

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

West Parish School Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

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

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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

(At this time the agenda was taken out of order.)

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – Chairman Pope reported that the committee has been working on the elementary school plan for quite awhile and that it is just the beginning of the process. He thanked everyone for coming and showing their concern for Gloucester Public Schools.

V. RECOGNITIONS – Dr. Safier recognized the ROTC program at the high school, which has been designated as an honors program. He introduced Gunner Richard Muth who spoke about the program.

Kathy Clancy recognized Susan Kelly and Generous Gardeners for weeding at O'Maley last week, Mayor Theken recognized the members of the National Honor Society who volunteered at the 9/11 ceremony, and Chairman Pope recognized the city councilors present at the meeting, namely City Council President Joe Ciolino and Councilors Melissa Cox, Scott Memhard and Paul Lundberg.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – None present.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee and Executive Session of August 10, 2016

2. School Committee of August 24, 2016
3. Building & Finance Subcommittee of August 25, 2016

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

E. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations

1. Donation of bookplates and a check in the amount of \$350.00 from Susanna Natti for the Robert Natti Story Corner, to be given this year to the Veterans' Memorial Elementary School

F. Authorization to Approve Individual Student Activity Accounts

G. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip – GHS ROTC to New London, Connecticut to visit the USS Nautilus Museum

Ms. Teixeira removed Item A.3 from the Consent Agenda.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Elementary School Plan – Public Input – Chairman Pope narrated a PowerPoint presentation which included slides on the 2004 school management audit, the 2006 Plan for Effective Learning Communities, the closing of Fuller School, and the West Parish project. The presentation also included the Dore & Whittier report on the remaining elementary schools, the School Committee Plan, considerations taken into account, the MSBA process and timeline, priorities and conditions, enrollment projections, cost considerations, potential sites, and the plan and reasons. Chairman Pope concluded by stating that the School Committee's goal is for all students in Gloucester to have a facility like the new West Parish School available to them as soon as possible.

Joe Pratt of 23 Derby Street asked about the percentage of reimbursement from the MSBA. Chairman Pope explained that the MSBA reimburses a fixed figure of the construction cost per square foot, which is lower than the actual construction cost.

Marion Sibley of 107 Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated that the proposed merger of East Gloucester and Veterans is problematic in two critical areas. One is that the School Committee has inexplicably changed its priorities. Over the past several years, the committee was guided by the Plan for Effective Learning Communities, which is small schools and small classes, which was linked to good educational outcomes, especially for kids that don't have many resources at home. This plan is talking about four classes per

grade, doubling the existing school. Furthermore, the committee has a plan for three total schools, which would merge Beeman and Plum Cove, which would have five classes per grade, upwards of 575 kids. She noted that the Plan for Effective Learning Communities seems to have been forgotten, and she reminded the committee that that is the principle that has been guiding everything it has been doing for the past 8-10 years. She doesn't think it should be cast aside just in the interest of moving on with some kind of expedient plan. The second critical problem with the merger of the two schools is that it's going to be sited on conservation land in a park that is extremely significant to the community. The Pines has wonderful diversity of wetlands, forest edges and fields and is a great place to be. When you combine that with the recreational part of Swinson's Field, the value is very high in terms of wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, and overall green space. She urged the committee to carefully consider the significant amount of land that we already have devoted to schools and how to creatively repurpose that land before we tear up undeveloped land for another school. We want to provide our kids with an updated resource-rich school building like West Parish while preserving the critical conservation park land that we have that's so important to all of us. The Pines to the East Gloucester community is comparable to Dogtown and Goose Cove in other parts of the city. She suggested a four school plan with 12 classes per grade, with all four schools on their current sites. The first part would be a new Beeman on Cherry Street designed along the lines of West Parish but with four classrooms per grade. She stated that the Beeman land is large enough for the students to continue to attend the old school, so no swing space is needed. Then when the students move into the new school, the old Beeman could become swing space for East Gloucester while that school is rebuilt on a somewhat larger footprint to increase it to three classrooms per grade. She suggested obtaining the Espresso restaurant site for another entrance, a parking lot and bus drop-off. The fourth school would be Veterans, which is in reasonable shape but would need to be updated. It should be kept the same size because the kids that go to that school have higher needs.

Jerry Klinow of 154 Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated that he continually hears that the schools are poorly maintained. He asked why there isn't a better system of maintenance. He knows it's not going to solve some of the problems that were brought up, but it seems to him that there isn't a very good system of maintenance. He asked what will happen to the East Gloucester and Veterans sites if a school is built somewhere else. Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee does not have any control over that. The committee declares the property surplus and the city decides what to do with it. Mr. Klinow commented that "it's the same pair of pants; it's just a different pocket." He stated that the committee needs to talk to the city about what's going to be done with those properties. Chairman Pope explained that the School Committee was requested by the city to come up with a plan for the elementary schools, and that's what it has done. He noted that there are many steps between now and then. Mr. Klinow stated that if his taxes go up another \$100 and it's specifically going to go to kids in this community for education, he'll say fine. However, there will then be three abandoned buildings. He thinks Fuller School is an embarrassment and asked why the heating system wasn't replaced 20 years ago. He restated that there should be a consideration of what's going to be done with the two empty schools and suggested that maybe that could help pay the cost of building a new school. He commented that, "If it's just left to city planning and the people who are working on the I4-C2 parcel, we're all going to be dead before anything happens." He also stated that he doesn't think the DPW is very good and wondered how long it will be before it

deteriorates. Chairman Pope stated that some of the buildings are 65 years old and have been maintained as best they can. Mr. Klinow asked if there was any thought given to how to access a school on the Swinson's Field site and how to handle traffic. He also asked if someone in the room is going to have to lose their house in order to create access to that parcel.

Samantha Watson of 10 Seeall Street asked how the committee came to the decision to do East Gloucester before Beeman because it sounds like Beeman is an easier process. Chairman Pope explained that there is a level of urgency at East Gloucester and, in addition, it is an unknown, meaning that the committee doesn't know what can be done there. They know what can be done at Beeman, so Beeman would be the fallback position if nothing can be done at East Gloucester. He indicated that the buildings are going to start costing a lot of money to keep open. Mr. Favazza stated that the answer for East Gloucester and Veterans will drive the final configuration of the schools. Ms. Watson asked if Beeman would be considered as part of the feasibility plan, and Chairman Pope indicated that the MSBA will look at all of the schools. He noted that we don't really know how many kids we're going to have six years from now, so there needs to be flexibility. The committee would have the most flexibility holding off on Beeman because there are many options there and there are not a lot of options for East Gloucester and Veterans. Ms. Watson stated that it doesn't sit well with her that her daughter will be at Beeman in six years when the rest of the schools will be completely renovated, and then she will go to O'Maley and the high school which also have their issues. She asked how the committee is going to account for the proposed affordable housing at the Fuller site and downtown, because there are probably going to be more children coming into the city. She asked if that will be included in the plans. Chairman Pope stated that only five or six kids at the LePage apartments and Pond View Village entered the school system, and those properties have about 300 units. Dr. Safier noted that West Parish was built to house 350 students based on the MSBA formula, but in reality, if there was an increase in students, the building could comfortably and educationally support 400 students if necessary.

Everett Brown of 127 Mt. Pleasant Avenue doesn't like the fact that the School Department always gets to say that their job is to provide the education and somebody else has to deal with the cost. He stated that somewhere during the process, the School Committee is going to ask the mayor for \$25 million and she's not going to have it. He suggested that the process needs to change and that the focus shouldn't be on getting rid of a building when it becomes 45 years old. He stated that the committee already knows what a new school is going to cost and should have talked to the city about the cost before coming up with a plan. Mr. Gross pointed out that the City Council approved the Statement of Interest and that the committee has been in complete collaboration with the city throughout the process. Chairman Pope stated that before we start talking about where the money is coming from there has to be a plan, and the plan that was presented is what the committee believes is the best deal for the city. Mr. Brown asked what good a plan is if the committee doesn't know what the city's ability to pay is. Chairman Pope stated that you have to start with a plan, because you don't know what it will cost until you have a plan. Mr. Brown replied that he spent a lot of time developing shopping centers and he never asked to have a plan drawn up for a building and then told them he'll let them know if he can pay for it. He noted that there have been capital advisory committees over the years that would look at all projects and make recommendations to

the mayor. Mayor Theken indicated she is asking for a new capital improvement committee and is not going to do anything unless that committee has looked at all of the properties that need to be done. She noted that Fuller is in negotiations right now and that it's not affordable housing; it's regular housing. With respect to I4-C2, she stated that it's nice to have open space downtown. As far as maintaining the buildings, she stated that the DPW took over in 2006 and that maintaining and cleaning are two different things. She stated that the schools have been maintained; otherwise, you couldn't be in them for 30-60 years. She reported that according to DPW Director Mike Hale, since the DPW took over, every school except GHS has a new heating system. She emphasized that the city and the School Department have absolutely worked together. Finally, she noted that the city is putting money away for capital improvements and that the School Department has contributed to that.

Sarah Grow of East Gloucester stated that she has been so proud of the Gloucester Public Schools and thanked all of the committee members for the incredible amount of work they have done. She thinks everyone can agree that we absolutely want the best for Gloucester's children and how wonderful it would be to have a brand new school with all the space and technology that we need for our students. She stated that she has three children who have benefited from a small neighborhood school. She has worked very hard on every site-based council to make sure we have the best environment for our students. She noted that the closing of Fuller was really hard and it was hard to see that community disappear. She still believes that the research shows that small neighborhood schools are most effective for our students, and she's surprised that the committee is talking about building schools that have 470 to almost 500 students in them. To put that in perspective, that is more students than at Manchester High School or Rockport High School. She wants all of our children to have the benefit that her children had. She asked if the committee considered the cost of school choice and bussing if we suddenly consolidate to these mega schools and noted that downtown will be left with no neighborhood, which is not fair to downtown children. She wholeheartedly believes in small neighborhood schools and will work hard and pay more than what she is asked to make it better. She asked the committee to think about our neighborhood schools and consider it very, very hard. She hopes that the committee will still support small neighborhood schools.

Mr. Favazza indicated that Manchester elementary school has 380 students and Rockport elementary has 416. He reported that Ipswich has one at 407 and one at 412, and they just voted to consolidate them into a single elementary school. Beverly has five elementary schools with an average of 430 students per school, the largest of which has 522 students. Therefore, he noted that the committee's plan is not out of the ordinary and is not different than what is going on in neighboring communities that people tout as an example we should be looking to. He appreciates that there is a desire to hold onto small neighborhood schools, but it is not a financially responsible thing to do and it is not what's happening in other successful school districts.

Craig Herrmann of 10 Highland Street asked what sites the feasibility study will be focused on. Chairman Pope indicated that the MSBA will look at all of the possibilities. Mr. Herrmann indicated that he would like to know the information that is going to go into that feasibility study because he believes that if we move out of the current buildings,

money is going to be lost. He stated that that information really does have to be considered in the total cost, as well as the loss of green space and what's going to happen with the existing school locations. Until the possibilities of the other locations are assessed, there is no reason why the school footprint couldn't stay the same at Veterans and you could go up multiple stories there. He would also disagree that the access to Beeman is better than the access to Veterans. Until all of those aspects are brought into consideration, there is no financially responsible project in place. He stated that he has been working in construction and design for the last 30 years, and you do need to have a ballpark construction budget before you start planning. You have to be able to use that ballpark as a starting point. That all has to be put into place as a goal. He believes there is additional information that has to be presented to the city residents before anything moves forward with the MSBA. He also expressed concern about taking up green space and not considering reutilizing the areas that we have. He hopes the committee will keep the public informed on how the feasibility study is going to go forward.

Amy Racofsky of 11 Lupine Lane asked why St. Ann's can't be used as swing space since we spent over \$1 million on it. The school could then be rebuilt on the same spot. Chairman Pope indicated that the Archdiocese is in control of St. Ann's and the lease ran out in September. Ms. Racofsky asked if the committee has explored major renovations to the existing buildings or if they are too old to do that. Chairman Pope referred her to the master plan on the website, which includes options for renovating with additions for each of the schools. Ms. Racofsky believes that would be a much less expensive option. Kathy Clancy noted that unless the building has historical value it's always cheaper not to renovate, and Ms. Teixeira indicated that the information provided to the committee is that renovating does not make financial sense. Ms. Racofsky asked about maintenance of the buildings and the grounds. Chairman Pope indicated that the grounds have almost always been taken care of by the DPW but the custodians worked for the School Department in the past. Ms. Racofsky stated that she is at Beeman everyday and now that the DPW employs the custodians, she has noticed the custodian there not working on several occasions and nobody can say anything. Mayor Theken replied that the city has an agreement with the School Department that if there is a problem with a custodian, the principal has the right to say something. She noted that the Veterans principal meets with the custodians to discuss what work needs to be done at the school. Ms. Racofsky stated that the grounds at Beeman are a disgrace. She believes the School Department needs to work with the city and money needs to be set aside for that.

Bo Abrams stated that she has been going to a lot of School Committee meetings to hear what is going to happen in our elementary schools. She has a son at O'Maley and a daughter at the high school, and she has seen that the schools have constantly been a place where there are vying needs. She noted that her daughter, while working on a project last year, read articles from 1850, 1922 and the 1950s, all by different people, all of which said "Gloucester won't pony up more money for the schools." Having been watching and listening to the conversation about how to make the best decisions going forward for the kids who will be coming into the schools, she believes the School Committee has done a tremendous job of asking questions of people in the schools. They've had conversations at each of the elementary schools and the high school, asking people what they want in a new school for their kids, what's important to them, and how they can make it work. She knows there are a lot of people who feel that this is an

oppressive committee coming out to have their way, and that is not true. There are a lot of people here who really care about all of the children in this community and doing the best for a larger picture. She thanked the committee members and asked what they need from the community so they can make decisions that allow them to get the most support and buy-in. She stated that the community doesn't need the negativity, that it's been through that with Fuller and the charter school. The community needs to work together to make things work. She suggested starting with the plan that the committee has put forward and then figuring out what we need and moving forward.

City Council President Joe Ciolino reiterated that the West Parish project came in at \$1.5 million under budget and stated that they deserve a round of applause for doing that. He spoke about financing and stated that for every dollar the city is going to spend on a new school, 50 cents is going to be reimbursed to the city, which isn't going to last forever. He believes we need to take advantage of this opportunity to get in the queue so we can get another facility like West Parish for half price. He indicated that the City Council relies on the School Committee to educate the children, and it's the council's obligation to figure out how to pay for it. He explained the debt service and stated that the City Council and the mayor are going to be planning for this project. He also warned everyone that the current elementary schools are not going to be worth a lot if and when they are surplus because they are outdated and developers will be hesitant to get involved with them. He indicated that the City Council will aid the School Committee to make this happen, and now is the time to make it happen. The money will come, and it's something that we need to do.

Kailey Mione of 6 Davis Street Extension lives next to East Gloucester School in her grandparents' house which was given to her by her mother and her uncle. That school means so much to her because she grew up with it and her five-year-old just started kindergarten there. She is also a teacher at Veterans, and the thought of losing that downtown school that they've worked so hard to get those families involved in is difficult for her to think about. She wants a new school for her kids, but it isn't going to change the way she teaches her students. She's still going to do the best she can for them. She indicated that she went to the meeting at East Gloucester in the spring, and it troubles her that she did not hear about this plan in the school because it affects the people working there.

Robin Towne of 12 Links Road stated that people don't know just how bad East Gloucester School is. She attended there and has four boys there and she loves it, but it is in bad condition. She noted that there is mold in the ceilings and indicated that one of her kids had to wear his winter coat in the classroom; other times he was asking to wear shorts. She doesn't understand how that is a safe and effective learning environment. She doesn't know if The Pines is the right answer, but something needs to be done. Small neighborhood schools are cute, but she wants this (referring to West Parish), and the committee wants to give it to us. She suggested that everyone work together with the School Committee instead of against them to try to find the best way to get it. The children are breathing good air here, and God knows what they're breathing at East Gloucester.

Mary Ann Boucher of 93 Mt. Pleasant Avenue lives five doors down on the opposite side of Swinson's Field. She grew up at 6 Davis Street Extension and feels that her heart and soul is within East Gloucester School. She spoke about her history with the Maxwell Parsons Playground and asked if the city owns the playground. Chairman Pope stated that the playground was given to the city after World War I to be used as a playground, and the rest of the site was taken for a school in 1947. Ms. Boucher noted that part of the playground was used to make parking spaces for the school. She asked whether the people on High Popples Road are aware of this plan, and Chairman Pope stated that the process is to come up with a plan and then start talking about it. He reiterated that this is not a done deal. He reported that the access to The Pines is via Marble Road, which is a city street on paper that runs from Mt. Pleasant Avenue to High Popples Road, which would be the access point. Ms. Boucher also stated that The Pines is the only green space in East Gloucester and is very valuable to all of the surrounding neighborhoods. She sees people walking up there all day long. She is also very concerned about what's going to happen to the East Gloucester School because she owns a house next to it and doesn't want to see it boarded up. She stated on the record that she has lived next to East Gloucester School for 56 years and they do not maintain it; maybe now, but they've never maintained it and it's disgusting.

Jay Albert of 4 Davis Street Extension stated that he has lived next to East Gloucester School most of his life. He indicated that when he moved there in 1995, the people in the neighborhood didn't complain about the school until more classrooms were added. The feasibility studies didn't show a need for traffic corrections and parking for the extra faculty. He stated that that was worked out a few years ago with a parking area in back of the school. What the feasibility studies won't tell you is how the neighborhood is going to receive a school of close to 500 students. He stated that these days, a lot of kids are driven to school by their parents, and there's a lot of traffic. That should be considered. He understands that Ipswich and Beverly are going from smaller schools to larger schools, but we're not Ipswich or Beverly. Gloucester is a city of villages, and each village is unique in its own way. If you take away a neighborhood school, you take away its character.

Jim Holscher of 102 Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated that the committee should determine what the city can afford first and then work backwards. He also noted that the MSBA is making us comply with these modern standards that cost a lot of money. He indicated that it would be nice to have another school like West Parish, but people are going to have a hard time living in this city because they won't be able to afford the property taxes. He stated that if the city paid for the school itself, we could do it the way we want. The taxpayers paid \$21 million for the West Parish building, which is a nice school, but what could we do for \$20 million without the MSBA telling us what it has to look like and how much space we need? He suggested putting \$15 million into East Gloucester and having a great looking place that isn't as nice as West Parish.

Mr. Favazza stated that in 2008, when the majority of the modulars were put on the elementary schools, they were given a 15-year shelf life. In 2011, the former CFO explained that those 15-year modulars were paid for with a 20-year bond. So, the city will be paying for them five years after they stop being useful. Meanwhile, for those five years that we're still paying the debt on them, the DPW is doing what it can to keep them

functional. So, if the city is going to take on debt for a bond that's going to be less than half the life of the school, that's a better position than we're in right now.

John McElhenny of 19 Allen Street stated that two of his kids go to East Gloucester and they live downtown, so his family has enjoyed two communities instead of one. His kids have friends downtown, and they are also an East Gloucester School family. He spoke in opposition to the idea that you can't have a school that's bigger and still be a part of that community and that you lose something if you don't have a school in your neighborhood. He stated that he has had exactly the opposite experience in his family.

Maureen Donahue of 100 Mt. Pleasant Avenue asked about the access to The Pines. Chairman Pope restated that Marble Road is still a city road on paper and the access point would be from High Popples Road.

Amy Justice of 82 Mt. Pleasant Avenue stated that the Marble Road path used to be owned by her family many years ago and she has walked it with her children and her dog. She has no issue with the committee trying to build a new school or paying more taxes. She thinks the committee does a great job, but she wants them to seriously look at where they put the school and the effect it will have on the community. If you take The Pines, it's gone. What about teaching our children about nature, about life, about walking? She noted that the best summer of her life was spent walking there with her two children. To take that away from our children's future is tragic. She asked that the committee look at The Pines for what it is. It is priceless, and we can't get it back.

Debbie Liacos of West Gloucester stated that she came tonight to support the East Gloucester people. She is a big supporter of neighborhood schools and stated that bigger is not always better. Whatever Beverly, Salem and Peabody are doing doesn't necessarily mean it's what is best for our children. She suggested taking the Espresso site by eminent domain and putting an access road there and building a three-story school on the same site. She indicated that she knows someone who sits on the finance committee at St. Ann's who told her it is still available as a swing space. She asked the committee not to make the school so big that the kids get lost in the shuffle. The people in East Gloucester only have The Pines for green space. There are no other places to roam and hike, and it would be a huge loss for them. She stated that she can't personally support two schools being combined and putting in 500 little kids when the presentation said that what's best for our kids is a small number of classrooms per level. The committee is going against what's being recommended. She also noted that 200 housing units will be going up at the Fuller site and asked how those families are going to be absorbed into the school system if we only have one school that's supposed to handle all of central Gloucester and East Gloucester. The housing at the former Cameron's Restaurant site will also impact the school system. The Pines is a beautiful property and she doesn't think it's the place for a big school.

Joanne McKinnon of 4 Lantern Lane asked everyone in the audience who is against the plan because of quality of life, traffic flow, neighbors that may lose their houses, and the loss of The Pines to stand up. She stated that she has two very successful children that are a product of the Gloucester Public Schools, but she was told by Cape Ann Greenbelt that the area the committee is suggesting is listed as conservation land and it will take a

two-thirds vote of the City Council and a two-thirds vote of the legislature for that property to be built on. Many people in the community are saying the entrance is never going to be on High Popples Road because Kathy Clancy said so, which she's sure is a rumor. They're also saying that this is a done deal. She stated that this is not a done deal and that the people of East Gloucester are not going to roll over their beautiful conservation land that adds to the quality of all of their lives. She asked where all of the wildlife is supposed to go and stated that she is very passionate about that land.

Bart Schick of 121 Mt. Pleasant Avenue submitted an email to Chairman Pope to be included in the record. (See attached.)

Chairman Pope closed the public input portion of the meeting and indicated that if people have any more thoughts, they can send them to the committee and they will be taken under advisement. Kathy Clancy thanked everyone for coming and stated that their thoughts and input are valuable to the committee. She reiterated that this is the beginning of gathering information and exploring options. Finally, she indicated that the committee's meeting minutes always reflect conversations and reports about what is happening and they are part of the public record.

(A 10-minute recess was taken at this time.)

- B. Discussion on the Charter School Resolution** – Chairman Pope stated that the issue before the committee is whether to take a position on the charter school referendum and, if so, what that position is going to be. Mr. Favazza indicated that despite diligent efforts to find someone to speak in favor of the referendum, he was unable to do so. Chairman Pope believes it is important for the committee to take a position on the referendum because Gloucester has such an intimate relationship with charter schools and the how the Department of Education oversees them.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

VOTED: 6 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Favazza) to draft a resolution in opposition to Question 2 on the November ballot, namely the authorization of up to 12 new charter schools per year.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she believes the committee did its due diligence to try to get someone to speak in favor of the referendum and that she is prepared to move forward on this issue. Kathy Clancy indicated that she is very well educated as to charter school issues, the financial formula that funds them, and the accountability issues. Therefore, she is ready to take a position, as well.

Mr. Favazza stated that he is uncomfortable with the committee formulating opinions for a political discussion that is not focused solely on what the committee has to address. Mr. Gross agreed with that except for the fact that the information on charter schools is so bad that he believes it is appropriate for the committee to take a stance. Chairman Pope indicated that a draft resolution will be presented to the committee at the next meeting for a vote.

Mayor Theken stated that she remembers what the former charter school cost the city and what it did to the children when it closed. She indicated that if the formula was equal it would be fine, but it can't be sustained the way it is. Therefore, she will be supporting the opposition to the referendum.

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

1. Opening of School
2. Bomb Threat at Gloucester High School – Mr. Favazza noted that when bad things happen at a school, there is no warning. His first thought when he heard about the bomb threat was that if someone wanted to do a lot of damage at a school, it would be easier to call in a bomb threat and get everyone out in an open field. Dr. Safier responded that there is a percentage of risk that is always going to exist but that the administration works annually with the police department in reevaluating the emergency management protocols.

Mayor Theken asked how long it took to inform the public of the bomb threat. Dr. Safier indicated that the evacuation took place around 10:00 and emails went to families by 11:00. Mayor Theken indicated that by that time, parents already knew because they were contacted by their kids. Dr. Safier stated that the administration was in the middle of dealing with the situation and that once the kids were brought back inside and everything was secure, then they sent out the message. He indicated that the kids were not told the specifics of why they were being evacuated.

3. Mandated Trainings
4. Highlights of Changes to McKinney-Vento under ESSA
5. FERPA
6. Nutrislice – Dr. Safier will demonstrate this new software at the next meeting.
7. Calendar – Kathy Clancy noted that there is an open house at O'Maley tomorrow night and that the elementary schools' open houses are on September 22nd.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Superintendent's Report.

Dr. Safier added that the lead testing in the schools will be taking place during the first couple of weeks of October. The DPW will be putting together a sampling plan where all of the drinking fountains and sinks are listed.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of August 25, 2016** – Chairman Gross reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the audit of the student activity accounts at its meeting of August 25, 2016. There was a discussion about how the account limits were determined and the treasurer’s authority to freeze the accounts.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the proposed Student Activity Account Guidelines for Gloucester Public Schools.

X. ACTION

- A. First Reading of Revised Student Activity Accounts Policy, File JJF** – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to waive the actual reading of the revised Student Activity Accounts policy, File JJF.

On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the first reading of the revised Student Activity Accounts policy, File JJF.

- B. Approval of Proposed Student Activity Account Guidelines** – See Item IX.A.

- C. Approval of Authorization to Establish a Revolving Fund for West Parish Before School Program** – After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to approve authorization to establish a revolving fund for the West Parish Before School Program with a limit of \$50,000.00.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the MSBA will be coming out to do a study of East Gloucester School on October 26th to begin assessing what the needs of that building are in relation to the Statement of Interest. Chairman Pope reported that he was at the West Parish building committee meeting this morning and they discussed the ribbon cutting ceremony.

(Kathy Clancy left the meeting at 10:17 p.m.)

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To Discuss Potential Arbitration – Tabled.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of September 14, 2016 at 10:18 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*

9/14/2016

Gloucester Public Schools Mail - Fwd: EG School



Maria Puglisi <mpuglisi@gloucesterschools.com>

Fwd: EG School

1 message

Jonathan Pope <jpope@gloucesterschools.com>

Wed, Sep 14, 2016 at 7:39 AM

To: Maria Puglisi <mpuglisi@gloucesterschools.com>, School Committee <schoolcommittee@gloucesterschools.com>, Richard Safer <rsafer@gloucesterschools.com>

Maria this letter should be entered int tonight's SC meeting record.

Thanks

Jonathan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bart Schick** <rwschickjr@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 13, 2016 at 8:17 PM

Subject: EG School

To: Jonathan Pope <jpope@gloucesterschools.com>

Hi Jonathan,

I am going to do my best to attend your meeting tomorrow; I have a conflict I am trying to reschedule.

Nevertheless, the article in this morning's paper suggested come with solutions, not just complaints. So:

I suggest instead of building a new school in a new location that you expand East Gloucester School. Since I don't know if the first floor structure can support a second floor, there is ample room on the edge of the under (if not un-) used field to expand the building. You wouldn't have to find temporary facilities for the school kids because the existing structure would be completely usable.

That would save the \$1.5 million paid to St. Ann's when West Parish was being constructed.

That would eliminate having to work around the two ponds in the Pines.

It would eliminate substantial expense to create new roads and site prep that the Pines would require.

That would avoid the headache traffic considerations on either High Popples or Mt. Pleasant where there are already narrow streets with few to nonexistent sidewalks with concurrent safety concerns for kids walking to/from school.

If at the same time renovation to the existing structure needed to happen, it could be scheduled during the summer or once the new structure was completed, the kids could move over there while the existing EG school building was renovated .

One of my biggest concerns is that the city does not have a stellar reputation for maintaining existing buildings. As a taxpayer and concerned citizen, I would ask that whatever solution is finally decided you school committee budget adequate maintenance. It is a fiscal sin to allow existing buildings disintegrate for lack of maintenance at the same time asking us to fund a new building to repeat that cycle.

I will be more than willing to serve on an empowered committee to help sort through the various alternatives.

If I am unable to read this into the record tomorrow evening, I would very much appreciate your having someone do so for me. Many thanks for your service and your concern,

Kind regards,

Bart

Robert Schick

121 Mt. Pleasant Ave

Gloucester, MA 01930

email: rwschickjr@gmail.com

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