

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners.

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2011
City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Roger Garberg
Michelle Sweet
Tony Gross
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

Administration Present

Interim Superintendent Dr. Joseph Connelly
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
Assistant Superintendent Shayne Trubisz
New Superintendent Dr. Richard Safier
CFO Tom Markham
Gregg Bach, East Gloucester Principal
William Goodwin, GHS Principal
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and indicated that the School Committee is happy to have Cape Ann TV broadcasting the meeting live tonight. She also recognized Tom Markham, Bill Goodwin and Gregg Bach.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Sara Grow of 12 Marble Road, a parent of children at East Gloucester and O’Maley Schools, spoke to the committee about her concerns about the past cuts in the past seven years, i.e. librarians, teachers, world languages and a school closing, and yet we are still struggling with decreased revenues due to school choice and the charter school. The GEF and others have helped greatly in areas including curriculum development, science labs and arts programs. She requested a better understanding of what we were doing as a district strategically, using examples at the middle school where there was confusion about an emphasis on adding world languages back and then at the last hour, a request to emphasize Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Sara urged the district to put world languages back into all three years of middle school. It is not an “extra” and our district needs to show some strategic continuity. She requested that we put it back into the middle school schedule so we can lay a foundation for the high school program. She stated, “From where I’m standing, this district hasn’t valued world languages for seven years, and tonight I’m asking you to change that.”

Chairperson Gilman thanked Mrs. Grow for her suggestions and her dedication to Gloucester Public Schools and requested that her speech be given to School Committee Secretary Maria Puglisi for the record. She asked Dr. Safier to comment briefly as he will be taking over the school district on

5/18/2011. Dr. Safier thanked Mrs. Grow for her comments and stated that he attended a meeting at O'Maley this morning in which there was a discussion of including world languages as a special next year, as well as other diverse opportunities for students.

Chairperson Gilman thanked Dr. Safier for participating in all of the School Committee meetings and recognized Ellen Sibley, Brian Tarr, and Shayne Trubisz.

- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairperson Gilman stated that a lot of things have been happening this week. She reported that she thoroughly enjoyed the Beeman musical and proudly stated that her son is participating in “Oliver” at Plum Cove tonight and tomorrow night. She also reported that the West Parish auction raised \$28,000 to \$30,000 and the Plum Cove online auction raised \$9,000 to \$10,000.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Local author Ron Gilson, a member of the GHS Class of 1951, spoke about that era of Gloucester history, including the fishing industry and the opening of Route 128 and its effect on the city. He stated that he would like to give a copy of his book, “An Island No More,” to every graduating senior in the Class of 2011 and presented the first copy to Student Advisory Council Member Lauren Palazola.

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept a gift from Ronald H. Gilson of 270 copies of the book “An Island No More” for the Class of 2011 graduates.

Chairperson Gilman thanked Mr. Gilson for his generosity.

- VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Lauren Palazola recognized Hannah Cain’s accomplishments on the GHS girls basketball team and updated the School Committee on events at Gloucester High School, including the induction of National Honor Society members (all juniors), the student council conference, a group of students traveling to Italy and France, another group traveling to Switzerland, and the seniors counting down the days until they are out of school. Chairperson Gilman thanked Ms. Palazola for her report.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Special School Committee Meeting of March 28, 2011
2. Public Hearing of March 30, 2011
3. School Committee Meeting of March 30, 2011
4. School Committee Executive Session Meeting of March 30, 2011 – **Confidential – Not to be Released**

B. Schedule of Future Meetings

School Committee – Wednesday, April 27, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium, City Hall

Agenda: To be announced

Program Sub-Committee – Friday, May 6, 2011, at 9:45 a.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Agenda: To be announced

C. Acceptance of Gift

1. To accept a gift from the Essex County Ecology Center Toad Hall Bookstore in the amount of \$500 to West Parish Elementary School.
2. To accept a gift from Ronald H. Gilson of 270 of the book An Island No More for the Class of 2011 graduates – See Agenda Item V.

D. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip Requests

1. Gloucester High School DECA Program to DECA Internationals in Orlando, Florida from Friday, April 29 to Wednesday, May 4, 2011.
2. Annual Grade 5 Nature’s Classroom at Camp Cody, Freedom, New Hampshire from Tuesday, May 31 to Friday, June 3, 2011.

E. Acceptance of Grant

1. DESE Race to the Top – Vertical SIF Implementation – \$4,666 (to follow)

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as listed above.

Chairperson Gilman indicated that City Council President Jackie Hardy recommended having a joint City Council/School Committee meeting on May 3, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at O’Maley to talk about the budget, the rink, and whatever else the committee thinks is appropriate. Mayor Kirk stated that city staff will be busy preparing the city budget, which is due on May 10th. She indicated that they will make every effort to send a representative to the meeting but preparation of the budget is the first priority for all city staff.

VIII. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

A. Review of School Improvement Plan for 2011/2012

1. East Gloucester Elementary School – Principal Gregg Bach reviewed a slide presentation on the EGS SIP, including 2010 MCAS results summary, strengths and challenges, actions to address challenges, 2010 goals and status, and summary of goals. The following issues were discussed:

- Paraprofessional coverage
- MCAS report cards
- Weakness in performance of fourth graders on MCAS
- Professional learning communities

Mayor Kirk complimented Mr. Bach on the strength of his SIP and putting together strategies that address teaching and learning. She also thanked him for his leadership and compassion for her children and their friends over the years. Mr. Garberg congratulated Mr. Bach on the performance of the fifth graders on the MCAS, and Kathy Clancy thanked him for the family event that was held on Friday night. Chairperson Gilman thanked Mr. Bach for his presentation.

2. Gloucester High School – Dr. Bill Goodwin thanked his staff and Gregg Bach for their help in putting together the GHS SIP. He also thanked Ron Gilson for his gift to the graduating students and stated that he hopes they appreciate it.

Dr. Goodwin reviewed a slide presentation on his SIP, including a summary of 2011 goals, MCAS results, and strategies for moving forward. The following issues were discussed:

- Freshmen failures this year compared to last year
- Replacement of Jim Hayes' position
- EPP plans
- Expansion of vocational program
- Membership in required vocational advisory committees
- Importance of parent connection at the high school
- Use of NEASC audit as a bar to improvement
- Use of school-wide rubrics

Note: City Councilor Paul McGeary joined the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Chairperson Gilman reported that she has heard directly from two Rockport parents various success stories about their student's experiences at GHS. She suggested using success stories to promote school choice in. She thanked Dr. Goodwin for all of his hard work.

B. Superintendent's Report – Interim Superintendent Dr. Connelly updated the School Committee on the following matters:

- Year-End Budget Projection Report #3
- MSBA Green Repair Projects
- GCACS Enrollment and Impact on FY 2012 Chapter 70 Funding
- Update on Developing Changes to Transportation Contracts
- Upcoming PTO Schedule – Dr. Connelly suggested reaching out to the PTOs to see if they would like a presentation from their School Committee liaison regarding the budget.

Chairperson Gilman stated that she and Kathy Clancy attended a charter school board meeting last week with the hope of speaking to their board about our school district's financial challenges as we enter FY2012. Unfortunately, she was not allowed to speak because public comment was not included in the agenda.

Chairperson Gilman thanked Dr. Connelly for his report.

IX. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Special Building & Finance Sub-Committee Report of April 12, 2011** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the reduction in ice time for the hockey programs proposed by Mike Hale. Chairperson Gilman stated her belief that this is a process issue and that it would be helpful to work on it with city staff. Dr. Connelly reported on his conversation with Mike Hale about this issue and his impression that it was to be a discussion and not a directive from Mr. Hale to the athletic department. Mayor Kirk stated that there should not be an expectation that city staff will be attending subcommittee meetings of the School Committee or City Council. There was a discussion about communication protocol between city staff and the School Committee pursuant to the MOU, and Mr. Garberg pointed out that the city charter allows the School Committee to call city employees before it. He suggested rewording the MOU to reflect this provision of the city charter.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was

VOTED: 6 in favor 1 opposed (Mayor Kirk) that the School Department has the right to identify the ice time that is needed for the existing Varsity, Junior Varsity and O'Maley hockey programs and that this ice time will be honored consistent with the terms of the Facilities MOU.

Ms. Teixeira requested that Dr. Connelly reach out to Mike Hale to get a report by the next School Committee meeting if time allows.

Chairperson Clancy reported that Jonathan Pope attended the B&F Subcommittee meeting and stated that the GFAA will commit to contributing \$30 per participation to supplement athletic fees, as well as the opportunity to earn \$50 three times a year by working. Mr. Gross

also mentioned that Mr. Pope would like the School Committee to publicly recognize and promote the GFAA's contributions. Ms. Teixeira stated that there may be a misconception that the GFAA is supplementing the school budget when, in fact, their contributions are going to the families. Dr. Connelly indicated that he asked the IT department to modify the website to make that clear.

Mayor Kirk indicated that Gorton's has made a \$50,000 donation for Newell Stadium, which is due to the fundraising efforts of GFAA. Chairperson Gilman asked Kathy Clancy to write a thank you letter to Gorton's on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Program Sub-Committee Report of March 11, 2011 – Chairperson Garberg reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the Programs Agenda for 2011.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that one goal of the Superintendent is to provide teachers with needed professional development opportunities, including reestablishment of the Professional Development Committee/Curriculum Consulting Council, for the purpose of identifying successful instructional strategies that will assist Gloucester in closing the existing achievement gaps.

On a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept the 2011-2012 Program Subcommittee Agenda.

X. DISCUSSION

A. Day on the Hill – Report to the School Committee – Kathy Clancy stated that she appreciates the leadership of MASC on legislative issues. Both chairs of the education committee expressed a desire not to undertake any more unfunded mandates. Ms. Clancy stated that she has a report on legislation that has been filed which she will distribute. Ms. Teixeira stated that the luncheon provided by the vocational schools was excellent. She reported on the positive attitudes of the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Education, a proposed dropout bill, and action on health care plan design which will be coming out soon.

Kathy Clancy reviewed House Bill 1048 regarding sanitizing of musical instruments before they are transferred from one student to another. She indicated that she sent an email to Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante saying they will likely get a letter from the School Committee on this issue. Ms. Clancy would like to draft a letter to them against the bill. Mr. Tarr stated that this issue was a hot topic at the Superintendents' Round Table this week and that it did not have any support. Chairperson Gilman suggested putting this on the agenda for the next meeting and inviting music director Dave Benjamin to give his thoughts.

- B. FY 2011 Year-End Projection #3** – See Agenda Item VIII.B.
- C. Facebook for Gloucester Public Schools** – Chairperson Gilman suggested that this item be deferred to the Program Subcommittee and have Tylor Marquis and Grant Harris come talk about it. She asked Mr. Garberg to put this issue on the next Program agenda.
- D. Health Insurance Plan Design Resolution** – Mayor Kirk reviewed the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Reform Resolution and indicated that there will be significant pushback from the unions. She stated that it is important that the School Committee supports this resolution and get it in the hands of our legislators and MASC.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to support the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Reform Resolution as stated.

XI. ACTION

A. FY 2012 Operating Budget

1. To Discuss Reactions and Comments to the Public Hearing and Possible Further Communications to Parents/Guardians at PTO Meetings, Etc. – Chairperson Gilman complimented Maria Puglisi for an extraordinary job in capturing the comments of the speakers at the recent public hearing. She also thanked Dr. Connelly for putting together a letter to parents/guardians with an overview of the significance of the Tier I cuts and working with principals so they could send it out. Ms. Teixeira thanked everyone who attended and made the public hearing possible. Kathy Clancy stated that she was particularly touched by Beth Morris’ comments about putting forth our dream budget. Chairperson Gilman reminded the School Committee that several people talked about an override and stated that she would be supportive of considering that at a later time. Ms. Teixeira stated that if anyone is interested, she is available to provide information about overrides.
2. Tier II Update/Discussion – Dr. Connelly reviewed additional SPED costs in the amount of \$73,275 that were omitted from the budget, which results in a \$758,025 increase in the Draft 2 budget.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to amend the Draft 2 budget to include the increase in special education costs as outlined on the schedule provided by Dr. Connelly.

Dr. Connelly reviewed additional Tier IIa reductions and strongly recommended that the School Committee give serious consideration to and take action on the Tier II and IIa reductions since the budget that is presented to the mayor on April 22nd should reflect a budget that the committee feels is as balanced as it can be. The goal is to reduce the gap as much as possible now to avoid making larger cuts later in the process.

Mayor Kirk reviewed the issues that came out of the statehouse today regarding local aid and circuit breaker funds and stated that she is still trying to finalize the numbers. In addition, she indicated that the City Council voted down the early retirement program for city staff. Consequently, she is looking at laying off 30 people, which will impact public safety. Therefore, her guidance to the School Committee is still for level funding. She thanked Mr. McGeary for supporting the early retirement program.

Mayor Kirk also indicated that health plan design probably will not get voted until the governor signs the budget and that she has gotten no response from public employees about the proposal that is on the table. She is not optimistic about the negotiations. She stated that the MTA is telling their locals to stall on health insurance until contracts are settled, and she doesn't see it getting better and potentially getting worse.

Dr. Connelly indicated that we would get at least 60 percent reimbursement from circuit breaker funds, which is built into the Draft 2 budget. He stated that we may get more than 60 percent, but it would be too risky to go to 65 or 70 percent in the budget.

A discussion was held on the process of revising the Tier I budget reductions already voted on and nurse coverage at all of the schools.

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

VOTED: 6 in favor one abstained (Ms. Teixeira), to approve Item #22 of the Tier II budget reductions.

After discussion, Chairperson Gilman withdrew her motion.

Chairperson Gilman stated that she would like to remove Items 23 and 24 from the Tier II budget reductions. Kathy Clancy would like to remove Items 29, 31, 32, and Ms. Teixeira would like to remove Item #25.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the following Tier II budget reductions, representing a net savings of \$345,067:

- Item #22 1.5 clerical hours at West Parish
- Item #26 .2 HR clerical in Central Office
- Item #27 GHS teacher retirement/position eliminated
- Item #28 GHS teacher resignation/position eliminated
- Item #30 SPED teacher at Veterans Memorial
- Item #34 O'Maley teacher retirement/position elim.
- Item #35 O'Maley teacher retirement/position elim.

Kathy Clancy stated that she would like to remove Items 36 through 41 from the Tier IIa budget reductions, and Chairperson Gilman would like to remove Item #43. Dr. Connelly recommended taking no action on Items 50 and 51.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the following Tier IIa budget reductions, representing a net savings of \$134,093:

- Item #42 Two crossing guard vacancies
- Item #44 Crossing guard location
- Item #45 Crossing guard location
- Item #46 Crossing guard location
- Item #47 Central Office administrator
- Item #48 GHS teacher retirement/position eliminated
- Item #49 Food service resignation/position eliminated

Chairperson Gilman stated that she is comfortable with the budget to be presented to the mayor on April 22nd with a gap of \$278,865. There was a discussion about reducing the budget further in June.

Mrs. Sweet thanked the administration for all of their hard work in coming up with this budget and thanked Grant Harris for offering to reduce his budget by \$25,000. Dr. Connelly indicated that he will move forward with notifying the people who are being cut by the contractual deadline. Kathy Clancy noted that the budget to be presented to the mayor is less than a 1 percent increase over this year's budget and is not irresponsible in any way and that she will fight against further cuts when the time comes.

Note: Chairperson Gilman thanked Paul McGeary for being at the meeting. Mr. McGeary and Mayor Kirk left the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, that the Draft 3 budget is \$33,961,539, which represents a \$278,865 increase over this year's budget, or 0.83 percent.

B. Administrative Protocol Policy – The second reading of this policy was waived.

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve File CFB and GBEBBC “Administrative Protocol When Dealing with Serious Criminal and/or Legal Incidents.”

XII. OTHER COMMUNICATION

A. For Your Information

1. Invitation to Suburban Coalition Annual Legislative Breakfast – Tuesday, April 26, 2011
2. Email (4/5/11) from Kathleen Clancy
3. Email (4/5/11) from Jim Duggan
4. Letter to Parents/Guardians from Principals – Chairperson Gilman requested that Dr. Connelly prepare a second letter to parents/guardians with the most recent cuts.
5. GHS Spring Sports Schedule – 2011
6. MASC Packet of Information “Forms You Need”

B. Further Discussion

Ms. Teixeira would like to refer the vocational program issue to the Program Subcommittee for discussion in June to ensure that the students starting in the fall can be accommodated. She also reported on the status of contracts.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Gilman – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mrs. Sweet – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 11:25 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the nurses' contract and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of voting on the contract and adjournment only.

XI. ACTION (Continued)

C. Ratification of Nurses' Contract – Ms. Teixeira read the tentative agreements reached with the nurses.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to accept the tentative agreements with the nurses as the current contract with this group for September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011.

Ms. Teixeira put the School Committee on notice that every contract will be up for negotiation again in September.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of April 13, 2011 at 11:35 p.m.

All reference documents and reports are filed in the Superintendent's office.

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*