

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, April 27, 2016  
Gloucester High School Library  
7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson  
Melissa Teixeira (7:17 p.m.)  
Tony Gross  
Michelle Sweet  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent  
Tom Lafleur, CPA, Director of Finance  
and Operations  
Dr. Telena Imel, West Parish Principal

**Also Present**

Mike Hale, DPW Director

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- 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** – Susanne Altenburger reported that she was invited to attend the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System workshop on Green Boats and Ports at the University of Rhode Island. She distributed her materials from that workshop to the committee, together with a copy of the magazine *Epoxyworks*.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Mr. Gross recognized the O’Maley aquaponics lab and thanked the Gloucester Education Foundation and Cell Signaling for funding it. Dr. Safier recognized and congratulated the JROTC drill team for their performance at the grand nationals in Orlando, Florida. He also thanked the DPW for the hanging the art festival banners on Main Street. Mayor Theken recognized the students who were inducted into the National Honor Society last night. Finally, Chairman Pope reported that the Mad Hot Ball will take place on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. in the GHS Field House.
- VI. **GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A. **Approval of Minutes**
    1. School Committee Public Hearing of March 30, 2016

2. Joint City Council & School Committee of March 24, 2016
3. School Committee of April 13, 2016
4. Program Subcommittee of April 7, 2016
5. Building & Finance Subcommittee of April 6, 2016

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

**C. Approval of Transfers**

**D. Referrals**

**E. Out-of-State Field Trip – GHS JROTC to Canobie Lake in Salem, New Hampshire on Friday, May 27, 2016**

Kathy Clancy removed Item A.3.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

#### **VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**A. Public Input/Discussion on Conditions of Elementary Schools –** Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee has been involved in a long process of coming up with a plan for the elementary schools. He reported that Statements of Interest for East Gloucester and Beeman have been submitted to the MSBA and the committee will need to have a plan outlined by September or October.

DPW Director Mike Hale reported that the DPW has been maintaining the schools for seven years under a Memorandum of Understanding with the superintendent. He noted that the DPW facilities budget has increased by almost \$2.5 million since they first took over the maintenance of the schools.

Mr. Hale stated that the youngest elementary school is 51 years old and the oldest is 68 years old. He noted that all of them have had significant deficiencies of maintenance over the years. The DPW has replaced the heating systems in Beeman and East Gloucester. The building envelopes have remained the same, with incremental improvements over the years, and there are new roofs on all of the elementary schools.

*(Ms. Teixeira joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.)*

Mr. Hale stated the DPW’s budget only allows for minimal preventative maintenance and some capital improvements each year. All of the elementary schools have classrooms and/or office space located in modular units, the majority of which are at half of their life expectancy. He indicated that there is not a lot of preventative maintenance that can be done to the modulars to keep them fresh and safe for use.

Mr. Hale noted that Plum Cove and Veterans will need continual capital improvements until a decision is made on them. The plumbing, heating and electrical systems are very old and there are not enough outlets for a modern school. Mr. Hale stated that there is always a request for additional space in the schools and there is no way to create space without adding more modular units.

Mr. Hale stated that his biggest concern right now is the modular units, which do not have a long life expectancy. Brad Dore of Dore & Whittier stated that the cost to replace a modular is approximately \$1.5 million, which includes the unit itself, the site work associated with it, utilities, etc.

Chairman Pope noted that we can no longer get parts to repair failing systems because they are so old. Mr. Hale indicated that he can buy some new components but cannot always match the ones that are there. He reported that he has shopped all over the country and on eBay to try to find parts that can be swapped out without having to replace a whole unit.

Mr. Dore and Michelle Rogers of Dore & Whittier presented a slide show on their study of the elementary schools, including tasks and goals of the study, overall assessment of the schools, enrollment projections, capacity based on gross square footage, MSBA guidelines comparison, space needs analysis of each building, a summary of the options, maps of each of the sites, triggers for renovations and additions, and the MSBA process.

The committee discussed the following matters:

- Soil testing
- Loss of playing field at Veterans if new school is built there
- Average size of new elementary schools
- Monetary advantages of building bigger schools
- Possibility of building two schools on one site

*(Kathy Clancy left the meeting at 8:16 p.m.)*

*(A five-minute recess was taken at this time.)*

- B. Proposed Opening Events – New West Parish Elementary School** – Chairman Pope reported that the West Parish PTO will be holding an ice cream social at the new school on August 25th for West Parish families. In addition, there will be an open house on August 28th at 2:00 p.m., and the MSBA ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on September 21st at 10:00 a.m. Dr. Safier reported that the teachers union has expressed some concern about the ice cream social on August 25th because it is taking place before school opens and pressures them to complete their classrooms earlier. Chairman Pope noted that that event is being held by the PTO.

Chairman Pope suggested establishing an ad hoc committee to plan the open house and the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Ms. Teixeira and Ms. Sweet volunteered for that committee.

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

1. Updates on Social Emotional Learning and Approaches to Play and Learning
2. FY17 Draft House Budget
3. NESDEC Enrollment Projections
4. Special Progress Report to New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
5. National Honor Society Induction

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Superintendent’s Report.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** – None.

**X. ACTION**

**A. Approval of Elementary Attendance Policy, Grades 1-5, File JE** – Dr. Safier reviewed the new proposed language in the policy, and the actual second reading of the policy was waived without objection.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Elementary Attendance Policy, Grades 1-5, File JE, as presented.

There was a discussion about the strength of the attendance language in the school handbooks.

**B. Approval of Northshore Education Consortium’s Articles of Agreement** – Dr. Safier reviewed the change to the Articles of Agreement and recommended that the document be approved.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Northshore Education Consortium Articles of Agreement as presented.

**C. Acceptance of Gloucester Education Foundation Grants**

1. \$1,000.00 for the 2016 Countdown to Kindergarten Orientation Program

2. \$400.00 for Partial Support of Attendance by Cynthia Mochowski at the upcoming Garrison Institute Program
3. \$2,108.00 for the Incredible Years Parenting Program at Veterans' Memorial Elementary School

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the above-referenced Gloucester Education Foundation grants totaling \$3,508.00.

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

**VOTED:** 0 in favor, 5 opposed to reconsider the Committee's vote to accept the above-referenced Gloucester Education Foundation grants totaling \$3,508.00. The motion failed.

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

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the construction work taking place at the site. Chairman Pope reported that the fields will be seeded this year but cannot be used for the first year.
- B. School Start Time** – Chairman Pope provided some references on this topic to the committee members.
- C. Next Steps in Elementary School Plan** – Ms. Teixeira asked what the next steps for the committee are with respect to the elementary school plan. Chairman Pope stated that the committee needs information on the availability of other sites, which he should be able to report on at the next meeting. He indicated that Brad Dore and Michele Rogers walked the Swinson's Field site and thought it would be suitable.

Chairman Pope believes the consensus of the committee is that the district should remain a 12-class district, and he suggested that the committee have a serious discussion about what the configuration is going to be. He suggested that if the committee is going to consider building a four- or five-class school that it visit some existing new schools of that size.

Finally, Chairman Pope stated that the committee has invited the community to be part of the process and to provide input on the elementary schools and, unfortunately, for the most part, they have chosen not to do so. However, he indicated that the committee will continue to be receptive to public input throughout the process.

- D. Class Gift** – After discussion, it was the consensus of the committee to give the top 5% of graduating seniors a maroon Cross pen. Mayor Theken indicated that she has several books written and signed by local authors that can be given to the students

with the pens. Ms. Sweet suggested that this matter be discussed earlier next year so that other options can be considered.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of April 27, 2016 at 9:14 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*