

ZOOM MEETING LINK:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/82993984448?pwd=TU5ja010L1UrZmhPZE9HamdBbVkrdz09>

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair, Ms. Copeland, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was partially virtual and partially in-person, with some School Committee members and administrators taking part virtually and some in person, held in the library at Portsmouth High School. She requested that everyone pledge allegiance to the flag and a moment of silence in honor of our armed forces in harms way.

1. CHAIRPERSON’S

A. Roll Call

Emily Copeland:	Present	Thomas Vadney:	Present
Juan Carlos Payero:	Present	Catherine Holtman:	Present
Allen Shers:	Present	Karen McDaid	Present
Fred Faerber	Present		

Let the record reflect that all School Committee Members are present this evening, August 11, 2020

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

B. RIASC Update

Ms. Copeland reported on the RIASC update. There was a meeting held with all the Chairs of the School Committees around the state where they answered questions. The good news was that the Governor said the state would be taking care of the COVID testing requirements for districts and the goal is a 48-hour turnaround. They were also releasing the COVID 19 outbreak response playbook for schools which is guidance on how we to respond to various scenarios for teachers and staff. It is available on line if anyone would like to look at it. It is called Outbreak Response Playbook PreK-12. Based on the state metric as of last week, there were three towns, Providence, Central Falls and Pawtucket, that would not be able to have some in-person opening but all other districts would be able to have at least partial in-person opening. A lot of the meeting was about specific questions from districts which did not apply to Portsmouth. The Commissioner of Education did say they are looking substitute teachers and have a campaign to attract them in order to establish a state-wide pool of substitute teachers. The bad news was that they are very much in a “wait and see” mode to see what the federal government does because that will have the biggest impact on how the state handles its next year’s budget. Once they get that information, they will work on the budget. The Governor does hope that more money will be coming from the federal government.

C. Recognition of Reopening Efforts

Chair, Ms. Copeland, wanted to take a moment to recognize the herculean efforts that have happened in our district over the past couple of months. After listening to other districts, I am confident that Portsmouth is far ahead of other districts preparing for the opening. Health and safety is paramount and there are still a lot of unknowns but the entire School Committee is grateful for the support and help. Ms. Copeland particularly recognized Dr. Kenworthy on the excellent job he has done communicating with the staff, teachers, families, and community. However, it is a team effort and she and the members of the School Committee want to recognize everyone as we prepare for a variety of scenarios.

2. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

A. Racial/Equity

Mr. Payero reported on the Racial/Equity Subcommittee. The first meeting was held July 22, 2020, which came out of our conversation with parents after our statement came out in June. We are always looking for stakeholders and we want to create a diverse representation from the community. They not only want to do equitable work but that the group represents that equity. During the next couple of meetings, the plan is to determine long-term goals with the focus of developing a holistic approach in not only how we confront these issues but how we best prepare the students who come out of Portsmouth to be in an ever changing global society. Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Vivieros, and Mr. Payero have been collaborating on this committee and Ms. Vivieros feels they are in a very good place at the present time.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment this evening.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A. Personnel Update

Superintendent Kenworthy reported that we continue to have a number of positions to fill and we are working to do that. Some people have been hired and their paperwork is complete. Others are waiting on a few things to complete their paperwork. I will report the hires at our next August School Committee meeting. We did hire the new Human Resources Director, Ms. Kimberly Aguiar. She has been officially hired, contract approved and starting on Monday, August 17, 2020. Other new hires are as follows:

Jasmine Clarke – School Psychologist/PMS
Kelli Courville – Student Support Specialist/Mel & Hath
Aaron Couto – Music/ PMS
Gabrielle Grieco – Social Studies Teacher/PHS
Jenna Larson – Biology/Chemistry Teavcher/PHS
Jonathan Lewis – PE/Health/APE – PMS & Hath
Amanda Madore – School Psyuchologist/PHS
Cynthia Milone – Grade 7 Science Teacher/PMS
Elizabeth Perry – Special Education/PMS
Catherine Wagner – Literacy/Special Education/PHS
Eden Younkin – ELA/PMS

B. School Reopening Updates

Superintendent Kenworthy reported on School Reopening Updates. He noted that this process is ever changing. News was received that the Governor Raimondo will announce at her weekly press conference on Wednesday, August 12, 2020, that the start of school is going to pushed forward from August 31, 2020, to September 14, 2020. Some of the Professional Development days on the latest approved calendar will be moved up to the week prior to September 14, 2020. Although the dates may be subject to change as we move forward and also the latest information that school will be starting later than had originally been announced. The Reopening Operations Update is as follow:

Portsmouth School Committee

August 11, 2020

Public Session

- July 30, 2020 – Full PSD Reopening Plan will be released
- August, 2020 – School Based Teams will meet to actualize the District Plan
- August 3, 2020 – Families will be asked to select which teaching and learning option their child will be participating in for the first marking period of the 2020-21 school year.
- August 14, 2020 – Deadline for families to select teaching and learning option
- August 17, 2020 – Final Determination on Reopening Scenario will be made by Governor Raimondo
- August 31, 2020 – First day of the 2020-21 School Year (postponed until September 14, 2020 by decision of Governor Raimondo announced at press conference of Wednesday, August 12, 2020).
- Transportation deadline for information from parents needs to be determined.

Mr. DiIuro explained the COVID Budget Update letting the School Committee know where the money coming for COVID expenses can be used. We have some rainy day funds, if necessary, and Capital funds for unexpected COVID related expenses. He did indicate that we will have more personnel expenses due to COVID for the hiring of additional custodial staff, general school aides, school nurse personnel, and substitute teachers (32 applications).

Dr. Colwell gave a report on the Health and Safety Update. The information included:

- Aspen Self-Attestation form in Aspen
- PPE ordered
- Plexiglass shields ordered
- Isolation spaces designated across each building
- Facilities – Disinfecting, filters, furniture, schedule adjustments for custodial staff.
- Schools looking at their outdoor spaces and thinking outside the box to make this possible. Schools are looking at flexibility in the use of outdoor spaces.

Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Vivieros, gave an update on Instruction and Support. The Distance Learning Survey Results as of 8/8/2020 show that 10% of our student population are opting for Distance Learning or Homeschooling. That is a total of 231 students in all grades. The numbers have increased some and probably will continue. Ms. Vivieros requests that anyone who would like, should contact her to discuss their own situation.

Ms. Vivieros explained the Distance Learning Staff. It will vary by grades. Work continues on the format for distance learning. There is going to be one Administrator overseeing Distance Learning and being the connection to our families. We are working with several models including families who choose distance learning only, those who wish to do distance learning and virtual learning, plans for sick days with the tight restrictions, and also the students who will be in class with the teacher in front of them. One of the goals of secondary learning is to make sure the distance learning and in class rigor of the work is the same so that if a family decides during the second marking period to attend school in person, there is no difference in the teaching of the students. More information will be coming to families as further plans are implemented.

Ms. Vivieros also reported on the Technology aspects of preparing for the opening of school. Additional Chromebooks have been purchased and received. Middle and high school students will be receiving I-pads to support partial return and distance learning scenarios. Subscriptions have been renewed and updated to support digital learning. Edgenuity PD is in the process of being scheduled and ongoing Google Classroom PD will be available to our teachers to support them.

Melville Principal, Ms. Laurie, gave a presentation on the updates for the Elementary level. She and Ms. Little have worked collaboratively to prepare the elementary schools for the opening. However, Ms. Little was not able to attend the meeting this evening for the presentation. Mr. Arruda gave the presentation for PMS and Mr. Amaral presented the updates of plans at PHS. They are following protocols provided by Governor Raimondo and how they are going to support that. PHS may run two cafeterias in operation at the same time for the four lunch periods and are thinking of ways to creatively give students access to the restrooms while providing ways to not encourage congregating at the same time. Committees are discussing curriculum, instruction and assessments. PHS wants to support the social and emotional development of students, making available guidance and support personnel. PHS continues to look at scheduling and presently has 97% of requests honored.

Superintendent Kenworthy reported that no decisions have been made regarding the Fall Athletic Season. The PSD has made no decision regarding after-school activities and discussions regarding before and after school care are continuing with AlphaBest. The information known for sure is that no transportation will be provided for any after school programs on PSD buses this year.

5. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

A. June 9, 2020

B. June 9, 2020 Executive Session

C. June 23, 2020

D. June 23, 2020 Executive Session

Chair, Ms. Copeland, made a motion to move to table the Executive Session minutes of June 9, 2020, and the Executive Session minutes of June 23, 2020. Mr. Payero seconded the motion as requested to move to table Executive Session minutes of June 9, 2020, and June 23, 2020. Chair, Ms. Copeland, stated that this motion is automatically approved.

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion to approve the School Committee minutes of June 9, 2020, and June 23, 2020. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0. EC=yes, AS=yes, FF=yes, TV=yes, CH=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Homeschool Requests

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

7. BUSINESS

A. Discuss/Action Part-Time Employee Salary Increase

Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Part-Time Employee Salary Increase. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, AS-yes, FF-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

B. Discuss Update on PMS Generator

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested Discussion Update on PMS Generator. A motion was not needed for this discussion item. Superintendent Kenworthy reported out that during a storm last week, this one generator did not come on in the Portsmouth Middle School building during a power outage in the area. The areas involved included the fire suppression system, kitchen refrigerators and freezers as well as the servers for our IT systems. It was deemed necessary to approve the expenditure of funds to purchase a new generator to replace the one that was not working. Problems with this equipment has happened before and it was felt this was the best way going forward. There will be extensive protocols to follow before the generator can be installed. We will be reaching out to the Department of Education School Building Authority for emergency approval and to get housing aide approval.

C. Discuss/Action Graduation Policy – IKF (Final Read)

Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Graduation Policy – IKF (Final Read). Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

D. Discuss/Action Resolution Recognizing and Honoring African American history in Rhode Island and Urging the adoption of African American Education in Rhode Island’s K-12 Schools starting in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Resolution Recognizing and Honoring African American history in Rhode Island and Urging the adoption of African American Education in Rhode Island’s K-12 Schools starting in the 2021-2022 academic year. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

E. Discuss Update on USDA School Meals Waiver

Superintendent Kenworthy reported that he did send the USDA School Meals Waiver to enable us to provide meals if we find ourselves in a distance learning situation again for the Fall free of charge and no questions asked. We were able to participate in that process during the Spring when COVID 19 made virtual learning necessary. The waiver was a time sensitive issue made aware to the district through the Health and Wellness Subcommittee.

8. 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.

Portsmouth School Committee
August 11, 2020
Public Session

The Executive Session convened at 8:44 p.m.

Members present: Ms. Copeland, Mr. Faerber (virtual via Zoom), Ms. Holtman, Ms. McDaid, Mr. Payero, Mr. Shers, and Mr. Vadney.

Also present: Superintendent Kenworthy; Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Viveiros; Director of Finance and Administration, Mr. DiIuro (virtual via Zoom); Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Dr. Colwell; Attorney for the Portsmouth School Department, Ms. Carroll.

Mr. Faerber made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, TV-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

The Executive Session adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

9. MOTION TO SEAL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Chair, Ms. Copeland, reported in Public Session that no votes were taken.

Mr. Faerber made a motion to seal the Executive Session minutes. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, TV-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Copeland announced the public session of the School Committee meeting is concluded. The School Committee will move into Executive Session. The next School Committee meeting is August 25, 2020, with the format of both in-person and virtual. We will see what the Governor announces as to limits on public gatherings to determine if we are able to have the public attend our meetings.

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion to go into Executive Session.

Mr. Faerber made the motion to go into 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.

Mr. Shers seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, AS-yes, FF-yes, CH-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

The Public Session is adjourned and the School Committee entered Executive Session.

Portsmouth School Committee
August 11, 2020
Public Session

Upcoming Meeting:

- August 12, 2020
- August 25, 2020
- September 8, 2020

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