

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

**School Committee Public Hearing
On the FY 2019 Proposed School Budget**

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

District Office Conference Room

2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

7:00 p.m.

Members

Jonathan Pope, Chairman

Tony Gross, Secretary

Michelle Sweet

Joel Favazza

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent

Tom Lafleur, CPA, Director of Finance
and Operations

James Cook, GHS Principal

Others Present

City Council President Paul Lundberg

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- 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 opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m. and stated that the School Committee will be voting on April 11th on a budget to be submitted to the mayor.
- IV. PROPOSED FY 2019 BUDGET PRESENTATION** – Dr. Safier presented a slide show on the proposed FY19 operating budget, including the budget calendar and district initiatives, such as curriculum review and revision, examination of preschool through Grade 8 literacy, special education, Next Generation MCAS preparation, strengthening higher order thinking skills, technology, intervention systems, social/emotional learning, ELL students, use of data, professional culture and community, and safety.

Dr. Safier discussed the annual increases to the budget, including cost of living adjustments of \$698,077, an increase in health insurance costs of approximately \$118,000, an increase in special education costs of approximately \$411,000, Step increases of \$396,614, and lane changes of \$235,748. He reviewed other significant increases to the budget, including special education transportation costs of \$23,335 and an increase in the bus lease of at least \$28,000.

Dr. Safier reported that the proposed budget totals \$43,272,273, an increase of \$2,233,377 (5.44%) over this year's approved budget. He reviewed out-of-district tuitions and indicated

that additional requests from principals and department heads of approximately \$385,000 are not included in the draft budget.

Dr. Safier reviewed the anticipated increase in out-of-district tuitions, anticipated grant reductions, and salaries funded by grants and revolving accounts (i.e. not included in the operating budget) of \$2.2 million.

Finally, Dr. Safier reviewed cuts required to reach certain percentage increases to this year's budget.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Laura Wiessen, who has a daughter starting kindergarten next year, asked if the committee believes there is a “sweet spot” between a 3% and 5% increase, given what is required. Chairman Pope explained the budget process and stated that the city will decide what the bottom line is going to be. Mr. Gross noted that the budget presented at last year's public hearing was for a 2.9% increase and the committee did not receive that amount. Chairman Pope stated that the increase in teachers' salaries this year (cost of living, step and track) is 3.78%. He noted that the City Council could conceivably increase the school budget but they would have to take the money from another department.

Ms. Wiessen also asked about the new East Gloucester/Veterans' School and Chairman Pope indicated that the project is in the Feasibility Study phase. Mr. Lafleur noted that the debt from the new West Parish School is coming online and the city has to service that, which places additional demand on the city budget.

Chairman Pope closed the public hearing at 7:35 p.m.

VI. DISCUSSION – Mr. Favazza would like to see at next week's meeting a list of things that are definitely not needed that could be cut from the budget and still provide the same level of service to students. Ms. Sweet would like to see the enrollment numbers for electives at the high school and the ramifications of not having an assistant principal there.

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

VOTED: 4 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Public Hearing of April 4, 2018 at 7:40 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*