

**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the January 22, 2008 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, January 22, 2008 in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers, City Hall, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Attendance

PRESENT: Dr. Mitchell Shuldman (Chair), Mr. Brendan Ristaino (Vice Chair), Ms. Rebecca Emerson, Ms. Sheri Ham Garrity, Mr. Kent LaPage, Mr. Dexter Legg, Mr. Carson Smith, Ms. Lisa Sweet, and Ms. Ann Walker.

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zadravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. Stephen Bartlett (Business Administrator), Ms. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative), Ms. Abigail Rockefeller (Student Representative) and Ms. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representatives)

Call To Order

At 7:00 p.m. Dr. Shuldman, called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming.

Moment of Silent Reflection

The Chair asked everyone to think about the good work we are trying to do for the citizens of Portsmouth. The Pledge of allegiance was lead by Dr. Shuldman.

Approval of Minutes

December 11, 2007 Ms. Garrity moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Ristaino.

January 7, 2008 Ms. Walker moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Ristaino

January 8, 2008 Ms. Walker moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Garrity seconded with the change to reflect that Ms. Garrity was in attendance.

Ms. Emerson would like it noted that she asked if the School Board had voted to make Parrott Avenue the chosen site. After some discussion it was noted that the School Board had not voted on the Parrott Avenue site.

Ms. Emerson asked that her memo be accepted and her statement be added to the minutes.

The motion to accept the minutes as amended was approved unanimously.

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Communications: Dr. Lister went over the communications in the board packet.

- Community Education Spring brochure for Adult Education.
- Information about Senate Bill 511. Senator Martha Fuller Clark presented to the City Council and a public hearing in Concord was scheduled for the next day. She will be sending to the School Board updated information at a later time.
- Committee assignments
- Dr. Comstock, Executive Director, New Hampshire School Boards Association – This letter is being sent by the board to explain that the School Board did not participate in the Delegate Assembly on January 19, 2008 because the board did not receive information about this meeting.
- A notice on a meeting on the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school calendars will be held in the small theatre at Portsmouth High School with the Association of Portsmouth Teachers for input only.
- Elementary School Menu.
- Article “Unforgettable Semester” from Nancy Wheaton Modern who would like to come to the board to tell about her trip to Argentina in the future.
- Mr. Stokel’s letter informed the board that the Association of Portsmouth School Administrators would like to begin contract negotiations.

The letter from SAU 50 has been given to the Association of the Teachers and forwarded to the Calendar Committee. The School Board will also be given a copy of the letter. Dr. Lister and Dr. Shuldman received this letter as well. The Calendar Committee will be presenting to the School Board the first week in February.

Agenda Approval: Ms. Emerson would like to hear the process of how we got to this point of the Middle School presentation tonight. Mr. Shuldman will be discussing this.

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Ms. Sweet asked when the elementary upgrade would be discussed. It will be done under Financial.

Ms. Rockefeller wondered if the Proposed Student Contract Policy would be discussed. Mr. Shuldman stated the policy had not been presented so will not be discussed tonight.

Ms. Ham Garrity inquired as to what items are on loan from the School Department to the City and if the School Board can get a list. This will be discussed under Items for Discussion.

Recognition of Staff/Students:

Dr. Lister recognized Mr. Collins and Ms. Ronchi requesting permission for students to travel to Mexico. The Spanish club would like to travel to Mexico to focus on community service and community development. There would be three staff members with 12 students who went through an application process. Fund raising will pay for this trip.

Mr. Ristaino moved to approve the trip, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved unanimously.

Read across America will come before the board on February 12, 2008.

Public Commentary Session:

Kirsten Barton, 300 Court Street, Portsmouth, NH. Location, Location, Location. We should be more excited about the renovations of the current Portsmouth Middle School. It is frustrating for the board and the community. We all need to be heading to the same destination. Please vote tonight on the Parrott Avenue site.

Chris Dwyer, 600 Broad Street, speaking as a citizen. Happy the School Board will be finalizing the decision for the architectural firm. Appreciate the process and the time. School and Municipal Officials worked closely together. Consensus is needed in the community. Be clear that the firm selected provide the community with several ways of meeting the needs of the Parrott Avenue site.

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Steve Roy, 440 Lafayette Road, wonders what the process is and what site will be chosen. Every school is still standing. He wants to see the Parrott Avenue renovated. Spend the money wisely.

David Forman, Sagamore Avenue, wrote a letter to the editor in response to a letter Adam Leach had written. He read this letter. In it he stated he does not believe the process is fair, there are many questions with little answers and a lot of confusion. He feels the Superintendent and the School Committee don't want the Parrott Avenue to be rehabilitated. He said the letter to the City Council from the School Board had too many restrictions. The letter should have simply stated the School Board supports the Parrott Avenue site subject to meeting the State of New Hampshire standards. Also, he is concerned that the public commentary session is before the Architects presentation.

Carol Chellman hopes this new board will rethink prior decisions and become more open and inclusive and more responsive to the public. She would like the Board to re-visit the process and not go into non-public session to choose the architect. Public decisions are better and there would not be speculation and rumor. The law requires the board to be more inclusive and open.

Heather Hurd, 69 New Castle Avenue, said there was a lot of time and energy to make it known that the public wants the Parrott Avenue renovated. She wants to be reassured that the Parrott Avenue site is the view of the School Board. She requests that the board go on record to vote on the Parrott Avenue site.

Presentation by Middle School Selection Committee:

Dr. Shuldman would like to explain where we are now.

- Old History Oct 2003 – formation of committee to make recommendations, new, improved, an/or renovations.
- Education needs assessment and physical space needs assessment was necessary. Team Design was hired to do the analysis in June 2004.
- Oct 2004 School Board voted that renovations are not feasible in the current footprint without expanding to other areas. The Peirce Property was an area the community did not want to take over.
- 2006 JSAC committee was formed to reconsider the questions one more time. Team design was asked to look at building new or renovating and whether it is possible to renovate using the Peirce property. The answer was yes.

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- Both sites were passed onto the School Board and they did not take a vote.
- Portsmouth Listens suggested the Parrott Avenue building be extended to the right on the adjacent land including the Senior Center.
- July 2007 School board sent a letter to the City Council that the School Board was prepared to support the renovations of the Parrott Avenue site and asked for funds to have a feasibility study done by an architect for design alternatives. City manager was asked to work with the Superintendent to begin this process.
- A request for qualifications was sent out.
- Initially there were 5 city employees who were members of the selection committee. There were 17 applications reviewed, then down to 5 and an RFP was requested and returned. 1 firm dropped out. Ms. Walker and Dr. Shuldman joined in December and the committee would tonight like to recommend one firm. There were many questions asked and the last two firms on the list were interviewed one final time.

The tasks at this phase are,

- Review the educational Program
- Evaluate land conditions and building conditions
- Public participation
- Develop design alternatives and cost level estimates.

It is the hope that after this process the Joint Building Committee would proceed towards the design for a renovated building on Parrott Avenue.

Ms. Walker added that the committee is unanimously approving the decision to recommend the firm presenting tonight. Along with Ms. Walker, members were Dr. Lister, Mr. Stokel, Mr. Bartlett, Public Works Director Steve Parkinson, Facilities Project Manager Dan Hartrey, School Board Chair Dr. Mitch Shuldman and Assistant City Attorney Suzanne Woodland. Written proposals were read and then presentations were given. RFP's gave specifics and firms showed what they might do. City staff contacted references. JCJ Architect is being recommended to prepare a conceptual design for the Portsmouth Middle School on Parrott Avenue. National recognized Project Team Leader James LaPosta and JCJ will be partnering with DeStefano Architecture of Portsmouth.

James LaPosta and Lisa DeStefano presented.

Ms. DeStefano, who was born and raised in Portsmouth, has a special interest in working on the PMS. Other firms requested the partnering with Ms. DeStefano's company and The JCJ was the one she felt would be the best. JCJ has been involved in many renovation/restoration projects.

A list of Project Team members were presented.

Mr. LaPosta is a principal with JCJ Architecture. They are thrilled to have been recommended. They have been through this process with other school systems. The company in 1936 was formed and is one of the largest. They are dedicated to Educational Design and Jim has been doing this since 1988. Mr. LaPosta is the National Chair of the American Institute of Architects on Education and has been working with other architects here and abroad including the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. AASA and School Boards Association awards have been given to JCJ for providing great working environments. All projects have come in on time and under budget. They have experience building communities within the school, city schools, small cities, tight sites, connecting students to their environment. The company has worked on historic buildings. They are thrilled to be working with Ms. DeStefano which will help in the importance of understanding local involvement. They will review work already completed.

A presentation was made which included project delivery, defining, planning and designing and executing the plan, the educational facility design, including current trends, design approach and the important areas will be looking at the building, the site and the sustainability for a high performance building.

Examples were shown of renovations of other schools.

Board Questions;

Mr. Legg asked about the roll of DeStefano Architects, how long Doug Roberts, Project Manager has been with JCJ. He also wondered how Jim, the CEO of a 200 person firm with offices around the country could be personally involved.

Mr. LaPosta stated he would be personally involved as this will be his main project. The company requires principals and leadership be involved. He along with Ms. DeStefano will be doing most of the presentations to the Portsmouth community.

Mr. Roberts has been with the firm 1½ to 2 years. He is the Senior Project Manager with much experience.

All three of these leaders will be involved.

DeStefano Architect's role will be Associate Architect. Local approvals and community workshops will be their role and collaboration on the design working in Ms. DeStefano's office. Drawings will be worked on by DeStefano's office.

Mr. LaPage asked about the type of construction and if a construction management would be needed. After touring the Portsmouth Middle School, what did the architects see differently than at other sites worked on?

Mr. LaPosta said this project may need construction management. These can be talked about later as we move along. Within a 4 month time each option will have a total project cost for each proposal and a schedule for each as well as recommendations. During the tour of the building he found the building to be very confusing.

Dr. Lister asked what the process is for involvement with the community.

Mr. LaPosta stated that in past projects they had neighborhood meetings to listen to what the community had to say. They give feedback to the community continuously.

Ms. Sweet found the presentation very exciting.

Ms. Emerson asked the Board and Superintendent about the memo of January 10 from the selection committee which the City Council did not accept because the City Council wanted Parrott Avenue site listed.

Mr. Ristaino asked that this be discussed later with the Board rather than the Architects and to continue with questions for the Architects at this time.

Ms. Emerson said by using the state RSMMeans calculations, we can come up with a rough guess which she estimates at \$13 million dollars for the construction costs which she sees as reasonable for the project.

Ms. Emerson asked who wrote The Scope of Work? Which Mr. Shuldman will answer later.

Ms. Garrity, asked if the School Board is being asked to hire JCJ Architects or JCJ Architects and DeStefano Architects?

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Mr. LaPosta said JCJ Architects is the contractor and will be the contract holder. JCJ has a separate contract with other firms such as DeStefano and structural engineer, mechanical engineer, site civil engineer, etc.

Ms. Garrity asked how JCJ found out about the RFQ?

Mr. LaPosta said it was widely advertised. They also heard from employees' family members who live in community, and through the internet.

Ms. Garrity asked what in particular made JCJ apply for this project.

Mr. LaPosta said this project and size, city size, setting was something they felt they could do a good job on. Professionally intriguing. It felt right. And once teamed with DeStefano knew it was right. Ms. DeStefano asked the same question of Mr. LaPosta during their meetings.

Ms. Garrity asked about any other projects in NH.

Mr. LaPosta said this is the first public project. But they are working at the Balsams in Northern New Hampshire. JCJ Architects is licensed in NH.

Ms. Garrity asked if the RSP included cost estimates? Are there any numbers you had to give?

Mr. LaPosta said there is no budget so far.

Mr. Ristaino asked the firms to send the power point presentation to Suzanne Woodland at the City Legal Department. He also asked what kind of weaknesses were seen?

Mr. LaPosta sees no weaknesses but challenges; small space, old building- phasing will be difficult making sure the building is safe while students are on site. There is a regulatory challenge when built to the water. It appears to be workable.

Mr. Legg asked what criteria do you use to come up with functionality and right size.

Mr. LaPosta will get input on the needs from the Board, staff, and community for right size of classrooms and number of classrooms, what programs needed, large spaces, multi use spaces, etc. State regulations need to be looked at. Building must meet the educational mission. Visit other schools in the region and ask

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what teachers at these other schools have to say about their new building.

Mr. LaPage felt the costs can not be commented on. This board will hopefully vote to have JCJ on board.

Ms. Sweet stated that she wants to hold onto the many good things in the building such as the doorway to keep the history of the building while renovating.

A motion for a 5 minute recess was made, seconded and approved.

Dr. Shuldman suggested another 15 minutes to continue the discussion of the middle school. The financials from Steve Bartlett could be discussed briefly after that.

Mr. Ristaino: Would like to see the readings of the policies and curriculum councils held off until another week. Dr. Shuldman agreed.

Ms. Emerson asked about the memo and the minutes of the City Council but the minutes do not seem to be the same.

Dr. Shuldman stated that the July 16, 2007 minutes of the City Council state the City Council received a request from the School Board for money for an architectural feasibility study for the Parrott Avenue Site. A motion was made to postpone the issue. A roll call vote was taken. The Council voted 4 – 4 which meant the motion did not pass. The main motion was withdrawn. With an 8 – 0 vote the Council asked the School Board to make the Parrott Avenue the chosen site and to authorize the City Manager to work with the superintendent to develop an appropriate RFP for design alternatives that would be circulated to the council and the board prior to being issued.

Ms. Emerson asked about the January 10, 2008 letter to the School Board from the selection committee. The site is feasible. She wants the School Board to choose this site.

Ms. Sweet wanted to make sure what site are we talking about and the configuration.

Dr. Shuldman said Mr. Murdough was talking about the Parrott Ave site, not including the decision going to the right.

Ms. Emerson is concerned with the process. The School Board needs to come up with what we want before we can ask them to design a building.

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Dr. Shuldman stated that JCJ will help clarify the educational program.

Ms. Suzanne Woodland, Assistant City Attorney, is to work with the purchasing department. She has been involved in this process of the selection committee. She states that Requests for Proposals are done on a regular basis. This process started with a Request For Qualifications to narrow the field, looking for the best. The City Staff, Steve Parkinson who has been with the city 20 years, Dan Hartrey, Facilities Project Manager, worked with the School Department, Legal Department and Purchasing Department working together.

Phase I - review of existing programming to give the information to the contractor.

- look at the site. Need to understand existing building and land
- Public participation
- Pen to paper – coming up with design alternatives

Phase II further design

Goal will be to obtain design alternatives and then a cost estimate.

The RPF process was to look at the firms qualifications, interview and rank them. Two firms stood out.

Then the committee opened the envelopes and looked at the quotes. The numbers were not what they expected. So wondered if they adequately described what we were looking for.

Ms. Woodland said the school is represented by Superintendent Lister in a management role.

Ms. Emerson said the Board should have been involved. She asked who proposed the scope of work and what the criteria were.

Dr. Shuldman and Mrs. Walker were on the committee the later part of the process

Ms. Emerson would like to see the criteria used for the selection process.

Ms. Woodland said she would provide a copy of the spreadsheet used. She cannot show these completed spreadsheets until after there is a signed contract. If they are not successful in signing a contract with JCJ they have to go back to the other candidates and the process.

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Ms. Emerson said ED 306 states the Board is responsible so she would like to see the documents

Mr. LaPage asked Ms. Woodland if we meet all criteria for right to know?

Ms. Woodland said yes, and the completed forms will be available for review after the contract is signed.

Mr. LaPage stated we all have a full commitment to this but we need to have trust in the committee and the process.

Mr. LaPage made a motion that JCJ Architects of Hartford Connecticut enter into a contract agreement completing the Board task that are recommended by the committee which is to review the Educational Programming site scope of work, public input preliminary design and come with a cost estimate at the end of the time period and not to go beyond a 5 month time period.

Ms. Walker seconded the motion.

Dr. Shuldman felt that members of the board want to wait to look this over and vote at the next meeting.

Mr. Ristaino said we may need to suspend the agenda to allow us to go beyond 10:00 p.m. to allow other items such as financial and policies.

Regarding the motion, the members would like to review the information and reflect on the presentation. Members would like to suspend this motion to the next meeting.

Ms. Garrity had mentioned last meeting not to vote at this meeting but instead to digest and reread the information before taking a vote.

Mr. Ristaino mentioned that the public is seeing this for the first time also so would like them to be able to ask questions and to comment on the next public commentary.

Mr. LaPage, along with Ms. Walker, agreed to table the motion until the next meeting, but, no longer than that.

Ms. Garrity would like to know again how the committee came to the decision to choose JCJ Architecture.

Dr. Shuldman explained his own personal reasons for choosing JCJ which were because of communication, and the ability to lead public sessions. The experience they have, with at least 25

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renovations, aware of the middle school concept, building in small areas and in phases not to disturb the educational process, worked well as a team, know their individual roles, and having great recommendations. They also stated that the 180,000 square feet was a bit large for what the needs are.

The Vote of the recommendation of the JCJ Architects will take place on the 12th of February at the School Board Meeting.

Financial Report: Mr. Bartlett reviewed the standard month-end of December statement (form 6A). The maintenance is 80 % spent at this time due to snow plowing. He will research to see if that is the only reason.

The next financial report will be more detailed with fees and tuition which looks like they are going to be behind initial projections.

Ms. Walker asked if the school is doing more plowing.

Mr. Bartlett said last year we had light snow and that maintenance now does all the sanding and salting to cut costs. Due to the number of the snowstorms and to move snow, we must contract out some work.

Ms. Sweet asked how far off is the maintenance budget?

Mr. Bartlett said project work can affect the budget.

Mr. Legg wondered if there are any other items that are over what was planned for?

Mr. Bartlett said they are checking into a few small areas.

Ms. Garrity felt conference allowance was high.

Mr. Bartlett noted that most conferences are held in the fall.

Ms. Garrity stated workers comp is high. Is there enough for the year?

Mr. Bartlett explained there is no way to know that.

Ms. Mayer asked when does the administration indicate there will be a freeze?

Mr. Bartlett stated that usually in January we determine what will need to be examined to have the least impact in the educational day-to-day activities of the curriculum and instruction.

Ms. Mayer would like Dr. Lister to notify Dr. Cushing of any freeze.

Mr. Ristaino questioned if the entire budget would be frozen or just certain areas.

Mr. Bartlett – Some areas are contractual so cannot be frozen. Other areas would be frozen. No favoritism is given. It is a process to determine what can be frozen and not impact the educational process.

Mr. Ristaino noted that School Board looks at everything.

Mr. Bartlett explained that this was an unanticipated arbitration bill.

Ms. Briolat said two issues went to arbitration. The association pays $\frac{1}{2}$ and the board the other $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cost.

Mr. Bartlett went over the tuition area. We were able to get final readings from the auditors on how to classify some items so it did not affect the DOE 25 which in turn gives you the allowable tuition numbers for non SAU 50 agreements.

The planning board presentation by the sub committee on the capital improvement plan given to the planning board was held at City Hall Chambers. Monday, January 28th there will be a work session on the capital improvement planned at 6:15 with the City Council.

Mr. LaPage asked how to change the replacement of bleachers to something else if there is a high cost of maintenance, what is the process to change that to something else.

Mr. Bartlett said it would have to be brought up to the City Manager and to the City Council to change that before we get the bonds so everyone agrees.

Ms. Sweet inquired about the sprinklers at Little Harbour school. Are we waiting for the complete engineering and safety review to be done?

Mr. Bartlett explained that any renovations to Little Harbour would require a sprinkler system. The review would be after the Middle School project is completed.

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Dr. Shuldman, noted that on the committee assignments including the negotiations committee he will be on the computer technicians committee.

Ms. Emerson would like to make sure they are notified as to when, where these meetings will be held.

Dr. Lister stated Mr. Flygare will holding an orientation meeting for School Board members and the Leadership Team on February 19th in the Board Room.

Mr. Smith – why are we postponing policies – because we would have to make a motion to go past the 10:00 with a time limit. It is fairly brief so he made the motion to extend this meeting after 10:00 to take up the first reading of the policies. The motion was seconded.

The vote was taken and approved to extend the time.

Ms. Garrity discussed the Bullying Policy. It is just a matter of adding the electronic devices, cell phones, computers to be included, updating the wording.

Mr. Smith made the motion to approve the first reading of the Bullying Policy, seconded by Mr. Ristaino and approved unanimously.

Ms. Garrity spoke on the Field Trip Policy. The Policy committee asked for the field trip requests to be given to the Superintendent for approval and that the Superintendent would bring the report to the board.

Dr. Lister said overnight requests have been brought to the board and he thinks they should come before the Board so the Board knows the learning going on outside the classroom. Day trips he approves without going to the board. Principals call the Superintendent when the students are back in the school at the end of the day.

Mr. Legg said having them come before the Board makes it part of the public record where these students are going.

Ms. Garrity said some board members would like the students to come to the board. She would like a time limit on these presentations.

Mr. Smith does not feel they need to come to the board. Dr. Lister is capable of doing this.

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Ms. Emerson would rather hear from the students afterwards with a brief time limit.

Mr. Ristaino feels that because we have a lot ahead of us, and the Board asks the same questions and we have never rejected a field trip that the Board is just rubber-stamping what Dr. Lister is doing.

Mr. LaPage said that some trips were in question due to situations going on in the world. Also felt Kathleen Dwyer should let us know what responsibility Dr. Lister has if the board has not approved the trips.

Ms. Walker would still like to know what trips students are going on and then hear back from them.

Ms. Garrity said that the committee did not talk about the legality of Dr. Lister being solely responsible for approving trips.

Mr. Ristaino feels some specific trips could come to the board if Dr. Lister felt the need.

Dr. Lister said the Policy Committee is meeting this Thursday so this could be discussed and information brought back to the board next time.

Dr. Shuldman suggested that the check list for field trips should be brought to the Board by Dr. Lister.

Mr. Smith - move that the first reading of the Field Trip Policy be approved, Mr. Ristaino seconded. The board approved 8 – 1 with Mr. LaPage voting against the motion.

Next Agenda:

March 11th or 25th Work Session to discuss Financial Reports.

The vote for JCJ Architects.

The second reading of the Bullying Policy and the Field Trip Policy.

The Benjamin Franklin painting status.

Committee reports will be presented.

Financial samples and formats would be presented on the next agenda.

Public hearing of the budget for the 12th and a recommendation of the JCJ Architects.

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Read Across America presentation.

Adjournment: Mr. Ristaino made the motion to Adjourn, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary

jdf