

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the July 12, 2005 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, July 12, 2005 in the Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Municipal Complex.

Attendance

PRESENT: Mr. Kent LaPage (Chair), Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh (Vice-Chair), Mr. Raimond Bowles, Mr. Clay Hayward, Mr. John Lyons, Jr., Mr. Charles Vaughn, Mrs. Ann Walker

ABSENT: Mrs. Nansi Craig, Mr. Carvel Tefft

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Mr. Andrew Kinaci (Student Representative), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative), and Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

Prior to the regular meeting, the School Board met at 5:00 p.m. in a non-public session in the Law Library. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A: 3 II. (a) and (b). The non-public session was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

The Board met in a work session for the 1005-2006 budget in the Law Library. The work session was called to order at 6:35 p.m. and was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:24 p.m. He apologized for the late start and said the Board had been meeting in a work session regarding the budget; specifically the special education funding, the PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School) program, and the food service program.

The Chair called for a moment of silent reflection. He asked people to remember those who are less fortunate, those who are serving overseas, and those who were affected by the tragedy in London, England. Mr. LaPage said this School Board works together on a regular basis to make life better for this community and, hopefully, there will be no more of these tragedies. The Chair asked the Board's

secretary, Patty Wojnar, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes Approved The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the June 28, 2005 meeting. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, to approve the minutes as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Student Participant in National Competition The Chair asked Mrs. Briolat to read an e-mail from Chef Diane Pinkham regarding Ryan Briolat's participation in the USA Skills Competition held in Kansas City in June. Chef Pinkham described the items Ryan had to make and the skill components on which the participants were judged. Ryan placed sixth out of 38 secondary contestants; increasing his placement by 14 positions over last year's competitions.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

No one had signed up to address the Board during the public commentary session.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

There were no presentations to come before the Board.

PERSONNEL

Professional Nominations Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Amy Gordon to the position of visual arts teacher at Portsmouth High School (replacing Shawn Pelech, who retired) for the 2005-2006 school year. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the nomination of Kimberly Thornton to the position of physical education/health teacher at Portsmouth High School (replacing Andrea Ogden, who resigned) for the 2005-06 school year. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyons stated it appears as though the Board quickly moves through the nominations; however, they have previously met with the administration and reviewed the credentials of the people nominated

(Approved by the Portsmouth School Board on August 9, 2005).

by the Superintendent.

***Professional
Resignation***

Dr. Lister presented the resignation of Michael Mayo from this position as a physical education teacher at Portsmouth High School effective the end of the 2004-2005 school year. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the resignation be accepted. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

***Joint Building
Committee***

Joint Building Committee: Chair LaPage reported the Joint Building Committee will meet in a joint work session with the City Council and the School Board on Thursday evening. A tour of the high school will begin at 6:00 p.m., after which there will be a discussion on the status of the project and what remains to be completed. The Chair said the dedication of the high school will take place on Sunday, August 28, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. He encouraged the public to attend the dedication ceremony, and said it is a good chance to tour the new building.

***Booster Clubs Meet
to Address Snack
Shack***

Ms. LaPage reported the sub-committee of the Booster Clubs met to discuss the snack shack. The group has had two good meetings, and will meet again in two weeks. He commended High School building trades teacher Dexter Robblee, who did an outstanding job in developing the blueprints for the building. He said the Superintendent and Business Administrator will follow up with the required paperwork at City Hall. The Chair reminded the Board that prepared foods can no longer be served at the current snack shack as it does not meet a number of conditions. He thanked the Health Officer, Odysias Athanasiou, for bringing this to the attention of the School Department. Mr. LaPage said he believes the snack shack will be completed in time for the fall sports, which start in September.

NEW BUSINESS

***Superintendent
Authorized to
Accept Resignations
and to Offer
Teaching Contracts***

The Superintendent requested the Board authorize him to accept resignation and to offer teaching contracts pending final approval by the School Board. The Chair stated the Board meets once a month during the summer, and approval of this request would allow the Superintendent to offer teaching contracts to successful candidates. The candidates' nominations would then be presented to the School Board for final approval. Mr. Bowles moved the Board authorize the Superintendent to accept resignations and to offer teaching contracts pending final approval by the School Board. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Mr. Torrey stated the Board held a work session earlier this evening to discuss the deficit in fee-based programs (special education, food service, and PASS). During that time he provided information on the history of the programs and the situations that have occurred to cause a deficit. He said the next discussion that has to take place is the closing of the fiscal year 2005 books. Once the books are closed, the City will put together a financial report, which will, subsequently, be reviewed by auditors.

Mr. Torrey reported that two out of the three programs that had been running negatives have turned around as more revenues were received this year. The special education budget and the food service budget ended the year with balances. PASS, however, will end the year with a deficit of approximately \$150,000. He reminded the Board that, at the last meeting, they authorized him to use any remaining funds in the operating budget to defray the deficits. Because of that motion, he believes the deficit will be 100% covered by any remaining funds in the school budget. He said the next step is for him to close the books and make final transmissions to the City.

Mr. Vaughn thanked Mr. Torrey for his fine presentation, and said that all municipalities in the United States face similar problems with providing Federally mandated programs without Federal funding. Mr. Vaughn said that more responsibilities are being placed upon the states, which translates to more responsibilities at the local level to raise money for these programs. Mr. Vaughn said that parents of children with special needs move to this community because of its fine reputation for meeting the needs of those students. Over the years, the taxpayers have picked up more and more of the costs of these special programs.

Mr. Lyons said there is not a child in the City of Portsmouth who has not been fully taken care of by the School District, and the District will always continue to do that. He said the City supports its children. Mr. Lyons said that, because of the way the system works, one child with special needs could move into the community and have a significant impact on the budget. Mr. Lyons said the School Board, with great assistance from the Business Administrator, the former Superintendent, the new Superintendent, the former Director of Special Education, and the Director of Student Services, has worked hard to address programs in a way to resolve the problems without a negative impact to the budget. He said there are other areas in the budget in which the School Board does not have control, such as increased insurance premiums. Mr. Lyons said the School Board will continue to provide all students with an exemplary education within its means.

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Mr. Vaughn said the taxpayers are being asked to give more and more. He cited the increase in health insurance premiums increasing at an alarming rate. He said other costs, such as gasoline, are increasing, which will affect the City's budget.

Chair LaPage said the School Board held an excellent work session to discuss this topic. He said the information provided to the Board will be forwarded to the City Manager and City Council.

Mr. LaPage said the school district was complying with mandates. He said at some point in the future it may be necessary to state that the City cannot meet the mandates. He said the Federal Government has mandated special education programs since 1975, but has not come up with the funding for these programs. The Chair said he is looking for the funding to begin soon, and he will not tolerate being told he should be happy to receive 20% of the costs. Mr. LaPage said this is a problem across the nation. He said the deficit did not occur overnight, and there were many years when the programs ended the fiscal year with balances. He said the School Department turned back \$80,000 to the City of Portsmouth last year; and in other years, over \$260,000 was returned to the City. The Chair said he wants to make sure that people understand there is an incorrect assumption out there that City departments do not turn money back to the City.

FINANCIAL

2005-2006 Budget

Mr. Torrey said the Board had asked the administration if there are to be any adjustments to the 2005-2006 budget, now that a total budget figure has been approved by the City Council. He said the Superintendent reviewed with the Board, during the work session, some changes to the budget. Mr. Torrey said the Board has requested some more time to review these items.

Dr. Lister suggested the Board schedule to meet an hour before their August meeting to allow time to review the recommendations and to have questions answered. The Superintendent said he is recommending reorganization within some departments. The Chair suggested the Board review the materials they received earlier, and to call either Dr. Lister or Mr. Torrey if they have any questions so the Board is prepared to act on this at the August ninth meeting.

Mr. Vaughn said it is important for the public to realize that the Superintendent and Business Administrator are still working within the budget figure that was approved by the City Council; they are changing figures around within the budget so the Board can meet necessary needs.

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Mrs. Walker requested an update on the technology integrator position. Dr. Lister stated there had been difficulties at the elementary level this past year due to the elimination of the Technology Director. He reviewed his recommendation to correct this problem.

The Chair stated the Board will receive a written narrative addressing each of the budget items that it will be asked to vote on.

NEXT AGENDA

Next Meeting

Chair LaPage stated the School Board meeting will be held on August ninth in the Council Chambers. He asked that if Board members have agenda items, they contact him or Dr. Lister.

OTHER

Class of 2005 Graduation

Mr. Hayward said he attended the High School Class of 2005 graduation, and that it was superbly done. He said that he was able to congratulate each of the graduates after they received their diplomas.

Chair LaPage said it was nice to have air conditioning in the gymnasium during the graduation ceremony, and that they were able to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend. The Chair said the graduation of high school seniors is the highlight of what the Board stands for and is the last chance the Board has to thank the students for being members of our community.

Celebration Graduation

Dr. Lister congratulated the parents who presented Celebration Graduation. He said this is a non-school activity, which has been in existence for 21 years because of dedicated parents. This year, two-thirds of the Senior Class participated in the overnight event.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board adjourn its meeting; Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary