

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the September 25, 2007 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, September 25, 2007 in the library at Portsmouth High School.

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**CALL TO ORDER**

***Attendance***

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

**ABSENT:** Mr. Carson Smith

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

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***Non-Public Sessions*** The Board held a non-public non-session with counsel in the Principal's Conference Room beginning at 5:00 p.m.

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The Board held a non-public session in the Principal's Conference Room beginning at 5:30 p.m. and adjourning at 7:05 p.m. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. ( c ).

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***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order in the library at Portsmouth High School at 7:12 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection, and asked the Board to keep in mind the family of Wayne Lee (retired custodial supervisor for 19 years at PHS) who died last week. Mr. LaPage said that Mr. Lee put his heart and soul into the high school building. The Chair asked the Board to keep in mind the men and women who are serving to protect American citizens throughout the world, and to always keep in mind Portsmouth students. Mr. Lyons led the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Remembrance***

***Minutes Approved***

Chair LaPage called for approval of the September 11, 2007 minutes. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be approved as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Board received a copy of an article from Foster's Daily Democrat on the snack shack dedication. The Chair thanked the people who were present that evening, and High School Principal Jeff Collins for hosting a tailgate prior to the game.

The Chair asked Mr. Collins to read a letter that was sent to the editor of The Portsmouth Herald by Jennifer Fowler, a junior at Portsmouth High School, in which she states there is no better place than Portsmouth High School. Mr. Collins said he asked Ms. Fowler to read the letter, but she, like many other PHS students, had a previous commitment with extra-curricular activities. Mr. Collins said that Ms. Fowler wrote the letter because she was "sick of reading some of the things on line from the newspaper and decided to write some things herself."

The Board received a copy of the October elementary school luncheon menu.

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**AGENDA APPROVAL**

The Chair asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Dr. Shuldman requested to discuss "Housekeeping Issues." The Chair placed this on the agenda after the second reading of the due process policy. Ms. Garrity requested to talk about bus issues. That subject was placed on the agenda after housekeeping issues.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION**

There was no one in attendance who wished to address the School Board. The Chair declared the public commentary session closed.

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**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

***Second Reading of Policy Approved***

The Chair called for approval of the second reading of the "Due Process" policy. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the policy be approved. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***"Agenda Approval"***

Dr. Shuldman reminded the Board that they had agreed to request items to be discussed under "Agenda Approval," and requested that

***Bus Issues***

all Board members follow this rule.

Ms. Garrity said she has received phone calls complaining about bus drivers and asked what are people to do if they witness a bus driver not following rules and the bus company is not getting back to them when they call to complain. Mr. Bartlett responded that, generally, the first call should be to Terri Pratt at Laidlaw Transportation (436-0426) and if they are not satisfied, they may call him. Mr. Bartlett said he would do an investigation of the complaint and try to work it out between the parent and the bus driver.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Curriculum Council***

Curriculum Council: Mr. Zadravec reported the Curriculum Council met last Thursday and prioritized a long list of items that members of the Council felt were important to address this year. He reported that list was then shortened to items the Council felt could be discussed this year. Mr. Zadravec also reported on the first in-service day that is coming up on October fifth. The Chair requested that Susan Birrell, Computer Technology Director, present a report to the School Board on the “Infinite Campus” software that is being used in the District. The Chair further stated that Dr. Shuldman had requested to give a report on technology to the Board, and perhaps that could be presented along with Mrs. Birrell’s report. Mr. Lyons requested Mrs. Birrell’s report include how much the “Infinite Campus” software has cost the District and compare it with the “Performance Measures,” which is provided free by the State. The Chair stated these reports will be scheduled for the October 23<sup>rd</sup> School Board meeting. Mr. Zadravec and Mrs. Clayburgh gave a brief description of the “Infinite Campus” software. Mrs. Briolat stated the computer equipment in the schools is old and, therefore, does not easily accommodate the new software.

***Student Behavior  
Contract Sub-  
Committee***

Student Behavior Contract Sub-Committee: Mrs. Clayburgh reported the first meeting of the sub-committee charged to determine if there should be a behavior contract for all students will meet on October 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the Principal’s Conference Room at the High School. Mrs. Clayburgh and Ms. Garrity stated the School Board’s Policy Committee requested that a sub-committee be formed to review whether or not there should be a behavior contract for all students and to report back to the Policy Committee.

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**FINANCIAL**

***Budget Work  
Session***

Mr. Bartlett reported the School Board’s first budget work session for the 2008-2009 budget will be held prior to the November 13, 2007

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board on October 9, 2007.)

School Board meeting. Chair LaPage said this is after the November elections, and new Board members, along with Dr. George Cushing (Superintendent of SAU 50), will be invited to participate. Mr. Bartlett said the purpose of the meeting is for the Board to have an initial discussion of issues that need to be addressed for the 2008-2009 budget.

***Elimination of Deficit***

Mrs. Briolat stated that, at the last Board meeting, Mr. Bartlett reported the special education deficit of \$527,000 had been paid off. Mrs. Briolat said she was surprised to find out that people in her building were not aware of this, and she would have thought that people should know about this and be celebrating the fact that this deficit no longer exists. She said this should be celebrated, and wanted to know why a memo had not been sent out throughout the school district. Superintendent Lister said, while the District was going through the reorganization, the building principals knew the reason was to pay off the deficit. Mr. Bartlett said the budget was frozen and many people had to go without. The Chair and other Board members agreed the School Department should celebrate that it is now fiscally fit. Mr. LaPage said this was also due to increased revenues in Medicaid and tuition due from other districts. Mr. Bartlett cautioned this is preliminary until the final City audit is completed. Mr. Ristaino, Ms. Garrity and Mr. Hayward agreed that a memo should be sent to the staff. Mrs. Walker said people who knew the deficit had to be paid may not realize that it was paid off so quickly. She also stated that she has heard from teachers that their computers are not working. Mr. Bartlett said a portion of the new laptops for elementary teachers have just arrived, and the Technology Department is in the process of getting them into the inventory. Mr. Zadravec stated that one of the issues is getting the professional development component in place; he said there is a lot going on within the Technology Department to get the computers up and running.

Mr. Lyons said the Board needs to look at what it has actually spent, and he requested the Board, on November 13<sup>th</sup>, receive information on what was spent in the various accounts for fiscal year 2007; what are departments actually spending in certain areas?

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**NEXT AGENDA**

***Next Meeting***

The next meeting of the Portsmouth School Board will be held on Tuesday, October 9, 2007 in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. Mr. Lyons requested a report from the Superintendent about PEEP (Portsmouth Early Education Program) and a report back on tracking kindergarten students (as approved at the last meeting). The Chair stated the report on PEEP will be placed on the October

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board on October 9, 2007.)

23<sup>rd</sup> agenda.

***NH First Lady to  
Speak in Greenland***

Mrs. Mayer stated that Dr. Susan Lynch, First Lady of New Hampshire, will be speaking in Greenland on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. She said everyone is welcome to attend.

***Sustainability  
Committee***

Mrs. Walker said the Sustainability Committee will probably be ready to give a presentation to the School Board on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

***Adjournment***

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister  
Executive Secretary