

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the September 24, 2002 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, September 24, 2002 in the cafeteria of the New Franklin Elementary School.

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***Ribbon-cutting  
Ceremony***

Prior to the meeting, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held, beginning in the gymnasium. The Honorable Evelyn Sirrell, Mayor of the City of Portsmouth, cut the ribbon leading to the new addition. New Franklin students and their Principal, Mrs. Constance Carmody, accompanied the Mayor as she cut the ribbon.

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***Attendance***

**PRESENT:** Mr. Kent LaPage (Chair), Mr. John Lyons, Jr. (Vice-Chair), Mr. Raimond Bowles, Mrs. Nancy Novelline-Clayburgh, Mrs. Nansi Craig, Mr. Clay Hayward, Mrs. Colleen Montminy, Mr. Carvel Tefft, Mr. Charles Vaughn

**PARTICIPATING:** Dr. Lyonel B. Tracy (Superintendent of Schools), Dr. Robert J. Lister (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Miss Sarah Sanger (Student Representative), and Mrs. Diane O’Leary McGee (Employee Representative).

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***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the meeting to order in the new cafeteria at the New Franklin Elementary School at 7:38 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection and asked Board members to remember Carl Corliss, an employee for over 25 years, who died unexpectedly on September 13. He said Mr. Corliss was an outstanding employee, and his family should be proud that so many of his colleagues paid their last respects. Mr. LaPage extended the Board’s sympathy to the Corliss Family. Mrs. Constance Carmody, Principal of New Franklin School, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Moment of Silent  
Reflection***

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**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

***Minutes Approved***

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the September 10, 2002 meeting. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, the minutes be approved as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Thank You Note***

The Board received a thank you note from Mrs. Millie Aliberti acknowledging their expression of sympathy. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board accept and place on file the note from Mrs. Aliberti, with a response by the Superintendent. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION – GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS**

There was no one in attendance who wished to address the Board.

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**RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS**

***Opening of School Reports and Introduction of New Staff***

The Principals were in attendance to give opening reports and introduce new staff.

Mr. Rick Gremlitz, Principal of Portsmouth High School, reported the High School had a smooth opening, even with the shortage of parking. He said there were no glitches with the opening, and he credits the good work done in developing the master schedule. He reported that freshman orientation was held the week before school started, and 50 upper-class students volunteered two days to serve as role models for the incoming freshmen. He reported the accreditation process is moving along, and 16 educators from throughout New England will arrive at the school on October 20 to begin the evaluation process. School Board members will be asked to meet with the Accreditation Committee on October 20. Mr. Gremlitz reported that open house will be held on Thursday evening, September 26, at 6:45 p.m. He introduced the following new staff members: Rick Hugener, Tracy Gilroy, James Keane, Phil Loud, Kate Schulten, Amy Mercier, and Ken Sommers.

Mr. John Stokel, Principal of Portsmouth Middle School, reported an extremely smooth opening. He credits this with having an excellent, respectful student body and an excellent faculty that wants to be teaching middle school students. He said all of the math teachers have been trained in “Connected Math,” and it is amazing to see all of these people get on board with this program. He said the physical education teachers will go through training for the Life Skills Program, and the program will begin this year with sixth and seventh graders. Mr. Stokel reported three parent evenings have been scheduled this year with different forums on health issues. The first is on bullying and harassment; the second on adolescent health facilitated by Dr. Dixon Turner; and the third on responding to a crisis or disaster, facilitated by the American Red Cross. Mr. Stokel

***Opening of School  
Reports and  
Introduction of New  
Staff (con't.)***

introduced new staff members Ann Gilman and Tom Denning.

Mrs. Paulette Hoeflich, Student Services Director, reported that PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School) had a smooth opening. She referred to articles in the folders about two projects the students completed: a freedom quilt to express their feelings about September 11; and a submersible video camera to examine the underwater environment. Mrs. Hoeflich said she believes PASS is going to have a great year. She stated there is one new paraprofessional, Michael Deragon, who was not able to attend this evening. She introduced the new Principal at PASS, Carol James.

Mrs. Jill LeMay, Principal at the Mary C. Dondero Elementary School, said she is most pleased to report that Dondero School also had a very smooth opening. She credited the tremendous cooperation among the maintenance staff, her custodial staff and Hutter Construction. Mrs. LeMay reported that two-thirds of the staff were either relocated to new classroom or office space. The teachers put in many hours this summer preparing their classrooms for the students' arrival. She said school opened on time, and parents were treated to a breakfast when they dropped off their children at school. Mrs. LeMay said open house was held last week, and for the first time they were able to have all parents together under the roof on the same night. She also reported the PTA membership drive has begun. Mrs. LeMay stated the teachers will continue to teach "Everyday Math." She introduced the following new staff members: Linda George, Jenn Dunham, Lynne Pallarino, and Jodi Kenny.

Mrs. Robin Burdick, Principal of Little Harbour School, said the summer was peaceful and calm at her school. No summer maintenance projects had been scheduled, and summer school was not held in the building this year. Mrs. Burdick said she and her staff are happy that the other two elementary schools have received renovations, and they know their turn is coming. She reported that Christine Todd Whitman, EPA Administrator, visited Little Harbour School on Monday because of the work that was completed at the school to improve the indoor air quality. She said the school year started with 380 students, 22 of whom speak English as their second language. She thanked the Board for appropriating funds in a tight budget year to allow an ESL (English As A Second Language) teacher to help the young people to be better prepared as they move through the educational system. She reported on the progress a student has made over the last three years in reading. She said this student has experienced significant improvement, and is very proud. Mrs. Burdick said she, too, is proud of this student. She said he may very well be scored a "novice" reader in the spring, but she would challenge anyone to say that any one of our schools is a failing school, or that he would be a failing student. She said his self-esteem

***Opening of School***

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has improved along with his love of reading. Mrs. Burdick said the three elementary principals work together on elementary initiatives. She introduced two new staff members: Shailagh Curry and Jaime Trudel.

Mrs. Beth Setear, Coordinator of the Portsmouth Early Education Program (PEEP), reported that PEEP delivers special education services to the community's pre-school age children. Because of an early childhood integration program, all students identified as needing special education services are now receiving those services in classrooms taught by early childhood educators; they are no longer in classrooms taught solely by special education teachers. They hope that through these efforts, they will notice in a few years that children are arriving at kindergarten better prepared. Mrs. Setear said that PEEP had a wonderful opening. She said there were no vacancies to fill this year.

Mrs. Constance Carmody, Principal of New Franklin School, reported that New Franklin also had a smooth opening. She said they were delighted that the addition was ready on time. She said the annual family picnic was held, and enabled the staff and students to meet the new students from Dondero. She said the renovations have also resulted in 18 additional parking spaces, which are used by the staff, freeing up parking in the front of the building for visitors and itinerant staff. Mrs. Carmody said she appreciates the wonderful support shown to her and her staff by phone calls and visits. She said she never had any doubt that New Franklin is a quality school, and those phone calls and visits confirmed that. She thanked Dr. Tracy and Chair LaPage for their support. She said the parents, staff and students all appreciate the support. Mrs. Carmody also stated the three elementary principals work cooperatively together. She introduced the new staff members: Nicole Keil, Christina Bates, John Marlowe, and Deirdre Shea.

The Superintendent, continuing a tradition, invited the new staff members to come forward to meet the Board. Following this, the Chair declared a recess at 8:20 p.m. (Mrs. McGee left the meeting at this time.) The meeting was reconvened at 8:28 p.m.

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**PERSONNEL**

**Professional  
Retirements**

Dr. Lister presented the professional retirement of Anne Costello, Middle School art teacher, effective October 18, 2002. Mrs. Craig moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, to accept the retirement. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Professional**

Dr. Lister presented the professional retirement of Sandra Wilkins,

**Retirements (con't.)** grades six teacher at the Middle School, effective September 20, 2002. Mrs. Craig moved, seconded by Mr. Tefft, to accept the retirement. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Professional Nomination** Dr. Lister presented the professional nomination of Sue Rafferty to the position of grade six teacher at the Middle School. Mr. Hayward moved, seconded by Mrs. Montminy, to approve the nomination. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Rules Suspended to Take Up Agenda Item** Mrs. Clayburgh moved the Board suspend the rules and take up agenda item VIII. A. Student Trip to Costa Rica, at this time. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Proposed Student Trip to Costa Rica** Mrs. Kathleen Metterville, Assistant Principal at Portsmouth High School, presented a proposal for a student trip to Costa Rica from June 30 through July 11, 2003. Mr. Tefft raised a concern that prohibitive costs exclude some worthy students from attending. He supports trips that have an educational purpose, but suggested that the Board discuss guidelines and protocol at some later date. Following the presentation and discussion, Mr. Vaughn moved the Board approve this trip and the Business Administrator be asked to report back to the Board in early May as to whether or not funds will be available for five or six students who may not be able to afford the trip. Mr. Bowles seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion. The motion failed in an eight to one vote (Mr. Vaughn voted for the motion; Mr. Bowles, Mrs. Clayburgh, Mrs. Craig, Mr. Hayward, Mr. Lyons, Mrs. Montminy, Mr. Tefft and Chair LaPage voted against the motion). Mrs. Craig stated she could not vote for the motion, as there are other trips that occur throughout the year, and it would not be fair for the Board to specify this trip for financial assistance. Mr. Vaughn said he was not aware of other trips. The Chair stated the Board, at its last meeting, approved a student trip to Japan in December. Mr. Vaughn said he was absent from the last meeting as he was working at the voting ward and could not leave there until his duties were complete. Mr. Lyons supported Mr. Tefft's suggestion that the Board discuss the topic of financial assistance for student trips at its annual retreat. He further suggested discussions be held with the business community to establish a fund for students that need financial assistance to participate in school sponsored trips. After further discussion, Mrs. Craig moved the Board approve the trip to Costa Rica with the provision that the insurance is finalized and in place at the time the students leave. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### ***Joint Building Committee***

Joint Building Committee – Mr. LaPage reported the Joint Building Committee is finalizing and closing the finances on the New Franklin and Dondero projects. He said they are very pleased that both projects were completed on time.

The Chair stated the bid process has begun for the high school project. Bids are scheduled to be opened at 4:00 p.m. this Thursday, September 26. Hutter Construction will summarize the bids and present the information to the Joint Building Committee. Mr. Torrey said the bidding process really belongs to the construction manager, Hutter Construction. Because of the magnitude of the project and the fact that taxpayers' dollars are involved, it was agreed by the Joint Building Committee that it would be a comprehensive process controlled by the School Department. He said that when the bids are opened, a separate log would be kept and the bids would then be handed over to Hutter for their review. He said their job is to get the right people to get the job done. Mr. Tefft stated that Board has the right to reject bids if it so decides. There was discussion of the bid process. Mrs. Clayburgh commended Mr. Bob Iafolla for sharing his expertise, and stated that he will assist in making decisions. Mr. Hayward expressed concern that the quality of the project be done correctly and that short-cuts are not taken in order to secure the low bid.

### ***Policy Committee***

Policy Committee – Mrs. Craig reported the Policy Committee will meet on October 15, 2002, at 4:00 p.m. at the Superintendent's office. The Board received copies of the following current policies and were asked to submit suggestions, comments, etc. to the members of the Policy Committee prior to the meeting: Citizens' Advisory Committees to the Board; Publicity; Advisory Committees for the Staff; School Visits; Loitering or Causing Disturbance; Participation in Community Life; Political Activities; Gifts to School Personnel; Gifts from the Board; and Soliciting Funds.

### ***Curriculum Council***

Curriculum Council – Dr. Lister stated the Curriculum Council will be prepared to give a report at the next meeting.

### ***Chamber of Commerce***

Chamber of Commerce Representative – Mr. Lyons reported that he will be introduced as the School Board's representative to the Chamber of Commerce Executive Board on Thursday, September 26. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent will speak on the relationship between the School Department and the business community.

***GPEPC***

Greater Portsmouth Educational Partnership Council (GPEPC) – Mr. Lyons said there would be a report from GPEPC at the next Board meeting. A retreat was held in August, and the first meeting of GPEPC will be held this Thursday, September 26.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

***Law Conference***

Mr. Bowles said he will attend the “Bradley F. Kidder Educational Law Conference” sponsored by the New Hampshire School Administrators’ Association and the New Hampshire School Boards Association. He encouraged other Board members to attend this conference.

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**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

There was no Continuing Business to come before the School Board.

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**FINANCIAL**

***Visit by EPA Administrator***

Mr. Torrey reported the Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Christine Todd Whitman, visited Little Harbour School on Monday to recognize the school for its efforts in addressing indoor air quality.

***Construction Projects Coordinator***

Mr. Torrey commended Mr. Scott French, who was responsible for coordinating the construction and renovation projects at both the New Franklin Elementary School and the Mary C. Dondero Elementary School. He said Mr. French was in constant communication with the Principals throughout the duration of the projects.

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**NEXT AGENDA**

***Vending Machines***

Chair LaPage said the Board will address the subject of vending machines at the middle and high schools.

***Clipper Health Center Work Session***

Mr. Lyons requested that notification of the work session regarding the Clipper Health Center be sent to all those concerned and interested.

Mrs. Clayburgh said, as the parent of three children in the school system, that she is very proud of the Portsmouth School System.

*(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board – October 8, 2002.)*

***Dropout Report***

The Chair stated the Board will discuss the dropout report written by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent on October 1, 2002, at 7:00 p.m.

***Adjournment***

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board adjourn its meeting; Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyonel B. Tracy, Ed.D.  
Executive Secretary