

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 25, 2011
City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium
7:00 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Roger Garberg
Tony Gross
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

Administration Present

Superintendent Dr. Richard Safier
CFO Tom Markham
City Councilor Ann Mulcahey
Former Superintendent Al Swekla

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and recognized CFO Tom Markham, City Councilor Ann Mulcahey, and former superintendent Al Swekla.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

V. RECOGNITIONS

- A. Award of Certificates** – Certificates of achievement were presented to the members of the GHS Junior ROTC Team who participated in the National High School Drill Team Championships in Florida from April 28th to May 3rd. The team came in fourth place overall in the Unarmed Division and eleventh place overall in the Armed Division out of 38 teams representing 22 states and the U.S. territory of Guam. The JROTC Team had the top 10 finishes in Unarmed Exhibition Drill, Unarmed Personnel Inspection, Unarmed Color Guard, Armed Personnel Inspection, and Armed Exhibition Drill. Cadet Siennica Service placed first out of approximately 1,000 cadets in Unarmed Individual Drill Regulation.

Chairperson Gilman thanked the JROTC Team for serving their school and their country, and Kathy Clancy thanked them for their accomplishments and for making everyone proud. Several members of the team performed a brief unarmed demonstration for the School Committee.

- B. GHS Senior Elizabeth MacDougal** – Dr. Safier congratulated GHS senior Elizabeth MacDougal, president of the GHS Environmental Club, for being chosen as winner of the sixth annual International Awareness Award presented by the Cape Ann Forum. Ms. MacDougal has been instrumental in transforming the Amnesty International chapter into a local Human Rights Club. She was chosen for her efforts to bring attention to global environmental and human rights issues. Under her leadership, the Environmental Club has organized cleanup efforts in Gloucester, participated in international environmental awareness events, planted raised beds with a district elementary school, researched sustainable energy for the high school, and collaborated with the Rockport High School Green Team. The Human Rights Club funded a microloan through the San Francisco-based organization, Kiva, which provides loans to small businesses in 60 countries.

- VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Lauren Palazola updated the School Committee on events at Gloucester High School, including Academic Recognition Night, the Drama Club play “Once Upon a Mattress,” the prom, and seniors’ last day of school, finals and some of the colleges they will be attending.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Meeting of May 11, 2011
2. School Committee Executive Session Meeting of May 11, 2011 – **Confidential**

B. Acceptance of Grants

1. Gloucester Education Foundation Grants, per approval of the GEF Board at their meetings on April 11, 2011 and May 16, 2011
 - a. To accept, in the absence of approval of The Navy Triathlon Proposal, up to \$30,000 for the STEM Science Coordinator and STEM Tech Specialist Salaries for the Fall 2011 Semester. (Note: This is dependent upon approval of their goals for the 2011-2012 school year.)
 - b. To accept \$2,115 for the Vocational Education Softworks Software.
 - c. To accept \$1,000 to each of the five elementary schools (mini-grants) totaling \$5,000. (Note: Each school must submit a description of the money’s use.)
 - d. To accept \$81,000 provided to fund “rollover” programs.
 - e. To accept \$4,000 for Summer Advanced Placement Preparation.
 - f. To accept \$2,500 for bikes for Special Education.

- g. To accept \$11,000 for iPads to be used in chemistry classes.
 - h. To accept \$2,000 to help defray unexpected elementary and middle school music program costs.
2. Gorton’s “Hooked on Cooking and Fitness” Grant – To accept \$3,200 from Gorton’s to provide students with an opportunity to participate in the program “Hooked on Cooking and Fitness” administered by the North Shore ARC in Danvers. To make this program accessible to Gloucester students, Gorton’s has generously donated \$3,200 toward this activity. Ten GHS students will participate in this collaborative program during the summer from August 15 to 18, four hours per day and four hours in the fall as follow-up. Teens will learn about proper nutrition, participate in hands-on activities, and exercise for a portion of each class. They will work with staff to develop individual fitness and nutrition plans to continue the benefits of the program after the grant period ends. The budget includes an ARC Recreation Director, ARC Recreation Specialist, YMCA Fitness Specialist, and a GHS Special Education teacher. Food and supplies are included, and the district will provide transportation.

C. Acceptance of Scholarship

To accept the Peter K. Prybot Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500.

D. Schedule of Future Meetings

Program Subcommittee – Friday, June 3, 2011 at 9:45 a.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Agenda: To be announced

School Committee – Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

Agenda: To be announced

Building & Finance Subcommittee – Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Agenda: To be announced

School Committee – Wednesday, June 22, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

Agenda: To be announced

Special City Council Public Hearing on the FY12 Budget – Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

Kathy Clancy removed the Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting from the Schedule of Future Meetings.

It was unanimously

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

VIII. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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

- Meeting with Gloucester Education Foundation and programs that have been approved for funding by the GEF
- MSBA Project Managers April Report
- Anticipated reduction in Title I grant funding for FY12 of \$99,520 and the effect of same
- Visits to elementary schools
- Special education online parent survey being conducted by the DESE

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern about the loss of Title I funding with respect to Veterans School and suggested reaching out to DSAC for assistance. She would also like to discuss this matter at the next B&F Subcommittee meeting. Kathy Clancy indicated that she has already started reaching out to our U.S. representatives on this issue.

B. FY 2011 End-of-Year Projection Report – Tom Markham reviewed Projection Report #4 as of May 23, 2011, reflecting a projected unspent balance of \$114,408 as well as possible spending options. Dr. Safier addressed timing issues with respect to the purchase of the Scott Foresman reading materials. Mr. Markham stated that he expects there will be additional contractually required salary adjustments since there is no deadline by which an employee can submit their material for a Step & Track increase.

Mayor Kirk reviewed her May 20th letter regarding year-end business that needs to be closed out, including the snow and ice deficit, school utility account deficits, and the dispute regarding the \$75,000 from the rink. Her suggestions on how to resolve these issues include the city assuming the school utility account deficits, the School Department contributing \$25,000 to the city for the snow and ice deficit, and the School Department foregoing the \$75,000 payment from the rink.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the purchase of the Pearson reading materials with up to \$100,000 to be paid in FY11, approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 to be paid in FY12, and the remainder to be paid in FY13, pending review by the Superintendent of the terms of the financing.

Mayor Kirk commended Mr. Markham for his work on the monthly projection reports.

Chairperson Gilman stated that she would like the School Committee to be mindful that spending for the rest of this fiscal year must be non-existent because the more that can be paid towards the reading materials in FY11, the better off the district will be in FY12, which is going to be a very tough fiscal year. Chairperson Gilman requested that Dr. Safier prepare a press release discussing what the purchase of the reading materials means to the community in terms of MCAS scores and our students' individual achievement and sharing some of the evidence from Revere, Salem and Beverly.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she does not want to lose sight of the importance of updating the School Committee policy manual. There was a discussion of whether that project could be done in-house by an ad hoc subcommittee in order to save money. Chairperson Gilman pointed out that there are hundreds of policies to be addressed and that she believes MASC could better handle the project for us. Ms. Teixeira also pointed out that MASC can advise us on policies that are missing. Dr. Safier agreed and stated that MASC would also be able to advise us on any issues that arise.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve up to \$3,500 to be spent on updating the School Committee Policy Manual, pending review by the Superintendent of the terms of the financing.

After discussion, on a motion by Mayor Kirk, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to authorize CFO Tom Markham to submit a transfer in the amount of \$25,000 from the School Department to the city's snow and ice line item.

In response to a question by Mr. Gross, Mayor Kirk indicated that she would support utilizing free cash for the Pearson reading materials since it is a one-time expense. She also stated that she would like to have a legal opinion on how to dispose of the issue of the \$75,000 from the rink. She will ask Suzanne Egan to put together a settlement agreement with respect to this matter.

- C. Update on FY 2012 Budget Planning Process** – Dr. Safier reviewed a summary of necessary budget reductions for FY12 (Tiers I, II and IIa) totaling \$1,329,036 to date. He also reviewed further reductions against the Mayor's budget proposal, which shows a revised FY12 deficit of \$722,721 using the Mayor's figures and \$656,161 using the School Committee's figures. There was a lengthy discussion and no consensus about the discrepancy in these figures, which results from the difference between the School Committee's and the Mayor's figures for the net increase in health insurance costs.

Chairperson Gilman recommended to the Mayor that the number used below level funding was actually \$282,000 and not \$350,000. Mayor Kirk indicated that she used the figure that was voted by the School Committee and presented to her office.

Dr. Safier stated that there are remaining Tier II and IIa reductions of \$207,642 which have not yet been voted. He also pointed out that Gloucester is at the lowest level of teachers' salaries on the North Shore with respect to Step & Track.

There was a discussion of Gloucester's new growth and property taxes and why this year's figures are lower than last year's. Kathy Clancy asked Mayor Kirk which city departments have not been requested to cut their budgets below level funding, and Mayor Kirk stated that the city budget is available for her review.

Chairperson Gilman reminded the community to come to the City Council public hearing on the budget on Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall and requested that Dr. Safier make an "all call" on Sunday night. She also indicated that the slides that were presented to the City Council regarding the budget are available on the school website. Ms. Teixeira stated that there will also be a special City Council meeting on June 21st in preparation for their finalizing the budget by June 24th. Chairperson Gilman suggested planning several B&F Subcommittee meetings over the next few weeks, and Dr. Safier indicated that there is a B&F meeting already scheduled for June 1st.

- D. Food Service Monthly Report** – Tom Markham reviewed the Monthly Income and Expense Report and reminded the School Committee that the food service is currently operating on a cash basis. He is projecting a year-end positive balance in the food service account. Mayor Kirk thanked Mr. Markham for his efforts in getting the food service budget to where it is today. Mr. Markham also updated the committee on the operation of the POS system in the schools, indicating that most of the problems have been ironed out.

IX. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Personnel Sub-Committee Report of May 10, 2011** – Chairperson Teixeira reported on this meeting at the last School Committee meeting.
- B. Program Sub-Committee Report of May 13, 2011** – Tabled to next meeting.
- C. Building and Finance Sub-Committee Report of May 18, 2011** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the issue regarding the Athletic Department's use of the Talbot Rink was resolved with the city.

At this time, the Agenda was taken out of Order.

XI. ACTION

A. Gloucester Fishermen’s Athletic Association (GFAA) Advertising Signage

Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, that the contract between the Gloucester Public Schools and the GFAA for advertising signage be extended for three years. However, since the contract was not in the packet for review, Mrs. Clancy withdrew her motion and stated that she will obtain a copy of the contract.

B. Building Use Rate Schedule

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the use of the October 2010 revised building use rate schedule until such time that a revised Building Use Policy is developed consistent with the terms of the MOU.

At this time, the Agenda was taken out of order.

IX. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)

D. Governance Workshop Report of May 21, 2011 – Minutes to follow. Chairperson Gilman noted that as a result of this workshop, the School Committee packets are now posted on the website the morning of the meeting for the public’s review.

E. Ad Hoc City Charter Sub-Committee Report of May 23, 2011 – Chairman Gross reported that this ad hoc subcommittee will also be reviewing the School Committee Rules and Regulations. There was a discussion of changing the date of the next meeting.

At this time, the Agenda was taken out of order.

C. Building and Finance Sub-Committee Report of May 18, 2011 (Continued) – Chairperson Clancy reported that the subcommittee received advice from General Counsel Suzanne Egan regarding the review and updating of the MOU regarding facilities. Attorney Egan recommended that a School Committee ad hoc subcommittee be established to go through the MOU before July 1st and look at what worked and what did not work over the past year. The city will do the same, and then the two groups can discuss it. Ms. Teixeira and Mr. Garberg offered to be on the ad hoc subcommittee. Mayor Kirk suggested that the subcommittee take their time and review the MOU carefully.

XI. ACTION (Continued)

C. GHS Wostrel Center – Chairperson Gilman explained the development of the Wostrel Center and stated that a dedication will be held on May 26, 2011 at 12:00 noon.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to officially approve the naming of the Wostrel Center at GHS for Environmental and Adventure Education.

D. Health Insurance Audit

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Mayor Kirk, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, that the School Department move ahead with a health insurance audit.

Note: Dr. Safier stated that he supports the idea of a health insurance audit but requested that it be undertaken at the beginning of the school year rather than over the summer.

E. Charter School Funding Resolution – Kathy Clancy reported that the Town of Pelham recently passed a resolution regarding charter school funding.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the following resolution regarding charter school funding and to subsequently forward the resolution to the Gloucester City Council for their discussion and vote:

Whereas Massachusetts funds charter schools by withholding aid to the cities and towns that send students to charter schools, and

Whereas the amount of such aid withheld for each student leaving to attend a charter school exceeds by a large factor the amount of per pupil aid that the district receives from the state, and

Whereas the loss of monies to a district results in either reducing programs in the local public schools or raising local taxes, thus shifting additional costs onto local taxpayers without their approval,

We call on the state to change the funding mechanism so that Commonwealth charter schools, which are approved and supervised solely by the state, be funded directly out of a line item in the state budget.

Note: Kathy Clancy stated that she will ensure that this matter is put on a City Council meeting agenda.

XII. OTHER COMMUNICATION

A. For Your Information

1. Letter (4/25/11) from Kathleen Clancy to DESE Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and email (4/21/11) from Barry J. Barnett to Tony Blackman
2. FY 2012 budget slides presented to the City Council on May 12, 2011
3. Letter (5/20/11) from Mayor Kirk regarding year-end business
4. Email (5/20/11) from Chairperson Gilman and attachments from DESE Commissioner Chester memo (5/20/11) and GCACS Year One Site Visit report (4/8/11)
5. Letter (5/22/11) from Dr. Safier and SPED Director, JoAnne Reiss, to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

At this time, the Agenda was taken out of order.

X. DISCUSSION

Building & Finance Subcommittee – Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 4:45 p.m. – Chairperson Clancy stated that this meeting has been moved to Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mayor Kirk, it was unanimously

VOTED: To add a new Building & Finance Subcommittee meeting to the agenda on Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Chairperson Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Gilman – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Garberg – yes
Mr. Gross – yes
Mayor Kirk – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 10:15 p.m. for the purpose of receiving an update on contractual negotiations with union and non-union personnel, as well as the status of health insurance negotiations between the City of Gloucester and the Public Employees Committee, and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of May 25, 2011 at 11:10 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*