

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 11, 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 1623 Studios

- 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** – None.

- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairman Pope noted that Recording Secretary Maria Puglisi is not in attendance and that the minutes will be prepared by her from the 1623 Studios recording.

- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier recognized the GHS Drama Society for their performance of *Once upon a Mattress* last weekend, which he stated was spectacular. Ms. Teixeira noted that she observed students playing on the field at Newell Stadium and is happy that it appears to be in good shape. Kathy Clancy recognized O’Maley Assistant Principal Jeff Strong and the staff who accompanied the eighth graders to Washington, DC.

- VI. **GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Samantha Gross and Henry Hardy updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: Docksiders field trip to New York City, Junior Event, scholarship applications, and NHS hours.

- VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. **Approval of Minutes**
 - 1. Program Subcommittee of February 1, 2018
 - 2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of February 14, 2018

3. School Committee of February 14, 2018
4. Personnel Subcommittee of February 26, 2018

B. Approval of Warrants

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

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

1. GHS DECA to Atlanta, Georgia for International Career Development Conference from Saturday, April 21 to Tuesday, April 24, 2018
2. GHS JROTC to Daytona Beach, Florida for Annual National Drill Team Championships from Wednesday, May 2 to Monday, May 7, 2018

Mr. Favazza removed Item E.1 from the Consent Agenda and stated that it was brought to his attention that the two sophomore students attending this conference were flying to Atlanta unaccompanied and that the chaperone was going to try to meet them at the airport there. He noted that a parent stepped in and is now flying down to Atlanta with the students. He wanted the committee to be aware of this type of situation when approving future out-of-state field trips. Mr. Cook suggested that the approval form be amended to include those kinds of details about the trip and that the person(s) sponsoring the trip come to the School Committee meeting at which it is being approved to answer any questions.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the out-of-state field trip request for GHS DECA to attend the International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from Saturday, April 21 to Tuesday, April 24, 2018.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

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

1. Status of Athletic Director Position
2. Door Locks
3. Supplement to Student Handbooks and Linkage

4. Mass. Municipal Association (MMA) on Chapter 70
5. Special Education Circuit Breaker
6. Student Transportation Reimbursements

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Superintendent's Report.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None.

X. ACTION

- A. FY 2019 Budget Proposal** – Chairman Pope reminded the committee that the budget voted for public hearing was a level service budget of \$43,272,273 and stated that the committee will be voting a bottom line number tonight to be submitted to the mayor. He reported that Jim Destino indicated that he will try to give the School Department \$900,000 above last year's budget, which translates to a 2.09% increase, meaning that the committee would have to cut \$1,333,376 from the level service budget to get to that number. Chairman Pope stressed the importance of understanding the magnitude of the proposed cuts when voting the bottom line tonight.

Dr. Safier stated that none of the proposed cuts are inconsequential and there are no additional requests included in the FY19 budget proposal. He reviewed past budgets and indicated that additions to the FY18 budget included ELL teachers and a cut of \$76,000 for furniture and equipment. In FY17, prominent additions to the budget were adjustment counselors, incorporation of the computer science program, and the addition of a preschool teacher and paraprofessional. He stated that the FY16 budget made adjustments to staffing based upon enrollment figures and that there were reductions at GHS in guidance, science, an IT specialist, English, math, social studies, and a secretary, as well as reductions at O'Maley in social studies, math and a paraprofessional. He stated that increases in health insurance, step and track, special education, and contractual salary increases account for \$1,860,281 of the FY19 budget.

Dr. Safier referred to a spreadsheet provided to the committee showing a list of proposed reductions to get to a 3% increase. Chairman Pope suggested that the committee discuss the impact of particular items on the list but restated that the committee will not be voting on the cuts tonight, just the bottom line. Mr. Favazza stated that he would like the proposed cuts to be differentiated between those that will allow us to provide the same educational experience for students and those that are going to have an impact that cannot be compensated for. Dr. Safier confirmed that the proposed cuts have been prioritized in that manner.

Mr. Gross stated the importance of letting the City Council know how damaging the cuts will be and that we may need supplemental appropriations during the year because there is no cushion left. He noted that the committee's real work will come

after it receives the final number from the City Council. Chairman Pope stated that it is important that the committee understand the magnitude of the cuts that may need to be made before it votes the bottom line. He noted that the City Council could realize substantial income from permits for the Fuller property, Cameron's, and the Maplewood School which are not currently included in the city budget.

Mr. Favazza stated that if the cuts are not voted tonight, the City Council Budget & Finance Committee may believe that the School Committee will not actually cut the programs that are being discussed and will find the money elsewhere in its budget to continue them. Mr. Gross recommended not locking ourselves into a corner and presenting to them the high probability of cuts that will have to be made.

Ms. Teixeira expressed frustration that the committee as a whole has not had a chance to discuss the proposed cuts and ask why these are the recommendations. She noted that the committee still does not know about potential revenues, such as from sales of marijuana beginning in January, and stated that a 2.09% increase is unrealistic. She pointed out that the committee also will not know the cost of health insurance until May 9th. She believes it is ridiculous and irresponsible to try to identify any cuts and make decisions tonight. She would like to submit the level service budget to the mayor and City Council, knowing that cuts are going to be coming.

Chairman Pope stated that the budget is never written in stone and is always flexible. He noted that the committee can still put forward what it thinks it needs even if we do not know everything yet. Dr. Safier clarified that he was encouraged by the Building & Finance Subcommittee to show a preliminary picture of the potential impact of what could happen and stated that he anticipates providing more information during another meeting or workshop. Ms. Teixeira would like to put forward a level service budget and then hold a workshop/meeting to discuss the potential cuts. Ms. Sweet agreed. Kathy Clancy expressed concern that the majority of the recommended cuts are at GHS and stated that making any cuts now makes the city administration's job easier.

Chairman Pope stated that the mayor will put forth a number to the City Council at the beginning of May and noted that last year the City Council Budget & Finance Committee never asked the School Committee what it would have to cut to get to their number. He is not sure who is going to listen to the committee defending a request for a 5.5% increase. Ms. Teixeira suggested that the possible cuts can be identified when we go before the Budget & Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Favazza cautioned against submitting an indefensible budget that does not include cuts that could be made that would be relatively painless.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

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

To approve the FY19 budget proposal in the amount of \$43,272,273 for submission to the Mayor and the City Council. The motion failed.

Mr. Gross reviewed the City Charter and noted that the committee does not have to vote on this tonight. He also suggested that committee members who do not have a paper copy of the budget book be provided with one because the notes contained in it answer many of the questions that were brought up tonight.

A School Committee workshop was scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Pope suggested that any questions be submitted to the administration beforehand so that they can be answered at the workshop.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to table the vote on the budget submission to the Mayor and City Council until after the School Committee Workshop on April 24, 2018.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

A. MSBA Project Updates

1. East Gloucester/Veterans School – Chairman Pope reported that the city has received a request from Brittany Gomes of MSBA that someone from Gloucester attend a workshop on how to make payments to MSBA. He believes that person would be either John Dunn or someone from the DPW.
2. GHS Roof – Chairman Pope reported that the roof top units are going to be installed next week, which will complete the job. They have also resolved the leak issues that occurred in the library. Finally, Chairman Pope reported that the city's cost of the roof, including the RTUs, is \$2.6 million.
3. West Parish – Ms. Teixeira requested an update on the traffic issue. Chairman Pope reported that he met with City Councilors Sean Nolan and Ken Hecht and they came up with a couple of possible solutions: (1) Take out the sidewalk on the left of the driveway in order to create right- and left-turn lanes leaving the property; (2) put a two-lane road in the field to the right of the backstop, which would increase the queue by about 35 cars to relieve backup

on Concord Street. Chairman Pope reported that this would require that plans be drawn up and presented to the Conservation Commission. In terms of paying for the work, he noted that the project has not been closed out but the final money has been borrowed.

B. Day on the Hill – Chairman Pope indicated that the Day on the Hill will take place on April 25, 2018 and anyone who wishes to attend should register as soon as possible.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of April 11, 2018 at 8:33 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*