

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Tony Gross
Michelle Sweet
Jack O'Maley (7:06 p.m.)
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance
and Operations

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

-
- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:00 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** – Chairman Pope noted that an overview of the FY15 budget will be presented tonight and that the committee will review the budget in more detail at a special meeting next week.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy stated that O'Maley Innovation Middle School will be performing "Fame Jr." on February 27 and 28 and March 6, 7, 8 and 9. She also noted that East Gloucester School will be performing "Peter Pan" on March 2 and 3.

Chairman Pope thanked Mayor Kirk, the City Council, the West Parish PTO, the building committee, and everyone else who made it possible to receive the bonding for the new West Parish School.

- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Jordan Westling updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: DECA competition, NEMASC conference on April 17th, intramural volleyball, Docksiders reunion concert, and a presentation on sea level and erosion by Ms. Lowther's ecology class on March 6th. Finally, Jordan reported that the state and regional Student Advisory Councils are working on draft policies regarding technology. There was a brief discussion about DECA competitions.

(Mr. O'Maley joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.)

- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Minutes and Executive Session of February 12, 2014
2. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of January 29, 2014
3. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of February 3, 2014
4. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of February 4, 2014
5. Amended School Committee Minutes of January 22, 2014
6. Program Subcommittee Minutes of February 6, 2014

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Acceptance of Grants

1. DESE “District and School Assistance Grant” \$8,918.00
2. DESE “District and School Assistance Grant” \$8,452.00
3. DESE “Title I, Part A Grant” \$18,323.00
4. DESE “FY14 Innovation School Enhancement & Sustainability Grant” \$30,000.00

Mr. Gross removed Item C since there are no transfers to approve. Chairman Pope noted that the transfers were referred back to the Building & Finance Subcommittee at the last meeting and the subcommittee has not yet met.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, 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. FY15 Proposed Budget – Dr. Safier stated that the proposed budget was designed to maintain a level service budget and to preserve the infrastructure for the activities that define the work being done in the district, including the ongoing literacy initiative, the active use of data and diagnostic interventions to strengthen student reading, the consideration of a new math program at the elementary schools that is consistent with the Common Core, the development of a standards-based report card, the expansion of the co-teaching model at Veterans, writing across the content areas, continued support for the STEM program at O’Maley, and curriculum development at the high school.

Dr. Safier noted that there has been a loss of grant funding and a significant increase in salary, benefits, and special education costs. The new staffing needs are necessitated by student numbers and special education needs. He also reviewed major initiatives taking place across the district, including implementation of and professional development for the new evaluation system, implementation of District-Determined Measures, professional development for new teachers, curriculum

mapping, the PARCC pilot program, and implementation of a 1:1 technology program.

Dr. Safier presented a slide show on the proposed FY15 budget and reported that the proposed level service budget totals \$39,618,230, an increase of \$2,619,480 (7.08%) over this year's approved budget. He indicated that the administration is arguing for an adjusted base budget of \$37,381,750, which is an increase of \$2,236,490 (5.98%) over this year's adjusted budget and includes \$383,053 of free cash supplemental appropriation. He noted that the supplemental appropriation was used for special education staff and out-of-district tuitions, a preschool teacher, an unanticipated increase in health insurance benefits, and moving expenses, all of which will be carried over to next year.

Dr. Safier reviewed the loss of grants and significant increases to the budget, including but not limited to special education costs, cost of living adjustments, track and step increases, health insurance costs, payout to the unions for anticipated health insurance "savings," increases in transportation costs, staff increases, and a new math program. He noted that a majority of teachers indicated that they supplement the current math program and believe it is not aligned to the Common Core standards or consistent across all five elementary schools, does not support small group instruction, and does not meet the diverse needs of students.

Finally, Dr. Safier reviewed requests not included in the proposed budget, namely additional staff at Beeman, East Gloucester, West Parish, Plum Cove, and O'Maley.

Mayor Kirk stated that she does not recognize the adjusted budget and will not entertain the argument in favor of it. Therefore, she is looking at a request of \$2.6 million over last year's budget. She noted that revenue growth from last year to this year is around \$2 million. She reported that the Speaker of the House has made assurances that the House budget will be better than the governor's budget in terms of state aid. She stated that a \$1 million increase in ordinary expenses seems extraordinary and recommended that the committee take another hard look at the budget.

Ms. Sweet requested a report on what could be eliminated from the Athletic budget for the next meeting. Kathy Clancy noted that those costs would be removed from the revolving account.

Mr. Gross stated that he will steadfastly continue to speak about including the supplemental appropriation in the base budget since it was the operating budget this year. He encouraged the committee to continue to use the adjusted number as they speak to the City Council and the public.

- B. Report on Joint City Council/School Committee Meeting** – Chairman Pope stated that the significant gain that the committee made with the City Council was the discussion about the recovery of outstanding lunch fees. As a result, the committee will continue to take legal action to recover that debt. Other matters discussed were the MSBA West Parish project, the transition to St. Ann's and O'Maley, the 1:1

technology initiative, the disposition of items at Fuller, and the budget. Chairman Pope stated that he will extend invitations to the City Council to attend the March 5th special School Committee meeting on the budget. Kathy Clancy expressed the importance of the City Council understanding the district's challenges, opportunities and gains. Mr. Gross suggested that for future joint meetings the committee submit questions to be answered by the City Council.

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

1. District-Determined Measures (DDMs) Update – Dr. Safier reported that five DDMs have been submitted and implemented this year. However, the DESE expects the district to submit a full district plan which includes at least two DDMs in all grades and all subjects by June 1, 2014. If the plan is not completed by that time, a rationale must be provided as to why that is the case and a request for a waiver must be submitted.

Mr. Bach reported that the first meeting of the DDM advisory committee will take place on March 5th. Since teachers will be creating and administering the assessments and collecting the data, the committee consists of five to seven teachers from each level, with a total of 17 members. The teams will review requirements and lead the group to propose DDMs to a joint union/district group.

Mr. Bach stated that the intention of the DDMs is to measure a year's worth of student growth in essential standards at every grade level and in every subject, including art, music and PE, which will be an enormous undertaking.

Mr. O'Maley stated that he is excited that teachers will have input into development of the DDMs. Kathy Clancy requested that Mr. Bach express the School Committee's gratitude to the members of the advisory committee for taking on this task.

2. Technology: Meetings with Grade 8 Team and High School Program Leaders
Mr. Bach reported on his meeting with the Grade 8 Team regarding implementation of a 1:1 technology program, noting that they are eager to get started. There was a discussion about Wifi access at O'Maley, which will be expanded.

Dr. Safier stated that he and Mr. Bach will be meeting with high school program leaders on Friday to discuss incorporation of the 1:1 technology program. A discussion was held on classrooms that have a mix of ninth and tenth graders.

3. Evaluation Training – Mr. Bach reported on the "connection document" created by Ribas Associates which breaks down the teacher rubric and includes a list of observable behaviors that are then linked to a course

textbook on instructional practice. That course is free of charge and sponsored by the state.

Mr. Gross expressed concern about teacher fatigue due to the number of tasks being required of them, such as new Common Core standards, PARCC, BSRI, 1:1 technology, the new evaluation system, DDMs, a new standards-based report card, and a new math program. Mr. Bach noted that many of the requirements are out of the district's control and that the need for a new math program is in response to new Common Core standards. Dr. Safier stated that the administration is also concerned and that they are trying to keep self-initiated programs to a minimum.

4. City Council Budget and Finance Committee – Dr. Safier reported that the full City Council approved the district's free cash request in the amount of \$383,053.

Chairman Pope asked when the special education report by the Walker Partnership will be received and whether it will have budget implications. Dr. Safier stated that the report should be received in mid-March and that it could have budget implications.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent's Report.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None

X. ACTION

- A. **Second Reading of Revised Wellness Policy, File ADF** – On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to waive the second reading of the Wellness Policy.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Wellness Policy, File ADF.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. **MSBA Project Update** – Mayor Kirk expressed appreciation to Chairman Pope for putting into perspective the project that the city is about to embark upon at last night's City Council meeting. Dr. Safier noted that the project is the means for increasing the quality of the work that we do and ensuring that the school environment is the best it can possibly be. He expressed hope that people see the new school as a valuable community resource and look at the School Department as an integral part of the

community. Mr. Gross commented on a report indicating that the condition of the U.S. becoming an economic leader again in the next century relies upon our education system.

- B. School Committee Workshop** – Chairman Pope reminded the committee of the special meeting scheduled for March 5th at 5:00 p.m. to review the budget in detail. Kathy Clancy suggested that if anyone has questions on the ordinary expenses in the budget that they submit them ahead of time.
- C. Nurses** – Chairman Pope reported that the nurses will be voting on Friday to ratify their contract.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of February 26, 2014 at 8:34 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*