

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge at 6:30 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair	Mrs. Cortvriend, Clerk	Mrs. Marge Levesque
Mr. Richard Carpender, V. Chair	Mr. Jamie Heaney	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Assistant Superintendent Jermain, Christine Tague, Patti Cofield, and Kathyne Bauchspies (High School Liaison)

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 6-0.

The Public Session recessed at 6:35 PM and resumed at 7:00 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held on a personnel matter, and no votes were taken. A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to seal the minutes. So voted 6-0. Ms. Wedge announced that "School Committee 101" training will take place at RIASC on November 22nd. She also announced that the PHS Athletic Boosters' fundraiser will be held on November 22nd, from 6:00 to 10:00 PM at the Glen Manor House. The tickets are \$50 per person. The Rhode Island Interlocal Trust's Member Appreciation Reception is being held on December 4th from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at their office in East Providence.

Ms. Wedge presented Mrs. Cortvriend with a Town tile plaque in appreciation of her years of service on the Portsmouth School Committee, and she thanked her for her countless hours of services to the Portsmouth School Community. Ms. Wedge appointed Mrs. Cortvriend to the Facilities Committee.

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi thanked Mrs. Cortvriend for putting in countless hours of service and her commitment to the School Committee and School Department. She greeted and congratulated our two new School Committee members, Angela Volpicelli and Marilyn King.

Dr. Lusi gave an update on the certification of the election. There are still 51 votes in question on the Town vote but not on the School Committee vote. The Board of Elections and our town solicitor agreed that it was not a problem to certify the School Committee election. Therefore, we will have a very brief swearing in ceremony in the Planning Room Board Room on November 24th at 7:00 PM. The formal swearing in ceremony for the Town Council and School Committee members will be on December 1st in the Town Council Chamber.

Dr. Lusi announced that the School Committee retreat will be held on December 5th and 6th at the Hampton Inn and Conference Center in Middletown. She thanked Mr. Buddemeyer for hosting the retreat. An agenda will be distributed to the Committee next week.

Dr. Lusi distributed a letter from NEASC regarding the continuation of the accreditation at PHS. The school had to submit a 2-year progress report, and the commission was very pleased and complimentary of PHS.

Dr. Lusi announced that she received a letter from RIDE informing her that PHS Science Teacher, Jeffrey Schoonover, has been selected to take part in the RI Science Education Leadership Council.

Dr. Lusi reported that she received an email from Mr. Driscoll this afternoon that was sent to the Town Council that announced that Gary Sasse and Peder Schaefer of the new Department of Revenue met with the League's Executive Board to discuss the State budget deficit, which now stands at \$357 million for this fiscal year (\$230 million is attributable to revenue shortfalls, and \$137 million to overspending). Mr. Driscoll indicated that he was advised that mid-year cuts to both school aid and general revenue sharing are "on the table," though it does not appear that anything will be announced until January. Gary Sasse stated that the Governor's supplemental budget proposal to the General Assembly could contain local cost reduction measures, and Mr. Driscoll indicated that the League quickly proposed a statutory universal 20 percent health insurance co-payment, among other things, to allow municipalities to control costs as revenues are reduced. Ominously, FY 2010's budget deficit is now estimated at \$461 million. Dr. Lusi stated that it is not a pretty budget picture, and the rumor mill is rampant. She will keep the Committee posted.

Dr. Lusi stated that the Funding Our Future conference that was scheduled for today was postponed. The group is now discussing having the conference sometime in January, once the new general assembly is seated.

Dr. Lusi gave an update on Strategic Planning. She stated that Mrs. Cofield has been preparing the invitations that will go to the organizations, and they will be sent out this week. We have secured conference room space through Roger Williams University, although we are still trying to clarify the logistics of that. Dr. Martin offered to have it at Hathaway School; however, there is an issue with parking. Our facilitator, Jan Williams, met with the administrative team and the Task Force that was assembled to help secure donations, etc. Members of the Task Force are Martha Costa, Maryanne Raymo, Kevin McCarthy, Anne Burns, George Silvia, Chris Carceller, and Priscilla Wimpress.

Dr. Lusi announced that she attended the District Management Council's meeting in Boston on November 9th and 10th. The focus of the meeting was on succession planning and the importance of growing school principals and central office staff from within. She also announced that a Professional Development session was held for the administrative team

earlier in the month, and the primary focus was on mathematics and becoming more concrete on a daily basis on how we will work together to improve teaching, learning and student achievement in this area forward.. In addition, she announced that the NACTC Coordinating Committee met last Friday. Our enrollment at the center this year is 2 full-time and 8 part-time students. We had 3 full-time and 10 part-time students attend last year. Dr. Lusi stated that we have not received a bill yet, but tuition is somewhat lower this year than last. She thanked Newport for trying to contain costs.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Assistant Superintendent Jermain stated that it has been a pleasure and honor to work with Mrs. Cortvriend. She announced that PMS distributed report cards today, and PHS distributed them last week. The elementary schools will distribute their report cards during the second week of December. The elementary report cards have been standardized, and Mrs. Jermain will email a copy to the Committee. Mrs. Jermain reported that she attended a conference on math instruction today with Kristen Borges, Patti McCarthy, Beth Roman, and Kelly Goss. It is important that we have a very strong math curriculum to ensure that all of our students are proficient in math. Mrs. Jermain stated that a lot of curriculum work is going on, as we need to have a clear roadmap as to what needs to be learned and when. We are reviewing our curriculum in all of our content areas to ensure that the GSEs and GLEs are being covered at each level. The NECAP scores will now be going on student transcripts. She commended PMS for inviting representatives from Grades 5 and 9 to speak to each of the content area teachers in an effort to ensure that we are not duplicating some of our teaching efforts at different levels. Mrs. Jermain reported that technology training is also being implemented. Grade 8 students must take a technology assessment test and must pass it in the spring of this year. She attended a meeting at PMS this afternoon to discuss it. The curriculum has been adapted and changed for the Grade 8 students. We will have 75 students take the pilot test within the next couple of weeks, and the rest of the students will take the test in May. There is no charge to take it. In the fall, the teachers, principals, library media specialists, and administrators must take this test. This is all part of federal grants through Title III, and it is a requirement of school districts if you want to receive federal grant money going forward. Mrs. Jermain announced that we will be test-piloting the AlertNow system in the coming weeks. AlertNow is a telephone system that alerts our community if there is a school cancellation, an issue at the schools, etc.
- b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Tague reported that her department is still working on the Uniform Chart of Accounts. She will wait until January to present the information to the School Committee, as it will be more beneficial to the Committee in understanding the overall budget process.
- c) **High School Liaison:** Portsmouth High School student Kathyne Bauchspies was present on behalf of Amy Larsen. She reported that a Blood Drive will be held this Friday, and PHS has been the Number 1 school in Rhode Island in terms of participation. Next

Tuesday, the Student Council will be making pies for the Senior Center and eight food baskets for Thanksgiving. Half of the baskets are for St. Barnabas Church, and the other half is for families in need within our community. Next Monday and Tuesday, the high school is holding a letter-writing campaign rally for St. Jude Children's Hospital. She announced that Portsmouth High School raised \$20,000 last year and was the Number 1 high school in the country.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the meetings held on October 7, 2008, and October 28, 2008. So voted 6-0.

4. **SPOTLIGHT**

- a) **PHS Science Department Summer Endeavors.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to commend the PHS Science Department for their 2008 educational summer endeavors, as well as all of their work towards improving science education for PHS students. So voted 6-0. Mr. Schoonover explained the various efforts of the PHS Science Department. Mr. Carpender commented that the summer work of the science department totaled over 156 work days – a far cry from teachers having the summers off.
- b) **PHS Athletic Dept. Donation to Iraqi Children.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to commend the PHS Athletic Department for their support of a soccer tournament designed to bring the Iraqi civilians, Iraqi security forces, and the American forces together in the name of reconciliation and peaceful competition. So voted 6-0. Mr. Lunney introduced Matt Murphy, Dylan Mello, and Jordan Lyons – three members of the Boys' Soccer team who assisted with the effort.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) **Coaching Appts. – PHS.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mr. Heaney to approve the coaching appointments at Portsmouth High School for the 2008-09 school year as presented. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi announced the following re-appointments:

Tara Donovan, Head Coach, Swimming
Mike Botelho, Assistant Coach, Baseball
Joel DeMarco, Assistant Coach, Baseball

She also announced the following appointments:

Steve Trezvant, Strength Coach
James Peluso, Assistant Coach, Indoor Track

6. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

Dr. Lusi requested that Item d) be moved to the top of the Business Agenda.

- d) **Bid Award – PHS Fitness Equipment.** A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend and seconded by Mr. Carpenter to award the contract for fitness equipment at Portsmouth High School to Frontline Fitness Equipment in the amount of \$21,750. So voted 6-0. Mr. Carpenter stated that this will be paid for out of the grant from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, which was specifically for fitness equipment for the mezzanine. Mr. Blaess stated that they are purchasing reconditioned equipment. They were originally looking at equipment that was over \$40,000, but by purchasing reconditioned equipment, they are getting more pieces of equipment at a lower price. Dr. Lusi thanked Mr. Blaess and Mr. Lunney. She also thanked Mr. Medeiros, Mrs. Fitzgerald, and the rest of the PHS Physical Education Department for putting together the grant from van Beuren.
- a) **Special Education Presentation.** Mrs. Martins distributed and reviewed her Powerpoint presentation on the Newport Country Regional Special Education program, which serves the towns of Little Compton, Tiverton, Middletown, and Portsmouth. The superintendents of each town form the Regional Board of Superintendents, which acts as the School Committee for the regional program. The total number of students receiving special education services in the four towns, according to the December 2007 census, was 1,580. The total number of staff members working for the region this year is 246.7. Mrs. Martins reviewed the eligibility categories Special Education, and the Framework for the 2008-09 school year. She also reviewed the School Support Visit findings, and the Student Assessment implications, and the major changes in the RI Special Education Regulations. She also talked briefly about the region's 2008-09 budget, which is \$15,013,817. Portsmouth's portion is \$5,295,978.98. Mrs. Levesque inquired about the need for a sign interpreter and the duties of the Adaptive PE teacher. Mrs. Martins stated that we don't have a need for a sign interpreter at this time, and the Adaptive PE teacher covers all services for the number of students who require adaptive physical education.
- b) **Ratification of In\$ite Report.** Ms. Tague distributed the In\$ite Report, which is a state-reporting mechanism. The Committee will ratify the report at the December meeting.
- c) **Report on October Financials.** Ms. Tague reviewed the October Financials. In the area of revenue, given the State's overall fiscal condition, there is a very high probability of mid-year local aid cuts to both the school department and town departments. If the cuts were to occur on just the general aid for the school department of \$5,366,800; every percentage point in cuts would translate into \$53,668 annualized. Regarding Little Compton Tuition, if the attendance holds the same all year, we will have a positive variance of approximately \$21,000. The budget for Medicaid receipts for FY'09 totals

\$348,000, minus received payments, is \$148,000. Ms. Tague stated that we have been informed by the Region that there is another \$123,000 to date accumulated, with eight months still remaining to be transferred against the balance of \$148,000. Any additional receipts can be utilized to offset other revenue short falls and state aid budget cuts. The additional state aid set-aside budget of \$138,000 from gambling receipts has generated approximately \$24,000 to date. However, there is a real potential that this may be cut as well to offset local aid cuts. On the expenditure side, in the area of Salaries & Benefits, Ms. Tague stated that we are still running a positive variance in salaries, once adjusted for encumbrances for all known salaries and budget allocations for contingency salary, of about \$102,000. There is still some concern for the number of long-term substitutes due to maternity leaves, which could seriously affect the Substitute line item account. However, our recent analyses determined that of the nine employees on leave, five were without pay or will be without pay prior to their return from leave, which would have a potential positive offset in the salary accounts. Additionally there is concern for time off due to personal days, as this impact does not generally occur until the end of the school year. Concerning benefits, our experience to date on health care is running about 8 percent over the anticipated funding rate. This is primarily due to nine participants who have substantially higher claims than the norm, but are way below our stop loss reinsurance rate. These nine participant claims alone attribute 24 percent of the total claims bill for the month. She will keep the Committee informed as this could result in a hefty increase for the upcoming Fiscal Year. The Town is also seeing a similar aberration. Ms. Tague reported that in anticipation of state aid cuts, a directive has been given to all building level administrators that have budgetary control, not to exceed 80 percent of all line items for the remainder of this Fiscal Year. This directive would result in savings to offset state aid cuts of approx \$133,400 excluding accounts for athletics and band. The additional impact if these line items were included in the 80 percent rule would be approximately another \$49,600. In the area of Utilities, Ms. Tague reported that while the cost of gasoline prices has gone down since last August, Portsmouth did participate in the EBEC bid for No. 2 fuel oil, which locked us in for the year at a price per gallon of \$3.45 until June 30, 2009. However, while the price of gasoline is dropping, the price of home heating fuel has still not dropped proportionately. The Electricity budget of \$291,754 is already spent by \$123,781 or 41.57 percent. This percentage spent to date is attributable to a reduction in the total budget for the anticipated savings from the Wind Turbine project of approximately \$128,000. It is anticipated that the turbine will be fully functional by January 2009 to achieve the anticipated savings. Regarding other major expenses, Ms. Tague reported that last month, the Board of Superintendent for the Region approved the special education budget. The impact to the Portsmouth School Department is an additional \$250,000 over the original budget. However, the savings in out-of-district placements of approximately \$202,000 will offset this variance. This variance was anticipated and will offset the regional cost increase because of more in district placements for the special needs students. The cost saving will continue to accrue as out of district tuition increases generally trend about 10 to 15 percent. Since we have not received the first bill for the career and technical school, in anticipation of it, we have

encumbered \$150,000. In the area of Transportation, the budget is currently being analyzed for potential variances. However, since we are only in the second month for regular transportation, that review is still ongoing to ensure we have all transportation costs for projection purposes for the remainder of the Fiscal Year. Ms. Tague will report out next month concerning this matter. Regarding Professional Fees, the EBEC assessment of \$25,952 will be offset by a surplus distribution declared last fiscal year. The Committee will vote on the October financials at the December meeting.

7. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

- a) **Finance.** No report.
- b) **Policy.** No report.
- c) **GCOC.** A motion was made by Mrs. Cortvriend and seconded by Mr. Heaney to dissolve the GCOC Subcommittee. Should anything arise in the mezzanine, Don Davidson will handle it. He is working on a minor punchlist. If something else arises, it can go through the Facilities Committee. So voted 6-0. A spreadsheet on fundraising was distributed. Mrs. Cortvriend stated that some of the figures are estimates, and they are awaiting bills.
- d) **Facilities.** Mr. Buddemeyer announced that the next meeting will take place at the PHS Library on November 25th at 4:00 PM to go over RGB's findings as a subcommittee before it is presented to the School Committee. The presentation will most likely be on the December 16th agenda.

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mr. Heaney to adjourn the meeting. So voted 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk