

ZOOM MEETING LINK;

<https://portsmouthschoolsri-org.zoom.us/j/82733165521?pwd=dUs5NWRZMDUycGFvUFBXdHNGSk9Pd09>

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Ms. Copeland, on Tuesday evening, February 23, 2021. Ms. Copeland led the group in the pledge of allegiance and requested a moment of silence in honor of our armed forces in harm’s way.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

RIGL 42-46-5 sections:

- (a)(1) Any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that such person or person affected shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting (advance notice has been provided);
- (a)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation.

Chair, Ms. Copeland, reported that an Executive Session had been held prior to the public meeting this evening, February 23, 2021. No votes were taken.

2. MOTION TO SEAL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Ms. Copeland requested a motion to seal the Executive Session minutes of February 23, 2021. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, IK=yes, JCP=yes.

3. CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

A. Roll Call

Emily Copeland:	Present	Thomas Vadney:	Present
Fred Faerber:	Present	Karen McDaid:	Present
Juan Carlos Payero:	Present	Isabelle Kelly:	Present
Allen Shers:	Present	Rita Kenahan (LC)	Present

Let the record reflect that all School Committee Members are present this evening, February 23, 2021, in a hybrid format versus all on ZOOM, located in the library of Portsmouth High School.

Present: Dr. Thomas Kenworthy, Superintendent; Ms. Elizabeth Vivieros, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Christopher DiIuro, Director of Finance; Dr. Lisa Colwell, Director of Pupil Personnel. Ms. Mary Ann Carroll, Attorney for the Portsmouth School District.

B. Emergency Evacuation Plan

It was noted by Ms. Copeland that should it be necessary to vacate the PHS building, please follow the exit signs and the meeting location is at the New Gym.

C. Melville MPTG and Community Meeting

Ms. Copeland and Assistant Superintendent Vivieros had the pleasure of attending the Melville Parent Teacher Group meeting. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros gave some opening remarks and a few were also given by Ms. Copeland. It was a very nice meeting and seeing all the staff and parents at Melville together again. A community service announcement was made for Melville that they will be having a fund raiser for MPTG and Plumby’s on

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February 24, 2021. They will be donating 10% of all sales to Melville School. Fundraising has been challenging during the pandemic but this is a way to help a local restaurant and the MPTG at the same time.

Other School Committee members attended the Community Meeting. Mr. Vadney, Ms. Kelly, and Mr. Payero were in attendance and thoroughly enjoyed seeing what the kids were writing in the Chat.

D. LEAP Task Force

Mr. Payero spoke regarding his appointment to the LEAP Task Force by the Commissioner of Education. He told the attendees the LEAP Task Force stands for Learning, Equity and Accelerated Pathways. The goal of the task force includes:

- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the schools and communities across the state.
- Analyze Rhode Island's specific academic and non-academic data
- Focus and engage with national experts on those areas
- Identify research-based high leverage strategies to identify root causes
- Establish strategic focus for the state and provide field guidance and align stimulus funding to instructional priorities driven by the data.

It is a six- week program, very intense, and moving very fast. Ms. Ana Riley, former Superintendent of Schools in Portsmouth, is heading the LEAP Task Force at the State level. Today was the half-way mark with three sessions to completion. Upcoming topics include:

- Working with diverse populations
- Thinking through a whole system response through the equity lens
- Provide draft recommendations by mid-March to be sent to the Commissioner for review.

This announcement is for School Committee members. The National School Board Association has an annual conference. This year is going to be virtual. It would obviously not involve any travel. The dates are April 8, 9 and 10, 2021. We need to know fairly soon if there is any interest. If any of our members are interested in attending this conference, there are a lot of panels and professional development to choose from and we are required to do six hours of professional development a year. If there is interest, be sure to send Superintendent Kenworthy an e-mail and copy me on that also. We will have Ms. Souza look up the rates and registration information for us.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

A. Finance

Mr. Faerber reported out on the Finance Subcommittee. They met on February 12, 2021, and this was basically the second look at the proposed budget. The members evaluated the revenues and expenditures of the upcoming year and shortly there will be a report by the Finance Director as to what our proposed budget is. The one big mystery on the expense side is transportation expenses. This could be significant and the fact that the state is shorting us on \$169,000,00.

5. RECOGNITIONS

Superintendent Kenworthy recognized several Scholastic Art Award Winners and several students and their families are with us via ZOOM. These particular awards are given in all the art areas. The students honored are:

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Anastasia Aten – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Gold Key Scholastic Art Award in Digital Art.

Grace Bakun – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Honorable Mention Scholastic Art Award for your Art Portfolio.

John Harding – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Honorable Mention Scholastic Art Award in Painting.

Abigail Kenyon – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Honorable Mention Scholastic Art Award in Photography and the Silver Key Scholastic Art Award in Photography.

Addison Page – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Silver Key Scholastic Art Award in Mixed Media.

Page Sullivan – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Silver Key Scholastic Art Award in Digital Art and the Gold Key Scholastic Art Award in Digital Art.

Emilia Tavares – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Honorable Mention Scholastic Art Award in Photography and the Silver Key Scholastic Art Award in Photography.

Zoe Vaspol – For the outstanding achievement of winning the Honorable Mention Scholastic Art Award in Film and Animation.

Congratulations to the students, teachers and their families. We are very proud of them.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment this evening.

7. PHS LIAISON'S COMMUNICATION

A. PHS Liaison Report (Aislinn Sullivan & Reidyn Pardo De Zela)

- Student Council is planning Spirit Week for February 8th week. Presently there are so many events they are not able to hold but they are still trying to organize some events to make it a special week for freshman students who have not experienced Spirit Week before and make it special for the Senior Class so they still get their Spirit Week during their senior year. The Student Council is looking for alternatives to make it as normal as possible.
- Student Council is hosting their Best of Portsmouth during Spirit Week. In the past, this had been known as Spirit of Portsmouth or Mr. Portsmouth. They are trying to plan an in-person event on the Friday of Sprit Week. However, they are also looking into solutions if it has to be a completely virtual event. They know that is a possibility but are hoping they can space out the theater at PHS to have it be a live event.
- The Student Council will be holding another blood drive at St. John's during March. All of the events have been very successful. There will have more information on that when the Student Council meets with their representatives from the R.I. Blood Center.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A. Personnel Update

Superintendent Kenworthy reported that he had a very small number of Personnel Updates to report during the meeting tonight. He announced two resignations:

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| 1. Mr. Erin Escher | Assistant Principal | PMS |
| 2. Ms. Mary Saladino | Director of Student Services | PHS |

B. District Updates

Superintendent Kenworthy welcomed students, staff and families back from Winter Break. He expressed his hope that everyone took the time for rest and relaxation during the break.

Later in the week, Superintendent Kenworthy will be publishing the final district calendar for our COVID testing schedule. We will be able to continue offering voluntary testing to all of our students and staff on a bi-weekly basis. For student athletes, we will continue with weekly, mandatory testing. To date, our district has administered, in our trial run, over 1400 tests so far and have not had one positive test in the district. That is not the normal results from discussions with other Superintendents across the state.

As I mentioned at our last meeting, a testing site was opening at the Raytheon Corporation. The site did open and they plan to remain open at that site based on vaccine availability and RI Department of Health protocols as to who can receive the vaccine. Town and school department employees will have the opportunity, hopefully within the next few weeks, to receive vaccines at this site in accordance with parameters set by the Department of Health. Our employees, Mr. Dean, Facilities Director, Mr. DeCosta, IT Director, Mr. Caron, Network Manager, and Systems Support Technician, Mr. Ballard, were all heavily involved in getting everything up and running and I thank them for all their hard work. All of the devices used at this Raytheon site have been loaned by the PSD. This has been a successful collaboration between the Town of Portsmouth and the Portsmouth School Department.

I continue to receive questions about the possibility of expanding full, in-person learning opportunities for grades 7-12. I just want to provide a quick update on that. The numbers within our municipality and the state level are certainly key pieces of data and right now those seem to be trending downward. Another big part of that is being able to assure that we have the proper spacing we would need to have within our building. Presently, we have full in-person learning opportunities, 5 days per week, for grades PK-6 and grades 7-12 on hybrid schedule. Grades 7 and 8 currently have either 2 days or 3 days per week of in-person learning and alternates every other week for those grades. Students in grades 9-12 consistently have 2 in-person learning opportunities. Both PMS and PHS have been working during the second marking period, as a main objective, to identify students who are struggling, either academically or social-emotionally and provide those students and families more in person learning opportunities. Both schools do have examples of students who are attending every day. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros has been working with both schools to look for creative strategies of how we can provide that 6-foot spacing and thus increase those opportunities for some groups or grades. Superintendent Kenworthy will have more to share on that in the coming weeks.

Our Racial Equity and Social Justice Ad Hoc Subcommittee met just before break. The subcommittee reviewed a Draft mission and vision statement and created subgroups with the goal that has been established for the work of this committee. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros and Mr. Payero are leading this group. Superintendent Kenworthy attends every other meeting of this group which is the schedule set up. He is looking forward to attending the next meeting.

Superintendent Kenworthy then directed his District Updates to Kindergarten Registration. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros and Dr. Colwell, Director of Pupil Services compiled a list of our three and four year olds who would be eligible for kindergarten this year. She worked with her team to put together a post card to mailed to these families with instructions on how to begin the registration process. We are very pleased so far to see the feedback. Congratulations to them for their efforts and positive outcome.

A virtual open house will be held this Thursday, February 25, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. to provide information for the PHS CTE Programs. This is for both Portsmouth students and out-of-district families interested in attending one of our RIDE approved CTE programs in Engineering, Education, Video Production or Arts.

The district is wrapping up Season 2 of our athletic season at PMS and PHS. We usually have athletics comprise 3 seasons but the R.I. Interscholastic League created a schedule so we would have 4 abbreviated seasons in an attempt to fit in as many athletic opportunities as possible. Right now we are in the transition of Season 2 to Season 3. Mr. Trezvant, Athletic Director, has been invited to attend our next meeting on March 9, 2021, to provide wrap-up of Season 2 and which sports are running for Season 3.

This week is National Public Schools Week as recognized by the leading Education Association in our nation. Superintendent Kenworthy extended his thanks to this association for recognizing all the hard work that everyone put in to providing the best possible education in the public sector. He then extended his personal thanks to this district and his pride in serving as the Superintendent of the Portsmouth School District.

9. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

A. February 9, 2021

B. February 9, 2021 Executive Session

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for the approval of School Committee minutes of February 9, 2021, and the Executive Session minutes of February 9, 2021. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 approved and 1 abstention EC=yes, TV=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, IK=yes, JCP -abstention.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Homeschool Requests

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for approval of the Consent Agenda as written. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, IK=yes, JCP=yes

11. BUSINESS

A. Discuss First Draft FY 22 Operating Budget

Superintendent Kenworthy reported the first sharing of the Discussion First Draft FY22 Operating Budget. He requested comments and feedback from the full School Committee. Another draft will be seen of this and go through the same process. A final draft on March 23, 2021, will have to be voted on by full committee. The only thing left after the approval of this FY22 Operating Budget is an approval of our Capital Facilities budget., By the end of March, the Town Charter requires us to turn over our budget to the Town for Town Council review and later in April, there are meetings scheduled with the Town Council. We present at that time with all the other various town departments. We have been working since the Fall with our building administrators and departments heads preparing their budgets. This information was submitted to the Administration before our winter break. Members of our Finance Committee attend those meetings. We all worked together to put together this draft you will see here this evening.

All of our principals and department heads were requested to come in with a level funded budget. There is no increase in personnel in this budget for FY22. We did add positions such as custodians and nursing assistants due to COVID in this year's budget, however, none of those positions are included in the budget this year. We have no big "Asks" from any school or department. In a budget with a 2.5% increase in expenditures in any \$40 million budget, you would normally see increases when it comes to personnel, healthcare, contracts for such things as utilities, transportation, and facilities. Those are the drivers you see here in this first draft. Re-emphasizing that this is a first draft, if nothing was adjusted, this would mean a 3.9% increase in our Town appropriation. The reason for that is the Town appropriation represents our largest revenue source. Our other sources of revenue are down. State aid is a 4.4% reduction that we were not expecting. We should have been coming up on the end of a 10-year transition in the state funding formula. We were well aware that Portsmouth was losing money using that formula. We were transitioning through it and were expecting to at least remain flat this year. However, when we received the projections and the calculations they were using, we were still losing state aid. In our district, we do have tuition agreements with Little Compton, R.I. and our CTE program which brings in students from other districts. However, Little Compton student enrollment is going down every year just like our own enrollment has been and the CTE enrollment has gone down due to COVID in this budget as well.

Superintendent Kenworthy turned the meeting over to Mr. DiIuro, our Finance Director, to present the line by line budget to committee members.

The School Committee members agreed that more work should continue to be done on the draft for the Operating Budget FY22 to make reductions. They agree it is a difficult task made more so by state aid reductions. However, they do not feel that a 3.9% appropriation request to the Town will be favorably received although it does show the Town and the community what it takes to operate the PSD on a budget already resulting from reductions.

B. Discuss/Action FY22 Technology 5 Year Equipment Plan

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for Business Item B. Mr. Faerber made the motion for Discussion/Action FY22 Technology 5 Year Equipment Plan. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, JCP=yes, KM=yes, IK=yes.

C. Discuss/Action Administering Medicines to Students Policy JLCD (Second Read)

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for Business Item C. Ms. McDaid made a motion for Discussion/Action Administering Medicines to Students Policy JLCD (Second Read). Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, FF=yes, JCP=yes, KM=yes, IK=yes.

D. Discuss/Action Nondiscrimination Policy AC (Second Read)

Ms. Copeland requested a motion regarding Business Item D. Ms. McDaid made a motion for Discussion/Action Nondiscrimination Policy AC (Second Read). Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC=yes, AS=yes, FF=yes, KM=yes, FF=yes, JCP=yes, IK=yes.

*E. Discuss/Action Removal of Policy 5600 which is replaced by Policy JLF

*F. Discuss/Action Removal of Policy 4350 & 4354 which is replaced by Policy IJNDC

*G. Discuss/Action Removal of Policy 5132 which is replaced by Policy JICA

Ms. McDaid requested that the Business Items *E, *F, *G be handled together and Ms. Copeland approved the request. The motion made by Ms. McDaid was Item E – Discussion/Action Removal of Policy 5600 which is replaced by Policy JLF. Motion made by Ms. McDaid for Item F – Discussion/Action Removal of Policy 4350 & 4354 which is replaced by Policy IJNDC. Motion made by Ms. McDaid for Item G – Discussion/Action Removal of Policy 5132 which is replaced by Policy JICA. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, AS-yes, FF-yes, JCP-yes, KM-yes, IK-yes.

12. REPORTS

A. Financial Reports

1. Monthly Financials – January, 2021

Mr. DiIuro reported on the January financials. The district is on budget and it looks like we may be heading for a COVID-19 relief surplus. It is too early to put a number on amount but Mr. DiIuro will continue to report out each month on this information.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for adjournment of the meeting this evening. Mr. Faerber made a motion for adjournment of the meeting of February 23, 2021. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, TV-yes, KM-yes, IK-yes, JCP-yes.

Upcoming Meetings:

- March 9, 2021
- March 23, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Massarotti, Recording Secretary for:
Thomas Vadney, Clerk