

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 7:30 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

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend
Mr. Richard Carpender

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Mrs. Cofield, Miss Julie Monteiro

Mr. Croston announced that the agenda was amended to add two issues: the ratification of teacher displacements and the rescission of teacher non-renewals. The reason for the amendment is to avoid a financial impact, as teachers who are not recalled may file for unemployment.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Ms. Wedge stated that the Town Budget Hearing will be held on Thursday, 6/15, 7:00 PM, at the Portsmouth Middle School Little Theatre. She stressed the importance of parents' attendance at the hearing to show support for the School Department budget. She also announced that the last gym fundraiser will be held at Brick Alley Pub on Wednesday, 6/14, from 6-9PM. The fee is \$25 per family.

2. **STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

a) **PHS School Committee Liaison**. Ms. Wedge made a motion to commend **Miss Julie Monteiro** for being the Portsmouth High School Liaison to the School Committee for the 2005-06 school year. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0. Julie was presented with a gift and a certificate from the School Committee. Julie introduced next year's High School Liaison, Marissa Mello.

3. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** Dr. Lusi reported that the high school graduation ceremony was held last Friday at the Portsmouth Middle School gymnasium. It was a wonderful event, and she was very impressed with the student speakers. She stated that the last day of school is Thursday, June 15th. She announced that an Administrators' Retreat will be held in August again this year. She also announced that the School Department will hopefully be receiving the Group Home Aid in the supplemental budget for this year and next year. She reported that at last night's Town Council meeting, the Council expressed the desire to meet in a workshop format on Monday, June 19th, at 6:30 PM.

a) **Teaching and Learning**: Asst. Supt. Jermain announced that they are bringing in the data on PLPs. She stated that we are showing success at the high school level, and we are getting some great feedback. Only two percent went down in performance, however, there were some extenuating circumstances with those students. We actually had students on PLPs that were improving 33 percent in growth in comprehension. Fifteen

of those students have been placed in the Starr program. An informational meeting was held last night for parents, and another meeting will be held during the summer. In the Ramp-Up programs this summer, Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 will be offered. In addition, a Computer Ramp-Up program will begin in August. She also stated that the Professional Development calendar for teachers is being completed for next year.

- b) **Finance and Operations:** Mrs. Brown reported that moving from Delta Dental to Blue Cross Dental will save us \$40,000 over the amount expended in the current year. Because the proposed budget had already been adjusted to reflect the lower Delta Dental cost, the net result is that the proposed FY07 budget can be reduced by an additional \$25,900. Mrs. Brown reported that both the Town and School Department are working with the providers today to make the change by July. This is a joint venture with the Town, and both the Town and School Department will save about \$80,000 in total over this year's budget.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes of the meetings held May 24, 2006, and May 30, 2006. This item was removed and will be brought back on the next agenda.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) **Appt. – PMS Principal.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston to affirm the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-6/13/06, to the position of Principal at Portsmouth Middle School, effective on or about July 1, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. Ms. Gleason stated her concerns about our financial crisis. She reiterated her suggestion to move one of the elementary principals up to the middle school for one year to save money. She said she would abstain from the vote, with no offense to the new candidate. So voted 6-0-1. Ms. Gleason abstained. Dr. Lusi introduced Ms. Natalie Brunelle Dunning as our new Middle School Principal. She also thanked the Search Committee.
- b) **Appts. – PMS House Leaders.** A motion was made by Mr. Croston to approve the appointments at Portsmouth Middle School for the 2006-07 school year as presented. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointments as follows: Joanne Lebel, Grade 5 House Leader and Math Curriculum Coordinator; Lisa Mello, Grade 6 House Leader and Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator; Christine Committo, Grade 7 House Leader and Science Curriculum Coordinator; Joao Arruda, Grade 8 House Leader and Modern Language Curriculum Coordinator; Amy Trudeau, English/Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator.
- c) **Clerical Retirement.** Mr. Croston made a motion that the Committee accepts the resignation for retirement of Jane Ann Mello, Hathaway School secretary, with a date to be

determined. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi thanked Mrs. Mello for her 23 years of service to the Portsmouth School Department.

Item d) was moved to the Business Agenda, at the request of Mr. Carpender.

6. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- d) **Request for Approval – Second Year of Unpaid Leave of Absence.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the request of Kristin White, Art Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, to take a second year of unpaid leave of absence for the 2006-07 school year. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Mr. Carpender stated he was opposed to approving this type of request. He reviewed the reasons in the contract for taking such leaves. Mrs. Brown stated that the contract gives the ability to take each request on an individual basis. Ms. Gleason stated that she isn't against granting a second year, as long as the contract is followed. Mr. Croston inquired about the possibility that the person requesting leave wouldn't have a position to come back to. Dr. Lusi stated that a lay-off would take place in February in anticipation of the individual coming back in September. Mr. Croston stated that he would not be in favor of approving this request because of that fact. He thinks it is unfair to the teachers in the system. Ms. Gleason disagreed with Mr. Croston and asked Ms. Feather, the NEA Union President, for her opinion. Ms. Feather stated that if the second year of leave is granted to Mrs. White, the superintendent could recall the Art teacher that is currently on the lay-off list. Mrs. Levesque views this as a family leave situation and feels it should be granted on those terms. In addition, she stated that it doesn't hurt the School Department financially to do this, and she would vote to approve this request. The motion passed 4-3. Mr. Carpender, Mr. Wilkey, and Mr. Croston were opposed.
- a) **Discussion/Action – FY07 Budget Request.** Mr. Carpender stated that there were several motions that were going to be made under this item. He stated that a Subcommittee meeting took place prior this meeting where these items were discussed. He is looking for a consensus from the Committee as to whether this is the direction they want to move in. He said these are not areas he wants to reduce, nor are they in the best interest of our students; however, they need to be addressed in order to meet our legal responsibilities. A spreadsheet on potential adjustments to the FY 2006-07 budget request to meet the tax cap override was distributed to the Committee, along with a draft of budgeted costs and proposed revisions for 2006-07 for the Prudence Island School. Dr. Lusi explained that we are faced with making more than \$1.2 million cuts to the request. We will be reducing our teaching force by 5 percent, and she stated that she can no longer support the Prudence Island School because of its cost. She reviewed the potential revenue changes for adoption, which leaves a balance of \$881,691 to reduce. She then reviewed the areas to consider in making budget reductions. She stated that the item regarding paying off the transportation costs was voted on at the last meeting, and it would reduce next year's budget by \$100,000. She reviewed the elimination of some

new requests, which total \$221,652. In addition, a reduction in Athletics of \$15,000 has been suggested. Reductions in existing staff of \$275,082 are being proposed, as well as cutting two positions at the high school level: art and modern language. The closing of Prudence Island School is being proposed, as well as reducing other requests in a variety of areas including substitute teachers, heating system service, boiler maintenance, and maintenance/repair supplies, which total \$52,000. The approximate savings is \$882,073.00.

Dr. Lusi then reviewed the budgeted costs for Prudence Island School for 2006-07 and the proposed revisions. Much discussion took place. Residents of Prudence Island spoke in opposition of closing the Prudence Island School. Ms. Gleason stated that she is opposed to closing the school. Mr. Wilkey stated that before Dr. Lusi came onboard, the School Committee went to Prudence Island and talked about this matter. He stated that if the school is closed, we will lose the land under it. Dr. Lusi said she thinks Mr. Wilkey is referring to the rights of reversion, which is in the deed. She stated that Mr. Updegrove investigated the deed back in February, and the property would no longer revert to the original owner should the School Department stop using it for educational purposes. Mr. Bob Marshall disagreed and mentioned that there is a document at Town Hall proving it. Mr. Croston moved to table this item until the June 27th meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.

Mr. Carpender moved that the Title I Revenue line be increased to \$85,476. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender moved that the Group Home Aid be increased from \$390,000 to \$570,000. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender moved that the Medicaid Revenue be increased from \$175,000 to \$275,000. Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender moved that the Committee tentatively approve the removal of the following new positions – 1 Reading Teacher, 1 Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School; 1 Music Teacher at Portsmouth High School; and the additional tutoring from the 2006-07 budget for an approximate reduction of \$221,650 with the caveat that the Music Teacher at Portsmouth High School must be provided from the Elementary Principals Maximization Plan. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Ms. Gleason amended that motion to include the database position. There was no second to the amendment. The original motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Carpender moved that the Committee tentatively approve the reduction of \$15,000 in the High School Athletic Budget at Portsmouth High School in areas to be determined. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-1. Ms. Gleason was opposed.

Mr. Carpender made a motion that the Committee endorses the Elementary Principals Maximization plan authorizing the Superintendent to move forward representing a reduction of approximately \$350,000. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender made a motion that the Committee tentatively approves the removal of a Modern Language position and Social Studies position at Portsmouth High School for an approximate reduction of \$95,980. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Ms. Gleason voiced her opposition. Mr. Carpender stated that this is a tentative approval. The motion passed 5-2. Ms. Gleason and Mr. Wilkey were opposed.

Mr. Carpender made a motion that the Committee tentatively approves the reduction of \$100,000 from the 2006-07 budget in areas to be determined and brought back to the School Committee in the amount of \$100,000. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Ms. Gleason voiced her opposition. Mr. Carpender stated that this is a tentative approval. So voted 5-2. Ms. Gleason and Mr. Wilkey were opposed.

Mr. Carpender reiterated that these cuts are not in the best interest of the students. Mr. Croston stated that some of these cuts could be potentially devastating to our system and that the Committee reserves the right to reclaim any of these cuts.

- b) **Resolution to Seek Repeal of Rhode Island Special Education Laws.** Mr. Croston made a motion to accept the correspondence. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Much discussion took place. Dr. Lusi stated she believes that all this resolution is seeking to do is to indicate to the State House and the elected members are asking that State requirements that are more restrictive than Federal be repealed. Mr. Croston withdrew his motion. Mr. Carpender made a motion that the Committee seeks the repeal of Rhode Island Special Education laws that are more restrictive than federal laws. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Mrs. Levesque amended the motion to add the caveat of funding the mandates. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. The amendment passed 5-2. Mr. Croston and Ms. Gleason. Mr. Croston said the motion doesn't make sense. He thinks it should be sent back to the Administration. The original motion failed 1-6. Mr. Carpender was in favor of it.
- c) **Bid Award – Moveable Walls, PMS.** Mr. Croston made a motion to award the contract for moveable walls at Portsmouth Middle School to Allied Products Group at a total cost of \$165,220, in accordance with the terms of their bid and our specifications. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.
- d) **Ratification of Teacher Displacements.** Mr. Croston made a motion to ratify the displacements of Teachers 65, 66, and 67 made on June 8, 2006, as attached. Dr. Lusi explained the rationale for displacing these teachers. She is simply asking the Committee to ratify the displacements. This will allow the Administration to reallocate one music teacher to the high school. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.

- e) **Rescission of Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve the rescission of non-renewals for Teachers 22, 24, 27, 32, 29, 40, 41, 43, and 45. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. Dr. Lusi explained why these teachers were being recalled. They were the most senior teachers on the list holding the required certificates for these positions. This was decided in discussions with NEA Portsmouth. So voted 7-0.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) **Finance:** No report.
- b) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC):** Mr. Croston said construction is ahead of schedule. The gym should open by the time school starts in September. He anticipates a Certificate of Occupancy in August. He stated the gym is at substantial completion.
- c) **Fundraising**
 - 1) **Agenda Item Request – Contribution from O’Neill Properties to PHS Gym Project.** Requested by Mr. Larry Fitzmorris. Mr. Fitzmorris is concerned about the report in the newspapers that Mr. O’Neill’s company has made a donation to the gym project. He asked Mr. Croston to give an update on what happened. Mr. Croston stated it is a pledge, and we are not yet in receipt of the funds. To the best of his knowledge, it will come in to the Gym Fund, all used for capital costs to the gymnasium. He stated that these funds are earmarked for the mezzanine space, which has not officially been voted as a fitness center. Mr. Fitzmorris suggested that O’Neill did not offer the contribution on his own and that he was solicited. He feels that soliciting a company doing business with the Town is inappropriate. Mr. Croston stated that we are thankful for the gift, and our children will love the gift. Ms. Gleason agrees with Mr. Fitzmorris.
- d) **Policy**
 - a) **Approval of Proposed Policy #5100.1 Wellness, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** Mr. Croston made a motion to approve as a second reading and adopt proposed policy #5100.1 Wellness. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Croston made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Douglas Wilkey, Clerk