

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	Mrs. Marilyn King
Mr. Michael Buddemeyer	Mrs. Cynthia Perrotti	Ms. Angela Volpicelli

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Colleen Jermain, Mark Dunham, and Patti Cofield

Absent: Ms. Sylvia Wedge, V. Chair

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

The Public Session recessed at 6:38 PM and resumed at 7:12 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Mr. Carpender reported on the following:

- An Executive Session was held prior to this meeting. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and was seconded by Mrs. King to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exception (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. So voted 5-0. No motions were made, nor votes taken. A motion to adjourn the Executive Session was made by Mrs. Levesque and was seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-0. A motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session was made by Mrs. Levesque and was seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-0.
- Mr. Carpender attended the Aquidneck Island Regionalization Committee meeting yesterday. RIPEC was present; and they continue to work on their report, which should be available within the next month or so. A representative from NESDEC was also present, and they are working on the Educational Analysis Study. Mr. Carpender and Dr. Lusi met with them yesterday, and they are hoping to have their report finalized by January.
- Ms. Wedge is out of town tonight.

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi reported on the following:

- Open Houses started this week. Dr. Lusi attended the Grade 4 Open House at PMS last night and will attend the Open House for Grades 5 and 7 tomorrow night. The Open House for Grades 6 and 8 will be held Thursday night.
- Regarding Race to the Top, a team is going to Washington this Thursday to meet with the U.S. Department of Education officials. Mrs. Jermain will be attending as the Superintendents' Association President. If everything goes as planned, the money will be obligated at the federal level by the end of the month. RIDE will be working with districts on a scope of work that will be due back in November.

- a) Teaching and Learning: Assistant Superintendent Jermain reported on the following:
- Professional Development was held today throughout the district. At PHS, the teachers worked on Response to Intervention and literacy. The new teacher observation process was reviewed with the elementary teachers. We are getting our district ready for the R.I. model that we will be implementing in 2011-12. It will be aligned to our Strategic Plan goals. Calendars will be sent out within the next two weeks to tell the teachers when their observations will be.
 - Attended PMS Open House last night.
 - The Dana Science Project starts next week.
 - PHS science teacher, Kathleen Beebe, attended the Systems Dynamics Program, which was funded by Mr. Bob Kittredge and a contribution from the PCC. We are starting to have initial talks about how to send additional teachers in the future.
- b) Finance and Operations: No Report.
- c) High School Liaison: Absent.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held August 24, 2010, was made by Mrs. Levesque and was seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Perrotti requested that Item a) be moved to the Business Agenda.

- a) **Appt. –Guidance Counselor, .2 time, Hathaway**: The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-9/14/10, to the position of Guidance Counselor, .2 time, at Hathaway School, effective immediately."
- b) **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."
- c) **Request for 3rd Year Leave of Absence**. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the request for a third year leave of absence in accordance with the backup information."
- d) **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 2010-11 school year for students HS #15 through #20-9/10, as listed in the confidential memo dated September 8, 2010, in accordance with the provisions of R.I. Law 16-19-2."

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque to approve Items b), c), and d) on the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-0.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

6. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

Item a) from the Consent Agenda:

a) **Appt. –Guidance Counselor, .2 time, Hathaway.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-9/14/10, to the position of Guidance Counselor, .2 time, at Hathaway School, effective immediately." Mrs. Perrotti stated that this position is listed as a new position, so she asked Dr. Lusi to explain where it is coming from. Dr. Lusi explained that this part-time position comes from the reallocation of what was previously an art position. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque to approve the appointment as presented. Seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointment of Leslie Improta to the position of .2 Guidance Counselor at Hathaway School.

Regular Business Agenda:

a) **Agenda Item Request - Discussion/Action re Potential Caruolo Action.** Mr. Carpendar stated that he requested this agenda item because he believes it needs some discussion and potential action. Over the last several weeks, he has been thinking about whether or not the School Committee should proceed with a Caruolo action, should the Budget Referendum fail. His thoughts were motivated not by sarcastic letters to the editor but rather by a simple question posed to him before the petition was even certified, which was, "What will you do if the petition is certified but the referendum fails? Should you go Caruolo?" He stated that the answer is "No." His position should not be misinterpreted, and he made it clear that the passage of the Budget Referendum is critical to the School Department's ability to provide the education that our students and parents expect and deserve. The School Administration and the School Committee worked hard to provide a lean and responsible budget with an original expenditure increase of 2.51%. We tried to work with the Council and reduced our budget by \$350,000 for an expenditure increase of 1.5%. The Town Council rejected the School Committee overture and approved a Budget increase of \$129,000, a reduction of \$765,000 from already reduced request, leaving us with a budget for 2011 that is less than our budget for 2010. If the Budget Referendum is not passed, the result on the School Department's budget will be immediate and will have long term lasting effects on budgets to come. He stated that the School Committee has an obligation to prepare budgets that meet our expenditure requirements – particularly those that are necessitated by law, regulation, and contract, and that meet the Portsmouth BEP. As of today, we do not have a final budget that meets

our requirements or needs. Mr. Carpender stated that a few years ago, there were a number of people, including himself, that felt that the tent meeting process was not democratic and disenfranchised too many people. A group of citizens worked on a petition, and the result was a Charter change so that the new process called for an all-day special election. Having supported the petition and the resulting change, he believes it would be hypocritical for the School Committee to pursue a Caruolo Action should the Budget Referendum fail. On October 5, 2010, the citizens of Portsmouth – Seniors and young, parents and those without children, Democrats and Republicans, those that support public education and those that don't, will have the opportunity to determine the face and direction of public education in Portsmouth this year and in future years. A YES vote will allow us to continue to provide the education our children deserve – a NO vote will have an immediate and lasting detrimental impact on the education Portsmouth schools provide; and voters need to realize this as they enter the voting booth. He believes deeply that providing a quality public education is one of the paramount responsibilities of government and our citizens and urges all to vote YES. Typically, as the Chair, he does not make motions; however, because he put this on the agenda, he made a motion to affirm that the School Committee will abide by the outcome of the budget referendum and will not file Caruolo. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. The motion passed 6-0.

- b) **Agenda Item Request – Arts and Music Programs of Study.** Mrs. Perrotti asked the administration to describe how the elementary music and art curriculum is supporting proficiency in music and art, how it is meeting the newly adopted Grade Span Expectations, the planned duration of music and art classes for all grades, and any changes from the 2009-10 academic year. Dr. Lusi stated that full art/music is in the budget, but we are only offering half until the budget referendum. Assistant Superintendent Jermain stated that she spoke with the two individuals responsible for the elementary curriculum in the music and art area. In art, the elementary art curriculum has been revised to meet the National Standards and is being tied into the new Grade Level Expectations. A full year of teaching is required to achieve this goal to the depth we would like to see in our system. Students that have had the same the advantage of one art teacher for the elementary experience do show a greater retention of art skills. As the reductions were occurring in the years, the district started to share teachers across the building; and the same art/music teacher was not in the elementary building each year. Teachers are limited in common planning time because of this, and this may have a future impact on implementation K-12. In the music area, the same results seem to be occurring. The teacher won't have the time with the students to have the deeper understanding of the modes of music. Mrs. Jermain wonders what is going to happen at semester breaks when the kids won't be in the music class until next September. The kids will have 16 to 20 classes, depending on the school schedule, versus the 30-40 they usually have had in the past. Both teachers have expressed that they will cover the breadth of their required standards, but they are concerned about going deeper with the learning. Mrs. Jermain stated that Portsmouth School Department is noted not only for its academics but also for

its arts. Many PHS students have been accepted to some of the most prestigious colleges in this country, not on academics, but on arts. It is a valued gem that we have in this school district. It's not just the sports or academics that make us a great district. The arts are shining every day, and our nationwide recognition is expanding. Mrs. Perrotti is concerned with the loss of knowledge. Mrs. Jermain stated that there is no decrease in art/music in Grades 4 and 5. Dr. Lusi explained what the BEP requirements are for art/music. Having an art/music program that provides for the R.I. K-12 GSEs in the arts is required, but it does not say full year. Best practice would be a full-year component; however, we are not required by law, regulation, or contract to provide a full year in elementary art/music. She does not want half year for this district. Her recommendation came from the potential outcome of the referendum.

- c) **Discussion of Impact of FY2011 Budget.** Dr. Lusi outlined the impact of reductions in school programs and reviewed other cuts that were made, including closing Elmhurst School, eliminating more than 12 staff positions, reducing transportation costs by participating in a collaborative bid, reducing the cost of health insurance, and savings in rubbish removal, heat, and fuel. She also reviewed the impact of staffing reductions at PHS with regard to courses that are not offered, as well as increasing class sizes. She reminded everyone that we are starting the year with one-half year art and music at the elementary level due to budget uncertainty, and that we have started the year with full athletic and student activities programs – travel for band, drama, etc. – at the direction of the School Committee; but with the acknowledgement that we may not be able to provide this full array in the future.

Dr. Lusi stated that there are whispers of additional revenue that she wants to put to rest. The first is about the JOBS bill passed at the federal level, which provides the illusion of \$273,250 coming to Portsmouth. A Field Memo alert sent from Commissioner Gist on Wednesday, September 1st, notified the School Department not to count on that money and not to spend it yet, as district's will probably lose any revenue they might receive through commensurate cuts in state aid. The second area of concern is the Race to the Top grant, which did get awarded to Rhode Island. RIDE has not received the final amount from the USDOE; however, Portsmouth is estimated to get \$49,000 per year for four years. It is very clear that any dollars are to be used for the express purposes of this competition grant only, not to fill budget holes. It cannot be used towards the operating budget. Dr. Lusi stated that although the teachers' contract is still in negotiations, the salary account will be lower this year than last year. She cannot fully outline what will happen if the budget referendum fails. Our school system will be eroded further if we don't get the 1.5 percent increase in our budget.

- d) **Agenda Item Request – Full Time Equivalent Personnel Analysis.** Mrs. Perrotti stated that during the June 22, 2010, School Committee meeting, the Committee asked for a Full-Time Equivalent Personnel Analysis if the Town Council did not fully fund our FY'11 budget. Mr. Dunham distributed the FYE 2011 Staff Description report, dated 9/14/10.

Mr. Dunham stated that the regional staff was broken out. Mrs. King asked how many House Leaders and Departments Heads we have. Mr. Dunham stated that he will add that as a footnote on the next report. Mrs. Perrotti stated that her goal would be to have something like this each year when the Committee builds the budget. She stated that the long-term goal is to put the 4th graders back in the elementary schools, so Mr. Dunham will break out the 4th grade teachers, too.

7. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

- a) **Facilities.** No report.
- b) **Finance.** No report.
- c) **Health and Wellness.** The next meeting is October 4th.
- d) **Policy.** No report.

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and was seconded by Mrs. King to adjourn the meeting. So voted 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for:

Mrs. Marjorie Levesque, Clerk