

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**Amended School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, October 24, 2012  
City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium  
7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Val Gilman, Assistant Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Melissa Teixeira  
Tony Gross  
Mayor Carolyn Kirk  
Roger Garberg (7:04 p.m.)

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent  
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance and  
and Operations  
Erik Anderson, GHS Principal

**Also Present**

City Councilor Paul McGeary  
City Councilor Sefatia Romeo-Theken

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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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** – Chairman Pope welcomed the audience from Cape Ann TV.
- III. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Amy-Beth Healey of 13 Calder Street is the parent of three children in Gloucester Public Schools. She stated that her oldest daughter, who is in high school, had a slight back injury over the weekend, which prompted Ms. Healey to start looking at the weight of backpacks, especially since she could not lift her daughter’s backpack to help her bring it into school. She reported that the general rule is that a backpack that is carried on a regular basis should not be more than 10 percent of the person’s body weight. She showed her daughter’s backpack and the binders that she has to carry on a regular basis, which weigh 40 pounds. Ms. Healey noted that funds are available for technological access to text books and stated that when and if money becomes available, a great way to benefit all students would be to provide some technological options for those who can use them, such as CD-ROMs, online access, flash drives, etc., as well as extra copies of textbooks that could be left at home for those students who do not have additional access. She stated that two of her eighth grader’s classes will soon have online access for their books. She also pointed out that in researching this matter, she found that there are access codes available for at least two ninth grade textbooks and that one of the textbooks originally came with a CD-ROM, which is now gone. However, there is no way that parents can purchase any of this. She believes the schools need to make this option available.

City Council Vice President Sefatia Romeo-Theken of 287 Magnolia Avenue spoke to the committee as a health care advocate about Resolution #3 regarding reimbursement for health insurance coverage for medically necessary treatment in the schools. She is concerned about how we are going to get reimbursed for those expenses and that other communities will push

children out of special education so they can be reimbursed. She believes it is wrong that schools cannot be reimbursed for special education students' treatment in school.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None**

**V. RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy thanked the Cape Ann Museum for hosting the annual GEF celebration in appreciation of their donors and celebrating the work that the foundation helps to put in our schools.

**VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Erin Jermyn and Nathan Frontiero introduced themselves and updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: cross-country team, new theater program advisor and auditions, ceremony honoring Dr. Goodwin, Interact Club lobster roll fundraiser, NHS community service event at Pathways, and students visiting from Ireland. Both Erin and Nathan stated that they would be staying for the discussion of the GHS attendance policy.

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

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**B. Special Program Subcommittee Meeting of October 19, 2012** – Chairperson Gilman reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the GHS attendance policy at its special meeting on October 19, 2012. Dr. Safier reviewed the criteria upon which the policy was developed, a chart comparing other districts' attendance policies, and GHS attendance statistics for last year showing large numbers of absences and tardies, which he believes calls for raising the expectation on attendance. He also provided a transcript request form and an actual transcript, which shows only the student's final grade and number of credits.

Dr. Safier indicated that the policy has been revised since it was last presented to the committee and noted that it includes the potential for an attendance failure and grade restoration. There is also an appeal process included in the policy.

Chairperson Gilman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, to conduct a first reading of the Attendance Standards & Procedures for Gloucester High School, and Mr. Anderson did the first reading of the policy. The committee discussed the following matters:

- Vacations planned and paid for before the policy is approved – Dr. Safier believes those “planned absences” should be grandfathered. Chairman Pope suggested having a waiver period for parents/guardians to notify the principal of planned absences previously booked and paid for.
- Reasons for absenteeism – Bullying, lack of interest, etc. Dr. Safier indicated that the role of the Dean of Students is student well-being. Mr. Anderson stated that the Student Services Team meets weekly to get students back on track with interventions. Mr. Garberg would like to be able to see data to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.
- Suspensions being counted as absences

- Students' eligibility to participate in school events – Mayor Kirk believes this is unclear and needs to be clarified.
- Attendance Review Team will consist of one of the Deans of Students, the assistant principal, the student's guidance counselor, and possibly the school nurse.
- Students who are more than 7 minutes tardy to class must meet with Dean of Students.

The following changes were made to the policy:

- The following sentence was added at the end of the third paragraph under "Attendance Requirements" on page 1: "If a student has accumulated three (3) unexcused absences to school in a quarter, parents/guardians will be notified by the Dean of Students to arrange for a parent/guardian conference."
- The word "days" was added between the words "three" and "after" in the third to last paragraph on page 2.
- The word "allowable" was replaced with "unexcused" in the last sentence of "Planned Absences" on page 3.
- The word "am" was replaced with "a.m." in the first paragraph on page 4.
- The word "justifiably" was replaced with "justifiable" in the first paragraph on page 4.
- The word "term" was replaced with "quarter" in the fourth paragraph on page 4.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of the Attendance Standards & Procedures for Gloucester High School, with the amendments noted above.

Mr. Garberg proposed an amendment to the policy that suggests that data will be collected as to the reasons the student and parents/guardians give for the absences on each instance in which a student is sent a letter concerning absences, which data will be periodically reviewed with the School Committee. Mrs. Gilman seconded the proposed amendment. After discussion, the amendment was voted down, 1 in favor, 6 opposed.

Mrs. Gilman thanked the Student Advisory Council members for participating in the deliberation with the School Committee.

## **VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **A. Approval of Minutes**

1. Program Subcommittee of October 3, 2012
2. School Committee of October 10, 2012
3. Special Program Subcommittee of October 19, 2012
4. West Parish Ad Hoc Communications Committee of October 22, 2012

- B. Acceptance of Scholarship** – To accept the Boucher Family Academic/Athletic Scholarship in the amount of \$500.00.

Mr. Garberg removed Item 1 from the Approval of Minutes.

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

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

Mr. Garberg requested that the Program Subcommittee minutes of October 3, 2012 be amended by changing the word “surveying” to “asking” in the first full paragraph on page 2.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Program Subcommittee minutes of October 3, 2012 as amended.

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

- A. Superintendent’s report** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Site-Based Council/School Committee Meetings – Dr. Safier noted that on February 15, 2012, the School Committee voted 6 in favor, zero opposed to support attending and participating in a two-way dialogue with site-based councils beginning in the early fall. He stated that he will notify principals that they can expect to be contacted by their liaison regarding arranging for School Committee members to meet with their respective site-based councils.
2. Police Officer in Schools – Dr. Safier reported that Sergeant Mike Gossem envisions a police officer visiting each school for an hour every week or two to meet with students and possibly participate in physical education or health classes in order to promote comfort among the students with the police department. Sergeant Gossem will make a presentation to the Leadership Team on November 7th. Dr. Safier noted that the regional safety meeting is on November 1st in Rockport.
3. New Unbudgeted Education Costs to Date
4. Comparison of Low Income/ELL/Sped Numbers by School – Dr. Safier stated that the average of low income students in the elementary schools is 44.8 percent. Mrs. Gilman suggested that this percentage be used instead of the 30 percent indicated in the Plan for Effective Learning Communities (PFELC) when the committee addresses the equal distribution of high needs students. She noted that shortly after the 30 percent number was defined in the PFELC, the district instituted bus fees and athletic fees due to budget cuts. This, in addition to the economic downturn, possibly led to an increase in the number of parents/guardians applying for free and reduced lunch.

5. North Shore Newsmakers and Cape Ann TV
6. Update on Evaluation System – Mr. Bach updated the committee on the October 16th professional development day in which teachers continued their work on professional practice goals. He indicated that the process has been challenging but has resulted in a very high level of discussion and establishment of very clear goals. They are working through the stress and extra work by meeting regularly and continuing to survey teachers and inviting as much feedback as possible. He noted that buildings and teams are now moving at slightly different paces, and it is very hard to provide a “one size fits all” model. Therefore, they are differentiating for the last round of professional development on November 6th. Finally, he stated that the principals and program leaders have stepped up and put in a lot of work and are now carrying a lot of the individualized presentations and team work.

On November 6th, the teachers will be discussing how growth in student learning is measured. They recognize that teams are in different places in their understanding of the new Common Core Standards in order to create the best assessments possible. Rather than forcing teachers to create an immediate artificial measure, they are being given time and structures to research best practice and understand the standards in depth and then to work over the course of the year to put together good common assessments and take them through a cycle of working together and getting feedback. The administration will do everything they can to make time available during the school day when possible so that teachers can work together.

7. MASS Educational Funding Legislative Concerns – Chairman Pope noted that the foundation formula recognizes 3.75 percent of enrolled students as special needs students and that Gloucester’s special needs students represent 19.4 percent of enrolled students. He believes the fact that the same percentage is used for every community in the Commonwealth is not right. Dr. Safier added that our budget for special education is approximately 25 percent of the entire budget for 19.4 percent of the students. Kathy Clancy reported that she asked the Department of Education why they couldn’t have a range of additional assistance for those communities that are above state average, and the reply was that they do not want to encourage districts to declare more students as special education students.

## **IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)**

- A. **Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of October 17, 2012** – Chairperson Clancy did not report on this meeting since the minutes have not yet been prepared.

## **X. ACTION**

- A. **First Reading of GHS Attendance policy** – See IX.B.
- B. **School Committee Rules of Procedure 2012** – Chairperson Gross indicated that Attorney Stonberg reviewed the Rules of Procedure and that her suggestions were taken into account. He then made a motion, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, to adopt the School

Committee – City of Gloucester Rules of Procedure 2012. After discussion, he amended his motion as follows:

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to delete the last sentence of Rule 4, paragraph C of the School Committee – City of Gloucester Rules of Procedure 2012.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to delete the last unlettered paragraph of Rule 4 of the School Committee – City of Gloucester Rules of Procedure 2012.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to add the words “for approval” at the end of the last sentence of Rule 7, paragraph A, subparagraph a.

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to adopt the School Committee – City of Gloucester Rules of Procedure 2012 with the amendments noted above.

- C. MOU Regarding Fuller School** – Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Chairman Pope, to request from the Mayor a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Gloucester and the Gloucester School Committee to ensure that the occupied portions of Fuller School (administration, transportation department, and preschool) remain available to the GPSD until a mutually agreed upon relocation is determined and to ensure that those occupied spaces are adequately maintained. She then amended the motion as follows:

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

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to request from the Mayor a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Gloucester and the Gloucester School Committee to ensure that the occupied portions of Fuller School (administration, transportation department, and preschool) remain available to the GPSD until a mutually agreed upon relocation is determined and to ensure that those occupied spaces are adequately maintained and to further ensure that Fuller School will be available for students if the West Parish School building project requires temporary relocation of students.

Dr. Safier stated that the feasibility study will be looking at the possibility of repair, renovation or a new school and that three plans will be brought forward to see which is the most cost-effective and educationally sound.

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

**A. MSBA Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the School Building Committee has selected an OPM and that there will be an approval meeting on November 5th at the MSBA offices. Chairman Pope indicated that once the OPM is approved and we have a contract with them, arrangements will be made to bring the OPM in to have a discussion. Mrs. Gilman stated that the West Parish Ad Hoc Communications Committee agreed to have a meeting on November 13th at 1:00 p.m. in the Mayor’s office and discussed inviting the OPM to that meeting to hear their strategy on outreach.

**B. MASC Resolutions/Legislative Priorities/Delegate Form** – Kathy Clancy believes that the committee should support all of the resolutions. She suggested that the City Council look into why there is a law stating that students between the ages of 3 and 22 are covered by the school district instead of medical insurance.

Mrs. Gilman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garberg, to support Resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and to ask Kathy Clancy to draft a letter on behalf of the superintendent, School Committee chair, and Kathy Clancy to sign. After discussion, the motion was amended as follows:

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to support Resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Mrs. Gilman made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to appoint Roger Garberg to represent the Gloucester School Committee at the MASC/MASS Conference on Friday, November 9, 2012. After discussion, the motion was amended as follows:

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to appoint Roger Garberg as a member and Melissa Teixeira as an alternate of the Gloucester School Committee to attend the MASC/MASS Conference on Friday, November 9, 2012 for voting purposes. If neither the member nor the alternate is available to attend on that day, Kathy Clancy will write a letter stating the School Committee’s preference to submit at the conference.

Mrs. Gilman noted that Gloucester is not receiving the minimum of Circuit Breaker funds and that the committee needs to keep reminding our legislators that we are under the minimum requirement.

**C. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings**

**D. Letter of Notification from GAEP to Commence Bargaining**

- E. Equal Distribution of High Needs Students** – Chairman Pope stated that it is clear that there are underperforming schools in the district and that those schools have a high percentage of high needs students. He would like to refer this matter to the Building & Finance Subcommittee. Mrs. Gilman stated that since the Program Subcommittee generated the Plan for Effective Learning Communities, she believes the matter should be referred to the Program Subcommittee to review the new numbers received from Dr. Safier and to get his recommendations. Chairman Pope indicated that his rationale for referring it to B&F is because that subcommittee is already engaged in performing a needs assessment of all of the buildings, which could be part of the same conversation.

Mayor Kirk suggested that Dr. Safier’s chart be collapsed to reflect high needs students across the board so that there is common terminology. She also suggested that the superintendent look at the latest research on how to address the achievement gap in terms of student demographics and report to the Program Subcommittee. She also believes this matter belongs in the B&F Subcommittee as it relates to enrollment. She suggested referring it to both subcommittees with those scopes loosely defined, and the committee agreed. Chairman Pope indicated that this is not a pressing issue.

- F. Legislative Update** – Kathy Clancy reported that she met with Rep. Ann-Margaret Ferrante a week ago to talk about legislative topics and that any legislation that the committee would like Rep. Ferrante to file is due at the end of December.

- G. Helmets** – Mrs. Gilman reported that the sign at the O’Maley skate park regarding helmets is rotted and there is no information stating that helmets are required for children under 17. She requested that the city take care of this matter. She also suggested that the police officer who will be visiting the schools could talk with students about the importance of wearing helmets.

- H. GEF Memorandum of Understanding** – Dr. Safier reported that he received a draft MOU between the GPSD and the Gloucester Education Foundation, which he would like to include on the next School Committee agenda.

- XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – None. Chairman Pope stated that he sent a letter to the GTA asking for a week’s extension for resolution of the grievance. Ms. Teixeira reminded the committee that at the next Executive Session, she will be amending the minutes of the August 29, 2012 Executive Session.

- XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of October 24, 2012 at 9:51 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary*