

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Public Hearing  
on the FY 2017 Proposed School Budget**

Wednesday, March 30, 2016  
Superintendent's Conference Room  
7:00 p.m.

**Members**

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  
Patricia Wegmann, Director of Special  
Education  
Erik Anderson, GHS Principal  
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal  
Amy Pasquarello, East Gloucester Principal  
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal  
Matt Fusco, Veterans Principal  
Dr. Telenia Imel, West Parish Principal  
Audrey Brancaleone, Accounts and  
Budget Officer

**Others Present**

City Councilor Paul Lundberg  
City Councilor Scott Memhard  
City Councilor Val Gilman (7:29 p.m.)

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

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- 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**
  - III. **INTRODUCTION** – Chairman Pope reviewed the budget development process and indicated that the School Committee will be voting on April 13th on a budget to be submitted to the mayor.
  - IV. **PROPOSED FY 2017 BUDGET PRESENTATION** – Dr. Safier thanked the staff and City Councilors Lundberg and Memhard for attending the public hearing. He presented a slide show on the proposed operating budget for FY17, including the budget development process and guiding principles, namely continued growth in student achievement, technology, and addressing the increasing need for social/emotional support and the increase in English language learners.

Dr. Safier discussed the major factors affecting the budget, including cost of living adjustments, an increase in health insurance costs of \$408,000, an increase in special education costs of \$95,651, Track and Step increases of \$271,327, and anticipated grant reductions of between \$31,000 and \$57,000.

Dr. Safier reviewed the budget summary, which indicates a proposed budget of \$40,225,057, an increase of \$1,036,309 (2.64%) over this year's approved budget. He noted that 75% of the cost increases to the budget are due to the above-referenced health insurance, special education and Track and Step increases.

Dr. Safier discussed kindergarten enrollment, noting that the district is anticipating a second year of a large kindergarten class, resulting in the need for full-time aides in each kindergarten classroom. Other additions included in the FY17 budget are two ELL teachers, continued computer science courses at the high school, an additional preschool teacher and paraprofessional, two additional paraprofessionals for the vocational program, a math coach for three of the elementary schools, a special education teacher and morning aide at Veterans, a math coordinator at O'Maley, adjustment counselors at Plum Cove and East Gloucester, and a board-certified behavior analyst.

Dr. Safier discussed some significant reductions to the FY17 budget, including retirements, reduced BSRI services, decreased transportation costs due to the new bus lease and a reduction in fuel costs, professional development, and out-of-district tuitions. Finally, Dr. Safier reviewed the budget by department.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS** – Chairman Pope opened the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

In response to a question from City Councilor Gilman, Ms. Wegmann discussed the learning centers at East Gloucester, Veterans and Beeman which are designed to keep special education students in the district. Ms. Wegmann stated that there are also programs in various buildings to meet the needs of students with autism or cognitive impairments. Dr. Safier noted that the co-teaching model at Veterans is a quasi-inclusive setting for students who may require a smaller academic setting.

Maria Puglisi of 8 Clearview Avenue, the parent of a seventh grader at O'Maley who is in the jazz band, thanked the administration and the School Committee for hiring a full-time music teacher at O'Maley. She stated that he has made a huge difference in the music program there, particularly with respect to her son.

Chairman Pope closed the public hearing at 7:43 p.m.

**VI. DISCUSSION** – Dr. Safier thanked the administrators who were in attendance for the work they did to help put together a fiscally responsible budget. Kathy Clancy recognized Audrey Brancaleone, who always puts in lots of time and effort on the budget.

Finally, Mr. Favazza commented on the principals' fairly small requests for art and music supplies, stating that he would be in favor of a modest increase to those requests.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 7 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Public Hearing of March 30, 2016 at 7:47 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*