

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by the Chairman, Mr. Carpender, and the following members were present:

Mr. Richard Carpender, Chair	Mrs. Marge Levesque, Clerk	Ms. Marilyn King
Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Vice Chair	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer	Ms. Angela Volpicelli
	Mr. Jamie Heaney	

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Christine Tague, Patti Cofield, and Madison Burns (High School Liaison)

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mr. Heaney to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exception (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. So voted 7-0.

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

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Mr. Carpender reported on the big issues facing us. He stated that Dr. Lusi has worked on a number of recommendations from the Berkshire Report, but we need to continue to work on it over the next couple of years. He also reported that the Facilities Committee has a lot of work to do, which will be a challenge in the coming years. The Future Search Committee will be working on decisions at the community level on where we want our school system to go. Mr. Carpender looks forward to working with everyone on these issues while we strive to have one of the best systems in Rhode Island. He thanked Mrs. Wedge for her leadership over the last four years on the Committee. Mr. Carpender announced the subcommittee assignments as follows:

Finance Subcommittee:	Mr. Buddemeyer, Mrs. Levesque, and Mrs. King
Policy Subcommittee:	Ms. Wedge, Ms. Volpicelli, and Mr. Heaney
Facilities Subcommittee:	Mr. Buddemeyer
Negotiations Subcommittee:	Mr. Carpender, Mrs. Levesque, Mr. Heaney

Mr. Carpender reported that an Executive Session was held prior to this meeting to discuss negotiations, and no votes were taken. A motion was made by Mr. Heaney and seconded by Ms. Wedge to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender announced that Item A on the Business Agenda was being removed from the agenda. A status update will be given under the Subcommittee Reports.

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi congratulated Mr. Michael Medeiros for achieving National Board Certification in the area of Early Adolescence Through Young Adulthood/Physical Education. She announced that the first issue of this year's Patriot Ledger is available online at <http://phspatriots.com/ledger/ledger.htm>. Dr. Lusi thanked Mr.

John Blaess for agreeing to chair a team of administrators who will be looking at the student code of conduct. This task was one of the recommendations coming out of the Berkshire Report. Dr. Lusi announced that a local citizen brought to her attention that the recent U.S. News and World Report rankings of states by quality of high schools ranked Rhode Island 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Rhode Island was tied with New Jersey and was behind Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, California, and Virginia. Dr. Lusi also announced that the Future Search Conference will be held on Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. She thanked Dr. Martin for offering to host the conference at Hathaway School. She also thanked NewportFed and President/CEO Kevin McCarthy for donating \$500 to the Future Search process. She stated that the Future Search Task Force has been working very hard to solicit donations of food and other support from local businesses, and we will use the grant to fill in for missing items needed to feed and care for 60 to 80 people for two days.

- a) Teaching and Learning: Dr. Lusi announced that Mrs. Jermain is out of the district this evening. She reported that our first elementary standards-based report cards were released last Friday. The purpose of the new report cards is to provide a better indicator for parents on how their students are performing on the standardized tests.
- b) Finance and Operations: Ms. Tague reported that on Monday, she met with the Auditor General's office to request an extension to the 2008 audit. The primary reason for the extension was because we undertook a systems conversion last year. The auditors have been in the past two weeks and have finished up their field work. By law we have to have the audit filed by December 31<sup>st</sup>, so in an abundance of caution we asked for an extension.
- c) High School Liaison: Madison Burns announced that the Student Council held "Santa's Workshop" last Saturday at PHS, and the children did crafts and activities. They raised \$80 and donated it to Lucy's Hearth. They also helped out with the glove drive at Hathaway School and donated money to Caritas House. She thanked the ALP Program and the Garden Club for making the pond repairs. She stated that the students make eight Thanksgiving baskets and baked pies for needy families. They distributed them to the Methodist Church, Lucy's Hearth, and the Martin Luther King Center. She also stated that the Freshman class is hosting a fundraiser at IHOP tomorrow night.

### 3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the minutes of the meetings held November 18, 2008, and November 24, 2008. So voted 7-0.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) **Coaching Appts. – PMS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the Committee affirms the coaching appointments at Portsmouth Middle School for the 2008-09 school year as presented.”
- b) **Approval of Requests for Permission to Home School.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the Committee approves the requests to provide home schooling for the 2008-09 school year for students HS#19-12/08, as listed in the confidential memo dated December 9, 2008, in accordance with the provisions of R.I. Law 16-19-2.”

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. So voted 7-0. Mr. Heaney noted that Lindsay Phillips’ backup was not included, and Dr. Lusi explained that she is one of our teachers and that we could gather the information for him. Dr. Lusi announced the following coaching appointments and reappointment:

Boys’ Basketball Coach	Caitlin Gavin
Track & Field Assistant Coach	Lindsay Phillips
Track & Field Coach	Jessica Kokolski (reappointment)

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Facilities Report.** Presented by Mr. Buddemeyer. This item was removed from the agenda.
- b) **Bid Award – On-Call and Emergency Plumbing Services.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to award the contract for On-Call and Emergency Plumbing Services as presented. So voted 7-0.
- c) **Report on District Accomplishments.** Dr. Lusi gave a Powerpoint presentation overview of the district’s accomplishments over the past three years.
- d) **Student Enrollment Report.** Dr. Lusi presented the student enrollment projections prepared by NESDEC, the New England School Development Council. The Portsmouth School Department is a member of NESDEC, and the enrollment projections are done for free. The projections are based on the official October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment. NESDEC projected our 2008-09 enrollment to be 2859, which is just 6 students below our official October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment of 2865. NESDEC is projecting a total enrollment of 2840 for the 2009-10 school year, which is a reduction of 25 students from the 2008-09 school year.

- e) **Ratification of In\$ite Report.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the In\$ite report. So voted 7-0.
- f) **Approval of October Financials.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the October financials. So voted 7-0. Ms. Tague
- g) **Report on November Financials.** Ms. Tague distributed the November financial report and gave a brief report. Mr. Carpender announced that in the future, the financial reports will be distributed at one meeting and then voted on at the next meeting. The Committee members agreed to the new procedure.
- h) **Preliminary 2009-10 Budget Discussion.** Ms. Tague distributed and reviewed the analysis of the budget gap she prepared. She stated that with the levy increase set at 4.75 percent, it would bring in \$1,273,060 in revenue. Utilizing the 1-time revenue (Fund Balance of \$200,000; EBEC Surplus of \$26,000; GHGRI Surplus of \$95,000; and Regional Surplus of \$79,000), the total net revenue available for FY'2010 is \$873,060. Ms. Tague reviewed anticipated expenditures and the increases we could expect next year. She stated that the total anticipated cost increases, without consideration of settling the teachers' contract or potential decreases in state aid, would be approximately \$914,000, for a total deficit anticipated of \$41,341. Mr. Carpender stated that this information makes us aware of what is going on to assist us in developing our budget. At this point, however, he doesn't want anyone to panic. The Finance Subcommittee needs to think outside the box to see where we are going with this. Mr. Tague stressed that this information assumes that the building, technology, and curriculum warrants continue.
- i) **Ratification of 403B Plan.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the 403B Plan. So voted 7-0. Ms. Tague stated that the contract was awarded to Gateway Keepers, at a 1-time cost of \$750, to take over the administrative planning aspects of the plan.
- j) **Discussion/Action – Statewide Consolidation Proposals.** Mr. Carpender reported that at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee (December 8<sup>th</sup>), the group was presented with some information from Tim Duffy regarding regionalization of different communities. In order to regionalize any districts, that vote needs to go before each of the individual communities. Representative Costantino and Governor Carcieri are talking about getting around that by basically regionalizing the superintendents, e.g., one superintendent for all three Aquidneck Island communities. Representative Costantino has drafted legislation on this. Mr. Carpender stated that when the group met, there were a number of issues they were concerned about, particularly, this being done without any empirical data. The study on regionalization of Aquidneck Island is due out in February. The different communities are saying that this is something they need to take a position on, so he asked

the Committee for authorization for him to write to our legislators asking them not to support moving on regionalization until there was data to inform the decision. Dr. Lusi thinks that the devil is in the details. For Portsmouth, our contracts have been studied more than once in comparison to Middletown and Newport, and our teachers' contract is seen as more economically reasonable. She supports getting the data so that all three communities can make an educated decision. Mr. Carpender asked the Committee to agree to oppose the regionalization of superintendents, at this time, until we have the data. Mrs. Levesque made a motion that the School Committee notifies the legislators that we oppose this document at this time, as we wait for more appropriate data collection. Seconded by Ms. Wedge. Mr. Fitzmorris saluted Mr. Carpender for his caution here and asked that he add to the letter that this matter needs to be submitted to the local voters for approval, as required in the constitution. So voted 7-0.

6. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

- a) **Finance.** Dr. Lusi announced that a joint meeting with the Town Council has been scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup> regarding the budget.
- b) **Policy.** No report.
- c) **Facilities.**
  - 1) **Approval of Progress Payment for Gym Mezzanine.** A motion was made by Mr. Buddemeyer and seconded by Mr. Heaney to approve the progress payment dated 8/30/08, in the amount of \$76,433, to Alhambra Building Company for the High School Gym Mezzanine Project. So voted 7-0.
  - 2) **Approval of Progress Payment for Gym Mezzanine.** A motion was made by Mr. Buddemeyer and seconded by Mr. Heaney to approve the progress payment dated 11/19/08, in the amount of \$62,447, to Alhambra Building Company for the High School Gym Mezzanine Project. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Buddemeyer stated that although the results of the Facilities Report are preliminary, financially, it would be in the best interest of the town to look at reconfiguration and close Elmhurst School as quickly as possible, mainly because of the building issues. All indications in the Facilities Report are pointing to that. Dr. Lusi explained that the new enrollment projections were sent to RGB for the final part of their report. Mr. Buddemeyer stated that he is hoping to present the report at the January 13<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Heaney and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield  
Recording Secretary for:

Marge Levesque, Clerk