

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 6:30 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair
Mr. Douglas Wilkey, Clerk

Ms. Karen Gleason
Mrs. Marjorie Levesque
Mr. Richard Carpender

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend
Mr. David Croston, V. Chair

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cofield, Mr. Elmasian, Attorney Updegrove

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exception (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation; (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted 7-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:31 PM and resumed at 7:00 PM.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held at 6:30 PM. A motion was duly made and seconded to seal the minutes. So voted 7-0.

Ms. Wedge announced that Items e) and f) on the Business Agenda are being withdrawn, as well as the approval of the minutes.

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lusi reported that Mr. Peter McIntyre had submitted an agenda item request to obtain the Director of Finance and Administration's contract. It was inadvertently excluded from the agenda, and Dr. Lusi apologized to him for the oversight. Mr. McIntyre's request will be addressed at the February 28th meeting.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Asst. Supt. Jermain distributed the Substance Abuse Task Force report for the School Committee to review. She stated that Mrs. Bunny Miller would give a presentation to the School Committee in the future, if they so desired. She announced that Ms. Gail Darmody won the Teacher Applet Award, which recognizes outstanding use of technology in the classroom. She was nominated for the website she developed for teachers at Portsmouth High School and in the district. The presentation took place at Bristol Community College on Saturday, January 21, 2006. Asst. Supt. Jermain thanked Ms. Lisa Murphy, Mr. Mike Podraza, and Mr. Robert Littlefield for attending the Peer Review in Providence. This review process focuses on meeting the

high school diploma regulations in preparation for the Commissioner's Review in May. She also reported that Mrs. Michele Polselli's class had a visit from Miss Kelly Bates, the Channel 10 weather reporter.

- b) **Finance and Operations:** Mrs. Brown mentioned that the January financials were distributed but because of the length of the agenda, they will be discussed at the February 28th meeting. She commended the maintenance and custodial staff for getting school open on time after Sunday's snow storm. She reported that overtime was used on Sunday and Monday.

Mrs. Brown also reported that at the February 15th meeting, revenue and warrants will be addressed. She announced that she recently noticed that we have additional Special Education student tuitions, and she will report further on it at a future meeting.

- c) **High School Liaison:** Miss Meg Lee spoke in Miss Julie Monteiro's absence. Meetings for the PHS Advisory Board have been taking place to discuss the art, music, and sports cuts. She stated that none of them should be cut because the students need them to get into college. She stated that you can't rely on academics for all students, so the School Committee can't cut away from these areas. She said the same goes for cutting teachers. Ms. Wedge stated that the Committee does not want to eliminate anything and that they would rather restore things that have already been eliminated.

3. MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the meetings held January 24, 2006, and January 31, 2006. This item was removed from the agenda and will be presented on the next agenda.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) **Guidance Counselor Retirement, PHS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee accepts with deep regret the resignation for retirement of Joy Benson, Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School, effective with the last day of the 2005-06 school year."
- b) **Teacher Retirement, Elmhurst.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee accepts with deep regret the resignation for retirement of Pamela W. Grossman, Kindergarten Teacher at Elmhurst School, effective with the last day of the 2005-06 school year."
- c) **Approval of Requests for Permission to Home School.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the requests to provide home schooling for the 2005-06 school year for students HS#20-1/06, as listed in

the confidential memo dated 1/26/06, in accordance with the provisions of R.I. Law 16-19-2.”

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi announced that we had only three retirees this year as opposed to many more in previous years.

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Agenda Item Request – Endorsement of Grant Application to Study Feasibility of Wind Generator Use at PHS and PMS.** Requested by Mr. Gary Gump, Portsmouth Economic Development Committee. Mr. Gump explained why the Economic Development Committee wants to request a grant to study using wind turbines at Portsmouth Middle School and Portsmouth High School, and they are seeking the School Committee’s endorsement. He stated that there are no financial expectations on the Town. Mr. Croston asked if a member of the School Committee could be a liaison on the EDC’s subcommittee. Mr. Gump agreed. Mr. Croston moved that the School Committee endorses the grant application for wind generator use at Portsmouth Middle School and Portsmouth High School. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.
- b) **Approval of Extension of Unpaid Leave of Absence.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the request of Miss Katelin Reagan, Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, for an additional 1-year unpaid leave of absence for the 2006-07 school year. So voted 7-0.
- c) **Teacher Non-Renewals/Terminations/Displacements.** Dr. Lusi explained that a meeting was held on Friday, February 10th, to answer questions about the layoffs. She also reviewed each category of layoffs/terminations. She stated that there are 26 non-renewals due to budget uncertainty and enrollment projections; however, if we were basing this on enrollment projections only, we would be laying off only 4 or 5 teachers. She stated that everyone on the displacement list will have a job next year. This year we have more displacements than usual because in the last round of negotiations with the teachers’ contract, it was agreed that the looping program would end. The other reason for displacements is budget uncertainty and declining enrollment. She stated that if we don’t layoff people by March 1st, we cannot lay them off. She said if we were actually to achieve this number of layoffs, we would need to make some very bad decisions to cut programs. She stated that our own budget process will not be finished until mid-March, and it may not be voted on by the Town Council until June.

Ms. Wedge announced that this is a pre-deprivation hearing, and she turned this portion of the meeting over to Attorney Updegrave. Attorney Updegrave stated that the School

Department has to make layoff decisions prior to completing their budget. Pursuant to Rhode Island law, the notices must be delivered in writing to allow the School Committee to make decisions before March 1st. This is a pre-deprivation hearing, and by law, the affected individuals have a right to make a public statement. Attorney Updegrave stated that individuals affected or their union reps can make a statement if they want to be heard. He said that the individuals affected are not listed by name in the agenda, and they do not have to be publicly announced until such time as their position has been formally terminated, which is at the end of the school year. He requested that if anyone wanted to make a public statement, it was their choice; however, the School Committee has made the decision to keep the anonymity of the individuals until June. He also asked that union reps refrain from mentioning any names.

Attorney Updegrave asked Dr. Lusi if she had the opportunity to deliver notices to the individuals affected, and Dr. Lusi responded Yes. He asked her if the report prepared by her in the ordinary course of business. She replied Yes. He asked the School Committee if they had any questions about the Superintendent's recommendations.

Ms. Gleason asked if there would be any more layoffs at the next meeting. Dr. Lusi said she does not anticipate any more but could not promise. Ms. Gleason commented on the language on Page 14 regarding teacher displacements. Mr. Carpender read the amended motions for the displacements.

Mr. Carpender announced that he consolidated the motions for the agenda. Attorney Updegrave suggested that he read the amended displacement motion, then read the numbers of the individuals affected. Mr. Carpender asked if it would be appropriate for individuals to make statements at this time or wait until the motion is on the floor. Attorney Updegrave said the public should make statements before the motions are made.

Mrs. Kathy Caron, School Nurse Teacher at Elmhurst: Mrs. Caron stated that there are students with Diabetes at two different schools. Parking at Elmhurst is a problem, as well as the distance from Elmhurst to Melville. She said three Elmhurst students need Epi-pens, and time is of the essence. Substitutes for nurses are almost non-existent. She said the need of the child should be the utmost factor. She said the Portsmouth School Department School Nurse Teachers are responsible for covering the students at the Christian Academy, as well.

Ms. Jodi Clark, Elmhurst Teacher: Ms. Clark's concern is of the disagreement with the wording in the letter given to teachers and the change of it at this meeting.

Ms. Mel Johnson, Art Teacher at PHS: Ms. Johnson has worked at PHS for 4 years. She motioned to the roomful of art students in the audience. She handed out an arts information sheet from the state level all the way down to the local level. She said her Department Head, Principal, and others are very supportive of the art program at PHS.

Attorney Updegrave then asked members of the public to speak.

Mrs. Melvin said there are some great opportunities here for the School Committee to focus in and direct the funds where they have been lacking in previous years and bolster the programs for the students. Music and arts are paramount.

Mr. Greg Shaw, 24 Full Circle, PHS Music Boosters: Mr. Shaw stated that he spoke last night at the Finance Subcommittee workshop. He stated that 264 students are in the music program at PHS, and without the arts, you cannot have a well-rounded education for our students. He also asked the School Committee to understand that although he was from the PHS Music Boosters, his group is also concerned with the middle school and elementary schools because they are feeder programs to the high school program.

Mrs. Linda Ujifusa: Mrs. Ujifusa has been a Portsmouth resident since 1993, and she urged the School Committee not to make cuts in music and arts. She stated that other countries that we're constantly competing against teach their students music and arts. We should address our protests to the federal government where we pay enormous taxes instead of at the local level. She stated that the citizens in the audience elected the School Committee to save our schools.

Mrs. Karen Anghinetti stated that she has been teaching in Portsmouth for 10 years, and there is much support in grades K through 12 by administrators, School Committee members, and parents.

Mr. Gary Vaspol, 215 Middle Road, taxpayer and teacher at PHS, stated that the arts and music programs are essential to education. He stated that some students find themselves in the arts, and he urged the Committee not to cut the program.

Mr. Marcel McVay, 181 Brownell Lane, a PHS student, stated that he gets stressed out when the School committee is doing things like this. He asked them to consider a world without art and to consider not cutting art and music programs.

Miss Meg Lee, 39 Pine Tree Road, a PHS student, spoke on behalf of some of her teachers who put so much effort into teaching the students.

Attorney Updegrave asked the School Committee to consolidate motions where appropriate.

Dr. Lusi asked Attorney Updegrave to advise the Committee on the motion language for displacements, in light of the comment made between the language in the letter and the language on the agenda. She also said the School Committee has not voted on displacements in the past, so this is somewhat new to us. Attorney Updegrave explained the appropriate wording.

- 1-7) **Substitute Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the long-term assignments of Substitute Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7-2/14/06 formally end following the completion of their current placement with the Portsmouth School Department. The specific reason for this recommendation is that Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 have not been appointed to the position by the School Committee and thus are not eligible for continuous employment and rights of recall. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 6-0-1. Mr. Wilkey abstained.
- 8-11) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 8, 9, 10, and 11-2/14/06, not be renewed on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is that Teachers 8, 9, 10, and 11 were appointed to fill a 1-year position, which does not entitle Teachers 8, 9, 10, and 11 to seniority or rights of recall. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.
- 12-17) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17-2/14/06, not be renewed on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is that Teachers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 are part-time, non-tenured teachers who were appointed to a position for less than the equivalent of 135 full days, which does not constitute eligibility for continuous employment and rights of recall. Because of this, the positions of Teachers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 must be offered to bargaining unit members, and teachers senior to Teachers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 may opt for the position. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.
- 18-19) **Teacher Termination.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 18 and 19 not be renewed on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is the desire of the School Department to re-open the position to seek a larger pool of more qualified candidates. Teachers 18 and 19 are non-tenured and may reapply for the positions. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.
- 20-45) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45, not be renewed on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to the uncertainty of Federal, State, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2006-07 budget. If there is a reduction, the School Committee will have to reorganize programs, eliminate positions, and consolidate classrooms in order to operate within the total budget allocation for school operations. As a result of this reorganization and consolidation, the positions of Teachers 20 through 45 may be eliminated or senior teachers may opt for positions in the areas of certification of Teachers 20 through 45. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 6-1. Mr. Wilkey was opposed.

- 46-52) **Teacher Displacements.** Mr. Updegrave stated that the amended motion tracks the language in the displacement letters that were issued to Teachers 46 through 52. Mr. Carpender made a motion that Teachers 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52 be displaced from their current position on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to the elimination of the looping program. As a result of this, Teachers 46 through 52 will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current positions at their current schools. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.
- 53-55) **Teacher Displacements.** Ms. Gleason recused herself from voting on these displacements. Dr. Lusi explained that the intent is to have the flexibility to close the positions at the elementary schools and open up part-time positions that would share schools. Mr. Carpender made a motion that Teachers 53, 54, and 55 be displaced from their current positions on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to the elimination of their current positions and due to the uncertainty of federal, state, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2006-07 budget, as well as declining enrollment. As a result of this, Teachers 53, 54, and 55 will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current positions at their current schools. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 5-1-1. Ms. Gleason abstained. Mr. Wilkey was opposed.
- 56-57) **Teacher Displacements.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that Teachers 56 and 57 be displaced from their current positions on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to the elimination of their current positions, the uncertainty of federal, state, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2006-07 budget, as well as declining enrollment. As a result of this, Teachers 56 and 57 will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current position at their current schools. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 6-1. Mr. Wilkey was opposed.
- 58-64) **Teacher Displacements.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that Teachers 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64 be displaced from their current positions on June 15, 2006, or the last day of the 2005-06 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to the elimination of their current positions, the uncertainty of federal, state, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2006-07 budget, as well as declining enrollment. As a result of this, Teachers 58 through 64 will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current position at their current schools. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-1. Mr. Croston was opposed.

Mr. Updegrave announced that the Deprivation Hearing had concluded.

- d) **FY2005 In\$ite Report.** Mrs. Brown distributed an In\$ite Financial Analysis Model for Education, which is the official state reporting model for financial information. She reported that every year, we are required to take all of the expenditures we have and put them into the state reporting model in accordance with a prescribed mapping method. She stated that this information is available on the Rhode Island Department of Education's website. Mrs. Brown reviewed the In\$ite charts and data. She explained the difference between PPEs (total versus adjusted). She offered to drill down further in the In\$ite information at future meetings. Mr. Fitzmorris stated that the PCC's numbers were slightly different. Mrs. Cortvriend asked Mr. Fitzmorris if the PCC compared Portsmouth's figures to our neighboring communities. Mr. Fitzmorris stated that it would be an enormous task to do so.
- e) **Review/Approval – January 2006 Financial Statements.** This item was moved to the next agenda.
- f) **Agenda Item Request – Analysis of Current and Past School Budgets – Information Exchange.** Requested by Mr. Jerry Cook and Mr. Arthur Carrellas. This item was moved to the next agenda.
- g) **Request for Approval – Revisions to Financial Policies, 1st Reading.**
- 1) **Business & Non-Instructional Operations – Budget Preparation, Proposed Policy #3120.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3120, Business & Non-Instructional Operations – Budget Preparation, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.
 - 2) **Business – Budget, Policy #3150.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3150, Business – Budget, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.
 - 3) **Business – Adjustment of Accounts, Policy #3160.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3160, Business – Adjustment of Accounts, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.
 - 4) **Business – Soliciting Bids, Policy #3323.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3323, Business – Soliciting Bids, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.
 - 5) **Business & Non-Instructional Operations – On-Call Services, Policy #3324.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3324, Business & Non-Instructional Operations – On-Call Services, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.

- 6) **Business – Periodic Financial Reports, Policy #3430.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to approve the proposed revisions to Policy #3430, Periodic Financial Reports, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.

6. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a) **Finance.** Mr. Carpenter reported that the Finance Subcommittee continues to meet. The Administration's budget was reviewed at the last meeting. Special Education and Warrants will be discussed at the February 15th meeting. Mr. Carpenter has been in contact with the Town Council president about setting up a workshop during the first part of March to review the budget.
- b) **Policy:** Mr. Wilkey reported that a Policy Subcommittee meeting was held this evening to review the financial policies that were voted on as a first reading at this meeting. He stated that Health, Wellness, and Obesity were also discussed at the meeting. They will be putting together a 10-member advisory board made up of private citizens, PTO representatives, and nurses, to obtain input into how to address the health, wellness, and obesity issue. The next Policy Subcommittee meeting will be held on March 15th at 6:00 PM. Mr. Wilkey stated that other items need to be addressed, such as policymaking and policy implementation.
- c) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC).** Mr. Croston reported that the steel is on schedule to arrive on February 20th, and that all site work has been finished, short of one man hole. He reported that they have been able to do everything on budget.
- d) **Fundraising.** Mr. Croston stated that 217 bricks have been purchased so far. The gala will be held on March 11th. He thanked the members of the Fundraising Subcommittee for their hard work, specifically Sheila Pedroty, Laura Novak King, and Debbie Oliveira.

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Douglas Wilkey, Clerk