

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Tony Gross
Michelle Sweet (7:11 p.m.)
Jack O'Maley
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent (7:41)
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance
and Operations
Erik Anderson, GHS Principal
Chris Kobs, Vocational Education Program
Leader
Melissa Francis, E. Gloucester Literacy Coach

Also Present

City Council President Paul McGeary
City Councilor Paul Lundberg

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Chairman Pope welcomed City Council President Paul McGeary and Councilor Paul Lundberg. He also recognized the DPW for their continuing efforts in clearing snow from the schools.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. School Committee and Executive Session (Confidential) of February 11, 2015
 2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of February 3 and 5, 2015
- B. Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

E. Acceptance of Grants

1. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education District and School Assistance Grant in the amount of \$3,024.00 and \$22,510.00
2. Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$10,000.00 to GHS Digital Photography Lab

Chairman Pope removed Items C and D from the Consent Agenda since there were no transfers or referrals.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mayor Theken, it was unanimously

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

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- A. FY16 Budget Presentation** – Chairman Pope reviewed the budget development process and timeline, and Kathy Clancy stated that the committee would appreciate the community’s attendance at the public hearings to support the proposed budget.

Dr. Safier presented a slide show on the proposed FY16 operating budget and stated that it was designed to maintain a level service budget (i.e. to cover all salary and non-salary expenses necessary to maintain the same level of services and staffing that existed in FY15). He noted that strenuous attempts have been made to offset any new requests within the budget.

(Ms. Sweet joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.)

Dr. Safier stated that the budget is designed to support an expanded focus on the Common Core, provision of the highest quality teachers, a transition to autonomy in literacy (from BSRI to GPS infrastructure), the use of technology to shape instruction, and addressing the increase of social and emotional issues. There was a discussion about Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by school nurses.

Dr. Safier discussed the major factors affecting the budget, including an increase in health insurance costs (likely between 6.5% and 9%), absorption of one-time costs in the FY15 budget, an increase in special education costs of over \$330,000, Track and Step increases of \$334,838.00, potential COLA increases (noting that 1% is the equivalent of about \$275,000), and anticipated losses of and reductions in grants. He also reviewed modifications to the budget.

Dr. Safier reported that the proposed level service budget totals \$39,814,690, an increase of \$1,775,942 (4.67%) over this year's approved budget. He contended that the supplemental appropriation for the 1:1 technology initiative is part of the level service budget and should be continued in FY16.

Dr. Safier reviewed several budget scenarios with COLA at 0%, 1% and 2% and an increase in health insurance of 4.5%, 6.5% and 8.5%. He also discussed additions to the FY16 budget, namely an ELL tutor, a .4 music teacher at O'Maley, and a literacy tutor at Beeman. He also requested continuation of the \$75,000 subsidy for athletic fees and bus fees, stating that if that subsidy is not received, the majority of athletic fees will go from \$230 to \$380 and bus fees will go from \$100 to \$150.

Finally, Dr. Safier distributed a handout from MASS regarding unfunded mandates over the last several years.

B. Winter Benchmark Report – Mr. Bach presented the K-5 Assessment Data Review, noting the difference between former goals and recommended goals. The report included a description of the DIBELS measures and results, reports by grade and school, notable individual school indicators, and GRADE results and subtests. Melissa Francis elaborated on the DIBELS subtests, and Mr. Bach discussed the change in the date of administration of the GRADE test. The committee discussed the following matters:

- Parent access to test results and reports
- Feedback from teachers on the change to Reading Street
- Impact of six snow days on March assessments

C. Vocational Program Report – Mr. Anderson presented the Career and Technical Education Program Report. The report included the vision for the program, course offerings, current enrollment by program, student/teacher ratios, other career and technical offerings, the Coordinated Program Review (CPR), recent changes to the overall program, 3D printing, and future opportunities.

Mr. Kobs elaborated on the criteria of the CPR that have been sufficiently addressed over the last three years and discussed the equipment purchased with the Perkins grant. Mr. Anderson discussed the equipment received from the Peabody vocational program and the North Shore Tech. The committee discussed the following matters:

- Advisory boards
- Automotive services available to the community
- Donation of cars to the automotive program
- Certifications
- Promotion of automotive services in Gloucester and surrounding communities
- Equipment received from Peabody and North Shore Tech
- Use of computer technology

(Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kobs, Mr. McGeary and Mr. Lundberg left the meeting at 9:06 p.m.)

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of February 3, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee reviewed the proposed budgets of GHS, O’Maley and West Parish at its meeting of January 21, 2015.
- B. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of February 5, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee reviewed the proposed budgets of Beeman, East Gloucester, Plum Cove and Veterans at its meeting of February 5, 2015. She stated that Plum Cove principal Tammy Morgan again raised the need for an additional classroom.
- C. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of February 19, 2015** – Vice Chairman Gross reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee reviewed the proposed Transportation, IT and Professional Development budgets at its meeting of February 19, 2015. He noted that the major increase in the IT budget is for an online service that provides data security and compliance with HIPAA laws and that a data breach would result in fines of between \$100 and \$50,000 per record compromised. In addition, Vice Chairman Gross stated that more wireless access points are needed because of the construction of the school buildings. Finally, he reported that the current ratio of IT staff to devices is 850:1 and noted the IT department’s preference of Chromebooks over iPads.
- D. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of February 24, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee reviewed the proposed Athletics and Special Education budgets at its meeting of February 24, 2015. With respect to Athletics, she noted that two new sports have been added, namely wrestling and swimming, which have been well-received by students. In addition, the curtains in the fieldhouse are still a safety issue, which is outside of the School Department’s operational budget. Chairman Pope reported that he had a brief conversation with Jim Destino today, who stated that he will look into the balance in the building use account. With respect to Special Education, Chairperson Clancy stated that the major issues are out-of-district tuition and the increase in social and emotional needs.

Mayor Theken asked how the new health insurance law will affect substitutes. Mr. Baumhauer stated that the district will manage substitutes to keep them under 20 hours to save on health insurance costs. Mayor Theken also reported on the MMA meeting that she attended, indicating that the city may not be receiving any disaster relief for snow and ice removal, which will affect the budget. She also requested further explanation of special education costs since she will be going to the Attorney General for help on that matter. Finally, Mayor Theken reiterated that the schools are very important to her, particularly the innovation that is happening at O’Maley, and asked the committee to be patient with respect to Chromebooks for eighth graders.

X. ACTION – None.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the site work is on hold because of the weather but that the project is still on target and within budget. Mayor Theken noted that the lights have been shut off. Mr. Gross noted that they tried to wrap the building so they could pour cement but the wrapping was blown off. However, that is covered by insurance.
- B. Masterplan Study of Elementary Schools** – A School Committee workshop was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. to review the plan and determine the questions the committee should be asking of the experts and the community.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Mr. O’Maley – yes
Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Sweet – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Mayor Theken – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of February 25, 2015 at 9:44 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*