

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 26, 2011
City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium
6:45 p.m.

Members Present

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Roger Garberg
Michelle Sweet

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham
Principal Debra Lucey
Principal Gregg Bach (7:27 arrival)

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 6:54 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman thanked Cape Ann TV for televising the meeting and reminded the public that hearing impaired devices are available at the City Clerk's office. She recognized Debra Lucey, Brian Tarr and Tom Markham and indicated that Mayor Kirk will not be attending the meeting and that Tony Gross will be arriving late.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – Chairperson Gilman reported that she and Dr. Safier spoke to the City Council at last night's public hearing on the urgent need for the new phone system for the school district. She communicated the School Committee's recent unanimous vote to support this purchase, and Dr. Safier spoke about the technical, safety, and business requirements. Chairperson Gilman added that School Committee members Teixeira and Clancy also attended the meeting, as well as school officials, Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr, IT Director Grant Harris, and GHS Principal Bill Goodwin. Chairperson Gilman commented that our committee was grateful that the City Council unanimously voted to approve a loan authorization of up to \$200,000 for the new phone system, which should be up and running within 60 days.

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

VI. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – Nathan Frontiero and Emily Ericson introduced themselves and updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: automotive technology classes, business management classes, technology and biology class, Docksidiers performances, seniors' semiformal, college rep visits, field hockey, boys' soccer, NHS blood drive, holiday can drive, Italian Club, and ROTC iPad raffle.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. School Committee Meeting of October 12, 2011

B. Schedule of Future Meetings

Program Subcommittee – Friday, November 4, 2011 at 9:45 a.m.

Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room

Building & Finance Subcommittee – Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 4:45 p.m.

Location: GHS Guidance Conference Room

Sawyer Medal/Recognition Night – Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: GHS Lecture Hall

C. Acceptance of Grants

1. To accept a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the C.A.S.IT. Inc. to the GHS Italian Program.
2. To accept a grant in the amount of \$98,139 from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation (received \$33,472).

Mrs. Sweet removed the Program Subcommittee meeting from the Schedule of Future Meetings, and Chairperson Gilman removed Item 2 under Acceptance of Grants from the Consent Agenda.

It was unanimously

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

VIII. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

A. Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Safier updated the School Committee on the following matters:

1. Pathways grant
2. Meeting with K12 Insight
3. MSBA Science Lab Initiative and Statement of Interest (SOI) Resubmission – Dr. Safier reported that MSBA is prepared to send us a declaration of removal of the West Parish project for FY12 since we have not been able to go forward

with this project. They will contact us each year when the filing period is open and invite us to join if we are ready. Dr. Safier requested that this matter be referred to the Building & Finance Subcommittee for discussion. He also recommended bringing this matter to the city to discuss whether the city and School Department are prepared to resubmit an SOI.

With respect to the new science lab initiative, Dr. Safier indicated that there are similar financial requirements for this project. There is no immediate need for funds. However, if the initiative is approved, MSBA would need a guarantee sometime in the late spring.

Chairperson Gilman reminded the committee that she would like Dr. Safier, Tom Markham, Kathy Clancy, and a member of city administration to meet with Katherine Craven before she leaves MSBA in December to find out who her replacement is and so she can pass on the work that she did in our favor to support this West Parish MSBA initiative. Dr. Safier stated that he spoke with Brian McLaughlin last week and Diane Sullivan this morning.

4. Publicist and Arts Festival Positions – Dr. Safier reported on a couple of stories that have been in the newspaper over the last week or so. He stated that training will be provided for the publicists on how to effectively talk to the press. Mr. Garberg suggested that “Good Morning Gloucester” would be a great place to post stories.

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

V. RECOGNITIONS

O’Maley School S.A.I.L.S. Program – Kathy McLearn, a guidance counselor at O’Maley, together with Paula Gray, guidance counselor, and Rebecca Wetter, school psychologist, presented a video on the S.A.I.L.S. Program to teach O’Maley’s core values, including the development, implementation and promotion of the program, how it is used to teach behavioral expectations, and future steps. Chairperson Gilman requested that the video be posted on the website and that the group come back with the students to show the five one-minute videos. Chairperson Gilman thanked the group for coming and for what they are doing for our students at O’Maley.

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

IX. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Building & Finance Subcommittee Reports of September 21 and October 19, 2011** – Chairperson Clancy stated that she has already reported on the September 21st meeting. She reported that the Building and Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its October 19, 2011 meeting:

- Food Service Financial Report – Chairperson Clancy stated that a list needs to be put together of the capital needs for the kitchens. Dr. Safier indicated that it has been reported to the city that those capital needs will be included on the list of requests for free cash.
- Meal Payment Policy – See Agenda Item X.D.
- Point-of-Sale System Update – Mr. Markham reported to the committee on the new online payment service, which will be up and running within a couple of weeks. There was a discussion about the online system replacing the current manual system, and Mr. Markham indicated that that likely will not happen in the near future.
- Building Use Rates – Staying the same as last year’s rates.
- Thanksgiving Football Ticket Prices – The subcommittee discussed options for ticket prices, and no action was taken at this point in time. Ms. Teixeira reminded the committee that we only get half of the ticket price since the other half goes to the visiting team.

B. Program Subcommittee Report of October 7, 2011 – Chairman Garberg reported that the Program Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its October 7, 2011 meeting:

- K12 Insight
- Mass TeLLS and DSAC self-assessment surveys
- MCAS Review
- Chapter 71 Conformity Issues
- Parent Survey on School Choice – Dr. Safier indicated that we have received eight or ten responses out of 121 surveys sent out. He will put a report together on the information contained in the responses possibly for the next School Committee meeting. Kathy Clancy would also like to know why families are choosing in to the GPSD, which will be informative as to what we are doing well.

After a brief discussion on the topic of reestablishing a parent advisory council on special education, on a motion by Mr. Garberg, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, that the Director of Special Education reestablish a parent advisory council on special education per Chapter 71B, Section 3, with the emphasis on active recruitment of parent and guardian participation.

Chairperson Gilman read Chapter 71M, Section 38M regarding the definition of the student advisory committee and requested that the minutes of the Program Subcommittee meeting of October 7, 2011 be amended to include this definition. She indicated that the next step is for her and Dr. Safier to attend an upcoming Student Advisory Council meeting to discuss about how to implement this requirement.

X. DISCUSSION/ACTION

- A. Highlights from Public Hearing at State House on Charter School Funding Reform and Senator Tarr’s Working Group Bill, Senate 246** – Chairperson Gilman referenced the letter in the packet that was sent to the 10 representatives and six senators who serve on the Joint Committee on Education and thanked Stephanie Delisi for her help in sending out these letters. She also indicated that Senator Tarr spoke at the joint hearing about his support of the Gloucester citywide resolution on charter funding, which gave Chairperson Gilman the perfect lead-in to talk about the resolution.

Kathy Clancy reported on the annual meeting of Citizens for Public Schools on October 15th at which she, Mr. Garberg and Chairperson Gilman made some good connections and were involved in discussion groups on chapter 70 and charter funding reform. She stated that Representative Carl Scortino is sponsoring a bill on MCAS testing and trying to get a more comprehensive way of assessing high school graduation.

Kathy Clancy reported that she and Chairperson Gilman also spoke on the need to reform commonwealth charter school funding and accountability at the State House hearing. She indicated that she felt the joint commission on education seemed very concerned about finding ways to make things better for the good of all public school students.

At the hearing, Chairperson Gilman stated that Senator Katherine Clark asked whether our School Committee had attempted to compromise with the charter school board. Chairperson Gilman explained that the compromise that was presented to the board of the charter school back in August of 2010 requested that their board consider an in district innovation school model with housing in one of our existing buildings. After a lengthy meeting in Commissioner Chester’s office, the School Committee’s proposal was not supported by the GCACS board as they felt that they had an obligation to the parents that had signed up to move forward with their charter.

Chairperson Gilman also mentioned in her speech the school committee motion from three years ago, before the charter school was approved, in which the School Committee unanimously voted not to support the proposed GCACS under the current funding arrangements. The motion requested that Governor Patrick impose a moratorium on new charter schools until the local aid picture improved and until an

education funding review was complete. It further requested that the governor clarify the relationship between charter schools and proposed readiness schools, which are now innovation schools.

Finally, the original motion of the School Committee back in November 2009 requested that the governor consider funding charter schools by taking the costs out of the foundation budget as a whole, spreading the cost among all districts in the state. This history, as explained at the joint hearing, shows that the inequities surrounding charter school funding has been a problem for a long time. Chairperson Gilman believes that Senator Tarr's working group on charter schools may address some of these issues.

- B. MASC – School Committee's Selection to Serve on the District Governance Support Project/RTTT** – Chairperson Gilman indicated that she spoke with Bob Gass, the project manager, about some of Mayor Kirk's concerns that were voiced at the last School Committee meeting. He suggested that he come and present more information about the project at the Program Subcommittee meeting on November 4th. He is interested in finding out what the key topics are that need to be addressed by the School Committee with Dr. Safier.

Chairperson Gilman requested that each of the members give Dr. Safier privately the top issues that they feel we are going to be addressing as a School Committee, which will be brought up at the Program Subcommittee meeting. The full committee will then be able to make a more educated decision on whether or not to participate in this project further.

Ms. Teixeira questioned why the information would be presented at the Program Subcommittee meeting as opposed to a full committee meeting. Dr. Safier indicated that Dr. McGrath stated that she would be willing to speak to the full committee after November 9th, when Joan Connelly and Dr. Gass will be presenting at the MASC conference. After hearing Ms. Teixeira's concerns, Chairperson Gilman stated that, since she would like everyone on the committee to feel comfortable with this professional development opportunity, she recommends that Dr. Gass not come to the Program Subcommittee meeting. Alternatively, if the group agrees, she will ask Dr. Gass and Dr. McGrath to present at the next full School Committee meeting.

Chairperson Gilman requested that we still commit to asking school committee member's to present our priorities to help with the discussion on our professional development needs. Dr. Safier stated that the first session of the program will include a self-assessment that will identify our needs. He reviewed the curriculum topics of the program and indicated that the committee needs to be interested and willing to explore tools that MASC would provide to "improve functionality" and also needs to be open to receiving feedback on how they might improve as a committee. Dr. Safier stated that this would entail approximately 8-10 hours of work.

Ms. Teixeira questioned whether this program would constitute public meeting work or training that is not being recorded. Mrs. Gilman stated that like other governance sessions, these meetings would be conducted in open session. Chairperson Gilman indicated that Bob Gass feels that the committee can continue to look at the top items that we have in this upcoming year and prioritize what those are, and this professional development could be steered to helping us to remain focused on academic achievement.

Chairperson Gilman requested that each member of the committee get their top two or three priorities in to Dr. Safier. She will let Bob Gass know that he does not need to come out for the Program Subcommittee meeting and will see if he is available on the 16th of November for our next full School Committee meeting.

- C. Liaison Updates** – Ms. Teixeira reported that she attended Veterans’ second PTO meeting and updated the School Committee on the following events: book fair, kids Halloween Hop, holiday craft fair, anti-bullying enrichment program, adult Halloween dance at DES Club, Election Day bake sale, and the Santa parade. Ms. Teixeira stated that she discussed with the PTO what her role should be with them, and they strongly encouraged her to attend their meetings. She indicated that Dr. Safier will be attending the PTO meeting on November 14th and that the PTO will invite other school officials to future meetings.

Ms. Teixeira also reported that she attended the GFAA annual meeting and updated the committee on the following matters: Newell Stadium golf ball drop fundraiser, expansion of Run Gloucester race, new model for work days for students, new member Dave Amero, resignation of Greg Verga, Fight Night at Fuller School, art show, and amendment of the bylaws.

Chairperson Gilman reported on the following GEF events: annual appreciation gala event at the temple, GHS reunion outreach, community council board meeting, alchemy arts gala auction, and annual appeal. She indicated that GEF news will now be communicated to each PTO on a monthly basis to try to get more parent involvement and support and that the foundation has now funded through grants and donations over \$2 million in programs and support for the GPSD.

With respect to the Youth Initiative Task Force, Chairperson Gilman stated that the adult code of conduct has been announced at all GHS home football games and distributed to fans at the concession stand and by students at the home games.

Chairperson Gilman reported that she will begin to attend the GHS Student Advisory Council meetings. She also reported that she attended back-to-school night at Beeman School, which was well attended. She has not yet attended a PTO meeting but plans to do so in the near future.

- D. First Reading of the Meal Payment Policy, File EFD** – Kathy Clancy did the first reading of the Meal Payment Policy.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to approve the first reading of Meal Payment Policy, File EFD, as read.

- E. End-of-Year Financial Projection** – Mr. Markham reviewed the following documents:

- Necessary Budget Reductions for FY12, which is simply a recap of the budget reductions that were necessary last spring.
- FY12 End of Year Fiscal Projection Report #1
- Known and Projected Expenditures beyond FY12 Budget (Unanticipated) totaling \$214,682, which led to the recent implementation of a budget spending freeze for FY12. There was a discussion of SPED costs and whether the city is aware of these unanticipated costs.

- F. SPED Parent Advisory Council** – Not discussed.

- G. Program Subcommittee Meeting on November 4, 2011** – Mrs. Sweet mistakenly thought this meeting was scheduled for the same time as the MASC conference in Hyannis.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to reinstitute the Program Subcommittee meeting on Friday, November 4, 2011 at 9:45 a.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

- H. Acceptance of Grant From Tower Foundation** – Chairperson Gilman removed this item from the Consent Agenda simply to emphasize the importance of the grant and thanked the foundation for helping the GPSD with this grant. She requested that Kathy Clancy draft a thank you letter to Tracy Sawicki from the Tower Foundation on behalf of the School Committee.

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to accept a grant in the amount of \$98,139 from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation (received \$33,472).

XI. OTHER COMMUNICATION

- Chairperson Gilman indicated that the next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 9th and that some of the members will be at the conference in Hyannis on that day. The School Committee meeting was rescheduled to Wednesday, November 16, 2011 from 4:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the GHS Library. There will be no School Committee meeting on November 23, 2011.
- Ms. Teixeira indicated that there will be a Personnel Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, November 1, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of October 26, 2011 at 9:06 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*