

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge at 6:40 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair
Mr. Richard Carpender, V. Chair

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend, Clerk
Mr. Jamie Heaney
Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Mrs. Marge Levesque
Mr. Douglas Wilkey

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Ms. Chris Tague, Mrs. Patti Cofield

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender 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 recessed at 6:40 PM and resumed at 7:12 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge reported that she attended the World Affairs Essay Contest Symposium at Salve Regina University, where Portsmouth High School Student Savannah Geasey was recognized for winning first place. She announced that the Portsmouth High School Choral Concert is being held on May 22, 2007; and the 15th Annual Regional Special Needs Recognition Program is being held on May 30, 2007. She reminded everyone that the School Committee will be presenting the budget to the Town Council on May 16, 2007.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi announced that Mrs. Kelly Goss, 4th Grade Teacher at Hathaway School, was selected as the Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year. She will receive a \$1,000 check to purchase items for Hathaway school. She also announced that Savannah Geasey was the winner of the Aquidneck Collaborative for Education's World Affairs Essay Contest after a very strong showing from a number of PHS students. Dr. Lusi would like to invite Mrs. Goss and Savannah Geasey to the next School Committee meeting for recognition.

Dr. Lusi announced that last week was Teacher Appreciation Week, and she attended the celebration put on by NEA Portsmouth on Tuesday. She thanked all of our teachers for their very fine work. She announced that Portsmouth Middle School is having its Teacher Appreciation luncheon on May 24, 2007, and Mr. Amaral has invited the School Committee members to attend.

Dr. Lusi acknowledged Ms. Chris Tague, our new Director of Finance and Administration. She reported that she, Ms. Tague, and Assistant Superintendent Jermain, attended the RISSA/RIASBO Annual Meeting last Friday. The conference provided school leaders with the Senate perspective on the formulation of the 3050 legislation. Rhode Island state leaders

from the educational, legislative, and economic development side participated in a panel discussion highlighting the impact of Senate 3050 on the already limited education resources and the potential consequential impact on student achievement. She offered to bring a resolution to the next meeting, should the Committee so desire. She stated that Senator Levesque spoke at the meeting, and the theme was basically “surviving the perfect storm.” He spoke on the need for something like 3050 and the need to find ways to fund it.

The Lance Cpl. Barton Carroll Road Race is being held on Sunday, May 20, 2007, at Portsmouth High School, and proceeds will support our Portsmouth Public Education Foundation.

Dr. Lusi announced that we will be withdrawing Items b-d) on the Consent Agenda, and Item d) on the Business Agenda.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Assistant Superintendent Jermain stated that two grants have been received. The first is the DOCE grant, which was an Aquidneck Island Collaborative effort with RWU and URI. The purpose of the grant is to provide additional content knowledge about coastal and ocean environments and have teachers share this knowledge with their students as they work in our communities on important environmental issues. Mr. Erin Esher, PMS Teacher, and Ms. Elaine Amaral, PHS Teacher, are working with students in an effort to build stewardship. For two weeks during the summer, they will be looking at different areas on Aquidneck Island. Field trips supported by the grant will be implemented for PMS and PHS students. The teachers receive college credit and a stipend of \$800, and PMS and PHS receive at least \$1000 for science equipment.

The second grant we received is one that Ms. Rose Muller and Ms. Gail Darmody applied for. We will be receiving 20 new computers, some scanners, and several digital cameras; and they will go towards the Senior Projects at PHS. This equipment was greatly needed because of the number of students who will be participating in Senior Project next year. This was one of our efforts in looking for alternative funding. She congratulated sixteen teachers who will be trained for two weeks over the summer on how to use this technology to assist with Senior Project next fall.

Assistant Superintendent Jermain announced that Madison Burns and Emily Franz were selected as Rhode Island Middle Level Scholar-Leader recipients for Portsmouth Middle School based on scholarship and leadership. This award is given annually by the New England League of Middle Schools to the top two scholar leaders of each Rhode Island high school. The students will be attending a dinner in West Warwick on Tuesday, May 22, 2007, to receive their awards.

Assistant Superintendent Jermain displayed a very large binder with samples of some of the work and effort that is taking place at the high school regarding the new graduation

requirements. The binder is one of the requirements that had to be submitted to the Commissioner to ensure that we are in compliance with the new regulations. The binder shows the evidence of what our teachers and school district are doing at the high school in order to meet the new regulations. She thanked all the teachers for putting this information together, and she thanked Ms. Lisa Murphy and Mr. Mike Podraza for leading the effort.

All the parents will be sent a letter from RIDE informing them that there is a new state-wide curriculum, which is available online at www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/curriculum. As part of the curriculum roll-out, we are scheduled to attend a meeting on June 6, 2007, with a Portsmouth team to see a presentation from RIDE. If any of the School Committee members are interested in attending that day, they are welcome to join the team. Middletown, Newport, and Portsmouth are meeting jointly to see what each school system is doing.

The professional development roll-out for elementary teachers is happening tomorrow. We were contacted by Tim Hawkes from Harvard University, and Assistant Superintendent Jermain will be meeting with him tomorrow to discuss other ways of doing professional development.

- b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Tague reported that the Committee has received the March financial statements, and she is working on the April statements. She is looking forward to working with the School Committee over the next several weeks on the operating budget.
- c) **High School Liaison, Marissa Mello:** Absent.

3. SPOTLIGHT

- a) **Chemistry Teachers of the Year.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to commend Thomas Holstein and Mickey Beebe for being selected as the Chemistry Teachers of Year in Rhode Island by the New England Institute of Chemists. So voted 7-0.
- b) **Athletic Administrators - State Award of Merit.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the Committee commends Michael Lunney for receiving the State Award of Merit by the Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. This item was moved to the next agenda.
- c) **National Board Certification.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to commend Michele Polselli for receiving National Board Certification for Professional Teaching Standards in the area of Early Childhood/Generalist. So voted 7-0.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mr. Heaney to approve of the minutes of the meeting held April 24, 2007. So voted 6-0-1. Mrs. Levesque abstained due to her absence from that meeting.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Items b), c), and d) were withdrawn from the agenda by Dr. Lusi.

- a) **Appt. – Custodian, Category A, PHS.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to affirm the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-5/15/07, to the position of Custodian, Category A, at Portsmouth High School, effective May 8, 2007. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointment of Mr. Robert Ibbotson to the position of Custodian, Category A, at Portsmouth High School.
- b) **Appt. – Custodian, Category A, PMS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #2-5/15/07, to the position of Custodian, Category A, at Portsmouth Middle School, effective May 16, 2007. This item was removed from the agenda.
- c) **Appt. – General School Aide, Melville.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #3-5/15/07, to the position of General School Aide at Melville School, effective May 16, 2007." This item was removed from the agenda.
- d) **Appt. – Network Administrator.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #4-5/15/07, to the position of Network Administrator, effective May 16, 2007." This item was removed from the agenda.

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Appt. – Facilities Supervisor.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mr. Heaney to affirm the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #5-5/15/07, to the position of Facilities Supervisor, effective June 4, 2007. So voted 7 -0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointment of Mr. George Simmons to the position of Facilities Supervisor.
- b) **Request for Approval – Policy #4351, Web Mail Guidelines, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve as a second reading and adopt proposed Policy #4351, Web Mail Guidelines. So voted 7-0.

- c) **Request for Approval – Policy #4352, Software Licensing, Approval, and Installation, 1st Reading.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve proposed Policy #4352, Software Licensing, Approval, and Installation, as a first reading. So voted 7-0.

- d) **Request for Approval – Proposed Revisions to Policy #5116, Residence Requirements, 1st Reading.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the Committee approves the proposed revisions to Policy #5116, Residence Requirements, as a first reading.” This item was removed from the agenda.

- e) **Discussion on FY’07-08 Budget.** Dr. Lusi distributed a Warrant Fact Sheet. She announced that she and Mr. Carpenter will be presenting the proposed budget to the Town Council tomorrow night. She stated that she and Ms. Tague met with Mr. Faucher and Mr. Driscoll yesterday and discussed some of the issues involved. Regarding the building warrant, the total accrued money remaining is \$589,225. The amount we have spent in building warrant money since July 2005 through the present is approximately \$470,000. She stated that it’s not the case that we haven’t been using money, but it is the case that we have not used all that has accrued over time. We do have a number of projects planned for now through the end of the summer, such as resurfacing the high school track, replacing windows to make the buildings more energy efficient, and fixing the floor near the old PHS gym. Estimates for these projects total almost \$331,000. Dr. Lusi stated that since we just hired a new facilities supervisor, we will now have the ability to develop a full facilities plan. Portsmouth School Department has Housing Aid approval for FY07-11 for a total of \$1,750,000, and \$583,333 of this amount is reimbursable. She stated that giving up the building warrant at this time may jeopardize our housing aid approval that we already have in hand, as well as the reimbursement, and could lead to deferred maintenance problems in the future, as it will not be possible to fund capital projects through the operational budget. Ms. Tague stated that one of the suggestions they discussed was extending the longevity of the bonds for maintenance projects out to 10-15 years; however, we’d pay more in interest. The rating agencies may look unfavorably upon us if we defer our maintenance because it puts pressure on the operating budget, which could cause us to go out for a bond in future years. Regarding Technology and Instructional Materials Warrant, Dr. Lusi said all monies, save for \$367, are encumbered and will be spent by the end of the fiscal year. She stated that the warrant is crucial to next year’s operation of our educational programs because we have nearly \$100,000 in software licensing district-wide, \$100,000 for new textbook series in math K-12, PHS Science, Grade 12 English, and Grade 9 Social Studies, \$35,000 for library books, over \$115,000 in Technology hardware. These expenses will have to be added to our operational budget if not funded through the warrant, making it impossible to stay within the state-imposed budget cap. Mr. Carpenter reiterated Dr. Lusi’s comments on the reimbursement for the housing aid. We may jeopardize that aid beyond the first year should we break the continuity. In the first part of the Technology and Instructional

Materials warrant, \$100,000 is for district-wide licensing fees, which are annual fees. Part of that is textbook implementation, and many of our textbooks need to be replaced because they are old. Mr. Carpender stated that to the best of his knowledge, we are in violation because our textbooks are supposed to be recycled every 5 or so years. We might have had a history book that only goes up to the landing on the moon. These are things that need to be done, and hopefully, we can come to some kind of plan with the Council so that we can accomplish this.

- f) **Discussion on Teacher Recalls.** Dr. Lusi distributed confidential backup for this item but stated that this is purely for discussion purposes at this time. She explained to the public why it is confidential. She stated that a teacher who is displaced is guaranteed a job, just not their current job. She suggested that we recall to their current positions the librarians, nurses, and Guidance Counselor at the elementary level. That would restore the full compliment of nurses, guidance counselors, and librarians. The only other recall she is recommending at this time is the teacher listed second on Page 2 because of a pending resignation. She stated that the first Job Fair is scheduled to be held on June 5th, and she explained that the Job Fair is the contractual mechanism for matching teachers to jobs. Teachers on lay-off are not allowed to participate in the Job Fair. After the Job Fair, depending on the results, we would then be able to call back additional teachers. Dr. Lusi stated that anyone who is on lay-off when school ends may file for unemployment. Mr. Carpender supports moving forward with the recalls. He also reiterated that there are 35 positions that are in a lay-off situation, and we need to look at the Job Fair and address them so we have the lowest exposure possible to unemployment. The Council is scheduled to vote on the final budget on June 25th, but the last day of school is June 20th. By the time the Council votes, the teachers will already be on unemployment. Ms. Tague stated that the unemployment costs are approximately \$13,000 per week, if everyone goes on unemployment.
- g) **Discussion/Approval – March Financial Statements.** Mr. Carpender made a motion to approve the March Financial Statements. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi reported that there are pieces of the budget that are not encumbered. Right now, we have a number of long-term substitutes, and that is why Ms. Tague is looking closely at the April financials to see where we are. Sometimes we have money encumbered that we may not need and that could be moved to other accounts.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

- a) **Finance:** Mr. Carpender stated that the School Committee will present their proposed budget request to the Town Council tomorrow night at 7:00 PM.
- b) **Policy:** Mrs. Levesque stated that a policy meeting was held on May 10, 2007, to discuss the software policy. She reported that the policies on software and webmail were generated by representatives from all three school levels, as well as community members. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the residency policy.

- c) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC):** Mrs. Cortvriend stated that a GCOC meeting was held last week. She reported that the sewer is the last piece of Phase 1, and it is just about complete. Work on the bricks is continuing, and the committee is looking at a possible change of domestic water. The next meeting will take place on Monday, May 21, 6:00 PM, at the PHS Library.
- d) **Fundraising:** No report.

Ms. Wedge reported that an Executive Session was held prior to this meeting for personnel and contractual issues, and no votes were taken. A motion was made to seal the minutes by Mr. Heaney and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk