

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

School Committee Chambers – District Office

7:00 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Roger Garberg
Mayor Carolyn Kirk
Tony Gross

Administration Present

Interim Superintendent Dr. Joseph Connelly
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Memorial Principal

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman asked the Beeman students to lead the salute to the flag. She then stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and recognized new superintendent Dr. Richard Safier and Principal Ellen Sibley.

III. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. BSRI Grant Implementation – Principal Ellen Sibley provided some background information on BSRI and the “Reading Street” program published by Scott Foresman. A video was shown of two classrooms at Beeman Memorial School to illustrate the program, after which four students spoke about their experiences with the program. There was a discussion about the different levels and strategies used in the program.

Ms. Teixeira thanked Mrs. Sibley for her hard work in getting this program up and running. Dr. Connelly stated that Veterans Memorial School will also be using the BSRI program starting in September and that the School Committee is hoping to be able to find the funding for the reading materials for the remaining three elementary schools. Chairperson Gilman thanked Mrs. Sibley and teachers AnneMarie Wentzell and Beth Lafata for their presentation.

Note Chairperson Gilman acknowledged Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr and CFO Tom Markham.

IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

V. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

VI. RECOGNITIONS

Chairperson Gilman recognized the GHS girls' basketball team, who made it to the second round of playoffs. She also recognized O'Maley Principal Debra Lucey and her team for organizing the tour of O'Maley School for fifth grade parents. Chairperson Gilman shared her experience on her tour of the school as a fifth grade parent and stated that she was very impressed.

VII. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Kelly Benson updated the School Committee on events at Gloucester High School, including intramural volleyball, junior event tickets, and the new lunch system, which she stated was "really confusing" and resulted in 20-minute lunch lines. Chairperson Gilman thanked Ms. Benson for her report and mentioned that basketball player Hannah Cain recently got her 1000th point.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Meeting of February 9, 2011
2. School Committee Executive Session Meeting of February 9, 2011 –
Confidential – Not to be Released
3. Special Joint Meeting of the City Council's Budget & Finance Committee and the School's Building & Finance Sub-Committee of February 17, 2011
4. Special School Committee Meeting of February 17, 2011
5. School Committee Executive Session Meeting of February 17, 2011 –
Confidential – To be Released

B. Schedule of Future Meetings

Program Sub-Committee – Friday, March 11, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

Location: Superintendent's Conference Room

Agenda: To be announced

Building & Finance Sub-Committee – Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

Location: Superintendent's Conference Room

Agenda: To be announced

School Committee – Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: School Committee Chambers – Fuller District Office

Agenda: To be announced

School Committee – Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

Agenda: To be announced

C. Gift

To accept a gift from Ohiopyle Prints, Inc. in the amount of \$19.15 to GHS.

Kathy Clancy removed Item A3 from the Consent Agenda, and Mayor Kirk removed the scheduled School Committee meetings of March 16 and 30, 2011 from the Consent Agenda, all for further discussion.

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

VOTED: To approve the Consent Agenda with the exceptions noted above.

IX. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

A. Report of the Superintendent of Schools – Interim Superintendent Dr. Connelly updated the School Committee on the following matters:

- MSBA – Green Program Project Approval – Dr. Connelly stated that all of the prerequisites have been submitted to and approved by the MSBA and that Noah Luskin will be the project manager representing MSBA. Mr. Luskin will send us the list of OPMs and design firms for consideration.
- Presentation of School Improvement Plans to the School Committee
- School Calendar for 2011/2012 – Must be shared with the GTA for their comments
- Administrative Protocol Policy – Dr. Connelly requested that the School Committee table this matter since he has not yet had time to get Suzanne Egan’s input.
- Superintendent Transition Efforts

Mr. Garberg commented on the legislation regarding SIPs and expressed concern about the short amount of time the School Committee is giving itself. Dr. Connelly stated that he strongly supports the initiative and hopes it is successful. Chairperson Gilman suggested putting this matter on a future School Committee agenda for discussion and vote (i.e. a letter to support the initiative through MASC).

Kathy Clancy noted that Columbus Day is incorrectly noted on the school calendar and that it should be October 10, 2011. In addition, Chairperson Gilman suggested rescheduling the November 1, 2011 professional development day for November 8, 2011, which is a voting day. Dr. Connelly indicated that he will make those changes to the calendar.

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

VOTED: To approve the first draft of the School Calendar for 2011/2012 for review by the GTA, with the exceptions of Columbus Day being October 10, 2011 and the recommendation that the professional development day will be on November 8, 2011 rather than November 1, 2011.

X. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Personnel Sub-Committee Report of February 15, 2011 – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed the following matters:

- Personnel evaluation status
- GPS evaluation rubric
- GAEP job qualifications (tabled)
- Health insurance audit

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

VOTED: To embark on an in-house health insurance audit subject to a report from CFO Tom Markham on the ability and capacity to do so.

Ms. Teixeira asked Mr. Markham when he would be able to report to the School Committee on the feasibility of the district taking on this task, and he indicated that the process is underway. Ms. Teixeira indicated that the next Personnel Subcommittee meeting will most likely be in April and that she hopes to receive a report from Mr. Markham on the ability to go forward with this task at that time.

B. Building & Finance Sub-Committee Report of February 16, 2011 – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters:

- Athletic field signage
- Preschool revenue target and marketing
- Food Service Monthly Profit and Loss Report
- Spending freeze for FY11
- FY11 Year-End Projection Report
- FY11 heat and utility bills

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

VOTED: To extend for three years the contract between the Gloucester Public Schools and the GFAA for advertising signage.

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

VOTED: That the Gloucester Public Schools implement a spending freeze effective February 16, 2011 in which all purchase orders are subject to the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

Note: Chairperson Gilman recognized City Councilor Paul McGeary.

XI. DISCUSSION

Note: Tony Gross joined the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

- A. FY 2012 School Budget Update** – Dr. Connelly reviewed the various components of the budget book, which includes a level service budget totaling \$35,217,301 and detailed backup information. This total is \$1,688,621 (a 5.04% increase) over this year's budget to maintain a level service budget.

Mayor Kirk provided the section of the City Charter with respect to the requirements for a public hearing on the budget, which states that the public hearing must be held at least 30 days before the meeting at which the School Committee votes on the budget to be submitted to the mayor. She indicated that the School Committee must present its budget to her on or before April 15, 2011, and the mayor's budget is due to the City Council on or before May 1, 2011.

Dr. Connelly stated that he believes it is very important to bring to the city a realistic budget that the city can afford, which is not a level service budget. Mayor Kirk agreed and stated that because of anticipated cuts to local aid and increased health insurance costs, the School Committee should develop a level funded budget minus \$900,000 of ARRA funds.

Dr. Connelly suggested scheduling one or two special meetings to deliberate on the budget and indicated that to get to a level funded budget, the level service budget would have to be reduced by \$1.6 million. He recommended that the School Committee initially address at least \$800,000 in reductions to make the budget more realistic going forward.

Mayor Kirk reviewed the new money available to the city and increases in retired teachers' health insurance, school choice out, school utilities and pensions. Chairperson Gilman stated that she expected Mayor Kirk to give the School Committee her allocation and was surprised that that number was not given. Mayor Kirk responded that the allocation is independent of the time line and that she had pointed out flaws in the time line in an earlier meeting.

After a 30-minute discussion, the School Committee agreed to schedule the following meetings to address the budget and make decisions on reductions:

Special B&F Subcommittee Meeting – Monday, March 7, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Special School Committee Meeting – Monday, March 7, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Public Hearing on the Budget – Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Fuller School Auditorium or City Hall

Chairperson Gilman asked Councilor McGeary if a member of the City Council B&F could attend the meetings to get a working knowledge. He indicated that he could attend the 4:45 p.m. meeting for awhile.

Dr. Connelly presented an overview of the budget book and went through the detailed backup information contained in the book. He thanked the budget holders for doing a great job and thanked Mr. Markham, who did all of the computer work. He also thanked Audrey and Nina who work in Tom’s office for their work on the budget book, which represents 200 hours of work. Dr. Connelly indicated that he will provide a list of potential budget reductions in three tiers to the School Committee to help facilitate the difficult task of balancing the budget.

Chairperson Gilman stated that she was incredibly impressed with the level of detail and transparency in the budget book and that she is grateful that Councilor McGeary was at the meeting to see it. She requested that all three members of the City Council B&F committee be provided with copies of the budget book. Chairperson Gilman also suggested that the School Committee members meet with their City Council liaisons in the next week to review the budget with them and allow them to ask questions.

Mayor Kirk stated that the City Charter requires that there be a list of the locations at which the budget book can be observed by the public, including the City Clerk’s office and the Sawyer Free Library. She also thanked Dr. Connelly for the level of detail in the budget.

- B. City Charter Section 4-3 Amended** – Chairperson Gilman reviewed this amended section of the City Charter, specifically a clause that is no longer included in that section regarding an even numbered year.

Note: At this time, Chairperson Gilman thanked the School Committee for their patience and stamina.

- C. Year-End Budget Projection #2** – Mr. Markham reviewed the Year-End Budget Projection #2, which includes the anticipated spending freeze. Dr. Connelly stated that it is likely that unanticipated essential expenses will arise that will be approved. There was a discussion about the financial impact of Dr. Connelly’s waiver from April 1st until Dr. Safier begins work. Mr. Markham stated that the next report is due in April.

Note: Cape Ann TV left the meeting at 10:10 p.m. (ran out of tape). Chairperson Gilman thanked them for being at the meeting.

1. Food Service January Report – Mr. Markham and Dr. Connelly reviewed the Food Service Monthly Income and Expense Report. Chairperson Gilman requested that Mr. Markham follow up with Martha Jo Fleming to make sure that there are no longer 20-minute lunch lines at the high school as reported by Kelly Benson. Mr. Markham stated that those kinds of problems were anticipated and that he is confident they will settle out soon.

- D. Approval of Minutes of Special Joint Meeting of the City Council’s Budget & Finance Committee and the School’s Building & Finance Sub-Committee of February 17, 2011** – Kathy Clancy stated that she believes that important things that were said at the meeting were not reflected in the minutes. She would like the following comments reflected in the minutes:

- Dr. Connelly was unable to attend the meeting because of an all-day meeting in Boston that ran very late and sent his apologies.
- Under governance, “Ms. Clancy stated that the City B&F should attend School Committee meetings when agenda items are of interest to them so as not to require attendance of school personnel unnecessarily at city meetings. Ms. Teixeira followed up, stating that the goal is to reduce duplicate meetings.”
- In the section regarding the formatting of the FY12 budget, she would like to add that Dr. Connelly had wanted to be able to show an example of the level of detail that we will be receiving for the budget, which has much more detailed backup for each line item, and there should be no question of transparency.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern that the School Committee’s position was not given as much weight in the minutes as the City Council’s position with respect to the \$75,000 that was being discussed. In addition, Mr. Gross pointed out some ambiguities on page 4 of the minutes, where what he is asking for is never referenced.

There was a discussion about having both recording secretaries attend the joint meetings, and Chairperson Gilman suggested that the chairs of both committees review the minutes together. Mayor Kirk recommended that Chairperson Gilman

meet with City Council President Jackie Hardy to review the rules of procedure, and Chairperson Gilman suggested holding off on making any amendments to the minutes until she talks to Jackie Hardy. She requested that Ms. Teixeira and Mr. Gross send their suggested amendments to Kathy Clancy.

- E. Public Meeting at the State House on March 8, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.** – Mayor Kirk stated that her remarks at the meeting will cover school and city matters. Kathy Clancy indicated that she would like to attend the meeting if possible. There was a discussion about the governor’s proposal.

XII. ACTION

- A. Administrative Protocol Policy** – Tabled.
- B. FY 2011-2012 School Calendar** – See IX.A.
- C. Recommendation made by the Personnel Sub-Committee at their meeting of February 15, 2011** – See X.A.
- D. Recommendations made by the Building & Finance Sub-Committee at their meeting of February 16, 2011** – See X.B.

XIII. OTHER COMMUNICATION

- A. For Your Information**
1. Letter (2/23/11) from Dr. Connelly regarding the Cape Ann YMCA’s per diem building use rate
 2. See copy of Dr. Safier’s contract and side letter.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Gilman – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mr. Gross – yes
Mayor Kirk – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 10:35 p.m. to receive an update on contract negotiations with union and non-union personnel.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: To adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 2, 2011 at 11:00 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*