

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Tony Gross  
Michelle Sweet  
Jack O'Maley  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent  
Tom Lafleur, Director of Finance  
and Operations

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier recognized staff and students for a relatively smooth opening of school, and Chairman Pope recognized the city for the Schooner Festival this past weekend, including the Mayor's Reception, fireworks, road race, etc.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. School Committee and Executive Session of August 12, 2015
  2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of August 26, 2015
  3. School Committee of August 26, 2015
- B. Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets
- C. Approval of Transfers**
- D. Referrals**

- E. Acceptance of Massachusetts DESE Grant** – Title I Part A in the amount of \$529,872.00
- F. Acceptance of Gift from Maine Community College System** – Gift in the amount of \$6,000.00 to the GHS Vocational Program for the new Solar Program
- G. Acceptance of Scholarship** – The Harry D. Powers Scholarship in the amount of \$500.00

Chairman Pope removed Items A1, B and C from the Consent Agenda, and Ms. Teixeira removed Item F for more detail about the gift.

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

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

Mr. Lafleur stated that the gift from the Maine Community College System is to integrate alternative technologies, specifically solar, into the GHS Electrical Program.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept a gift from the Maine Community College System to the GHS Vocational Program in the amount of \$6,000.00 for the new Solar Program.

## **VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

- A. Review of New School Buses/Transportation Safety Protocols** – The committee members and administration present boarded one of the district’s new school buses, and Transportation Director Kathy Verga and Transportation Maintenance Manager Rick Owens demonstrated the Child Check-Mate System, which reminds drivers to check all seats to make sure no children are left on the bus. Ms. Verga indicated that all drivers have been trained on the system.

The committee observed that an alarm sounded when the bus was shut down and that if the driver leaves the bus without turning the alarm off, the headlights start flashing and then the horn will sound. Mayor Theken requested that a notice be sent out asking people to investigate if they see an empty school bus with its headlights flashing and horn sounding.

Ms. Verga reviewed the role and responsibilities of bus drivers and monitors on special education buses, including keeping a log of all students on the bus, the times they are picked up and dropped off, and any special notes. The driver and monitor must sign the log, indicating that they have checked the bus and that no children were left on the bus. The logs are submitted to the Transportation Director every week.

In response to a question about seatbelts, Mr. Owens stated that there are currently no laws in place in Massachusetts stating that children have to wear seatbelts on school buses because they cannot hold the driver responsible. However, bus monitors on special education buses ensure that children's seatbelts are secured.

- B. Annual Presentation – YMCA** – Dr. Safier introduced Executive Director Tim Flaherty, Director of Operations Brian Flynn, and School Age Program Director Sarah Casey. Mr. Flaherty discussed the YMCA's role in the community, noting that they do not turn anyone away because of inability to pay, and stated that the strength of the Y is based on collaboration with the city and the School Department to help children in the community.

Mr. Flynn distributed a packet containing information on all of the YMCA's programs and discussed the summer literacy program, noting that the Y received grants from the Gloucester Education Foundation and the United Way. Ms. Casey elaborated on the details of the program and stated that there was a 90% attendance rate and that 1,500 books were read over the summer. Mr. Flaherty reported that at the completion of the literacy program, the students were able to attend two weeks of YMCA camp at no cost.

Ms. Casey reviewed the results of assessments given to the participating students before and after the program, which showed a one-month instructional reading level increase and an increase of two points in oral reading fluency. Mr. Flynn showed an example of the difference in a student's writing from the beginning to the end of the program.

Ms. Casey discussed the after-school program in all of the elementary schools, including certification of staff, sign-in and sign-out policies, programming, evaluation of the program and staff, and fees. She noted that the program complies with state regulations and that all staff are first aid and CPR certified.

Mr. Flynn discussed the number of students in the after-school program at each school and financial assistance provided. He also discussed the challenges encountered, namely space issues at some of the schools and having to bus the Veterans students to the YMCA because of the increase in custodial fees. Kathy Clancy noted that parents would likely have more of a connection with the school if they picked their children up there rather than at the YMCA.

Finally, Mr. Flaherty noted that the YMCA also has programs at O'Maley and the high school and started the GHS swim team last year.

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

1. UMass, State University Admissions Standards Change – Chairman Pope referred the matter of graduation requirements, including the possibility of a community service requirement, to the Program Subcommittee for review.
2. Opposition to Senate Bill 350: An Act Related to Just Cause Termination

3. Administrative Transition – With respect to District-Determined Measures, Dr. Unobskey stated that he believes Gloucester is ahead of most districts. There was also a discussion about the new computer programming classes at the high school and keyboarding for students in elementary school. Dr. Safier stated that if the PARCC assessment is selected by the Board of Education, his intent is to continue having elementary students take the test on paper.
4. Orientations – Dr. Unobskey reported that the September 16th orientation will consist of a review of the evaluation process and letting teachers know that they are very much a part of the process.

On a motion by Mr. O’Maley, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent’s Report.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None.**

**X. ACTION**

- A. Approval of School Department’s Annual Report to the City of Gloucester –** Dr. Safier stated that the annual report is a modified form of the “welcome back” letter and discusses the budget as well as classes, programs and initiatives taking place across the district. Ms. Teixeira requested that Dr. Safier add the GHS swim team and wrestling team to the annual report.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the School Department’s Annual Report to the City of Gloucester as presented and revised.

**XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

- A. MSBA Project Update –** Dr. Safier reported that paving at the West Parish site as well as the Beeman basketball court will begin on September 14th. Wallboard and window installation is ongoing in Building A. Exterior masonry installation has been completed and interior work is ongoing. The painting contractor has started to prime and paint Building A, and the prep work is being done on the beams in the entranceway. A polished concrete mockup of the floor has been finalized and is awaiting approval from Dore & Whittier. The project remains on time and on budget. Ms. Teixeira requested that Dr. Safier inquire at the next building committee meeting whether another bad winter will affect the completion of the project on time.
- B. Thank You Letters for Scholarships –** Kathy Clancy suggested that thank you letters be sent from the School Committee to people or organizations that provide scholarships to students.

**C. School Open Houses** – Chairman Pope distributed a list of the upcoming open houses at each of the schools.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of September 9, 2015 at 8:32 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*