

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

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
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance
and Operations
Ann-Marie Jordan, Student Health and
and Emergency Services
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal
Cherylann Parker, Veterans Principal
Carol Bratt, East Gloucester Principal

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.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

V. RECOGNITIONS – Dr. Safier introduced the new principal of Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School, Matthew Fusco, and reviewed his background, accomplishments, and comments made on behalf of his candidacy for the position. Mr. Fusco stated that he is very happy to be here.

Mrs. Gilman recognized Dave Adams, music director and manager of the Docksiders at GHS, for coordinating the Gloucester Arts Festival this year. She also thanked the Gloucester Education Foundation for their assistance with the event.

Mr. Garberg recognized the Backyard Growers Program for their work in the elementary schools. He reported that they are currently undertaking a fundraising campaign to pay for a food corps worker to help with the work at the elementary schools.

VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – None present

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Program Subcommittee of May 6, 2013
2. School Committee of May 8, 2013

B. Out-of-State Field Trip Approval – To approve a GHS out-of-state field trip request to Ram Island, Connecticut – Dory Rowing/Camping Trip from Thursday, May 23 to Friday, May 24, 2013

C. Acceptance of Special Donation – Gloucester Community Arts Charter School – To accept a donation from Cherylann Parker to the Gloucester Public Schools in the amount of \$19,262.85

Mr. Gross removed Item B, and Kathy Clancy removed Item C.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

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

With respect to Item VII.B., Mr. Gross noted that Ram Island is in Gloucester and not in Connecticut. Therefore, School Committee approval is not required for the field trip.

With respect to Item VII.C., Kathy Clancy acknowledged the wonderful donation from Cherylann Parker of furniture and materials.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to accept a donation from Cherylann Parker to the Gloucester Public Schools in the amount of \$19,262.85.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. Update of Federal Sequestration on Early Childhood – This item was tabled since Sue Todd was not present at the meeting.

B. School Improvement Plan – Elementary Schools – Dr. Safier stated that 80% of the school improvement plans (SIPs) are common, including shared goals for literacy, writing and math. Some of the differences in the SIPs relate to the measurable goals based upon each school’s performance and goals on family and community engagement.

Principals Bratt, Sibley, Parker and Morgan presented a slide show on the elementary schools’ SIP, including a vision statement, new initiatives, and goals, strategies and action steps for literacy, writing, math, family engagement, community awareness, and parental involvement.

The committee discussed the following matters:

- How the site based councils built the SIPs from the District Improvement Plan
- Use of data by site based councils to determine future goals
- Presence of School Committee liaisons at site based council meetings
- Scheduling of writing blocks
- Use of writing rubrics and the need for a common rubric
- Goals of literacy committee – Mr. Bach
- Bullying survey

Mr. Garberg expressed concern that significant changes in performance that do not necessarily show up in the indicators may be overlooked. Ms. Bratt indicated that that information is reflected in data meetings in which they look at all students and watch their growth.

Dr. Safier stated that the testing issue drives our mindset and that there is almost a preoccupation with helping students reach proficiency, which does not necessarily reflect a simple baseline standard. He noted that proficiency is a demonstrated ability to handle difficult aspects of curriculum. Dr. Safier also stated that each of the schools is dedicated to providing enrichment opportunities for students who are presenting in extremely positive ways through their achievement and that the student growth potential statistic is designed to ensure that progress is being measured at all levels.

Chairman Pope thanked the principals for the hard work they have done in putting together their SIPs and thanked the administration for the direction that they provided to the principals. He also proposed a challenge to the principals for next year to promote the importance of math to parents.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the School Improvement Plans for Beeman Memorial, Plum Cove, East Gloucester, Veterans' Memorial and West Parish Elementary Schools.

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

1. Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness
2. 9C Reversal Cuts
3. Senate Ways & Means Committee Proposed FY14 Budget
4. Innovation School Budget – State – Mrs. Gilman reported on the responses she received as a result of her outreach on this matter. Mr. Gross indicated that he discussed this matter with House Speaker DeLeo recently and that he looked at it very positively. Mrs. Gilman suggested that Kathy Clancy send a

follow-up letter to House Speaker DeLeo referencing the conversation he had with Mr. Gross.

5. Veterans Governance Advisory Study Group and Co-Teaching – Mr. Bach presented an overview of the study group, including the role of the group and concerns the group presented to administration, and indicated that they will be meeting over the summer. Dr. Safier discussed the implementation of a pilot co-teaching program at Veterans and reported that some professional development is being planned for the summer. There was a discussion of how the needs of students on IEPs will be met.
6. Gloucester Cyberspace/College Success
7. Some Happenings

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

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

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Building & Finance Subcommittee of May 15, 2013** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the Meal Payment Policy at its meeting on May 15, 2013, including efforts to collect outstanding balances, and she reviewed the proposed revision to the policy. She stated that an increase in preschool tuition was also discussed at the meeting on May 15th.

Mrs. Gilman made a motion to waive the first reading of the Meal Payment Policy. After discussion, she withdrew her motion.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mrs. Gilman – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To suspend the Rules of Procedure regarding the first reading of a policy.

(Ms. Teixeira left the meeting at 8:47 p.m.)

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to amend the Meal Payment Policy, File EFD, with the addition of the paragraph noted in bold in the packet.

Dr. Safier noted that the families with outstanding balances are not on the free and reduced lunch program.

With respect to preschool tuition, Dr. Safier reviewed the proposed increase and the change in payment structure and recommended that it be approved.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to increase the tuition for the preschool from \$50.00 per week to \$60.00 per week and to change the payment structure from weekly to monthly.

X. ACTION

- A. School Committee Annual Meeting Agenda** – Mr. Garberg reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the annual meeting agenda and reviewed the changes made to the agenda.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept the School Committee Annual Meeting Agenda as drafted by the Program Subcommittee on May 6, 2013 and as amended by the School Committee on May 22, 2013.

- B. Sawyer Medal Policy, File KCDA** – Mr. Garberg reviewed the changes to the policy.

On a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Sawyer Medal Policy, File KCDA, as revised.

- C. Recommendations to Administration Regarding Housing of Preschool, Administration, and Transportation Department** – Chairman Pope reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee tabled this matter until after a site visit was conducted, which took place yesterday. Therefore, there is no recommendation from the subcommittee on this matter at this time.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairman Pope – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mrs. Gilman – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To suspend the Rules of Procedure regarding recommendation of a subcommittee.

Chairman Pope made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to inform the administration that the building at One Blackburn Drive would be acceptable for housing the school administration, the preschool, and the Transportation Department and to urge them to move forward to negotiate a lease.

Kathy Clancy stated that even though the financial aspect of this move is not the responsibility of the School Department, she is concerned that the School Department will have to make cuts elsewhere in order to afford it. She hopes that the city can negotiate a reasonable rent that they can afford without impacting education.

Mrs. Gilman expressed concern about the cost of the proposal and indicated that she would feel more comfortable asking the city to revisit the proposed numbers and to enter into an additional RFP and an analysis of the cost of minimal upgrades to the current preschool area. Mr. Gross indicated that the cost of the space is similar to what the city is paying for its space at the CATA building, and he believes that a considerable amount of work would need to be done to the current preschool space in light of its deteriorated condition, which has occurred over a very long period of time. Therefore, he would like to move forward with the proposal that was received.

Kathy Clancy suggested amending Chairman Pope's motion to include an understanding that the city will report back to the School Committee on an analysis of what the upgrades to the Fuller building would cost to get it into an acceptable use state.

Chairman Pope reminded the committee that the city wants the School Department out of the Fuller building and that the MOU clearly states that the School Department will vacate when acceptable alternative space is found. He also reminded the committee that he put an amendment on the budget indicating that it does not reflect the cost of relocating the preschool, administration, and the Transportation Department. Finally, he pointed out that the city will realize some savings by the School Department not being in the Fuller building and stated that he is concerned that if only minimal upgrades are made to the building, there could be a catastrophic systems failure at some point.

Kathy Clancy amended Chairman Pope's motion as follows:

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to inform the administration that the building at One Blackburn Drive would be acceptable for housing the school administration, the preschool, and the Transportation Department and to urge them to move forward to negotiate a lease. The School Committee makes no representation as to its financial affordability.

- D. Preschool Tuition Increase plus Change in Payment Structure from Weekly to Monthly** – See Item IX.A.
- E. Meal Payment Policy, File EFD** – See Item IX.A.
- F. Proposed Adjustments to Draft FY14 Budget** – Tabled; no recommendations from B&F Subcommittee.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

- A. MSBA Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the Executive Director of the MSBA outlined for the City Council last week the basic procedures of a project. There was also a presentation by Dore & Whittier of the educational spaces that are being conceptualized, and a considerable amount of time was spent showing the failing conditions of both the West Parish School and the Fuller building.

Dr. Safier stated that testing is still being done at West Parish to determine the extent to which the wetlands encroach toward the existing building and to identify the state of ledge and clay that exists on the site. He also indicated that an extensive amount of work has been done identifying what the educational program should be at the new school in order to justify the selections that are made for the preferred schematic design.

Dr. Safier distributed an email from Brad Dore to Kevin Buckley suggesting that he “try and get the ball rolling with respect to possible phasing relocation ASAP,” meaning that there may be a need to move the West Parish students out of the school beginning in September 2014 for probably two school years while construction takes place. Dr. Safier noted that if the preschool were to move out of Fuller, we could possibly move the West Parish kindergarteners to that space and that failure to do so could result in the availability of Fuller disappearing in a year’s time. Other space in the city would still need to be identified for the other grades.

Chairman Pope recommended that the School Committee wait for official word from the designer that phasing relocation is necessary before putting out an RFP for space for the West Parish students. Mrs. Gilman noted that Dore & Whittier’s report to the committee indicated that the Fuller building is not habitable.

Finally, Mrs. Gilman suggested scheduling another outreach meeting to update the talking points and the West Parish FAQs. Dr. Safier strongly suggested that Kevin Buckley be brought into the discussion of outreach efforts on a regular basis.

B. Letter to Senator Tarr (5/9/13) Regarding FY14 Budget – Innovation School Funding from Vice Chairperson Gilman

- C. Honorary Diploma** – Dr. Safier reported that GHS Principal Erik Anderson received a request from Jane Mead and Cindy Williams of the Sawyer Free Library for an honorary diploma for 90-year-old Lucia Theresa McLaughlin who resides at the Seacoast Nursing Home. Her father decided after eighth grade that she would no longer attend school. She continues to read voraciously and reads ten books a month.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to confer an honorary high school diploma to Lucia Theresa McLaughlin.

- D. Site Visits** – Mr. Gross clarified that site visits are not considered meetings under the Open Meeting Law.

- E. “Superintendent’s Corner”** – Mrs. Gilman reported on her appearance on “Superintendent’s Corner” and the topics that were discussed.

- F. Memorial Day Ceremonies** – Chairman Pope reminded the committee that they are invited to participate in the Memorial Day ceremonies beginning at 9:00 a.m. at GHS.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairman Pope – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mrs. Gilman – yes
Mr. Gross – yes

To enter into Executive Session after a five-minute recess to discuss contract negotiations and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of May 22, 2013 at 10:06 p.m.

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

Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary