

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 22, 2018

District Office Conference Room

2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson
Tony Gross, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Michelle Sweet
Joel Favazza

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent
Tom Lafleur, Director of Finance
and Operations
James Cook, GHS Principal

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 stated that this is a special meeting to address a couple of matters that were on the agenda for last week’s meeting, which was canceled because of snow. He noted that the committee is going to vote on the budget to be presented at the public hearing scheduled for April 4, 2018.
- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy reported that East Gloucester School is presenting *Jungle Book* this weekend and on Monday evening. She also recognized the Gloucester Education Foundation for hosting the “Power of Play” at GHS on Sunday and thanked the volunteers from the high school and O’Maley. She especially thanked custodians John and Maureen for everything they did at the event. Ms. Teixeira recognized the GHS Cheerleaders for winning the New England Championship. Finally, Chairman Pope reported that he attended the Docksiders wine tasting fundraiser Friday night and they did a very nice job performing.
- VI. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. **Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip Request** – GHS JROTC to Elizabeth, New Jersey for Youth Physical Fitness Test Competition – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the GHS JROTC out-of-state field trip request.

VII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – None.

VIII. ACTION

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

B. Suspension of “Fundraising” Section of Wellness Plan – Kathy Clancy reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the Wellness Policy at its meetings on March 1 and March 19, 2018, specifically with respect to the school store. She indicated that the students stated to the subcommittee that they did not know they would not have the revenue from the school store for their class. Dr. Safier acknowledged that the way in which the store was shut down was very abrupt.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern about the lack of oversight of the food that is sold in the school store. She and Mr. Gross requested that the matter be tabled until the next meeting because of the lack of information. Mr. Cook reported that the class advisers will provide the oversight of what is being sold.

Mr. Favazza stated that the impact to the district of suspending the policy is negligible but the impact to the Class of 2018 and the possibility of earning more revenue in the next two weeks is appreciable. Therefore, he would like to address the matter tonight.

Ms. Teixeira also expressed concern about the impact of the school store on the food service program. Dr. Safier circulated a spreadsheet on GHS food service participation rates and noted that the Wellness Policy has been in place since 2010. With respect to the participation rates, Kathy Clancy pointed out that the enrollment in September 2017 was reported as 750 and in February 2018 was reported as 720.

Dr. Safier reviewed discussions with the student representatives regarding class dues, a class gift, etc. and noted that an increase in class dues of \$10.00 per year going forward would offset the annual revenue that was brought in by the school store. Caroline Enos reported that it is very hard to collect class dues and that the class pays for students to attend senior events even if they cannot afford to pay their class dues.

With respect to the school store, Ms. Enos reported that a staff member told them at lunch one day that they were not allowed to be open. At first they were told that the administration thought they were selling candy and other unapproved

items (which they were not), then were told there has been a policy in place for years that has not been enforced, and finally were told they were in competition with the food service program.

Ms. Sweet pointed out that the seniors are counting on the money from the school store for the majority of their fundraising. She noted that there is a fundraising calendar that needs to be filled out by each group at the beginning of the year and that the calendar was already full when the school store was closed.

Mr. Gross asked how the students report the financing from the store, and Ms. Enos stated that every student on a shift writes down what they made and the money is brought to the class adviser at the end of the week. Mr. Gross expressed concern that the School Committee created a policy and now is attempting to take the legs out from under the administration to enforce it. He is very uncomfortable doing this since it is an administrative issue unless and until the policy is changed by the committee.

Dr. Safier distributed a list of 15 North Shore school districts that were called to ask if they had a school store, all of which responded that they did not. Ms. Teixeira asked whether alternative methods of fundraising were discussed at the Program Subcommittee meetings, and Kathy Clancy indicated that it was discussed at a Program Subcommittee meeting as well as a Wellness Committee meeting. Ms. Enos reported that they have tried selling food outside of lunch periods but did not make much money.

Chairman Pope stated that since the Class of 2018 started the year under the assumption that they were going to have the revenue from the school store, and since the fundraising calendar has been filled, he is going to support suspending the policy for the remainder of the year. He made it clear that that does not imply that the policy is being changed. Ms. Teixeira indicated that she will also support suspension of the policy because there should have been more notice to the students.

Mr. Gross stated that before any action is taken, he would like a report on whether the food and beverages sold in the school store meet USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Mr. Cook confirmed that they do, in fact, meet the standards. Mr. Gross also reiterated that he is very uncomfortable undermining the administration.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to suspend the “Fundraising” section of the Wellness Plan and allow the Class of 2018 to operate the school store for the remainder of the 2017-2018 school year.

- A. Approval of FY19 Budget for Public Hearing** – Chairman Pope made a motion to approve an FY19 budget in the amount of \$42,472,648.00 to be published for the public hearing scheduled for April 4, 2018. In discussion, Ms. Teixeira acknowledged that the budget being voted for the public hearing will likely change going forward but stated that she cannot agree to the recommended reductions. She believes the vocational program is getting slammed by the loss of the vocational education administrator, who was able to get a large grant for the vocational program. She also expressed concern with the loss of the culinary arts program because of the lack of money for equipment, while noting that the district is prepaying out-of-district tuition.

Mr. Gross stated that the administration set forth the most efficient way to bring the budget down to a reasonable number that would not affect the services the district provides. Ms. Sweet expressed concern about making cuts to the level service budget before being asked to do so by the city administration. She indicated that she would like to present the level service budget at the public hearing.

Chairman Pope stated that on February 28th, the administration presented the level service budget, which did not include over \$300,000 in requests from department heads and principals. The committee then asked the administration to look for any reductions that could be made without reducing the services that we provide.

Chairman Pope noted that the culinary arts program would require a substantial capital expense to continue that program. Mr. Gross stated that there are compliance issues with the program and the equipment and space is not appropriate. He also clarified that it is not part of the vocational program.

Chairman Pope stated that the committee will take into consideration the input from the community at the public hearing and then vote a budget on April 11, 2018 to be passed on to the city administration. He noted that the City Council will review the entire city budget for about six weeks and there will be public hearing. However, the City Council has no capacity to increase the school budget that is recommended by the city administration unless they can find that money somewhere else in the city budget.

Chairman Pope indicated that the budget that is being voted on is 3.5% above last year's budget and noted that it has been a very long time since the schools have gotten a 3.5% increase. Therefore, he believes that it is unlikely that this budget will be approved by the mayor. However, the School Committee's role is to advocate for what it feels the district needs. He is going to support this budget and see what the public has to say about it.

Mr. Favazza stated that the School Committee and administration is charged with advocating for what they need to do the job that the School Department is asked to do. He noted that the committee was instructed to come up with a level service budget that would provide the same services we have this year. He stated that it seems like the committee is negotiating against itself if it presents a budget that is less than level service.

Ms. Teixeira thanked the administration for putting together the list of recommended reductions but stated that she would like to put forward a level service budget at the public hearing, together with a list of possible tiered reductions. Kathy Clancy stated that the budget that was brought forward is really a bare bones budget and she would support a level service budget for the public hearing. She expressed the importance of the city administration and City Council knowing what it takes to run the district. Mr. Gross pointed out that Tier 1 reductions were made before the public hearing last year.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Sweet – no
Ms. Teixeira – no
Kathy Clancy – no
Mr. Favazza – no
Mr. Gross – yes
Chairman Pope – yes

To approve an FY19 budget in the amount of \$42,472,648.00 to be published for the public hearing scheduled for April 4, 2018. The motion failed.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Sweet – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Favazza – yes
Mr. Gross – no
Chairman Pope – no

To approve an FY19 level service budget in the amount of \$43,272,273.00 to be published for the public hearing scheduled for April 4, 2018.

Ms. Teixeira acknowledged that the committee is probably not going to get a level service budget in the end but believes there needs to be more discussion among the committee as well as with administration and other stakeholders. Mr. Gross does not believe the committee is doing its due diligence on being good stewards of the budget for the citizens of Gloucester by presenting a level service budget.

IX. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS – None.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 22, 2018 at 8:01 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*