

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

School Committee Chambers – District Office

5:00 p.m.

Members Present

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

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and thanked Cape Ann TV for their flexibility in attending this special meeting. She recognized Tom Markham and Brian Tarr and stated that Mayor Kirk is unable to attend the meeting but passed along some comments on matters that will be discussed.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Amanda Kesterson of 293 Washington Street, a parent of a Plum Cove kindergarten student and a preschool student at St. Ann's, thanked Chairperson Gilman for meeting with her and other St. Ann's parents and stated that she is representing those parents tonight. She expressed concern with the new After School Policy and believes it is important that the Gloucester Public Schools send a message of inclusion and cooperation as much as possible.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Gilman stated that in the first revision to the second revision of tonight's agenda, four or five words were deleted but that the agenda was re-posted yesterday morning. She did not reasonably anticipate that those words would be deleted from the agenda, and the original posting with the correct wording was posted last Thursday. This announcement was made in compliance with the open meeting law.

In addition, Chairperson Gilman reported on her and Ms. Teixeira's meeting with St. Ann's parents on July 11, 2011 regarding the newly-approved After School Policy, including documents distributed at the meeting and the concerns shared by the parents. Specifically, Chairperson Gilman distributed copies of the old and recently amended after school policies, as

well as minutes of recent meetings showing the committee's deliberations. She also read Interim Superintendent Connelly's superintendent report from the fall of 2010 where he recommended that the committee table the topic of after school policy until the spring of 2011.

V. RECOGNITIONS

Kathy Clancy recognized and congratulated Rachel Nearis, a sixth-grader at O'Maley, who was named as a first place national grand prize winner in the Elks' annual Americanism Essay contest.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Meeting of June 29, 2011 – Mr. Garberg made a correction on page 9 of the minutes, Section XI.C. The first sentence of the first paragraph after the second reading of the After School Policy was conducted should read as follows:

Mr. Garberg explained that the Program Subcommittee rejected the idea of a premium pay-to-play scheme (whereby non-enrolled students would be asked to pay a premium to participate) because the committee does not support premium options reserved for those able to pay premium prices. In public education, services should be provided on the same terms to all participating students.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda with the correction noted above.

VII. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Safier updated the School Committee on the following matters:

- Coordinated Program Review
- MOU (Facilities) – Dr. Safier indicated that the Mayor's Office should be notified that the School Committee is ready to enter into dialog with respect to changes to the MOU. There was a discussion about having Naomi Stonberg review it before it is signed. It was agreed that the MOU should be in place before the start of school.

- Acceptable Use Policy/Social Networking Policy – A discussion was held on what will be covered under the Acceptable Use Policy. Dr. Safier listed the possible members of the committee that will be discussing this policy.
- Assistant Principal/Reading Coach/Adjustment Counselor – O’Maley Assistant Principal Kevin McCormick is resigning effective August 12, 2011.
- School Policy Manual
- MassDevelopment – Kathy Clancy stressed the importance of the financial implications and challenges the School Committee faces and there was a discussion of the committee’s involvement in the future of the Fuller School.
- Website
- Pathways and New Model
- Superintendent’s Goals – The committee agreed with the process described in Dr. Safier’s report, and he welcomed the thoughts of School Committee members during the developmental process.

Chairperson Gilman thanked Dr. Safier for his report.

VIII. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

IX. DISCUSSION/ACTION

- A. **Update on MOU Progress – Ad Hoc Sub-Committee** – Already discussed.
- B. **Proposed Amended Language of Publication and Public Hearings Required Prior to Second Reading of a Proposed Policy Change for either Inclusion to the City Charter Section 4-6 or Inclusion in the School Committee Rules and Procedures**

Chairperson Gilman reported that this matter was discussed during the Ad Hoc City Charter Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Gross reviewed the amended language regarding publication and public hearings. He believes that this language should be contained in the School Committee Rules and Procedures as opposed to the City Charter. Mr. Garberg expressed concern that there would be a need to hold several public hearings in the process of updating the policy manual.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to request that the Ad Hoc City Charter Subcommittee consider further language for inclusion in the School Committee Rules and Procedures regarding publication and public hearings required prior to second reading of a proposed policy change.

C. School Committee Vote to Hold a Public Hearing on the Recently Approved After School Policy

Chairperson Gilman stated that the School Committee has heard public feedback and concerns from one part of the community but not from another part of the community. She sees the School Committee's options as being either to refer the recently amended policy back to the Program Subcommittee for further review or to defer the implementation of the amended policy and refer it back to the Program Subcommittee for further review, either of which may include a public hearing.

The timing of a public hearing was discussed relative to the above options. Mrs. Sweet suggested deferring the implementation of the amended policy, having a public hearing, and then referring the amended policy back to the Program Subcommittee for further review based on the public comments. Ms. Teixeira would like to have a public hearing before the full School Committee sooner rather than later since school is starting soon. She reminded the committee that Chairperson Gilman had suggested a public hearing on the after school policy after the first reading and that there had not been consensus.

Mr. Garberg does not believe that deferring the implementation of the new policy is legal. However, Chairperson Gilman indicated that deferment was one of Naomi Stonberg's recommendations.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to hold a public hearing before the full School Committee regarding the After School Policy adopted on 6/29/11.

Mrs. Sweet made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to defer the implementation of the After School Policy adopted on 6/29/11 until the School Committee receives feedback from the public hearing and any action thereafter. Mr. Garberg amended the motion to defer application of the new After School Policy to any student who was participating in after school programming in the 2010/2011 school year and who was enrolled in a non-district school during that year. After discussion, Mr. Garberg withdrew his amended motion.

After discussion, on the original motion by Mrs. Sweet, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

VOTED: 5 in favor 1 opposed (Mr. Garberg) to defer the implementation of the After School Policy adopted on 6/29/11 until the School Committee receives feedback from the public hearing and any action thereafter.

Ms. Teixeira and Kathy Clancy requested that the Program Subcommittee look at pay-to-play and the fee structure when reviewing the amended policy. There was a discussion about issues arising from asking our staff to teach out-of-district students and how much of teachers' salaries are paid by taxpayer dollars. Kathy Clancy reminded the committee that GPS after school programs are funded by the GEF, not by taxpayers.

The committee agreed to hold a public hearing on Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Safier will ask Stephanie Delisi to find out if City Hall is available that night. Chairperson Gilman requested that the newly amended policy be posted on the web site and sent to the private schools in Gloucester. She also stated that the School Committee needs to do a better job of getting out in front of these types of controversial policies in the future rather than allowing the press to take control of the message. For example, the press used the headline "Outsiders Banned," and then subsequent letters to the editor attributed the use of the word "outsiders" as a word used by our committee, which was not true.

Chairperson Gilman thanked all of the members for their commitment.

- D. **Grant Balances (Surpluses)** – Dr. Safier indicated that he received an email from city administration regarding positive grant balances dating back to 1999, the total of which is approximately \$38,000. He recommended that these positive balances be applied to free cash. Kathy Clancy would like this matter referred to B&F to get more detail, and the committee agreed.

X. OTHER COMMUNICATION

A. FYI Letters from Chairperson Gilman

1. Email and attachment (7/18/11) regarding Tax Reform for Education
2. Letter (7/8/11) to Governor Patrick, Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante
3. Letter (7/6/11) to DESE Chairperson, Maura Banta
4. Letter (7/6/11) to Suburban Coalition Board of Directors President, Dorothy Presser
5. Letter (7/6/11) to North Shore Coalition for School Funding Chairperson, Susan Beckmann
6. Letter (7/5/11) from Chairperson Gilman to Mr. Joe Knowles

XI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of July 20, 2011 at 6:56 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*