

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Val Gilman, Vice Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Melissa Teixeira  
Roger Garberg  
Tony Gross

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent  
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Also Present**

Jim Duggan, Chief Administrative Officer  
City Councilor Paul McGeary  
City Councilor Steven LeBlanc

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Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Sherri Lewis of Magnolia Avenue stated that she does not believe O’Maley is the place for 10-year-olds because it is a middle school. She knows our teachers will do their best to make it fine for the children, but there is a certain developmental age that belongs at middle school. She hopes the committee finds a different alternative.
- Lisa Groleau of Western Avenue stated that she is happy we are moving forward with such an amazing project for our schools and our kids. She knows that the committee tried to keep all of the kids together, but she thinks sending the fifth graders to O’Maley will be a wonderful experience for them. She is working at West Parish now and stated that the students she has talked to are excited about going to O’Maley. Knowing our teachers and the administration, they will be well supported and will do very well there. She fully supports sending the fifth graders to O’Maley and keeping the kindergarten students with the general student body of West Parish at St. Ann’s.
- Carlotta Patten of St. Joseph Lane spoke as a parent of a fourth grader and a second grader at West Parish. She stated that she was a little taken aback when she first heard about the option of O’Maley but realized her son is going there in sixth grade anyway. She thinks he is ready for it and trusts the judgment of the district to make sure that the kids are properly integrated with the West Parish community. She is sad that all of the students are not going to be together, but if the committee decides on St. Ann’s she supports the fifth graders going to O’Maley. We have to keep our eye on the prize, and maybe short-term pain is worth long-term gain.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.

- V. **RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy announced that the West Parish fifth grade is selling “West Parish Strong” bracelets to help raise awareness and stop bullying. She also thanked Mr. Garberg and Mrs. Gilman for their service on the School Committee, recognizing their many contributions through the years. She then presented them with gifts on behalf of the committee, including dog tags made by the high school ROTC students.

Mrs. Gilman recognized Jack Favazza, a GHS sophomore, who is playing Peter Cratchit in “A Christmas Carol” at the North Shore Music Theater. She also thanked Leslie Sellers, Jen Luzitano, Heidi Dallin, Nick Neyeloff and Roy Genness for their training of performing arts students.

Mrs. Gilman recognized Cape Ann’s top fall athletes, noting that of the “Super 25,” eleven are from Gloucester: Calvin Kipruto, Alex Dahlmer, Kenna O’Maley, Everest Crawford, Kacie Quinn, Jordan Pallazola, Conor Harris, Jason Lattof, Drew Shairs, Julia Lamoureaux and Curtis Quinn. In addition, Mrs. Gilman recognized the Gloucester Schooner Festival Committee for their recent \$1,000 donation to GHS sailing.

Mr. Gross announced that Heidi Dallin’s youth acting workshop production of “Holiday Delights” will take place this weekend at the Gordon Theater on East Main Street.

Finally, Chairman Pope read a letter from Lee Swekla to the committee, thanking everyone who made the dedication of the O’Maley Commons in memory of her late husband such a wonderful event. He also thanked Mrs. Gilman and Mr. Garberg for their dedication to the school community over the years.

- VI. **GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Cody Eaton introduced himself and updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: new forensic science program and visit to State Police barracks, International Relations class fundraiser competition, Colleen Ritzer Fund, Open Door food drive, and the fall pep rally. He also stated that the Moose Youth Awareness program would like to recognize Mrs. Gilman for all of her work with the program over the last five years. Finally, he invited the committee members to attend a Student Council meeting on December 18th.

VII. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Approval of Minutes**

1. School Committee Meeting and Executive Session of November 12, 2013
2. School Committee Meeting of November 13, 2013
3. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of November 20, 2013
4. Personnel Subcommittee Meeting and Executive Session of November 26, 2013

B. **Acceptance of Grant** – To accept a Gloucester Education Foundation Grant in the amount of \$500.00 to O’Maley Science Teacher, Amy Donnelly

C. **Approval of Warrants** – Cover Sheets

Chairman Pope removed Item A3 from the Consent Agenda.

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

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

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

**X. ACTION**

- A. Approval of Schematic Design for New West Parish Elementary School** – Chairman Pope reported that the building committee has recommended that the School Committee approve the schematic design submittal to the MSBA, which includes the use of St. Ann’s School as the swing space. He stated that the schematic design must be voted up or down. In other words, the School Committee does not have the ability to amend the motion.

Michelle Rogers from Dore & Whittier presented a slide show on the existing conditions of West Parish School, the preferred solution site plan and floor plans, and exterior elevations, use of the Fuller site as swing space at a cost of \$15.9 million, and use of St. Ann’s as swing space at a cost of \$1.3 million.

OPM Kevin Buckley reviewed the costs associated with the project and the use of St. Ann’s as swing space. He indicated that the hard cost for the new school and the site is \$29,995,000, and the total project value including St. Ann’s is \$39,574,111. Soft costs include items such as architect’s fees, OPM fees, furniture, fixtures, equipment, technology, surveys, testing, and permitting.

Mr. Buckley reported that, currently, the city will be reimbursed for 48.27% of the cost by MSBA. However, there are opportunities through the LEAD program to add additional percentage points. Of the \$39.5 million cost, \$17 to \$18 million would be reimbursed by MSBA. However, swing space is not reimbursable.

With respect to the structural soundness of St. Ann’s, Jim Duggan reported that he has spoken with the real estate director for the archdiocese who stated that he has no evidence whatsoever about any type of structural failings of St. Ann’s School.

Mr. Gross clarified the capacity of the new school, noting that there will actually be 21 classrooms, including special education classrooms. With 18 students per kindergarten class and 23 children in all other classrooms, the capacity would be 399 students, leaving room for growth if it is needed in the future.

Chairman Pope read a memo from Fire Chief Eric Smith stating that Dore & Whittier’s code review summary of both the Fuller and St. Ann School sites meets all current enforceable code requirements for fire and life safety. Chairman Pope also read a memo from Building Inspector Bill Sanborn stating that Dore & Whittier’s code review summary is an accurate depiction of the code requirements of each building.

Dr. Safier addressed the swing space and the movement of Grade 5 versus kindergarten. He stated that most of the district’s resources and staffing is centered on kindergarten students and that it would not be possible to distribute 60 kindergartners across the other four schools since it would raise the class sizes to unacceptable levels. Placing three additional kindergarten classes at Beeman would put a huge strain on the staff there, and placing them

in one of the other elementary schools would require a number of modular units at considerable expense. Busing would also be a problem. Placing the kindergarten students at the high school would require two programs at the high school to be moved at considerable expense. Finally, three transitions to three different schools for our youngest students is not the most constructive path forward.

Dr. Safier noted that the Grade 5 students would be secluded at O'Maley in a space near Harbor House, and guidance counselors would be available to work with them. They would have use of the stage, the full gym, and the library. Dr. Safier reported that as recently as this morning, the West Parish site-based council has endorsed the idea of Grade 5 going to O'Maley. Chairman Pope pointed out that the space at O'Maley for the fifth grade costs nothing, as opposed to the cost of modular units to house kindergarten students, which is not in the budget.

Dr. Safier reported that a transition team will be established to address issues such as moving costs, timing of the move, packing and unpacking, emptying of St. Ann's, storage, security system, transportation, start time, inventory of furniture, morning queuing, traffic and parking, scheduling of specialists and prep time, recess areas, and obtaining a modular unit for one substantially separate class to be located at Beeman.

Mr. Dore explained that with this vote, the committee will be locking down the budget associated with the project, as well as the overall size of the building and the specific spaces within the building. He stated that there is an ability to change some of the details, such as doors between classrooms and location of cubbies, but there are guidelines that need to be followed. Mr. Buckley indicated that a number of contingency figures are built into the overall budget. He also explained the Construction Manager at Risk process.

Mrs. Gilman pointed out that to use the Fuller site as swing space would cost taxpayers an additional \$14 million, which she believes is an exorbitant amount of money to spend on a two-year swing school when our six other buildings need at least \$6 million worth of work to make them 21st century schools.

Mr. Duggan stated that the 30-year payment for the city's portion of the debt to use St. Ann's as the swing space is \$1.3 million annually. To use Fuller instead of St. Ann's would add another \$880,000 to that number. In other words, the city would be paying over \$2 million annually for 30 years for space we would only be using for a couple of years. In addition, Mr. Duggan noted that the cost of utilities at Fuller was \$300,000 a year, whereas the cost of utilities at St. Ann's is approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year.

Chairman Pope read the following paragraph contained in a memo from CFO Jeff Towne: "The estimated annual principal and interest payments on the debt described above (\$22,114,969 city's share of the cost) totals \$1,320,000 for 30 years. An estimated 4.25% interest rate was utilized. This amount will take up all of the capacity the city has for issuing debt over the next eight to ten years with projects already voted by the City Council taken into consideration. Any future capital projects would have to be paid out of the operating budget and not out of the debt that is coming offline in the future. The debt will have to be masterfully monitored and timed perfectly for the West Parish Elementary School project to adhere to the budget."

Chairman Pope stated that, essentially, if Fuller were to be used as the swing space and the city bonds that money, there would be \$882,000 coming out of the city's operating budget every year, which would affect every other city and school service, including teachers in classrooms, firemen in fire stations, and policemen on the streets.

Mr. Gross stated that investing money in a property that is not owned by the city does not sit well with him. However, investing \$15.9 million in Fuller does not make sense because there is no plan on whether and how it will be used in the future. He would also be fearful of cost overruns in the renovation of Fuller and noted that St. Ann's is currently permitted as a school and only has to meet the codes that were in place when it was built.

Mrs. Gilman stated that she is disappointed with the state of the Fuller School but noted that the School Committee made a decision to put money into the other buildings in which we have children. She does not want the new school to be delayed and believes this is the best financial decision.

Ms. Teixeira thanked the West Parish parents for voicing their concerns. She stated that it is disappointing that all of the students cannot stay together at St. Ann's but she believes this is a good compromise. After touring Fuller, it became clear to her that the building was in worse condition than she originally thought. She expressed concern that if we go a different route than St. Ann's, the funding of the project would be challenged by the City Council and the project may not go forward.

Mr. Garberg stated that renovating Fuller is an extraordinarily expensive option and the money that the city would put into it would not take away from just the opportunities of other kids but would also potentially impact the fifth graders at West Parish. He believes he needs to protect the education resources that we have both for them as well as for others in the community. He noted that the "Fuller Fifth" experience worked because those parents channeled their concern into the school, which made a remarkable difference in the way the school performed. He is confident that the West Parish community will be actively involved in making this option work.

Kathy Clancy stated that she is excited for a beautiful new school that will solve so many problems at West Parish which concern her every day, such as the heating system. If the option for the swing space was Fuller for the sake of keeping all of the kids together, the project would be delayed a year and she cannot imagine what could happen at West Parish during that year. She noted that communities have to do a lot to get new schools built and there is always pain, but the project that has been put forth by the designer is the most cost effective solution and the one that keeps the project on track.

Chairman Pope stated that we have the opportunity to build a state-of-the-art elementary school in Gloucester, which we have not seen since the '50s, and that we cannot lose sight of the prize. There is not a perfect solution for the swing space, but St. Ann's will be safe, economically feasible, and educationally sound. The fact that all of the students cannot stay together is regrettable, but there are far worse situations that communities face. Fuller School is a valuable asset but it does not work as an elementary school. He stated that the committee declared it surplus a year ago so that the city could find a viable solution to reuse it. However, to do that on the back of the West Parish project is not the right thing to do.

Chairman Pope thanked the building committee, Kevin Buckley, Dore & Whittier, and the West Parish parents who have supported the project.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Gross – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Garberg – yes  
Mrs. Gilman – yes

To approve and authorize the Owners Project Manager to submit the Schematic Design related submittals to the MSBA for consideration.

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

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Gross – no  
Chairman Pope – no  
Ms. Teixeira – no  
Kathy Clancy – no  
Mr. Garberg – no  
Mrs. Gilman – no

Not to reconsider the Committee’s vote to approve and authorize the Owners Project Manager to submit the Schematic Design related submittals to the MSBA for consideration.

**B. Approval of “Swing Space” for West Parish Students During Construction –**

Mr. Duggan reported that the going rate for leases in the Cape Ann area is between \$4 and \$7 per square foot and confirmed that the rent money will stay with St. Ann’s Parish as opposed to going to the archdiocese.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to request the city administration to secure a lease with St. Ann’s for use as a swing space for the West Parish students during construction.

*(A 15-minute break was taken at this time.)*

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

- A. Superintendent’s Evaluation** – Chairman Pope read the summative evaluation of Dr. Safier by the School Committee, noting that this was the first year of the new evaluation system that was put in place by the state and adopted by the School Committee. Members of the committee commended Dr. Safier for his integrity and hard work, the progress he has made in the district, his use of best practices, and his well-rounded approach to the job.

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

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Summative Evaluation of Superintendent Rich Safier by the Gloucester School Committee dated December 11, 2013, indicating an overall rating of “Proficient” by unanimous consent.

- B. Budget Development: Guidelines and Schedule** – Mr. Baumhauer reviewed the budget timeline dated November 14, 2013. He noted that the Budget & Finance Subcommittee should be involved in the budget development process earlier than in previous years. Mr. Gross expressed concern with the amount of time between the presentation of the budget to the School Committee and its vote for public hearing on March 12, 2014.

Dr. Safier reported on increases that will be necessary to a level service budget, including another Grade 5 teacher at Beeman, an additional preschool teacher and paraprofessional, expansion of co-teaching at Veterans to Grades 2 and 5, and an ELL teacher. He would also like to consider budgeting for surveys to be done next fall. Reductions to the budget include loss of bus fees at West Parish and loss of the Tower Grant and Race to the Top grant.

There was a discussion about including the site-based councils in the budget process, and Mrs. Gilman reminded the committee that they had made a commitment to go to their respective site-based council meetings to talk about the budget process.

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

1. Pacing of Reforms: PARCC, District Determined Measures
2. MCAS and PARCC Registration – Follow-Up
3. Educator Evaluation System: What Does Proficiency Mean? – Dr. Safier stated that any statements made in the newspaper that “Proficient” is considered to be a “C” is inaccurate. Proficient performance is considered to be fully satisfactory; demanding but attainable.

Mr. Bach stated that he started working with teachers on the new evaluation system a year-and-a-half ago, and the consensus among all of the teachers and administrators was that they would be proud to be rated as proficient in all of the categories. The guidance of the state indicated that a rating of “Exemplary” is an extraordinary level of performance, and Mr. Bach reported that the district has teachers who are exemplary in some of the indicators. Furthermore, Mr. Bach noted that this was the first year of the new evaluation system, and there was a common understanding

among teachers and administrators that the focus would be on understanding what proficiency is.

With respect to the newspaper referring to the evaluation process as clearly an afterthought, Mr. Bach stated that he has never seen such sustained work over a year-and-a-half. Every principal gave up an enormous amount of time to plan in the summer, to do substitute release time, and to meet every single teacher. In addition, the district spent three or four times the amount of hours that were required by the state.

Mr. Bach believes it was a huge mistake for the newspaper to compare towns because the districts are not comparable and each town had to determine what their approach would be in the pilot year, how to build trust, and how to learn about the process. He was very disappointed to see things characterized that way because it does not represent the work that the administration and countless teachers did.

Mr. Gross stated that to consider a rating of “Proficient” as a “C” grade is an affront. He believes that the total mischaracterization by the editor of the newspaper is an absolute abomination and that he should be fired for the total disservice he did to the community.

Ms. Teixeira commended the efforts of the district for handling this important issue that arose as a result of the newspaper article. She stated that it is unfortunate that the issue is being used as a political tool to show which communities may have more to offer in their district by having a higher number of exemplary teachers.

Mrs. Gilman suggested that Dr. Safier provide the Commissioner of Education with a summary of what he had to do as a result of the comparison of our district to others. She stated that it may also be in the district’s best interest for Dr. Safier to use his network at MASS to make the same statement to other districts in the state. She feels badly that our teachers were put down for things they did not deserve to be put down for because of the misrepresentation in the newspaper.

4. Update on Homeless Education
5. Attendance Officer – Mrs. Gilman referred the review of Ms. Clem’s job description to the Personnel Subcommittee. Mr. Gross requested that Ms. Clem be invited to the next School Committee meeting to be introduced to the committee.
6. Events – December 13th, Songs of Joy and Peace at East Gloucester Elementary School; December 14th, O’Maley Middle School Band and GHS Chorus at Universalist Church; December 19th, Concert of Peace and Friendship at Beeman Elementary School. Mrs. Gilman suggested that the list of upcoming events be posted on the district website.

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

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

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 20, 2013** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed raising the limit on the Professional Development revolving account and declaring certain items from the GHS library/media center surplus at its meeting on November 20, 2013.

Mr. Baumhauer reported that revolving accounts are set at a certain level and approved by the Cit Council at the beginning of every year. The Professional Development account has already reached its spending limit of \$20,000.00 and Kenny Costa suggested raising it to \$40,000.00.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to raise the limit on the Professional Development revolving account to \$40,000.00.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, that the following items from the GHS Library/Media Center be declared surplus:

- 30 solid state televisions
- 10-15 VHS players
- 26 overhead projectors
- Approximately 30 assorted carts

- B. Personnel Subcommittee of November 26, 2013** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed the Memorandum of Agreement with the Gloucester Teachers Association and the Gloucester Educator Evaluation Agreement at its meeting on November 26, 2013.

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

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Gross – yes  
Chairman Pope – abstain  
Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Garberg – yes  
Mrs. Gilman – yes

To approve the Memorandum of Agreement Between the Gloucester Teachers Association and the Gloucester School Committee under the following terms:

The parties agree to the following changes to the September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013 collective bargaining agreement:

- (a) Effective September 1, 2013, the teachers' salary schedule will be increased by 2%.
- (b) Effective September 1, 2014, the teachers' salary schedule will be increased by 2%.
- (c) Teachers new to the district who hold a preliminary or initial license and have not previously taken the course are required to enroll in "The Skillful Teacher" within their first three years of employment. The district will provide the course at no cost to the teacher in Gloucester and will attempt to offer the course both during the school year and during the summer break.
- (c) The teachers will participate in professional learning communities and will be assigned to one of the following duties per day: Professional learning communities (PLCs) will be corridor duty or cafeteria duty. In a seven-day cycle, teachers will participate in PLC meetings during at least three days of the week. Teachers will be permitted to work on PLC objectives outside of PLC meetings during at least one day, and teachers will fulfill a corridor duty or cafeteria duty during the remaining days in the cycle. PLC time is to be used, among other things, for collaborative school-based work on improving teaching and learning and the assessment, recording and reporting of student achievement. Program leaders and anyone teaching a sixth class are exempt from these duties. Teachers will not be assigned an advisory period during the 2013-14 and the 2014-15 school years.
- (d) The provision regarding the GTA president's teaching position will sunset at the end of the 2014-15 school year unless the parties agree to extend it. This applies to a high school teaching position only.
- (e) The Gloucester Educator Evaluation Agreement will be attached as an appendix to the contract.
- (f) Teachers may use five days of their accumulative sick leave on an annual basis to care for an ill or injured member of the teacher's immediate family or a member of their household.
- (g) Quarterly meetings will be conducted between the association president, association building representative, and the superintendent and other members of the administrative team.
- (h) The contract will be modified to reflect a two-year agreement effective September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2015.
- (i) An explanation of the vocational salary is included in the contract, recognizing trade experience and vocational training.

**X. ACTION (Continued)**

- C. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with Gloucester Teachers Association – See Item IX.B.**
- D. Raising the Limit on Professional Development Revolving Account – See Item IX.A.**
- E. Declaration of Surplus Items from GHS Library/Media Center – See Item IX.A.**

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

- A. MSBA Update** – Dr. Safier reported that the Construction Manager at Risk procurement process is underway and that seven applications were received from construction management firms. A subcommittee was formed to review the firms, and four of them have been qualified. All four firms visited West Parish today, and their full application is due by January 10, 2014. The notification of the interviews will take place on January 13th, and the interviews should be completed by January 23rd. The hope is that the city will select and approve the CM in early February.

Mrs. Gilman suggested offering a tour of the Avery School in Dedham to the West Parish teachers who expressed concern about cubbies being located in the classrooms. She also inquired about scheduling tours of St. Ann’s and O’Maley for parents.

- B. Thank You Letter from Leonora “Lee” Swekla**

- C. GRADE Results** – Mr. Garberg stated that the original review of this data suggested that our GRADE assessment was level in the last few years. However, it appears that the scores drop considerably when you look at cohorts, and he was surprised by the size of the changes in the data. Mr. Bach indicated that there is a report coming from BSRI and that Ed Moscovitch will be attending an upcoming School Committee meeting to present an analysis of GRADE scores.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – None.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of December 11, 2013 at 10:36 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*