

(Approved by the School Board on September 12, 2006.)

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the August 8, 2006 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, August 8, 2006 in Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Municipal Complex.

Attendance

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

ABSENT: Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh (Vice-Chair), 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. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

Prior to the regular meeting, the School Board met in a non-public session in Conference Room A at City Hall. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (b), called to order at 5:30 p.m., and adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:32 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection and asked people to remember those less fortunate, those serving in the Armed Forces, and the children who are on vacation and will return to school soon. Mrs. Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved

The Chair called for approval of the July 11, 2006 minutes. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, to approve the minutes as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

NHIAA

The Board received a copy of a letter sent to Marty Brown, Chair of

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NHIAA (cont.)

the NHIAA Eligibility Committee from R. Patrick Corbin, Executive Director of the NHIAA stating that he met with Rus Wilson and Tom Kozikowski, who presented him with the Athletic Handbook and a final draft of the student athlete participation agreement. After speaking with them, Mr. Corbin has decided that the Portsmouth School District has taken the concerns of the eligibility committee seriously and has complied with all requests. He recommended the Eligibility Committee accept the materials at its next meeting and consider the matter closed. The Board also received a copy of the Superintendent's follow-up letter to Mr. Corbin stating he is pleased with the work that has been done by the Athletic Committee and Mr. Wilson, and the District looks forward to beginning its first athletic season in Class I. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the letters be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

Support of Varsity Softball Coach

Ms. Lisa Winchell, 11 Drake Drive, Greenland, said it is her understanding that the varsity softball coach will not be rehired, and she asked the Board to reconsider that decision. Ms. Winchell said she has been the coordinator of the Greenland Softball Program for six years, and has coached in Portsmouth and Greenland for eight years. She credited Mr. Doran for his commitment to girls' softball and said he has done an outstanding job as varsity softball coach and has volunteered his time at tournaments. She asked the Board to reconsider, and said she never imagined the day when one of the coaches that parents supported would be removed from his job.

Search and Seizure Policy

Mr. John Baiarz, 356 Glad City Road, Grafton, New Hampshire spoke on the search and seizure policy. He said that he hopes the Board received legal counsel on this policy, and he presented some scenarios that could result in problems for the Board. He suggested the personnel be properly trained, and said that problems could occur when searching a vehicle in the school parking lot that belongs to the parent, not the student. He also stated that if a student is a minor, how can they give consent to be searched, and cautioned the Board against violating students' rights. He said it would benefit not only the City of Portsmouth, but the State of New Hampshire, for the Board to reconsider the policy.

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

Recognition of Individuals

Chair LaPage commended the cooperation among Channel 22, City

Televised Sporting Events

Manager Bohenko, and the School Department to allow athletic games to be televised to the community on Channel 22. A total of 287 hours of broadcasting football games, volleyball games, basketball and hockey games, not to mention championship games, occurred on Channel 22 last school year. The Chair commended Alan Brady, the City's webmaster, for helping to make sure that things got done to highlight athletics in the City of Portsmouth. The Chair said this was done as a test program three years ago, and a meeting was recently held to discuss the upcoming sports season.

Chair LaPage said that Alan Brady has received requests for copies of the tapes of athletic games. The Chair said that Guy Hampson attends all of the games to get the players' statistics, talks to the coaches, and even attends games of the competitors so that he knows the players and their statistics. He commended Mr. Hampson for 287 hours of volunteering, in addition to working full-time.

The Chair asked Mr. Brady and Mr. Robert (Chris) Tremblay to step forward to receive a certificate of appreciation from the School Board. Mr. Howard Mangold, who also assists, was not able to attend this evening. The Chair thanked Mr. Mangold for his work and dedication to students.

Mr. Brady, speaking for the group, thanked the Board and said they always have fun televising the sporting events. He said they will continue to televise games this year, and the schedule will be posted on the City's web-page as well as on Channel 22. Mr. Brady said that throughout the year there will be some sort of sporting competition on Channel 22 for people to watch. He said the games are televised on Saturday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Lyons asked Mr. Brady to look into televising concerts and plays throughout the year. The Chair said he has talked with Mr. Brady about broadcasting plays, and learned that he would need to get the copyrights in order to televise plays.

PERSONNEL

Professional Nomination

Mr. Zdravec presented the nomination of Molly French to the position of grade four teacher at the Mary C. Dondero Elementary School. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

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***Coaching
Nominations***

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Jason Coffey to the position of Freshman boys' soccer coach. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Kristin Johns to the position of junior varsity field hockey coach. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of James Knowles to the position of varsity softball coach. Dr. Shuldman requested, because of the person who spoke earlier in the meeting, more time before deciding on this position. Mr. Smith agreed with Dr. Shuldman. Dr. Shuldman moved to table until the next meeting.. Dr. Lister reminded the Board that all coaches were asked to reapply for coaching positions. He said a screening committee reviewed the applications and conducted interviews, and then brought their recommendations to the Superintendent. Upon approval, the Superintendent forwards the nomination to the School Board. After hearing an explanation of the process, Dr. Shuldman withdrew his tabling motion.

Mr. Smith stated that he has some concerns about the direction we are headed in some of our coaching appointments; however, his duty as a Board member is to oversee the superintendent and not make personnel decisions. Mr. Smith said he has confidence in Mr. Wilson's ability to hire coaches. Mr. Lyons said that, historically, athletic issues bring out more people to meetings than academic issues, and the Board will never be able to change that.

Mr. Ristaino said the Board hired Rus Wilson as its Athletic Director and the Board needs to let him do his job. He said the Board is looking toward the future of the High School and athletics, and needs to support the Athletic Director.

After further discussion, Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, to approve the nomination of James Knowles as varsity softball coach. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Presentation to
Sportscaster***

Chair LaPage recognized Guy Hampson, who arrived at the meeting. Chair LaPage commended Mr. Hampson for 287 hours on the air time, not counting the time used for research. The Chair said he challenges any ESPN sportscaster to meet Mr. Hampson's standards. Mr. Hampson thanked the Board for the recognition and mentioned some highlights over the last three years. He thanked the coaches for their cooperation. He said that he believes the work they do is great

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for the community, the students, the student athletes and their families. Mr. Hampson acknowledged Alan Brady, executive producer, and Howard Mangold, cameraman, for their contributions to the program.

***Nomination of
Principal for
Portsmouth High
School***

Dr. Lister said the principalship at Portsmouth High School is a key position in the community and there will be high expectations; therefore, the selection committee spent a great deal of time over the past six months to find the right person to lead the school. The Superintendent outlined the process that was used to find a candidate to fill the position. He thanked Assistant Superintendent Steve Zadavec who took on the duties of interim principal in addition to his duties as assistant superintendent. Dr. Lister thanked the students at Portsmouth High School for their cooperation with the staff and people in the community throughout the transition. He said that he is very proud of all of our kids, and he looks forward to Freshmen Orientation and a great school year. The Superintendent thanked the School Board for going along with the process and supporting the school throughout the process. Dr. Lister nominated Jeffrey Collins to the position of Principal for Portsmouth High School. He said that Mr. Collins has had a lot of experience in curriculum and instruction, and is currently an assistant principal at Nashua North High School. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, to approve the nomination. Mrs. Mayer thanked the Board and Dr. Lister for including SAU 50 in the process, including interviewing candidates. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Nomination
Unanimously
Approved***

***Comments from
New Principal***

Mr. Collins thanked the Board for sticking by the process and the people it hires. Mr. Collins said he knows that he has been given the position of righting the clipper ship and getting it moving in the right direction. He said he is truly honored to be standing before the Board this evening. He said there is so much pride and honor in the Portsmouth community, and he sees his job as a very serious challenge. He said that he knows the community, parents, students, staff, and school board will work together to bring back clipper pride.

***Resignation of
School Board
Member***

Chair LaPage announced the resignation of Raimond Bowles from the School Board. Chair LaPage read Mr. Bowles' letter, which stated his resignation from the School Board, effective August 9, 2006, due to health issues that have prevented him from attending meetings and other events. Mr. Lyons moved the resignation be accepted with regret; Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mr. Ristaino stated, being the youngest person on the Board, he will miss Mr. Bowles' experience and guidance to aspiring politicians. Chair LaPage said that Mr. Bowles has served the City of Portsmouth since 1966, and it is evident that he has a love for the City of Portsmouth and its students. Chair LaPage announced that a celebration of Mr. Bowles' service to the community will be held on Thursday, October

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Resignation (cont.)

5, 2006, and more details will be forthcoming. In a roll call vote, the resignation was unanimously accepted with regret. Chair LaPage read an e-mail message from Mrs. Clayburgh, who is not able to attend this evening, thanking Mr. Bowles for his commitment to the community and saying that she will miss him. Superintendent Lister offered his appreciation to Mr. Bowles, and said he has had the pleasure of working with him over the past several years. Chair LaPage said the Board will meet with the City Attorney to discuss the process for filling the vacancy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports to come before the Board.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Student Athlete Contract

Assistant City Attorney Kathleen Dwyer was present to answer questions about the student athlete contract. She reviewed changes that were made to the last draft, by request of the Board. Mr. Wilson, Athletic Director, indicated that he is agreeable to the revisions. Chair LaPage said the Athletic Committee and Mr. Wilson did a tremendous amount of work on the contract. The Chair recommended the contract be approved for one year with a report back to the Board next year.

Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the student athletic agreement as presented for a one year period, and the Athletic Director to report back. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Miss Loeser stated that she believes the contract is fair to all students.

Athletes/Coaches Handbook

Mrs. Dwyer presented the final draft of the student athlete/coaches handbook. On a motion by Mr. Ristaino, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the handbook was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Search and Seizure Policy Approved

Mr. Lyons moved the Board address agenda item VIII. A. 4. Searches and Seizures of Students and Property policy. Mrs. Dwyer reviewed revisions to the policy since its first reading. Mr. Lyons moved the second reading of the Searches and Seizures of Students and Property policy as presented by Mrs. Dwyer. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mrs. Dwyer answered questions from the Board. After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Public Health and Safety Agencies Policy Approved

The second reading of the Public Health and Safety Agencies was presented for approval. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the policy be approved. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

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***Advisory Boards
Policy Approved***

The second reading of the Advisory Boards policy was presented for approval. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the second reading be approved. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

***Access to Records
Policy Approved***

The second reading of the Access to Records policy was presented for approval. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, the second reading be approved. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Policies Eliminated

Mrs. Dwyer provided the Board with a list of policies that should be eliminated from the policy book as they have either been revised, are redundant, or have been replaced. The policies included: (in Section II) Responsibilities of the Board; Citizens Advisory Committee to the Board; Publicity; Advisory Committees for the Staff; Soliciting Funds; Soliciting Funds from and by Students; Fire Department; and Health Department. Dr. Shuldman moved the Board accept the recommendation of the Assistant City Attorney to eliminate the policies; Ms. Garrity seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

***Filling of Board
Vacancy***

The Chair stated the School Board will meet with the City Attorney in a non-public non-session on Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the options available to replacing Mr. Bowles on the Board. Following that, the Board will discuss the Superintendent's evaluation.

***School Board
Retreat***

The Board selected the date of Wednesday, September 6, 2006 to hold its retreat. The retreat will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room.

***“National Night Out
Against Crime”***

Superintendent Lister reported that members of the School Board, the School Principals, and Central Office staff boarded a school bus on Tuesday evening, August first, and participated in “National Night Out Against Crime.” He said they were able to visit seven or eight of the 14 neighborhoods that were participating, staying about 15 minutes at each location. The Superintendent said this was a good thing to do as it showed the Principals' and Board's support for the neighborhoods. He thanked the Board members who participated. Mrs. Walker said it was fun to visit the neighborhoods. She said she has lived in Portsmouth a long time, and had not been to some of the neighborhoods recently. She said people at the parks were pleased to see the Board and administrators. The Chair thanked the driver, Cathy Gustafson, for finding her way to the various parks throughout the City.

***Comments from
Chair***

Chair LaPage passed the gavel to Mr. Lyons and stated that unfortunately there is scuttlebutt and bad press. He said there are four new, outstanding members of the Board that got caught in the beginning of their terms with two very controversial issues: students and the swim team and, right after that, a budget process that he has never seen in his 13 years on the Board. The Chair said the success of a school budget is not measured by a percentage or during that fiscal year, rather it is measured years down the road pending the success of the students. He said the Board has done an outstanding job and he finds it highly insulting that anyone would say that this Board would be less than honorable or not telling the truth. He said the Board defends the education for the children in this school system. He said the Principals rode on the bus with the Board to show their support for those in the system. He thanked the Board members for the time they devote on behalf of the children in the City, and also thanked their families, who suffer because the Board members are away at meetings so often. The gavel was returned to the Chair.

FINANCIAL

***Preliminary Audit
Report***

Mr. Bartlett presented a preliminary, pre-audit report on the fiscal year 2005-2006 general fund budget. The anticipated revenue is \$119,879, with a surplus of \$1,604 balance from expenditures, and an encumbrance surplus of \$4,750. The anticipated financial impact to the City Fund balance is \$126,233. This amount will be turned back to the City's general fund. Mr. Lyons said this is very important information and he credited the administrators with running the school system slightly under budget. He said this is commendable in a \$30 million budget.

2006-2007 Rates

Mr. Bartlett presented proposed rates for the 2006-2007 school year.

***PHS Parking
Permits***

Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the PHS student parking permit be set at \$50 per semester. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Driver Education
Fee***

On a motion by Mrs. Walker, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the driver education student fee was set at \$550 (\$530 plus \$20 fuel surcharge). The motion was unanimously approved.

Energy Surcharge

Mr. Bartlett stated that he is currently working on determining an energy surcharge for existing rental rates. He will present this information to the Board at a later date.

***Sub Rates to be
Reviewed***

Mr. Bartlett stated the substitute rates will start out the same as last year, but may be brought back before the Board after school starts.

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School Nutrition Rates

The food service rates were approved as presented on a motion by Mrs. Walker, seconded by Ms. Garrity, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Bartlett said that he and Mrs. Laska will be meeting to further discuss plans and options for this school year.

Effects of Eliminating Lunchroom Monitors

Mrs. Walker requested information on the effect of eliminating the lunchroom monitor positions. Dr. Lister responded the Principals will give their reports at the September 22nd meeting.

Special Meeting

The Chair reminded the Board that it will meet in the Board Room next Thursday, August 17, at 6:30 p.m. for a special meeting. The next regular meeting of the School Board will be on September 12th at City Hall.

Energy Savings

Mr. Ristaino requested the Board discuss energy savings at the next meeting, to include updates on the policies and programs throughout the City. Mrs. Walker said she is a member of the City's Sustainability Committee. She said the City is doing a lot to save money, and she offered to bring information to the Board.

Grants Awarded to Programs/Schools

Mrs. Walker mentioned grants that were recently awarded to school staff or programs: \$5,000 to the FUTURES Program, \$5,000 to support community outreach, \$2,500 to the Middle School for field trips for the South Mill Pond Project, and \$13,680 to the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center to develop an outreach arts program for the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School (PASS). Dr. Lister said the administrators and teachers are writing grants to supplement what happens in the school system. Mr. Lyons said the staff is to be congratulated for being creative and getting this money.

Adjournment

There was no other business to come before the Board. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary