

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board on January 23, 2007.)

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the January 9, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, January 9, 2007 in the Board Room at Little Harbour 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 Zadavec (Assistant Superintendent), Ms. Elisa Loeser (Student Representative), Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

The Board held a non-public session, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (c) prior to the regular meeting.

Remembrances

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 keep the following in their thoughts and prayers: Linda Telles (retired Little Harbour teacher who recently died) and the following staff members who recently lost family members: Janice Fortunato (Dondero School), Helene Rafferty (Dondero School), and Jim Sparrell (school psychologist). The Chair said these were sad passings, and asked that the Board share in the joy of a new life; Brendan and Christina Ristaino brought in their new baby daughter, Ava, who was born on December 20, 2006. The Chair also asked people to keep in their thoughts and prayers those who serve to protect us overseas and at home.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved

Chair LaPage called for approval of the December 12, 2006 minutes. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Chair called for approval of the December 20, 2006 minutes. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be

approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Proposal Funded by State Department

The Board received a copy of a letter sent to Steve Zadravec from Lisa Kaim (Mathematics and Science Partnership Program Assistant at the State Department of Education) informing him the school district's proposal, "Curriculum, Assessment and Inquiry" has been reviewed and approved for funding in the amount of \$10,000. Mr. Zadravec said the district has worked with a consultant from the Center for Science Education to work with teachers in the elementary classrooms encouraging students to think more about science, and this grant will provide the opportunity to target some of that work and support professional development for teachers. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the letter be accepted and placed on file.

Proposal to Portsmouth Rotary

Mr. Lyons said that Molly Green, a teacher at Little Harbour School, has written a grant proposal to Portsmouth Rotary for \$6,000 to provide a number of cameras and a printer for her classroom. Mr. Zadravec said that Ms. Green and her students have been working on a project with the Mt. Washington Observatory. The motion to accept the letter and place on file was unanimously approved.

Seminar on Public Advocacy: How to Support Your Schools

Dr. Lister told the Board that a seminar entitled, "Public Advocacy for Parents: How to Effectively Support Your Schools" will be held at Portsmouth High School on February 12, 2007. This seminar is a cooperative effort of the Portsmouth School Department and the Dondero Elementary School PTA. Dr. Lister said this idea started with a conversation with school PTO Presidents, and he then met with Amy Philbrick Schwartz, Dondero School PTA President, to pursue the idea. The Superintendent reviewed the list of speakers and their topics.

Work Session

Chair LaPage said the Board will likely meet on Saturday, February 10, 2007 to continue work on its budget and to begin a portion of the retreat that was postponed from this past Saturday.

Character Pancake Breakfast

Ms. Loeser distributed an announcement of a character pancake breakfast that will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2007 from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. at Applebee's Restaurant to benefit the High School Concert Choir. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that so many teachers go above and beyond the call of duty for their students, and said that Ms. Gwen Baker has been incredible in working with parents and students so that all students in the choir may participate in the trip to New York City. Mrs. Clayburgh said that Ms. Baker has been meeting weekly with parents since November to find ways to fund-raise.

Newsletter

The Board also received a copy of Harbour Lights, the Little Harbour

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Letter to NHIAA

School newsletter, and a copy of a letter that High School Principal Jeff Collins wrote to Patrick Corbin, Executive Director of the NHIAA, regarding the behavior of some students who attended last Friday's basketball game. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the material be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

PHS Lockdown

The Chair stated there was an incident on school property last Friday afternoon that resulted in the High School going into a lockdown for a period of time. He said that Principal Collins and his staff could not have done anything more than what they did to ensure the greatest safety for the students and faculty who were still in the building. Mr. LaPage said that about 380 students were still in the building when the Portsmouth Police Dispatch was notified by neighbors of what they thought were gunshots outside of the building. After a thorough search by local and state police, it was determined the noise heard by the neighbors was firecrackers that had been set off. Dr. Lister read the press release issued today from Chief Mike Magnant, stating that a juvenile has been charged with releasing the firecrackers that prompted the calls to 911 and subsequent lockdown of the high school and arrival of local and state police officers. The press release stated that this individual would be held accountable through the juvenile court. The Superintendent commended the High School students and staff for coming together during the lockdown. He also commended Mr. Zadravec and Mrs. Robin Burdick, Little Harbour School Principal, for their efforts to ensure the safety of students at Little Harbour School who live in the area near the High School; the decision was made to hold the bus that transports those students.

Portsmouth Traffic Circle

The Board received a copy of a letter the Superintendent sent to Carol Murray, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, requesting to be kept informed of hearings and plans for the Portsmouth Traffic Circle. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the letter be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved. The Chair stated this was a top concern during a recent meeting of the City's Legislative Delegates.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

No one had signed up to address the Board. The Chair declared the public commentary session closed.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

There were no presentations to come before the Board.

PERSONNEL

Extension of LOA Approved

Mr. Zadavec presented a request from Kimberly Puglia, high school math teacher, to extend her leave of absence through the 2007-2008 school year. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, to approve the request. The motion was unanimously approved.

Coaching Nomination

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Kyle Harrison to the position of varsity golf coach. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Joint School Advisory Committee (JSAC)

Joint School Advisory Committee (JSAC) – Mrs. Clayburgh reported JSAC will meet tomorrow night in the Middle School library at 7:00 p.m. and a public commentary session will be held during the meeting to allow residents to address their concerns and give input. She said there will be no dialogue among speakers and JSAC members. On January 24, 2007, JSAC will receive a report from Team Design about the Jones Avenue and Parrott Avenue sites.

Mrs. Walker said that in April of last year, the City Council moved the Middle School project back to 2009/2010 in the Capital Improvement Plan. She suggested, given the significant funds that are currently being spent to patch the Middle School, that should be re-addressed and moved forward. The Chair said there are a number of issues of concern with the current building. He stated there is only one boiler operating and if we were to lose that boiler, it would be impossible to keep the building open. In addition, there are issues with the bathrooms and the roof. He said money that we are spending now for repairs could be used towards construction. The Chair said JSAC will come back to the Board with a recommendation, and the Board will soon be going into its budget deliberations. Mrs. Mayer asked, regardless of what happens on the 24th, how do we safeguard the children in Middle School building. She also said that, even if a new school is approved, it would take two years to build. Mr. LaPage said the District will have to use funds designated to renovate other buildings to keep the Middle School together. Mr. Lyons suggested the Board use the CIP funds as intended (door replacements, sprinkler systems) and approach the City Council for supplemental funds should there be emergency repairs at the Middle School. Dr. Shuldman asked if there is a plan should the Middle School building need to be vacated. Superintendent Lister said he has had discussions with Mr. Stokel to plan on how to accommodate the Middle School students, staff, and vehicles.

Boosters' Club Meeting

Chair LaPage said that he and the Superintendent attended the annual Boosters Club meeting last evening, and discussions involved fundraising and the snack shack. He said a committee representing the various booster clubs and fundraisers will be formed to work together. Chair LaPage said that Ken Linchey, Maintenance Supervisor, stated the snack shack would be ready in time to be used by the spring sports teams' booster groups. The Chair said that he encouraged the use of the High School cafeteria to be used for fundraising activities and for sports banquets.

NEW BUSINESS

Wentworth School Property

Mr. Lyons said that Michael Kane, Past President of the Chamber of Commerce, has purchased land along Woodbury Avenue and may want to speak with the Board Chair about the property on which the Wentworth School is located. Chair LaPage requested that Mr. Kane meet with the Superintendent of Schools. He then said it would be appropriate, after that meeting, for them to meet with the City Manager and City Attorney.

PHS Ice Rink

Chair LaPage said that a press release will go out next Monday announcing a new outdoor ice rink on the High School property. He said the rink will be 175' x 72' and will be placed on the upper rear parking lot at the High School (where it was intended to go back in 1991). Mr. LaPage said the High School hockey team will be able to use the rink for practice, and the rink will also be available to the public from 3:00 - 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. on weekends.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

DINI (District In Need of Improvement) Plan

The Board received a copy of the letter sent to parents concerning the District's DINI (District In Need of Improvement) Plan that was submitted to the Department of Education last week. Mr. Zdravec reviewed information with the Board and said the District is required to file the final proposal for the District's plan to the State Department of Education by February 15, 2007. He reported the administration has been meeting with a number of people, representing kindergarten through grade 12, and more staff will be included in meetings/planning as the process unfolds. The Assistant Superintendent said the District's five priority areas (curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional development, and community) are woven into the priorities of the required action plan.

Dr. Shuldman said that he met with Mr. Zdravec so he could understand the DINI designation and what it means. He said it is a

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complicated matter, and he drafted an article to be reviewed by the Board's communications sub-committee, to attempt to explain this to the general public. Dr. Shuldman said he has forwarded this draft to Mr. Zadavec for his review prior to giving it to committee members. Dr. Lister thanked Dr. Shuldman for his efforts and agreed that it is a complicated issue. Mrs. Walker said the teachers never consider a child who needs improvement as failing. She asked who the District-Wide Coordinator for this plan would be. Mr. Zadavec said he would assume that role throughout this process. Mr. Lyons said that no matter how hard you try not to equate failing in DINI, people keep going back to that. There was further discussion of the DINI designation and clarification of misconceptions. Mrs. Clayburgh agreed that it is important to educate the public as much as possible about this issue.

Athletic Fields

Mr. Ristaino reported that he and Dr. Lister recently met with City Manager Bohenko, Mayor Marchand, and Athletic Director Rus Wilson to discuss new athletic fields in the City. He said more information will be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

FINANCIAL

2007-2008 Budget

Board members will receive the proposed 2007-2008 budget books at the next School Board meeting.

***Revised List of
Affiliated Clubs and
Groups Approved***

A revised list of clubs and groups affiliated with school-sponsored activities for the 2006-2007 school year (dated January 8, 2007) was presented to the Board. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the Board approve the Middle School PTA and PHS Boys' Tennis Boosters as recommended by the Business Administrator. The motion was unanimously approved.

NEXT AGENDA

The Chair stated the non-public work session with the New Hampshire School Boards Association will be held on January 23, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Lyons and Mr. Ristaino stated they are unable to attend the work session as they will be participating in a Legislative gathering sponsored by the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce at the Sheraton at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Ristaino said this is an opportunity to meet the Governor and the State's new Senators and Representatives. The Chair instructed the Superintendent to try and reschedule the work session with NHSBA for Saturday, February 10th.

Ms. Garrity asked when the Rental Committee will report back to the

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Board. The Chair said the Committee had to postpone its previous meeting and has not yet had a chance to meet.

Ms. Garrity asked when the students who traveled to Washington, D.C. will give a presentation to the Board. Dr. Lister said there has been some difficulty in finding out who those students are. Once they are identified, he wants to schedule them to appear before the Board at a meeting that is televised.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved and the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary