

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, October 26, 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  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Tom Lafleur, CPA, Director of Finance  
and Operations  
Patricia Wegmann, Special Education  
Director

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** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Mayor Theken recognized GHS National Honor Society and JROTC students for volunteering to help with the Halloween Festival on Sunday.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Jarrod Martin and Lexi Ciolino introduced themselves and updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: first homecoming king and queen, football playoff game, semiformal, student council conference, and the Interact Club lobster roll fundraiser.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A. Approval of Minutes**
    - 1. School Committee and Executive Session of September 28, 2016
    - 2. School Committee and Executive Session of October 12, 2016
  - B. Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets
  - C. Approval of Transfers** – 7/1/16 to 9/30/16
  - D. Referrals**

**E. Out-of-State Field Trip Requests**

1. GHS to New York City on Saturday, November 12, 2016
2. GHS to New York City from October 6 to October 9, 2017

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, 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. Special Education Report** – Patty Wegmann reported that 12 new special education staff started on August 30th, including new adjustment counselors, teachers, psychologists, and a board-certified behavior analyst. She indicated that the district currently has 777 students identified as having a disability, which is 24% of the total student population. Similar districts in the DART analysis range from 17.1% to 23.3%. She and her program leaders continue to discuss the high percentage of students with disabilities and stand behind the fact that they are meeting the requirements of the eligibility process.

Ms. Wegmann reported that of the total number of students on IEPs, 58 are currently placed out of district and one student is tuitioned from a neighboring district into one of the programs at the high school for students ages 18 to 22. She indicated that four students who were placed out of district were brought back into the district, two at O’Maley and two at the high school. In addition, a student who was at a 45-day assessment also returned to the district.

Ms. Wegmann reported that there was some mediation over the summer that resulted in the placement of three students out of district. In addition, three students have moved in from neighboring districts that were put in out-of-district placements for which the district has assumed those tuitions.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the current enrollment in the preschool is 98 students and that two more students will be coming in November. She noted that there is no need for additional space at this time. Fifty of the 98 students have IEPs and 48 are typically-developing peers. Thirteen students are in substantially separate classrooms for students with moderate to severe special needs.

Ms. Wegmann discussed the new math initiative at the middle school, including the identification of students who need interventions, development of interventions, and how to get through the curriculum efficiently. She discussed Deb Hale’s work with the special education teachers to guide them through strategies to help make the curriculum accessible to their students.

Ms. Wegmann reported that an additional board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), Maureen Michaud, was hired to meet the needs of students with autism and

challenging behaviors. Ms. Michaud helps develop behavior plans, consults with sub-separate programs at all of the schools, takes copious amounts of data, and instructs staff on utilizing specific methodologies to work with students with autism.

Ms. Wegmann indicated that Ms. Michaud and Kim Anderson will be holding a training session in November for teachers to learn how to address certain behaviors with research-based methodologies. They will then be observing the teachers to see if they have gained the skills needed to use those methodologies in the classroom. If so, the teachers will be given a certification of the number of hours they have put into that work.

Finally, Ms. Wegmann reported on the activities of the Plum Cove and East Gloucester Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) teams and adjustment counselors and discussed the co-teaching program at Veterans.

The committee discussed the following matters:

- High percentage of special education students
- Use of educational advocates by parents
- Trends in special education referrals
- Transition of students in substantially separate programs to West Parish
- Students with social/emotional issues

- B. Follow-Up to Substance Use Prevention Policies Approval: District Curriculum**  
Dr. Safier presented a PowerPoint on substance use education by grade level. He noted that drugs and alcohol are not discussed at the elementary level and that the curriculum at that level includes self-awareness, self-management, relationships with others, social awareness, and responsible decision making. Dr. Safier reviewed the middle school and high school curriculum by grade and stated that the health curriculum will be reviewed across the board in the near future. Ms. Sweet noted that only ninth graders at the high school have health classes and suggested that reinforcement be considered for the rest of the grades. Kathy Clancy suggested that guest speakers could be invited to talk about issues such as drug use and dating violence.
- C. Superintendent's Evaluation Process** – Chairman Pope distributed a handout on the End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation and Report. He noted that Dr. Safier's contract indicates that he will be evaluated before the conclusion of his contract, which is January 1st. Dr. Safier stated that his documentation will be presented to the committee at the November 30th meeting and that his end-of-cycle summative evaluation will take place on December 14th. Chairman Pope reviewed the evaluation process and Dr. Safier indicated that he will distribute an evaluation template before November 30th.
- D. Superintendent's Report** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Free and Reduced Lunch Numbers by School
2. Nutrislice – Dr. Safier demonstrated how the website works, pointing out that it provides nutritional and allergy information for each food on the menu.
3. School Survey
4. Calendar – Dr. Safier discussed the MSBA’s visit to East Gloucester School on October 26th, noting that there were 90 Statements of Interest submitted this year. He reported that the MSBA board is meeting in mid- to late-November and again in January. Chairman Pope believes the MSBA saw the facility for what it is and noted that they may not make all of their decisions by January. He reported that they asked a number of questions concerning the willingness of the community to move forward with the project and the city’s ability to pay for it.

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

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

#### **IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of October 19, 2016** – Mr. Gross reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting of October 19, 2016:

- District expenditures
- Food services
- DPW open and closed tickets
- Budget transfers
- Fundraising, advertising, booster organization, and building alteration policies
- Transfer of funds to the police department
- Review of softball field facilities
- Advertising at the GHS softball field

#### **X. ACTION**

**A. Transfer of Funds to Gloucester Police Department** – After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor, 0 opposed to authorize the CFO to request approval to transfer \$60,000.00 for the GHS School Resource Officer from the School Department budget to the Police Department budget.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 0 in favor, 7 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced vote to transfer \$60,000.00 to the police department budget. The motion failed.

- B. Authorization of Advertising at GHS Softball Field** – Mr. Gross made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to authorize the Gloucester High School Boosters to sell advertising at the GHS softball field for the purpose of maintaining the field. Chairman Pope requested that this matter be tabled until the policy regarding advertising on school property has been approved by the committee. The motion was withdrawn.
- C. Acceptance of Grant** – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$1,000.00 to East Gloucester Elementary School for the spring 2017 production of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

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

**VOTED:** 0 in favor, 7 opposed to reconsider the above-referenced vote to accept the above-referenced grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation. The motion failed.

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

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier reported on the MSBA’s visit to East Gloucester School to corroborate the condition of the building in relation to the Statement of Interest that was submitted. He also reported on the high school roof project, noting that the contracts have been put together by the city for both the owner’s project manager and designer. In addition, test cuts were taken on the roof yesterday.
- B. Elementary School Plan – Next Steps** – Chairman Pope recommended waiting until the committee hears from the MSBA about its eligibility before taking any further steps on the plan. Ms. Teixeira expressed concern with not doing anything until January because she does not want the MSBA to be deterred by the letters that have been sent to the committee by East Gloucester residents. She would like to hear from the rest of the community to see if any new ideas or concerns come out.

Chairman Pope reminded the committee that both the School Committee and the City Council voted unanimously in favor of the Statement of Interest that was submitted, which did not mention anything about the location of the school. There was a discussion about the messages contained in the letters sent to the committee and the fact that the options for the location of the school will be narrowed down during the feasibility stage.

Chairman Pope noted that at least half of the concerns the committee heard at the recent meetings were about the site and that the MSBA is not looking at the site at this time. He stated that they are more concerned with the city's ability to pay for the project. Chairman Pope reported that he told Diane Sullivan that he has not heard anyone say that it can't be done and that it will be very hard to get a sense of whether the community will support a debt exclusion until we have a better plan of exactly what we are going to do.

Kathy Clancy stated that she wants the community to know that the committee is discussing maintenance and improvements to the other buildings, noting that there are projects on the capital improvement plan which are discussed and moved forward based on funding and urgency.

Mr. Favazza expressed concern with an annual 5% increase in construction costs and the ability to get a debt exclusion override in five years for another new school. He believes the most cost-effective way to do it would be to go through the process once with current rates.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the committee to wait to hear from the MSBA before taking any further steps on the elementary school plan.

- C. Plum Cove Renovations** – Chairman Pope reported that the city treasurer identified some funds that could be made available to complete the renovations at Plum Cove. Mr. Lafleur indicated that Kevin Buckley will take a tour of the school tomorrow. Chairman Pope reviewed the work that will be done, and there was a discussion about the timing of the project.
- D. Equipment for Girls Hockey Team** – Ms. Teixeira reported that she was contacted by Mandy Milan, who was instrumental in starting the girls' hockey team, about a concern regarding equipment. Athletic Director Julie Smith reported that winter registration has not begun yet and that there will be enough equipment for the girls' team. Dr. Safier stated that it should have never been in question as to whether or not the team was going to be outfitted.
- E. Parent Drop-Off at West Parish** – Mr. Favazza reported that he is hearing from West Parish parents that the drop-off is "worse than it used to be" and that there are still cars lined up on Concord Street. Kathy Clancy stated that her understanding is that there are a lot of parents that could have their kids on the bus that are dropping them off. Mr. Favazza expressed concern that this new site can't handle the capacity of the cars that use the site and that the new gym doesn't have enough room for people to watch a basketball game.

Dr. Safier stated that there have been no formal complaints and reviewed the parking situation there. He indicated that he will check in with the principal to see if there are concerns.

Chairman Pope stated that there are a number of reasons the committee should try to encourage people to take the bus, namely traffic and ecology, but he is not sure how to do that. He noted that Dr. Imel reported that drop-off is not a problem but that parents come early to pick up their children after school. Ms. Puglisi stated that she lives in West Gloucester and heard recently that one of the problems with parents putting their kids on the bus is the lack of sidewalks on Essex Avenue.

**XII. 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 October 26, 2016 at 9:05 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*