

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

District Office – Conference Room

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson (7:05 p.m.)  
Joel Favazza, Secretary (7:05 p.m.)  
Melissa Teixeira  
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  
Patty Wegmann, Special Education Director  
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal  
Matt Fusco, Veterans Principal

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.
  
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
  
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
  
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
  
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Chairman Pope recognized Backyard Growers for their “Harvest Days” program at all of the schools.
  
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
  
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A. Approval of Minutes**
    - 1. School Committee of April 13, 2016
    - 2. School Committee of April 27, 2016
  
  - B. Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets
  
  - C. Approval of Transfers**
  
  - D. Referrals**

- E. Acceptance of Donation** – To accept a donation of 34 Dell OptiPlex 760 computers from NOAA for Gloucester High School and O’Maley Innovation Middle School

Chairman Pope removed Item A.2.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, 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. Review of the Elementary School Plan to Date** – Chairman Pope reviewed the elementary school plan considerations.

*(Kathy Clancy and Joel Favazza joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.)*

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern with coming up with a plan to build a new school and then not getting financial support for it. She stated that she needs more information before deciding what the plan should look like, such as whether or not there is a school that can be modernized for \$10 million instead of rebuilt for \$40 million, which can then be taken out of the equation. She does not recall seeing any figures for the options that were presented by Dore & Whittier.

Mr. Gross noted that it will cost a lot of money to get those definitive answers and that it is very difficult and expensive to modernize buildings and to bring them up to code. He believes Dore & Whittier has expressed the opinion that the buildings can be renovated but that is a more expensive option because they are not easy buildings to update.

Chairman Pope pointed out that the MSBA will not subsidize projects that do not meet its standards and that all of the buildings have modular units, which do not meet MSBA standards. According to Mike Hale, the modulares are going to deteriorate faster than the existing buildings and they are very expensive to replace. Chairman Pope believes the committee should put forward the best education plan for the district.

Ms. Teixeira clarified that she wholeheartedly supports building a new school at Beeman or in East Gloucester but believes there should be a plan that takes into consideration all of the schools before moving forward. Mr. Favazza agreed and stated that he cannot imagine going forward without a complete plan and timeline for all of the schools. He believes it is the School Committee’s job to convince the community to support the plan they put forward.

Kathy Clancy noted that everyone thinks renovating is cheaper than building new but that is seldom the case. The committee will need to say that it believes wholeheartedly in the plan and that it is the most fiscally responsible solution. Committee members should also engage city councilors and other community leaders to help them make the case for the plan.

Chairman Pope believes it has always been the committee's intention to develop a plan that includes all of the elementary schools. He noted that the committee has had six sessions for community input on this matter and that there has been a mediocre response. He believes the committee needs to put a plan on the table very soon so we can get people to react to it and find out what they think.

Dr. Safier stated that as the plan moves forward, the new West Parish School should be considered as part of the equation. He also noted that the MSBA would not have allowed us to build a larger school there without closing another school.

The committee also discussed the following matters:

- Sale of existing school parcels to offset cost of new schools
- Confirmation of viability of Swinson's Field site
- Procedure for changing the use of Swinson's Field
- Need for swing space if renovations are done
- MSBA process
- Omnibus override for new school and other city needs

#### **B. School Improvement Plans**

1. Beeman Memorial Elementary School – Principal Ellen Sibley reviewed the Beeman School Improvement Plan. She commended BSRI for providing them with a core curriculum and reading coaches and for teaching them how to run data meetings. She noted that they are now taking what they learned in literacy and using it in math.
2. Veterans' Memorial Elementary School – Principal Matt Fusco reviewed the Veterans School Improvement Plan and noted that his goals are similar to Beeman's. There was a discussion about the discipline code, attendance, the running club, and the 100 Mile Club.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the School Improvement Plans of Beeman Memorial and Veterans' Memorial Elementary Schools.

- #### **C. Special Education Report**
- Patty Wegmann reported that the special education department is currently going through the self-assessment phase of the Coordinated Program Review, an audit that takes place every six years. That information will be submitted electronically to the Department of Education next week and there will be an onsite visit to review records and interview parents, staff and administrators. The district will receive a final report at the end of the school year.

Ms. Wegmann stated that two programs for students with significant disabilities that were previously housed at Veterans will be moved to the new West Parish building. She also reported on retirements within the special education department.

Ms. Wegmann stated that in the next few weeks, East Gloucester and Plum Cove will begin training for Positive Behavioral Supports and Intervention (PBIS), which was implemented at O'Maley last year. She noted that PBIS is not a curriculum but a framework that emphasizes positive classroom management and preventative school discipline.

Ms. Wegmann reported that there has been some fluctuation in the number of students placed out of district this year, but she anticipates that the district will begin the next school year with 58 students being placed out of district. She stated that five students returned to the district this year from out-of-district placements.

Finally, Ms. Wegmann reported that the summer program at Veterans will run from June 27th to August 4th. Eleven teaching staff, 24 paraprofessionals, a nurse, and five related service providers will take part in the summer program, and 15 tutors have been hired to provide services.

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

1. Gloucester High School Principal Search
2. Athletic Director Search
3. The Issue of Math Interventions: An Ongoing Conversation Among Administration
4. Accountability and Assistance System Feedback Opportunity
5. Help Testing for Lead in School Drinking Water
6. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: Social Emotional Learning
7. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: Low Income Education Access Project – Dr. Unobskey discussed steps taken by staff to pilot what they learned in the LEAP conference last fall.
8. Calendar of Events – Chairman Pope noted that the Citywide Arts Festival will take place on Saturday, May 14th.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Superintendent's Report.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** – None.

**X. ACTION** – None.

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

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Chairman Pope reported that there is a building committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow.
- B. End of Year Calendar for Seniors – May/June 2016 – FYI.**
- C. School Committee Position on the Upcoming Marijuana Referendum Question** – Kathy Clancy stated that she contacted MASC to find out if they were going to take a position on this referendum. Dr. Safier reviewed the statement from MASS and reported that it is firmly opposed to the referendum. Ms. Teixeira recommended that committee members read the actual bill before taking a position on this matter. Chairman Pope and Mr. Gross stated that they also have some concerns about the committee taking a position on the matter. Since there is no urgency for the committee to make a decision on it tonight, the matter was tabled for further discussion.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Sweet – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Mayor Theken – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Favazza – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:08 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and collective bargaining and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor 0 opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of May 11, 2016 at 9:31 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*