

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the August 9, 2005 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, August 9, 2005 in the Board Room at Little Harbour School.

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***Attendance***

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

**ABSENT:** Mr. Raimond Bowles, Mr. Carvel Tefft

**PARTICIPATING:** Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zdravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Mr. Andrew Kinaci (Student Representative), Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

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***Non-Public Sessions***

Prior to the regular meeting, the School Board met in a non-public non-session with Counsel in Conference Room A. Following the session with Counsel, the Board met in a non-public session in Conference Room A. This non-public session was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (b).

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***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. Dr. Lister called the roll.

***Introduction of New Assistant Superintendent***

Dr. Lister introduced Mr. Stephen Zdravec, the new Assistant Superintendent for the Portsmouth School Department. Mr. Zdravec comes to Portsmouth from the Amherst School District, where he was Assistant Superintendent for the last three years. Dr. Lister said he is looking forward to working with Mr. Zdravec and his being a member of the administrative team to work with teachers and the community. Mr. Zdravec thanked the SAU staff for an incredibly warm welcome last week. He said that he has already become involved in a number of different projects within the school district.

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***Moment of Silent Reflection***

The Chair called for a moment of silent reflection. He asked the Board to keep in their prayers Board members Ann Walker and Nancy Novelline Clayburgh and their families. Both ladies recently

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lost their mothers.

Mr. Vaughn requested the Board keep in their thoughts and prayers a friend, a veteran of World War II, who recently died.

Mr. Zadavec led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

***Minutes Approved*** Chair LaPage called for approval of the minutes of the July 12, 2005 meeting. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be approved as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Thank You Notes*** The Board received a thank you note from the Celebration Graduation Project for support of their program. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the correspondence be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Board received a note from Ann Walker thanking them and the Central Office staff for the flowers that were sent in honor of her mother, Pearl Brenchick. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Clayburgh, the correspondence be accepted and placed on file. The motion was unanimously approved.

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### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION**

The Chair announced that Ms. Patty Allinson is present this evening to show support for plans to replace the snack shack at Portsmouth High School and to hear the update of where things stand at this time.

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### **RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS**

***Request for PHS Men's Ensemble to Travel to Fitchburg State College, MA*** Mr. Forrest Ransdell, High School Principal, presented a request for five to seven students from the Portsmouth High School Men's Ensemble to travel to Fitchburg State College to participate in the Harmony Explosion Camp. Mr. Ransdell said arrangements would be the same as last year.

Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the Music Department's request for Men's Ensemble to participate in the Harmony Explosion Camp at Fitchburg State College. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Request from Environmental Club to Travel in 2006*** Mr. Ransdell introduced Ms. Kathleen Metterville, Assistant Principal, who presented a request for the Environmental Club to

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***Request from  
Environmental Club  
(cont.)***

schedule a trip to Wyoming during the summer recess of 2006. She explained the purpose of the trip is to continue to engage in the study of environmental science and related issues. Ms. Metterville said the students would be staying at the Rimrock Ranch in Cody, Wyoming. She said there will be a suitable number of adults to chaperone the students, and Mr. Ransdell will accompany them as well. Although specific costs for airfare are not available at this time, she estimates the cost of the trip will be in the vicinity of \$1,500 - \$1,700 per student. The students will continue to do the "Cleanathons" and other fundraising activities. Ms. Metterville answered questions from the Board. Mrs. Craig requested she come back before the Board when it has been determined how many students and chaperones will participate in the trip.

***Trip Approved***

Mr. Hayward moved the School Board allow the Environmental Club to take a trip to the Rimrock Ranch in Wyoming during the summer recess of 2006. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Chair LaPage stated this motion is made with the caveat that should there be a national emergency, the Superintendent will intervene. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Recognition of  
Student Board  
Representative***

Dr. Lister recognized Andrew Kinaci, Student Representative to the School Board, for having recently participated in a Presidential Program, Boys' Nation. Dr. Lister said that Mr. Carl Walton from the VFW has for many years contacted the high school to determine if there were any students to be recommended for this program. He said this was the first time that Portsmouth High School sent someone to Boys Nation. Mr. Kinaci said he had a fantastic time and learned so much from everyone there. He said it is an amazing program, and he would recommend to other students that they apply once the applications are received at the school.

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**PERSONNEL**

***Resignation  
Accepted***

Dr. Lister presented the resignation of Susan Carter from her position as second grade teacher at Little Harbour School. He said that Ms. Carter had been on a leave of absence for the 2004-2005 school year. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the resignation be accepted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister presented the following professional nominations:

***Professional  
Nominations***

Andrea Heath to the position of seventh grade math teacher at Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Professional  
Nominations (cont.)***

Joseph Denuzzio to the position of physical education teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Maria Cannon to the position of second grade teacher at Little Harbour School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Emily Miller to the position of grade two teacher at Dondero School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Joint Building  
Committee***

Joint Building Committee: Chair LaPage reported the work of the Joint Building Committee is winding down. Mr. LaPage reported the date and time of the dedication ceremony have been changed to Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to come and participate in this community celebration. He said the Governor's schedule allows him to participate in this celebration on August 27. Mr. LaPage thanked Assistant Mayor Joanne Grasso and Board Member Ann Walker for their efforts in planning this event.

Mr. LaPage said a "punch list" will be put together, and the Joint Building Committee will continue to meet up until the month of December. He said the finishing touches are being done now, and he expects most of the work to be completed by the dedication date.

***Athletic Committee***

Athletic Committee: Mrs. Craig reported the Athletic Committee met this morning. She said there continues to be an increase in student interest in athletics. She reviewed the fall sports teams, and said there is a lot of interest on the part of students and there are lots of opportunities for them to participate in athletics at the high school.

Mrs. Craig reported that 75% of the athletes from the spring sports programs were scholar athletes. Mrs. Craig said she asked the Athletic Director to provide a list of coaches for all sports; she will make a copy available to all School Board members.

Mrs. Craig reported the Committee held a brief discussion about booster clubs and sports programs. She said the basic purpose of those clubs is to support the programs and work with the varsity coaches. She said the Committee scheduled a future meeting to discuss other items.

***Athletic Contracts*** Mr. Lyons suggested the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent could give some thoughts to the issues surrounding athletic contracts. He said that perhaps the contracts should be issued to all students who participate in all extra-curricular activities. He suggested the Superintendent or the Assistant Superintendent could participate in those discussions. Mr. Kinaci said he thinks the intent behind Mr. Lyons' statement is good. There was much discussion about the athletic contract. After further review, this subject will be brought back before the Board.

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### **NEW BUSINESS**

***PHS Snack Shack*** Chair LaPage stated that at the last two School Board meetings, the Board has received information that the booster clubs are not able to use the snack shack to serve food, unless it is already prepared and packaged. Mr. LaPage said the different booster groups use the snack shack and raise funds through the sale of food; these funds are then given out as scholarships or used for the programs. He said that not being able to use the snack shack this past spring resulted in a loss of revenue for the School Department.

Mr. Torrey distributed a preliminary cost sheet for replacing the snack shack, and reviewed this information with the Board. He said that volunteers have been coming forward at the meetings and have stated they are willing to work with the School Department to replace the snack shack. Mr. Torrey said the City Manager has stated that City Departments will help throughout the process.

Mr. LaPage said a group of people has been meeting to get the snack shack done. The City's Health Officer, "Dish," called to say that he will work with the groups that will be doing the fundraising. The Chair said this project will be of no cost to the School Department; however, there is a need for approximately \$7,500 for "start up" funds to purchase materials. He said he is looking for a motion from the Board for temporary funds to begin the project so that it is not delayed. He said the facility will meet all of the City's conditions and will be used for groups that mainly participated in the fundraising to support the teams. There was discussion with Mr. Torrey and Mr. LaPage providing further information. They both answered questions from the Board.

***Funds Advanced for Snack Shack*** Mrs. Walker moved the School Board delegate its Business Administrator (Peter Torrey) to advance \$7,500 for the snack shack, the funds to be reimbursed to the School Department. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

There was no Continuing Business to come before the Board.

### **FINANCIAL**

***Preliminary 2004-2005 Financial Information***

Mr. Torrey provided the Board with preliminary financial information for the fiscal year 2004-05 School Department general fund. He stated for the first time in a long time, they have not met the estimated revenues. He said that is due to the rate charged last year times the number of students; it came in short this year.

***Motions Re: Line Item Accounts in 2005-2006 Budget***

Mr. Torrey brought back his June 30, 2005 memo in which he presented thoughts to the Board for adjusting the 2005-2006 budget. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board vote on the total amount of \$259,284 from the “delete” column and then vote individually on items listed in the “add” column. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. The motion was defeated in a three to four roll call vote. (Mrs. Clayburgh, Mr. Hayward, and Mr. Vaughn voted for the motion; Mrs. Craig, Mr. Lyons, Mrs. Walker and Mr. LaPage voted against the motion). The Chair declared that each item would be addressed individually.

***PHS Custodian***

Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the deletion of the PHS Security position in the amount of \$50,447 and approve the addition of a custodian at Portsmouth High School in the amount of \$50,447 (to include salary and benefits). Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***FUTURES Clerical***

Mrs. Clayburgh moved the Board approve the amount of \$14,240 for the FUTURES clerical position; Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved (Mr. Vaughn abstained from voting).

***Additional Summer Clerical Hours***

Mrs. Craig moved the Board allot \$8,647 for additional summer hours for the elementary school clericals. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Half-Time Teacher at New Franklin***

Mr. Vaughn moved the Board approve the amount of \$29,915 to add a half-time teacher at the New Franklin Elementary School. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion.

Mr. Lyons said there are three items on the list that he will not support, and one of them is the half-time teacher position for New Franklin School. Mr. Lyons said he would prefer the money go towards the technology solution. Mr. Vaughn said he is in favor of finding a solution for the technology department, yet he is in favor of the half-time teaching position at New Franklin School. The motion

passed in a five to two vote (Mrs. Clayburgh, Mrs. Craig, Mr. Vaughn, Mrs. Walker, and Mr. LaPage voted for the motion; Mr. Hayward and Mr. Lyons voted against the motion).

Chair LaPage stated there is a plan in motion regarding the technology department. He said the Superintendent may come back to the Board and inform us there have been some changes. He suggested that perhaps the Board needs to approach the City Council to request a supplemental budget for technology.

***Technology  
Solution***

Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the Board approve \$59,830 for the technology solution. Mr. Vaughn said the Superintendent has worked on a plan and he hopes the Board will support it. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Restore Funds to  
Maintenance  
Budget***

Mr. Vaughn moved the Board support restoring the maintenance budget to 75% of the 2003-04 budget by adding \$36,375 to that department's budget. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mr. Lyons said he would vote against the motion as the Board passed a budget without this in it. He said he believes that Mr. Linchey and his staff will take very good care of the buildings. Mr. Lyons said he would prefer the money be put towards the technology solution and hiring an outstanding person to work in that department. He said it is time for everyone to step up to the plate to help with the technology solution.

Mr. LaPage said it is a difficult decision to make. There was much discussion to the motion. Mr. Lyons suggested the Board increase the maintenance department budget by \$6,370 and delete \$10,000 from the strings program instructor, thereby allowing a little over \$16,000 to be placed into technology. Dr. Lister thanked the Board for its support of technology this evening. He agreed with Mr. Lyons that it will take some money for someone to apply for the technology position, and said the School District will be looking for a quality person.

Mr. Vaughn amended his motion to restore the maintenance budget by \$30,375 (allowing for \$6,000 to be placed towards technology); Mrs. Walker seconded the amendment. Mr. Kinaci said he appreciates the efforts of the Board to compromise on this issue. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Deletion of  
Amounts to Offset  
Additions***

Mrs. Craig moved the Board approve deleting the following amounts from the budget, to be used to offset additions to the budget: \$20,000 (P & L insurance rate savings); \$7,500 (estimated administrative savings); \$109,036 (course reimbursement, hold at 2004/05 rate for one year); and \$12,471 (substitutes or clerical consolidation). Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was

unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the deletion of \$59,830 for the music instruction reorganization. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. Dr. Lister said this entails two teaching positions. There was much discussion to the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Instrumental Music Program***

After further discussion, Mr. Vaughn moved that \$49,830 be retained for the instrumental music instructor position. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Strings Program***

Mr. Vaughn moved the \$10,000 allocated for increasing the strings program instructor be deleted and the funds be appropriated for the technology solution. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mrs. Clayburgh said she will vote against the motion, and stated the School Board has, over the past few years, taken big hits in its budgets because of the Statewide property tax and they are slowly trying to rebuild some of the departments that suffered because of this. She said the high school still does not have a business teacher or a full-time athletic director., and technology has also suffered. She said the Board is making an effort to get back on track. Mrs. Clayburgh said the strings program started at the fourth and fifth grade levels, and those students are now at the high school level. The students and their families in that program think highly of it, and she believes the high school needs to have that program. Mr. Vaughn said, although he made the motion, he agrees with Mrs. Clayburgh. Mrs. Craig said she agrees with Mrs. Clayburgh philosophically, however, said there are issues that need attending to and she believes the funds should be used to fix and improve the technology. Mr. Lyons stated the Board cannot do it all. He questioned is it more important for when a child leaves our schools to be technologically proficient in the real world or to play the violin? He suggested the parents who want their children to play an instrument would have to pay for those lessons. Mrs. Walker said that as much as she dislikes voting against the strings program, technology affects every child in grades kindergarten through high school, whereas the strings program is an enrichment program for children who want to do that. She said she would be voting against the strings and for the technology. Mr. Hayward said his heart goes out to Mrs. Clayburgh and he understands her concerns, but he believes the Board needs all the funds it can get in the technology solution. Mr. Vaughn said he will vote against his own motion as he agrees with Mrs. Clayburgh.

Chair LaPage said the Board is pitting one program against another. He said that in a \$31 million budget, the Board is talking about \$10,000. He said the budget for the strings program has not grown



***Increase in Strings Program Deleted*** in dollar amounts since Dr. Schrader started the program. He also said a \$10,000 increase on a \$15,000 budget is a 75% increase in a single program. The Chair said the Board will keep an eye on technology this year as the program has to turn around from what it was last year. In a roll call vote, the motion passed five to two (Mrs. Craig, Mr. Hayward, Mr. Lyons, Mrs. Walker and Mr. LaPage voted for the motion; Mrs. Clayburgh and Mr. Vaughn voted against the motion).

***Funds Moved to Technology*** Mr. Lyons moved the \$6,000 deleted from the restored maintenance account be added to the technology solution. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Central Office Administrators Authorized to Sign Forms to Receive Federal Funds*** Mr. Torrey stated it is time for the annual motion to allow Central Office administrators to sign forms to receive Federal funds. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Craig, to authorize the Central Office administrators to sign forms to receive Federal funds. The motion was unanimously approved (Mr. Vaughn was absent during the vote.)

***Food Service Financial Report*** Mr. Torrey reviewed the food service financial report. He said that last year the high school did not have a cafeteria, which attributed to a deficit of approximately \$35,000 for the 2004-2005 school year. He said a deficit in this program shows up in the program's checkbook, and does not affect a deficit situation with the City's finances. Mr. Torrey reported there is currently a cash balance of \$2,000 as of July 27, 2005, but cash requirements for the next 45 days are \$22,000 in order to meet administrative payroll. He said this can be done by either an inter-department loan between the general fund and Food Service, or by absorbing the July and August payroll manifests into the general fund. He said either case would be done with the intent to return these funds once cash flow has recovered during the year and before June 30, 2006.

***Proposal to Remedy Deficit*** The Business Administrator proposed a four-point remedy plan which included an increase in the cost of meals, creative marketing, staffing review and possible reductions, and the suspension for fiscal years 2005 and 2006 of the "in-kind" support of the School Department's charge for space and utilities (approximately \$8,000 per year). Mrs. Patricia Laska, School Nutrition Director, was present to answer questions. She discussed the construction and new kitchen and cafeteria, the new sales system at the high school, and government reimbursement and purchasing.

Mr. Vaughn moved the Board approve the Business Administrator's recommendations. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. There was discussion to the motion. Mr. Torrey and Mrs. Laska answered

***Food Service  
Program (cont.)***

questions from the Board. The Chair stated that losing students who go off-campus for lunch hurts the school lunch program. Mrs. Craig requested the motion be amended so the Board would suspend the “in-kind” general fund support for fiscal year 2005 (\$8,000) and revisit the suggestion for fiscal year 2006. Mr. Vaughn was not in favor of amending the motion.

After further discussion, Mr. Vaughn amended his motion that it include the first three recommendations from the Business Administrator (food price increase, creative marketing to increase ala-carte food sales, and a \$20,000 reduction through either food purchasing or staffing review), and the fourth recommendation would be for fiscal year 2005 only. Mr. Hayward seconded the amendment. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved. The Chair stated by approving this motion, the Board just voted the school lunch increase.

***Funds Advanced to  
Program***

Mr. Torrey said he still needs resolution on how to proceed with paying the school nutrition bills until such time as the program generates revenue. Mrs. Craig moved the school nutrition program be forwarded the funds upfront, the same as the community education program, and be responsible for reimbursing the school department during the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***2005-2006 Rates  
Approved***

Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the 2005-2006 rates with power to the administration as outlined in the Business Administrator’s memo of August 2, 2005. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. Mr. Lyons later withdrew that motion and moved the Board approve the 2005-06 proposed rates in the Business Administrator’s August 2, 2005 memo for sections two, three, four, six, and seven. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***High School  
Transportation/  
Parking Fees***

Referring to the Portsmouth High School transportation fee, Chair LaPage said he started talking about this back in 1995. He said that student use of school buses will result in less fuel consumption and less traffic around the high school. He encouraged the Board to support the recommendation to change the parking permit structure so the charge is \$25 per semester, for a total of \$50 for the entire school year and to delete the bus pass cost of \$25.00 per semester (bus passes would be free). Mrs. Walker made this in the form of a motion, seconded by Mr. Vaughn. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Exchange CityLease***

Mr. Torrey said he has received a request for the Board to amend the current lease with Exchange City to allow the sub-leasing of space at the school building during the 2005-2006 school year. Mr. Lyons

***Exchange City  
Lease (cont.)***

said he does not have a problem with the sub-lease provision, however, requested the School Board have final say on who/what will sub-lease the space. He also expressed concern that the sub-lease rate would be no higher than what Exchange City pays for the space, and stated the same space cannot be rented twice. Mrs. Craig said she assumes the spaces to be rented are those areas not used by Exchange City. She said the School Board has to maintain authority over what happens in that building and what changes are part of that process. Mrs. Walker said the sub-leased space should be for educational purposes. Mrs. Clayburgh moved the School Board allow Exchange City to sub-lease space at the Wentworth School subject to the School Board's approval of the sub-lease and that of the City Attorney. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion. Mr. Lyons requested the Superintendent and the City Attorney review the sub-lease stipulations so that Exchange City is not making money from the sub-lease. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Local Government  
Center to Process  
Retirees' Health  
Insurance  
Premiums***

Mr. Torrey reported he recently receive a notice from the Local Government Center (LGC) that they have developed a process for administering retiree and COBRA billing, etc. for local school districts. This service would streamline the managing of people who have access to our health insurance, but are not current employees. The service to retirees has no additional cost for any parties, but service to COBRA recipients has a 2% administration fee charged to the COBRA recipients. Mr. Torrey stated that if the Board authorizes them to proceed, they would transition to this service by January 1, 2006. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board allow the Business Administrator to enter into an agreement with the Local Government Center for billing retirees and COBRA recipients for health insurance premiums. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***July Financial  
Report***

Mr. Torrey presented the July 2005 financial report.

***Next Meeting***

The Chair stated the next meeting will be held on September 13, 2005 in the Council Chambers.

***High School  
Dedication***

The Chair reminded the Board of the Portsmouth High School dedication ceremony that will be held on August 27 at 4:00 p.m. He invited people to attend to celebrate the new high school.

***Adjournment***

There was no other business to come before the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Dr. Robert J. Lister, Executive Secretary