ms. Garrity presented the Parent Involvement Policy for its second and final reading. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the second and final reading be approved. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

First Reading of Policy

Ms. Garrity presented a policy entitled Search and Seizure of Students and Property for first reading. Dr. Lister said the policy is being presented this evening in order for it to receive prior approval before the start of the 2006-2007 school year. There was discussion

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

of the proposed policy. Mr. Lyons suggested the policy should read that teachers and coaches will have the right to detain students who are suspected of a violation. After further discussion, Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the first reading of the Search and Seizure of Students and Property; Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Mr. Lyons said he hopes it is evident to people watching this meeting that the School District is moving forward; the School Board hired an athletic director, approved a student athletic contact, approved the coaches' handbook, hired new teachers, and has approved policies.

Elimination of Policies

Ms. Garrity requested a motion to eliminate policies that have been incorporated into new policies. A motion was made by Mr. Lyons, seconded by Dr. Shuldman, and subsequently withdrawn after Mrs. Walker requested the elimination of policies take place after the second readings of the new policies. Dr. Shuldman requested the policies that are mandated by State law be marked to indicate that. He also suggested the policy book be available on the website. Mrs. Mayer said posting the policy book on the website should be done only if it can be accurately maintained. She said one school district in SAU 50 has chosen to do so, while another did not for the reason of maintenance. Chair LaPage charged the Policy Committee to review this with the City Attorney and the City Webmaster.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent's Evaluation

The Chair asked Board members to complete their evaluation of the Superintendent and to return it to Patty Wojnar no later than July 21st. He said the Board would meet prior to August 8th to review the evaluation.

Communication with the Media

Ms. Garrity reviewed information she received from The Portsmouth Herald, Foster's Daily Democrat, and Portsmouth Public Radio on what they would be willing to do to support communications from the School Board. Ms. Garrity suggested the School Board start with a clean slate, forget previous issues, and make an effort to work with the media. Mr. Ristaino suggested the Board discuss this during a work session or at its retreat. Dr. Lister said the communications sent home to high school and middle school parents have been well received, and he has received positive feedback. Dr. Shuldman said he agrees with Mr. Ristaino to discuss this in a work session or at the retreat, and he suggested the Board establish an ad hoc committee to talk about communications. He agreed to serve on such a committee, as did Mrs. Walker.

(Approved by the School Board on August 8, 2006.)

FINANCIAL

Year End Financial Reports Mr. Bartlett reported his staff is diligently working on year-end reports and the final information will be ready for the Board's August meeting.

NEXT AGENDA

Next Meeting The Chair stated the next meeting of the School Board will be held on Tuesday, August 8th in Council Chambers. He stated that he will call for a non-public session to discuss personnel prior to the meeting.

OTHER

Request to Reschedule Date of Board Retreat Ms. Garrity requested the Board reschedule the date of its retreat, which had been set for Saturday, September 9th. She suggested the Board consider meeting from 5:00 – 9:30 p.m. There was discussion of various dates, and it was left the Board members would submit dates on which they are available to meet. Board members also discussed the timing of setting goals, and the Chair reviewed the history of the retreat.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Board adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Director