

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**Amended School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, January 9, 2013  
City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium  
7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Val Gilman, Assistant Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Melissa Teixeira  
Roger Garberg  
Tony Gross  
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent  
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance and  
and Operations  
Erik Anderson, GHS Principal  
Debra Lucey, O'Maley Principal

**Also Present**

City Councilor Paul McGeary (7:06 p.m.)

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Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. RECOGNITIONS** – Mrs. Gilman recognized Dr. Safier for his stimulating interviews on “Superintendent’s Corner” and thanked Cape Ann TV for the opportunity to record those sessions. Chairman Pope recognized the Demoulas Foundation and Market Basket for their donation of \$100,000 for the Newell Stadium project.
- IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- V. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Melody (inaudible) and Cody Eaton introduced themselves and updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: Secret Pals Week, NHS Color Run, Polar Plunge for Polio, Spring Fling, midterms, and hockey and basketball teams.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of December 19, 2012
  2. Special School Committee of December 19, 2012
  3. Ad Hoc Policy Manual Subcommittee of December 17, 2012
  4. School Committee of December 12, 2012
  5. School Committee Executive Session of December 12, 2012 (**Confidential**)

6. Building & Finance Subcommittee of December 10, 2012
7. Amended School Committee Executive Session of August 29, 2012  
(Confidential)

- B. Acceptance of Gift** – Donation by Leuders Environmental, Inc. in the amount of \$50.00
- C. Acceptance of Grant** – Massachusetts DESE Academic Support Services Allocation Grant Program in the amount of \$9,579.00

Mrs. Gilman removed Item A2 from the Consent Agenda.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

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

Mrs. Gilman asked Mayor Kirk to clarify a statement she made during the December 19th Special School Committee meeting with respect to the Fuller School referendum question. Specifically, the minutes reflect that the Mayor stated, “In addition, it is well-documented that the School Committee has voted not to use Fuller as a school. Therefore, it is grossly misleading to the public, should that option prevail, that the School Committee would reopen a policy that has been set in stone and affirmed many times.” Mrs. Gilman asked if the Mayor was referring to the selection of O’Maley as opposed to Fuller as a middle school.

Mayor Kirk stated that she did not specifically mention the Fuller versus O’Maley debate that the former committee had taken up and that her intention was to refer in general to the number of times the question has come up amongst the School Committee since 2008 regarding its status as a school. She noted that at every turn, the School Committee has gone in a different direction, whether to affirm O’Maley as the middle school or for the Plan for Effective Learning Communities to continue to be invested in small community schools. Mrs. Gilman pointed out that the School Committee has not yet voted on whether Fuller should be used as a school and that that vote will be taken at tonight’s meeting.

## **VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

- A. Update on GCACS Student Enrollment to GPSD** – Dr. Safier reported that he met with charter school administrators and parents last night and that both the district and the charter school have been actively engaged in effecting an orderly transition of students. The charter school provided an address list for approximately 99 students. To date, the district has received inquiries or enrollments of 96 students, 40 returning to the elementary schools, 15 who have exercised intradistrict choice, and 41 enrollments at O’Maley. Of those, there are 12 special education students at O’Maley, six at Beeman, seven at West Parish, three at Veterans, three at Plum Cove, and one at East Gloucester, and program leaders are reviewing the needs for those students. On January 16th, the charter school’s director of special education will be meeting with all elementary special education program leaders to answer any questions they have regarding individual students, and Patricia Wegmann has directed program leaders to let her know of any student who may require additional support or specialized programming.

Dr. Safier stated that the transfer of student records has been very efficient. He is considering this week to be an enrollment week, making sure that students are enrolled where they want to go. Next week, he will send a welcome letter to parents, and at the request of charter school board members, he will also send a letter to the editors of the local newspapers to communicate the collaboration that is taking place.

Debra Lucey reported on the enrollment activity at O'Maley and an orientation that took place for charter school families. She noted that the students are given placement tests on their first day to determine their level of need and that they start their classes the next day. Since there are 2-1/2 weeks left in the second term, that time will be used as a transition period for new students, who will go through their schedule but will not be graded. She stated that new students will be able to join after school activities that have already started so long as there is space in the program.

Finally, Dr. Safier reported that he will be inviting charter school parents to meet with him, Mr. Bach, and some of the principals and that the PTOs are in the process of reaching out, as well. Mayor Kirk thanked Dr. Safier and his staff for the professionalism, compassion and focus they have put on transitioning each student on an individual basis.

- B. SAT/Advanced Placement Report** – Principal Erik Anderson gave a presentation on MCAS performance, PSAT participants, SAT scores, the average number of SAT and ACT test takers, and information on the Abigail and John Adams Scholarship, including the number of scholarship recipients. A discussion was held on whether the fact that GHS has vocational students is a factor in the difference between Gloucester's rate of SAT test takers and the state rate. Mr. Anderson indicated that there are more nonvocational students who choose not to take the SAT.

Mr. Anderson also reviewed the benefits of the AP program, scoring, current AP course offerings and enrollment, and 2012 AP Scholars. A discussion was held on why the number of AP test takers has declined and encouraging students to take AP courses and exams. The following matters were also discussed:

- Promoting GHS as a school of choice since it offers nine AP courses and wonderful sports, arts, music and theater
- Encouraging all students to reach to a higher standard
- SAT prep/tutoring
- AP test fees for low income students

- C. Superintendent's Report** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Visits to Elementary Turnaround Schools – Dr. Safier and Mr. Bach reported on their visit to the William W. Henderson Inclusion Elementary School, a turnaround school in Dorchester that is demographically comparable to Veterans. Dr. Safier stated that they will be visiting at least three more turnaround schools.
2. Kindergarten Outreach

## IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

**A. Ad Hoc Policy Manual Subcommittee of December 17, 2012** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the subcommittee reviewed Section I of the policy manual at its December 17, 2012 meeting. The next meeting will be held on February 4, 2013 with the same members. She believes the revised manual will be ready for review by the full committee in the spring.

**B. Building & Finance Subcommittee of December 19, 2012** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on December 19, 2012:

- Gate Fees for Hockey Games – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, that for all student athletes participating in sports that have a gate fee, we provide one free pass for a parent for each game for the remainder of the 2012-13 school year.

- MOU with City Regarding Facilities – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor, 1 present (Mayor Kirk) to approve the Agreement by and between the City of Gloucester & the City of Gloucester School Committee Concerning the Transfer of Responsibility for Maintenance and Repair of School Buildings and Grounds, with the last sentence of paragraph 7 being replaced with paragraph 3 of the “Possible Language for MOU with Facilities” dated August 29, 2012.

Mr. Garberg noted that he is supporting the motion with the understanding that scheduling of the rink will be done no less frequently than every year and that the committee will have an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the MOU next year and make any adjustments that might be necessary. Mayor Kirk indicated that she will do her best to encourage Mike Hale to sign the MOU.

**C. Building & Finance Subcommittee of January 2, 2013** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed student lunch accounts and collection and declaring Fuller School surplus at its meeting on January 2, 2013.

With respect to Fuller School, Mr. Gross stated that his children went there and he was the PTO president for a few years. In the course of six years, they went through four principals, at least a half dozen assistant principals, and numerous other staff. It was a school of around 600 students, and that size and that building was very difficult to maintain. We are now trending to more reasonable school sizes because the delivery of education is so much better. The infrastructure in the Fuller School building would need to be completely rehabbed. The Plan for Effective Learning Communities (PFELC)

established that a reasonable size learning community is much more effective, and the city is far better off serving our children that way.

Mrs. Gilman highlighted some of the statements made in her email to the City Council on December 23, 2012 (see Item XI.E.) and stated that if members of the community would like more information on this matter, they can go to [www.gloucesterschools.com](http://www.gloucesterschools.com) and click on “Fuller School Future FAQ.”

Mayor Kirk stated that in 2006-2007, over 400 children and 200 staff members were redistricted when Fuller School was closed. Many families were thrust into turmoil, and it was a very difficult time for them. The district has finally settled down. We have made investments in the smaller elementary schools through new roofs, we have a leadership team that is focused on education and outcomes, and we have a DPW that has taken on the maintenance of all of the school buildings. Mayor Kirk believes we owe those families certainty, to take the question of the future of Fuller School and our K-5 configuration out of play. As mayor, she promised the community that she will do a better job of articulating a vision for the redevelopment of the Fuller School property, and she is looking forward to a new vital use of the property.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she has been confronted by people who have a strong sentimental connection to Fuller. In addition, Gloucester is located between two wealthier communities that have one or two elementary schools as opposed to five. However, Gloucester is a city and is not comparable to those communities. Ms. Teixeira researched eight other cities and found that they all have 4-6 smaller elementary schools. She believes that if there was something to be said for bigger elementary schools, that would have been on the radar in some of those communities, which is not happening. She also noted that MSBA has not suggested building a bigger elementary school and closing two smaller schools. Finally, the PFELC strongly supports smaller learning communities. She believes the School Committee has done their due diligence and is making this decision based on good information and that it is not in the best interests of the children to make Fuller an elementary school again.

Kathy Clancy believes our current school structure mirrors life, starting with a small intimate school in the younger grades and then moving to a bigger middle school and high school. She believes socially and educationally, the way the schools are structured is good for students. She requested that Dr. Safier’s “My View” column on this matter be attached to these minutes because he went through all of the research and cost aspects on this matter. It would cost millions of dollars to rehab Fuller into an elementary school, without MSBA assistance, so it was determined that it was not beneficial from that perspective. The School Committee’s job is to provide the best educational program we can within the resources we have been allotted, and she believes the existing structure is that best delivery. To destabilize it would only set us backwards and would not keep us on a level playing field. We have been moving forward at a very good pace for the past couple of years, and she would hate to see anything interrupt that.

Mr. Garberg stated that there has been a lot of talk in the community about the process that the School Committee should follow in making this decision. He noted that a ballot question has been broached by the City Council with the rationale that the community

should put forward an opinion on the matter. The School Committee has had to balance the community's perception and values against their own work on what educational research suggests is the best hope for student growth. The message has been clear that the smaller schools we presently have are our best hope for building on the work that we have been doing. He believes the committee has gone, perhaps in some ways, farther than it should in terms of polling the community about their perceptions, but the results are very compelling. All of the elementary schools that were surveyed had groups of parents and teachers who strongly supported their local schools, and among community members that chose to participate in the survey, the same kind of results were obtained, namely a strong endorsement of the current setup and an interest in building on that. He believes that asking those people who are strongly engaged with the public schools what value they place on smaller community schools was appropriate. He feels that the committee has gone far out of their way to ask the community's advice on this question, and that, in combination with the administration's research on the educational value of smaller schools, makes it very clear what the committee should be doing.

Chairman Pope stated that there are a lot of urban myths about Fuller School, one of which is that it is the best built school we have. In 1965, it was a pretty well-built school, but it was built as a high school for 400 students. It has a beautiful auditorium and gymnasium, which are community assets but neither of which are of any significant value to an elementary school and which MSBA will not pay for. Fuller is not in good condition, and it is huge – 176,000 square feet. Putting two of the elementary schools there would not even fill half of the building. There is also nostalgia about Fuller being a great school, and it was. His son went there, and his wife taught there for eight years, but there is no support to use it as a school within the school community. There is no educational justification for larger schools and bigger classes. He noted that there is an element in the community that is talking about saving money. However, it is going to cost twice as much to maintain as it would two smaller schools that hold more students. You gain by consolidating classes, which means larger class size, and everybody knows that is not a good idea. The amount of money that would be saved is negligible because of the maintenance costs by consolidating classes, and the amount of money that it would cost to bring Fuller up to par would be a phenomenal amount of money for which we would receive no reimbursement. He has heard numbers from \$5 million to \$28 million, and it would probably cost \$40,000 just to find out what it would cost. He is glad that this is happening and that the committee is done with this discussion.

After the above discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mayor Kirk – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Garberg – yes  
Mrs. Gilman – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes

To declare Fuller School surplus and no longer needed for educational purposes.

Finally, Chairperson Clancy reported that there will be another Building & Finance Subcommittee meeting next week to continue the discussion of athletic fees.

- D. Personnel Subcommittee of January 2, 2013** – Chairperson Teixeira stated that the meeting on January 2nd was a collective bargaining session and not a subcommittee meeting.

## **X. ACTION**

- A. Declaration of Fuller School Surplus** – See Item IX.C.
- B. Parent/Guardian Ticket Discount** – See Item IX.B.
- C. Facilities MOU with the City** – See Item IX.B.

## **XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS**

- A. FY14 Budget Overview** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the budget process. Department heads and principals submitted their materials during the middle of December, which were reviewed over Christmas vacation, and the administration will be meeting again with the leadership team to identify priorities. The administration also looked at what a level service budget would look like, potential revenue streams, and the possibility of certain grants being reduced. He noted that Mr. Baumhauer has been invited to meet with Jeff Towne to look at forecasts for the FY14 budget.

Dr. Safier indicated that some of the district initiatives that are known at this time are: a new curriculum mapping initiative, implementation of the new teacher evaluation system, development of common benchmark assessments and common unit assessments, project-based learning around the district, vertical alignment of the science curriculum, and kindergarten accreditation. In addition, a team is looking at the possibility of two early release days per month to facilitate teachers in professional learning community times. Other issues that do not have profound impact on the budget at this time are a systemic approach to district data analysis, ongoing attempts at public relations and communication through School Messenger, and work on the websites.

With respect to budget considerations, at the elementary level, the two major priorities are to continue to promote and support BSRI and Six Traits. In addition, Math Content Institute has been established for the beginning of August, including six sessions for up to 24 teachers during the school year. In addition, Dr. Safier is looking to place into the budget an administrative position for a K-8 math coordinator, another math coach, and an attendance/truancy officer.

At the middle school, the writing consultant that was previously funded by the GEF must now be placed into the operating budget. Dr. Safier is also looking at staffing needs due to the 45 new students from the charter school.

At the high school, Dr. Safier is looking into the possibility of a school resource officer and will be meeting with Chief Campanello next week to discuss that possibility. Mr. Bach reported on the activities of the technology group that has been meeting for a number of years to expand the use of technology in the school.

Mayor Kirk stated that her budget is due to the City Council for presentation by May 7th. Therefore, she will need the School Department's budget by April 15th.

- B. MSBA Update** – Dr. Safier stated that the building committee has assigned five members to form the designer selection committee, which will be meeting next Tuesday. He stated that the MSBA has the ultimate authority to make the final decision on the designer but will take into account the recommendation of the designer selection committee.

Chairman Pope referred the matter of an outside assessment of existing school buildings to the Building & Finance Subcommittee. Mayor Kirk recommended that the scope of the assessment include how the educational program maps into the buildings and any adjustments that need to be made.

- C. School Committee Draft Overarching Goals** – Chairman Pope stated that this matter will be discussed during the governance workshop on January 28, 2013. Mrs. Gilman requested that Dr. Safier put the draft goals on the website and reach out to the community to let people know that it is posted there.
- D. Email from Roger Garberg to Mayor Kirk (12/20/12)**
- E. Email from Val Gilman to City Council (12/26/12)**
- F. Joint City Council/School Committee Meeting** – Mrs. Gilman would like to schedule a joint meeting with the City Council. In terms of agenda items, Chairman Pope suggested that the committee could discuss their budgetary goals, and Mrs. Gilman suggested providing the council with more information on the MSBA process, possibly including a presentation by Kevin Buckley. Chairman Pope will talk to Council President Jackie Hardy about scheduling a joint meeting and report back to the committee.
- G. Collective Bargaining** – Ms. Teixeira reported that she received a letter from the nurses' negotiating team, which she will pass on to Dr. Safier.
- H. Process for Free Cash** – Kathy Clancy asked Mayor Kirk about the process with respect to free cash. Mayor Kirk indicated that her office is working on a comprehensive plan that will be submitted to the City Council next week. The Mayor's recommendation will become public on Friday and go to the City Council the following week for referral out to the Budget & Finance Committee. Mayor Kirk stated that the free cash appropriation will be voted by the City Council as a lump sum. She recommended that the School

Committee use the supplemental appropriation to take care of any needs that come forward from the new students enrolling in the schools. She stated that it will take some time for the calculation to be completed by the DESE on the charter school numbers and that there is some disagreement between DESE and the DOR about access to that funding, which will take some time to sort out.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mayor Kirk – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Garberg – yes  
Mrs. Gilman – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:51 p.m. to discuss negotiations with all groups and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of January 9, 2013 at 10:22 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*