

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Tony Gross  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent  
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Also Present**

Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal  
Carol Bratt, East Gloucester Principal  
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal  
Matt Fusco, Veterans Principal  
Telena Imel, West Parish Principal

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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** – Chairman Pope stated that the kindergarten overcrowding issue at East Gloucester School is an ongoing issue and that this is the first time it has come before the committee. He reported that the committee will discuss the matter later in the meeting but that no decisions will be made tonight. He expects that there will be a special School Committee meeting next week in order to resolve the issue. Finally, Chairman Pope noted that kindergarten registration remains open until June 1st.

Heather Dagle of 11 Marina Drive asked the committee to bring back community schools. She stated that eight children in her neighborhood are already at East Gloucester School and her child will be the only one in the neighborhood not going to East Gloucester.

Jim Towne of 12 Links Road referenced the city census and studies done by the city and asked the committee to utilize that data to try to come up with a long-term plan to prevent this situation from occurring at such a late stage in the future.

Susan Costa of 19 Abbott Road asked the committee to take into consideration that families will be split up. Chairman Pope stated that the committee will not break up families.

Max George of 16 Allen Street stated that he is new to Gloucester and that one of the reasons he chose his neighborhood is because it is in the East Gloucester School catchment area. He knows that his son is going to be fine but stated that it was jarring to be notified at such a late date about this situation.

Matt Parisi of 9 Stanley Court stated that he went to East Gloucester School as a child and that he specifically built his house in that catchment area. He asked the committee to take that into consideration.

Danielle Osier of Liberty Street stated that it is unnerving to think that she might have to tell her daughter, who has moved twice in six months, that she will be going to a different school. She is disappointed at how last-minute everything was.

Debbie Donovan of 4 Highland Street stated that one of her grandsons goes to East Gloucester School and another one will hopefully be going there next year. She does not understand why this problem was not picked up earlier when the census was taken. She asked the committee to consider the possibility of transferring a teacher from Plum Cove. People moved into that community so their children could go to East Gloucester School.

Heather Widtfeldt of 28 Marina Drive stated that she is Debbie Donovan's daughter.

Erin McKay of 5 Orchard Road has two children currently at East Gloucester, one of whom will be going to O'Maley next year, and a son who is supposed to go to East Gloucester next year. She believes siblings should be kept together so their parents can be involved in that school. She asked whether the Plan for Effective Learning Communities was effective and whether we have achieved those goals.

Gina Bragulio of 57 Prospect Street stated that the outcome of this decision is going to weigh heavily on her decision to send her son to a public school in Gloucester or to consider a private school. She knows her neighbors are very concerned, as well.

An unidentified woman asked when the kindergarten registration deadline was switched from May 4th to June 1st. She understands that people may have just moved to the area, but she finds it hard to believe that 17 kindergartners just moved to East Gloucester this week. Chairman Pope indicated that he would find out the answer to that question.

Chairman Pope stated that kindergarten registration is a tool that is used to determine how many children are coming to a particular school, and if children show up on the first day of school we take them. An unidentified man asked where those children would go if the classes are already full, and Chairman Pope stated that that issue is not clear in the committee's policy and needs to be resolved. He indicated that the Program Subcommittee will be reviewing the policy in the near future, but the East Gloucester kindergarten issue will be resolved by next Wednesday.

An unidentified man stated that the earlier the parents are notified that there are unforeseen issues, the more time they will have to make other decisions. Limiting those choices only creates panic and angst, especially for the children who don't know where they are going.

An unidentified woman asked about class sizes, and Kathy Clancy reminded the audience that the committee is taking comments before it has heard any information from the superintendent. The woman stated that she is more concerned about her son being in a classroom with 28 children and not learning or getting the attention he needs. Chairman Pope stated that that will be part of the discussion but that the committee's preference for maximum size for kindergarten is 21-22 students.

Kathy Clancy stated that all of the committee's future discussions on this topic will be posted and are open meetings. She suggested that if anyone has solutions that do not come out of the committee's discussion tonight as possibilities, they should come forward with their recommendations or suggestions.

Catherine Mazzeo asked how accurate the feasibility study was and whether the city spent a lot of money on something that cannot project numbers accurately. Chairman Pope stated that most of the numbers used for projections are generated by the state and that the study used the state's numbers. There was no indication that this surge in numbers was coming.

Ms. Teixeira asked whether there will be another opportunity for public input on this matter. Mayor Theken stated that written responses are not enough for her and that she needs to see the parents' compassion and be able to ask questions. She suggested having a community meeting other than a School Committee meeting. Chairman Pope stated that there will be a presentation at tonight's meeting about the issue and then the committee will decide how to go forward.

Mary Ann Boucher of 93 Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated that she has a grandchild that will hopefully be going to East Gloucester School next year. She believes that residents in Ward 1-1 should go to East Gloucester School. She is not pitting one school against the other but stated that children in the neighborhood should go to the same school.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None.**

**V. RECOGNITIONS –** Dr. Safier recognized the JROTC Drill Team for receiving a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Congressman Seth Moulton. Kathy Clancy recognized the students, teachers and parents of Plum Cove and Veterans for putting on "The Hobbit" and "Annie Jr.," respectively, which Chairman Pope noted is made possible by the Gloucester Education Foundation.

Mayor Theken recognized the JROTC, the O'Maley school band, and the Boy Scouts for participating in the Memorial Day ceremony. She also recognized West Parish students for their Memorial Day performance at City Hall. She invited any students who are not able to participate in a field trip or other program to come to City Hall for a fun day. Ms. Teixeira noted that some of the West Parish fifth graders who did not go to Nature's Classroom visited the courthouse where she works. She stated that it is nice to have West Parish downtown.

Kathy Clancy recognized Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante for showcasing O'Maley to several prestigious technology companies (Verizon, Apple, iRobot, Vertex, EMC, Applied Materials). She reported that the companies were extremely impressed by the hands-on

learning that is happening at O'Maley and the executive director of the Mass. Business Roundtable referred to O'Maley as an educational gem and a model for middle school education across the Commonwealth.

Finally, Chairman Pope recognized that all five elementary school principals are in attendance at the meeting.

**VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – None present.**

**VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

1. School Committee Meeting of May 13, 2015
2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of May 13, 2015
3. Personnel Subcommittee of May 19, 2015
4. Building & Finance Subcommittee of May 21, 2015

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

**C. Approval of Transfers – March 17, 2015 to May 21, 2015**

**D. Referrals**

**E. Acceptance of Gloucester Education Foundation Grant – \$33,000.00 to support the Gloucester High School photography program**

Kathy Clancy pointed out that due to the generosity of a community resident, \$33,000 is going to the GHS photography program. She reported that a photography professional visited the photography studio this winter and said it was a better facility than the current equipment at the New England School of Photography. She stated that Jacqueline Underwood has really elevated visual arts at the high school.

Chairman Pope removed Item A4 from the Consent Agenda since the minutes are not yet available.

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

**VOTED:** 5 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.)**

**B. East Gloucester School Kindergarten Registration – Dr. Safier thanked the community members for coming to the meeting and recognized that this is an emotionally charged issue. He stated that on May 14th, there were 41 students**

registered for kindergarten at East Gloucester. However, on May 22nd, 15 more students registered, and as of today the total is 58.

Dr. Safier reviewed the birth data that is evaluated by the administration every year (noting that it does not take into account families that move in whose child may not have been born in Gloucester) and kindergarten enrollment over the last ten years. He indicated that the School Committee's policy states that if the number of children is greater than the number of places available, students will be admitted on the basis of the proximity of their home to the school by the nearest route. This policy will be part of the conversation going forward.

Mr. Bach stated that the situation this year at East Gloucester is unprecedented in the 20 years that he has been with the district and that it came up very quickly. He noted that space is a challenge at East Gloucester and suggested that it may just be a one-year situation. He asked the committee to think about implementing buffer zones in the catchment areas that have a primary school and a secondary school in the event the primary school cannot fit any more students.

Dr. Safier stated that if there are larger size kindergarten classes, the district would have to bring in paraprofessionals while facing a budget crunch. On the other hand, if we go by proximity and look at areas furthest from East Gloucester and closest to bus stops to provide access to Plum Cove, Veterans or West Parish, that would increase bus costs. He indicated that all of these factors will be taken into account.

Mayor Theken asked what would happen next year when these children go to first grade. Dr. Safier stated that his recommendation is that if they are moved to Plum Cove or Veterans, that will become their school and they will stay there up through Grade 5. He noted that if there are opportunities for choice, the choice system is usually a lottery system for the available spots.

Mayor Theken stated that she heard about this situation on Facebook and wondered how parents learned about it before she did. Dr. Safier explained that he got a report on May 22nd and spoke with Principal Bratt, who then made phone calls to the parents affected. He apologized for not sending out an email about the situation. Mayor Theken stated that her office will be open on Monday at 4 p.m. for parents who want to come talk to her about this matter.

Chairman Pope referred the School Admissions Policy, File JF, to the Program Subcommittee for clarification.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she would like to hear more public input before next Wednesday's deliberation on the issue.

Kathy Clancy reported that she talked to the City Clerk today about demographics and learned that there is no way of capturing move-in data and that the "required" census is often not returned or is returned incomplete. Mayor Theken noted that some people are afraid to fill out the census because they are undocumented or do not

want to get called for jury duty. She stated that people can come to City Hall and register as a resident.

Kathy Clancy asked Dr. Safier about the enrollment in the other elementary schools, and he reported that Plum Cove has 22 students in two classrooms, Veterans has 20 students in two classrooms, West Parish has 56 students in three classrooms, and Beeman has 59 students in three classrooms. He indicated that there is a space issue at West Parish and he believes there are 12 families that are asking to choice out of Beeman.

Kathy Clancy stated that great things are going on at each of the schools and they all have involved PTOs. She believes that many people do not give all of the schools a chance and requested that parents visit them with an open mind to see what they have to offer. She stated that she personally would not shy away from any school in the district. Chairman Pope noted that the elementary principals will be presenting their School Improvement Plans at tonight's meeting and invited those in attendance to stay for that presentation.

Mr. Gross stated that he understands the anxiety involved in this situation and indicated that the administration and School Committee will come up with the best possible solution, which may not be a perfect solution. He asked the community to be patient and help the committee with this process. He noted that all of the schools have very strong parent support.

Chairman Pope stated that he would like to see the costs attached to each of the options that the School Committee will be taking into consideration, such as paraprofessionals and buses. He would also like to see maps and/or a street listing of where the students who do not have siblings at East Gloucester live. Dr. Safier reported that address verification is in progress and is done by the school secretary. Ms. Teixeira also suggested sending out a letter inquiring whether there are East Gloucester families willing to choice to another school.

It was the consensus of the committee to schedule a special School Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of hearing the administration's presentation and receiving public comment. Mayor Theken noted that she has another commitment from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. but will be at the School Committee meeting afterwards. The committee will then meet again on Thursday, June 4th at 7 p.m. to deliberate and vote on the matter.

- A. School Improvements Plans (SIPs) – Elementary Schools** – The five elementary school principals reviewed the common goals in their School Improvement Plans, specifically continuing efforts, new initiatives, implementation of best practices, and interventions and progress monitoring in ELA and math. Ms. Morgan and Dr. Safier explained what it means to “unpack the standards.” There was a discussion about common planning time, time on learning and enrichment time.

Ms. Bratt stated that she has faith in the teachers at East Gloucester that whatever happens, they will make it work. Mr. Fusco indicated that Veterans is open for anyone who would like to come visit.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept the five School Improvement Plans of the elementary schools.

An unidentified woman stated that it is encouraging to see that all five elementary schools are on the same page. She lives downtown and indicated that she would be happy to choice to Veterans. Mr. Gross stated that one of Dr. Safier's priorities has been to bring all of the elementary schools together with one common educational thread. The woman indicated that she will encourage her neighbors to look at Veterans. Dr. Safier stated that each particular grade is learning the same curriculum at all five elementary schools.

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

1. Changes to PARCC Testing Time for 2016
2. House Bill No. 340: An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High Stakes Testing and PARCC
3. Kindergarten Grants – FY16
4. HS Technology Consultant

On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Mayor Theken, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent's Report.

## **IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Personnel Subcommittee Meeting of May 19, 2015** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed the following policies at its meeting of May 19, 2015:

1. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy, File GCC – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to waive the reading of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy, File GCC.

Dr. Safier reviewed the policy.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy, File GCC, as presented.

2. Massachusetts Parental Leave Act (MPLA) Policy, File GCCA – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to waive the reading of the Massachusetts Parental Leave Act (MPLA) Policy, File GCCA.

Dr. Safier reviewed the policy and stated that the language is consistent with the law.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Massachusetts Parental Leave Act (MPLA) Policy, File GCCA, as presented.

3. Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, File GBEC – Ms. Teixeira stated that this policy is based on the city's drug and alcohol free workplace policy because the city's policy was attached as an addendum to many of the school employees' current contracts.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to waive the reading of the revised Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, File GBEC.

Dr. Safier reviewed the policy, and the committee discussed the use of medical marijuana and compatibility with the city's policy on that subject.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, File GBEC, as presented.

Ms. Teixeira requested that these policies be placed on the agenda for a second reading on June 10, 2015.

**X. ACTION**

- B. Naming of GHS Music Room** – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to name the Gloucester High School music room in honor of David Adams in recognition of his contributions to the high school music program.

Chairman Pope suggested that the committee discuss a procedure for giving out awards in the near future.

- E. Approval to Present Extraordinary Service Award to David Adams** – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to present the Extraordinary Service Award to David Adams.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont'd)**

- B. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of May 21, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the FY16 budget at its meeting of May 21, 2015. Dr. Safier reviewed the list of reductions that was voted on by the subcommittee in order to meet the budget submitted by the city.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

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

To reduce the FY16 school budget by \$435,857.00 by making the following reductions:

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| GHS Guidance Counselor          | \$55,000.00 |
| GHS English Teacher             | 8,953.00    |
| GHS Math Teacher                | 35,000.00   |
| GHS Science Teacher             | 51,373.00   |
| GHS Social Studies Teacher      | 56,055.00   |
| GHS IT Integration Specialist   | 40,000.00   |
| O'Maley Math DDM Coordinator    | 5,500.00    |
| O'Maley Social Studies Teacher  | 32,183.00   |
| O'Maley Grade 6 Math Retirement | 55,000.00   |

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| O'Maley Paraprofessional     | 15,654.00 |
| Bus Lease Savings            | 14,000.00 |
| GHS Secretary                | 36,649.00 |
| West Parish MESPA Membership | 490.00    |

Dr. Safier stated that most of the above positions have already been eliminated based on enrollment and district priorities.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

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

To reduce the health care line item by \$324,000.00.

Mayor Theken thanked everyone who participated in changing health care, which saved the district \$324,000.00.

**X. ACTION (Cont'd)**

**A. Approval of Policies for First Reading – See Item IX.A.**

1. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy, File GCC
2. Massachusetts Parental Leave Act (MPLA) Policy, File GCCA
3. Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, File GBEC

**C. Reduction of FY16 School Budget – See Item IX.B.**

**D. Reduction in Health Care Line Item – See IX.B.**

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

**A. MSBA Project Update** – Chairman Pope suggested setting up a walk-through of the site for the City Council.

**B. House Bill 340: An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High Stakes Testing** – Chairman Pope asked the members whether the committee would like to endorse this bill, one of the sponsors of which is Senator Tarr. Ms. Teixeira noted that the GTA is in support of the bill and asked her to bring it forward to the committee.

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

**VOTED:** 4 in favor, 1 present (Mayor Theken) to support House Bill 340: An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High Stakes Testing.

Kathy Clancy will draft a letter to the appropriate people indicating that the committee supports the bill.

**C. Extraordinary Service Award** – Kathy Clancy nominated GHS photography teacher Jacqueline Underwood for an Extraordinary Service Award (see attached).

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

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

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

To enter into Executive Session at 10:06 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with noon supervisors, AFSCME-A and AFSCME-B and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of May 27, 2015 at 10:24 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*

X.L.C.

TO: School Committee  
FROM: Kathleen Clancy, member, Gloucester School Committee  
DATE: May 26, 2015  
SUBJECT: Nomination for Extraordinary Performance / Service Award – Jacqueline Underwood

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Dear Fellow Committee Members:

I would like to nominate Jacqueline Underwood, Art teacher at Gloucester High School (GHS) for the *Extraordinary Performance / Service Award* (School Committee policy BHF).

Ms. Underwood has been a teacher at the high school for 20 years. In that time, her influence has enabled Gloucester High School's program in the visual arts to grow and thrive.

Most notably, Ms. Underwood has been instrumental in creating what is now, according to a well-known visiting professional photographer, GHS has a state-of-the-art digital photography studio that exceeds most professional studios and even exceeds the current facility equipment at the New England School of Photography. She has been creative and resourceful in garnering support in terms of funding and donations of first-rate equipment and technology. Her drive to "think big," and submit grant proposals to Gloucester Education Foundation for equipment and other resources has benefitted Gloucester students in ways that have enhanced their education experience, allowed them to gain new ways of seeing our world and inspired some to pursue further education in the arts.

Ms. Underwood was successful in reinstating the graphic design program at GHS. She has taught classes in oil painting which provided students the opportunity to explore other mediums and receive recognition in the community for their talent. She has challenged her students with real-life learning experiences such as graphic design work creating the posters for the annual District-wide Arts Festival, creating and marketing student art work, and helping students hold portrait sessions for community members.

Ms. Underwood's vision has inspired many young people to carry on our community's heritage of creativity and has given so many of them a view of the beauty and joy that art brings to our lives.

Gloucester High School's visual arts offerings are vast and rich in large part thanks to Ms. Underwood.

For these reasons and many more, I am nominating Jacqueline Underwood for the *Extraordinary Performance / Service Award*.