

Poultney Town School Board
Official Minutes
June 17, 2008

Attending: Mary Jo Teetor, Board Chair, and Board Members Tracee Oakman Rupe, Pat Davenport, Al Jackson, and Michael Nagar, JeanMarie Oakman, PHS Principal, Kristen Caliguiri, PES Principal, Anne Colpitts, PSB Recording Clerk, Dick Stewart, Interim Business Manager, Beverly Fedolfi, Linda MW Smith, Roderick W. Smith, Beth Winters, Bonnie Lenihan, John Troy, Sheila Nichols, Nancy Schwaner, Melissa Kristiansen, Clarena Renfrow, Liz LeBrun, Michele Harmon, Barb Mulholland, Mike Schwaner, Karen Powers, Linda Paquette, Janet Chandler, Kim Babcock, George Carone, Darren McIntyre, Brent Curtis, Tammy Petty, and Dale Kerber.

Chair Mary Jo Teetor called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Action: *Mike Nagar moved to begin the meeting with the business manager's report. Pat Davenport seconded. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda:

d. Business Manager's Report:

1. Approve Warrants:

- a. #29, in the amount of \$248,965.51, dated 5/16/08
- b. #30, in the amount of \$84,236.96, dated 5/30/08

Tracee Oakman Rupe asked about professionalizing the process of raising questions on the warrants, since the current process of making notes directly on the warrant looks unprofessional. Mary Jo Teetor suggested writing questions on sticky notes to minimize unnecessary writing on the actual warrant.

2. Financial Reports: Interim business manager Dick Stewart presented a detailed spreadsheet of the FY08 budget including revenues and expenditures to date. He reviewed all personnel contracts with the principals to ensure accuracy and adjusted staff salaries to reflect the current contract. There is a revenue surplus of approximately \$70,000, even though tuition revenue came in at \$40,000 under budget. He estimates that there will be an addition to the assessment from the SU of around \$40,000. There were significant differences between budgeted amounts and actual expenditures in fuel oil (\$120,000 budgeted vs. \$70,000 in expenditures due to surplus oil in tanks and a decision to wait to top off the tanks to see if prices go down), retirement costs (\$60,000 budgeted but none expended), middle school health insurance (\$10,000 over budget due to a change in enrollment), the PHS principal's budget (\$30,000 savings in health insurance, supplies and a lower salary than budgeted for the dean of students), and Stafford tuition (\$8000 short), among others. After summing revenues and expenditures, he estimates that there will be a surplus of around \$170-180K. This money can be included in the FY10 budget and will need voter approval.

Action: *Pat Davenport moved to move to executive session. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried at 7:05.

Action: *Pat moved to come out of executive session. Mike seconded. Motion carried at 7:55.

Action: *Mike moved to approve offers of PHS music position to Benjamin Potvin, PHS math position to John Troy, and middle school special ed to Katie Chase. Pat seconded. Motion carried. Letters of intent will be issued and contracts sent out after July 1.

Consent Agenda (continued):

a. Approval of Minutes: May 5, 2008 (Special), May 14, 2008 (Special), May 14, 2008 (Emergency), May 20, 2008 (Regular) and May 28, 2008 (Special).

Action: *Pat Davenport moved to approve minutes with amendments. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

b. Superintendent's Report: None

c. Principals' Written Reports: PES: See written report. Principal Caliguiri passed out additional information on the PES action plan, and she would appreciate feedback from the community over the summer. PES received an \$1800 donation from the Poultney Rotary. **Action:** *Pat Davenport moved to accept the donation. Tracee Oakman Rupe seconded. The motion carried. PES also raised \$275 during the Keezer literacy walk.

PHS: PHS is planning 17 days of PD in the 2008-09 school year with expert David Liben, who will work with the staff on targeting reading and writing across the curriculum. The 2006-2007 Annual School Report Card has been completed and is on the website – special thanks to Vinnie Covino. Principal Oakman wanted to clarify minutes from April 22nd board meeting to specify that classes added to the new schedule were proposed and created by teachers, not driven by the schedule. Tracy Gallipo, the new guidance director, has started work.

Principal Oakman also presented a letter from Liz Filskov, PHS French teacher, requesting permission to schedule an individualized Spanish class during contract hours, but outside the school day. She would leave campus at 2:45pm two days a week. She is working toward a second endorsement in Spanish.

Action: *Al Jackson moved to allow her to take the class. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

Food Service Presentation: George Carone from Fitz, Vogt and Associates gave a summary of changes in food service during Fitz Vogt's tenure and discussed budget shortfalls for next year. Since Fitz Vogt began working with PTSD, participation in the school lunch program has increased by 10%, the food quality has improved, and the company has promoted good nutrition at the elementary level by holding tastings and promotions. Due to an 8% predicted increase in the

cost of food for next year, Fitz Vogt needs to increase price of meals by \$.25 to offset losses, and they hope that increased price will not reduce participation. George Carone said they have decreased labor costs while increasing food quality, but further reductions will cause the food quality to suffer. Principal Oakman commended the Fitz Vogt staff for their visibility on campus and clear communication, and suggested that they provide a letter to send out to parents with the welcome information in the fall to explain why the increase is necessary. She also requested that Fitz Vogt cap charging to either \$5 or 5 days and then provide students with an alternate lunch. Mary Jo Teetor pointed out that the school year will increase by 3 days next year to 180 days, and thanked George Carone and Kim Babcock for their hard work. Principal Caliguiri also thanked them for their hard work.

Vinnie Covino revised the Staff Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources and Internet Safety Policy, which was sent out electronically to staff and discussed at a faculty meeting. It should be put on board agenda for July meeting. The new version will be sent by e-mail to the board and staff before the July meeting. Melissa Kristiansen said that teachers had various questions and concerns regarding the document and thought that they would have a chance to review the changes before it went before the board. Principal Oakman responded that the teachers' input was taken into consideration, but that she and Vinnie were responsible for the final version of the document.

Vinnie Covino also presented a summary of the current state of the technology program at PTSD, detailing the expenses that PTSD incurs for technology that supports all SU schools but that not all schools are paying for (such as the Wide Area Network). He ended his report by recommending that PTSD withdraw from the SU as far as technology is concerned. Mike Nagar asked if PTSD alone would need the expensive broadband upgrade Vinnie mentioned in his report, which costs \$15,000 a year for three years, with the first year covered by a grant. Vinnie said that PTSD probably does need to keep the upgrade for the faster internet speed. Tracee Oakman Rupe asked who authorized the 3-year broadband contract. Vinnie said he signed it, but he was directed to by Michelle Folger and was under the impression that all the relevant administrators had been notified and approved the idea. Tracee asked why the expense was not approved by the school board. Vinnie said that the school boards were notified of the obligation, but not asked to approve the expense. Principal Caliguiri clarified that the administrators did not vote on it, but that they were directed by the business manager and Michelle Folger to include it in their budgets for FY09. Vinnie also reported that the tech he proposed hiring for \$32,000 at the last board meeting has been offered the new SU tech position at a salary that PTSD cannot match, so he proposes hiring a part-time tech for \$15,000. There is not currently money for that position in the PTSD technology budget. Mary Jo Teetor said that the issues regarding the new position, the budget and the workload distribution need to be discussed at the SU level.

Old Business:

a. Follow-up on Weighted Grades: Tracee Oakman Rupe reported to the board additional information she became aware of since the vote on this issue at the meeting on 5/20, some of which contradicted information presented on 5/20. She talked to Steve Sampson, director of guidance at Rutland High, who said that both honors and AP are weighted 10 points, and college courses are not weighted. The subcommittee was originally going to review cases from the last three years, but ended up going back to 2003 when a student took a class at Rutland. Tracee checked with the guidance counselor from that time, George Davis, who said that they did weigh grades at that time and that if the grade was not weighted that was an error. She called Michelle Folger to find out how other local schools handle weighted grades and found that they do incorporate weights into their grading systems. She argued that "past practice" should not apply in this case because there was no previous conscious agreement among the parties involved. Tracee also said that the board should consider what the student and parent believed when they signed up for the course, and given this additional information, she would like to request that the board reconsider the issue. Mary Jo Teetor said that the board made the decision based on the information they had, and that they had researched extensively how it related to the classes at Poultney High School. Taking classes at Rutland High has not been a standard option for PHS students, only for Stafford students who cannot get back in time for a class. Mary Jo also noted that other local schools weigh classes taken at other schools only when they also weigh similar classes at their own schools. Pat Davenport said that she believes there should be a policy in the student handbook. Principal Oakman suggested discussing it with the new guidance Tracy Gallipo at the July board meeting, and the board agreed. Al said he believes that the subcommittee did follow the instructions of the board looking at the 3 year window, with the exception of a student Mike knew who graduated with his daughter. **Action:** *Tracee moved that the board reconsider the 5/20 decision and weigh the grade received in the class taken at Rutland High by a PHS student who was also a Stafford student. There was no second. Motion died. **Action:** *Tracee moved that the board reconsider the decision taken at the last meeting after considering new information put in writing by Tracee. Pat seconded. Discussion: Al said that if the board takes up the discussion again, it needs to have broader implications beyond one class taken at Rutland High. Tracee pointed out that the past precedent was based on one case. Al said that he believes that the discussion must involve the entire board - no subcommittees. Mike said he believes that the board has sufficiently investigated this issue and should only reopen the discussion to create policy for future classes. **Action (continued)** *The vote was tied. Chair voted no. Motion failed 3-2 (Mary Jo, Mike and Al against).

b. Follow-up on incorrect report card: Tracee Oakman Rupe reported several meetings ago that her daughter's transcript is incorrect. She said that she has not been able to resolve the problem with Roger Forando, the previous guidance director, or the 2007-2008 guidance director, Shayron Bill. Her daughter has now graduated, but she still wants to get a correct report card. Mary Jo said she felt it

was not a discussion for the open board, and Tracee requested to discuss it later in executive session.

New Business:

- a. Harney House: John Harney owns a house on the corner of the baseball field and has offered to sell it to the school district because of its location. The asking price is around \$74,000. Mary Jo Teetor wanted to bring it to the board's attention. The purchase would need to be approved by the voters next March.
- b. Review FY09 School Calendars - Submitted by principals.

Policies - Drug and Alcohol Policy (1st Reading): First reading postponed to July meeting. Nancy Schwaner brought up the possibility of using the SAP grant for a drug and alcohol counselor, who might be available to counsel the students who cannot afford outside counseling as well as students who seek counseling on their own.

Action on Personnel:

- a. New hires:
 - i. Thornton, Wayne - Summer Maintenance FY08 & FY09
 - ii. Grenier, Kendra - Substitute Custodian FY08 & FY09
 - iii. Grenier, Kendra - 7/8 Grade Football Cheering Coach (shared) FY09
 - iv. Valenti, Ericka - Varsity Girls Soccer Coach FY09
 - v. DeBonis, Leanna - 7/8 Grade Football Cheering Coach (shared) FY09
 - vi. Williams, Joey - Varsity Football Cheering Coach FY09
 - vii. Turner, Benjamin - Varsity Boys Soccer Coach FY09
 - viii. Capman, David - Varsity Football Coach FY09
- b. Resignations: None
- c. Terminations: None
- d. Leave of absence requests
 - i. Rommy Fuller - PES Teacher - Requesting one-year leave to accept a faculty position at Green Mountain College. Decision from May meeting stands.

General Public Comment:

- a. PHS Grading System: Melissa Kristiansen, PHS art teacher, reported that one of the colleges her son applied to called about the class he took at Stafford that does not show up on her son's PHS transcript. It is included on a separate sheet and the college called because they thought it looked funny. She said that there continue to be glitches in the grading system that she believes are not simply due to teacher error, but there has not been a clear explanation of what is going wrong. PHS teachers have had training in using the system as a grade book, but not specific training in inputting the grades. In certain situations, Web to School

does not calculate the grade correctly. Different programs (for instance, Excel vs. Web to School) calculate different grades using the same input. The system is also not designed to factor in certain kinds of classes, like Stafford classes. Vinnie Covino explained that they will be changing the program so that it will use a semester average plus final exam (85 plus 15) instead of a two-term plus final exam average (42/43/15), which should make the grading more consistent. Vinnie said that he is arranging training for the guidance office, and teachers could attend the training if they were interested. Principal Oakman noted that chain of command was not followed and this issue should have come to her first. Tracee Oakman Rupe said that she had copied both the principal and board chair all along regarding the issue of her daughter's grades. Linda Smith, PHS special ed teacher, said she asked Vinnie for help to do her grades and that Web to School did work for her. Teachers Liz LeBrun, Linda Paquette, Clarena Renfrow, and Janet Chandler also spoke to the issue.

b. Request for funding for summer class: Catherine Oliverio requested funding to take a week-long intensive summer class with an emphasis on reading and writing. The class would cost \$1350 for credit or \$815 non-credit, which is more than the amount allotted in the master contract per semester. Principal Oakman suggested checking with Michele Folger to see if there is any available Title money that must be spent by the end of the fiscal year. Pat Davenport said she doesn't think the board can override the master contract.

c. Reading Recovery at PES: Tracee Oakman Rupe asked Principal Caliguiri about a letter the board received from parent Lynn Sawyer regarding Reading Recovery, an elementary literacy program. Principal Caliguiri said that she had discussed changing programs with the Reading Recovery teacher in December and that at the time she supported considering new programs that would serve more children (RR serves only 4 students a semester). PES is currently considering a program that could serve a larger number of children selected for specific needs - fluency, etc.

d. Nancy Schwaner thanked the PHS faculty who supported her and her family after her father's recent death.

e. Availability of board minutes to the public: Tammy Petty asked why the board minutes cannot be distributed by RSWSU in a timely fashion. Mary Jo Teetor responded that she hopes for an improvement in the near future.

Next Regular Meeting: July 15, 2008, 6:30 pm, PHS.

Mary Jo adjourned the public meeting to move to executive session at 10:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Colpitts, Recording Clerk