

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Val Gilman, Vice Chairperson
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Roger Garberg
Tony Gross

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Pope stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and welcomed the audience from Cape Ann TV.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – Chairman Pope stated that the Mayor has presented the city budget to the City Council and that the City Council Budget & Finance Subcommittee will be engaged in a number of reviews of that budget. He asked the public to keep the evening of June 12th open for the public hearing on the budget and stated that while the school budget is in excess of \$1.3 million above last year’s budget, it is still \$1.1 million below what has been requested for FY13.

V. RECOGNITIONS – Mrs. Gilman reminded the public that the Arts Festival will take place on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and starts at City Hall. Chairman Pope noted that there is fabulous artwork all over the auditorium and briefly reported on some of the events that will be taking place on Saturday. Mrs. Gilman also commended the music teachers and Miss Tina (LaFlam) for the Mad Hot Ball.

Chairman Pope reminded the public that the high school will be presenting “Little Shop of Horrors” this weekend.

Ms. Teixeira recognized the North Shore Vocational High School and Essex Agricultural and Technical High School on their groundbreaking ceremony for the new school.

VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – Erin Jermyn, Sam Bevens and Eleanor Keller updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: “Little Shop of Horrors,” Spring Fling, Academic Recognition Night, Senior Banquet, North Shore Scholars Banquet, and AP testing.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee of April 12, 2012
2. Building and Finance Subcommittee of April 23, 2012
3. School Committee of April 25, 2012
4. Program Subcommittee of May 3, 2012

B. Schedule of Future Meetings

Personnel Subcommittee – Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at 5:45 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

City Council Budget & Finance Subcommittee – Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

City Council Ordinance & Administration Subcommittee – Monday, May 14, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

Location: City Council Conference Room – City Hall

Building & Finance Subcommittee – Wednesday, May 16, 2012 at 4:45 p.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Program Subcommittee – Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

School Committee – Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

School Committee Governance Workshop – Thursday, May 24, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

C. Acceptance of Grants

1. Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$13,596.00 to purchase 12 REDCAT systems for use in Grade 1 classrooms
2. DESE FY12 Education Jobs Fund Program Amendment in the amount of \$6,096.00 (*originally \$301,668.00; now \$307,764.00*)

3. DESE Quality Full Day Kindergarten Grant Amendment in the amount of \$2,500.00 (*originally 129,398; now \$131,898.00*)
4. DESE District and School Assistance Grant in the amount of \$9,559.00
5. DESE District and School Assistance Summer Grant in the amount of \$2,822.00

Mrs. Gilman removed Item A4 and Kathy Clancy removed Item A3 from the Approval of Minutes.

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

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

Kathy Clancy made a clarification on page 5 of the School Committee minutes of April 25, 2012, Item XI.A. The second sentence should read, “She discussed the Stand for Children ballot initiative which was mentioned by Senator Katherine Clark.”

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2012 School Committee meeting as noted above.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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

1. District Improvement Plan (“DIP”) – Dr. Safier reviewed the DIP in detail and invited the committee to review it over the next couple of weeks. He noted there is nothing in the law that calls for approval of a DIP; however, it must be submitted to the DOE.

Mr. Garberg questioned the distinction made by Dr. Safier between the DIP and a strategic plan. He suggested that one clear distinction is that the School Committee should be involved in strategic planning, together with community members, as is done in other communities. Mr. Garberg commended Dr. Safier’s work and stated that, in his mind, it represents an interim strategic plan to get the new administration up to speed, which is what the district needed. However, he would not want the DIP to substitute for strategic planning that involves the School Committee.

Dr. Safier stated that he would have no basis for establishing a process for strategic planning because he does not yet know the district. He fully embraces the concept of it being a participatory process and the notion of using the DIP and his entry plan as the groundwork to develop a strategic plan

next year. He stated that the process of strategic planning is essential and important; however, the strategic plan is oftentimes not used as a working document. He views the DIP and strategic planning as a complementary process.

Mr. Garberg would prefer not to talk about a strategic plan as much as a strategic process, developing habits in the district with strategic reflection. Dr. Safier stated that one of the values of a strategic plan is the extent to which it creates a collective mindset about how values are going to be articulated and then incorporated into the work of the district. He believes the DIP goes a long way towards beginning to establish that strategic planning, subject to amendment as the process goes on.

Kathy Clancy questioned why East Gloucester School is not mentioned under Title I. Dr. Safier indicated that East Gloucester is a Title I school but is not in a position to apply for a full Title I designation because of its low income rate.

Chairman Pope thanked Dr. Safier for his excellent work and suggested that the committee members review the DIP over the next two weeks so that it can be approved at the next meeting. Any questions that come up during that review may be emailed to Dr. Safier with a “cc” to all members and included in the packet.

There was a discussion about approval/endorsement of the SIPs. Chairman Pope requested that the committee focus on the DIP at this time and address the SIPs in the future.

2. K-12 Insight Survey – Dr. Safier reviewed the responses to the survey regarding preference for smaller or larger schools and indicated that the results are consistent with the work that was done in 2008 that resulted in the Plan for Effective Learning Communities (PFELC). He reviewed the conclusions of the PFELC and some reports concerning the benefits of smaller schools. Ms. Teixeira suggested that the PFELC be posted on the website, and Kathy Clancy requested that Dr. Safier’s research be included in the FAQs on the Fuller School. Mr. Garberg requested the raw data from the survey.

Mrs. Gilman requested that the School Committee vote to officially endorse smaller schools at the next meeting now that Dr. Safier has stated the educational merits of smaller schools. Chairman Pope referred this matter to the Program Subcommittee to make a recommendation to the full committee. He stated that the Building & Finance Subcommittee is waiting for more information to make a recommendation.

Mrs. Gilman would like the results of the survey shared with the City Council and the community as soon as possible. Ms. Teixeira clarified that when the results of the survey were reviewed by Dr. Safier, the percentage of participants who responded “No Difference” and “Don’t Know” was not reported.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Program Subcommittee Meeting of May 3, 2012** – Chairperson Gilman reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on May 3, 2012:
- Elementary School Attendance Policy – First Reading – Chairperson Gilman stated that the subcommittee did not approve a first reading of this policy. The policy will be discussed further at the Program Subcommittee meeting on May 23rd.
 - Community Outreach Discussion/Brainstorming/West Parish MSBA Process Chairperson Gilman reviewed the timeline drafted by West Parish PTO President Lisa Groleau and revised by the subcommittee. Ms. Teixeira suggested that the “My View” column include a description of the scope of the feasibility study. Kathy Clancy suggested adding a link in the FAQs to Dr. Safier’s document that describes what is included in the feasibility study, and Mrs. Gilman recommended that Kathy Clancy consolidate that document and add it to the FAQs. This was approved without objection.
- B. Personnel Subcommittee Meeting of May 9, 2012** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that this meeting was cancelled. Chairman Pope stated that since the public hearing on the performance standards was not advertised, it will take place at the May 23rd School Committee meeting.

X. ACTION – None

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

- A. Preparation for City Council Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting on the FY13 School Budget on Thursday, May 10, 2012** – Chairman Pope stated that he was surprised to learn on Monday morning that the School Committee will be presenting to the City Council B&F Subcommittee tomorrow night. He informed Councilor McGeary that the committee would not be in a position to discuss the gap between the School Committee’s budget and the Mayor’s budget.

Mr. Markham reviewed a spreadsheet entitled “Scenarios for FY13” regarding the budget gap. He also provided and reviewed a replacement for Tab 11 in the budget books, which represents an executive line summary of the budget. Chairman Pope indicated that, at some point, the committee will need to meet with the City Council B&F Subcommittee again regarding the impact of potential cuts to the budget.

Mr. Markham also provided the revised capital plan as it was approved at the last meeting for inclusion in Tab 3 in the budget books.

- B. Gift to Top 5% of Graduating Seniors** – Chairman Pope referred this matter to the Building and Finance Subcommittee and stated that all committee members may make suggestions on an appropriate gift.
 - C. Film at Cape Ann Community Cinema** – Kathy Clancy reported that the cinema is showing a film entitled “August to June” on May 21st at 7 p.m. with a reception at 6:30 p.m. The film is about a year in an unconventional public school in California and has been promoted by Citizens for Public Schools as an example of really good teaching and innovative practices.
 - D. Invitation to Memorial Day Services** – Chairman Pope stated that they are looking for an RSVP to know if people are going to attend.
 - E. Important Education Topics** – Mrs. Gilman suggested that all important educational topics in the Superintendent’s Report be listed on the agenda, as well, such as the new evaluation system, the district improvement plan, and the K-12 Insight survey.
- XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – None. Ms. Teixeira stated that the committee will be going into executive session at the next meeting to discuss settling contracts, with action items likely coming out of that session.

XIII. FYI

- A. Invitation from the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church** – Public ceremony honoring ten individuals chosen to receive this year’s Gloucester Citizenship Awards

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of May 9, 2012 at 8:49 p.m.

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

Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary