

ZOOM MEETING LINK;

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84501550562?pwd=SnpFYXFLajlWeDQyWlV4MW5EK3h4dz09>

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Ms. Copeland, on Tuesday evening, October 13, 2020. 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 at 6:30 pm. No votes were taken

2. MOTION TO SEAL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Ms. Copeland requested a motion to seal the Executive Session minutes of October 13, 2020.

Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 6-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, KM=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		
Allen Shers:	Present		

Let the record reflect that all School Committee Members are present this evening, October 13, 2020. Ms. McDaid is present virtually and the other members are in person this evening.

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Kenworthy, Superintendent; Ms. Elizabeth Vivieros, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Christopher DiIuro, Director of Finance; Dr. Lisa Colwell, Director of Pupil Personnel

B. Emergency Evacuation Plan

The Emergency Evacuation Plan has the exit plan from the nearest door and the muster location is over at the tennis courts at PHS.

C. Communications from Collective Bargaining Units

Ms. Copeland reported that communication has been received from our Collective Bargaining Units which is ACME RI Council 94 and the Portsmouth Teachers Association, NEA. Both have requested that we commence the collective bargaining process. The receipt of letters is the first step and now Mr. Vadney, as Chair of the Negotiations Committee, and Superintendent Kenworthy will move that process forward. Thank you to the unions for getting that process started.

D. Town Council update on replacement process for School Committee Member

The Town Council has adopted their process for how they are going to replace the school committee member with Ms. Holtman's vacancy and resignation. Ms. Copeland wanted to make it known that any Portsmouth resident who is interested in this vacancy can apply as long as they are not an employee of the school system or the town and the person is a registered elector. The deadline for applications is November 13, 2020. A cover letter and resume is required for submission and questions are being posted on the website. Ms. Copeland encouraged anyone who was interested to apply. It is a valuable, worthwhile way to give back to your community and to the students of Portsmouth.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

A. Racial Equity

Mr. Payero reported on the Racial Equity Subcommittee. The group met two weeks ago to discuss our organizational structure and aligning our priorities that have already started to take place across the district, especially at PHS. We want to make sure we are all working towards the same goals. This was a great and enlightening conversation followed up by conversation about Professional Development happening throughout the district. The elementary school principals will be joining the committee for the next meeting to share information and enlightening conversation. We have been trying to determine a time slot for our meetings that work for everyone. Right now it appears that after-school on Thursdays is the best scenario. We want to encourage new members and, therefore, ideas and thoughts for this subcommittee. It may be necessary to go into an early evening timeslot to encourage greater participation.

B. Safety

Mr. Shers gave his report from the Safety Subcommittee which held its meeting on October 8, 2020. Discussions were on a range of topics including present safety coverage and future items in process as well as new related safety issues in our district. It was agreed that the subcommittee would meet quarterly in this regard. It is continuing to be the desire to have a safe and secure environment for everyone. Kudos were given to our first responders for their continued vigilance.

Ms. Copeland requested that perhaps the Safety Subcommittee could secure current information on bus cameras to video cars passing buses when stopped and the lights are flashing. Superintendent Kenworthy will also reach out to the Portsmouth Police Department with the district concerns about this safety issue.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment this evening.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A. Personnel Update

Superintendent Kenworthy began his Superintendent's Update with the Personnel Update which welcomes new staff to the Portsmouth School District. He is happy to report that as of the last School Committee Meeting, all staff has been hired for teaching positions. This evening he is announcing some support staff who are helping to round out the support offered to students. We are welcoming to our staff this evening the following new employees:

CUSTODIANS AND PARAPROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- Christopher Goodreau Custodian A/PHS
- Mark Souza Custodian A/PHS
- Gary Hamilton Custodian A/PHS

Portsmouth School Committee

October 13, 2020

Public Session

- David Silva Custodian A/PHS
- Michael Davis Custodian A/Hathaway
- Shane Paquette Custodian A/Melville
- Ana Resendes Paraprofessional/Melville
- Sarah Fernandes Paraprofessional/PMS
- Jackie Verville Paraprofessional/PMS
- April Fonseca Paraprofessional/Melville

GENERAL SCHOOL AIDES

- Alexandra Pacheco Melville
- Kelsey Vieira Melville
- Laura Sullivan Hathaway
- Amy Olson Hathaway
- Michelle Botelho PMS
- Bente Rainer PMS
- Christine Rainey PMS
- Zoe Hammond PHS
- John Visconti PHS
- Sue Mayes PHS
- Diane Sykes PHS

DISTANCE LEARNING SUBSTITUTES

- Cal Harrington Melville
- Andria Duvaul Goss Melville
- Caroline Heffeman Hathaway
- Kyle Turcotte Hathaway
- Darcy Ryan Hathaway

GSA'S

- Laura Barth Hathaway
- Amy Buddemeyer Hathaway
- Christopher Carruba Hathaway
- Nicole Faria Hathaway
- Alison Gaumond Hathaway
- Cynthia MacDonald Hathaway
- Elisa Morrell Hathaway
- Andrea Purvis Hathaway
- Wendy Francis Melville
- Gina Gianetis Melville
- Jessica O'Brian Melville
- Rebecca Oliver Melville
- Christine Sacco Melville
- Amy Wilt Melville

B. National Principals Month

Superintendent Kenworthy wanted to acknowledge October as National Principals Month. Our four principals have done an amazing job helping us get ready for 2020-21 school year. We could not do what we do for our students without the work of Mr. Amaral, PHS; Mr. Arruda, PMS; Mrs. Little, Howard Hathaway Elementary; and Mrs. Lauri, Melville Elementary School.

C. Take it Outside Grant Award

Also recognized this evening were Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Vivieros as well as Mr. Costa and our IT Department. Portsmouth was recently awarded a “Take It Outside Grant” by the Rhode Island Commerce Commission. In the initial round, we were one of only two districts to get an award. We received a \$55,000.00 Grant. This is going to help increase our capability outside our buildings to provide WiFi and this year, in particular, trying to get students in classes outside, this is going to be a tremendous help. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros gave the credit for this grant to Mr. Steve Costa and Mr. Jacob Caron for finding the grant, contacting Ms. Vivieros about the grant, writing the grant and submission of the grant. The turn-a-round time was very quick. We congratulate and thank them.

D. Embrace Home Loans – Donation of Masks

Superintendent Kenworthy recognized a local business, although it is a national company, Embrace Home Loans, for their donations of masks to all the school districts on Aquidneck Island. They are disposable, meeting all the specific guidelines and we received the donation of 3000 of these masks. We have distributed to all of our schools, helping with our PPE efforts. Thank you to them. Dr. Kenworthy sent Embrace Home Loans a thank you note from our district and the Newport Daily News ran a story about their donation to the Aquidneck Island schools.

E. Little Compton School Committee Meeting October 14, 2020

As an FYI, Superintendent Kenworthy, Assistant Superintendent Vivieros, Mr. Amaral, and Ms. Kirwin-Claire will be joining the Little Compton School Committee Meeting tomorrow night, Wednesday, October 14, 2020, virtually. Little Compton students attend PHS for high school and we have a relationship with them. The Little Compton School Committee invited us during the summer and we look forward to that meeting. The link will be put in the Chat and made available to everyone.

F. District Updates

Superintendent Kenworthy’s final updates of the evening concerned the District Updates regarding our reopening efforts. At this point we are fully reopened following our initial reopening plan. As of 09-28-2020 we are open every day for students who want to be joining us in that capacity, Pre-K through Grade 6 and as a hybrid two days per week for Grades 7-12. We are still holding steady at about 14% of students joining us in all grades through distance learning. We did send out a survey to both staff and families to see how things are going since this routine has been established. Our staff survey had over 100 responses from all levels. As would be expected the responses were both positive and also covering the challenges represented by this form of school routine for all involved. This is a whole new way of teaching and he thanked them for their hard work. The Administration is trying to do everything possible to help make this effort be successful. One of the questions on the survey concerned expanding in-person instructional time for Grades 7-12 to only staff involved with teaching during this grade level of Grades 7-12. The staff wants to meet in person with their students but the main focus is on the health and safety of both our students and staff. Due to the layout of classrooms and the furniture, we are able to utilize and the 6 ft. safe spacing Grade Pre-K through Grade 6 classrooms. However, in the Grades 7 through 12, we are not able to maintain the 6 ft. safe spacing. The family survey resulted in 56 responses. The percentage of

families who would feel comfortable returning their child to in-person learning knowing the 6 ft. distance is not possible was at 78%. This is our challenge. In our school district, we have not had any COVID cases at this point. We are one of few districts who has not reported a case but we are preparing for with all the protocols in place. Superintendent Kenworthy was very specific in saying he would not be comfortable opening our district to in-person learning right now for the health and safety of our students and the inability for us to maintain the 6 ft. space guidelines put out by the CDC/RIDOH for our Grade 7 through 12 students and faculty at this time.

We are continuing to look at creative ways to bring our students back in-person who are finding distance learning a more challenging situation for them. We are working with our administrative teams at PMS and PHS to identify those students and transition them (our vulnerable population) back to a full in-person return.

We do have additional challenges that we are addressing. They include:

- Simultaneous in-person and distance instruction
- Attestation Form
- We are waiting on last order of air purifiers at PHS
- Travel guidelines for schools with the holidays coming up soon. The call is for a 14-day quarantine after return to RI from international travel or travel to a US state that has >5% positivity rate.
- Budget/Staffing
- Transportation

7. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

A. September 22, 2020

B. September 22, 2020 Executive Session

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for the approval of the School Committee Minutes of September 22, 2020, and the approval of the Executive Session minutes of September 22, 2020. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, FF=yes AS=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes

8. 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, 6-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

9. BUSINESS

A. Discuss/Action Revised Contract for Director of Finance

Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Revised Contract for Director of Finance. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved for a Revised Contract for Director of Finance, 6-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, FF=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

B. Discuss/Action Colliers Owners Project Manager Contract

Ms. Copeland requested a motion for Discussion/Action Colliers Owners Project Manager Contract. Mr. Faerber so moved for Discussion/Action Colliers Owners Project Manager Contract. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

C. Discuss Transportation Committee

Mr. Faerber made a motion to Discuss Transportation Committee findings. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. Superintendent Kenworthy began the discussion on the Transportation Committee. This topic was brought up for

discussion only because it is in the preliminary stages. We have several contracts coming up in the coming months and the transportation contract is one of them. Our contract actually expired last year and we did a one-year extension with First Student and that has worked out well for both sides. Based on all the challenges we have faced with the opening of schools in our district, we are very fortunate that we have not had a lot of hiccups in that area. We do have to put that contract back out to bid. It has been a number of years since we have really looked at our policies regarding transportation so it might be a good opportunity to put a temporary committee together, including some parent representation, to get some feedback. There may be things we are not thinking of or are aware of as we move forward to our next contract agreement. Superintendent Kenworthy will begin the initiative to start this Transportation Committee.

10. REPORTS

A. Financial Reports

1. Monthly Financials – July 2020, August 2020, September 2020

No motion needed on the Monthly Financials – July 2020, August 2020, and September 2020. Mr. DiIuro gave a brief overview of the reports. These reports are the product of our new system which is now up and fully functional.

11. 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 October 13, 2020. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

Upcoming Meetings:

- October 27, 2020
- November 17, 2020

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