

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 2, 2015

Beeman Memorial Elementary School Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Secretary
Tony Gross
Michelle Sweet
Jack O'Maley
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

Administration Present

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

Also Present

Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal
City Council President Paul McGeary

-
- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:03 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** – Chairman Pope recognized City Council President Paul McGeary, who will be stepping down at the end of the year, for all of the work he has done over the past six years. Mr. McGeary thanked the committee for all the time they gave him and stated that nothing is more important than seeing to the education of our children. He applauded the work that the committee has done and encouraged them to continue it. Mr. Gross thanked Mr. McGeary for being such a huge supporter of the schools and for taking time to understand the issues the committee faces.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Hannah and Noah introduced themselves and updated the committee on the upcoming Red Cross blood drive and the ongoing food drive.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. School Committee and Executive Session of November 18, 2015
 2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 12, 2015

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

E. Out-of-State Field Trip – GHS Boys Ice Hockey to Bellows Free Academy and Junction Regional High School in Vermont for annual preseason two scrimmages on Friday, December 4, 2015

F. Acceptance of Gifts

1. O'Maley Innovation Middle School

- \$1,667.52 from Hockmeyer Photography
- \$5,000.00 from Verizon for the purpose of rebuilding sail carts

2. GHS Electrical Vocational Technical Program from Allied Building Products

- 4 pieces of Unirac SM Rail Mill 168”
- 12 pieces of Unirac SM Endclamp D DK
- 8 pieces of Unirac SM BND Midclamp DK SS
- 24 pieces of Unirac L-Foot Serrated W/T-Bolt CLR
- 24 pieces of Quick Mount E-Flashings

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

VOTED: 6 in favor 0 opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

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

1. Preliminary 2015 District and School Accountability and Assistance Levels – Dr. Safier reported that he will be participating in a media call with the Department of Education next Wednesday as a result of the work that the district has done.
2. Center for District and School Accountability Team Visit

3. Calendar – Chairman Pope noted that the dedication of the GHS Music Room to David Adams will take place on December 11th at 7:00 p.m. Also, Dr. Safier stated that there will be a parent meeting to discuss effective communication with adolescents on December 14th from 6-8 p.m. in the O’Maley library.

On a motion by Mr. O’Maley, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept the Superintendent’s Report.

- B. Presentation on Elementary School Facilities** – Chairman Pope reviewed the options suggested by Dore & Whittier with respect to an assessment of the remaining four elementary school buildings and stated that that report is posted on the website. He indicated that the School Committee is looking for input from parents and the community to help the committee make decisions. He noted that the options are deliberately not monetized so that the discussion can focus on the best plan rather than the cheapest plan.

Dr. Safier presented a slide show containing information on each of the buildings, which he stated is to be used to open up some conversation from the public about wants and needs. 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. At the request of a gentleman in the audience, the PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the website tomorrow.

Chairman Pope noted that the preschool will also need to be taken into consideration, since it is currently overcrowded and expanding. He also stated that the committee will be moving forward on getting a new enrollment projection, since the sixth grade enrollment has increased significantly over the last couple of years. 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 color-coded 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, making our schools community schools as opposed to neighborhood schools.

Chairman Pope indicated that the School Committee will have a meeting in each of the elementary schools to get input from the public on what they feel is lacking in the elementary schools 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.

- C. Public Input on Elementary School Facilities** – Principal Ellen Sibley stated that her school community is hoping that they can be part of the planning process because if Beeman is not going to be rebuilt in the near future, their priorities include, among other things, the general condition of the building, the lack of space for teachers’ offices, and

the need for space to accommodate the influx of ELL students. She noted that there is enough land at Beeman for a new school to be built onsite, and then another school could move into the old building while that school is being rebuilt.

Chairman Pope reviewed the MSBA application process and timeline, and there was a discussion about the sequencing of potential projects, debt exclusions and overrides, and the poor condition of all of the buildings. Kathy Clancy encouraged people to provide feedback at an upcoming meeting or by email about what is important to them to have in the schools and how big of a school can they tolerate.

(Mr. McGeary left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.)

Val Gilman expressed the importance of encouraging people to visit the schools and participate in events there and suggested having realtors and businesspeople act as ambassador for the schools. She also suggested looking at when the city will be losing and gaining debt in order to determine when school projects should be introduced. Finally, she noted that a 2012 survey showed a preference for smaller learning communities and stated that that should be revisited.

Chairman Pope stated that the School Committee's goal is to have a plan in place for submission to the MSBA by April of 2017. The committee will continue to get input from the public in the upcoming months with meetings at the other elementary schools, which are all open meetings, and will be working on getting a more accurate enrollment projection. Chairman Pope cited a UMass report in which Gloucester's population was projected to go down by about 4,000 people in 15 years.

Mr. Gross stated that he would like to hear from the public what they want their elementary school community to look like and what is needed in the new schools as opposed to what is wrong with the current schools. A gentleman in the audience suggested that each school establish a committee to determine what the school should look like and why. He also suggested taking advantage of Department of Education resources to visit schools that are using technology well and how to align the physical space with the use of technology.

(A 10-minute break was taken at this time.)

- D. Superintendent's Evaluation** – Chairman Pope stated that the committee will be conducting the superintendent's evaluation at the next meeting. He noted that there is a link to Google Docs that the members can use to fill out the evaluation report.
- Dr. Safier reviewed the hard copy of the Superintendent's evaluation material, including the superintendent's goals and the evaluation report. Chairman Pope requested that the members send their individual reports to him by December 12th.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None.

X. ACTION

- A. Acceptance of Grant** – Gloucester Education Foundation grant in the amount of \$11,125.00 to O’Maley Innovation Middle School in support of the Aquaponics in the Classroom project in Grade 6

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

VOTED: 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$11,125.00 to O’Maley Innovation Middle School in support of the Aquaponics in the Classroom project in Grade 6.

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

VOTED: 0 in favor, 6 opposed, to reconsider the Committee’s vote to accept the above-referenced grant. The motion failed.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Kathy Clancy reported that the Interiors Subcommittee met a couple of weeks ago to select fabrics and finishes. She noted that there is a binder identifying specific furniture with a checklist to make sure all of the furniture is accounted for. Dr. Safier reported that the Technology Subcommittee met today to identify items that will be in each room. That subcommittee is also discussing how to hook up the infrastructure to the school in a timely fashion.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by Mayor Theken, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor 0 opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of December 2, 2015 at 8:50 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*