

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 28, 2018
District Office Conference Room
2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA
7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson
Tony Gross, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira Prince
Michelle Sweet
Joel Favazza
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken (7:18 p.m.)

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent
Gary Frisch, Director of Finance
and Operations
Patty Wegmann, Special Education Director
Bryan Lafata, Athletic Director
Jeffrey Destino, Asst. Track Coach

Also Present

City Councilor Val Gilman

Recorded by 1623 Studios

- 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 AND MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR BRIAN TARR**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Mr. Lafata introduced the following fall season athletes, who received citations from the School Committee:

NEC All Star Awards: Andrea Napoli, boys soccer; Mohamad Alsweidani, boys soccer; Lauren Wood, girls soccer; Elizabeth Schuster, girls soccer; Ruby Melvin, field hockey; Bailey Marshall, field hockey; Rachel Rallo, field hockey; Leah Rudolph, cross country (not present); Nicholas Poulin, cross country

NEC All Conference Awards: Anthony Suazo, boys soccer (NEC South MVP); Elijah Elliott, boys soccer, Jemima Grow, field hockey; Mia Salah, field hockey (not present); Cate Delaney, field hockey (not present); Colby Mitchell, golf (not present)

Moynihan Lumber Student-Athletes of the Month: Maisie Grow, girls soccer (September) and Tracy Wood, field hockey (October)

- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Elizabeth Schuster and Jemima Grow introduced themselves and updated the committee on the following events at GHS: Thanksgiving pep rally and game, Thanksgiving baskets, blood drive, and Christmas baskets.

(Mayor Theken joined the meeting at 7:18 p.m.)

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of October 17, 2018
2. Program Subcommittee of October 11, 2018
2. School Committee and Executive Session of October 10, 2018

B. Approval of Warrants

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

- E. Approval of Scholarship** – Marilyn H. Goodwin Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$500.00

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the Consent Agenda as noted.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- A. Special Education Update** – Ms. Wegmann reported that the district currently has 773 students identified as having a disability, which is 25.3% of the total student population. Similar districts in the DART analysis range from 18.4% to 23.2% and the state average is 17.7%.

Ms. Wegmann reported that of the total number of students on IEPs, 61 are currently placed out of district and three students are tuitioned from a neighboring district into the high school and the preschool. She indicated that three students who were placed out of district were brought back into the district. However, it was necessary to find more restrictive programming for a number of students. At this time, she projects that there will be fewer than 55 students placed out of district in FY20.

Ms. Wegmann reported that Governor Baker passed new legislation last month that will require earlier screening of students for dyslexia. It will also require training of classroom teachers on the signs of dyslexia and intervention strategies, as well as adoption of evidence-based remediation programs. She indicated that the Department of Education is currently reviewing the legislation and that we should have more guidance on it in the spring.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the elementary schools currently use a variety of screeners. She also indicated that the district will be contracting with a neuropsychologist to provide training on elements of neuropsychological evaluations that have been provided by parents. There was a discussion about the cost of screenings.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the current enrollment in the preschool is 135 students, 75 of whom receive special education services. Last year at this time there were 60 students with special needs and 58 peers. She indicated that another classroom will be added after the holidays, which will be an integrated class in the morning and a substantially separate class in the afternoon. The projected numbers for that class are currently small; however, a number of referrals are coming in from Pathways and Early Intervention.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the preschool hosted a family dinner recently, which was sponsored by the Open Door. The families were provided with cookbooks and information regarding SNAP benefits, and Backyard Growers conducted activities with students.

Ms. Wegmann reported that GHS Transition Coordinator Nancy Goodman is putting together a transition fair for families with students on IEPs to be held on December 12th. There will be 14 vendors who will provide information on transition services and conduct workshops on guardianship and eligibility for Mass. Rehab and Social Security benefits.

Ms. Wegmann reported that Dawn Leoni is leading the Special Education Parent Advisory Council and that she held a workshop last month on creating an IEP binder. Ms. Wegmann reported on the upcoming workshops sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

Ms. Wegmann reported that during the November 6th professional development day, a speaker from the Federation presented a workshop for elementary and high school paraprofessionals. Each of the staff received a tool kit that included strategies for recognizing students that may have experienced trauma and changes that can be made in the classroom for those students.

- B. Fieldhouse Floor/Track** – Chairman Pope discussed the history of problems with the fieldhouse floor and asked Mr. Lafata to discuss how the condition of the floor and track programmatically impacts PE classes and the athletic department.

Mr. Lafata stated that the track team has been unable to host meets at home due to the track condition. He noted that there are orange cones nailed to various parts of the floor to prevent injuries and stated that the fact that our student athletes are not able to perform at their home facility is a huge problem. He also commented on the problem with the basketball hoops and the bleachers and how that affects practices for multiple teams. He stated that it is about pride and taking care of the facilities.

Mayor Theken stated that a meeting should be scheduled to come up with a plan. Mr. Gross asked the mayor if she is absolutely committed to finding the funding to fix the fieldhouse floor, and the mayor stated that she is going to try.

Jeff Destino, assistant track coach, stated that the track team has not had a home meet in four years, meaning current seniors will never have had a home meet for the indoor track season. He added that those seniors will not be recognized for senior night and the boosters will not get any money from concession sales. There is no doubt in his mind that the track team is smaller than it has ever been in recent memory because we do not have an indoor facility, and our kids do not have a sense of home pride. He stated that four years is enough and it is time to find the money for this project because our kids deserve better. Finally, he expressed the importance of including a track coach when conversations begin about updating the facility.

Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sweet, to request funding from the city administration for a designer plan to fix the fieldhouse floor. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn and the following motion was made.

Kathy Clancy made another motion, seconded by Ms. Sweet, to request from the city administration a plan to fix the fieldhouse floor. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn and the following motion was made.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was

VOTED: 6 in favor, 1 present (Mayor Theken) to request that the Superintendent work with city administration, the Department of Public Works, the Athletic Department, and an architectural firm to develop a plan to remediate the fieldhouse floor and track.

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

1. Reading Fluency Data
2. Comprehensive School Health Service Grant Application
3. New Edwin Report: Attendance and Suspension Monitoring Report
4. Essex County Learning Collaborative December 4: Showcase of Learning – Endicott College – Mr. Bach and Ms. Wegmann spoke about this collaboration.
5. GEF Grant – Empowering Girls for STEM Careers – Mr. Bach spoke about the grant.

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

(At this time the agenda was taken out of order.)

B. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 28, 2018 – Mr. Gross reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting of November 28, 2018:

- GHS bleachers and basketball hoops
- Shop floors
- O’Maley kitchen floor
- Load bearing issues in shops
- Food Service compostable containers
- Girls’ bathrooms at O’Maley
- Special budgetary transfer for SRO

A. Personnel Subcommittee of November 27, 2018 – Ms. Teixeira Prince reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed the Security Cameras in Schools and Buses policy at its meeting of November 27, 2018.

X. ACTION

A. First Reading of Security Cameras in Schools Policy, File ECAF – After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira Prince, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to waive the actual reading of the Security Cameras in Schools and Buses policy, File ECAF.

Dr. Safier reviewed the provisions of the policy and procedures.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira Prince, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to approve the first reading of the Security Cameras in Schools and Buses policy, File ECAF.

Chairman Pope suggested that the policy be posted on the district website for review and comment by the public. Dr. Safier noted that the policy can be put into effect at any time and that there will be ample notification to parents and signage on the buses.

Ms. Teixeira Prince requested that a copy of the policy be provided to the Transportation negotiating team once it is approved, since some of the provisions of the policy may need to be impact bargained. Finally, Chairman Pope requested a demonstration for the committee on how the cameras work.

B. Acceptance of Grants

1. Gloucester Education Foundation Grants

- a. \$2,500.00 to West Parish School – Dr. Safier indicated that this is an annual contribution from GEF.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Teixeira Prince, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation to West Parish School in the amount of \$2,500.00 for the 2019 theatre production.

- b. \$2,500.00 to East Gloucester School – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira Prince, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation to East Gloucester School in the amount of \$2,500.00 for the upcoming theatre production.

- c. \$24,000.00 to GHS – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira Prince, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation to Gloucester High School in the amount of \$24,000.00 for Empowering Girls for STEM Careers.

2. Perkins Grant – After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Perkins Grant in the amount of \$25,600.00.

In response to a question by Ms. Teixeira Prince, Dr. Safier reviewed costs paid by the Perkins grant.

3. Energy North Inc. Grant – Chairman Pope reported that this grant requires that a poster be displayed. He reviewed the history of this grant and indicated that in the past, the posters have been displayed in the auto shop teacher’s garage, which appears to be a violation of the grant requirement.

Ms. Sweet made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to accept a grant from Energy North Inc. to Gloucester High School in the amount of \$500.00. During discussion, Mr. Favazza pointed out that the grant requires that the poster be displayed in the school that receives the grant and that there also needs to be a demonstration of community awareness of the grant. He stated that he is not comfortable accepting a grant if the requirements are not going to be met. At the same time, he is also uncomfortable following through with the requirements since it constitutes advertising for Exxon Mobil. Mr. Favazza referenced File KCD, Public Gifts to the Schools, and there was a discussion about advertising in connection with donations. The motion was withdrawn.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Teixeira Prince, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to table the vote on the acceptance of this grant until the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Teixeira Prince requested that Mr. Porter be invited to the next meeting to discuss why the grant is important to him.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. **MSBA Project Update** – Chairman Pope reported that the building committee will be meeting on December 6th to review the timeline and preparation for the MSBA kickoff meeting at East Gloucester School on December 12th.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Favazza – yes
Mr. Gross – yes
Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Sweet – yes
Ms. Teixeira Prince – yes
Mayor Theken – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:02 p.m. for the purpose of discussing GTA and GAEP grievances and to enter back into regular session only to adjourn.

XIII. 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 November 28, 2018 at 9:52 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*