

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC HEARING/WORK SESSION MINUTES 1/21/2010

LITTLE HARBOUR ELEMENTARY

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2010

TIME: 7:00PM [or thereafter]

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Shuldman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: MITCH SHULDMAN (CHAIR), ANN WALKER (VICE CHAIR), LISA SWEET, LESLIE STEVENS, KENT LAPAGE, DEXTER LEGG, REBECCA EMERSON, TOM MARTIN, CAROL CHELLMAN, ED MCDONOUGH, (SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT), STEPHEN BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR) AND LINDA BRIOLAT (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE)

Absent: ANN MAYER (SAU 50 REPRESENTATIVE) AND PHILIP BOYNTON (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE)

- I. **INVOCATION** - Board members silently reflected on Ms. Jean Frisbee’s sister, Dee Regan, who recently passed away.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** –Chair Shuldman led in the pledge of allegiance.
- III. **PUBLIC HEARING** – Chair Shuldman opened the meeting with a brief synopsis of the budget process so far. In reality, the School Board is being asked to cut 10% in real “spendable” budget funds. What will be the impact on learning? How should the district move forward? With the help of administration, all scenarios will be pursued before a final budget is submitted to City Council. Chair Shuldman stated the importance of every school board member being comfortable with supporting the final submitted budget.

Chair Shuldman thanked the large number of community members who were in attendance and stated the ground rules for a public hearing. The following community members addressed the School Board:

Patrick Ellis – 235 McKinley Road - Mr. Ellis stated that it was his intention to go to City Council and let them know that he did not find the proposed request to cut 4% from the school budget acceptable. Mr. Ellis asked that the School Board puts forth a budget that feels appropriate.

Ann Wheeler – 110 Ash Street - Ms. Wheeler is terrified what Portsmouth’s schools might look like if the school board reduces the budget by 4%. Ms. Wheeler encouraged Board members to reserve the high quality of education that exists in Portsmouth today.

Scott McKee – 151 Lafayette Road – Mr. McKee believes that this budget is the tipping point that so many have talked about in budget seasons past. Not only will class sizes increase, but staff will suffer as well. Mr. McKee encouraged Board members to be a strong advocate for what was best for Portsmouth’s children.

Mark Brighton – Union Street. Mr. Brighton stated that whiteboards are nice, small class sizes are nice, but Portsmouth doesn’t need them. Mr. Brighton’s generation learned in large classrooms and without whiteboards. Children can also learn in the midst of adversity. We are in adverse times.

Erica Taylor- 205 Odiorne Point Road – Ms. Taylor stated that the proposed cuts would be devastating to Portsmouth’s schools. People will not want to move to Portsmouth. All “fluff” has already been cut in previous budgets and data clearly shows that small class sizes are where students learn best.

Christine Bastianelli – 230 Cass Street - Ms. Bastianelli stated that it was the responsibility of the schools to produce citizens who are successful after graduation, not to simply control chaos. With the proposed 4% cut, Ms. Bastianelli believes that Portsmouth will no longer be able to provide its students with the necessary skills to be successful.

Emy Adams – 6 Nixon Park –Ms. Adams sees teachers working conditions and school morale decreasing every year. Personally, Ms. Adams would rather see a pay freeze than teacher lay offs or 30 kids to a classroom.

Alyssa Murphy – Ms. Murphy moved her family from New York to the Portsmouth area specifically for the schools and was anxious to buy a house in Portsmouth. Now she is not sure.

Kelly Hurd – 159 Austin Street – Ms. Hurd works at Little Harbour Elementary and is amazed at the quality of teachers that Portsmouth constantly hires. Ms. Hurd is a single mom who has worked several jobs in the past to afford living in Portsmouth, assuring that her daughter can attend the Portsmouth school system. She would go back to working as a nanny or working a second job if it meant keeping the schools as they currently are.

Chair Shuldman closed round one of the public hearing and opened round two where several community members took advantage of a second opportunity to address the board. Round three was then concluded with no one speaking.

IV. AGENDA

1. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS – Principals Shea, LeMay and Grossman presented their requested budgets:

Dondero School
2009 – 2010 Enrollment

Grade	Number of students
K	60
1	41
2	62
3	52
4	46
5	44

2010 – 2011 Projected Enrollment

Grade	Number of students
K	unknown
1	63
2	43
3	62
4	52
5	46

Proposed 2010-2011 Budget - Dondero School January 21, 2010

Key Priorities addressed in the proposed budget

- Sustaining strong student-teacher ratios in classrooms
- Integrating technology into classrooms

	FY 2011 Proposed Budget	FY 2010 Current Budget
Enrollment by grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please see reverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please see reverse
New Programs and/or Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No new programs or initiatives that impact the budget at this time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No new programs or initiatives that impact the budget at this time
Staffing Adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One additional classroom teacher to create four first grade classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An additional 50% classroom teacher was added to fifth grade
Major Increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No increases at this time ○ Some funds have been transferred within the 102 budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None at this time
Major Decreases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None at this time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teaching and Learning Team funds ○ Professional Development funds ○ Substitute Teacher funds ○ Furniture funds
Items NOT included in this budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom paraprofessionals for Kindergarten ○ Cost of supplies, books, etc. for additional classroom ○ Technology to support classroom instruction 	

Little Harbour School- Projected Enrollment
2010-2011

	Projected Number of Students	Proposed number of classrooms	Avg. # of Students per classroom
Kindergarten	68?	4	17?
Grade 1	76	4	19
Grade 2	83	5	16-17
Grade 3	70	4	17-18
Grade 4	82	4	20-21
Grade 5	69	4	17-18

Proposed 2010-2011 Budget- Little Harbour School January 21, 2010

Key Priorities addressed in the proposed budget

- Sustaining strong student-teacher ratios in classrooms

	FY 2011 Proposed Budget	FY 2010 Current Budget
Enrollment by grade	Please see reverse	Please see reverse
New Programs and/or Initiatives	No new programs which impact budget at this time	No new programs which impact budget at this time
Staffing Adjustments	-Additional teacher for fourth Grade 5 classroom due to increased class size -District funded replacement for Title I Reading teacher - Two additional stipends for Safety Patrol (1) and Chess Club (1)-Provides an accurate reflection of past and current needs	Additional teacher for large Grade 1 Class (this teacher will follow this cohort to second grade for 2010-2011)
Major Increases	None at this time	None at this time
Major Decreases	None at this time	-Teaching & Learning Team Funds -Professional development funds -Substitute teacher funds
Items NOT included in this budget	-Material and supplies costs for additional Grade 5 teacher -Replacement costs for Title I books and furniture -Replacements for Title 1 paraprofessionals -Additional classroom for proposed teacher -Classroom computers -Kindergarten/primary regular education paraprofessionals	

2009-2011 New Franklin Class and Population Projections

2009-2010

Grade	Enrollment	Number of Sections	Teachers
Kindergarten	50	3	Hennigar, Shaw, Spivack
Grade 1	43	3	Carrier, Fleischer, Whelan
Grade 2	48	3	Bates, Monmaney, Spinney,
Grade 3	50	3	Dennis, Henderson Jacoby
Grade 4	34	2	Needham, Remsen
Grade 5	45	2	Manning-Welch, McGuigan/Carr
		16	

2010--2011

Grade	Enrollment Estimate	Number of Sections	Teachers
Kindergarten	?	3?	
Grade 1	50	3	
Grade 2	43	3	
Grade 3	48	3	
Grade 4	50	3	
Grade 5	34	2	
		17?	

Proposed 2010-2011 Budget – New Franklin School January 21, 2010

Key Priorities addressed in the proposed budget

- Continuing individualized education programming through strong student-teacher ratios in classrooms
- Sufficient support personnel to provide timely interventions for students in need

	FY 2011 Proposed Budget	FY 2010 Current Budget
Enrollment by grade	See reverse	See reverse
New Programs and/or Initiatives	No budget-affecting programs or initiatives are being introduced.	No new initiatives or programs affected the budget.
Staffing Adjustments	In the event of a Kindergarten warranting three sections, New Franklin would need an additional classroom teacher if all current grade level sections remained constant.	Internal shifts only
Major Increases	Level funded from 2009/2010	Level funded from 2008/2009
Major Decreases	None at this time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Teaching and Learning funds • Loss of furniture funds • Loss of professional development funds
Items NOT included in this budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drywall to replace folding wall currently separating two classrooms. 	

Following the budget presentations, board members raised the following concerns:

- Lack of paraprofessionals in the elementary schools and the importance of their role in the classroom
 - The impact that larger classes would have. Are we at a tipping point? Dondero's enrollment is lower than in years past, yet the needs of students have never been greater. Principal LeMay reported 40 students with IEP's (individual education plans), 9 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, 2 diabetics, 13 with food allergies, 13 others that need inhalers, and 12 students who speak second languages. Ms. LeMay stated, "we are at the tipping point."
 - ALL students are expected to understand the curriculum before moving on. However, due to classroom size increasing, there is gradual erosion occurring. How much individual time can a student realistically receive? Currently, each school is aware of their successes and shortcomings. With increasing classroom size, individuality will/is being compromised.
 - As the School Board looks toward class guidelines, elementary principals asked Board members to consider class levels. First grade is where initial instruction begins. If class sizes must be increased, it should not be at the kindergarten, first or second grade levels.
 - Ramifications of schools becoming a SINI (School In Need of Improvement) or a DINI (District In Need of Improvement). Ms. Simons stated that New Franklin is currently categorized as a SINI. Therefore, 20% of the Title I budget must now go towards professional development at New Franklin. Due to No Child Left Behind legislation, New Franklin parents can also now choose to send their children to a different school within the district. Other steps of SINI and DINI were discussed, clearly showing what the impact of lower test scores will mean to the district.
2. Title I Director, Joanne Simons – Title I supports a collaborative effort to focus on reading district wide at the elementary levels and at the Portsmouth Middle School. Ms. Simons is also responsible for the homeless population. Portsmouth has had 52 students identified as homeless so far this year. Although the federal government mandated that a district is responsible for transporting homeless students, there is no line item for homeless transportation. The Title I budget must simply absorb the cost. Ms. Simons has worked for the Portsmouth district for five years. With every year/budget, the federal government has cut funding and created more mandates for the district. Cutting staff and being as creative as possible must simply absorb these costs. Cutting valuable programs, such as the homework club at Little Harbour, summer school and the Gold Star program, must also be cut to save costs.
 3. BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION – Superintendent McDonough received an invitation from City Manager Bohenko to attend a meeting. Mr. McDonough intends to further a conversation with the city manager regarding sharing facilities costs and consolidating other departments. School Board members requested that a draft of the follow up letter to the city manager be shared with the board at the January 26, 2010 budget meeting.

Mr. McDonough then presented three budget scenarios to the School Board:

Mr. McDonough concluded by stating that administration should be consulted as to how they would make cuts in their school.

V. ADJOURNMENT -

MOTION: Motion to adjourn by Mr. Legg

SECOND: Ms. Walker

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimous at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed. McDonough".

Ed McDonough
Superintendent of Schools