

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

City Hall – Kyrouz Auditorium

6:30 p.m.

Members Present

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

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent (6:54 p.m.)
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance and
and Operations

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. **RECOGNITIONS**
 - A. **Performance by GHS Chorus** – Dr. Safier introduced David Adams, the program leader, and stated that he and Mr. Adams taped a show at Cape Ann TV that will air tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. The GHS Chorus then performed three holiday songs.

A five-minute recess was taken.

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

- VI. **STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Trina Lafata and Tess Benson introduced themselves and updated the School Committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: NHS blood drive, track meet, JV hockey, student/teacher basketball game, Ugly Sweater Day, Pathways Christmas party, and the new attendance policy.
- III. **RECOGNITIONS (Continued)**
 - B. **Acknowledgment of Donation from Robert Amory** – Dr. Safier reviewed the list of photographic equipment donated to GHS by Mr. Amory and thanked him for his generous contribution. Mr. Bach noted that this is not the first time Mr. Amory has donated to the Gloucester schools and thanked him for his generosity and kindness and for looking out for our students. Mr. Bach reported that today he signed an approval for the purchase of cameras funded by the GEF. Mr. Amory stated that to be able to create opportunities and paths to discovery is something that his life as an artist has always been about, and it gives him great pleasure to make this donation. Chairman Pope thanked him for his generosity.

- C. **Other Recognitions** – Kathy Clancy recognized Elaine Webb, Mark Poulin and Stacia Therault from Varian/Applied Materials for volunteering for the “Big Fat Science Shows” in the schools last week.

Mrs. Gilman recognized the co-presidents of SEPAC, Tricia Reed and Jen Messier, for reestablishing this important committee. She noted that attendance at the meetings is averaging between 8 and 14 parents.

- IV. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Michelle Noyes of 18 Macomber Road is the parent of two GPS students and a GHS Boosters Officer. She spoke to the committee about high hockey gate fees. (See statement attached.) Chairman Pope noted that the \$30 increase in user fees reflects the fact that the GFAA is no longer supplementing user fees but is providing work days for students to earn \$30 or more towards their user fees.

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

- A. **MSBA Update** – Kevin Buckley from Knight, Bagge & Anderson, the Owner’s Project Manager for the West Parish project, reported that they are in the process of putting out a Request for Services for the designers. On February 4th, the designers’ submittals will be reviewed with the designer selection panel at the MSBA. The Superintendent, the Mayor, and Kathy Clancy will participate in this presentation. By October 2013, we should have the preferred schematic design, and then the designer will proceed to design documents, which will be completed by late spring/early summer of 2014. Bids will occur in July 2014, and construction will take place from September 2014 to September 2016.

With respect to keeping West Parish students on-site while construction is taking place, Mr. Buckley indicated that that determination will be part of the designer’s feasibility study process. Mr. Garberg noted that there is an issue about reserving Fuller School for possible use as a swing site for West Parish students and questioned when that determination would be made. Mr. Buckley indicated that the schematic design will not be completed until August/September of 2013. Therefore, in the late spring/early summer of 2013, we should have some sense about whether swing space is a possible and/or preferred option. The cost of relocating the students to a swing space is not reimbursable.

Mr. Buckley noted that his firm has been involved in projects in which a new school was built 50 feet from the old school while the elementary students stayed in school. He indicated that there would be clear separation between the contractor and the students by barriers and that everyone entering the construction site must be CORI checked and monitored daily by an onsite field representative. He noted that Plexiglas windows can be cut into the fencing so students can see what is going on and that activity on the job site can be included in lessons.

Ms. Teixeira questioned whether there are model elementary schools available, since there is additional reimbursement for model schools. Mr. Buckley stated that there are a limited number of model schools and that the MSBA has to invite you to participate in that program. He has just started to look at the available model schools, which are very limited and which he does not believe are good configurations. In addition, there may be modifications necessary to the model school, which may not make it a good choice. He recommended looking at what is available and not restricting ourselves to designers who only design model schools.

There was a discussion about “construction manager at risk,” which means that instead of putting the project out for general bid, contractors are invited to submit proposals. Those contractors are selected on experience and merit, and they give you a fee for working with you to develop a guaranteed maximum price. The theory is that you are getting a proven contractor with a track record for construction manager at risk that is part of the team early in the process. On the other hand, in public bidding, you are typically obligated to take the low bidder. All of this will be discussed and Mr. Buckley will be able to offer his advice as the project moves forward.

Dr. Safier reported that the West Parish PTO has questioned whether there will be adequate space for their students and programs in the new building. Mr. Buckley indicated that the new building has to be designed using the minimum standards of the MSBA and that we can request a variance in that space summary.

Mr. Buckley indicated that the MSBA will weigh in on whether the current school is renovated or a new school is built, either on the same site or somewhere else. However, it is imperative for the building committee and the School Committee to come up with the best scenario and present that to the MSBA.

Mr. Buckley recommended that he update the School Committee periodically as milestones are hit to make sure the committees are comfortable with the process. He stated that he will come in as often as needed.

V. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – None.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 28, 2012
2. School Committee and Executive Session (**Confidential**) of November 28, 2012
3. Personnel Subcommittee and Executive Session (**Confidential**) of December 5, 2012

B. Acceptance of Gift – Donation by Mr. Robert Amory of extensive photographic studio equipment to Gloucester High School, valued in the amount of \$50,000-\$100,000 (*amount to be confirmed*)

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.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

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

1. The State’s 9C Budget Cuts – Dr. Safier noted that the district will be losing about \$30,748 in circuit breaker reimbursement, which pays for costs for out-of-district students.

2. Budget Freeze – Dr. Safier reported that unanticipated expenses now total \$217,670, an increase of \$28,500 from a couple of days ago due to the need to increase both a .5 teacher and a .5 paraprofessional to full-time at the preschool in light of the increased number of referrals of children on IEPs who require substantially separate classrooms. He noted that at a meeting of citywide department managers yesterday morning, the Mayor indicated that requests for free cash should be submitted by December 21st and categorized as “needs” and “wants.” Dr. Safier indicated that the unanticipated expenses will be Item No. 1 on the School Department’s free cash need list.
3. Revised Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grants Allocation – Mr. Bach reported on the revision of this grant and indicated that rather than going back into the general budget, he would like to use the \$14,398 increase for a consultant to renew the kindergarten accreditation, which is a huge undertaking. This is something that Dr. Trubisz initially put in prior year grants. However, because of the lower allocation, it had to be taken out. The consultant would be able to advise us on the best accreditation program and then create a timeline and action plan for moving toward that accreditation.
4. Update on School Publicity – Mr. Bach reported that the idea of partnering with GEF for an educational forum was raised at a regular meeting with GEF members recently. They will be meeting tomorrow night to come up with some ideas for the forum, including technology and what it means to be a digitally literate district. With respect to reaching out to prospective kindergarten parents, Mrs. Gilman suggested that information be put in the “Goings On” sections of the two local newspapers.
5. Sawyer Free Library Community Innovation Challenge Grant
6. DART Review of Student Attendance: Percentage of Students Who Were Absent Less Than Ten Times in a School Year – Dr. Safier reported that in comparable districts, the schools that have had the highest MCAS scores are also the schools that have had the highest attendance rates. He stated that he plans to include in the budget for next year an attendance officer who would seek to meet the needs of our clientele first and, if necessary, apply the requisite pressures to get students into school.

Mr. Garberg suggested comparing more samples of schools that are not necessarily comparable to see if there is a correlation that suggests it is not just a fluke. Dr. Safier indicated that we would have to come up with a rationale for selecting the schools that we chose to compare. Mr. Bach noted that we could simply pick a school, regardless of where it is, and use the ten comparable schools in that demographic range. Mrs. Gilman suggested that the administration not spend too much time looking at more data and that perhaps Mr. Garberg would like to take on that task.
7. Holiday Season Calendar

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

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

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 28, 2012 – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee reviewed a report on facilities and the free cash request report at its meeting on November 28, 2012. She noted that the vote on the free cash request was rescinded at the December 10th subcommittee meeting.

D. Building & Finance Subcommittee of December 10, 2012 – Chairperson Clancy reported that the Building & Finance Subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting on December 10, 2012:

- Free Cash Requests – Dr. Safier reviewed the updated free cash requests and noted that the cost of purchasing tablets for teachers was removed from the list and replaced with \$15,000 to offset the cost of interest on a lease-to-purchase program. The updated list also includes ELMO document cameras for Beeman, Veterans and West Parish in order to provide near equity across the district with respect to this equipment. The new total for free cash requests is now \$530,570.00, which includes unanticipated expenses of \$217,670.00.

Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gross, to approve the request for free cash in the amount of \$530,570.00 as presented on December 10, 2012. After discussion, Chairman Pope made the following amendments to the motion:

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to add a note to the request for free cash stating that we reserve the right to ask for an additional supplemental appropriation to deal with expenses that may arise from the changing educational landscape in the community.

On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to add to the current unanticipated expenses of \$217,670.00 the amount of \$30,748.00, which represents the amount that is budgeted but will not be received from circuit breaker.

Mr. Baumhauer stated that the new total of unanticipated expenses is now \$248,418.00.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve a request for free cash in the amount of \$561,318.00, as presented on December 10, 2012 and amended above.

Kathy Clancy noted that the lockers and cafeteria tables are items that ideally would have been budgeted. However, since we were asked to remove them from our budget pending free cash, she hopes there is an understanding that these items will be funded by free cash. Mrs. Gilman reiterated her concern about the size of the lockers at O'Maley.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern about the safety of the cafeteria tables and strongly encouraged that they be a priority in our free cash request. Mr. Baumhauer reported that they have actually been replaced at West Parish and that school appropriation funds were used to replace half to three quarters of them at Beeman and East Gloucester.

Dr. Safier noted that he will be requesting that a Special School Committee meeting be scheduled for December 19th, at which he will present his recommendations for the tiered system of free cash requests.

- Fuller School MOU – Kathy Clancy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gross, to execute the Agreement by and between the City of Gloucester and the City of Gloucester School Committee regarding Fuller School as amended on December 10, 2012. Mrs. Gilman expressed concern about approving the agreement tonight because the committee has not seen the minutes from the meeting at which it was discussed. In addition, she reported that she reached out to a lawyer in the community who gave her some suggested revisions to the agreement. She requested that the motion be tabled until the committee reads through the MOU and possibly incorporates some of those suggested revisions.

Chairman Pope noted that the MOU was vetted by the committee's attorney and that the Building and Finance Subcommittee took her recommendations into consideration. For the record, he stated that if people want to communicate to the School Committee in a formal way, they need to do it through the chair and the superintendent and not through a random member if they want it to be included in the record.

Mrs. Gilman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garberg, to revise the last two paragraphs of the MOU as follows:

“Therefore, the City of Gloucester shall at all times ensure that the occupied portions of Fuller School currently in use and under control of the School Committee (administration, transportation department, and preschool) remain available to the School Committee and be adequately maintained by the City of Gloucester until a mutually agreed upon relocation that in the sole determination of the School Committee is determined adequate.

Additionally, the City of Gloucester shall ensure that the entire Fuller School property will be available and made suitable and educationally sound for students' use if the West Parish School building project requires temporary relocation of students.”

Kathy Clancy indicated that she will support the amendment because she believes the inclusion of more clarifying language will solidify the intent of the Building & Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Gross stated that he will not support the amendment because he has not seen it before and because the process of bringing it forward was flawed.

Ms. Teixeira expressed concern about the process, as well, since not all members had the opportunity to read the language that was submitted by this community member. In addition, since we are considering another attorney's suggestions, she would like Attorney Stonberg to look at it again. She also believes that the document she saw

first adequately addresses the concerns of the School Committee. Mrs. Gilman indicated that she sent the suggested revisions to the superintendent and asked him to forward them to the chair if he supported them.

Chairman Pope noted that the amendment is coming from Mrs. Gilman based on her judgment and that the source of the amendment is not up for discussion. Even though he has no problem with the process of how the amendment came forward, he will not support the amendment.

Mr. Garberg believes that the language is ambiguous in certain respects about the scope of the agreement. He suggested tabling the motion and referring the amended MOU back to the committee's attorney.

Mrs. Gilman believes that in a situation where there is a subcommittee meeting on Monday and a School Committee meeting on Wednesday and the members have not had an opportunity to see the minutes of the subcommittee meeting or put the documents out for the public to see, it would be a mistake to push something through without giving the public an opportunity to see it and provide feedback.

After discussion, on a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mr. Garberg, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to table the motion and to refer the proposed revisions back to the Building & Finance subcommittee.

- B. Personnel Subcommittee of December 5, 2012** – Chairperson Teixeira reported that the Personnel Subcommittee discussed the new superintendent evaluation process at its meeting on December 5, 2012.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, that the annual superintendent evaluation cycle begin in January and end in December.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, that for evaluation purposes, the superintendent's district goals be limited to three for the calendar year 2013.

- C. Program Subcommittee of December 6, 2012** – Since the minutes of this meeting have not yet been prepared, Chairperson Gilman will report on this meeting at the next School Committee meeting.

X. ACTION

- A. Approval of Fuller School MOU** – See Item IX.D.

- B. Approval of Initial List for Access to Funding from the City’s Free Cash – See Item IX.D.**

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS

- B. Free Cash Request Report – See Item IX.D.**
- C. School Committee Draft Overarching Goals –** Dr. Safier reviewed the three overarching goals, which were slightly modified to incorporate comments made by the leadership team. Mrs. Gilman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gross, to approve the proposed School Committee Overarching Goals dated 12/12/12 as presented. After discussion, she amended the motion as follows:

Amended Motion:

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the draft School Committee Overarching Goals dated 12/12/12 as presented for the purpose of public input.

- D. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings –** Chairman Pope noted that the December 19th B&F Subcommittee meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. Also, in light of the changing educational landscape, there will be a Special School Committee meeting on Wednesday, December 19, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. If City Hall is not available, the meeting will be held in the GHS library.
- E. Gate Fees for Hockey Games –** Chairman Pope referred this matter to the Building & Finance Subcommittee.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

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

To enter into Executive Session at 9:04 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining with all groups and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of possibly acting on an item that will be discussed in Executive Session and for adjournment.

X. ACTION (Continued)

- C. Free Cash Request –** On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to request an appropriation from free cash of \$130,000.00 to assist in contract negotiations for this year.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of December 12, 2012 at 10:10 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*

IV

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Michelle Noyes. I live on 18 Macomber Road in Gloucester. I am the parent of two Gloucester Public School students. I am also a Gloucester High School Boosters Officer. Both of my sons play sports including baseball, lacrosse, and hockey. I am speaking here tonight though as a hockey parent who is feeling the financial burden of increased user fees and high gate fees. (By high gate fees, I am referring to the cost of an admission ticket for the hockey games). Gloucester charges \$7.00 for adults and \$4.00 for students. This is the highest rate being charged in this area. Beverly, Salem, Danvers, Winthrop, Newburyport, Saugus, Rockport and Peabody all charge \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for students. Gloucester hockey players are also paying an increased user fee from \$350 last year to \$380 per hockey player per family. Student hockey athletes are also responsible for purchasing their own equipment. For two parents of a hockey player to go watch their child play, it cost an additional \$154 a season, and this includes only the home games. So what I am requesting from the school committee is to consider awarding a one parent gets in free pass to be used as admission to home games.

To break it down into more detail for you here are some statistics for this year.

Omaley Middle School Hockey has a 50% increase in numbers for the hockey team this year, which is great news for the future of the hockey program. There were 22 players on the roster last year and there are 33 players this year. That means the athletic department collected \$12,540 in user fees from the middle school team alone. That's \$4,840 more than last year. And there are no ice time fee increases this year to diminish that number. The one parent pass I am requesting if you were to put a price tag on it would cost 7 dollars for 20 parents times 11 games which comes to \$1,540. Which would leave the athletic department still in the plus from last year at \$3,300.

This small but thoughtful gesture from the school committee will represent your understanding and willingness to help families in hard economic times to keep their children involved in the sport they love to play. As school committee members it is crucial that you positively respond to this request for help from parents who are working so hard to give our cities youth, academic as well as athletic opportunities. Thank you.

Michelle Noyes

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