

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA FOR JANUARY 20, 2009

NEW FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2009

TIME: 7:10PM [or thereafter]

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: DR. MITCHELL SHULDMAN (CHAIR), SHERI HAM-GARRITY (VICE CHAIR), ANN WALKER, DEXTER LEGG, PATRICK ELLIS, KENT LAPAGE, STEVE BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR), DR. ROBERT LISTER (SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS), LESLIE STEVENS, LISA SWEET, LINDA BRIOLAT, ANN MAYER, AND ABIGAIL ROCKEFELLER.

Absent: REBECCA EMERSON

I. INVOCATION

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Shuldman led in the pledge of allegiance and wished our new president great success.

Dr. Lister mentioned that today was a very special day in the schools and nation because of the inauguration of a new president. All schools participated in the celebration.

New Franklin students Katy Ehnstrom, Lexi Fratamico and Charlie Sirmaian performed America, the Beautiful as Audrey Lucasz danced. Liam Hansen read a poem. Olivia Grant played her electric guitar.

Mr. Shea thanked his fifth graders for having the courage to share their talents and helping him celebrate this historic day.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

1. December 30, 2008 Special Meeting – New Board Member discussion. Mr. LaPage Motions to accept. Mr. Legg seconds. Unanimously approved.
2. January 6, 2009 Regular School Board Meeting. Mr. LaPage Motions to accept. Mr. Legg seconds. Page 4, a date needs to be changed to the 22nd from the 21st. Pending change, approved unanimously.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Thank you letter from Peter Smith (Greenland Central School Principal) to Portsmouth Music Department.
2. 2009 Spring Portsmouth Community Education Newsletter. Dr. Lister thanked Ms. Kim LaCroce for all her hard work.
3. Clipper News from Portsmouth High School. In addition to sending out emails, Mr. Collins sends Clipper News to parents as well.
4. NHSBA Legislative Bulletin.
5. Letter from City Manager John Bohenko, legislative delegation. This meeting is held two or three times a year. Dr. Lister attends these meetings.

6. Letter from City Manager John Bohenko re: the potential stimulus package. Steve Bartlett and Bob Lister have had conversations with Mr. Bohenko regarding the stimulus package and Portsmouth projects.
7. School Field Trips. Quarterly update.
8. Letter to All Staff from Dr. Lister. Sent last week requesting that principals and teachers provide every opportunity for students to watch the inauguration of the 44th president. Ms. Sweet stated that her son watched the inauguration in the amphitheatre and believed that students should be commended for their respect and genuine enthusiasm.
9. Fund for Excellence in Education. This was a competitive grant and Dr. Lister would be glad to share copies of proposals with the board. All grants relate to school board goals and district initiatives and also have no impact on taxpayers. A total of \$35,000.00 was awarded out of \$78,000.00 requested. Twenty-three proposals were received. Eleven were funded.
10. Copy of budget memo sent to parents yesterday. Dr. Lister, along with Lisa Sweet's assistance, encouraged parents to be part of the budget process and stay informed.
11. Ms. Sweet shared an article with the board on Maryland public schools. Schools were rated on six performances and three states received the top score, (a B), Maryland being one of them. Ms. Sweet wanted parents and taxpayers to be reminded about what can happen when they increase their investment in education.
12. Teacher workday is rescheduled for the 28th. Students have been notified.

V. RECOGNITION/UPDATE OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

1. Deborah Miller, a French teacher at PHS, is resigning at the end of the year. She is currently on a leave of absence. Motion to accept resignation by Mr. LaPage. Ms. Walker seconds. Unanimously approved.
2. Dr. Lister recognized all staff that allowed students the opportunity to watch the inaugural celebration today.
3. Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast, at the Jarvis Center, exhibited an art show that will be on display throughout the city. Anna Nuttall was instrumental in making this happen.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

1. Other

VII. FINANCIAL

1. AREA Agreement. The AREA agreement is still in negotiations for the purpose of changing the way special education tuition is billed from SAU 50. Dr. Shuldman stated that both districts have agreed to settle in time for the agreement to be submitted to the state. The goal is to complete the agreement by February 28, 2009. Dr. Lister has been in constant discussion with Dr. Cushing and feels both districts are close to an agreement.
2. Updated Clubs and Groups Affiliated with School-Sponsored Activities. A motion was made to accept PHS baseball boosters by Mr. LaPage. Ms. Walker seconds. Unanimously approved.

3. Ann Walker was contacted by paraprofessionals who would very much like to have their contract approved by the board. Dr. Lister stated it could be done, as long as the paraprofessionals have had their ratification meeting. Ms. Garrity believed the board was waiting for Mr. Tom Flygare to provide one more piece of information and appear before the board. Dr. Lister will find out what the process is from Mr. Flygare with those associations who have a tentative agreement. Dr. Lister will also provide the board with copies of the contracts with time to read and analyze. Mr. Ellis is not certain if a wage freeze is being considered, but why would the board approve the contracts if a wage freeze might be discussed? Mr. LaPage explained that the two must be kept separate. Ms. Walker will notify the paraprofessionals that Dr. Lister is contacting Mr. Flygare.

VIII. AGENDA

1. Safe Routes to Schools. Dr. Lister would like to have Ms. Emerson involved and requests to update the board at the February 10, 2009 meeting. He then asked board members if they would like him to bring any concerns to the committee. Dr. Shuldman had a concern about walking in inclement weather. He asked if there might be a possibility to work with the city to address unplowed sidewalks through the new grant. Dr. Shuldman's daughter was walking to school and stated it was difficult walking in the street when the sidewalks were not being plowed.
2. School Board Newsletter. Ms. Stevens requested feedback from board members and asked if emails should be added to the newsletter. Dr. Lister cautioned about email and would like the board to stay away from conducting business through email. No emails will be added. Mr. Ellis requested that school board meeting dates be added to the newsletter.

The newsletter will go be distributed electronically, will be available in the city's community newsletter and also emailed to all parents. The newsletter will also be made available in hard copy at the Portsmouth Library for those without computers. One copy will be available at each school as well as Central Office. Motion to make changes and print by Mr. LaPage. Ms. Garrity seconds. Unanimously approved.
3. School Board Retreat date. Ms. Garrity requested that the board decide on a date. – Motion by Ms. Emerson to propose March 14, 2009. To be held at the high school conference room from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Seconded by Ms. Walker. Mr. LaPage stated that by the 14th, new superintendent candidate ma be attending the retreat.
4. Other

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Special Education Task Force. Inclement weather cancelled the meeting and Mr. Zadravec would like to postpone an update at this time. The committee expects to have a draft before the next board retreat. Ms. Garrity asked if funding and costs would be part of the report. Yes, but not in specific, short term as far as recommending towards next years budget.
2. Secondary Advisory Committee/Financial Accounting. Dr. Shuldman presented Rye's school budget book as an example of financial reporting which shows the cost of individual schools.

3. Policy Committee. The committee is rewriting a nutrition policy and the instruction section, which will be addressed at the next meeting as well.
4. Other. The Superintendent Search sub committee conducted site visits to the three candidate's districts. Mr. Zadavec then discussed the schedule for January 21, 2009. Escorts have been chosen for each candidate. At the evening forum, it will be announced that feedback forms can be downloaded and mailed in to Central Office. Ms. Stevens asked the board if they should have a discussion about what questions will be asked. Mr. Legg stated the board might want to have the candidates reflect on the time that they spent in the district or were they surprised in any area. Mr. Zadavec stated that he planned to develop a series of questions the board may want to use for their interview process as well.
 - Mr. LaPage believes the final interview by the board should be held no longer than seven days after January 21, 2009. A discussion followed discussing the pros and cons of holding the interview in public session or non-public session. Ms. Stevens requested Attorney Kathleen Dwyer is consulted. Dr. Shuldman will speak with Attorney Dwyer. Dr. Shuldman will also see if the candidates are available on either the 4th or the 11th. Mr. LaPage stated that if the board decided to enter into non-public session, he would like Attorney Dwyer to rule that Abigail Rockefeller, Ann Mayer and Linda Briolat be allowed to attend.

X. NEXT AGENDA ITEMS (February 10, 2009 Council Chambers)

1. Read Across America – Linda Marconi will update the board.
2. Abigail Rockefeller – Survey Results. Ms. Rockefeller is scheduled to meet with Mr. Collins, Dr. Lister and Ms. Laska to review the results. Ms. Rockefeller will then present her results at the February 10th regularly scheduled board meeting.
3. School board retreat for March.
4. Other - Contracts. Mr. LaPage stated that the board always voted on bus and drivers Ed contracts and requested the board have information on these contracts when they are negotiated and signed. Mr. LaPage feels the board should be informed when there is a change in a major contract and he would like to have a discussion on this soon. Mr. Ellis asked for information on bio fuels. If there is a contract coming up, do we have any information? Steve Bartlett and Dr. Lister will provide updated information.
5. Mr. Ellis stated that there is a survey regarding the Portsmouth Middle School on the Portsmouth Herald website and the majority of respondents were thumbs up to moving the process forward.

XI. ADJOURNMENT At 8:41 PM, voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Superintendent of Schools