

SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2008

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM [or thereafter]

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: DR. MITCHELL SHULDMAN (CHAIR), KENT LAPAGE, SHERI HANGARRITY, ANN WALKER, DEXTER LEGG, LISA SWEET, REBECCA EMERSON, LESLIE STEVENS, DR. ROBERT LISTER (SUPERINTENDENT) STEPHEN ZADRAVEC (ASST. SUPERINTENDENT), STEPHEN BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR), JEFF COLLINS (PRINCIPAL PHS), JOHN STOKEL (PRINCIPAL PMS), MS. ABIGAIL ROCKEFELLER (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE), MS. LINDA BRIOLAT (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE).

Absent: BRENDAN RISTAINO (VICE CHAIR), ANN MAYER (SAU 50 REPRESENTATIVE)

III. INVOCATION

Superintendent Lister asked School Board members to remember Ms. Suzanne Woodland who lost her father and for military troops overseas protecting us. Mr. LaPage asked the Board to also remember Mr. Sanders of Sanders Lobster and fish market who also passed away.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Shuldman led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

1. September 23, 2008 School Board Meeting

Voted to approve and accept the minutes of the September 23, 2008 School Board Meeting.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Salvation Army letter requesting your presence as a volunteer. Superintendent Lister stated the board has participated in the past, along with students at the high school and middle school, to ring the bell for the Salvation Army. Participation from board members has always been appealing to the community and Dr. Lister would be glad to come up with two proposed dates, if all are interested in ringing the bell.
2. October lunch menu. Superintendent Lister voiced appreciation to several board members who have taken him up on his invite, joining him at different schools for lunch.
3. Field Trip spreadsheet. Superintendent Lister asked the board what groups they would like to receive reports from.

4. Important dates to remember. It will become busier as the board approaches the holiday season. Superintendent Lister provided the board with a list of important dates and asked them to set times aside. Chair Shuldman stated the location for the next board meeting had been changed from Dondero Elementary to Council Chambers at City Hall due to votes regarding the middle school. Chair Shuldman extended apologies to Dondero and hopes to reschedule.
5. FAQ draft. The Communications Committee provided the board with a draft of Frequently Asked Questions for the board to approve and place on the school's web site.

VII. RECOGNITION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Robin Burdick, Principal of Little Harbour Elementary – Ms. Burdick stated that in 1969, three elementary schools closed their doors. The following fall, Little Harbour Elementary opened its doors for the first time and welcomed students. This year was the school's fortieth opening day and Little Harbour Elementary has now reached middle age. This is Ms. Burdick's 36th year in the Portsmouth school system and she stated that, important to her, the history of Portsmouth is still going on at Little Harbour Elementary.

Ms. Burdick then asked to spend some time addressing an urgent and important matter. 431 students now attend Little Harbour Elementary with 76 kindergarteners enrolled this year. This is the largest enrollment ever, averaging 18.7 students per classroom. Little Harbour Elementary is bursting at the seams where even small offices have been converted to create a computer lab. Space issues will need to be addressed by the board very soon.

Ms. Burdick thought back to her third and fourth years of teaching. In the summer, you would have found her at the beach or reading a book. There is a difference today with new teachers. Teachers are at their schools year round and show a different level of dedication. Teachers are painting and cleaning their own rooms. Many teachers are immersed in professional development and can be seen throughout the entire summer. "Our teachers are so committed" stated Ms. Burdick. Opening Day rivaled any street fair in Portsmouth. Little Harbour Elementary has an initiative to improve community relationships and the list of volunteers continues to grow. She proudly presented her new teachers:

1. Megan Rice – Previously taught in Rochester and will be teaching fifth grade. Her husband works for the City and she is an active PTA member.
2. Lori Lebar – Previously taught kindergarten and first grade in Raymond. Ms. Lebar left to raise her family and is now returning to teach Little Harbour's fourth kindergarten class.
3. Sue Ellen Corbett – Spent 7 years in Hampstead and hails from Dover. She will be teaching in special education.
4. Erin Lawson – Will be teaching Special Education as well.

Jill LeMay, Principal of Dondero Elementary, stated that Dondero Elementary's first day of school seemed more like the second day of school, due to on August 25, the school was opened for families to tour and was the first "watermelon welcome".

Ms. LeMay stated the year started with some challenges. Opened positions proved difficult to fill and the year started without a full supportive staff. Ms. LeMay was proud to report that the school is now at full staff. Dondero's class sizes range from 14 to 23, averaging 18. For the thirteenth consecutive year, Dondero Elementary has been awarded the Blue Ribbon Award and for its first year, received the Gold Circle Award. Ms. LeMay proudly presented her new staff members to the board:

1. Shayna Kennedy – Previously taught first and second grades in Massachusetts. Currently teaching first grade at Dondero.
2. Josh Evans – Previously taught for 4 years in Massachusetts. Currently teaching grade five.
3. Sandra Alaimo –Hired into a new position of Autism Spectrum Disorder and comes with five years experience from Kingston, New Hampshire.
4. Christina Rocca –Taught for two years in Burlington, Massachusetts and is now a third grade teacher at Dondero. Ms. Rocca was unable to attend tonight.
5. Jessica Locke – Joins the Special Education staff from Rochester, New Hampshire where she taught for 7 years.

Mr. George Shea, Principal of New Franklin Elementary, stated his school began with 265 students enrolled at New Franklin; forty of them being new kindergarten students. Mr. Shea stated that opening day is an incredible amount of work but came and went without a hitch. As Ms. Burdick stated, New Franklin's teachers are there all year round. Mr. Shea and his staff members have identified goals and new initiatives that will be driven from what we have learned from student learning data. Mr. Shea and his staff are looking at gaps in learning and have implemented blocks into the daily schedule to refine reading and writing for students that are having difficulties. Mr. Shea proudly presented his new staff members to the board:

1. Sara Zoe Patterson – Library Media Specialist and Technology Integrator for grade 4 and 5 for all elementary schools but her home base is New Franklin. Ms. Patterson comes to New Franklin with seven years of experience and is heavily involved in the community.
2. Callie Brinkman – Outreach Therapist – Ms. Brinkman previously worked in Epping, New Hampshire.
3. Ian Fleischer – Mr. Fleischer comes to New Franklin with eight years of teaching experience and served as a teacher consultant.
4. Kelly Whelen – taught two years in first grade.

Mr. John Stokel, Principal of Portsmouth Middle School, proudly reported that PMS had a fantastic opening with many volunteers helping and 541 students in enrollment. Many faculty members were involved with both institutes this summer, addressing what are the essentials of learning, how will we know if students have learned, and what will we do if they have not learned? PMS will once again host Rachel's Challenge October 24. Mr. Stokel proudly presented his new staff member to the board:

1. Mr. Phillip Davis, the top choice of the selection committee, will be teaching social studies at Portsmouth Middle School.

Nancy Roy, Principal of PASS, stated the beginning of school went great. PASS currently has 28 students. 17 students are from Portsmouth, 6 being out of district students and she expects PASS to increase to 15 students out of district after all interviews have been processed. Most are seniors. This will create a long waiting list for Portsmouth students who may need to have services. PASS staff members have been addressing commitment with students. Teachers have taken feedback and created staff commitments to students. The students will now make commitments back to staff members. Ms. Roy and her staff have found this process effective and moving for all students and staff members at PASS. There are infrastructure issues that need to be addressed. How do we develop a food service program for our students? Who is financially responsible for the lunch program at PASS? Transportation is an issue. When Ms. Roy trades her personal vehicle, which happens to be a van, at least two staff members will need to transport students to Great Bay Community College and return them as well.

PASS has been very privileged to have a great relationship with Great Bay Community College. The Department of Education and faculty are helping students transition to the working community. Ms. Roy is also working with Ms. Diane Pinkham, Career Technology Director, to begin a nursing program. Ms. Roy proudly presented her new staff member to the board.

1. Jodi Blouch – Ms. Blouch worked at Noble High School for five years and was the director of New Hampshire's Business Center. She will be teaching English at PASS.

Jeff Collins, Principal of Portsmouth High School, reported that learning continued all summer long. Summer school was extremely successful, enrichment classes have begun, and Clipper Camp finished its first year, benefitting all who participated. Mr. Collins would like to make a Clipper Camp presentation to board members some time this year. Freshman orientation wrapped up and friends of Rachel groups have already met. Student leadership is at an all time high with students looking to raise an endowment of 10 million dollars. Students are taking a role and ownership in their building. Student participation in spirit week and Powder-puff football were high. Mr. Collins stated that 500 people were fed before the football game.

As of today, PHS has 1031 students in the high school. 300 are involved in fall athletics. 75 students will participate in the fall play of Peter Pan. Clubs and activities fair very successful. Band is 80 members strong. Chorus now has 105 members. Mr. Collins looks forward to the use of professional days to analyze student work. The

next step is what to do if children are not learning? Mr. Collins proudly presented his new staff members to the board:

1. Erik Schlapak will be filling in for a one year maternity leave. Mr. Schlapak has thirteen years experience as a middle school teacher. He will be teaching Social Studies.
2. Vera Haus will be joining the Business department with twenty years experience at McIntosh College.
3. Luis Insausti will be joining the Spanish department. Most recently Mr. Insausti was a teacher in Nashua with experience as English as a Second Language teacher in Miami, Florida and twelve years teaching in Virginia.
4. Jeannette MacDonald will be joining the French department, filling in for a one-year maternity leave.
5. Melanie Mazzone will be joining the Guidance department taking the position of Susan Anderson who retired. She most recently taught at Nashua South High School.
6. William Schefer joins the staff as a part time Welding Instructor. He also will be coaching soccer.
7. Deb DeQuattro joins the Art department part time. Ms. DeQuattro comes to PHS with ten years of previous experience.
8. Ryan Holder, who has been part of the PHS team for a year and a half, now comes on full time as an options counselor.
9. Terra Merry joins PHS as a technology coordinator/coach with eight years experience in California.
10. Amy Krajeck joins the English department with six years experience.
11. William McElroy joins the math department and is taking no time getting to know students and become involved. Mr. McElroy has already taken students on climbing outings, instilling wellness habits that will benefit them their whole lives.
12. Kara Kelley comes to PHS from Spaulding High School and joins the math department. She worked for several years as an engineer before seeking alternative certification. Ms. Kelley also is active as a PHS volleyball coach.
13. Christine MacDonald-Lantz joins the math department with thirteen years experience. Ms. Lantz started her student teaching at PHS.

Superintendent Lister asked for new staff members to take a few moments and allow the board members to shake hands and congratulate them.

VIII. FINANCIAL

1. September Financial

Mr. Bartlett sent out an additional packet with the financial statement for September. Ms. Garrity asked if certain figures don't line up, could Mr. Bartlett provide an explanation if the issue does not appear to be timing issue. Mr. Bartlett believes offset numbers are simply a timing issue where numbers are

front loaded, but would provide explanation if it turns out to be something else.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

X. AGENDA

1. Middle School Update

Mr. Bartlett recommended that JCJ's PowerPoint be posted on the school's web site with Draft stamped on it. Mr. Legg asked Chair Shuldman to briefly state what he thinks the public session next Tuesday will be like and suggested asking JCJ to come back and do their presentation, preceded by a brief description of programs again. Ms. Emerson believes what was presented to City last night was very helpful and would like portions reiterated. Ms. Garrity believes that waivers are being discussed for the first time and would like them explained in a clear way for the community to understand.

Ms. Stevens wondered if it was possible to arrange information on the web in a clearer manner for the public. The Communications Committee will be addressing this, but was unsure if they would be able to complete it before the next meeting. Mr. LaPage asked if possibly Bob Sullivan could open the meeting with what procedures are needed to get the entire process to a bonding vote and what a true JBC is. Superintendent Lister stated he would make contact with Alan Brady to see if there is a way to highlight the three latest PowerPoint presentations.

Chair Shuldman reminded everyone the board is being sued and requested that each chair of school board committees email Amy Noble at Central Office so info will be properly posted.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Ms. Emerson stated that tomorrow, October 8, 2008 is Walk to School Day. The Safe Routes to School Committee invites everyone to participate. Groups will be meeting 45 minutes prior to school and the Committee is hoping each school will take ownership for themselves next year. This national day was created to encourage physical activity, reduce traffic congestion, and spend time with children.
2. The Communication Committee was formed to be more responsive to the community. Ms. Emerson, Ms. Stevens, Mr. Stokel and Ms. Sweet make up the committee. The committee started with the 10 most frequently asked questions and worked together to answer. The committee would like the board to approve so the FAQ document can be posted on the web site and in the community newsletter. Mr. Legg motioned to approve. Ms. Walker seconded. Voted to approve. Mr. Legg encouraged the committee to take next steps ASAP to reorganize the web site.
3. Newsletter Committee – A newsletter is an idea that came out of the board's retreat and is a way to communicate on a quarterly basis with the community. Ms. Stevens and Ms. Walker presented the board with a mock up and asked for direction. The newsletter would be distributed electronically and available on the web site. Mr. LaPage requested the newsletter be passed by legal. Ms.

Emerson requested a list of all committees and who sits on them. Chair Shuldman has a meeting soon with Ms. Dwyer and will see if a list can be compiled.

4. The Superintendent Search Sub Committee met last Thursday. Ms. Walker (Chair Committee), Ms. Stevens, Ms. Garrity and Chair Shuldman joined to work on the leadership profile. Many community members will be interviewed with Paul DeMinico next week. On October 18, 2008, the committee will meet to develop the leadership profile further and assure that the entire community is represented. A city councilor, business leader, administrator, SAU 50 representative, elementary parent, middle school parent, high school student and teacher will be chosen to create the Superintendent Search Committee. If there were other people the board would want to add, it would be possible. Ms. Garrity asked Dr. Lister if he felt the board had missed anyone. Dr. Lister reiterated the importance of involving SAU 50 in the process. Chair Shuldman explained to the board that there is another list of people of other individuals that will not serve on the committee, but will have interviews with DeMinico next week to feed into creating the leadership profile. The leadership profile is the document in which the applicants will be matched against. Once the sub committee chooses members of the community they believe would be candidates to serve on the Superintendent Search Committee, the names would then be brought before the board for a vote.
5. Mr. LaPage stated the Holiday Express is having its first volunteer meeting October 20. Proceeds would be going towards the Patricia Wojnar Scholarship and literacy in the schools.
6. Ms. Garrity inquired about field trips. Ms. Garrity and Ms. Emerson would like to invite the automotive group and the PASS students who traveled to New York. Superintendent Lister would check to see how many students were seniors and have graduated. The board requested that Dr. Lister make a discretionary decision.
Ms. Emerson inquired about Ms. Rockefeller's questionnaire and when will she be ready to report? Tentatively, she believes she will be ready to report November 18, 2008.

XII. NEXT AGENDA ITEMS (October 21, 2008)

1. Special Ed Task Force Committee

XIII. ADJOURNMENT At 10:45 p.m., voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Robert J. Lister

Superintendent of Schools