

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Melissa Teixeira  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Tony Gross  
Michelle Sweet  
Jack O'Maley  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent (7:41)  
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Also Present**

City Council President Paul McGeary (7:07)

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- 
- 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.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Cecilia Corazo thanked the committee for allowing the public to speak at last week's meeting and asked whether the committee will be addressing the issues raised during that meeting. Chairman Pope stated that all of the questions asked during that meeting will be addressed in a presentation during tonight's meeting. He also noted that Kathryn Goodick sent in a letter with a number of additional questions that will not be able to be addressed tonight. He will speak later about the process for addressing questions about the budget.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairman Pope stated that the committee has been working very hard on the budget since January and reminded the public that all of the committee's meetings are open to the public and that the agendas and minutes are available on the GPS School Committee website ([www.gloucesterschools.com](http://www.gloucesterschools.com)).

*(City Council President McGeary joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.)*

Chairman Pope noted that the public does not have the opportunity to see other city departments' budgets until the mayor gives her recommendation to the City Council. However, there will be many opportunities for the public to weigh in on the school budget. He invited people to send any questions they have about the budget to Mr. Baumhauer, Dr. Safier or himself and stated that the committee will try to answer all questions through the website. He also indicated that the entire line item proposed school budget will be on the website by the end of the week.

- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier introduced the new principal of East Gloucester School, Amy Pasquarello, and spoke about her background and experience. Kathy Clancy discussed Ms. Pasquarello’s strengths and rapport with the students and their parents.

Kathy Clancy reported that the East Gloucester fifth graders are performing “Robin Hood” tomorrow night, Friday night and Saturday, and Mayor Theken stated that Beeman fifth graders will be performing “Aladdin” next week.

Mr. Gross reported that it was suggested at the Open Meeting Law educational forum last night that the chairman announce at the start of School Committee meetings that they are being recorded and by whom.

Chairman Pope reported that he and Mr. O’Maley attended the first Interact induction ceremony yesterday and stated that the district is lucky to have the Gloucester Rotary Club sponsor such an organization at the high school.

- VI. **GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Sam Bevans and Liana Hendershott introduced themselves and updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: spring sports, Interact Club’s Pizza Taste-Off fundraiser, language trip to France and Italy, senior banquet, NHS induction, scholarship in memory of Meg Tarr, Drama Club’s production of “Legally Blonde,” visit by Katrina Keiser, and results of the Moose Youth Awareness Program. Sam relayed Ms. Lowthers’ invitation to the School Committee to visit the presentation and discussion by her ecology students on areas vulnerable to storm surges and sea level rise in Gloucester, which will take place at 10 a.m. on Friday at the high school. Sam also reported that Mr. Barry will be out for the next six weeks after donating a kidney to his father.

VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Approval of Minutes**

1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of March 18, 2015
2. School Committee Workshop of March 18, 2015
3. School Committee Public Hearing of April 1, 2015
4. Building & Finance Subcommittee of April 2, 2015
5. School Committee and Executive Session (Confidential) of March 25, 2015

B. **Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets

C. **Approval of Transfers**

D. **Referrals**

Kathy Clancy removed Items A3 and A4 from the Consent Agenda since the minutes are not yet ready.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, 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**

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

**D. Presentation on Space Issues at Plum Cove** – Dr. Safier reviewed the need for space at Plum Cove to service special needs students, and Michele Rogers from Dore & Whittier presented a plan showing modification of the existing space to provide same. The plan reflects the division of an existing classroom into a learning center, timeout room, therapeutic office, and psychologist’s office, as well as spaces for the art and music teachers’ desks. That classroom would then shift to where the library is currently located, and the library would be brought back to where it used to be in the main building. The stage would be taken down and that space would be used as a teacher workroom and the PE teacher’s office. Ms. Rogers indicated that no walls would need to be taken down.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to refer Dore & Whittier’s plan for the modification of space at Plum Cove to the Building & Finance Subcommittee.

Chairman Pope thanked Dore & Whittier for providing this plan at no cost.

**B. Response to FY16 Draft Budget Public Hearing Questions** – Dr. Safier reviewed the answers to the FY16 public hearing questions (see [www.gloucesterschools.com/district-news](http://www.gloucesterschools.com/district-news)), and the committee discussed the following matters:

*(Mr. Bach joined the meeting at 7:41 p.m.)*

- The need to make teachers’ salaries competitive with other districts
- Cost of mandated special education services
- Addition of \$55,000 to the budget for the School Resource Officer
- The fact that the School Committee does not negotiate health care increases
- The fact that Manchester/Essex recently passed a budget with a 9% increase via an override
- History of cuts to the school budget below level service
- West Parish students leaving the district during the transition period
- Legality of including a figure to be reserved for negotiations
- Increase in cost of certified mail
- The fact that teachers’ pensions have no impact on the school budget
- Advocacy by the School Committee at the state level for funding to acquire technology needed for PARCC testing

- Addition of \$15,000 for HealthOffice (online recordkeeping system that provides HIPAA security)
- Savings due to increase in technology (purchase of less textbooks, etc.)
- Health insurance premiums paid by teachers
- City expenses included in the school budget
- Increased workload on principals due to the teacher evaluation system (unfunded mandate)
- Reasons for students choosing out

The following changes were made to the document:

- Page 1, Number of Teachers – Change the word “teachers” to “staff,” since this information includes guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, etc.
- Page 2, Special Education – Begin with the sentence, “Statewide, the cost of special education services is going up.”
- Page 3, Special Education and McKenney-Vento Transportation Costs – Add the figure of \$121,157 to transport ten homeless students.
- Include a reference to the additional cost of the School Resource Officer (\$55,000)
- Page 5, Reasons for Students Choosing Out – Include “perception issues.”
- Page 5, Transportation Budget – Include a statement about the bidding process for new bus leases.
- Page 6, Common Core and PARCC – Start the paragraph with “The Common Core Standards are not optional.”
- Page 8, Principal’s Membership Dues – Include a statement that memberships keep principals current with best practices.
- Page 9, Teachers’ Pensions – Move the following sentence to the beginning of the paragraph: “There is no contribution from the City of Gloucester.” Include a reference to the MTRS website.
- Page 10, Longevity and Sick Buyback – Include a statement that teachers do not have a sick day buyback benefit in their contract.
- Page 11, Teachers’ Health Insurance Premiums – Replace the word “teachers” with the phrase “all city employees.”
- Page 14 – Remove the heading “Local Mandates.”

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept the answers to the FY16 Public Hearing Questions, as amended.

**A. Discussion of April 7 Technology/Inquiry Professional Development** – Mr. Bach reviewed the activities of yesterday’s joint middle school/high school professional development session with Barbara Stripling and indicated that he will be doing a survey of teachers tomorrow regarding their experience.

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

1. School Choice Vote Reminder – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept school choice students for the 2015-2016 school year.

Chairman Pope suggested contacting Essex Technical High School to ask them to inform students who do not get into that highly competitive school about the GHS vocational program. Ms. Teixeira reported that the superintendent of Essex Tech is happy to do that. Dr. Safier indicated that letters will also be sent to superintendents of all towns who participate in the Essex Tech encouraging students who were not accepted there to consider our vocational program.

2. Updated Open Meeting Law Guide

3. E-Rate Deadline Extended

4. Assessment Study Update

5. Vocational Technical Education Regulations

6. Upcoming Events

On a motion by Mr. O’Maley, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

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

## **IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of April 2, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting of April 2, 2015:

- DPW Facilities Proposed Budget – Matters discussed with Mike Hale
- Substitute Pay for Bus Monitors, Noon Supervisors, Crossing Guards, and Cafeteria Workers – Mr. Baumhauer reported that the current rate for these employees is \$10.12 per hour and that substitutes are paid \$8.00 per hour. He indicated that the district is having trouble finding substitutes who are willing to work for \$8.00 per hour and recommended raising it to \$9.00 per hour, which is the current minimum wage.

Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Chairman Pope, to raise the substitute pay for bus monitors, noon supervisors, crossing guards, and cafeteria workers to \$9.00 per hour. Ms. Teixeira amended the motion to increase the rate to \$9.50 per hour, since the minimum wage will increase to \$10.00 per hour on January 1, 2016 and it will be a more attractive pay rate. Ms. Sweet seconded the amendment.

After discussion, Ms. Teixeira withdrew her amended motion and suggested that this matter be tabled to hear from the employees in these groups. She indicated that she will reach out to those groups to see how they feel about this matter and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

- Elementary Food Service Debt – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was

**VOTED:** 6 in favor, 1 present (Ms. Teixeira) to instruct the Director of Finance & Operations and Food Services Director to file small claims actions against all families of students who owe more than \$50.00.

## **X. ACTION**

### **A. FY16 Budget Proposal**

1. Mr. Gross thanked the members of the community for bringing their questions forward at the public hearing. Kathy Clancy stated that the increase in the proposed budget reflects the staggering changes in the cost of providing education over the past 13 years and also highlights the changing nature of a teacher's job and the need for continuing development to keep them current and able to serve all students. She also pointed out that the committee continues to advocate for changes in Chapter 70 state aid.

Ms. Teixeira thanked those who asked questions at the public hearing but stated that, in the future, she hopes people will become involved in the budget process sooner. She also thanked the Building & Finance Subcommittee for their hard work and Mayor Theken for requesting a level service budget. Finally, Ms. Teixeira stated that she believes the budget is extremely responsible to the needs of the School Department and the city as a whole.

Chairman Pope discussed the unfairness of the Chapter 70 formula and stated that in the course of preparing a level service budget, the committee has already cut over \$700,000 from the requests of principals and other department heads. He believes this is a budget that meets the criteria that the committee was given.

Mayor Theken discussed the health insurance situation and recommended that all employees carefully review the available plans to find the best fit for them. She also thanked the School Committee for providing programs like Compass and not giving up on our students.

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

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mayor Theken – present  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes  
Mr. O'Maley – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Sweet – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes

To approve the FY16 budget proposal in the amount of \$39,814,690, as presented at the School Committee public hearing of April 1, 2015.

2. On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the FY16 budget proposal for submission to the mayor and the City Council.

- B. To increase substitute pay for bus monitors, noon supervisors, crossing guards, and cafeteria workers to \$9.00 per hour – Tabled. (See Item IX.A.)**
- C. Approval of 2015-2016 School Calendar** – Mr. Bach reviewed the draft school calendar, noting the early release parent conference and professional development days. There was a discussion about the primary election date and whether that would be a half day.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the 2015-2016 School Calendar.

- D. Annual School Choice** – See Item VIII.C.1.

- E. To instruct the Director of Finance and Operations and the Food Services Director to file small claims actions against all families of students who owe more than \$50.00 – See Item IX.A.**

**XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Chairman Pope noted that a building committee meeting will be held tomorrow. Dr. Safier reported that that meeting will include general project updates and a review of the proposed sign outside the school. He also stated that the second-floor slab has been poured and that sheathing, framing and underground utility trenching is ongoing. Chairman Pope reported that Michele Rogers of Dore & Whittier invited the building committee to go for a walk-through of the site next week, and he extended that invitation to the School Committee.
- B. Letter from Joseph Benevento to Mayor Romeo Theken**
- C. Letter from Kathryn Goodick**
- D. Transfer of Health Insurance to City Budget** – Ms. Teixeira asked whether the committee is interested in reaching out to the City Council or the mayor to talk about transferring health insurance to the city budget so that the school budget reflects educational expenses only. Mayor Theken requested that this matter be discussed in executive session.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Mr. O’Maley, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mayor Theken – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes  
Mr. O’Maley – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Sweet – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 10:21 p.m. for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the GTA and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of April 8, 2015 at 10:34 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*