

SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DATE: Tuesday, January 06, 2009

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM [or thereafter]

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: DR. MITCHELL SHULDMAN (CHAIR), SHERI HAM- GARRITY (ASSISTANT CHAIR), KENT LAPAGE, ANN WALKER, DEXTER LEGG, LISA SWEET, REBECCA EMERSON, PATRICK ELLIS, LESLIE STEVENS, MS. ABIGAIL ROCKEFELLER (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE), MS. LINDA BRIOLAT (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE), DR. ROBERT J. LISTER (SUPERINTENDENT), STEPHEN ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT) AND STEPHEN BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR).

Absent:

III. INVOCATION

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Shuldman led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

1. December 2, 2008

Voted to approve and accept the minutes of the December 2, 2008 School Board Work Session, pending one change be made. The wording of elementary and secondary education is changed to elementary, middle school and high school.

2. December 9, 2008

Voted to approve and accept the minutes of the December 9, 2008 School Board Meeting

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Elementary Lunch Menu
2. Harbour Lights Newsletter. LHS. Dr. Lister reminded everyone to refer to the master calendar for a complete list of school activities and events.

VII. RECOGNITION/UPDATE OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Mr. John Hebert and Mr. Ted Alex made a presentation representing the Jeremy Alex fund, which has provided extreme support to Portsmouth and St. Patrick's fourth grade classes. Kids are now playing chess from the PEEP program all the way up to Portsmouth High School. The Jeremy Alex fund was started three years ago in memory of Ted Alex's son. The foundation was created to help kids find the right road and learn how to make good decisions in life. Chess is a good tool to teach students that every move has consequences, both good and bad.

The foundation's original goal was to reach \$10,000.00. This year, the fund has already reached \$200,000.00.

Mr. Hebert and Mr. Alex have worked closely with Dr. Lister and elementary principals to schedule a fourth grade assembly with a giant chess set in order to show students how the game can be played. At the end of the assembly each student receives their own chess set to keep. A book was also created, which is given to each fourth grader along with a chess set. Each fourth grade teacher will also receive a chess set for his or her classrooms.

Ms. Sweet stated that her son received a chess set and book last year. The highlight for her son was the big chess set in the gym. Ms. Sweet believes this is a great program to have in the schools.

An extra bonus that Mr. Hebert and Mr. Alex did not expect was how the students played chess with siblings and parents. The foundation had a "bring your parent to play chess at the library" day and over forty students with their parents showed up.

Mr. LaPage inquired if there were any tournaments planned and if any outdoor venue for playing chess has been thought of?

Mr. Hebert stated that there are some chess benches at Prescott Park and the foundation may be able to expand in the area. Chess coaches are discussing starting inner school chess programs and tournaments.

As far as hosting a tournament in the area, the cost is high and the foundation would first need to grow more.

Dr. Shuldman asked if the foundation provided support with other areas, in addition to the chess program, in the schools.

The foundation gives donations to the schools and scholarships for graduating seniors. The Jeremy Alex Committee is a separate group within the Rotary Club. The Jeremy Alex Foundation also works with a program that helps steer kids through the justice system. A donation was made to Jackie Valley, allowing her to go into the high school and educate students on pregnancy, smoking and underage drinking.

Dr. Shuldman commended the foundation and believes that chess is a great game, specifically for teaching kids strategy and logical thinking.

VIII. FINANCIAL

1. December Financials – The paraprofessional line item is being closely watched. Unemployment compensation will probably be over for the year. This depends on how many people apply and how many are awarded. The district- wide assessment is a timing issue and still appears to be on line. Data processing is a timing issue with infinite campus. Large equipment is a coding error.

Mr. LaPage stated that the high school became the disaster center for the recent ice storm. The generator went non-stop and motors burned out. Will the school district budget be reimbursed for these expenditures?

Mr. Bartlett stated the district would be reimbursed for expenditures, as well as any overtime. Reimbursement funds will come from FEMA, which will also take into account any food provided and food spoilage.

Dexter called Mr. Bartlett's attention to the out of district line. We may actually have some savings?

Steve Bartlett stated he would research further.

The general fund budget total on page three was adjusted, based on the teacher's contract being split. Mr. Bartlett subtracted the difference from \$667,000.00 to \$550,000.00.

2. A list of 2008/2009 clubs and groups affiliated with school-sponsored activities was provided. All clubs provide Mr. Bartlett with their tax ID number to assure that all tax codes are being complied with.

Ms. Emerson asked if any of these extra curricular clubs receive any portion of the school budget. Mr. Bartlett stated they do not and in fact, the clubs actually help the school by paying for team uniforms, providing scholarships and paying for ice time.

Ms. Garrity asked if there was a deadline for clubs to respond. Mr. Bartlett stated that they needed to respond before their season begins.

Mr. LaPage – This year, several of these groups have been hit hard with the removal of their largest fundraiser; gate receipts. They are no longer able to collect money at the gates but Mr. LaPage has witnessed volunteers becoming more creative in order to raise necessary funds for their club. This list is 100% volunteers.

Dr. Shuldman asked Mr. Bartlett what the actual process was for clubs to receive permission to become a school-sponsored club.

Mr. Bartlett provides a simple checklist form for the clubs to fill out and is there to assist anyone who needs help.

Mr. Bartlett also stated that the school department was putting together information, along with the city manager's office, for President-elect Obama's stimulus package. Given the criteria, the city will provide a list of projects for the City Manager.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

Mr. LaPage commended Dr. Lister, Jeff Collins and others that were at the high school during the ice storm. The school was opened and fully staffed for people needing a safe and warm place to stay. Mr. LaPage would like to see a better-implemented plan in the future to ensure that the community is properly housed and safe.

Dr. Lister also thanked employees that took care of the community during the ice storm. Many left their own families without power and flooded basements to take care of others.

Dexter asked if anyone has had conversations on what the emergency plan should have been?

Dr. Lister stated the city has had several meetings and talked about their response, how should the Red Cross become involved and how could we better communicate? The city is assessing the data and using it to prepare for future event.

X. AGENDA

1. Vote of new School Board member. Dr. Shuldman stated the School board met with Attorney Kathleen Dwyer to discuss the board's options in filling the vacant seat. The board could leave the seat empty; they could choose to run another election or to fill the seat themselves. A letter was sent to City Clerk, Kelli Barnaby, asking if anyone was left on the list from the last election. No names were found. People in the community brought forth names and some came forward on their own. Dr. Shuldman stated that the board was not interested in filling the seat for a short time. Three people were chosen and all three had appointments with Dr. Lister. Patrick Ellis was chosen and will be sworn in tonight.
2. Oath of office administered by Superintendent Lister to new board member, Patrick Ellis.
3. Employee Agreements –Currently, five out of seven contracts have been settled. After all have been settled, they will be brought before the school board.
4. Superintendent of Schools search –Dr. Shuldman stated that January 15th and 16th committee members will be visiting each candidate's work place and meeting with three or four constituents during the day. The schedule for January 21st was handed out showing that a session had been set aside for school board members during the day. Mr. Zadravec announced that the evening public forum would be broadcast live on Channel 22. Feedback forms for community members will also be available.

Mr. LaPage believed it only fair that the board conduct its interviews within a two or three week period.

Ms. Garrity inquired if candidates need a sponsor for the day or night.

Mr. Zadravec stated that sponsors could be a board member or parent. Ideally, it would be someone that could help the candidate stay on time and guide them from place to place. Community members could contact Central Office if they were interested.

Mr. Legg asked what goes on in the sessions inquired on the structure of the evening public forum.

Mr. Zadravec briefly explained the daytime schedule and the structure of the public forum in the evening. He also stated that Dr. DeMinico would be working

closely with the group to assure successful use of time.

Dr. Shuldman asked Mr. LaPage if in the past, did the board vote the same night as the public forum. Mr. LaPage stated that the board interviewed in a public session and then went into non-public to deliberate. This was not scheduled on the same night as the public forum.

Dr. Shuldman asked the committee to follow up with Dr. DeMinico on what he had in mind for dinner plans for the candidates.

Mr. Legg believes some of the media have either misunderstood the process or not followed closely.

Dr. Shuldman recapped the process. After the school board decided they needed assistance, NHSBA was hired and a search committee was formed including school board members, administration, teachers, parents, city councilors, students, SAU 50 representatives and city officials. Nineteen applied and the full committee screened their resumes. On a parallel course, Dr. Paul DeMinico put together a leadership profile after interviewing several people in the community. Six were interviewed. Three finalists emerged.

Mr. LaPage reminded the board that the meeting during the day on January 21, 2008 should be posted.

5. Little Harbour principal search – Dr. Lister stated that a number of people applied and interviews had begun. The committee will narrow the search to two or three candidates and conduct site visits. Finalists will spend a great deal of time in Little Harbour School.
6. Director of Student Services – Interviews begin next week and six people have been granted interviews. The committee consists of teachers, representatives from SAU 50, and administrators. The committee hopes to present the board with a finalists the end of February or beginning of March.
7. Middle School – Update Dr. Shuldman stated the application was delivered to the state. One of the requirements was a maintenance plan for all buildings in the district, what we have for equipment and what we propose to maintain the new building. We had two full notebooks; one on the high school and one for the other schools. The question lies now with what City Council is going to do and when they are going to do it?

Ms. Sweet asked about a timeline. What can the board continue to do to move it forward?

Dr. Shuldman requested that Attorney Sullivan or Dwyer update the board on the eminent domain issue January 20th.

Mr. Legg requested someone speak to JCJ and see what phase two will cost, and then submit to City Council. This would provide them with a complete picture when they plan to bond.

Ms. Garrity requested that a complete copy of the application be available somewhere. Mr. Bartlett will have a copy available at Central Office. He also stated that the book would be updated as the state requested new information.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Curriculum Council – The meeting for this month has changed to January 22, 2008 at Central Office.
2. Other

XII. NEXT AGENDA ITEMS (January 20, 2009)

1. Special Ed Task Force Committee
2. Abigail Rockefeller – Survey results
3. Newsletter
4. Other - Dr. Lister passed out NHSBA resolutions and invited everyone to breakfast on Martin Luther King Day. Breakfast begins at 8:00 AM and, if board members would like tickets, please see him. Dr. Lister also thanked Ms. Anna Nuttall for working with the art staff and students to provide the wonderful artwork being displayed around town.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT At 8:30 p.m., voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Robert J. Lister

Superintendent of Schools