

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the November 27, 2007 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, November 27, 2007 in the library at New Franklin 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 of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zdravec (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)

Sitting in the audience were Board members-elect Rebecca Emerson and Elizabeth (Lisa) Sweet.

Budget Work Session

Prior to the regular meeting, a budget work session was held in the library at New Franklin School beginning at 5:30 p.m. The work session was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Non-Public Non-Session with Counsel

The Board then moved to the conference room at New Franklin School and met in a non-public non-session with Counsel.

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting to order at 7:55 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection and asked that Mr. Rus Wilson lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chair asked that people keep in mind, especially during the holiday season, those men and women who serve in the military protecting our country. The Chair further commented that there are many Portsmouth School Department family members serving in the military helping to make the world a safer place.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes Approved

The minutes of the October 23, 2007 Work Session were presented for approval. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the

minutes to be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the October 23, 2007 Board meeting were presented for approval. Dr. Shuldman wanted to point out, with respect to the Middle School project chronology, that on page five of the October 23, 2007 minutes City Attorney Sullivan made a comment "... the Middle School situation is a little different than the Public Library as the Library Trustees do not have the same relationship to City government as the School Board does." Dr. Shuldman wanted to point out that in terms of this process, regardless of what has been done in the past, we are different and therefore the process can be different.

Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the minutes to be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the November 13, 2007 Work Session were presented for approval. Mrs. Briolat asked that a correction be made to indicate that she was present and was a participating member.

Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes to be approved as corrected. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the November 13, 2007 Board meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Garrity asked that a correction be made on page nine to reflect the date as Monday, November 19, 2007, not November 15, 2007.

Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Dr. Shuldman, the minutes to be approved as corrected. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the November 14, 2007 Board Special Meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Garrity asked that a correction be made to the dollar amount of \$500,000, not \$5000,000. Ms. Garrity also noted that she had made a suggestion that the new Board members could "pair up" and mentor with another Board member and would like this as part of the record.

Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the minutes to be approved as corrected. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

The Board received a copy of the December 2007 elementary lunch menu.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Added Agenda Items

Chair LaPage noted that there is a request in tonight's packet to choose a date for Superintendent Lister's evaluation. Chair LaPage stated that this date is needed so that the sub-committee can meet prior to that date. Chair LaPage would like to add this item during the Committee Reports.

Dr. Shuldman would like to speak about the Middle School packets during the Committee Reports.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

No one has signed up to speak before the Board; therefore Chair LaPage declared the public commentary closed.

FINANCIAL

Report/Update on Cost Centers 206 and 207

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the new line-by-line object code reporting format for cost centers 206 PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School) and 207 SPED (Special Education) reflecting revenues and expenditures for the month of October 2007. Mr. Bartlett explained that this is the Excel report version of Pentamation (our financial software package integrated with the City of Portsmouth), which had to be manually developed. Mr. Bartlett stated that there are three revenue sources for the PASS program - tuition from other LEA's (Local Education Agencies – all districts other than Portsmouth or SAU 50), tuition from SAU 50 and tuition from Portsmouth. Mr. Bartlett stated that revenues and expenditures for PASS are on-track and that tuition receipts typically are received by the early part of December for the first quarter billing period.

Mr. Bartlett further reviewed SPED for the month of October 2007. Mr. Bartlett explained that some object codes reflect a *percentage used* to date higher than others because of up front purchasing at the beginning of the school year. The salaries and benefits are at the appropriate levels. Ms. Garrity asked for examples of what would fall under contracted services. Mr. Bartlett explained that contracted services would be for specialty services through someone not employed by the Portsmouth School Department. Mr. Bartlett further explained that as a clearer billing backup, the object code for teacher salaries is the portion of the teacher's salaries that relate to the services provided to students from other districts. Mr. Bartlett also stated that expenses for Portsmouth children should typically be covered by CAT Aid and Medicaid reimbursement.

Mr. Lyons stated that SPED Tuition SAU 50 should be a line item under the SPED revenue as it is under PASS revenue. Mr. Bartlett stated he would develop another line and explained that once we have a clearer

understanding of what SPED services SAU 50 students are receiving then that line can be developed. Dr. Shuldman questioned what services the Portsmouth School Department supplies to other districts. Chair LaPage stated that when out-of-district students that have Individual Education Plan's (IEP) cannot be serviced by their respective towns they would send them to Portsmouth for the PASS or SPED programs and that all services provided to that student would be billable back to the sending town. Chair LaPage further indicated that this can occur in the reverse as well and Portsmouth could have students that are in need of outsourcing. Mrs. Clayburgh questioned whether or not we had someone again this year collecting Medicaid information to send to the Medicaid billing company for reimbursement by the State of New Hampshire. Mr. Bartlett stated that with the assistance of the Special Education staff, and through the coordination of Mrs. Marge Achilles, Student Services Secretary, we are actively looking for additional Medicaid billables.

Mr. Bartlett stated that if the Board had any other SPED questions regarding services to please e-mail them to him and he will ask for them to be addressed during the SPED budget presentation.

Mr. Ristaino requested information on the breakdown of coded students attending Portsmouth, those that are being outsourced, and regular students as a clearer understanding of the cost-per-student. Mr. Bartlett reported that the DoE 25 takes into account all expenses of all funds and comes up with the cost-per-student.

Mr. Lyons thanked Mr. Bartlett for this new report format and his explanation and would ask that the new board members have some input on the report format as well. Mr. Bartlett would provide other report formats for the Board to review in December.

***Motion to Approve
report as presented***

Chair LaPage called for a motion to accept the PASS and SPED financial report (not the format). Mrs. Clayburgh moved, and seconded by Mrs. Walker to accept the report. A roll call was taken. Mr. Lyons abstained. The motion passed.

***October 2007
Financial Report***

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the October month-end report, which shows that the overall budget for 2007/08 is within target for the end of October. Mr. Lyons suggested that a better report with more detail could be developed so that the Board would have a better understanding of what is being spent on a monthly basis. Mr. Lyons further recommended that the Board pay attention to the total benefits and energy lines for possible savings throughout the year. Mr. Bartlett stated that he would provide other report formats to the Board for their review and input in December. Mr. Bartlett stated that part of the savings in energy last year were from efficiencies with fine-tuning the system as well as the reduction of the use of air conditioning at the High School. Mr. Bartlett

stated that a cold winter with more snow could cause the energy budget line to go in the other direction. Mr. Bartlett reassured the Board that the entire budget is scrutinized on a regular basis, inclusive of the benefits and energy lines and that he is always looking for savings.

Ms. Garrity asked for an explanation of why nothing has been spent to date for *object code 114 Extra-Curricular*. Dr. Lister explained that stipends are paid twice a year (one-half in December and one-half in May). Ms. Garrity also questioned why the percentage used for *object code 136 Media Services Supplies* is at 102.08%. Mr. Bartlett explained that the Media Services provides the A/V supplies for the entire school system and that supplies are purchased at the beginning of the school year.

***Update on the
Wentworth School***

Mr. Bartlett reported that a letter turning the Wentworth School over to the City of Portsmouth has been given to the City Manager and is on a future agenda for action by the City Council. Mr. Bartlett further reported that all overdue payments have been paid in full as of the end of September.

(Mr. Bartlett left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Rus Wilson reported that the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) awarded the Girls Soccer Team the State Sportsmanship award. Chair LaPage will send a letter of congratulations to each student member and coach of the Girls Soccer Team with a copy to all Board members.

***Student Dismissal
Time From School
to Attend Sporting
Competitions.***

Chair LaPage stated that Mr. Wilson has been asked to address the amount of time athletic students are dismissed from school in order to attend sporting competitions. Mr. Wilson supplied a list of each PHS fall athletic team and the number of times that each specific team was dismissed early. Mr. Wilson explained that early dismissal usually consisted of leaving 30-45 minutes before the end of the school day. Mr. Wilson further explained that there are four fall athletic teams (Golf, Varsity Girls Soccer, J.V. Girls Soccer, Reserve Volleyball) that have had five early dismissals; two teams (Reserve Girls Soccer, Varsity Boys Soccer) that have had four early dismissals; three teams (J.V. Boys Soccer, Reserve Boys Soccer, Cross Country) that have had three early dismissals; three teams (Varsity Volleyball, J.V. Volleyball, J.V. Football) that have had two early dismissals; and three teams (J.V. Field Hockey, Varsity Football, Reserve Field Hockey) that have not had any early dismissals. Mr. Wilson stated that the biggest reason for many of the early dismissals is that most of the schools that they play do not have lights and they have to complete the game before dark. Mr.

Wilson further stated that Portsmouth is fortunate to have lights and that we have been able to move the starting time of many home games to a later time. Mr. Wilson stated that the students are required to make up the loss of class time and that the teachers have been very helpful providing homework or make-up tests and he does not think that early dismissal has been a problem for the athletes. Mr. Wilson stated that there are 75% scholar athletes and that the PHS grade requirement (one D and C or better) is higher than that of NHIAA requirements.

Mrs. Walker questioned how the teachers manage early dismissal when they are coaches themselves. Mr. Wilson stated that the teachers usually take the fourth period off or have a substitute take over their class, if necessary.

Chair LaPage stated that the students' academics come first and he appreciates the efforts by both the Athletic Department as well as the faculty at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Wilson stated that many students come back once they have met our requirements and stay with the program. Mrs. Clayburgh thanked Mr. Wilson for being our Athletic Director and that it has been a win-win situation for the students of Portsmouth High School.

Request from Mr. Ristaino for Information Regarding Numbers and Budgets for Performing Arts and Athletics

Mr. Ristaino appreciated the information provided to him regarding the number of students participating in athletics as well as in the performing arts and the budgets associated with each department. Dr. Shuldman compared the total number of students in each (859 students participating in athletics and 283 students participating in the performing arts). Mr. Wilson clarified that within the 859 students participating in athletics there could be students that are in numerous sports. Mr. Ristaino also stated that within the 283 students participating in the performing arts there could also be students in numerous arts.

Mrs. Clayburgh stated that the play "Grease" put on by PHS was absolutely fantastic! Mrs. Clayburgh sold tickets to the show and stated that there were over 3,000 people that came to see this play during the weekend of November 16th. Mrs. Clayburgh further reported that Mr. Tim Stokel, a former PHS graduate and senior at Emerson College was director of the play. Mrs. Clayburgh also stated that because "Grease" takes place in 1958, the PHS class of 1958 was invited to PHS for a reception after the play. Chair LaPage noted that Superintendent Lister performed in the play along with former 1958 PHS Assistant Principal Walter Novak. Mrs. Clayburgh also stated that there were two boys with Downs Syndrome in the play as well, her son, Michael, who worked behind the scenes, and Luke Devens who was a member of the cast.

Request for Leave of Mr. Zadavec stated that Ms. Nicole Smith, a third grade teacher at

Absence

Little Harbour School, has requested a continuation of her previously approved *Leave of Absence* through the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. Ms. Smith was hired in 2004 and has completed three years with the Portsmouth School Department. Ms. Smith had requested and was approved for a *Leave of Absence* for the first semester and was expected to return from her leave on January 2, 2008, but due to her son's accident and special care, she is requesting a continuation of her previously approved *Leave of Absence* through the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year.

Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the minutes to be approved. The motion was unanimously approved. Mrs. Clayburgh wishes a speedy recovery to Ms. Smith's son.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee

Mrs. Clayburgh stated that the sub-committee's report on the *Student Conduct Policy* has been given to the Policy Committee for their review and approval. Mrs. Clayburgh further stated that this *Student Conduct Policy* will apply to all students participating in extra curricular activities and is very similar to the athletic contract. Mrs. Clayburgh explained that it is the sub-committee's goal to place this policy in the agenda book so that students and parents only need to sign this one document for the entire year. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that the sub-committee worked very hard through the efforts of Superintendent Lister; Mr. Jeff Collins, PHS Principal; Mr. Robert Ducharme, Social Studies Teacher and Lawyer who drafted the language in this document; Mr. Rus Wilson, Athletic Director; a parent, Sherri Dohnemeyer, two students, Abigail Rockefeller and Nick Demouler; Mr. Wendell Purrington, Mr. Steve Cirillo, and Ms. Courtney Randall. Chair LaPage stated that Mr. Collins reviews the agenda book every year during the first assembly with students and teachers. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that the sub-committee would like to put this policy into effect for the second semester of this school year. Mrs. Clayburgh further explained that any infraction of this policy would go before the Principal and Director of the involved extra curricular activity for consequences. Chair LaPage stated that the first reading of this policy would not take place until the Board meeting in January. Chair LaPage explained that the Policy Committee would review this *Student Conduct Policy* and report back to the Board. Chair LaPage will contact Mrs. Kathleen Dwyer to determine if a first reading and motion can take place on the same night. Dr. Lister stated that this *Student Conduct Policy* is one strategy in changing the culture at the high school in a positive way. Dr. Lister further stated that the students know there are consequences for inappropriate behavior and that conversely good behavior is rewarded.

As the Board members just received the proposed *Field Trips Policy*

and the *Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Policy – Bullying* any motions to accept these policies will take place at the next Board meeting.

Superintendent's Evaluation

Chair LaPage stated that Dr. Shuldman e-mailed the evaluation format to the Board and that a date needs to be determined for Superintendent Lister's evaluation and for the sub-committee so that they can meet prior to the evaluation date. It was agreed that the sub-committee would meet on Monday, December 3, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. at the PHS Principal's Conference Room. All evaluations need to be returned to Chair LaPage by 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 3, 2007. Chair LaPage requested that if you are going to e-mail your evaluation to him, please call him first. The Board evaluation meeting will take place prior to the regular Board meeting on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. Chair LaPage stated that he would change the time of the regular Board meeting to 7:30 p.m.

Middle School Update

Dr. Shuldman reviewed the Middle School packet and would like to share the criteria with Board members. Dr. Shuldman would also like to create PDF files of the narrative from the five selected architects as well as the sheets showing examples of their work with respect to schools and historic renovations and then e-mail them to the Board members. Dr. Lister stated that he did not have a problem with that. Dr. Lister stated that when initially reviewing the seventeen architects, it was very obvious, by comparing narratives, those architects that know schools and those who do not. The five chosen do meet the criteria. Dr. Shuldman and Mrs. Walker will be observers on the review committee to report back to the Board members. Chair LaPage stated that the new Board members could take out the packets to become familiar with the process. Chair LaPage recommended that any PDF files also be sent to Ms. Patty Wojnar so that she can make copies. Ms. Garrity asked for a report of the walk through of the Middle School. Mrs. Walker reported that the architects were surprised with the overall condition of the building and the fact that there were no bathrooms on the second floor.

NEXT AGENDA

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. The Superintendent's review will take place prior to the regular meeting from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Chair LaPage stated that the agenda would consist of (1) School Board Photo for Yearbooks, (2) Recognition of School Board Members, and (3) Samples of Potential Financial reporting Formats.

Dr. Lister stated that he has been approached by the Rotary Club who

has been working with the Jeremy Alex Fund, and they would like to make an award to the Board of a chess set for every third grader in the City as well as a couple of the big patio sets for the elementary schools. They will make a brief presentation at the next Board Meeting.

Chair LaPage wanted to publicly recognize Mrs. Ann Walker, a re-elected Board member who ran an outstanding campaign and public relations. Chair LaPage wanted to congratulate her and mention that when she was a teacher with the Portsmouth School Department, she had been the longest serving Employee Representative. Congratulations to Ann for an outstanding campaign.

Chair LaPage also thanked Mrs. Virginia Kelleher who is filling in for vacationing Ms. Patty Wojnar tonight as recording secretary.

Chair LaPage also thanked George Shea for hosting the Board meeting at New Franklin School.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. On a motion by Mrs. Walker, Seconded by Ms. Garrity, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary