

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Veterans' Memorial Elementary School Gymnasium

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

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

**Administration Present**

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

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- 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** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier recognized the Open Door for supporting so many families in Gloucester and stated that it will be holding its annual breakfast at 7:30 tomorrow morning.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. School Committee of October 7, 2015
  2. Amended Program Subcommittee of October 1, 2015
- B. Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets
- C. Approval of Transfers** – September 14, 2015 to October 7, 2015
- D. Referrals**
- E. Acceptance of Grants**

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

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

- A. Presentation on Elementary School Facilities** – Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee, in conjunction with the city, hired Dore & Whittier to conduct an assessment of the remaining four elementary school buildings and that their report is posted on the website. He noted that there are probably some other options besides those included in the report.

Chairman Pope indicated that the School Committee will have a meeting in every one of the elementary schools to get input from the public on what they feel is lacking in their elementary school and what they would like to see in the future. Once the committee receives input from all of the elementary schools, it will have another meeting at which the DPW will update the committee on the condition of the buildings and what they have planned in the future.

Chairman Pope stressed that this process is going to take time. He noted that even if the School Committee had a plan today and submitted it to the MSBA for financing, the process would include an eligibility phase (1-2 years), a feasibility study phase (approximately 2 years), and the submission of a plan to finance the project.

Dr. Safier presented a slide show containing information on each of the buildings, which he stated is to be used as a springboard for subsequent conversation with and input from the public. The presentation included a description of each of the elementary school buildings, including the new West Parish School, MSBA enrollment projections, capacity versus enrollment, demographics, and conceptual options.

Chairman Pope noted that the MSBA projection is 120 students less than we actually have this year and that Dore & Whittier used those numbers in their report. Therefore, an enrollment study will need to be done to get accurate numbers. He also stated that the fact that we have excess capacity has allowed the district to avoid redistricting every time there is a population shift in the community.

Dr. Safier’s presentation included maps showing where students at each school reside, as well as students who choice out to other districts. Chairman Pope pointed out that students at each school are scattered across the city because of intradistrict school choice and indicated that the maps will be accessible on the website soon.

- B. Public Input on Elementary School Facilities** – Chairman Pope stated that the committee will be getting more information from MSBA about renovations to current buildings to bring them up to MSBA standards (i.e. replacing the modulars with brick and mortar). Kathy Clancy noted that there are a lot more needs for students now than when the schools were originally built.

A gentleman from Arnold Way asked how ongoing facility maintenance and upgrades take place and whether there is a school facilities manager. Chairman Pope explained that the facilities are maintained by the DPW and the facilities manager is Jim Hafey. He noted that the school custodians are employees of the DPW, although they are under the supervision of the building principals. Chairman Pope also stated that there is a work order system and that the School Committee is able to make suggestions about school maintenance priorities, but those decisions are ultimately made by the DPW. He noted that the committee in conjunction with the DPW is putting together a request to the MSBA for a roof replacement at the high school, which will need to be approved by the City Council. He also explained the process of putting together a long-term capital improvement plan, over which the School Committee has no control. Mr. Lafleur discussed his relationship with the DPW with respect to maintenance of the schools.

Maggie Rosa, president of the Gloucester Education Foundation, one of the sponsors of the district-wide arts festival, asked the committee to provide art rooms for all of the elementary schools as opposed to “art on a cart” and asked the School Committee to address this inequity in the short term. Chairman Pope stated that one of the substantially separate classes at both Veterans and Beeman will be moving to the new West Parish School next year, which will open up classrooms in those buildings. However, he noted that the administration will determine the best use of those classrooms.

Lisa Morgan expressed concern about going from a 12-class district to a 10-class district and asked if there is a way to cap the amount of students per classroom. Chairman Pope stated that he believes the committee will be making the case that the district should remain a 12-class district. However, that may change after the enrollment study is completed. Dr. Safier stated that the MSBA based the size of the new West Parish School on approximately 355 students; however, it can comfortably accommodate 390 students.

Chairman Pope reiterated that there will be many more opportunities for the public to give their input to the committee and that people can email any member of the committee with questions or comments. Kathy Clancy stated that everyone is welcome at any and all of the meetings, even if it is not held at their child’s school. Ms. Teixeira asked the audience if there is any other information they would have wanted to hear tonight in order to get more feedback. There was no response.

Chairman Pope stated that this is the beginning of a long process, and Kathy Clancy indicated that the committee would like to submit a statement of interest to the MSBA in 18 months (April of 2017). Chairman Pope explained that the MSBA has seven different levels of need and that the need to replace outdated buildings is the fourth or fifth level.

*(A 15-minute recess was taken at this time.)*

- C. **October 1 Enrollment Report** – Dr. Safier reviewed the report that was submitted to the Department of Education and indicated that the Chapter 70 funding formula is

based upon the number of students in the district as of October 1. He noted that the enrollment of 2,987 students is virtually the same as it was last year.

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

1. Gloucester Biotechnology Academy
2. Technology – Closing the STEM Gender Gap
3. Technology Integration Professional Development Plan – November 2015 to December 2016
4. Low Income Education Access Project (LEAP)
5. North Shore Superintendents Roundtable Legislative Session
6. PARCC State Results – Dr. Safier noted that in most instances, the students meeting expectations on PARCC were lower than on MCAS, with the exception of Grade 4.
7. Calendar

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Superintendent's Report.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of October 14, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting of October 14, 2015:

- Year-to-date FY16 expenditures
- Revolving account balances
- Student meal balances
- DPW maintenance ticket status

**B. Personnel Subcommittee Meetings of October 15, 19 and 20, 2015** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that these meetings were negotiation sessions with the nurses, GTA and AFSCME-B. Negotiations with GAEP will be held on November 2, 2015.

**X. ACTION**

**A. Sabbatical Leave Request** – Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee is required by the GTA contract to approve this request for leave. Mary-Kate Canavan introduced herself and distributed her plan for a sabbatical leave to attend the National University of Ireland in Galway to obtain an MA in Irish Studies. Her

presentation included what she is planning on doing in Ireland, why that university is a perfect fit for her, a course overview, and how it will benefit her classroom teaching and strengthen the ELA department. She also discussed her dissertation.

Dr. Safier stated that in terms of enrichment, he believes this is an extraordinary opportunity. However, he indicated that there would be a cost associated with the leave since the district would need to bring on a permanent substitute for the entire school year. Ms. Canavan stated that since she is an Irish citizen, she would be able to get health insurance in Ireland. She realizes that it is a hardship to the district but she knows that this would be a positive step. She also stated that she will try to find and apply for grants to cover some of the cost of her salary.

Mr. Gross made a motion, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, to approve Mary-Kate Canavan's request for a sabbatical leave. Kathy Clancy stated that although she supports the educational merit of the request, she has concerns about the financial impact of the leave on next year's budget. After discussion, the motion was amended as follows:

**Amended Motion:**

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

**VOTED:** 4 in favor, 1 abstain (Kathy Clancy) to approve Mary-Kate Canavan's request for a sabbatical leave and to authorize the superintendent to work out the financial details of same.

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

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Kathy Clancy reported that the Interiors Committee will be meeting on Friday, and Dr. Safier stated that there was a meeting today to begin discussing technology.
- B. Upcoming School Committee Meetings** – After discussion, it was the consensus of the committee to continue to have public input on the configuration of the elementary schools during regular School Committee meetings. The next opportunity for public input will be on December 2nd at Beeman. Chairman Pope reminded the committee members that they will be evaluating Dr. Safier during the December 16th meeting.

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

**VOTED:** 5 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of October 21, 2015 at 9:17 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary*