

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the October 24, 2006 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2006 in the cafeteria at the New Franklin Elementary School.

---

***Attendance***

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

**PARTICIPATING:** Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent), Mr. Stephen Zadravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. Stephen T. Bartlett (Business Administrator), Ms. Elisa Loeser (Student Representative), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative)

---

***Reception to Honor  
Sally Vaughn***

Prior to the meeting, the School Board held a reception for Sally Vaughn, FUTURES Coordinator, who is retiring. Members of the FUTURES Advisory Board and the FUTURES Selection Committee joined the School Board at the reception along with present and former High School students.

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:02 p.m. Superintendent Lister called the roll.

***Remembrances***

The Chair called for a moment of silent reflection and said the Portsmouth schools have been blessed to have had Sally Vaughn working in the school system for over 20 years. He asked the Board to keep in mind those less fortunate. The Chair asked the Board to remember Mrs. Clayburgh's aunt, Florence Stanton, who passed away, and to keep Judy and Herb Bunnell in their prayers, as Herb is critically ill in the hospital. The Chair asked people to remember Office Briggs from Manchester, New Hampshire who was killed last week in the line of duty. He asked the Board to keep Officer Briggs' family in their thoughts and prayers. The Chair also asked people to keep in their thoughts and prayers those who are serving our Country overseas and at home.

Chair LaPage stated that the Board's last meeting went real late, and that from now on he will begin to see what items may be tabled or moved from the agenda when it becomes 9:30 or 9:45 p.m.

***Recognition of Mrs. Vaughn, FUTURES Coordinator***

Chair LaPage recognized Mrs. Sally Vaughn as a magnificent individual who has touched the hearts of so many in the City of Portsmouth. He praised her outstanding efforts in looking after each and every one of her students in the FUTURES Program, since the program was founded more than 20 years ago. He thanked Mrs. Vaughn for her service to her students and, on behalf of the School Board, presented her with a certificate of appreciation and a gift certificate. Superintendent Lister thanked Mrs. Vaughn for her dedication, professional, passion, and for being a good friend to everyone. He wished her, on behalf of the School Board, teaching staff, students and families, good luck in her future endeavors and thanked her for all she has done. Mrs. Vaughn thanked the Board and said that she has loved her job, her students, and the way that the School Board has embraced the FUTURES Program. The Superintendent recognized Shanyn Arnold Grenier, Portsmouth High School Class of 1993, who was one of Mrs. Vaughn's FUTURES students and is now a director of guidance at a New Hampshire high school.

---

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

***Meeting Dates and Events***

The Board received a list of meeting and event dates beginning October 25<sup>th</sup> through December 20<sup>th</sup>. The Chair reviewed the list. He said the Board will meet with Ted Comstock, Executive Director of the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) on November 28<sup>th</sup>, therefore, the agenda for the regular meeting will be kept light.

***High School Sports Teams***

The Board was informed of the High School sports teams that are competing this week to make it to the playoffs.

Board members received an invitation to the High School Volleyball Team's banquet on November 14. Since that is the night of a School Board meeting, the Superintendent suggested a letter be sent to the team thanking them for the invitation and wishing them the best. The Chair agreed with this, and instructed the Superintendent to write the letter.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION**

No one had signed up to address the Board. The Chair allowed people in the audience to speak at this time.

Adam Harr, 40 Saratoga Way, Portsmouth, said he was present this evening in support of the French Club's trip.

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

---

### **RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS**

***Request from  
Spanish Club to  
Travel to Costa Rica***

Ms. Helaine Wemple and Ms. Meg Ronchi, Spanish teachers at Portsmouth High School, presented the request of the Spanish Club to travel to Costa Rica during April 19 – 28, 2007. Ms. Wemple said previous trips to Costa Rica have been successful and that she personally knows the host families from when she lived and worked in Costa Rica. Spanish Club students Kristen Amato, Marisa Rodriguez, Jon Grossman, Eddie Young, and Alex Anthony were present at the meeting. The students and their teachers answered questions from the Board. Mr. Smith commended both teachers for their willingness to give up their April vacation to take these students to Costa Rica. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, that the Board approve the Spanish Club trip to Costa Rica during April vacation 2007. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Request from  
Spanish AP  
Students to Travel to  
Puerto Rico***

Ms. Nancy Modern, Spanish teacher and International Languages Department Head at Portsmouth High School, was present with students Jon Grossman, Mary Kluesner, and Kristen Amato to discuss a request for the Spanish AP (Advanced Placement) students to travel to Puerto Rico from May 24 – 28, 2007. Ms. Modern said the advanced placement students have been working very hard this year and would like to travel to a destination where they can speak the native language. She said Puerto Rico was selected because the trip can be made in a matter of hours, allowing more time to experience the culture. Ms. Modern reviewed the itinerary, and said she is working with a travel agent that she has known for over 20 years. Mr. Ristaino moved the Board approve the AP Spanish students' trip to Puerto Rico in May 2007. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Language Festival***

Ms. Modern invited the School Board to attend the Language Festival at Portsmouth High School, to be held on November 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

***Request from  
French Club to  
Travel to Montreal,  
Canada***

Ms. Immaculee Niwemugeni and Ms. Deborah Miller, French teachers at Portsmouth High School, were present with students Kelsey Gardner, Adam Harr, and Elisa Loeser to request the French Club be allowed to travel to Montreal, Canada from March 16 – 19, 2007. The teachers and students said they will use Jumpstreet Tours, a company that has been successfully used over previous years by both High School and Middle School tours. Jumpstreet Tours provides a security guard in the hallways of the hotel during the overnight hours. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the trip to Montreal, Canada be approved for the French Club in March 2007. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyons asked Mr. Collins, High School Principal, if Portsmouth High School sends more students on trips than other schools. Mr. Collins said he has never seen the commitment from the teachers to go out and bring their students to different parts of the world so they may experience the culture of the language they are studying. Mr. Collins said this provides a fantastic opportunity for the students, and he commended the teachers for taking this initiative and responsibility.

***Request from  
French AP students  
to Travel to France***

Ms. Debora Miller was present with French advanced placement students Betsy Pescosolido, Mike Nadolny, Kim Driscoll, Nicole Fonteyne, and Britt Conway to present their request for the French AP students to travel to France during February vacation, 2007. Ms. Miller said each of the 14 students in AP French was assigned to research and outline a trip to France. After the school year started, the students compared their notes and put together the proposed trip for February 2007. She said that 12 students plan to go on the trip, and it would be a great opportunity for the students to use their French and be immersed in the language they are spending so much time studying. The students reviewed their itinerary with the Board, and talked about some of their fundraising activities. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Board approve the trip to France in February 2007. Mr. Hayward cautioned the students to be careful overseas, and the students stated some of the precautions they are planning to take. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chair LaPage thanked the students who attended this evening to speak in support of their planned trips, and encouraged them to continue doing well in school.

## **PERSONNEL**

### ***Recognition of Sally Vaughn***

Dr. Lister said the Board, earlier this evening, celebrated the service of Sally Vaughn as FUTURES Coordinator. He said that Phyllis Eldridge has been hired to be the next FUTURES Coordinator, and he has asked Ms. Eldridge to attend a future Board meeting to talk about her goals and direction for the program. He reviewed Ms. Eldridge's credentials, and said she has a lot of experience writing and receiving grants and with capital fundraising. He said she is presently working hard to meet the FUTURES students and their families. Chair LaPage said he knows at least three of the other candidates that applied for the position, and said there was a rich pool of candidates from which to choose. He said the Advisory Board had a tough decision to make, and it was not because of a lack of talent. He said that Mrs. Vaughn and Ms. Eldridge are working together to insure a smooth transition.

### ***Hiring of Coaches***

The Superintendent stated that Mr. Ristaino had requested the topic of hiring coaches be placed on this agenda. Dr. Lister said that all coaching positions are posted. He said that at the elementary level, individuals apply by letter to the building principal. He said applicants for coaching positions at the Middle School apply to Matt Mitchell, who sets up a screening committee. At the High School, applicants apply for the position, and Mr. Wilson sets up a screening and interview committee. The recommendations are presented to the School Board for final approval. Mr. Ristaino said he does not believe the Board should vote on coaching positions, and said he would not be opposed to Mr. Wilson doing all of the hiring for coaches. Ms. Briolat said the School Board has the ultimate responsibility for hiring coaches, and she would feel more comfortable if all decisions regarding personnel and coaches are brought before the Board for approval. Mr. Smith said he agrees with Mr. Ristaino, and said that some Board members had questions when a citizen expressed support for a coach that had not been rehired. He said the Board chose to support Mr. Wilson's recommendation, which he does not disagree with, yet he does not want to be "rubber stamping." Mr. Smith said he wants to be well-informed and make informed decisions, or leave it entirely to the Athletic Director. Mr. Lyons said the Board is currently a rubber stamp, and suggested this is not the time to discuss it as they know there is some question between the Board and the teachers' union as to whether or not coaching positions are contracted positions. Mr. Lyons said he believes this is an area in which the rubber stamp process can do more harm than good as it allows people to come before the Board and make statements on television. He said that if Mr. Mitchell made a coaching recommendation, he will have made it in connection with

***Hiring of Coaches  
(cont.)***

the building principal, and the same would hold true at the High School. Mr. Ristaino said he does not want to prevent people from coming before the Board, but feels that it could cloud their decision-making. Mrs. Walker responded that people have a right to come and speak before the Board, but the Board does not have to feel, and she does not feel, that she has to agree with what they are saying. She said the School Board has hired people to hire personnel, and if they are willing to state a certain candidate is the best person for the job, she will accept their recommendation. The Chair stated the Board cannot do anything about this topic at this time as it is contractual under the current teachers' contract. He suggested the Board's negotiating committee might want to bring this up for discussion during negotiations.

The Chair said he contacted the New Hampshire School Boards Association and found that out of the 72 high schools in the State of New Hampshire, approximately 32 have coaches' contracts. He also said that over the last 14 years that he has served on the School Board, there have been five athletic directors, and the athletic directors have been the ones to release coaches from their positions. He reminded the Board that the school system is still in transition and there had not been an evaluation process for coaches. He said that Mr. Wilson has an evaluation process for each season.

Dr. Shuldman asked if there is language in the teachers' contract that coaches come under that contract. Mrs. Briolat said the coaches' salaries are addressed in the contract. Mr. Lyons said the School Board has a good relationship with the teachers' union, and they have asked that Mr. Ristaino's issues be addressed at negotiations. He said whether or not the Board agrees, the request should be honored.

---

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***PHS Joint Building  
Committee***

Joint Building Committee – Chair LaPage reported the 80<sup>th</sup> (and last) meeting of the Joint Building Committee for the High School Renovation/Construction Projects was held last week. The Chair commended the members of the committee, all volunteers, who have spent the last seven years attending meetings and sub-committee meetings and events. He said this was the single largest building project that has ever taken place in the City of Portsmouth. He said there is approximately \$5,000 left in the budget; the project did not go over budget or the time projected for completion. He said that many communities are requesting the minutes and notes so they can follow the same procedure for their building projects. Chair LaPage said that Ginny Kelleher was presented with a letter signed by Mrs.

***PHS Joint Building Committee (cont.)***

Grasso and himself, as co-chairs of the committee, for the fine work she had done on taking the minutes of the meetings. Mr. Lyons asked if the \$5,000 left from the project is taxpayers' money. Mr. LaPage stated that if the money is not spent on the high school project, it has to be returned to the State of New Hampshire. Mr. Bartlett said there are a couple of items that were originally in the project for which the money may be used.

***Middle School Advisory Committee***

Joint Middle School Advisory Committee -- The Chair reported that committee appointed a sub-committee to walk the Jones Avenue site with Dan Bisson from Team Design, Inc. He reported that several City officials and members of the community participated in that walk on October 14th. He said that City officials have studies and reports on the Parrott Avenue site, many of which was done during the development of plans for the new library. He said that Rus Wilson's report on the scarcity of athletic fields within the City, and the City does not have enough fields to meet the present needs. Mr. Wilson also reported that many of the fields are not in good condition. The Chair said there is room for fields at the Jones Avenue site, and reported the City will receive reimbursement from the State for the building as well as the fields. Mr. LaPage said the committee members are working well together. He said the City is so land-deprived that committee members are trying to think clearly and independently about what it wants to do about the Middle School. He said the Parrott Avenue site is not perfect, nor is the Jones Avenue site. He said that Ms. Garrity is concerned about trying to find another site. The Chair said he is happy to hear Mayor Marchand saying the building issues need to be addressed as quickly as possible.

***Athletic Committee***

Mr. Ristaino said the Athletic Committee will meet in early November to talk about the fields. He said there are some fields that need to be rehabilitated. Ms. Garrity said another site walk of Jones Avenue will be held on Friday, November third at 3:00 p.m. Dr. Lister said the City Manager requested this site walk for members of the City Council, and he has indicated the gate will be open so that people may drive their cars in and not have to walk from the street.

***Curriculum Council***

Curriculum Council -- Mr. Zadavec reported the Curriculum Council held its second meeting of the school year and discussed community resources in Portsmouth. Committee members brainstormed about the local resources and how they would fit in the spectrum of a K-12 curriculum. They also discussed human resources and partnerships within the community, as well as information on the City of Portsmouth's website. He said that Dr. Lister met with people from the local historic homes, and they have been invited to the next

**Curriculum Council  
(cont.)**

meeting of the Curriculum Council. Dr. Lister said he met with some people from the Portsmouth Historic Homes Association, which has been in existence since 1949. He said these people represented, to name a few, the Warner House, the Wentworth Gardner House, and the Moffatt Ladd House. They talked about how to become more involved with and connect with the schools' curriculum. Dr. Lister said that Mrs. Walker, while teaching at Dondero School, was very involved with a lot of community activities. The Superintendent also reported that he will be meeting with members of the Cemetery Committee on October 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss how the schools may partner with them. He said the schools are very fortunate that there is a lot of communication going on. Mr. Zadravec said the Curriculum Council will also discuss other areas of importance, such as the math, science and health curricula to meet the new State minimum standards, and look at the length of the school day and school year. Mrs. Walker stated that Strawberry Banke is very involved with the State curriculum frameworks. When a group of students arrives at the museum, she has the State frameworks that their teacher has been working on.

**Communications**

Ad Hoc Communications Committee – Ms. Garrity presented a draft of an article about the Middle School concept that the sub-committee would like to submit to the newspapers. She said that as they come up with topics, they want everyone on the same page. Mr. Ristaino suggested the article be condensed. Mrs. Clayburgh suggested that Ms. Garrity be allowed to present the article to the papers and ask what their restrictions are. Mr. Lyons asked what is the intent of the article. He also suggested the article is too long, and that most people would not read it in its entirety. Ms. Garrity responded the intent is to present the information to the community. She leaves it to the people as to whether or not they read it, but she wants the School Board to do its part by getting the information out. Dr. Shuldman, a member of the sub-committee, said his perception of the intent is to respond to the questions that are out there in the community. He said he does not agree that people do not read long articles. Mrs. Walker, another member of the ad-hoc committee, agreed the article is long, but said they really tried to present the history of what has happened. Mr. Smith presented Ms. Garrity with a corrected copy of the article. The Chair thanked the sub-committee members for their hard work and said it is truly appreciated. Mr. Lyons moved the Board authorize the ad-hoc communications committee, with whatever amendments they may want to make, approach the papers to get this article printed. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. A copy of the final, edited version will be given to Board members. Some editing occurred at the meeting, and the motion was unanimously approved.



**Communications  
(cont.)  
Future Articles**

Ms. Garrity said the next topic will be class sizes, including the weighted count, and the following article will be about Adequate Yearly Progress.

Dr. Lister reminded the Board that at the last meeting it was discussed about having a student involved with communications from the high school. He met with Principal Collins, and they talked about getting students involved. The Superintendent suggested that he and Ms. Loeser meet with Mr. Collins, and then report back to the School Board.

---

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to come before the Board.

---

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

***Space at Wentworth  
School***

Dr. Lister reported that he has received another proposal to lease space at Exchange City (Wentworth School). He and Mr. Bartlett will be reviewing the proposal within the next couple of weeks. He said some people have approached Philip Ross, Executive Director at Exchange City, and he has referred them to the school administration. Dr. Lister said there is a lot of interest in the space among different non-profits because of where the school is located. He said that 14,000 square feet is available. The Chair reminded the Board that the City owns the building, and in order for the School Board to keep the building it must be used for educational purposes.

***NHSBA Delegate  
Assembly***

Chair LaPage reported that he and Mr. Ristaino will represent the School Board at the Delegate Assembly on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The Chair stated that the State's School Board Association works diligently with Legislators and other associations in the State, and also has a good working relationship with the State teachers' association and principals' association. Dr. Shuldman requested further information about the resolutions. Mr. Lyons cautioned the Board members to know what they are voting on, as there is some language in resolutions that could impact the City of Portsmouth, such as funding education. The Chair suggested the School Board take time to review the resolutions and vote on them at a special meeting to take place after the non-public session on Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. He asked Board members to call him if they have any questions.

(To be voted by the Portsmouth School Board at its next scheduled meeting.)

Dr. Lister reviewed what has taken place over the last several weeks to promote and ensure safety in the school buildings. He recommended to the Board that cameras and door buzzers be installed for each of the schools (with the exception of the High School which already has a system of security due to new construction) and Central Office. He said the cost to do this is approximately \$15,000, and the administration is in the process of investigating funding sources to make this happen. Mr. Lyons suggested they submit a grant proposal to Crime Stoppers.

### **FINANCIAL**

***PMS Capital  
Projects Balance***

Mr. Bartlett referred to a memo in the Board's packet (postponed from last meeting) indicating there is \$6,618 remaining in Capital Projects from the Portsmouth Middle School encumbrance.

***Non-AREA Cost  
Per Pupil  
Adjustment***

Mr. Bartlett requested the School Board vote to allow him to adjusted cost per pupil, as shown in his spreadsheet dated 10-19-06, for out-of-district students' tuition bills who are not covered by the AREA (Authorized Regional Enrollment Area) agreement. Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the out-of-district, non-AREA students' additional cost per pupil as shown on the spreadsheet prepared by the Business Administrator, dated October 19, 2006. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

---

### **NEXT AGENDA**

***Presentation From  
Portsmouth Rotary***

The Superintendent reported the Board will receive a presentation from Portsmouth Rotary at the next meeting.

---

### **OTHER**

The Chair thanked Mr. Shea for hosting this evening's reception and meeting.

***Bulletin Board at  
PHS***

Ms. Loeser reported that a bulletin board has been installed at Portsmouth High School that describes the Portsmouth School Board, what the Board does, and what students should do to become more involved.

Mr. Bartlett informed the Board that the New Franklin Elementary School was not polished up for this evening's meeting; it looks this way all the time, and he commended the custodial staff.

*(To be voted by the Portsmouth School Board at its next scheduled meeting.)*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### ***Adjournment***

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Hayward moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister  
Executive Secretary