

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the March 13, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

Attendance

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

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

Non-Public Session

Prior to the regular Board meeting, the School Board met in a non-public session in Conference Room A. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A: 3 ii. (b) and (c).

Call to Order

The Chair called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at 7:03 p.m. The Chair said it is a great feeling to meet in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers; the room was recently dedicated in Mrs. Foley's honor. He said it is appropriate the room was named after Mrs. Foley, a former School Board member, City Councilor, and State Representative. Superintendent Lister called the roll.

Chair LaPage said Board members will introduce their counterparts for Student Government Day, which will be held on April 11, 2007. He said participating students will learn about politics and how local government works. The students will hold their own Board meeting that day.

Remembrances

The Chair asked Board members to remember the following staff members who recently lost family members: Jeanne Loughan, Middle School teacher, whose mother passed away last week, and Jim Johnston, High School teacher, whose father passed away during the last two weeks. He asked people to remember Wendell Belmont,

Remembrances (cont.) a Veterans' Diploma graduate, who passed away last week, and Betty Belmont, the wife of Joe Belmont from Great Bay Services, whose wife also passed away this weekend. The Chair said the members of the greater Portsmouth school community mourn the loss of these people and offer prayers for their families. Mr. Patrick Dowd led the Pledge of Allegiance.

National Middle School Month The Chair stated that March is National Middle School Month. He said it is a good time for the community to focus on what is best for the middle school.

Student Gov't. Day Participants The following students were introduced and will participate in Student Government Day on April 11, 2007:

Emily Achilles	SAU 50 Representative
Sam French	Board Member Lyons
Alexa Piekarski	Board Member Shuldman
Nicholas Samonas	Board Member Smith
Judee Utoh	Business Administrator Bartlett
Diana Clayburgh	Vice-Chair Clayburgh
Marissa Reilly	Employee Representative Briolat
Kevin Anderson (arrived later in the meeting)	Student Representative Loeser
Melissa Stanwood	Board Member Ristaino
Kristen Jurus	Board Member Garrity
Alissa Dodds	Board Member Walker
Julia O'Leary	Assistant Superintendent Zadravec
Ali Donnermeyer	Superintendent Lister
Patrick Dowd	Chair LaPage

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved Chair LaPage called for approval of the February 13, 2007 minutes. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Letter of Thanks for Allowing Field Trip The Board received a letter from Heidi Chase, Executive Director of the FRIENDS Project, thanking them for approving the trip to Old Quebec, Canada and describing what the students did on the trip. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the letter be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

Letter to PASS from Rotary The Board received a copy of a thank-you letter sent to students at PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School) from Rotarians for Fighting Aids, thanking them for their donation of \$900 for the

Orphan Rescue Program. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the letter be accepted and placed on file. Mr. Lyons requested a copy of the letter be forwarded to the local Rotary Club. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Request for
Permission to
Attend Academic
Bowl***

The Board received a letter from Donna Schefer, teacher of the deaf, requesting permission for two students to attend the Gallaudet University Academic Bowl to be held in Rochester, New York from March 20 – 23, 2007. Dr. Shuldman moved the Board accept the letter and accept previous past practice to allow the students to attend the Academic Bowl. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Students’
Presentation
Rescheduled***

Chair LaPage said High School students Ashton Braun and Gamble Morrison are not able to attend this evening. They will be at the next meeting to discuss their trip to Washington, D.C.

***Portsmouth Early
Education Program
(PEEP)***

Dr. Lister stated the School Board, during the non-public session, discussed moving the PEEP (Portsmouth Early Education Program) from the Community Campus. During this session the Superintendent asked to make the recommendation the Board allow PEEP to remain at the Community Campus for the next year while the administration works with people from the Foundation for Seacoast Health and with members of the PEEP/special education staff. The Superintendent said this recommendation is being made to work together on a plan for an easy transition for the students and staff and to allow discussion about the future of PEEP. Dr. Lister said the Board has a commitment to early education and certainly has a commitment to the taxpayers. He said the School Department is reorganizing in many areas, and PEEP will be another one of those areas. Mrs. Walker moved the Board accept the Superintendent’s recommendation that the administration continue to work with the staff at PEEP and the administration of the Community Campus during the next school year to make a decision about PEEP. Ms. Garrity seconded the motion. The Superintendent stated this recommendation is being made per the School Board’s budget request of a 5.89% increase. He said it would be difficult for that recommendation to remain should the budget increase be less than the 5.89%. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Recommendation to
Leave PEEP at
Community Campus
for Next Year***

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

***Comments Re:
PEEP at
Community Campus***

Mr. John Bouchard, 150 F. W. Hartford Drive, Portsmouth, spoke in favor of keeping PEEP at the Community Campus. He said the administrators and staff have worked hard to accommodate the students in that program, and the community school is unique. He

**Comments Re:
PEEP at
Community Campus
(cont.)**

asked Board members to visit the program to see what happens there on a daily basis. He said the children's needs are being met in that program. Mr. Bouchard said the students and program deserve a good year of planning, and it would be a great loss to the City of Portsmouth should PEEP leave the Community Campus.

Mrs. Amanda Veilleux, 100 Holly Lane, Portsmouth, said that Portsmouth is so fortunate to have a program like PEEP that recognizes the merits of inclusiveness for special needs children. She referred to page 14 of the New Hampshire Parental Safeguards Handbook for Special Education, and said the program meets the needs of a child's IEP (Individual Education Plan). Mrs. Veilleux said her younger daughter is in PEEP and has an IEP; there is no question in her mind about the progress her daughter has made in PEEP because of the inclusiveness of the program. Mrs. Veilleux said all children at the Community Campus benefit from PEEP. She cautioned the Board that moving the program from the Community Campus may result in more children having IEPs at the kindergarten level.

The Chair called three times for other speakers. Being none, he declared the Public Commentary Session closed.

Mr. Lyons stated the Board's previous vote allows PEEP to remain at the Community Campus next year. The Chair said the School Board's budget was sent to the City Hall containing the recommendation that PEEP move to another location. He said the budget will be adjusted when the Board meets with the City Council to accommodate this recommendation. Dr. Shuldman said the Board's earlier vote to move PEEP out of the Community Campus was difficult, and people need to understand it had been done because the School Department was looking at an increase of \$50,000 upwards to \$60,000 to keep the program at its present location. Chair LaPage said the rent at the Community Campus went from \$38,000 to almost \$62,000 due to increased utilities cost.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

Dr. Lister said that Ashton Braun and Gamble Morrison were scheduled to address the Board at the request of Mr. Ristaino. The students are not able to be at tonight's meeting, and they will be rescheduled for the next meeting.

**Presentation on
Internet Safety**

Chair LaPage said the School Department is fortunate to have a good working relationship with the Portsmouth Police Department. He introduced Captain Janet Champlin of the Portsmouth Police

***Presentation on
Internet Safety
(cont.)***

Department, who gave a presentation on Internet Safety for Children and addressed how the school resource officers (SROs) interact with the students and faculty.

Captain Champlin said the Portsmouth Police Department is the agency for the Northern New England Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, covering the states of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. She showed the photographs of people arrested for on-line solicitation of a child and reminded people that they are innocent until proven guilty. She also showed the photos of two men arrested in Portsmouth within the last two weeks and charged with interfering with minors. Captain Champlin said it is important for parents to monitor their children while they are on the Internet and to be aware of with whom they are communicating. She said some of the challenges on the Internet today are: MySpace, YouTube, PZP, Aim Express, and Facebook. She reviewed statistics from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Captain Champlin said the Police Department is very fortunate to have a great relationship with the School Department and has a very supportive Police Commission, Chief, and Deputy Chief who are committed to keeping kids safe in the community.

Mrs. Clayburgh extended thanks to the Police Department for its cooperation with the School Department. Mrs. Clayburgh said her three children are going through the school system and have had a great relationship with the school resource officers. She said that Officer Corey MacDonald gave a similar presentation to the High School Parents Group last year, and it is really scary to learn that an adult can make a connection with a minor so quickly over the Internet. Captain Champlin said that every day there are crimes that do not occur because of the in-roads that have been made with the school resource officers. Captain Champlin answered questions from Board members. The Chair thanked her for her presentation this evening and for the great relationship between the School Department and the Portsmouth Police Department.

***Rules Suspended To
Take Up Agenda
Item***

Mr. Lyons moved the Board suspend the rules and take up agenda item VI. A. Rental Committee (Presentation re: Wentworth School). Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Loeser introduced Kevin Anderson at this time (8:12 p.m.). Mr. Anderson arrived at meeting following a basketball game.

***Proposal from
Portsmouth Music
and Arts Center
(PMAC) to Lease
Space at Wentworth
School***

Chair LaPage invited Mr. Russ Grazier from the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center to the podium to discuss his proposal to lease a portion of the Wentworth Elementary School. Mr. Grazier said that he and Mr. Brian Campbell, a member of his Board of Directors, met with the School Board's Rental Committee to discuss their proposal. Mr. Grazier gave a history of the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center, and said they have outgrown their Albany Street studio. He reviewed plans to lease and renovate approximately half of the space at Wentworth School, and said they are excited about the site becoming a positive cultural center for the community. He stressed the program is not replacing Exchange City at the Wentworth School; in fact, it would be a financial help to Exchange City.

The Chair recommended this be moved on to Legal Counsel, City Attorney Bob Sullivan, to determine if this could move forward at the City level.

Mr. Lyons asked if Philip Ross, Executive Director of Exchange City, has been included in the discussions. Mr. Ross was present at the meeting and said that having the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center as a partner would help Exchange City tremendously. He said the program presently uses 28,000 square feet, yet pays for 100% of the utilities.

***Motion to Refer
Proposal to City
Attorney for Review***

Mr. Ristaino said he believes the arts and music are being diminished in the Nation's public schools. He moved the Board forward this proposal to the City's Legal Department for review, with a report back to the full Board. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mrs. Clayburgh asked how the renovations will be funded. Mr. Grazier said he plans to apply for grants and there will be fundraising. The Chair called for a roll call vote; the motion was unanimously approved.

***Recess, Meeting
Resumed***

Chair LaPage declared a recess at 8:35 p.m. and said the students could leave at this time. The meeting was reconvened at 8:43 p.m.

***Presentation on
High School
Redesign***

Board Member Loeser, Superintendent Lister, Assistant Superintendent Zdravec and High School Principal Collins gave a presentation on High School Redesign. They reported they are working to change the culture of the High School by engaging all students and all stakeholders. They said a lot of times the high school teachers receive the accolades, yet high school is a culmination of students going through the elementary and middle schools. Their presentation included: why redesign, rigor and high standards, empowering educators, connecting to New Hampshire State School Approval Standards, monitoring progress, and where we go from here. They answered questions from Board members.

PERSONNEL

Resignations

Mr. Zadavec presented the resignation of Mary Moore from her position of intervention specialist at the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School effective the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, the resignation be accepted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the resignation of David McKinniss from his position of resource room teacher at the High School effective the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the resignation be accepted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Request for Leave of Absence

Mr. Zadavec presented a request from Kim McGuigan for a leave of absence for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, to approve the request. The motion was unanimously approved.

Professional Retirements

Mr. Zadavec presented the following professional retirements:

Linda Berry	Business Dept./Career Tech. Portsmouth High School 32 years
Paula Bruno	English teacher Portsmouth High School 36 years
Kenneth Loughlin	Science teacher Portsmouth High School 36 years
Stantial Lyford	Math teacher Portsmouth High School 33 years
William Murphy	Physical education teacher Portsmouth High School 34 years
John (Jack) O'Reilly	Science teacher Portsmouth High School 11 years
Janet Homan	Fifth grade teacher (Brackett, Jones, Little Harbour Schools) 36 years

(Amended and approved by the Portsmouth School Board on March 27, 2007.)

**Professional
Retirements (cont.)**

Marsha Shaw	Grades one and two teacher (Wentworth, Brackett, and Little Harbour Schools) 32 years
Robert Snow	Grades 5 and 6 teacher (Wentworth, Brackett, and Little Harbour Schools) 37 years
Susan Christmas	Guidance counselor Brackett School and Middle School 21 years
Alison Hamilton	Grade six teacher Portsmouth Middle School 12 years
Kevin Rafferty	Grades four, five and six teacher (Lafayette, Jones and Brackett Schools and Middle School) 36 years

Dr. Shuldman moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the retirements be accepted. Chair LaPage said the retirees represent 356 years of service to the Portsmouth community. He said five teachers retiring from the High School taught him when he was a student in Portsmouth, and three of the elementary teachers taught his children. The motion to accept the retirements was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination sheet of 270 professionals for the 2007-2008 school year. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the nominations be approved. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the coaching election of Christopher Strobel to the position of varsity volleyball coach. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the coaching election be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports to come before the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business to come before the Board.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Athletic Field Proposal

Mr. Ristaino presented a plan for a multi-purpose athletic field to be located off of Route 33 in Portsmouth. He said the Recreation Department supports after-school activities, yet there are not enough fields to support these activities. Mr. Ristaino said, looking to the future, a group of people met to discuss the development of a multi-field with artificial turf. He said the cost could be anywhere from \$750,000 to a range of \$1.2 or \$1.3 million; different options would be presented. Dr. Shuldman asked if the School Department or taxpayers would be expected to maintain the field. Mr. Ristaino said this would be a community project. Chair LaPage said the Recreation Board unanimously endorsed the plan. Mr. Ristaino answered questions from the Board about the location. He said he would keep the Board updated about the project.

FINANCIAL

January and February 2007 Financial Reports

Mr. Bartlett presented the January and February 2007 financial reports. He said that he is waiting for the latest utility bills to come in, and said he would have a better idea by the next Board meeting.

NEXT AGENDA

The Chair reviewed the items that will be on the next agenda.

OTHER

Student Gov't. Day

The Chair reminded the Board that Student Government Day will be held on April 11, 2007.

Board Retreat

Ms. Garrity asked when the Board will hold its retreat. The Chair said the Superintendent will get back to the Board with the dates of three weekends.

(Amended and approved by the Portsmouth School Board on March 27, 2007.)

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no other information to come before the Board. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister, Executive Secretary