

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge at 6:05 PM. The following members were present:

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

Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Mrs. Marge Levesque  
Mr. Jamie Heaney

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Ms. Christine Tague, Mrs. Patti Cofield, and Miss Julie MacDougall

Absent: Mrs. Terri Cortvriend, Clerk; Mr. Douglas Wilkey

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 5-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:05 PM and resumed at 7:00 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held at 6:05 PM on a personnel matter. One vote was taken, and it passed 5-0.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi announced that the Performance Audit by Berkshire will be publicly presented on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 6:00 PM, in a joint workshop with the Town Council. Only the School Committee and Town Council will be allowed to ask questions and make comments at that meeting. The public will have a separate opportunity to ask questions on Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, at a location to be determined. The report will be made available to everyone on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be posted to the Town's website 11:00 AM. Copies for the public will be available at the School Department. Dr. Lusi also announced that the School Committee's budget presentation to the Town Council will take place on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall.

Dr. Lusi reported that she and Mrs. Wedge have been attending meetings of the Aquidneck Island Study Group, which includes members of the School Committee, School Department, Town Council, and Town Administration of each of the three island communities. This group hired RIPEC through the support of each School Committee and Town Council to do a study on our financial future -- requested expenditures versus our revenue -- given the Senate 3050 cap.

The report will be presented to the School Committees, Town Councils, and the public, at a convocation on Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM at the CCRI Auditorium in Newport. Dr. Lusi distributed a spreadsheet regarding House Bill 7957, which is a funding formula bill that proposes to redistribute existing state aid based on the formula, looking at student need and ability to pay. The formula calls for 25 percent in the first year, 75 percent in the second year, and 100 percent in third year. This means that for Portsmouth, we would lose almost

\$1.7 million this year, over \$5 million the following year, and all in the third year; and the same is the case for Newport and Middletown. She stated that Aquidneck Island does not fare well under this proposed legislation. She is still working with the Funding Our Future group, and they will be finishing their legislation next week and scheduling meetings at the State House. She realizes that urban areas absolutely need funding; however, for communities such as ours, with the tax cap and level funding in state aid this year, it would be an impossible situation. If the School Department were to lose \$1.7 million, it would exceed what we were allowed on the local side going forward, based on the cap. The funding group is trying to make sure this doesn't happen.

Dr. Lusi stated that she received a number of questions from the community regarding busing students across the school districts as a result of maximizing class size throughout the district. She has been looking at whether or not the elementary school districts need to be redefined in the near future. She announced that she will be sending a letter to realtors reminding them that it is no longer a guarantee that children will attend their neighborhood district school.

Dr. Lusi thanked Gina Macris from the Providence Journal for working with her on the Town and Municipal Budget articles and for correcting the FTE information for the School Department. She stated that Portsmouth has one of the lowest, instead of one of the highest, FTEs.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Assistant Superintendent Jermain thanked the teachers who were presenting the electronic portfolio to the Committee. She also thanked Rose Muller for attending the PTO meetings to explain our technology; and our Literacy Coordinator, Denise Dvorak, for presenting a snapshot of what is going on in literacy across the district to the Committee. She announced that the East Bay Education Collaborative is visiting our last elementary school to observe classroom teaching. They will report out to the staff, share their observation, and pose questions they may have. Mrs. Jermain stated that she attended the Change Leadership Group at Harvard last week and will be going back this Sunday and Monday for another session. Lastly, she announced that Mrs. Gail Darmody will be bringing forward some technology policies in the near future.
- b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Tague reported that a handout was distributed about House Bill 7158 requiring all municipalities to participate in the State healthcare plan, which is currently with United Health. Portsmouth is a member of GHGRI, which is comprised of eight separate communities and represents \$52 million in risk sharing. The legislature estimates a \$17 million savings for communities; however, GHGRI is questioning some of the calculations used in determining the savings. GHGRI submitted a letter to the Portsmouth delegation asking them to keep an open mind as to whether H-7158 will indeed save money for GHGRI municipalities and school districts. There are currently seven additional communities considering joining the consortium.

- c) **High School Liaison:** Miss Julie MacDougall announced that the Senior's Variety Show will be held this Thursday at 7:00 PM. Also on Thursday, the sophomores are collecting old semi-formal or prom dresses for a sale on Saturday from noon to 5:00 PM.

### 3. **SPOTLIGHT**

- a) **Senior Project Presentations:** Dr. Lusi introduced the Senior Project Coordinators, Ms. Julie Bisbano and Mrs. Patty McCarthy. Ms. Bisbano explained the process of completing a Senior Project. She stated that the students recently finished their research papers, and now they are reviewing the product part of their projects. She stated that they started with 267 students this year; and one student, Savannah Geasey, would be presenting her project to the Committee this evening.

Miss Savannah Geasey gave a thorough and impressive presentation on her Senior Project to the Committee. She spent four weeks working in orphanages in Nairobi, Kenya, last summer and worked as a liaison for an organization called, "Flying Kites," which was in the process of founding an orphanage. Her minister from St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth was her mentor, and she gave a sermon to the congregation about her project.

A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter to commend Savannah Geasey for her presentation on her Senior Project entitled, "Reflections of Kenya," and for her continued commitment to the Flying Kites organization and children in need. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 5-0.

Mrs. Patty McCarthy demonstrated the Rhode Island electronic portfolio system that gathers the evidence of student learning. Portsmouth became a member in the fall, and we've used it as a classroom management tool for teachers and a curriculum mapping system to align us with state standards. The high school also uses it for Senior Projects.

### 4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Heaney requested that the minutes be amended to include the location of the meeting, which was at Town Hall. A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the minutes of the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting as amended. So voted 5-0.

### 5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Wedge announced that Item c) was being moved to the Business 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. – Systems Administrator.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-4/8/08, to the position of Systems Administrator, effective April 8, 2008."
- c) **Coaching Appts. – PHS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the coaching appointments at Portsmouth High School for the 2007-08 spring season as presented."

Mr. Carpender made a motion to approve Items b) and c) on the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 5-0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointment of Mr. Brian Freeman to the position of Systems Administrator.

6. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- c) **Coaching Appts. – PHS.** Mr. Carpender stated that he requested that this item be moved to the Business Agenda so discussion could take place on it. He stated that coaching appointments should be brought to the School Committee by a specified date, and he would like to see them come forward more readily whenever possible. He also stated that the backup information doesn't indicate whether or not these candidates have had background checks and first aid certificates. A discussion took place regarding adding these requirements to the Hiring Form. Mr. Carpender made a motion to approve the coaching appointments as presented, contingent upon verification of background checks and first aid certificates. Seconded by Mr. Heaney. So voted 5-0. Dr. Lusi announced the following appointments and reappointments:

Appointments:

Shaun Horgan	Head Coach	Boys Outdoor Track
Steve Trezvant	Head Coach	Girls Outdoor Track
Joel DeMarco	Assistant	Baseball
Bob Champion	Volunteer	Baseball
Mike Botelho	Assistant	Baseball

Reappointments:

Gary Eggeman	Assistant	Softball
Cheryl Kearns	Assistant	Girls Outdoor Track
James Peluso	Assistant	Boys Outdoor Track
John Heino	Head Coach	Boys Lacrosse
Myke Hurley	Volunteer	Boys Lacrosse
Bryan Kriner	Volunteer	Baseball

Business Agenda Items:

- a) **Presentation on the Literacy Initiative.** Mrs. Denise Dvorak gave an in-depth Power-point presentation on the Literacy Initiative. She reported that the district collects data on our students and compares patterns and trends to the NECAP data. Mr. Carpender referred to the 3-year analysis of the Junior Class and stated that it appears that we've made a lot of progress there. Assistant Superintendent Jermain stated that we are hoping to have fewer students who enter the high school reading below grade level. Extended school day, tutoring help, and summer school for enrichment are all being offered to students. One of our district's four guiding principles is that we understand that it is the quality of the instruction and the quality of practice to reach all students.
- b) **Support of Town Council Resolution to the General Assembly in Support of House Bill #7108.** Mr. Carpender read the Town Council's resolution to the General Assembly in support of House Bill #7108, which would prohibit language in collective bargaining agreements between the state and certain state employees and between the cities and towns and their employees and in arbitration awards which contain language identifying a specific medical, dental, or optometric medical insurance company, as a viable and effective way to slow down the ever-increasing health insurance and administrative costs facing Portsmouth and, in turn, to provide much needed savings to the taxpayers of Portsmouth. Mr. Carpender thinks it is worth supporting. Therefore, he made a motion to endorse the Town Council's resolution in support of House Bill #7108 and that the endorsement be transmitted to the individuals who are cc'd on the correspondence. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 5-0. Dr. Lusi added that our contract allows us to choose our provider; however, there are a number of contracts in the state that name a specific provider, such as Blue Cross.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

- a) **Finance.** Mr. Carpender announced that the Budget Presentation to Town Council will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup>.
- b) **Policy.** Mrs. Levesque stated that she is in the process of coordinating dates for the next meeting.
- c) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC).** Dr. Lusi stated that the SC received a couple of handouts from the last GCOC meeting. A memo that was transmitted to Luis Torrado summarizing the agreements made in the meeting and the update on the funds available for building phase 2.
- d) **Facilities.** Mike said a tour of Hathaway will take place tomorrow at 4PM. Public is invited.

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn the meeting.  
So voted 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield  
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk