

(Amended and approved by the School Board on August 14, 2007.)

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the July 10, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, July 10, 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. Abigail Rockefeller (Student Representative), Mrs. Ann Mayer and Mrs. Helen Maldini (SAU 50 Representatives)

Non-Public Session

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the regular meeting of the School Board to order at 7:13 p.m.

Remembrance

Moment of Silent Reflection

The Chair called for a moment of silent reflection and asked the Board to remember William DiBartolomeo (Billy D), former Clerk of the Works for the High School construction/renovation projects, who died unexpectedly on June 27th. The Chair and Board members who served on the Joint Building Committee commended Mr. DiBartolomeo's expertise and mild-manner in dealing with the project and its architects and numerous craftsmen. The Chair asked the Board to remember those who are serving our Country at home and overseas. City Councilor Harold Whitehouse led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Newington School Board Chair

The Superintendent acknowledged Mrs. Helen Maldini, Chair of the Newington School Board, who joined Mrs. Mayer at the table this evening.

Correspondence

***Letters Accepted
and Placed on File***

The Board received a thank you note from Marsha Shaw, who recently retired from teaching elementary school, and a letter from Heather Hurtt, Portsmouth resident, encouraging the Board to request funding for a PMS design contest rather than for another feasibility study. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the correspondence be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

AGENDA APPROVAL

The Chair stated the letter to the City Council regarding the Middle School would be placed as agenda item IV. C. Mrs. Clayburgh requested to report on the Athletic Committee under “Committee Reports.”

Minutes Approved

The Chair called for approval of the June 26, 2007 minutes. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

***Comments About
Parrott Avenue Site
and Portsmouth
Middle School***

Ms. Rebecca Emerson, 34 Woodbury Avenue, Portsmouth, stated she was speaking as a mother and as a graduate of Portsmouth High School. She said that she watched with great interest as the School Board worded its letter to the City Council; and she thanked the Board for listening to the voice of Portsmouth citizens. She quoted wording from the letter, stating the Board is “prepared” to support the Parrott Avenue site. She asked the Board to clarify whether or not it is supporting the site, and urged them to move forward and start planning and not be constrained by the educational narrative.

Mr. Richard Adams, 75 Kent Street, Portsmouth, said he attended the Board’s last meeting and thought the Board got off to a good start when Mr. Lyons said the public has spoken and the Board needs to revisit the issue of the Parrott Avenue site, but by the end of the meeting the Board had come up with a letter listing stipulations and requesting a feasibility study. Mr. Adams said he believes the study circles represented the broader spectrum of Portsmouth. Mr. Adams said the study circles addressed the issues that the Board believes are stumbling blocks, and cited eminent domain as one issue. He urged the Board to show they are people who monitor the sentiments of the electorate and find a way to renovate the Parrott Avenue building.

Mr. David Forman, 579 Sagamore Avenue, Portsmouth, said that

***Comments About
Parrott Avenue Site
and Portsmouth
Middle School
(cont.)***

many technical issues have been discussed relative to the Middle School building and he will limit his conversation to one item: eminent domain. He provided Board members with a copy of a “letter to the editor” written by David Witham of Portsmouth, who states that eminent domain is not an issue but, rather, an issue of amending a deed restriction.

Ms. Heather Hurtt, 69 New Castle Avenue, Portsmouth, urged the Board to recommend to the City Council next week to move forward and renovate the Parrott Avenue Middle School. She recommended the next immediate step would be to hold a competitive design contest through which multiple designs would be presented to the community. She said that everyone agrees there is a need for a new middle school, and it is important that the Board take the Parrott Avenue site without any more studies and expense and get on with renovating the Middle School.

Ms. Carol Chellman, 430 Richards Avenue, Portsmouth, said also she would echo some of the sentiments of other citizens who spoke this evening, she will limit her comments to one question. She asked if the School Board has picked a site, and said that if they have not done so, they need to pick a site. She said the current Middle School building is a mess and she believes there are safety issues in that building and she is amazed there has not been a lawsuit by now. She said the Board, in the best interest of the kids, should pick a site and delay no longer. She said it is imperative that the Board pick a site and then proceed with this site as quickly as possible.

Ms. Mary Lucas, 367 Richards Avenue, Portsmouth, said she is the parent of an elementary student going into fourth grade and a taxpayer. She asked the School Board that, should the Parrott Avenue site be chosen, to be creative in thinking about where to house the middle school students during renovation. She said any modifications made while her child attends the middle school will affect her and not her child. She said the parents and staff will be affected the most. She said this is not about our children, but about our community. She cited the importance of renovation an historical, 75 year-old building. She stated the Parrott Avenue site concerns mentioned by the Board (parking, parent and bus drop-off) are not big deals and can be made to work. She stated the completed educational narrative is a wish list, something which all families have for their homes.

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

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

***Overnight Field
Trip Approved***

Mr. Jeff Collins, Principal of Portsmouth High School, presented a request on behalf of Wendell Purrington, for three members of the PHS Men's Ensemble to attend the three-day Northeast district "Young Men In Harmony" music festival at Fitchburg State College from August 9 – 11, 2007. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the request be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Professional
Nominations***

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Perrin Long to the position of culinary arts teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadravec presented the nomination of Gina Duchesne to the position of career technology counselor at PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School). Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Superintendent
Authorized to Offer
Letters of
Employment***

The Chair requested the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools to offer letters of employment to successful candidates in order to fill vacancies during the summer months. Mr. LaPage said this is needed because the Board will not meet again until August 14th. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the Board allow the Superintendent to fill vacancies and then bring the names before the Board at its next meetings for formal approval. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Letter to
Portsmouth City
Council Re: Parrott
Avenue Site***

Superintendent Lister requested Board members sign the letter that was put together at the last meeting and give him permission to forward it to the City Manager tomorrow morning so that it may be put in the packets for the next City Council meeting. The Superintendent stated that he would like to have permission from the Board to work with the City Manager and his staff to develop a RFP (Request For Proposal) for architectural designs. Mr. Lyons stated the Board, at its last meeting, unanimously voted to send the letter (Dr. Shuldman was absent from that meeting), and that no one tonight has said the letter is contrary to the motion approved last meeting. He further stated that the Superintendent had been instructed to share a copy of the letter with Dr. Cushing, Superintendent of SAU 50, and Mrs. Maldini, Chair of the Newington School Board. Board members agreed with signing the letter, and it was circulated around the table for signatures.

Mrs. Clayburgh asked if the City Attorney would provide information

Portsmouth Middle School (cont.)

about the process involved with RFPs (Requests for Proposals). The City Attorney, Bob Sullivan, told the Board the site selection and design for a middle school would be made by the School Board; the City Council's role is to budget the money. He said the way the letter is written, the City Council would be requested to budget money for this feasibility study. Continuing further, he said that once the School Board has decided on a site and design for the school, it needs to ask the City Council to budget money for building the school. He said this would be done through a bonding resolution, which affects the establishment of a Joint Building Committee, made up of equal representatives from the School Board and City Council. He said the Joint Building Committee's responsibility is to take the money provided by the City Council to build the school. Attorney Sullivan told the Board there are a number of different design and build options available.

The City Attorney said he does not interpret the Board's letter as having selected a site. He interprets the letter as the Board turning towards that site and turning away from other sites. Attorney Sullivan answered questions from the Board regarding his interpretation of the letter, the design/build process, eminent domain, and how the project would progress.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Council: Mr. Zdravec, given that most activities were discussed in his last report, deferred his time to Mrs. Clayburgh.

Athletic Committee Report

Athletic Committee: Mrs. Clayburgh reported the Athletic Committee met on June 27th and discussed the successful athletic season at the high school. (Mrs. Maldini left the meeting at this time.) Mrs. Clayburgh reported that Mr. Rus Wilson, Athletic Director, said he truly enjoyed being Athletic Director at Portsmouth High School, and he commended cooperation from adults, teachers, parents, and students. He reported to the Committee that over 700 students participated in sports at Portsmouth High School. He reviewed the maintenance work that is being performed on the fields this summer. Mrs. Clayburgh reported the fall season will begin with practices on August 13.

Proposed Amendment to Student Athlete Contract

Mrs. Clayburgh reported that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Collins, High School Principal, believe the student athlete contract is very good and has been consistently enforced. They were, however, recommending one minor change to number two of the agreement and asked that the Athletic Director be allowed to have some flexibility when dealing with infractions. After some discussion, Mr. Ristaino moved the Board re-open discussion of the student athletic agreement. Mr.

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Lyons seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, it was unanimously approved to reopen the contract.

***Amendment
Approved***

Mr. Ristaino said he would like for the Board to accept the change in the athletic agreement under “Second Violation” to change it from “If I commit a second violation within twelve (12) months of my first violation, I will no longer be allowed to participate with the team for the season and will be removed from associating in any way with any sports team in any season for a full year (12 months) from the date of my second violation” by adding the words “up to” between the words “year” and (12).” The sentence would now read, If I commit a second violation within twelve (12) months of my first violation, I will no longer be allowed to participate with the team for the season and will be removed from associating in any way with any sports team in any season for *up to* a full year (12 months) from the date of my second violation.” Mr. Ristaino made this in the form of a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Walker. Mr Lyons moved the question. In a roll call vote, the amendment was unanimously approved.

***Student Behavior
Contract***

Mrs. Clayburgh said there has been discussion about a student behavior contract for all students, not just athletes. She suggested a committee be put together to study a student behavior contract and to hold a public forum. She said there have been concerns that athletes are held to a contract and other students are not. There was some discussion to this. Mrs. Clayburgh said, if approved, the contract would not be in place for the 2007-2008 school year, but for the following year. Ms. Garrity said the Policy Committee has discussed whether or not there should be a student behavior contract. The Chair requested the Policy Committee come back to the Board with a recommendation regarding the student behavior contract. After further discussion, Mr. Lyons moved that a sub-committee of the Policy Committee be empowered to create a panel, working together with the Superintendents of SAUs 50 and 52, and report back to the Policy Committee; who will report to the full Board on the feasibility of a student behavior contract. Ms. Garrity seconded the motion. After further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL

***School Nutrition
Program Price
Recommendations***

Mr. Bartlett explained there is an early request this summer for a slight increase in some of the school lunch prices in order to allow timely notification to parents. He said that inflation affects food, labor, and everything else. He said the increase is one way to stay on track and try to keep a little bit ahead. Mrs. Patricia Laska, School Nutrition Director, and Mr. Bartlett presented the following recommendations:

- Elementary breakfast price remain the same at \$1.25

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- School Nutrition Program Price Recommendations (cont.)**
- Elementary lunch increase ten cents to \$2.00
 - 8 ounce milk remain the same price at .40
 - Secondary breakfast price remain the same at \$1.50
 - Secondary lunch price increase 15 cents to \$2.50
 - 10 ounce milk price remain the same at .50
 - adult lunch price increase 25 cents to \$3.50

Recommendations Approved Ms. Garrity moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the proposed recommendations be approved by the Board. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Two-Year Agreement for Driver Education Mr. Bartlett reported the school district put out RFPs (Request for Proposals) for driver education instruction for the 2007-2008 school year. He said that two interviews were held with vendors who responded. Mr. Bartlett asked the School Board for permission to enter into a two year agreement with Pro-Staff Driving School. Mrs. Clayburgh made this in the form of a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walker. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved (Mr. Lyons abstained from voting).

NEXT AGENDA

Next Meeting The Chair declared the Board will not be meeting in a work session on July 23rd. The next meeting of the School Board will be held on August 14, 2007.

Adjournment There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Ristaino moved the Board adjourn its meeting; Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary