

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 26, 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
Jack O'Maley

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- 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. 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** – Chairman Pope stated that the public hearing on the school budget will take place next Wednesday night at the GHS library. The public hearing presents an opportunity for the community to weigh in on any aspect of the school budget. He indicated that the budget is available for review at the Sawyer Free Library and City Hall.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Mr. Gross recognized the current members of the Docksiders as well as alumni members for their fantastic concert on March 15th, Kathy Clancy commended the O'Maley Innovation Middle School for their recent Evening of Excellence, and Mr. O'Maley recognized the O'Maley Innovation Middle School drama students for their production of "Fame Jr."
- Dr. Safier recognized and congratulated GHS seniors Matt Lane and Olivia Parsons for winning scholarships in the New England Moose Youth Awareness competition. He reported that out of 114 statewide participants, Matt came in first and Olivia came in fourth. He thanked all those who have maintained this program over the years.
- Dr. Safier also recognized O'Maley eighth graders Matthew Smith, Elias Mortillaro, Riker Voss, Megan Craybeek and Jenna Lake for attending the Essex County District Attorney's Second Annual Youth Summit on March 4, 2014. He indicated that they brought back a number of strategies that will be used to promote and enhance the O'Maley SAILS program.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 5, 2014
2. Special School Committee Workshop Minutes of March 5, 2014
3. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 6, 2014
4. Special School Committee Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 10, 2014
5. School Committee Minutes of March 12, 2014
6. Special Program Subcommittee Minutes of March 18, 2014
7. Building & Finance Subcommittee Minutes of March 19, 2014

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Acceptance of Gloucester Education Foundation Grants

1. Career Initiative Award to Amy Donnelly in the amount of \$1,000.00
2. Elementary Science and GHS Drama in the amount of \$14,307.00

Mr. Gross removed Items A1, A6, A7 and B. With respect to Item A1, Mr. Gross noted that the minutes incorrectly state that “Chairperson Clancy noted that these budget transfers were approved by the School Committee at the January 22nd meeting.” With respect to Items A6 and A7, those minutes have not yet been prepared. With respect to Item B, Mr. Gross requested an explanation for the \$696,001.74 set forth in Voucher No. 1174, and Kathy Clancy reported that it was for health insurance.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, 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. Gloucester U Presentation – Mr. Bach reported that Samantha Whitney and Mark Kelsey came on in late October to take charge of the 21st Century Learning Center grant, with a lot of help from the GEF, to implement this new program at the high school. Mr. Bach thanked them for the enormous amount of work, energy and creativity they have put into the program and stated that teacher response has been amazing.

Ms. Whitney and Mr. Kelsey presented a slide show on Gloucester U, including what it is, objectives, goals, the structure of the program, community participation, and session offerings. The committee discussed academic credit for the courses and the process of data collection to determine how many at-risk students are served by the program. Ms. Whitney and Mr. Kelsey praised the teachers involved in the program, and Kathy Clancy commented that it is a great way to strengthen the school community.

- B. Gloucester School Committee Operating Protocols** – Chairman Pope stated that he included these protocols in the packet, together with the School Committee SMART goals and annual meeting agenda, for the benefit of the new School Committee members. He noted that the committee pledged to review the operating protocols at the beginning of every fiscal year; however, they may want to change that to the beginning of the calendar year.

Chairman Pope referred the SMART goals to the Program Subcommittee to be updated, if necessary. Kathy Clancy noted that the SMART goals are meant to remind School Committee members what they are accountable for in helping the district to achieve its goals and stated that it is meant to be an active evolving document.

Chairman Pope reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee is in the process of developing an annual meeting agenda to accompany the full committee annual agenda. Mr. Gross indicated that he will also distribute the rules and procedures to the new members.

- C. District Improvement Plan** – Dr. Safier reviewed the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and noted that it is consistent and continuous with the work that was done last year and includes some new material, as well. He indicated that the plan contains four fundamental strategic objectives which each contain strategic initiatives designed to meet those objectives.

With respect to the PARCC exams, the committee discussed the need for keyboarding instruction. Dr. Safier noted that early on, there are options for the test to be administered on paper if students are not ready to take online exams so as not to put them at a disadvantage. He stated that the administration will do its best to prepare students to take online exams in the future.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the District Improvement Plan 2014-15.

Kathy Clancy stated that she is happy that the district is continuing the great work that was put into place last year. Dr. Safier credited the MASC program for new superintendents for the framework of the DIP. Chairman Pope stated that it is encouraging to see the vertical alignment between the DIP and the school improvement plans.

- D. 1:1 Digital Environment Initiative Update** – Dr. Safier and Mr. Bach demonstrated the capabilities of the Google platform, including the ability to search, cite sources, create documents, presentations, forms and drawings, and the ability for up to six students to simultaneously work on a document. Mr. Bach stated that students can

also access online videos for help in specific areas, and teachers can assign homework over the Google platform (e.g. students watch a video and fill out a response form).

Mr. Bach indicated that the intent of the 1:1 initiative is to provide access to the Google platform to all students and provide them with training to make use of it. He stated that the district has teachers that already have the skills to use the Google platform, and the goal is to use the innovation school grant to help those teachers train other teachers. Students will also be able to teach the teachers and the rest of the class how to do certain things. Kathy Clancy suggested doing some parent outreach on the 1:1 initiative.

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

1. Update on SAFIS – Dr. Safier reported that over the next couple of years, all staff members will need to be fingerprinted. He reviewed the revised appointment letter which he stated will protect the district going forward.
2. Message from Commissioner on PARCC Field Test – Dr. Safier reported that a letter has been sent to parents regarding the PARCC test and stated that students taking the field test will also be taking the MCAS since the schools that have been chosen for the PARCC test represent some of the district's highest performers on the MCAS tests. The PARCC assessments should be completed by April 11th.
3. Update on Educator Evaluation – DDMS – Dr. Safier indicated that he received model contract language from the DESE and sent it to the union for review.
4. New Federal E-Rate Rules – Public Comment – Dr. Safier reported that the district receives E-Rate reimbursement for phones and internet connection of up to 45% of the cost. The amount of reimbursement is based upon eligibility for free and reduced lunch. During the last few years, the district has received between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Dr. Safier reported that the IT Department is reviewing the new rules proposed by the FCC and will submit any comments they have by April 7th.
5. License Renewal – Dr. Safier indicated that a follow-up notice will be sent in mid-April to teachers whose licenses are expiring this year to remind them of the need to renew their license.
6. Per Pupil Spending by School – Dr. Safier reviewed a report from the DESE regarding the district's total expenditures. He stated that a report detailing per pupil spending by school will be presented as soon as it is completed.

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

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

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Special Program Subcommittee Meeting of March 18, 2014** – Ms. Sweet reviewed the revisions made by the subcommittee to the 2014-15 draft school calendar at its meeting on March 18th. Dr. Safier explained the need for professional development early release days and the importance of PLCs, particularly with respect to development of a standards-based report card.

With respect to the early release day on Election Day (November 4), Dr. Safier stated that police details could be requested at the three schools where voting takes place. Mr. Bach reported that the principals welcomed the idea of a police detail and noted that all three of the schools have exterior access to the voting location.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the 2014-15 School Calendar with the following exceptions, as presented to the Program Subcommittee on March 18, 2014:

- (a) The Nov. 4 professional development PreK-12 early release day will be moved to Dec. 9.
- (b) The Nov. 6 parent conference PreK-8 early release day will be moved to Nov. 4.
- (c) April 3 will be a full day of school.
- (d) The last day for students will be on June 16, subject to snow days.

Ms. Sweet reviewed the results of the community survey that was conducted to determine whether people preferred having two full weeks off at Christmas and extending the school year by two days. She noted that 69% of staff prefer to have two full weeks off but that 60% of parents preferred not to have two weeks off.

Kathy Clancy noted that in the past, the committee has discussed keeping students in school as much as possible prior to assessment tests. She also commented that two weeks off from school is a very long break for students, educationally speaking. She would prefer to err on the side of parents in this decision because she believes that is who the committee should be listening to. Ms. Teixeira and Ms. Sweet agreed, and Chairman Pope stated that he believes December 22 and 23 are more valuable educational days than June 17 and 18.

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

VOTED: 0 in favor 6 opposed, to add December 22 and 23, 2014 as vacation days and to change the last day for students to June 18, 2015, subject to snow days. (**Motion failed**)

B. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of March 19, 2014 – Kathy Clancy reported that the subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on March 19, 2014:

- DPW Budget (see attachment to B&F minutes)
- Food Service Report
- Review of City/School Facilities MOU

C. Special Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of March 25, 2014 – Kathy Clancy reported that the subcommittee discussed budget process and procedures at its meeting on March 25, 2014. She indicated that a new budget timeline will be forthcoming.

X. ACTION

A. 2014-15 School Calendar – See Item IX.A.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the contract between the Gloucester School Committee and the Gloucester/Massachusetts Nurses Association effective September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2015 with the following change of salary: Steps 1 through 12 shall be in parity with the Gloucester Teachers Association, ranging from \$41,753.93 to \$68,092.84.

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:

- Transportation issues with respect to St. Ann’s, including “Do Not Enter” and “No Parking” signs
- Options for staff parking – hardtop at St. Ann’s, lot next to Yellow Sub, Burnham’s Field lot, and property behind McDonald’s (grading work needed)
- Modular units at Beeman

Dr. Safier reported that the school building committee will be meeting at 2 Blackburn Drive tomorrow at 4:00 p.m.

B. Letter to the Editor – Mr. Gross stated that he would like to write a letter to the editor regarding the PARCC test to inform the community about what the test entails and requested the committee’s consent. Ms. Teixeira noted that approximately two

thirds of the country does not know what the Common Core is. She asked Dr. Safier to do an introduction to Common Core in the newspaper and then follow it up with Mr. Gross' letter to the editor. Dr. Safier stated that he is considering doing an information session on the Common Core and PARCC in the near future.

- C. **21st Century Learning Center Grant** – Mr. Bach reported that an RFP was recently released for additional sites for 21st century learning centers and that the district intends to apply for this grant for O'Maley. A letter of intent is due by April 14th, and the grant application is due on April 29th. The grant would be for up to three years at \$175,000 per year to make the O'Maley Innovation Middle School a 21st century learning center after school program site. Tina Raimo from GEF will be helping again to write the proposal.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 26, 2014 at 9:46 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*