

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Val Gilman, Assistant Chairperson
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Roger Garberg
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance and Operations
Patricia Wegmann, Special Education Director
Erik Anderson, GHS Principal
Kerri-Ann O’Connell, GHA Assistant Principal
Chris Kobs, GHS Dean of Students
Debra Lucey, O’Maley Principal

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Dave Hodgkins, representing the Cape Ann Tea Party, complimented and thanked the School Committee, superintendent, principals and teachers in the district. They visited five different schools on Constitution Day and were treated with the utmost courtesy. They learned a lot, were very pleased with the curriculum that was going on, and had an excellent time.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None

V. RECOGNITIONS

A. Introduction of New Administrators – Dr. Safier introduced GHS administrators Erik Anderson, Chris Kobs and Kerri-Ann O’Donnell. He noted that Andrew Korman could not be at the meeting tonight. Mr. Anderson stated that he is enjoying working at GHS and complimented the student body, who is an amazing group to work with, noting that they have adjusted to some of the changes at the high school quite positively. Ms. O’Donnell stated that she hopes to meet all of the School Committee members after the meeting. Mr. Kobs indicated that his major role this year is talking to staff, parents, students and the community. He welcomed everyone to come in and check out what is going on at GHS.

Mrs. Gilman recognized Pat Earle, Executive Director of the First R Foundation, for the foundation’s 10-year anniversary celebration. She reported that Frances Ferrante received an

award for the work she did at the beginning stages of the program. Mrs. Gilman thanked the First R Foundation and suggested inviting the board to a future School Committee meeting.

Chairman Pope thanked Dr. Safier, Mr. Baumhauer and Jim Duggan for the work they have done in finding alternate places for the youth basketball leagues to play throughout the winter.

VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – Erin Jermyn updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: freshman elections, Spirit Week, Student Council fundraiser to frame Dr. Goodwin’s picture, homecoming dance (new tradition started by Mr. Anderson), tutoring, Newell Stadium groundbreaking, senior semiformal, sports, and new changes at GHS.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Personnel Subcommittee & Executive Session (*Confidential*) of September 10, 2012
2. School Committee of September 12, 2012
3. Program Subcommittee of September 14, 2012
4. Special Program Subcommittee of September 17, 2012

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

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

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

X. ACTION

H. Renaming of the Ralph B. O’Maley Middle School – Debra Lucey stated that O’Maley now has a commitment to 21st century skills and that the new name will reflect what the school really is, will recognize the hard work that is going on, what they have accomplished over the last year, and what they will accomplish in the future. Dr. Safier reviewed the procedure for renaming a school and noted that all of the steps have taken place.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to rename the Ralph B. O’Maley Middle School the Ralph B. O’Maley Innovation Middle School.

Ms. Lucey left the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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

1. Evaluation Professional Development Update – Mr. Bach reviewed the feedback received from teachers via a survey regarding the September 18th professional development program. Dr. Safier noted that they will be meeting with the union leadership on Tuesday and are hoping to meet with the high school program leaders and middle school teachers to get their feedback on what the next steps should be. Mr. Bach stated that program leaders and administrators are doing a fantastic job and that teachers have been very receptive. He praised their willingness to dig in and get through a pilot year of a new system. Finally, Mr. Bach reviewed the online evaluation management tool for teachers.

Mr. Kobs and Ms. O'Donnell left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

2. West Nile Virus and EEE Public Health Update
3. Physical Restraint – Dr. Safier reviewed the use of time-out rooms and procedures, which are only to be used by training behavior specialists. He stated that Ms. Wegmann has obtained funding to bring in a consultant to review the district's physical restraint procedures. Alternatives to time-out rooms are an increase in out-of-district placements, the request for one-to-one paraprofessionals, an increase in 911 calls, increase in physical restraints and/or suspensions, increase in negative phone calls to parents, increase in anxiety of children, emptying of classrooms, and a decrease in the school's ability to remain flexible to respond to every situation.
4. Personal Calendar

B. MCAS Presentation – Dr. Safier noted that adequate yearly progress (AYP) has been replaced by progress and performance index (PPI), which is a measure of the district's ability to reduce the proficiency gap by half between 2011 and 2017. He reviewed the 2012 MCAS report, including the proficiency gap in each school level, progress in each group, student growth percentiles, which show that growth is taking place, comparison of students scoring proficient or above, and the dip in fourth grade scores, which he indicated he would like to investigate.

Mayor Kirk asked if any conclusions have been drawn about the BSRI program at Beeman. Dr. Safier indicated that BSRI is currently putting together all of the data on their benchmark scoring and is analyzing our MCAS, as well.

In terms of math, Dr. Safier indicated that we need to ask the teachers how much time is being spent in math on a daily basis and whether they have looked at small group instruction. He is also considering bringing in consultants with respect to math instruction and the alignment that the curriculum has to the standards.

Ms. Wegmann left the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Dr. Safier stated that teachers will be asked to spend time honing benchmark assessments in math. The first thing they will be asked to do is to get to know the Common Core Standards and then align the questions in the benchmark assessments to the Common Core Standards and the Investigations math program. If time allows, the teachers will need to assess the Common Core in terms of the Investigations program. Finally, Dr. Safier indicated that multiple common planning times are being established in the elementary schools.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. West Parish School Ad Hoc Communications Committee Meeting of September 10, 2012** – Chairperson Gilman indicated that the minutes of this meeting were approved at the last School Committee meeting and that two motions came out of the meeting. She made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, that the charge of the Gloucester School Committee is to oversee and be the front face of communications, create and maintain the website, and be the mouthpiece of the MSBA West Parish building project process. Mayor Kirk reported that she was unable to attend the ad hoc meeting and believes it is premature to prescribe the mouthpiece for the project since we do not yet have a good understanding of the charge of the building committee. In addition, the administration is clearly going to have to be the mouthpiece of the project with respect to financing.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern that the School Committee does not have enough information to vote on this matter at this time. Chairperson Gilman tabled the motion until the committee can get more information from Sarah Creighton and Susan Beckman on best practices. Kathy Clancy agreed to this course of action and stated that she would like to call Newburyport to get a city's perspective on how they handled this issue.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to invite Sarah Creighton and Susan Beckman to an upcoming School Committee meeting to give us an overview of their experiences.

Chairman Pope recommended having a special School Committee meeting for this purpose, and Kathy Clancy suggested that such a meeting take place after the owner's project manager is selected.

- B. Personnel Subcommittee Meeting of September 10, 2012** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the Personnel Subcommittee had further discussion on the Social Networking Policy at its meeting on September 10, 2012. She made a motion, seconded by Chairman Pope, to conduct a first reading of the Social Networking Policy, File IJNDD, as revised by the Personnel Subcommittee on September 10, 2012. Chairman Pope asked that the first reading be waived.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to waive the first reading of the Social Networking Policy, File IJNDD.

Dr. Safier reviewed the terms of the Social Networking Policy, and Mayor Kirk requested that a reference to photographs be added.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Social Networking Policy, File IJNDD, with the addition of a reference to photographs.

C. Program Subcommittee Meeting of September 14, 2012 – Chairperson Gilman reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on September 14, 2012:

- Status of publicist positions
- GHS attendance policy
- K-12 Survey Data Consolidation Report

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to place the Community Survey on Attitudes Towards Fuller School Options on the district website.

Mrs. Gilman and other members of the committee thanked Mr. Garberg for his hard work in consolidating the data from the survey, and Kathy Clancy thanked the public for their feedback.

D. Special Program Subcommittee Meeting of September 17, 2012 – Chairperson Gilman reported that this was a working meeting to update the FAQs with respect to Fuller School, which included the survey results and the committee's vote on June 27th to reaffirm its commitment to smaller versus larger elementary schools.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the amended proposed changes to the Frequently Asked Questions for the future of Fuller School.

Chairperson Gilman noted that they were not able to address the West Parish FAQs at the September 17th meeting. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for October 3, 2012 at 3:15 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room. Kathy Clancy will not be able to attend that meeting. However, she has agreed to update the FAQs and forward them to Chairperson Gilman and Mr. Garberg to complete on October 3rd.

E. Ad Hoc City Charter Subcommittee Meeting of September 18, 2012 – Tabled. Chairman Gross was not in attendance at tonight’s meeting.

F. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of September 19, 2012 – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on September 19, 2012:

- Assessment of school buildings in relationship to Plan for Effective Learning Communities
- Review of athletic and other student fees – Waiting for more guidance from city. Mayor Kirk indicated she would summarize the request in writing to the subcommittee.
- Youth basketball

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to waive all building use fees for the three youth basketball organizations for this year.

Dr. Safier reported that, according to Jim Duggan, the city is intending to reduce the weekend fees for custodians at youth basketball games, as well.

With respect to athletic fees, Mrs. Gilman expressed her hope that the committee will hear advice from Dr. Safier and discuss what the most important needs are for free cash. She noted that the district has technology needs and that there were requests that had come out of the budget last year that the committee was not able to fund.

Mr. Garberg suggested amending the referral to the Building & Finance Subcommittee to consider the use of free cash for any and all purposes that the superintendent and the administration find most appropriate. Chairman Pope indicated that the subcommittee will be looking into a request for free cash, including lockers for O’Maley. He noted that the School Committee has already put \$110,000 into the athletics revolving fund account and that he believes it will take a lot of discussion about priorities before the committee can determine how to reduce athletic fees in a permanent way without having an impact on the operating budget.

X. ACTION

A. First Reading of Social Networking Policy – See Item IX.B.

B. Second Reading of Pest Management Policy, File EBAB – Ms. Teixeira noted that this is an existing policy that is being amended to add the authority of the superintendent or his or her designee to set sanitation procedures for each building, including but not limited to food consumption.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to waive the second reading of the Pest Management Policy, File EBAB.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adopt the first reading of the Pest Management Policy, File EBAB, as presented.

Mayor Kirk pointed out a typo in the lettering of the paragraphs in Section V.

C. Community Survey on Attitudes Towards Fuller School Options – See IX.C.

D. Acknowledgment of Availability of 2012/2013 Student Handbooks – Chairman Pope noted that the draft GHS Student Handbook contains the existing attendance policy, and Dr. Safier confirmed that the handbooks have not yet been distributed.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Gloucester High School Student Handbook for 2012-2013.

Mrs. Gilman stated that the O’Maley Middle School Student Handbook and Code of Conduct was already approved as part of the innovation school. Chairman Pope noted that the name on the handbook needs to be changed.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Ralph B. O’Maley Innovation Middle School Student Handbook and Code of Conduct for 2012-2013, as amended with the new title.

With respect to the Elementary Schools Student Handbook, Mrs. Gilman noted that Kathy Clancy’s name needs to be added to the list of School Committee members and that the phrase “12-day maximum” under “Unauthorized Vacation” on page 8 should be changed to “15-day maximum.”

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Gloucester Public Elementary Schools Student Handbook for 2012-2013 with the changes noted above.

Dr. Safier indicated that this process needs some correction and that this work should be done, reviewed and approved by site-based councils before the end of the previous school year. They will be working on that for next year. Kathy Clancy recommended that approval of the handbooks be put on the School Committee’s annual agenda sometime

before the end of the school year, and Ms. Teixeira suggested having legal counsel review the handbooks in the future.

- E. Best Practices About Outreach** – See Item IX.A.
- F. Update of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Fuller School** – See Item IX.D.
- G. Building Use Fees** – See Item IX.F.
- I. Vote to Approve MSBA Request for Services Application** – Kathy Clancy reported that the School Committee must approve the Request for Services (RFS) in order to comply with the MSBA requirements. Dr. Safier stated that the RFS has already been approved by the MSBA.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the MSBA Request for Services #12177.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

A. For Your Information

1. Superintendent's Evaluation – Amended version is included.
2. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings – Chairman Pope reported that the City Council voted to have a joint meeting with the School Committee, which will be added to the Schedule of Upcoming Meetings when he and Council President Hardy determine a date. Dr. Safier stated that Counselor Tobey expressed concern that for three years, the charter school has submitted enrollment projections that far exceed reality, which has had an impact on Chapter 70 allocations, and that he would like to discuss the idea of the charter school becoming an innovation school.

Ms. Teixeira questioned the School Committee's role in that discussion since the committee has no involvement with the charter school. Kathy Clancy suggested that Chairman Pope can work with President Hardy on the agenda and make it a productive agenda that is under the School Committee's purview. Mayor Kirk suggested inviting Counselor Tobey to address the School Committee to share his concerns or questions.

Mrs. Gilman reminded the committee that in August of 2010, they worked hard to come up with a mutual agreement for an in-district innovation school or Horace Mann School and were not successful. Therefore, she is not sure the committee has the right at this point to ask the charter school to consider something different than what their charter has allowed them to do. She suggested that before the committee considers having any type of discussion on this topic, they ask

Dr. Safier to get some advice from Jeff Wulfson on the appropriateness of Councilor Tobey's request.

Chairman Pope stated that he believes it is timely for the committee to have a joint meeting with the City Council and that he will discuss the agenda with President Hardy.

Finally, Dr. Safier reported that he was asked to submit a letter to Representative Ferrante and Senator Tarr stating our concern regarding the projected enrollments versus the reality of the enrollments and the impact that it has on the funding mechanism.

3. Selected Massachusetts General Laws 2012 Book

B. Massachusetts School Building Authority Update – None.

C. Collective Bargaining – Ms. Teixeira reminded the committee that it is now “negotiation season” and that at least four groups are requesting meetings in the month of October. She will be reaching out over the next week or two for dates for committee members to attend negotiation meetings.

D. Mayor's Letter Regarding Fuller School – Kathy Clancy requested that Mayor Kirk's letter regarding Fuller School be included in the next packet as an attachment so that the public has access to it.

E. Site-Based Councils – Mrs. Gilman reminded the committee that they voted in the spring that there would be School Committee involvement at the site-based councils this fall. She would like to put this matter on the agenda for an upcoming meeting and suggested getting a recommendation from the superintendent in terms of how the principals would recommend integrating the School Committee into the site-based council meetings consistent with Mass. legislation.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of September 26, 2012 at 9:43 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*