

October 25, 2005

Public Session

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 7:03 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair

Mr. David Croston, Vice Chair

Ms.

Karen Gleason

Mr. Douglas Wilkey, Clerk

Mr. Richard Carpender Mrs.

Marge Levesque

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cofield, Miss Julie Monteiro, Mr. Rick Elmasian

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Wedge stated that the gymnasium groundbreaking was held on Saturday, October 15th, in the main lobby of the high school. Mr. Kavanagh and Mr. Ingraham, former Committee members, attended the event. She stated that the gym construction is underway. The last meeting of the GCOC was well attended by Committee members, and she hopes their attendance will continue.

Ms. Wedge also reported that the Committee met with the Town Council on Tuesday, October 18th, to discuss the budget deficit. She commended Dr. Lusi for her presentation on the deficit.

Ms. Wedge reported that she attended the dedication of the Girls' and Boys' Town Bazarsky Campus with Dr. Lusi and Mrs. Cortvriend on Thursday, October 20th.

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lusi gave a brief report on recent meetings and activities. She met with Mr. Dennis Lit-key and a colleague from the MET School in Providence, which is a state-funded career and vocational school. They have rented space in Newport and will be opening a MET School next year. They will start with 30 freshmen the first year and will ultimately serve 120 students by their fourth year. Dr. Lusi believes it will be another way to provide our students with some additional opportunities that they may not have had before. She welcomes the MET School to the island.

Dr. Lusi reported that she and a team from Portsmouth are participating in a training on Classroom Walkthroughs this week in Providence. It is sponsored by the Education Alliance at Brown University in partnership with the UCLA School Management Program. The training is free-of-charge and is part of the lab's effort

to support the region. A number of Portsmouth team members spent the morning at North Kingstown's high school. The purpose of the training is to learn more about how to improve teaching and learning.

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Dr. Lusi gave a presentation on state initiatives to students at Salve Regina University this afternoon. Dr. Lusi put the presentation together with Asst. Supt. Jermain's assistance.

Dr. Lusi stated that Asst. Supt. Jermain will present student assessment data at the first meeting in November; and Ms. Trish McGrath, Director of Special Education, will give a presentation at the second School Committee meeting in November.

a) Teaching and Learning: Asst. Supt. Jermain reported that NECAP testing is finishing up in Grades 3-8, and reports are due back in March. At the high school level, she will be meeting with Mr. Littlefield to discuss technology and the Microsoft program to increase the rigor in that area. She is also working on a grant with Mr. Schoonover for the Physics First program. At the middle school level, she will be meeting with Mr. Desposito and Mr. Amaral in early November to discuss where we are going with math and how it

influences what we will be doing at the high school level.

b) Finance and Operations: Mrs. Brown reported that over the last few weeks, we have been working with the new audit firm, Hague, Sahady & Company. They are tentatively scheduled to give a preliminary report to the Town Council on November 14th. We will not have final numbers at that time. It is a preliminary report while they complete the financial documents. Mrs. Brown also reported that she attended the annual Association of School Business Officials' conference in Boston over the weekend. She also attended a meeting at the Interlocal Trust about necessary report forms. They are working on getting information out to school committees and town councils about initiatives that will save us money.

Mrs. Brown distributed the September financial statements and gave a preliminary re-view. She will put them on the next agenda for approval.

Miss Julie Monteiro reported that Homecoming activities were held at Portsmouth High School, despite the inclement weather. The majority of the student body participated in Spirit Week. They had a very successful canned food drive to benefit Lucy's Hearth. The Patriots won the homecoming football game, and the new gymnasium groundbreaking ceremony finally occurred. We are quickly approaching the end of the first quarter.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Croston to approve the minutes of the meetings held October 4, 2005; October 6, 2005; October 11, 2005, as revised; and October 17, 2005. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0-1. Mr. Carpender abstained.

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4. CONSENT AGENDA

a) General School Aide – Melville School. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-10/25/05, to the position of General School Aide at Melville School, effective immediately."

b) General School Aide – Melville School. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment,

Recommendation #2-10/25/05, to the position of General School Aide at Melville School, effective immediately.”

Dr. Lusi removed Items a) and b) from the Consent Agenda at this time. They will be pre-sented on a future agenda.

5. BUSINESS AGENDA

a) Recognition of Gymnasium Fundraising Committee. Mr. Croston made a motion to recognize the Gymnasium Fundraising Committee for the purpose of raising additional funds for costs associated with the Portsmouth High School gymnasium. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. The motion was amended by Mrs. Cortvriend to reflect the changes recommended by Mr. Croston, which were to change “Town of Portsmouth” to “Portsmouth School Department” in the second paragraph and to remove “Town of Portsmouth” in the fourth paragraph. In addition, Ms. Gleason asked that the charter be subject to legal approval. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed. She requested a legal opinion on “construction services” in the fourth para-graph. Dr. Lusi agreed.

Mr. Croston stated that the Gymnasium Fundraising Committee would be a subcommittee of the School Committee. Its actions will be in the public purview and will be done as any subcommittee of the School Committee. The members will be selected by the Chair. The

subcommittee will consist of a minimum of 4 members, but no more than 12.

b) Bid Award – Management Review Company. A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to award the contract for the management review of the business operations of the Portsmouth Public Schools to the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), in the amount of \$9,350 (low bidder), in accordance with their bid proposal attached. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.

c) Discussion – Next Steps re FY06 Budget.

• School Committee Members’ Suggestions: Ms. Gleason made a motion that the School Committee adopt Item III on her 2005/2006 School Department Budget

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Shortfall Recommendations List, which is to implement a “Comprehensive Energy Management Program,” that could produce a savings of 15 to 25 percent in heating costs and 10 to 15 percent in electrical costs. Mr. Croston suggested that Ms. Gleason change her motion to say “instruct the administrators to develop a

Comprehensive Energy Management Program and assign Ms. Gleason to work with the Facilities Manager to support that endeavor.” Mrs. Brown stated that many cost savings methods are already being done behind the scenes. Mr. Elmasian stated that the School Department already does many of the things Ms. Gleason suggests, but it is not on paper. Ms. Gleason amended her motion to say “that the School Department develops a Comprehensive Energy Management Program in a well documented format that includes implementing future changes.” Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.

Ms. Gleason made a motion that the School Department implements a special overtime management program (Item IV on her recommendations list). Mr. Croston seconded the motion for discussion. Mrs. Levesque stated that the motions are not on the agenda and could be in violation of the Open Meetings Law. Dr. Lusi stated that she will put a report on overtime use on the next agenda. Ms. Gleason stated that she would like the report to include potential reductions. Mr. Croston stated that the School Committee took an oath to live within the budget the Town Council approved, and they have failed to do that. He suggested that Ms. Wedge call an immediate budget review workshop to discuss the causes of the FY2006 deficit in terms of the process, make recommendations, and have a question and answer period, in order to gain back the public’s trust. It was agreed that the special School Committee workshop will be held on Wednesday, November 2nd, at 7:00 PM. A member of the

audience, Mr. Callahan, suggested that written comments be accepted as backup for the workshop. Ms. Wedge agreed to accept letters for the record, which should be submitted to the Superintendent by 4:00 PM on Monday, October 31st.

Ms. Gleason stated that she intends to donate her School Committee stipend to the School Department.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a) **Finance.** Mrs. Brown distributed the September financial statements and reviewed the highlights of each (Budget by Object Detail Report, Budget by Object Summary Report, Monthly Revenue Report, and Medicaid Cash Balance Report). These reports will be included on the next agenda for discussion and acceptance, along with the October financials.

b) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC).**
Presented by Mr. Croston, GCOC Chair.

1) Request for Approval – PHS Gymnasium Utility Upgrades. A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to authorize the Portsmouth Water and Fire District to perform necessary utility upgrades for the PHS gymnasium. The motion was amended by Mr. Carpender to include “not-to-exceed \$40,000.” Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed. The original motion with amendment was passed 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.

Mr. Croston reported that Chief Adams made a request to the Town Council to withhold up to \$80,000 of Impact Aid money to pave the fire lane surrounding the new gymnasium. This raised some critical problems. The existing reclaimed asphalt is a pervious material, while a paved surface is not. Were we to pave the fire lane, we would have to recalculate the water flows, increase the water catch basin, and reapply for our DEM permit. This would add a critical delay to the project.

Mr. Croston also stated that he began a discussion with the Chief on leaving the existing access road as a fire lane (It was scheduled to be removed and grassed.). This accommodation has many benefits to the project and to the Fire Chief. While no final determination has been made, he and the Fire Chief continue to work out a compromise which would leave the existing access road and not change any of the proposed fire lane materials around the outside of the gym.

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield

Recording Secretary for

Douglas Wilkey, Clerk