

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

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

Administration Present

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

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools. He also mentioned that the meeting is being recorded by Cape Ann TV and the committee's Recording Secretary.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy recognized East Gloucester School fifth graders for their amazing performance of "Peter Pan," and Dr. Safier recognized the O'Maley Innovation Middle School students for their spectacular production of "Fame Jr."
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Jordan Westling updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: lunch survey, junior events next year (semi-formal, parent banquet and prom), reimbursement for student travel to regional Student Advisory Council meetings in Danvers, cheerleading competition at Lawrence High School, DECA competition, Docksidiers reunion concert, math challenge, photography competition finalists, World Language Week, and Pizza Tasteoff. Jordan distributed "Gloucester U" flyers to the committee, and Dr. Safier suggesting inviting Ms. Whitney to talk about the program at a future School Committee meeting.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. Special Joint Meeting of the City Council and School Committee of February 18, 2014
 2. School Committee Minutes of February 26, 2014
 3. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 5, 2014
 4. Special School Committee Workshop Minutes of March 5, 2014

5. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 6, 2014
6. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 10, 2014

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers from 12/19/13 to 2/7/14, as recommended by the Building & Finance Subcommittee on March 5, 2014

D. Acceptance of Grant – BOKs Reebok Foundation, Inc. grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 (\$500.00 received on 2/24/14)

E. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip Requests

1. GHS Junior ROTC to Reading, PA from Friday, March 28, 2014 to Saturday, March 29, 2014 to attend Reading High School Northeast Regional Drill Competition
2. GHS Junior ROTC to Daytona Beach, FL from Friday, May 2, 2014 to Wednesday, May 7, 2014 to attend National High School Drill Team Championship
3. GHS Grades 11 and 12 to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH on Thursday, May 22, 2014

Chairman Pope removed Items A3 through A6 since the minutes have not yet been completed.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. Introduction to the Standards-Based Report Card – Mr. Bach reported that the staff of all five elementary schools met on March 4th to review a draft of a standards-based report card and to talk about the rationale and urgency for same, much of which came from the teachers themselves. The current report card is outdated, not consistent between the schools, and does not reflect what is happening in math and literacy. In order to accelerate the process, Mr. Bach stated that he reached out to other districts that had recently created standards-based report cards.

Mr. Bach presented a slide show on the purpose of a standards-based report card, comparison to traditional report cards, important points, implementation steps to date, contents of the report card, performance levels, next steps, and supporting rubrics. He stated that the full development of standards-based reporting in science and social studies will be phased in over time so as not to overload teachers in the beginning. The report cards will also be put into Ipass so that grades can be entered online from any location.

Dr. Safier noted that it is not unusual for parents to be concerned about their child not being challenged. He stated that with the standards-based report card, teachers will now be responsible for making sure that students who exceed a standard are given enrichment work.

Dr. Safier stated that the district will hold information sessions with parents this spring at each of the schools to inform them of the changes to the report cards. Letters will also be sent out to parents.

There was a discussion about the definition of the word “proficient.” Ms. Teixeira suggested posting signs in the schools reminding students that “proficient” means excellent.

- B. Introduction to a 1:1 Digital Environment** – Dr. Safier presented a slide show on the goals of the 1:1 initiative at the middle school and high school, student and teacher objectives, merits of the initiative, readiness issues, professional development, and implementation steps to date. He reported that Grade 8 is enthusiastic and ready to go forward in September and that the Grade 9 teachers and program leaders are in the process of figuring out how it is going to work for them.

Kathy Clancy suggested educating parents on Internet safety and responsible use of the devices. She would also like the administration to think about the district’s liability if students are accessing unauthorized websites and the creation of an agreement with students for the use and care of the devices. In addition, she would like the administration to look into how the district’s technology money could go farther if a student already has access to a computer and does not need a Chromebook.

Dr. Safier stated that they will be looking at other districts that provide devices to students to see what policies they have in place. He noted that part of the 1:1 proposal includes insurance of the devices, and the administration will also have a document for students to sign with respect to their responsibilities.

Finally, the committee discussed the sustainability of the initiative, the expansion of it to other grades, the sufficiency of electrical outlets to support chargers for the devices, and the job description of the new IT employee. Chairman Pope requested that Dr. Safier bring a Chromebook to the next meeting so that the committee can see it.

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

1. Hiring Procedures – There was a discussion about the new fingerprinting requirement.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to refer employee hiring procedures to the Personnel Subcommittee.

2. Food Service
3. PARCC Testing Preparations and Parent Letter – Mr. Bach reported on the PARCC field tests at GHS, Plum Cove and East Gloucester. Mr. Gross requested that Mr. Bach send the committee members sample questions from the test. There was a discussion about the need to provide keyboarding instruction for students. Kathy Clancy stated that she would be curious to see if flexibility is allowed for a student’s developmental stage, and Ms. Teixeira pointed out that some students may be “penalized” by the stress of having to take the test online if they are unable to type.
4. Educator Evaluation Update: Student and Staff Surveys – There was a discussion about weighing negative responses to the surveys and the implementation of checks and balances.
5. K-12 Insight: Let’s Talk! – Dr. Safier showed a video entitled “Chat with Charles,” demonstrating how this product works. He suggested that the district pilot this product next year but limit it to the central office, special education and food service to see if we can begin to address some of the community concerns in a constructive way. The cost for one year is \$7,500.

Dr. Safier stated that the comments would not be seen by the public and that outgoing messages from the district to the community would be conveyed by an all-call or email. Kathy Clancy suggested reaching out to districts that use this product to get some feedback on it to decide whether the district should pursue it. Mr. Gross referred this item to both the Program and Building & Finance Subcommittees.

6. Calendar Options – Mr. Bach reviewed the two school calendar options. The committee discussed the need to include a professional day at the beginning of the school year and having school on election day. Kathy Clancy requested that the Program Subcommittee discuss the pros and cons of having early release days on Fridays. Ms. Teixeira requested professional development attendance records for the Program Subcommittee meeting.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent’s Report.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Meetings of March 6 and March 10, 2014** – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Sweet – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To approve a budget in the amount of \$38,605,623 to be published for the public hearing scheduled for April 2, 2014.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she believes this budget is extremely reasonable and recognizes the needs of the district. She noted that it reflects the salaries of hundreds of school employees, resulting in a large increase in the bottom line, and she stated that the increase in COLA is very fair when compared to what the city and other districts have provided for their employees.

Kathy Clancy stated that this budget advances the goals of the School Committee, such as maintaining staff, continued investment in the BSRI program, and implementation of a new math program.

Finally, Chairman Pope stated that this is a responsible budget and solidifies the gains that the district has been making and hopes to continue to make.

X. ACTION

A. FY15 Budget – See Item IX.A.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

A. MSBA Project Update – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters with respect to the West Parish project:

- Moving company scope of services, including storage of materials and furniture from West Parish in June and moving them to St. Ann’s in August.
- West Parish transition FAQs, which have now been shared with the community
- Fifth graders at O’Maley will have their own lunchtime and recess.
- Continued development of West Parish blueprints
- Development of a curriculum that uses the new school as a teaching school with respect to environmental science, which will increase the reimbursement points received from MSBA

- Meeting at City Hall to discuss ramp at St. Ann’s, location of fire alarm system, need for exterior strobe at St. Ann’s, parking at Beeman, and location of new modular unit to serve West Parish PDD students at Beeman.

B. Professional Development Early Release Day – Mr. Bach stated that the elementary principals will be at a BSRI conference on April 8th and that several of them suggested that the K-5 early release day scheduled for that day be moved to April 17th. The fifth grade teachers at Beeman and West Parish have agreed to let their students out of class on April 8th for play rehearsal.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to allow the administration to change the K-5 early release professional development day from April 8 to April 17, 2014 to accommodate the principals’ attendance at the BSRI conference.

C. Non-Union Employee Salary Comparisons – Ms. Teixeira referred this matter to the Personnel Subcommittee.

D. Student Reimbursement for Attendance at Regional Student Council Meeting – Mr. Gross referred this matter to the B&F Subcommittee.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 12, 2014 at 9:37 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*