

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Carpender at 6:50 PM. The following members were present:

Mr. Richard Carpender, V. Chair	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer	Mr. Jamie Heaney
Mrs. Terri Cortvriend, Clerk	Mrs. Marge Levesque	Mr. Douglas Wilkey

Also Present: Assistant Superintendent Jermain, Ms. Christine Tague, and Mrs. Patti Cofield

Absent: Ms. Sylvia Wedge; Dr. Lusi

A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. Seconded by Mr. Wilkey. So voted 6-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:50 PM and resumed at 7:02 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Mr. Carpender announced that Ms. Wedge is out of town on vacation, and Dr. Lusi is home ill with the flu. He reported that he attended last night's Town Council meeting where Mr. Driscoll reported that the bids on the sprinkler system at Portsmouth Middle School, although estimated to come in at \$1.9 million, came in at the \$1 million range. Mr. Carpender also reported that two Executive Sessions were held. One was held on November 30, 2007, to discuss negotiations, and no votes were taken. A brief Executive Session was held this evening to discuss pending litigation, and no votes were taken. A motion to seal the minutes was made by Mr. Wilkey and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**: Assistant Superintendent Jermain reported that the Central Office will be closed after Friday, December 21, 2007, and will reopen on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. Mr. Davidson will be at the office December 27-28, 2007, to receive bids.
 - a) **Teaching and Learning**: Assistant Superintendent Jermain announced the extra-curricular activities scheduled this week. This evening, Ms. Karen Anghinetti and students from Elmhurst are performing at Open Court at Salve. The Boys' and Girls' Town Tree Lighting is being held Wednesday evening. The Portsmouth Middle School Choral Concert is being held Thursday evening, and the Symphonic Band concert at Portsmouth High School is also being held Thursday evening.
 - b) **Finance and Operations**: Ms. Christine Tague stated that the report in tonight's packet was generated using the new financial software. She reported that she met with the consultant from Phoenix today to go through the Human Resource system, and it will take about a year to get the software fully functional.

- c) **High School Liaison:** Miss Julie MacDougall stated that this Saturday is Santa's Workshop, which is put on by the Student Council. Activities include cookie decorating, candy trains, a visit from Santa, etc. She also reported that the National Honor Society put together the Gingerbread Express, which is a program where Advisories pick a child in need and gets them school supplies.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Carpender stated that the November 27, 2007, minutes are being removed. A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the meetings held October 9, 2007, and November 13, 2007. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 6-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a) **Request for Leave of Absence.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the request for Family and Medical Leave in accordance with the backup information."
- b) **Appt. – General School Aide, Hathaway.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-12/11/07, to the position of General School Aide at Hathaway School, effective immediately."
- c) **Coaching Appt. – PMS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the coaching appointment at Portsmouth Middle School for the 2007-08 school year as presented."

A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. So voted 6-0. Assistant Superintendent Jermain announced the appointment of Chris Carruba to the position of General School Aide at Hathaway School, and Mary Borrosh to the position of Girls' Basketball Coach at Portsmouth Middle School.

5. BUSINESS AGENDA

- a) **Discussion/School Committee Action on Options for Prudence Island School.** Mr. Carpender announced that his reason for putting this item on tonight's agenda was to give the Committee and audience an opportunity to discuss the options for keeping Prudence Island School open. Mrs. Levesque stated that the items she thought were most attainable were the Charter or Magnet Schools. She thinks the problem with the Prudence Island becoming its own district is that we would still have to provide administrative support and co-curricular classes. She would like to see a little more information in terms of leads from the historical society and what they can do for us. She is interested in the

endowment option. Mr. Carpender stated that the School Committee cannot legally be involved with the endowment. Mr. Buddemeyer stated that most of the options will take a good portion of time to occur. He feels the best option presented is to leave it as is. He thinks the Committee should look at other options in our budget in order to make it work. He feels that we need to work as a community and have Prudence Island as a school within the community and move on. Mr. Carpender agreed that many of the options put on the table require significant time. Some require action and involvement of the School Committee, such as the Magnet School; and he's not sure we have the manpower to pursue something like that at this time. He is seeking a sense of direction from the Committee, and he doesn't think it is fair for the Prudence Island School Working Committee to keep working on options when there is no impact in sight on the operational budget. They could keep meeting for another year, and none of these options would come to fruition. Mr. Mark Katzman of 78 Mail Coach Road stated that as a resident of Portsmouth, his preference is to keep Prudence Island School open; and he asked if anyone had ever looked into contracting someone to ferry the students to the island. Mr. Carpender stated that if it has been looked into, it has been at a cursory level, and no formal motions have been made. Mr. Alan Bearse was opposed to the idea of having the students ferried to the island on a small boat, especially during the winter months when the bay is particularly rough.

Mr. Carpender reviewed each option.

Charter School: Mr. Carpender stated that the dilemma is that we need to make the decision to keep the school open for another three years in order to pursue the Charter option. Mrs. Jermain stated that the allocation leaves this budget and goes to the Charter.

Magnet School: Mr. Carpender doesn't think the Committee has the resources to start to consider going through with it.

Developing Separate School District: Mr. Carpender stated that if Prudence Island were to develop their own school district, the Town Council would lose all tax revenue; and he doesn't think the Town Council would pursue that. He stated that it's outside the purview of the School Committee.

Historical Society: Mr. Carpender stated that having an Historical Society take over the building would take away the maintenance costs of the building, but it wouldn't take away from the operational budget.

Endowment: Mr. Bob Marshall stated that a lot of people are behind setting up an endowment. However, Mr. Carpender stated that we can't, from a School Committee standpoint, legally direct anyone to go establish an endowment so that we may keep the building open.

Mr. Carpender stated that he doesn't see any option that has an impact on the operational budget. He only sees one option, and that is to keep the school open as is. However, keeping the school open after the end of the year requires School Committee action. He asked for direction from the School Committee, but he doesn't see any outcome other than operating it as it is.

Mr. Bearse asked Assistant Superintendent Jermain about separating Prudence Island School from Melville School so they could qualify for Title I money. Mrs. Jermain stated that she would have to investigate that with the State, if the Committee directs her to do so. Mr. Bearse stated that Kate Hibbard was hoping that the school could be free-standing and not linked to any other building. Mrs. Jermain thinks it was linked to a mainland elementary school for a reason; however, Mr. Bearse thinks it was just to assign a principal to the school.

Mr. Carpender stated that all the School Committee could do is to vote to keep Prudence Island School open. He asked for the Committee's direction. Mrs. Cortvriend stated that transportation is the big question.

Mr. Carpender stated that another option that had been discussed was to increase the grade levels, but that would only drive down the per pupil cost

Mr. Heaney said he wouldn't mind looking further into the Charter School option as well as the Title I option. In addition, he'd like to look into tutoring. Mr. Carpender stated that the Charter School option is nothing that the School Committee can do. A separate group must pursue forming a Charter School.

Mrs. Cortvriend asked what the administrative requirement would be if Prudence Island School became its own entity. Mrs. Jermain stated that a superintendent, school committee, and a building administrator would need to oversee the education. Mr. Carpender added that that is a question for the Town Council to research.

Mr. Carpender stated that this discussion has resulted in two areas that need to be researched. One issue is transportation, and the other is to look into Title I funding. Mrs. Levesque made a motion that the Superintendent explores alternate transportation models for the Prudence Island school. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0. Mrs. Cortvriend made a motion that the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent explores the Title I funding options either disconnecting the school or realigning it with Hathaway School. Seconded by Mr. Heaney. So voted 6-0. Mr. Carpender asked Mr. Bearse and Mr. Marshall if they need to continue meeting as a working committee. Mr. Bearse stated that they will keep working to do things to bring the costs down.

- b) **Presentation on Summer School and Enrichment Activities.** Mr. Joao Arruda, the director of summer school and enrichment programs, distributed an information packet and reviewed the enrollment in the various grades, the courses, the success rate, and the enrichment courses. He stated that the goal for the past 4 or 5 years has been to bring more students into the summer program. Some students need to be there because they didn't fulfill the requirements during the school year, but others attend for enrichment opportunities. He stated that it is his belief that summer school should be an opportunity for students to attend school over the summer for enrichment opportunities so they can continue to learn over the summer under the supervision of professionals. He thanked the summer school staff for doing a superb job. Mr. Arruda stated that the enrichment program was very successful; however, he feels it should be done separately from Portsmouth High School and should be housed at the elementary schools. Mr. Arruda reviewed the budget summary. Total receipts were \$57,430; and total expenses were \$66,508.26 (salaries \$66,162.15; course reimbursement \$175; and purchases \$171.11). He thanked the custodians and building secretaries, as well as the program coordinators. He thanked Mrs. Jermain and Dr. Lusi for giving him the opportunity to oversee the summer school for the past five years. He stated that he will not be able to run the program next summer, but he will help whoever takes over.
- c) **Report on Enrollment.** Assistant Superintendent Jermain reviewed Dr. Lusi's memo. As of October 1, 2007, there were 2,935 students enrolled in Portsmouth schools, which is 65 less than were expected in the projections. That is a difference of 2.17%. There are an additional 26 students enrolled in out-of-district Special Education placements and 44 students enrolled in private schools. This enrollment information will now be sent to the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), so that they may generate our enrollment projections for next year. They provide this service free of charge to member districts.
- d) **Ratification of Bid Award – Sound System, PHS.** A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend to reaffirm the School Committee's award of the contract for the Sound System at Portsmouth High School to DAS Sound Systems, Inc., in the amount of \$9,129.40, as voted on at the November 27, 2007, School Committee meeting. Seconded by Mr. Wilkey. So voted 6-0.
- e) **Discussion/Approval – November Financials.** Mrs. Cortvriend made a motion to accept the November financials as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. Ms. Tague explained the revenue and expenditures as of November 30, 2007. She stated that it is too early to start seeing any potential budgetary issues on the expenditure side. She is keeping a close eye on healthcare costs as well as the salary accounts. Mr. Carpenter would like the report to include a column for actual expense to budget not including encumbrances. Ms. Tague contacted Phoenix/Sungard last week to inquire about customization of the reports. She was told that we paid for customization on the last version, and it would cost about

\$500.00. Ms. Tague informed the Committee that after the school budget was approved, there was a potential revenue shortfall; however, we have additional Medicaid receipts to bring it back into balance. The motion to accept the November financials as presented passed 6-0.

6. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

- a) **Finance.** Mr. Carpender stated that at our retreat, there was a public portion where we discussed the budget process for the coming year.
- b) **Policy.** Assistant Superintendent Jermain reported that in adjusting the Building Use policy, they found that others need to be addressed as well. A Policy Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled in the near future.
- c) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC).** Mrs. Cortvriend reported that bids have gone out for fitness equipment.
- d) **Prudence Island School Working Committee.** See above.
- e) **Facilities.** Mr. Buddemeyer stated that all the tours have taken place. An advertisement will be placed in the newspaper, an interview process will ensue, and a committee will be formed. Another tour with the full committee will take place to determine what is needed to repair and upkeep the schools.

Mr. Carpender wished everyone a happy and safe holiday.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Cortvriend and seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted. 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk