

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 29, 2011

City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson

Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson

Kathleen Clancy, Secretary

Roger Garberg (7:08 p.m. arrival)

Michelle Sweet

Tony Gross

Mayor Carolyn Kirk (7:35 p.m. arrival)

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr

CFO Tom Markham

East Gloucester Principal Gregg Bach

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools, thanked Cape Ann TV for televising the meeting, and reminded the audience that hearing impaired devices are available at the City Clerk's office. She also welcomed Gregg Bach, Brian Tarr, City Councilor Steve Curcuru, Joe and Maggie Rosa of the GEF, Steve Fletcher from Gloucester Daily Times, and CFO Tom Markham.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Steve Curcuru of 26 Granite Street spoke to the committee as a city councilor and as a father and grandfather of GPS students. He believes the committee has lost sight of the issue regarding after school activities. He has three grandchildren attending St. Ann's, which does not affect the bottom line of the Gloucester school system, and he would like them to have the same opportunity his daughter had when she played on the O'Maley cross-country team while she was attending St. Ann's. He believes that separation is not the answer and that any child educated in Gloucester should have the same opportunities. He also stated that for three years, he and his wife donated to the GEF and that for two of those years, his daughter was a student at St. Ann's. He would like the committee to take this into consideration tonight when voting on the after school policy.

Note: Roger Garberg joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – Chairperson Gilman stated that, after recognizing that the GEF presentation and three subcommittee votes were left off tonight's agenda, she directed Stephanie Delisi to amend and repost the agenda with the City Clerk today, in accordance with the procedures of the open meeting law. Chairperson Gilman stated that she

did not reasonably anticipate discussion when the agenda was posted on Monday. She indicated that the GEF presentation was on the draft agenda and was somehow deleted from the final version.

Chairperson Gilman also made note of her correction in today's Gloucester Daily Times that states, "This year, the city schools are facing a budget shortfall of \$471,607 compared to the current fiscal year which closes on Thursday." She notified the editor in an email of her correction that the \$471,000 reduction is from a level funded budget, and that reflects more than \$2 million in cuts to our FY12 budget and our school district next year from what it would cost to provide level services.

Chairperson Gilman also indicated that, as of this morning, the minutes and the School Committee packets have been moved to the top of the School Committee link on the website for viewing ease.

Lastly, Chairperson Gilman stated that the end-of-year closing of the schools went remarkably well and thanked Dr. Safier for his help in making sure that the year was successful. Dr. Safier stated that it was a testament to the work of the staff and thanked everyone for their efforts.

V. RECOGNITIONS – None

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Gloucester Education Foundation – Maggie Rosa thanked the School Committee for allowing the GEF to make a presentation tonight. She acknowledged the passing of Harriet Webster, who was a valuable collaborator.

Note: At this time, a one-minute moment of silence was observed in memory of Harriet Webster.

Mrs. Rosa presented a slide show, including the background of the GEF, its major milestones, revenues and expenditures, summer, in-school and after-school sponsored programs, cost and participation of after-school programs, and recently awarded grants. Chairperson Gilman thanked the Rosas for their dedication, compassion and love for what they do.

(Mayor Kirk joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.)

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Meeting of June 8, 2011
2. Special School Committee Meeting of June 13, 2011

B. Schedule of Future Meetings

Program Subcommittee – Friday, July 15, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

C. Acceptance of DESE Grants

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1. | \$165,000 | Improve Educator Quality |
| 2. | \$100,000 | Race to the Top |
| 3. | \$301,668 | Education Jobs Fund |
| 4. | \$943,595 | Special Education |
| 5. | \$ 25,041 | Early Childhood |
| 6. | \$630,181 | Title I |
| 7. | \$ 35,290 | Title I Carryover |
| 8. | \$ 4,500 | Safe & Drug Free |
| 9. | \$ 33,333 | Perkins Grant |
| 10. | \$ 12,950 | Academic Support School Year |
| 11. | \$133,400 | Kindergarten |
| 12. | \$ 23,000 | K-12 Literacy |
| 13. | \$ 6,140 | Safe & Supportive |
| 14. | \$ 77,900 | Essential School Health |

D. Acceptance of GEF Grants

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 1. | \$3,000 | Pilot School Newspaper Program at East Gloucester School |
| 2. | \$1,800 | GHS Cabinet-Making Safety Measures |

Chairperson Gilman removed the Program Subcommittee Meeting of July 15th from the Schedule of Future Meetings.

It was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

Chairperson Gilman noted that, as in previous years, barring any unforeseen problems, there will be no School Committee meetings in July and that the School Committee will reconvene on August 24, 2011.

VIII. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

- A. FY 2011 End-of-Year Projection Report/Update of End-of-Year Purchasing** – Tom Markham reviewed Report #8 as of June 29, 2011, which reflects \$950 for a 1% increase for bus drivers for retroactive charter work only and a revised cost for the GHS/vocational program storage of \$7,545.

- B. Monthly Food Service Financial Report, May 2011** – Mr. Markham reviewed the Food Service Monthly Income and Expense Report, showing a loss of \$9,243 in May as a result of expenses carried over from the prior month as well as personnel issues (i.e. need for substitutes). Mr. Markham indicated that the food service budget is still on target to be in the black at the end of FY11. There was a discussion of the POS system and its effect on the food service budget and possible monitoring of students’ dietary restrictions. Kathy Clancy commended Martha Jo Fleming for her terrific job in getting a handle on the finances of the food service department.
- C. Middle School STEM Innovation School** – Dr. Safier stated that he is considering undertaking an exploratory investigation into developing an innovation school concept at the middle school, the purpose of which is to improve school performance and student achievement. He reviewed the process of starting an innovation school and the format of such a school. He stated that Principal Debra Lucey feels the best time to mobilize would be late August/early September and that there is Race to the Top money for both development and the first year of implementation. He also reviewed the makeup of the panel charged with developing the plan for the school. Chairperson Gilman indicated that Dr. Zimmerman, a renowned STEM expert who presented at our first Education Forum earlier this year, offered to be a mentor to GPS if our district wishes to pursue this initiative.
- D. Draft Goals for FY 2012** – Chairperson Gilman reminded the chairpersons of the subcommittees that they should have a preliminary set of goals for the next fiscal year to share with Dr. Safier at the August 24th School Committee meeting in order to begin a conversation about priorities.
- E. Superintendent’s Report** – Dr. Safier updated the School Committee on the following matters:
- Summer roofing project – Dr. Safier indicated that one of the bidders may be withdrawing from the process. However, the OPM has two other companies prepared to bid on the project. This may extend the project another two weeks.
 - Automated messaging system – Gregg Bach reviewed the features of the new “School Messenger” system, which he stated is very user friendly and includes extensive survey capabilities.
 - Website and Facebook – Dr. Safier indicated that the new website and Facebook profile will be up and running by mid- to late July.
 - Update on Coordinated Program Review
 - Transportation/charter school – Ms. Teixeira expressed the importance of having some type of recourse if we do not receive this information from the charter school.

- Survey of school choice parents
- Communication of district survey results – Chairperson Gilman and Dr. Safier thanked Mr. Garberg for his extensive work on the survey.
- Meetings with representatives from Apple Computers
- Identified priorities FY12 and moving forward
- Sidewalk bazaar project update – Chairperson Gilman suggested showing videos of STEM initiatives and O’Maley Move-Up Day on a laptop at the sidewalk bazaar.

Mayor Kirk suggested that the committee review the policies that govern the use of the new School Messenger Service. Dr. Safier stated that this issue will be addressed when the acceptable use policy is discussed.

Chairperson Gilman thanked Dr. Safier for his report and for staying focused on what is important to our students.

IX. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Program Sub-Committee Reports of June 3 and June 13, 2011** – Chairman Garberg reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its June 3, 2011 meeting:

- Vocational program
- Math graduation requirements
- Setup of Facebook account
- Community Satisfaction Survey 2011

(Mr. Bach left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.)

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to adopt four years of math as a graduation requirement beginning with the graduating class of 2015.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to immediately establish a Facebook profile and that the Superintendent is the point person for posting information.

Chairman Garberg reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the After School Policy at its special meeting on June 13, 2011.

- B. Building and Finance Sub-Committee Report of June 22, 2011** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the B&F Subcommittee discussed the GFAA advertisement agreement and end-of-year projection report at its June 22nd meeting.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to appropriate up to \$8,800 for the GHS/vocational program storage from any end-of-year unspent balance.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to appropriate \$5,000 for the COPS grant from any end-of-year unspent balance for the installation of a security system at Gloucester High School.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that any remaining end-of-year unspent balance reflected in end-of-year projection report #8 as of 6/29/11 be appropriated to prepay out-of-district SPED tuition.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that the FY11 end-of-year transfers be approved as presented in FY11 End of Year Transfers (Action Report #1).

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that the remaining balance in the personnel account for FY11 be transferred to the ordinary account.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, that the FY12 Food Service budget be approved as presented.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept the recommendation of the city auditor to adopt M.G.L. Ch. 44, Sec. 53E with regard to the Food Service Revolving Fund.

- C. Ad Hoc City Charter Sub-Committee Report of June 14, 2011** – Chairman Gross reviewed the revisions made by the Ad Hoc City Charter Subcommittee to Article 4 of the City Charter. There was a lengthy discussion of the School Committee’s power to appoint certain school department personnel pursuant to state law.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to recommend to the City Council Ordinance and Administration Subcommittee the revised language of Article 4 of the City Charter as presented.

(Note: A five-minute break was taken at this time.)

XI. ACTION

A. Building and Finance Sub-Committee recommended action items from its June 22, 2011 meeting

1. To appropriate \$8,800 for the GHS/Vocational Program storage – See IX.B.
2. To approve that any FY11 end-of-year balance be appropriated to prepay out-of-district SPED tuition – See IX.B.
3. To approve that the FY11 end-of-year transfers be approved as presented – See IX.B.
4. To approve that the remaining balance in the personnel account for FY11 be transferred to the ordinary account – See IX.B.
5. To approve the FY12 Food Service budget – See IX.B.
6. To approve the recommendation of the City Auditor regarding the adoption of M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53E with regard to the Food Service Revolving Fund – See IX.B.
7. Dr. Safier reviewed the FY12 School Budget Adjustments & Revisions per the joint resolution, which shows a revised budget gap of \$471,609, as well as options to address level funding. Chairperson Gilman reminded the committee that these

cuts are in addition to the \$1.5 million in cuts that have already been made, which includes 42 positions. There was a discussion of circuit breaker funds and anticipated Title I cuts.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

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

To approve the FY12 school budget adjustments and revisions recommended by the administration in the amount of \$471,607 as presented on the FY12 School Budget Options schedule.

B. Approval of FY 2012 Budget

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

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

To approve the City Council's appropriation for a FY 2012 School Department Budget of \$33,682,673.

Chairperson Gilman stated that she is grateful that our teachers and the PEC supported the new health insurance plan. She also recognizes that principals and teachers are being asked to do more with less, and she appreciates everyone's willingness to roll up their sleeves and get the job done. She thanked everyone for their due diligence in the budget process and stated that she supported this motion with reluctance.

Kathy Clancy stated that many of the cuts reflected in this budget are things that are being delayed. In other words, inventory is being used and people are being asked to go without for what she hopes is a temporary different level of operating. She stated that she does not want anyone on the City Council to think this is the new “normal” for our schools. She also reluctantly supported the motion and hopes that next year the schools will get a share of new revenue.

C. After School Policy File: IHC – Second Reading

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to undertake a second reading of the After School Policy File IHC, as revised.

Kathy Clancy did the second reading of the After School Policy.

Mr. Garberg pointed out that our budget has been harmed by students choicing out and stated that after school activities are open to any child enrolled in the district. He hopes that this policy will convince parents to keep their children in our schools. He feels duty-bound to support this policy on behalf of GPS students.

Mr. Garberg explained that the Program Subcommittee rejected the idea of pay-to-play because it is inconsistent with our policy to privilege those people who are capable of paying a premium fee. In addition, he stated that our effort is to signal very strongly the value of remaining within GPS. Finally, he reminded the committee that the cost to the district of transfers to the charter school is \$11,000 per student and stated that any premium charged for after school activities would not compensate the district for that loss.

Kathy Clancy pointed out that this is the way most districts operate (i.e. their programs are for their students). She also pointed out that Manchester-Essex opted out of accepting school choice students, yet there has been no comment or criticism in the newspaper about this.

Chairperson Gilman stated that the Program Subcommittee tried to be sensitive to the five or six out-of-district students who are currently enrolled in after school activities and that this policy affects only a small group of people. She pointed out that the Mad Hot Ball is not an after school activity because it is taught during school.

Kathy Clancy stated that our district strives for excellence and that, with the budget that was just voted, we are now asking our teachers to do a lot more with a lot less. She believes that asking our teachers to take care of students outside of our district is asking a lot. She stated that one of the goals of the GEF in providing these programs is “making the light bulb go off” for students and our after school programs do that. The School

Committee is responsible for making these programs the best experience it can for our students and not diluting them. She thinks that the programs that differentiate our district should be kept for our students, and hopefully that will attract students to come to us.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she understands the competitive need for a policy such as this, the need to preserve our resources, and that the children of the district should have priority in our programs. However, she is struggling immensely with this policy because she feels that it came about because of the charter school, and she believes we are making policy based on the wrong reasons. She indicated that, in the past, other schools have been involved in our programs, and it was not an issue. She cannot accept the fact that we are denying Gloucester children access to educational or athletic programs. She believes we need to do our best for all of the children in the city because that is how Gloucester is going to move forward. She would like to see pay-to-play included in the policy. However, she recognized that the GEF provides the majority of our after school programs and it is their policy to provide those programs to GPS students only.

Mrs. Sweet stated that the School Committee's responsibility is to the children who attend our schools. She expressed doubt that students choosing in to Gloucester from Rockport and other communities go back to their district for after school activities and wondered whether students attending the charter school from those communities would be allowed to attend GPS after school activities. Finally, Mrs. Sweet stated that the after school programs are not a right but a privilege for students to attend. They have to be in good standing academically and socially. Mrs. Sweet questioned how we would be able to keep track of whether students from other districts are in good standing.

Mr. Garberg reiterated that any child in Gloucester has after school programs available to them and that the requirement for attendance is enrollment in our schools. That is not denying anyone access; it is inviting people to participate in our schools fully, both in in-school and after-school programming.

Mayor Kirk reminded the committee that this is not a new policy but a revision to an existing policy and that the impetus for seeking the change to the policy was because a child from the charter school was in the band. She does not agree with the notion of our after school programs being a competitive advantage. Rather, she believes our competitive advantage is the quality of education in the district. She also believes that one way to get students into the district is to have them attend after school programs, which can build bonds with families and encourage them to enroll in the district. She believes we need to adopt a policy that is more inclusive, and she hopes that if this policy is adopted tonight, a future School Committee overturns it.

Mr. Gross stated that the School Committee's duty is to the 3,200 students enrolled in the Gloucester Public Schools. Athletics are supported within the budget, which is constrained considerably by out-of-district placements. To have a very clear guideline on expectation is a benefit. He stated that we did not create the situation that is making this issue rise to the surface. Rather, we are responding to an issue that was thrust upon us.

He is concerned about the exclusion of students that attend private schools, which do not affect our bottom line, and stated that allowing them to attend GPS after school programs would be a good marketing tool.

Kathy Clancy stated that students that attend other public schools take money with them from the GPS. Since private schools do not affect our budget, she is conflicted about allowing private school students to participate in our after school programs. At the same time, she does not want the experience for GPS students to be diluted by having more non-GPS students attend the programs.

Chairperson Gilman stated that it is with great pain that she supports this policy because she believes we have to do everything in our power to keep our students in our schools, and these after school programs give our district a competitive edge.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Gilman – yes

Kathy Clancy – yes

Ms. Teixeira – no

Mr. Garberg – yes

Mrs. Sweet – yes

Mr. Gross – yes

Mayor Kirk – no

To approve the second reading of After School Policy File IHC.

- D. City Resolution on Charter School Funding – Discussion of Additional Recipients –** Chairperson Gilman stated that on June 14, 2011, the City Council unanimously voted to adopt a citywide resolution on charter school funding. She indicated to whom the resolution has been sent and asked the committee if there were others to whom it should be sent.

Kathy Clancy would like the resolution sent to Maura Banta, Chairperson of the State Board of Education, Governor Patrick, the Suburban Coalition, the North Shore Coalition for School Funding, and the Massachusetts Charter School Association. Dr. Safier suggested that the resolution also be sent to Tom Scott and Paul Andrews at MASS, and Mayor Kirk suggested the Massachusetts Mayors Association and Massachusetts Municipal Association. Lastly, Chairperson Gilman suggested sending the resolution to Joe Knowles, GCACS Chairman of the Board.

- E. City Charter – See IX.C.**

- F. Program Sub-Committee recommended action items from its June 3, 2011 meeting – See IX.A.**

X. DISCUSSION

1. The Program Subcommittee was rescheduled to Monday, July 18, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.
2. Mayor Kirk reported that the custodians union submitted a proposal, and it has been accepted. She reviewed the terms of the agreement and stated that 11 of the 19 custodians that were originally going to be let go are now being retained.
3. Chairperson Gilman reminded the committee that they had discussed having a meeting on a Saturday in July regarding the open meeting law. The committee agreed to wait until the fall for that meeting.
4. Kathy Clancy stated that the full committee will need to meet before August 24th to talk about changes to the MOU in preparation for a meeting with the city to review the MOU.

XII. OTHER COMMUNICATION

A. For Your Information

1. Resolution on Charter School Funding (see attached copies of letters to legislators and MASC.)
2. 2011 Community Satisfaction Survey Results
3. Email from Chairperson Gilman (6/29/11)

- B. Letter Drafted by Kathy Clancy** – Kathy Clancy reviewed a letter that she drafted to Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante regarding the senate amendment to municipal health reform with respect to municipal contributions to employees' and retirees' health insurance.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of June 29, 2011 at 11:35 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*