

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 27, 2013
Gloucester High School Library
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

Also Present

City Councilor Robert Whynott (7:18 p.m.)

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 reported on upcoming events in the schools, including the East Gloucester fifth grade play and the GHS drama club competition. Mrs. Gilman reported on upcoming events at O’Maley Innovation Middle School, including the production of “Little Mermaid Junior” and an “evening of excellence.” Mayor Kirk reported on the GHS cheerleaders’ competition and indicated that they will be competing this coming weekend in Lowell.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – None.
- VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. Approval of Minutes**
 - 1. Special School Committee of February 7, 2013
 - 2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of February 13, 2013
 - 3. School Committee of February 13, 2013
 - B. Acceptance of Grant** – To accept a grant in the amount of \$200.00 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help pay for transportation expenses for the GHS

German field trip in March 2013. *(The grant application was submitted by GHS teacher, Anne Paganetti.)*

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

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

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Commissioner’s Update on Sequestration
2. Gloucester Charter Tuition and Reimbursements
3. Free Cash – Dr. Safier reported that last night, the City Council approved two supplemental appropriations, namely \$57,000 towards a reduction in athletic fees and \$18,000 towards a reduction in transportation fees.
4. Calendar
 - a. West Parish Evacuation – Dr. Safier indicated that he will be going to all of the schools and their evacuation locations to make sure that evacuation procedures are in place.
 - b. Citywide Communications Meeting – Dr. Safier stated that he will invite Grant Harris to speak to the committee in more detail on this matter.
 - c. Visit to Avery Elementary School, Dedham, MA – Kathy Clancy and Chairman Pope reported on some of the features of this new school designed by Dore and Whittier, including its energy efficiency and a large gymnasium that can be used by the community. Chairman Pope encouraged all School Committee members to team up with their City Council liaisons to visit the school.
 - d. Webinar on Expanded School Day – Mr. Bach reported on this webinar and the associated grant.

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent’s Report.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Building and Finance Subcommittee of February 13, 2013 – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the implementation of

reduced user fees at its meeting on February 13, 2013. Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, that we implement the reduction of athletic fees beginning with spring sports and that we implement the reduction of transportation or bus fees beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. After discussion, Kathy Clancy amended her motion as follows:

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that we implement the reduction of athletic fees beginning with spring sports and that we implement the reduction of transportation or bus fees beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. The reductions will equate to approximately 40% across athletic and bus fees.

Mayor Kirk noted that it is a milestone that we are able to reduce fees for families at this time and stated that when we have an opportunity to give families a break, we must take it. She believes that the high fees and family cap has been a deterrent to participation and that, hopefully, the number of students participating in our programs will increase. Mrs. Gilman and Mr. Gross thanked the administration and City Council for their support of the appropriation of free cash to make this action possible.

Dr. Safier reported that the GEF is providing the stipends for a music coach and a drama coach. He would like the district to take over those two stipends and is hoping that the GEF will earmark that money for resources for the drama club.

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

X. ACTION

- C. Naming of the O'Maley Innovation Middle School Auditorium** – Chairman Pope indicated that he spoke with Lee Swekla extensively about this matter and that she is very grateful and pleased that the committee is going to take this action. He reported that the administration will share in the cost of a plaque for the site.

After discussion, on a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to name the O'Maley Innovation Middle School Auditorium in memory of Alphonse Swekla.

Chairman Pope, Mr. Gross, Mr. Garberg and Councilor Whynott spoke about their experiences with Mr. Swekla in his roles as a teacher, principal, superintendent, School Committee member, and city councilor over the years and expressed appreciation for his years of service to the city.

With the committee's approval, Chairman Pope will work with Vice Chairperson Gilman on the details of a dedication ceremony. Kathy Clancy reminded the committee that they have not yet formally christened the O'Maley Innovation Middle School.

Councilor Whynott left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

- A. Proposed FY14 Budget** – Dr. Safier reviewed the key initiatives that the proposed budget has been designed to support, which are either mandated by the state or essential for raising student achievement in the district. The proposed budget was also designed to maintain our initiative in literacy, to generate the same kind of momentum in mathematics, to maintain the efforts of the O'Maley Innovation Middle School, to ensure that our obligations to all students are met, to preserve art and music programs, and to negotiate multiyear contracts with each of the unions.

Mr. Baumhauer distributed the budget books to the committee members and presented a slide show on the proposed FY14 operating budget, including the budget development process. He reported that a **level service budget** totals \$36,795,840, which is an increase of \$1,397,089 (3.95%) over this year's budget.

Mr. Baumhauer indicated that the **proposed budget** totals \$37,706,353, which is an increase of \$1,929,184 (5.93%) over this year's budget and an increase of \$910,513 over level service and takes into account estimated cuts to federal grants and new educational initiatives.

Mr. Baumhauer stated that the administration recommends an adjusted base budget of \$35,777,167, which includes a portion of a supplemental appropriation from free cash of \$248,418 for unbudgeted FY13 expenses and \$130,000 for salary negotiations. Dr. Safier reviewed the unbudgeted FY13 expenses and reported that after free cash, the School Department has had additional personnel expenses in the amount of \$197,220, most of which is due to the influx of 100 students from the charter school in January.

Mr. Baumhauer reviewed some of the major increases to the level service budget, including special education costs, School Committee contingency, salary negotiations, employee benefits, textbooks, technology, and classroom equipment.

Dr. Safier reviewed the proposed additions to the level service budget in the amount of \$821,270, which include a district math coordinator, a math coach, an IT technician, an attendance officer, and a school resource officer, among other things. Mr. Bach discussed the pilot technology project, which is a new initiative at the high school with the goal of making the high school a 1:1 school in five years.

There was a discussion about the high ratio of computers to IT technicians in the district (433:1), which Mr. Bach believes has a substantial impact on education, especially since the district is moving towards online resources and computer-based MCAS testing.

Kathy Clancy indicated that the March 7th Building & Finance Subcommittee meeting will be dedicated to discussion of the budget.

- B. Request for Proposals** – After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to request that the City work with the School Department to develop a Request for Proposals for the relocation of the Gloucester Public Schools' preschool, Transportation Department and Central Office.

Mayor Kirk stated that she will ask the city's Purchasing Agent, Donna Compton, to work with the School Committee on this matter. She indicated that this matter should be completed before the end of the budget cycle so that rental expenses can be included in the budget. Chairman Pope noted that the School Committee would like the preschool to be opened in the fall in a more desirable facility.

- D. Bills HD918 and HD927 Filed by MASS** – Dr. Safier briefly reviewed these bills. After discussion, on a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to send the School Committee's support of Bills HD918 and HD927 to Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante.

Kathy Clancy will draft a letter on behalf of the School Committee.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

- A. State of the Schools 2013-2014** – In light of the upcoming budget hearing and educational forum, Mayor Kirk suggested holding the State of the Schools in the fall.
- B. MSBA Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the MSBA has approved Dore and Whittier as the West Parish designer. He expects to set up another visit to the Avery Elementary School in Dedham in two or three weeks. In addition, he received an email from Kevin Buckley this afternoon indicating that he received Dore and Whittier's contract and will be delivering it to the Mayor's office on Friday morning for city review and signatures. Dr. Safier reported that the MSBA requires a kickoff meeting to be held two to three weeks after the executed contract has been submitted to their office. Mr. Buckley suggested having that meeting by the end of March. Finally, Dr. Safier would like to bring the School Building Committee together with KBA and Dore and Whittier to discuss moving forward on the feasibility study. They are looking at a date of March 7th at 2:00 p.m. for that meeting.
- C. Opinion Letter from Superintendent Safier to School Committee regarding Armed Guards in Schools**
- D. Public Hearing on Armed Guards in Schools** – Chairman Pope reported that the City Council has concerns about holding this public hearing on the same night as their public hearing on the Fort hotel. It was the consensus of the committee to hold the

School Committee public hearing on March 27th in the West Parish auditorium as part of the regular School Committee meeting.

- E. Referrals on Consent Agenda** – Chairman Pope suggested including referrals to subcommittees on the Consent Agenda.

- F. Update on GHS Roofs** – Mayor Kirk reported that the roofs on the field house, the library and the auditorium are not eligible for MSBA reimbursement because they are not old enough to be considered in jeopardy. She recommended funding those repairs through the settlement account. Every other repair associated with the high school is being bundled and submitted to the superintendent for submission to MSBA in an SOI. She stated that she needs the School Committee’s support to release the funds into an account for the purpose of repairing the roofs. Dr. Safier noted that the SOI is due MSBA by April 10th.

- G. Doctors’ Notes** – Mrs. Gilman reported that a handful of parents have mentioned to her that they are finding the requirement for doctors’ notes under the new attendance policy to be difficult to comply with. She told those parents that the committee agreed to look at the policy at the end of the year to see what adjustments need to be made.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of February 27, 2013 at 9:16 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*