

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 6:10 PM. The following members were present:

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

Ms. Karen Gleason  
Mrs. Marjorie Levesque  
Mr. David Croston, V. Chair (6:40 PM)

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend  
Mr. Richard Carpender

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 6:11 PM and resumed at 7:15 PM. Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held at 6:12 PM.

#### 1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Wedge stated that that an Executive Session was held at 6:12 PM, during which one vote was taken. The Committee voted in favor of disciplining a student. Mr. Croston made a motion to seal the minutes. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.

Ms. Wedge read a letter she received from Governor Carcieri regarding his intent to help with the Group Home funding.

#### 2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lusi stated that she and Asst. Supt. Jermain attended a meeting at the East Bay Educational Collaborative immediately before the February vacation. The Collaborative board voted to move forward with the desire to purchase their building, and there will be materials coming before the Committee in March for a vote. She also reported that she, along with Asst. Supt. Jermain and Mr. Ettinger, attended a session by Dr. Reeves regarding leadership, which was sponsored by the Rhode Island Department of Education and funded by the SAELP grant to support leadership training and development in the state.

Dr. Lusi announced that Portsmouth High School senior, Shelly Kornatz, was recently named one of two Rhode Island top youth volunteers this year by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Miss Kornatz was nominated by the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island. She will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC in early May.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Asst. Supt. Jermain invited the Elmhurst faculty and staff to give their presentation under her report. She reported that she has been meeting with Grade 4 teachers and School Nurse Teachers regarding the health and wellness policies that will need to be established in the future. She reported that School Nurse Teacher Kathy Caron organized the Pennies for Leukemia drive at Elmhurst School. At Hathaway School, School Nurse Teacher Nancy Souza has been running an asthma training clinic for parents and families of children with asthma. At the high school level, School Nurse Teacher Carolyn DiGioia has been very successful in the Vaccinate Before You Graduate Program.

Mr. Ettinger, Principal at Elmhurst School, gave a Powerpoint presentation on School Improvement goals and programs at Elmhurst. He stated that these programs cannot happen without the dedicated teachers at Elmhurst. Mrs. Valerie Seveney spoke about Literacy. Mr. Kurt Totten spoke about the workshop concept of students working together on projects and strategizing together. He said it is important for teachers to let the students think about what they're doing and figure things out on their own versus walking them through it. He added that Professional Development really helps the teachers learn how to accomplish this. Mrs. Keri Jardine spoke about the mathematics program, which includes writing and communicating. She also said the training and Professional Development they've had on this program has been crucial. Mr. Ettinger talked about homework online, where parents and students can check homework online at Schoolnotes.com. He explained his "Coffee with the Principal" meetings for parents. He invited everyone to check out Elmhurst's webpage: [www.ElmhurstSchool.org](http://www.ElmhurstSchool.org). He also spoke about the work of the Elmhurst Faculty Advisory Committee. He announced that Elmhurst now has a community listserv for parents. He explained common planning time, where the teachers get to meet by grade level each week. Mr. Rob Shult, President of the EPTO, introduced Kathleen Hickey, Communications Liaison. She discussed the Kindergarten Buddy Program, New Student Buddy Program, and the New Student Focus Group. She also talked about the after-school enrichment opportunities at Elmhurst. The Volunteer Coordinator, Lisa Steeley, spoke about volunteer efforts at Elmhurst.

An Elmhurst parent spoke about her concern over the direction the school is headed in because of the budget crises. She said the cutbacks have forced the layoff of her child's reading teacher last year, and she feels her child's services have since suffered. She stated that the second resource teacher her child has had in the past year and a half has recently received her pink slip. She stressed that this can't go on.

Mr. Croston asked Mr. Ettinger what the impact was on the loss of the Professional Development day. Mr. Ettinger said it didn't impact them as greatly this year as it would've in previous years because of trainings that have been on going with Asst. Supt. Jermain.

- b) **Finance and Operations:** Mrs. Brown reported that she had gone out to bid for dental coverage and received four very competitive bids. She reported that we will not see an

increase in costs, as predicted, for next year; we may actually see a decrease. When the recommendation has been finalized, she will bring it the Committee. Mrs. Brown also reported that the blue cross coverage percentage increase will be coming in soon. The statewide average is between 10 and 13 percent, and we are hoping to come in below that. She'll provide more information to the Committee in the near future.

- c) **Miss Julie Monteiro, High School Liaison:** Miss Monteiro reported that the school is getting back into the swing of things after vacation. The Modern World Language Department is conducting the International Volleyball Tournament this week, which is a good fundraiser for charity. Three performances of Bye Bye Birdie were held prior to vacation. The Marching Band will be heading to New York City for the St. Patrick's Day parade in a few weeks. The Gymnastics team won the State Championship. The Hockey Team won the division championship. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents will be visiting the high school to start planning their children's future. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Modern Language National Honor Society will be putting on a Cultural Entertainment Night for parents.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Lusi stated that the February 14, 2006, minutes were not distributed and will be presented at a future meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the meetings held January 17, 2006; January 24, 2006; and January 31, 2006, as presented. Mr. Carpender amended the January 31, 2006, minutes to reflect a change on Page 2. His motion should have been "Access to Public Records Act," instead of the "Open Meetings Act." Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0. The original motion passed 7-0.

### 4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a) **Appt. – General School Aide, Melville.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-2/28/06, to the position of General School Aide at Melville School, effective immediately."
- b) **Resignation – Part-time Literacy Coach, PMS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee accepts the resignation of Amy C. Trudeau from the position of part-time Literacy Coach at Portsmouth Middle School at the end of the 2005-06 school year."

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. So voted 7-0.

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Review/Approval – January 2006 Financial Statements.** Mrs. Brown reported that the substitute accounts are in good shape. As of today, the balance in the long-term sub account is \$143,000. The sick leave substitutes are tracking the same as they did last year. She stated that she wants to look at benefits further because there have been quite a few changes lately. She also reported that tuitions have increased. The electrical accounts look good at the mid-year point. On the revenue side, she is continuing to watch the Group Home aid situation. She reported that our legislators are doing their best to help secure the funding. She stated that the revenue is running ahead in the Medicaid account. A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the January 2006 Financial Statements. So voted 7-0.
- b) **Approval of 2005-06 Budget Adjustments.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Carpender to approve the proposed 2005-06 budget adjustments, as presented. Dr. Lusi suggested that we review the adjustments and vote on them at the next meeting, since they were distributed late. Mr. Croston suggested that the Committee leave them on the table at this time. Mrs. Brown reported that she looked closely at the salary accounts, and adjustments were made. Some fine-tuning in the Special Ed accounts was done. She verified that the salaries matched what was approved under the Consolidated Resource Plan. She said a projection of the known long-term substitute costs that haven't hit us yet was done, and adjustments that need to be made due to the elimination of the evening custodial position and the shuffling of custodians were looked at. In the Purchased Services section, Special Education numbers were looked at. She spoke to Mr. Elmasian about some of his accounts and decided to make a slight adjustment in the heating services line. In the Dues and Fees area, there was some savings in the EBEC invoice for the annual assessments. She reported that we still have to find \$135,217 dollars to balance out before the end of the year. She stated that we have additional Medicaid revenue, and we are still working on vocational tuition adjustment. Substitute accounts are running very well right now, and we asked the principals to go through their line items and tell us realistically what they will need moving towards the end of the year. Medicaid is running ahead, and Mrs. Brown is going to continue to report to the Committee every month. Ms. Gleason stated that she would like to compare this budget adjustment report to the last one. Mr. Croston suggested that the Committee moves forward with the proposed adjustments. Mrs. Cortvriend asked when the Committee would be making the decision about spring sports. Dr. Lusi said right now. She emphasized that if it weren't for the unforeseen costs in Special Education increases, we would be managing this budget within our designated bottom line. She asked if spring sports should be affected and those students penalized because of the increased Special Education costs, or if the Committee should talk with the Council about doing something further for this year. Mrs. Brown asked the Committee's permission to implement these adjustments and make any changes later. The motion to approve the adjustments passed 6-0-1. Ms. Gleason abstained.

- c) **Agenda Item Request – Analysis of Current and Past School Budgets – Information Exchange.** Requested by Mr. Jerry Cook and Mr. Arthur Carrellas. Mr. Cook gave a Powerpoint presentation on a study the PCC conducted on the Portsmouth School Budget Analysis for school years 2000-01 through 2005-06. He stated that the purpose of this is to make an attempt to inform the general public on how the funds are allocated within a school budget and what the salaries are. They presented this to the Town Council on February 13<sup>th</sup>, and they will present it at the Masonic Lodge in March. They will also present on Cox Cable 18.

Dr. Lusi stated that the numbers in the PCC report are not the same as the Portsmouth School Department's numbers, and she was concerned when the PCC presents this report that this fact is made known. Mr. Croston stated that the "Dollars for Students" slide is erroneous, and he'd like Mr. Cook to fix it. Mr. Cook stated that they may be all wet with their figures; however, he doesn't see the School Committee being proactive to make the necessary changes to lower taxes. Mr. Carpender stated that the PCC should report that other communities are in the same boat at Portsmouth. He also disagrees with Mr. Cook's statement that Unions negotiate the contracts.

- d) **Agenda Item Request – Request for Copy of Employment Contract for Director of Finance and Administration.** Requested by Mr. Peter McIntyre. Ms. Wedge asked Mr. McIntyre why he is requesting the contract. Mr. McIntyre said he is requesting it as a citizen; and as a tax payer, he is entitled to see any contract. He is questioning the total cost of fringe benefits, the \$25,000, and the stipend for the bachelor's degree. Attorney Updegrave referred to the Johnston case and law. The Attorney General's decision is that an employment contract is a personally identifiable record pursuant to Rhode Island General Law 38-2-2(4)(i)(A)(I). Attorney Updegrave stated that the law is protection for municipalities rather than the employee. He added that municipalities have the right to waive it, if they want to disclose the information. He stated that the decision is on the School Committee as a matter of policy. Mrs. Cortvriend asked Dr. Lusi if she feels the School Department is at a disadvantage in the future to make it public. Dr. Lusi stated that she is conflicted on this issue. She said if the School Committee makes the contract public, they should make them all public. Mr. Croston stated that in the absence of policy, the public has the right to know what constitutes a contract in relation to the benefits. His opinion is that all contracts should be public, but it is a policy issue. He favors the Committee referring the issue to the Policy Subcommittee; however, he is also in favor of releasing the contract in due course. Ms. Gleason is in favor of releasing the contract, stating that not releasing it indicates that we're hiding something. She feels the contract is pretty basic. Mr. Carpender said he doesn't think releasing the contract should be individualized. Mr. Wilkey said he would be in favor of releasing Mrs. Brown's contract or all the contracts. Mr. Wilkey made a motion to release the contract. Seconded by Ms. Gleason. Mr. Croston said releasing the contract as requested is unfair, and he requested that all contracts be released. Mr. Wilkey amended his motion to include the contracts of all administrators in the district. Seconded by Ms. Gleason. Mr.

Croston said he prefers the issue be addressed by the Policy Subcommittee. Mr. Wilkey withdrew his motions. He made a motion to take the matter of contracts of Portsmouth administrators to the Policy Subcommittee. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.

- e) **Agenda Item Request – Safety on Middle School Buses.** Mr. Wilkey read his Agenda Item Request. He said there have been occurrences since the bus monitors were removed where the students could be in possible danger on Routes 114 and 138. Mrs. Brown explained that on occasion, a student will cross a street after the bus has driven off, and the bus monitors cannot control what happens after the bus continues on its route; however, whenever this occurs, it is brought to the principal's attention to address the issue with the student. Mr. Wilkey was concerned with putting the safety of the students first, and he stressed that the bus monitors should be reinstated because of the seriousness of the issue. Dr. Lusi said that we are following the law, and we have an official waiver from the Rhode Island Department of Education. Mr. Wilkey made a motion to reinstate the middle school bus monitors on buses carrying 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to and from the middle school; the cost of which could be handled in budget adjustments. Ms. Gleason seconded the motion for discussion. Motion failed 2-5. Ms. Gleason and Mr. Wilkey were in favor of the motion.
- f) **Request for Approval – Revisions to Financial Policies, 2nd Reading and Adoption.**
- 1) **Business & Non-Instructional Operations – Budget Preparation, Proposed Policy #3120.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3120, Business & Non-Instructional Operations – Budget Preparation. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.
  - 2) **Business – Budget, Policy #3150.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3150, Business – Budget. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.
  - 3) **Business – Adjustment of Accounts, Policy #3160.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3160, Business – Adjustment of Accounts. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.
  - 4) **Business – Soliciting Bids, Policy #3323.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3323, Business – Soliciting Bids. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.
  - 5) **Business & Non-Instructional Operations – On-Call Services, Policy #3324.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3324, Business & Non-Instructional Operations – On-Call Services. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.

- 6) **Business – Periodic Financial Reports, Policy #3430.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopt Policy #3430, Periodic Financial Reports. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0.

## 6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) **Finance:** Mr. Carpender announced that Finance Subcommittee workshops will be held on March 7, 8 and 9, to finalize the budget. He is trying to schedule a date with the Town Council to present the budget. Tomorrow night, a Finance Subcommittee workshop will be held at 7:15 PM to discuss the NESDEC report.
- b) **Policy:** Mr. Wilkey announced that a Policy Subcommittee meeting will be held on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Another meeting was scheduled for 5:30 PM on Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss establishing a policy on releasing administrators' contracts.
- c) **Fundraising:** Mr. Croston invited everyone to purchase a ticket to the Gym Gala at Salve Regina University on March 11<sup>th</sup>.
- d) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC)**
  - 1) **Approval of Progress Payment for Gym.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the progress payment of Invoice #05-095-00004 from Advanced Building Concepts in the amount of \$111,688.53. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.
  - 2) **Appointment of Clerk of the Works.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the School Committee appoints the recommended candidate to the position of Clerk of the Works for the construction of the Portsmouth High School gymnasium. Dr. Lusi stated that one of the two candidates did not show up for his interview. The GCOC was quite impressed with the other candidate. Dr. Lusi was charged with checking references. She proposed that this issue be addressed prior to a Finance Subcommittee meeting next week. Mr. Croston tabled this issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(1) Job Performance/Personnel Matters, (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation; or (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted 7-0.

Public Session adjourned at 11:11 PM and resumed at 11:28 PM.

Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held at 11:16 PM. One vote was taken on a personnel matter. A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to seal the minutes of the meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Croston and seconded by Mr. Wilkey to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 11:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield  
Recording Secretary for

Douglas Wilkey, Clerk