

# Joint City Council & School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 24, 2016  
Gloucester High School Library  
7:00 p.m.

## School Committee Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson  
Joel Favazza, Secretary  
Melissa Teixeira  
Tony Gross  
Michelle Sweet

## School Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent  
Tom Lafleur, CPA, Director of Finance  
and Operations  
Patricia Wegmann, Special Education Director  
Debra Lucey, O'Maley Principal  
Jim Hafey, Facilities Manager

## City Councilors Present

Joseph Ciolino, President  
Steven LeBlanc, Jr. Vice President  
Paul Lundberg  
James O'Hara, Jr.  
Scott Memhard  
Melissa Cox  
Valerie Gilman  
Sean Nolan

## Also Present

Linda Lowe, City Clerk

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER – SCHOOL COMMITTEE** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. **CALL TO ORDER – CITY COUNCIL** – Council President Ciolino called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- III. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG/ MOMENT OF SILENCE** – A moment of silence was observed in memory of retired firefighters Marty Hanrahan and William Newman and retired police officer John Christopher.
- IV. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Students in the GHS theatre program presented a musical statement requesting that they be allowed to go forward with their production of “Into the Woods” in the GHS auditorium. (See lyrics attached.)
- V. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE & CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT** – None.
- VI. **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION**

**At this time, the agenda was taken out of order.**

- E. **GHS Roof Repairs** – Chairman Pope stated that both the City Council and the School Committee have endorsed a Statement of Interest to the MSBA which would help pay for

the replacement of the GHS roof. Mr. Hafey gave some background on roof repairs in the district and stated that the high school roof is at the 20-year mark this year, which allows it to be eligible for MSBA reimbursement.

Mr. Hafey stated that many repairs and replacements of sections of the high school roof have been done over the last four or five years. He noted that a number of repairs have been done in the last couple of weeks, which seem to be holding well. Work will continue through the weekend and tiles will be replaced in the auditorium. He reported that there are no structural issues with the roof and that the DPW is doing all they possibly can to stop the leaks.

There was a discussion about the composition of the roof, the estimated cost of replacing it, and the life expectancy of the new roof. Mr. Hafey noted that the deterioration of the roof is largely due to seagulls, who peck at it and whose waste eats through the membrane. He is looking at putting on a white PVC roof for that reason.

With respect to the performance of “Into the Woods,” Madison Smith stated that there is no backup plan for the show and that the licensing company informed her that if the show was moved out of Gloucester, they would lose their performance rights. She reported that the O’Maley stage is one-third the size of the GHS stage, meaning that the students would have to eliminate 60% of the set they have already built. Additionally, the set includes an eight-foot-tall tower that would not be able to be safely rebuilt for use at O’Maley. There is no other space to which they can safely move the set before the show starts, and the show cannot be rescheduled due to contract restrictions with the licensing company.

Council President Ciolino asked about the field house roof and floor. Mr. Hafey stated that the condition of the track is not due to the roof leaking. He acknowledged that some of the wear and tear on the basketball court is water-related and that one of the contingencies for replacing the floor is having a roof over it that does not leak. President Ciolino suggested that an action plan be developed with costs so that funds can be gathered to address these issues. Mr. Hafey stated that once the roof is done, they will start working on the field house floor. Ms. Cox noted that there is funding in the stabilization account for capital projects.

Chairman Pope reported that the field house was identified as being insufficiently constructed shortly after it was built and that it was part of a lawsuit against the contractor and architectural firm that built it. He stated that the Clerk of the Works signed off on a change order saying it was okay to change the floor from three layers of plywood to one. The district received about \$375,000 from the architectural firm, which was turned over to the DPW a couple of years ago. Back in 2002, the estimated cost to replace the floor was about \$750,000. It is sure to be much more than that now.

*(Mr. Hafey left the meeting at 7:31 p.m.)*

- A. **Governance Structure of School Committee** – Chairman Pope indicated that this item is intended to explain the differences between how the School Committee and the City Council function. He stated that the School Committee has three major functions: hiring

the Superintendent to run the schools, making policy, and overseeing finances. There are three subcommittees: Program Subcommittee, Building and Finance Subcommittee, and Personnel Subcommittee.

Mr. Gross, Chairman of the Building and Finance Subcommittee, discussed the functions of that subcommittee, including reviewing district expenditures, approval of transfers, reviewing DPW tickets, developing the budget, and signing warrants.

Ms. Teixeira, Chairperson of the Personnel Subcommittee, discussed the charge of that subcommittee, including matters concerning salary and benefits, contract negotiations, job descriptions, evaluation tools, and policies relative to personnel, such as FMLA, domestic violence, and CORI record checks. She noted that the subcommittee negotiates with ten groups, namely the GTA, GAEP, nurses, food service, transportation, AFSCME-A, AFSCME-B, noon supervisors, crossing guards, and bus monitors.

Ms. Teixeira pointed out that the committee has been negotiating one-year contracts every year for the last eight years, with the exception of the smaller groups for which they recently negotiated three-year contracts. She expressed her frustration with that process due to the fact that the committee does not know what its budget is going to be until the City Council approves it at the end of June each year. She hopes that if the committee settles multi-year contracts, that the City Council will recognize that obligation and support it the following year.

Councilor Cox stated that the City Council supports the school budget to the extent it is allowed to do so and that there needs to be an understanding that, unfortunately, not everyone is going to get what they want. Council President Ciolino noted that the mayor has more control of the budget than the City Council does and that they are looking at raising the beach parking fees, which may lead to surplus funds that can be transferred to the schools.

Kathy Clancy pointed out that the city budget has the employee benefit costs in its own department but the School Department has employee benefits as a department within its budget.

Kathy Clancy, Chairperson of the Program Subcommittee, discussed the functions of that subcommittee, namely drafting policies that are related to education, including policies suggested by the Department of Education. Some examples include those relating to substance abuse, support for students with social/emotional needs, special education requirements, etc. The subcommittee also reviews the policy manual to ensure that the policies are up-to-date.

Chairman Pope spoke about the hiring of district employees and stated that the School Committee approves very few of them. He also explained the school budget process. Mr. Gross indicated that the Superintendent and the CFO start meeting with the principals and department heads in December each year.

- B. 2 Blackburn Drive/St. Ann's** – Chairman Pope stated that the city currently leases both of these buildings and that both of the leases expire in September. He also noted that the city is in negotiations with both of the landlords.

Dr. Safier discussed the preschool program which is currently located at 2 Blackburn Drive. He noted that it is a role model program, meaning that 50% of the children are students with disabilities (autism, developmental delays, mobility issues, cerebral palsy, etc.). He stated that the Blackburn facility allows us to provide a least restrictive environment for those students. In addition, the preschool enrollment has increased from 75 students three years ago to 109 now. The inside of the building has been renovated and is clean and modern, which attracts families to enroll their children.

Dr. Safier stated that the Blackburn building is compliant with ADA and the standards for preschool facilities and that the play areas meet the requirements of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. In addition, preschool programs are usually located in single-story buildings. Blackburn also has multiple means of egress within short distances, the temperature control is steady and adequate, and there is adequate parking for staff as well as drop-off and pick-up (4 times per day).

In response to a question by Council President Ciolino, Ms. Wegmann discussed the services supported by the early childhood grant.

Mr. Favazza noted for the record that he currently represents the owner of 2 Blackburn Drive in matters unrelated to that property and that he will abstain from any votes regarding this matter.

- D. FY17 Budget Overview** – Dr. Safier stated that the first draft of the FY17 proposed budget was passed by the School Committee in late February and that there will be a public hearing on the budget on March 30th. The committee anticipates a final vote for submission to the mayor on April 13th.

Dr. Safier reviewed the budget process and stated that it is designed to support continued growth in student achievement, technology, including continuation of the 1:1 Chromebook initiative, the increased need for social and emotional support, and the increase in English language learners.

Dr. Safier reported that the proposed FY17 budget totals \$40,225,057, an increase of \$1,036,309 (2.64%) above this year's approved budget. He noted that 75% of that increase is due to increases in health insurance costs, Track and Step, and special education costs. The remaining 25% increase includes anticipated grant reductions and a need for kindergarten aides due to the number of potential enrollees.

Dr. Safier reviewed additions to the FY17 budget, including two ELL teachers, continued computer science courses at the high school, an additional preschool teacher and paraprofessional, two additional paraprofessionals for the vocational program, a math coach for three of the elementary schools, a special education teacher and morning aide at Veterans, a math coordinator at O'Maley, adjustment counselors at Plum Cove and East Gloucester, and a board-certified behavior analyst.

Dr. Safier reviewed reductions to the FY17 budget, including retirements, reduced BSRI services, decreased transportation costs due to the new bus lease and a reduction in fuel costs, professional development, Internet service, out-of-district tuitions, and a teacher sabbatical.

In response to a question from Councilor Gilman about athletic fees and bus fees, Dr. Safier stated that the former mayor placed \$75,000 into the school budget for those fees, which is divided between transportation and athletics. He also noted that those fees are scaled depending upon a family's need.

There was also a discussion about technology, and Dr. Safier reported that all eighth, ninth and tenth graders will have Chromebooks next year.

- C. Special Education** – Ms. Wegmann gave an overview of special education instruction and related services for students with disabilities, which include autism, developmental delays, and intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, and physical impairments. She reviewed the process of determining whether a student is eligible for special education and what happens if the student is found to be eligible. She explained individual education plans (IEPs), free appropriate public education (FAPE), and least restrictive environment (LRE). Ms. Wegmann stated that there are currently 62 special education students who are placed in out-of-district specialized settings, at costs ranging from \$20,000 to \$265,000.

Mr. Lafleur distributed a packet showing the proposed FY17 special education budget and an explanation of the special education circuit breaker program. He stated that the projected out-of-district tuition costs for FY17 is \$3,962,895, which is offset by \$931,800 in projected circuit breaker funding. He pointed out there are additional special education costs that are not included in the budget, which are funded through the preschool revolving fund and grants. Therefore, the actual cost to deliver special education services is \$13,305,304, or 33% of the budget.

Mr. Lafleur reviewed the reimbursement formula in the circuit breaker program, which he is budgeting at 68% for FY17. There was a discussion about what happens when a student moves into the district mid-year. Councilor Gilman noted that transportation for the 62 out-of-district students is not reimbursed at all, which constitutes an unfunded mandate. Councilor Cox indicated that Governor Baker has listening posts for people to talk about unfunded mandates.

- F. Statements of Interest – East Gloucester Elementary School and Beeman Memorial Elementary School** – Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee has had meetings at each elementary school to get input from the community on the plan for the elementary schools. The committee has also received advice from Dore & Whittier, KBA and the MSBA indicating that we should submit a statement of interest as soon as possible since it is such a long process. Chairman Pope reported that the School Committee has directed the superintendent to put together statements of interest for both East Gloucester and Beeman Memorial Elementary Schools, indicating East Gloucester as the priority.

However, that priority can be changed as long as it is done before the MSBA starts looking at the schools.

**G. Perspectives from City Council – Not discussed.**

1. Vision for the City/Priorities/Deliverables
2. How City Councilors See Their Responsibility for School Outcome

**VII. ACTION**

**A. School Committee Vote of Approval of Statement of Interest for East Gloucester Elementary School – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously voted 6 in favor, 0 opposed to resolve the following:**

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on March 24, 2016, prior to the closing date, the School Committee of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority a Statement of Interest Form dated April 7, 2016 for the East Gloucester Elementary School, located at 8 Davis Street Extension, Gloucester, Massachusetts, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

MSBA Priority #7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements, the building has space and system issues that have compromised programming and the delivery of instruction

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of the grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Gloucester Public School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously voted 0 in favor, 6 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced vote regarding approval of the Statement of Interest for the East Gloucester Elementary School. The motion failed.

**B. School Committee Vote of Approval of Statement of Interest for Beeman Memorial Elementary School – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously voted 6 in favor, 0 opposed to resolve the following:**

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on March 24, 2016, prior to the closing date, the School Committee of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority a Statement of Interest Form dated April 7, 2016 for the Beeman Memorial Elementary School, located at 138 Cherry Street,

Gloucester, Massachusetts, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

MSBA Priority #7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements. The building has space and system issues that have compromised programming and the delivery of instruction

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of the grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Gloucester Public School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously voted 0 in favor, 6 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced vote to approve the Statement of Interest for Beeman Memorial Elementary School. The motion failed.

- C. City Council Vote of Approval of Statement of Interest for East Gloucester Elementary School** – On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed to resolve the following:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on March 24, 2016, prior to the closing date, the City Council of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority a Statement of Interest Form dated April 8, 2016 for the East Gloucester Elementary School, located at 8 Davis Street Extension, Gloucester, Massachusetts, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

MSBA Priority #7: Due to the age and condition of the building, the district is looking to replace or add to an obsolete building in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of the grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City of Gloucester to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Cox, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 0 in favor, 8 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced

vote to approve the Statement of Interest for East Gloucester Elementary School. The motion failed.

- D. City Council Vote of Approval of Statement of Interest for Beeman Memorial Elementary School** – On a motion by Councilor Memhard, seconded by Councilor Cox, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 8 in favor, 0 opposed to resolve the following:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on March 24, 2016, prior to the closing date, the City Council of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority a Statement of Interest Form dated April 8, 2016 for the Beeman Memorial Elementary School, located at 138 Cherry Street, Gloucester, Massachusetts, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

MSBA Priority #7: Due to the age and condition of the building, the district is looking to replace or add to an obsolete building in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of the grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City of Gloucester to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor LeBlanc, seconded by Councilor Cox, the City Council voted by ROLL CALL 0 in favor, 8 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced vote. The motion failed.

- VIII. ADJOURNMENT – SCHOOL COMMITTEE** – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the Joint City Council & School Committee Meeting of March 24, 2016 at 9:08 p.m.

- IX. ADJOURNMENT – CITY COUNCIL** – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED:** 8 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the Joint City Council & School Committee Meeting of March 24, 2016 at 9:08 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary*

VI.E.

**LITTLE RED**

Into the space we'd like to go, this will be my last musical.  
Into the space, to do our show for everyone in Gloucester.  
Into the space, we'll block off seats, with tarps, with ropes and with sheets  
Into the space for Into the Woods  
Into the space for Into the Woods

**ALL**

The roof does leak, the tiles do fall, so we ask you remove them all.  
The seats we can block so no one gets wet.  
We've worked so hard on the show, so please will you not say "no."  
  
We know you're concerned with safety, we ask you just hold 3 weeks  
The roof has been this way for many years before today  
Patches have worked well in the past, we don't need it to everlast  
Let us go home to do the show, to sing the songs, to dance the dance  
The act to sing to dance to laugh to cry to gasp to put on our Musical  
Into the Woods  
Into the Woods  
Into the Woods here at Gloucester High is all we ask for!