

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 10, 2016

District Office – Conference Room

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson
Joel Favazza, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Tony Gross
Michelle Sweet

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Tom Lafleur, CPA, Director of Finance
and Operations

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Russ Davis of 23 Woodward Avenue, Executive Director of Massachusetts Jobs with Justice and coordinator of the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance, spoke about the ballot question calling for the expansion of charter schools in Massachusetts and how that will take money out of public education if it passes. He distributed a flyer entitled “No on 2, Bad for Our Schools.”
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairman Pope welcomed the committee back from the summer break.
- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier congratulated Lara Lepionka, Executive Director of Backyard Growers, Inc., who was recently recognized by Green Schools for being an outstanding green education program director.
- VI. **GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. **Approval of Minutes**
 - 1. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of June 15, 2016
 - 2. School Committee Meeting of June 22, 2016
 - 3. Special School Committee Meeting of July 14, 2016
 - B. **Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

E. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 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.)

D. Charter School Cap Referendum – Chairman Pope explained and then read the referendum and stated that the issue before the committee is whether it wants to draft a resolution in opposition or in support of the referendum. Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante spoke about the bills they worked on as an alternative to the charter school cap referendum, which ultimately were not passed. Representative Ferrante stated that other communities will be watching the Gloucester School Committee to see what position they take on the referendum in light of its past experience with a charter school in the community.

There was a discussion about the inequity and lack of local control of charter schools and whether the legislature can address those issues. Chairman Pope noted that there is no funding attached to the referendum and that it will cost a substantial amount of money. Ms. Teixeira spoke about the lack of accountability on the part of the DESE.

Senator Tarr suggested that the committee hear from a proponent of the referendum before finalizing its action on this matter, and it was the consensus of the committee to do so. Chairman Pope indicated that he will try to find a proponent to speak to the committee on this matter and requested that all of the members think about what they would like to see in a resolution. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

A. Elementary Schools Statement of Interest – Chairman Pope stated that Statements of Interest have been submitted to the MSBA for East Gloucester and Beeman Memorial Elementary Schools, with East Gloucester as the priority. He also noted that the committee has discussed amending the Statement of Interest (SOI) to include consolidation of East Gloucester and Veterans, which would be a more expedient way of accomplishing the committee’s goals.

Kevin Buckley of KBA discussed the MSBA timeline and process, including the fact that SOIs only last a year and must be refreshed every year. He indicated that the investigation of options takes place during the feasibility/schematic phase of the project. He also stated that if a district has just built a new school, it may take longer for that district to get back on the MSBA’s list, unless the second school is just as overcrowded and/or structurally deficient as the first one was.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Mr. Buckley reported that the West Parish project is now in the closeout period, which takes a month or two beyond the opening of school. He indicated that the project is tracking a little below budget and that school will open on time. Mr. Buckley noted that the punch list was finalized by the designer last week and that there is still a significant amount in the contingency account. He also discussed the warranties and stated that they are working with the city on insurance coverage. Mr. Gross noted that there is a sign at the entry to the site but there is no sign on the building itself.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT (Continued)

- B. Elementary School Plan** – The committee discussed amending the Statement of Interest to indicate that if a site can be located, it will consider consolidating East Gloucester and Veterans’ Memorial Elementary Schools. Kathy Clancy suggested having a broader public hearing at either East Gloucester or Veterans’. Ms. Teixeira believes the committee needs to come up with a plan first and then suggested holding a meeting in the new West Parish School so that the community can see what a bigger brand new school looks like. Chairman Pope will send the SOIs that were submitted for both schools to each of the committee members for their review.

After discussion, Dr. Safier recommended that a written plan be prepared, with justifications included for the plan, indicating that the committee is looking to consolidate East Gloucester and Veterans, subject to change between now and November, and then will be looking at Beeman and Plum Cove with an eye towards consolidation, as well. Kathy Clancy expressed concern about presenting a firm plan without the community conveying how they feel about it. Chairman Pope stated that he will work with Dr. Safier on preparing the plan that will be presented at the next meeting and then the committee will take public input on September 14th at West Parish.

- C. Update on August 28 West Parish Open House** – Ms. Teixeira reported that Dr. Safier conducted a videotaped tour of West Parish recently. Dr. Safier discussed the tour, which he stated will be ready next week and will be shown on Cape Ann TV. The videotape will also be played in the media center during the open house. Ms. Teixeira stated that the open house will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and she discussed the different features of the tour.

- E. Superintendent’s Report** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Student Enrollment – In addition to the information provided in his report, Dr. Safier reviewed the total number of students enrolled at each school.
2. Hiring Update and Orientation – In addition to the information contained in his report, Dr. Safier reviewed the positions that have not yet been filled.

3. Leadership Retreat
4. Countdown to Kindergarten
5. Opening of School Correspondence
6. Substance Use Policies – Submission and Guidance
7. Calendar

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Superintendent's Report.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None

X. ACTION

A. Acceptance of Grants

1. Gloucester Education Foundation grant totaling \$55,060.00

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation totaling \$55,060.00 for programs to be funded for the upcoming year.

In response to a question by Mr. Favazza, there was a discussion about the educational value of the Mad Hot Ball.

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

VOTED: 0 in favor, 6 opposed to reconsider the vote to accept the above-referenced Gloucester Education Foundation grant totaling \$55,060.00. The motion failed.

2. DESE grant amendment in the amount of \$55.00 for Title IIA – Improving Educator Quality

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to accept a DESE grant amendment in the amount of \$55.00 for Title IIA – Improving Educator Quality.

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

VOTED: 0 in favor, 6 opposed to reconsider the vote to accept the above-referenced DESE grant amendment in the amount of \$55.00. The motion failed.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

- B. School Start Time** – Mr. Favazza inquired about the next steps in addressing this matter. Kathy Clancy stated that as discussed at the Program Subcommittee meeting, Dr. Unobskey was going to continue doing research on what other communities have gone through. She also noted that there was a discussion about doing some outreach in the spring to get feedback from families.
- C. Consolidation of City and School Departments** – Mr. Favazza stated that the City Council requested information back in June from the school administration with respect to the potential of consolidating some school and city departments. Chairman Pope stated that neither the superintendent nor the School Committee has received an official request for information on that matter. Mr. Gross pointed out that the City Council has no authority over the School Department. Mr. Favazza stated that as a School Committee member, he would like to explore the possibility of consolidating the IT and payroll departments via an outside audit. Chairman Pope stated that he will put this matter on a future School Committee agenda.
- D. Review Board to Examine City’s Retirement Policies** – Chairman Pope reported that the Mayor requested that two School Committee members sit on a review board to examine the city’s retirement policies. He asked any interested members to let him know if they would like to sit on that board.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Favazza – yes
Mr. Gross – yes
Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Sweet – yes
Ms. Teixeira – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:48 p.m. for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to enter back into regular session only for the purpose of adjournment.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor 0 opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of August 10, 2016 at 10:13 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*