

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 14, 2016
District Office – Conference Room
2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Jonathan Pope, Chairman
Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson
Joel Favazza, Secretary
Melissa Teixeira
Tony Gross
Michelle Sweet
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

Administration Present

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

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – Gina Sargent stated she has been teaching at West Parish for 29 years and is a proud member of the GTA. She is one of hundreds of committed members who educate the children of Gloucester and stands with their bargaining team.

Susan Kenyon, who has been a teacher at O'Maley for the past 16 years, read the following petition, which she and hundreds of other GTA members signed:

As proud members of the Gloucester Teachers' Association, we sign below to document our full support of our bargaining team and to urge the Gloucester School Committee to quickly settle a fair and equitable contract.

Eric Leigh stated that he has been teaching at GHS for nine years. He stated that he fully stands behind the petition that has been submitted and asked that the committee realize the service that all GTA members have provided to the schools. He stated that they are working without a contract and are going beyond what they have been asked to do. He asked for a speedy resolution, especially at this time of year, and presented the petition to Ms. Teixeira.

(At this time, there was a five-minute recess while CATV set up video equipment.)

Grace Scola, a teacher at Plum Cove, stated that she stands with the GTA bargaining team.

Hugo Smith, a teacher at O'Maley, read the above petition that he signed fully supporting their bargaining team and urging the School Committee to quickly settle a fair and equitable contract.

Janell Andrews, a GHS teacher, stated that she stands with the GTA bargaining team and urged the committee to quickly facilitate a fair settlement.

- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairman Pope apologized that the Recording Secretary was not at the meeting and stated that Ms. Teixeira is taking notes and that the meeting is being recorded.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Dr. Safier recognized Gunner Muth and members of the JROTC for their upcoming participation in the first ever nationals to be held on April 22, 2017 in Irving, Texas. He noted that only fifteen schools nationwide qualified for this national meet.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Roy Kirwa introduced himself and updated the committee on the boys' and girls' hockey teams, the boys' basketball team, and the community blood drive to be held on Friday. Chairman Pope noted that the girls' hockey team won a scrimmage recently with a score of 5-1.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

- 1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of November 16, 2016
- 2. School Committee of November 30, 2016

B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets

C. Approval of Transfers

D. Referrals

E. Approval of Scholarship – Hospitality Financial & Technology Professionals New England Club Chapter Ginny Burke Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.00

Chairman Pope removed Item A.2 from the Consent Agenda.

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

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

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Summative Evaluation of Superintendent** – Chairman Pope explained the process of evaluating the superintendent and reviewed the summative evaluation of Dr. Safier by the School Committee. (See attached document containing comments made by committee members.) Dr. Safier thanked everyone for their support and stated all of

the paperwork doesn't mean anything unless you have people in the trenches that show us what commitment is all about on a daily basis. The teachers understand the need for constructive change and are willing to try new things, and that makes his job manageable and a pleasure.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept the Summative Evaluation of the Superintendent.

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

X. ACTION

- A. Notification to Enter into Negotiations with Superintendent for the Purpose of Renewing Contract** – Chairman Pope indicated that the committee must notify Dr. Safier by January 1, 2017 of its intention to enter into negotiations.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to notify the superintendent that the School Committee intends to enter into negotiations for the purpose of renewing his contract.

This matter was referred to the Personnel Subcommittee.

B. Acceptance of Grants

1. Massachusetts Department of Public Health Grant Increase – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept a Mass. Department of Public Health grant increase in the amount of \$3,000.00 (\$77,900.00 to \$80,900.00).

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

VOTED: 0 in favor, 7 opposed to reconsider the vote to accept the above-referenced grant. The motion failed.

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

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$6,418.00 for a pilot project at O'Maley Innovation Middle School in Life Sciences.

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

VOTED: 0 in favor, 7 opposed to reconsider the vote to accept the above-referenced grant. The motion failed.

VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT (Continued)

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

1. Evaluation: Proposed Amendments Re: Student Impact Rating
2. PISA Results Put Massachusetts among Top Nations
3. Northeast Education Consortium Annual Report and Recovery High Schools – Proposed Regulations
4. December 6 Professional Development Sampler
5. Calendar
6. Holiday Concerts/Performances

In response to a question from Chairman Pope, Dr. Unobskey reported that Jessica Minahan will be speaking with the middle school staff on March 7, 2017 about PBIS.

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 – None.

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

A. MSBA Project Update – Dr. Safier reported that the GHS Roof Committee met yesterday with P3, the OPM, and designers from Baker Wohl, who put together and costed out a preliminary schematic design to be submitted to MSBA by December 20th. Dr. Safier noted that the OPM is cognizant of the fact that the figure that they present is subject to adjustment in the future. He reported that the reimbursement rate is approximately 59% and it appears that most of the work will be reimbursable. He discussed the designer’s recommendations and indicated that there was a discussion about whether they should continue work on the schematic design while the MSBA is reviewing the project so that it can be completed during the summer. Dr. Safier stated that based on the funds that have already been appropriated and the cost estimate of continuing the design work, we will not lose anything by having them continue that work through January, February and March.

B. Condition of Newell Stadium – Mr. Favazza expressed concern with puddling on the track and the stands buckling and presumably sinking due to the fact that the stadium was built on an old dump that is affected by the tide. Chairman Pope reported that there is a building committee still in place and that they have been going back and forth with the contractor and the engineers about this issue. The two

theories as to why it happened are (a) that the slab is leaking and it is a frost heave, or (b) that it is settling. Chairman Pope reported that they are working on remediating the issue. Mr. Favazza believes it would helpful to have someone inspect the stadium to make sure this is not the first in a series of issues with the brand new stadium. Chairman Pope stated that the building committee is reconvening this month to review data and noted that the chairman of the committee pointed out that it had not moved over the summer, which would indicate that it is not settling and it must be due to frost. They have already done some remediation to eliminate standing water on the slab. Chairman Pope stated that he will get an update on the issue.

XII. 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 December 14, 2016 at 8:15 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*

School Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2016

Comments from School Committee Regarding
Superintendent's Evaluation

Mr. Gross praised Dr. Safier's correction of inconsistencies in curriculum between the grades, which he believes is one of the most important factors in moving the district forward. He hopes Dr. Safier will stay on and continue to do that work.

Mr. Favazza noted that because of the way the goals were stated, some of the criteria had not been met. For example, he could not come to a conclusion as to whether the MCAS goal had been met because we do not have the data yet. However, he stated that overall, he is very pleased with Dr. Safier's performance and looks forward to him continuing on as superintendent.

Ms. Sweet thanked Dr. Safier for everything he does. She stated that he continues to lead the district with dignity and respect, continually improves education, and empowers staff to be part of the decision-making process. When he sees a need for improvement, he attacks that need with purpose and direction. He fosters high achievement among the staff and students which creates an effective learning environment that provides our students with so many successes. She stated that it has been a pleasure to work with him and his staff and that she looks forward to working with them over the next year.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she gave Dr. Safier a proficient rating overall. However, because of the language of some of the goals, her evaluation indicated that there was some progress made. She stated that she understands that they were measurable goals that are in process and that he was not expected to meet them right now. Ms. Teixeira noted that she has worked with six different superintendents and that Dr. Safier stands out by far as an exemplary superintendent when it comes to teaching and learning. She is very proud to call him the superintendent of our district because she has not met anyone else who could carry out what we are trying to achieve at a faster pace than he has. She is very happy with him and his administration and what he has done over the past six years to lead us on the path to excellence, engaging his staff and giving them the resources they need under the limitations that we have. She is very happy that Dr. Safier wants to stay and called that a gift to the district because consistency is very important. She is very grateful to be part of the committee and to work with him to keep that consistency in place. She believes Dr. Safier is a very compassionate man in terms of special education students and that he does his best to get resources for the district. She pointed out that he has been successful working with the city administration in getting those resources and stated that she looks forward to working with him for many more years.

Mayor Romeo Theken stated that communication has improved and ratings of the schools have improved. She also stated that it has been amazing working as a team with Dr. Safier. She too has worked with a lot of superintendents as a member of City Council and as a parent and Dr. Safier is one of the best. During times of crisis, she saw how he cared about his staff. She thanked him for the way he handled those situations, which made her job easier. She pointed out that he has the respect of his staff, which shows a lot, and she is very glad he is going to stay with the district.

Kathy Clancy stated that she believes this process is very useful for growth and goal-setting, in which Dr. Safier is topnotch in every aspect. She praised his leadership abilities and stated that there are so many reasons to be proud of our schools. She stated that Dr. Safier has the ability to get the support the district needs and thanked him for keeping the district moving on the right path.

Chairman Pope stated that Dr. Safier understands how to create an environment where all children can learn and all teachers are supportive of the mission and the culture. He indicated that the fact that we have a district improvement plan which is reflected in the school improvement plans shows that we are making great progress. He stated that one of the reasons he enjoys working with Dr. Safier is that he looks for solutions instead of making excuses for why things may have gone wrong. He believes the district is in good hands.