

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the September 12, 2006 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, September 12, 2006 in Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Municipal Complex.

Attendance

PRESENT: Mr. Kent F. LaPage (Chair), Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh (Vice-Chair), Ms. Sheri Ham Garrity, Mr. H. Clay Hayward, Mr. John Lyons, Jr., Mr. Brendan Ristaino, Dr. Mitchell Shuldman, Mrs. Ann Walker

ABSENT: Mr. Carson Smith

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zadravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. Stephen T. Bartlett (Business Administrator), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative), Miss Elisa Loeser (Student Representative), Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

Non-Public Session

The School Board met in non-public session in the Legal Department Conference Room prior to the regular meeting, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (b). The non-public session was called to order at 6:10 p.m. and adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the School Board to order at 7:24 p.m. He welcomed Clay Hayward back to the Board. (Mr. Hayward was appointed to fill the remainder of Rai Bowles' term.)

Condolences

The Chair said he was saddened to hear that a long-time resident and former City employee, Barbara Driscoll, recently died. He said she was Ken Linchey's mother-in-law, and he asked the Board to keep her family in their thoughts. The Chair also stated that five years ago the School Board postponed its meeting due to the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11th. He said the Country has moved on, but we must always remember those who perished on that day and to also remember those who serve in the military to protect our freedoms. Mr. Hayward led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of Minutes The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the August 2, August 8 and August 17 meetings. Mrs. Clayburgh moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the minutes be approved. Ms. Garrity requested the August 2nd minutes be corrected to reflect that she was absent and did not make or second motions. The motion was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Review of Materials in Packet The Superintendent reviewed information that was in the Board packets: the August edition of *Education Update*, in which there was an article reporting on a presentation given by Joy Bryan and Joyce Corbin at the 2006 ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Conference on understanding and resolving student-teacher conflicts; the School Department pages from the City's 2006 annual report; the Fall 2006 Portsmouth Community Education flyer; a pamphlet outlining the Fall schedule of arts classes at Arts City, held at Exchange City; and a newspaper article listing the non-profit organizations that received grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

Request for Child to Remain at New Franklin School Ms. Lianne Plasch Williams, Greenleaf Avenue, Portsmouth, told the Board she is applying for an educational hardship for her son. Ms. Williams said that, as a single parent, she needs for her son to attend the New Franklin School, as her parents watch him before school and he could take the school bus from their home, and it is imperative for him to have adult supervision after she leaves for work. She asked if the Board would make a decision on her request tonight. The Chair told Ms. Williams the Board will hand the matter over to the Superintendent of Schools and he will inform the Board of his decision; a decision will not be made this evening. Mr. Lyons explained to the public that during the public commentary session, the Board is not allowed to comment directly or engage in a dialogue with the people making the comments.

Mr. Ned Raynolds presented Mrs. Walker with a copy of a notebook produced last year by a High School student, Marta Lyons, with information about "green" buildings for the sustainability committee.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

Mr. Jeff Collins, High School Principal, thanked the Board for

Request for High School Choir to Travel to New York City

allowing the High School Choir to appear tonight to request an overnight trip to New York City. Mr. Collins said he fully endorses and supports the trip, which would allow the students to participate in the Heritage Festival of Gold. He introduced Ms. Gwen Baker, Choral Director at Portsmouth High School, who was present with some of her students. Ms. Baker requested permission from the Board to allow the High School Choir to attend the Heritage Festival of Gold in New York City from April 12 – 16, 2007. She said the Music Department went to the Heritage Festival in 2005 in Orlando, Florida, and received three awards. Last year the Choir chose not to travel, as the Percussion Ensemble was traveling to compete in Ohio. Ms. Baker explained the Festival is by invitation and is only open for two years after a previous award. She said the choir would be adjudicated by top choral professionals, and the students would have the opportunity to see and hear other top choirs from around the country. She said the music department normally travels during school vacation, but the festival dates are less flexible and require the students to miss three days of school. Ms. Baker said she has not yet selected the pieces the students will perform, and prefers to wait until after she receives the pieces for the combined concert. Mr. Hayward moved the School Board authorize the concert choir and Ms. Baker to participate in the Heritage Festival of Gold National Invitational Choral Festival in New York City from April 12 – 16, 2007. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. Ms. Baker answered questions from the Board concerning the number of chaperones, the cost of the trip, and possible fundraising activities. The Chair asked if any of the students wished to speak. Stephanie (last name) said the trip to Orlando was amazing for everyone and she thinks it will be great for the choir to go to New York to honor those who came before them. The Chair thanked the students for their hard work in representing the City of Portsmouth. The Vice-Chair thanked Ms. Baker and the music department staff for their energy, passion and enthusiasm for the students and their willingness to provide these opportunities for the student. The motion was unanimously approved.

Trip Approved

PERSONNEL

Resignation

Mr. Zadavec presented the resignation of Kimberlee Torres from the position of social studies teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the resignation be accepted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Professional Nominations

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Mary Ann D riscoll to the position of reading specialist at New Franklin Elementary School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Mary Moore to the position of classroom teacher and intervention specialist at PASS. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Robert Ducharme to the position of social studies teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Benjamin Utter to the position of KIDS counselor at Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Nathaniel Heard to the position of tv/media teacher at Portsmouth High School. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Coaching
Nomination***

Mr. Zadaved presented the nomination of Fred Ludington to the position of junior varsity girls' soccer coach. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. 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 VII. D., Little Harbour School Sign. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion, which was unanimously voted.

***Little Harbour
School Sign***

Dr. Lister stated that Leslie Stevens and Lisa Sweet were present to represent a group of parents who wrote a grant to replace the sign at the entrance to Clough Drive. The Superintendent said the present sign is in disrepair, and the parents would like to replace it with one that could also be used to advertise upcoming school events. He said they have already gone to the Planning Department, and were told they need permission from the School Board. He said that Leslie Stevens and Lisa Sweet are present this evening to represent the group that wrote the grant. Ms. Stevens reviewed the proposed sign and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the sign with power to the Superintendent to work with the parents on the final plans. He said that he would not have to see changes to the plan as long as the Superintendent is satisfied with it. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. Ms. Stevens said the grant also includes landscaping around the sign. In the spring, a parent will come in and, through the afternoon enrichment program, work with the students to help landscape the area around the sign. Ms. Stevens thanked the other parents who were involved in writing the grant and designing the sign. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Joint Middle School Advisory Committee

Joint Middle School Advisory Committee – Dr. Lister reported the committee has met twice, and Councilor Grasso chairs the committee. He said that Principal John Stokel presented the middle school concept at the last meeting. He said the next meeting will be on September 20th, and the City Attorney, Bob Sullivan, will be present to talk about the Pierce Trust. The Superintendent said there have been good discussions at the meetings, and the committee is talking about the building, renovations, and different sites around the City. He said that he is optimistic they will be able to continue this work. He said the committee's charge was discussed at the last meeting, and the Mayor is presently editing the charge. Mrs. Clayburgh said she is very pleased with the spirit of the committee members and she believes they are having good, honest discussions and everyone has an open mind. Mrs. Walker said she was disappointed about the negativity of the editorial and the inaccurate information it contained. She said that, in speaking with people in town, there is an enthusiasm and general support that people are moving forward to getting something done at the Middle School. She encouraged people to forget about the negative editorial and to move on. Mr. Lyons suggested the Athletic Director be asked to address the issue of athletic fields and how they can be encompassed. He said people cannot look at only the building; they have to remember the other issues which can clearly be addressed if the right site is chosen.

Sustainable Practices Committee

Sustainable Practices Committee: Mrs. Walker reported she serves as a member of this committee, and the City has called in energy management consultants to review its buildings. She said more would be discussed at the committee's next meeting. Mrs. Walker suggested the School Department might also have an energy management audit completed and be proactive in terms of saving money. She asked if unexpended funds had been returned to the City, and, if not, suggested they be used for this purpose.

Curriculum Council

Curriculum Council: Mr. Zadravec reported the Curriculum Council will meet the third Thursday of each month at 3:30 p.m. at Central Office.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Work Session

Chair LaPage said the recent Board retreat left a number of items for action by the Board. The first item is to hold the first work session for the 2007-2008 budget on Wednesday, November 1, 2006. Mr. Ristaino moved the Board hold its first budget work session for the FY 2008 budget on Wednesday, November 1, 2006. Dr. Shuldman seconded the motion. The Chair stated the work session would begin

at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room at Central Office. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Formation of
Communications
Committee***

The Chair said another item from the retreat is to form an ad hoc communications committee with the assistance of Jodi Record. Mr. Ristaino credited Ms. Garrity with bringing the subject of communications before the Board. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Ristaino, the Board approve the formation of an ad hoc communications committee. The motion was unanimously approved. The Chair said that Mrs. Walker, Ms. Garrity, Dr. Shuldman, and Mrs. Clayburgh have volunteered to serve on this committee. The Chair appointed Ms. Loeser to also serve on the committee. He charged the group to report back to the full Board.

***Location of Second
Meeting of the
Month***

The Chair said another item from the retreat is to hold the second meeting of the month in Council Chambers so that it may also be televised. He said the Board needs to clear this with the City Clerk to determine if the Council Chamber is available on those dates. Mr. LaPage said he spoke with Alan Brady about the availability of a technician should the Chamber be available. He said the Board Room is not conducive to broadcasting the meetings. Mrs. Clayburgh suggested that perhaps the Board could meet in one of the new rooms of the new library after it opens.

***Information on Test
Scores***

Dr. Lister said it is very important for the Board to have knowledge about where the District is with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI). He said they are still interpreting the data from the NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program and NHEIAP (New Hampshire Educational Improvement Assessment Program) tests. The Superintendent said the NECAP is administered in grades three through eight each October to assess students in reading and math. Writing is also assessed in grades five and eight. Beginning in the fall of 2007, a NECAP assessment will also be given in grade 11 in the areas of math and reading. He said the teachers and administrators look at all State assessment data as an important piece to monitor student progress, as part of Follow the Child.

Dr. Lister reported the New Hampshire Department of Education re-released AYP reports for elementary and middle schools based on the October 2005 assessment. Also released were results and AYP reports from the Spring 2006 NHEIAP assessment. In Portsmouth, all schools as a whole and all subgroups within the schools made AYP in math and reading with the exception of the educational disabilities group at Little Harbour and Portsmouth Middle School. That subgroup at Little Harbour did not make AYP in reading, and the subgroup at the Middle School did not make AYP in math. Results from the 10th grade NHEIAP assessment indicated the whole

Information on Test Scores (cont.) student population made AYP in both math and reading. The Superintendent reported: the number of 10th grade readers who scored below basic dropped to 12% (from 15%); the school has the ninth highest reading score in the State; the school has the seventh highest math score in the State; and Portsmouth High School is one of only seven schools to make it off the “School In Need of Improvement” list. The Superintendent reviewed other statistics and information with the Board.

The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent reviewed: the schedule of assessments; the characteristics of a personalized education and “follow the Child” indicators; the Curriculum Council’s expectations for student learning; four phases of curriculum revision; and a report on the history of the students who dropped out of Portsmouth High School during the 2005-2006 school year. They answered questions from the Board regarding test schedules, the curriculum, and how the tests are administered.

Dropout Information Dr. Lister reviewed information about the dropout rate. Sixteen students dropped out of Portsmouth High School during the 2005-2006 school year. Of those 16, four returned during the 2006-2007 school year. The Superintendent reviewed information pertaining to the other 12 students, including absences/tardies, previous school experience, and attempted interventions.

Portsmouth Education Foundation Dr. Lister asked the Board to consider a group of people meeting to develop a Portsmouth Education Foundation, from which funds could be used for future classroom activities. He said the Town of Rye has an education foundation. The Superintendent said there needs to be discussion about such a foundation and how it would be established. He suggested there would be a board of directors to decide how to raise money, what the funds would be used for, and the criteria for awarding funds. Mrs. Mayer suggested that Dr. Cushing, Superintendent of SAU 50, provide assistance. Mrs. Clayburgh and Mrs. Walker volunteered to work with Dr. Lister. The Superintendent will research this and report back to the Board.

Meeting with City Council re: Negotiations The Chair stated the City Council will ask the School Board to meet on Saturday, October 21, 2006 from 12:45 – 2:00 p.m. to discuss negotiations with the various unions. This will take place at City Hall.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Middle School Grades Configuration The Chair stated the Board, at its recent retreat, requested to vote on the grade configuration at the Middle School. Chair LaPage said a previous board voted on the present six, seven and eight

***Middle School
Grades
Configuration
(cont.)***

configuration in the Spring of 2003. Mr. Ristaino requested the Board receive a presentation about the middle school concept and what some alternatives might be. Ms. Garrity said that, through the Joint Advisory Committee for the Middle School, Ms. Jodi Record is supposed to be putting together a write-up. She suggested the Board have that information available to them before voting on the configuration of the middle school. Mrs. Clayburgh and Mr. Ristaino suggested that Mr. Stokel give his presentation to the School Board, preferably during a televised meeting so that more people will receive the information. Mrs. Mayer said people need to hear the presentation to learn the difference between a junior high school and a middle school. The Chair stated that Mr. Stokel will be asked to give this presentation at the October 10th School Board meeting.

***Second School
Board Retreat***

The Chair stated the School Board talked about holding a second retreat and had suggested the date of January 6, 2007. Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the School Board hold another retreat on Saturday, January 6, 2007. The motion was unanimously approved.

Supt's Evaluation

The Chair stated that copies of the Superintendent's evaluation will be available tomorrow. Mrs. Clayburgh read the evaluation.

***Students Entering
School Late***

Miss Loeser reported that at the last meeting there was discussion of the student athlete agreement and if a student arrives at school later than 9:00 a.m., that student is not eligible to participate with the team that day. She spoke with the grade principals' secretaries and asked if they are aware of the change to the agreement, and found that they are aware of it. Mr. LaPage said he has attended a number of athletic programs over the last few weeks and has noticed great enthusiasm. He credited Mr. Collins, the High School Principal, and Mr. Wilson, the Athletic Director, for their efforts to bring back Clipper Pride and working to quickly resolve issues.

***Early Release Dates
Approved***

Mr. Zdravec presented four dates for approval as early release days so the staff may participate in professional development. He proposed the dates of: September 27, 2006, November 15, 2006, February 7, 2007, and May 23, 2007. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the early release days for the 2006-2007 school year be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL

***July 2006 Financial
Report***

Mr. Bartlett presented the July 2006 financial report. He said the City applies the funds from some accounts (health insurance stabilization fund, leave at termination fund, etc.) at the beginning of the fiscal year, therefore, those accounts will show as being expended.

**June 2006
Financial Report**

Mr. Bartlett presented the June 2006 financial report, which provides an estimated year-end report for fiscal year 2005-2006. He circulated the signature pages for the DOE25 and MS25 forms, which are submitted to the State for review. Mr. Bartlett said he will make copies of the reports after they are reviewed and approved by the State. He said he has to wait until the Department of Education forms are completed by the State before he can work on a final end-of-year report.

AREA Tuition Rates

Mr. Bartlett reported the AREA tuition rates will be presented at the next Board meeting.

NEXT AGENDA

**Agenda Item for
Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the School Board will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2006 at Portsmouth High School. Mrs. Clayburgh requested the Board discuss the formation of a committee to study the issue of a student behavior contract. She said the subject came up while the committee reviewing the student athlete contract was meeting.

Bowles Celebration

Ms. Garrity asked if the date for Rai Bowles' celebration has been scheduled. The Chair and Superintendent said that Mr. Bowles has requested there not be a major event, and they are talking with the City Manager about possibly doing something before a City Council meeting; the date has not yet been set.

City's Web Site

Miss Loeser said that much information about the schools and sporting events is available on the City of Portsmouth's web-site, and she encouraged people to check it out for information.

Athletic Teams

Mrs. Clayburgh reported on the status of the varsity and junior varsity teams.

Adjournment

There was no other business to come before the Board. Mr. Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary