

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

School Committee Workshop Minutes

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

District Office Conference Room

2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

4:00 p.m.

Members Present

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

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent
Tom Lafleur, Director of Finance
and Operations
Patty Wegmann, Special Education Director
Grant Harris, IT Director
Shana Goldwyn, ELA Coordinator
Ann-Marie Jordan, Preschool Administrator
James Cook, GHS Principal
Debra Lucey, O'Maley Principal
Amy Pasquarello, East Gloucester Principal
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal
Matt Fusco, Veterans Principal
Dr. Telen Imel, West Parish Principal
Jodi Gennodie, Beeman Principal (4:29)

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – **Cynthia Mochowski** stated that she hopes the School Committee will allocate funds to keep the vocational program going strong because it is absolutely necessary. She noted that a lot of the businesses on Cape Ann are graduates of the vocational program over the past 75 years. She also requested funding for all of the elementary school libraries and an in-house suspension position at the high school. **Billy Martin** expressed concern about the possibility of losing the electrical shop.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – Chairman Pope stated that this meeting is intended to be a workshop to review the budget, since all indications are that cuts will be required. He reviewed the budget process and indicated that the committee has no control over the bottom line. He stated that the city administration directed the committee to produce a level service budget, which resulted in a 5.62% increase over last year's budget. Chairman Pope pointed out that we will not know what the health insurance increase will be until May 2nd or what the Circuit Breaker reimbursement will be. Finally, Chairman Pope noted that

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

- V. **FY19 BUDGET PRESENTATION** – Mr. Lafleur reported that the original level service budget was \$43,272,273, representing an increase of 5.44% or \$2,233,376 over last year’s budget. He stated that the level service budget was updated on April 18th to \$43,352,170 to reflect the new bus lease, updated out-of-district tuition costs, and the new O’Maley principal, representing an increase of 5.62% or \$2,313,273 over last year’s budget. He emphasized that reductions of \$227,000 in non-salary items were taken out of the budget before any consideration of the proposed reductions being presented tonight.

Chairman Pope reported that he received an indication from the city administration that they are going to try to give the School Department a \$900,000 increase over last year’s budget, which represents a 2.09% increase. He stated that if that is the case, \$1,413,273 would need to be cut from the budget to reach that number. Mr. Gross pointed out that contractual obligations account for \$1.33 million of the budget, so we already in the hole before we take anything else into consideration.

Dr. Safier reviewed the recommended tiered reductions to get to a 3.05% increase of \$1,063,073. He noted that the administration has tried to balance the cuts between schools, programs and units. The committee discussed the following:

- Morning Supervisor at Veterans/Beeman – Approximately 30 students will be affected at each school. Would need to look into having a before school program paid for by parents or not opening the school early. Approximately 20 students at Plum Cove (covered by teachers); EGS has no drop-off until 8:10.
- BSRI Coaching and Professional Development – Mr. Bach reported that the budget still includes the same level of BSRI support for Beeman as last year. Literacy coaches will also be doing a summer academy for new teachers.
- Business Teacher Retirement at GHS – Mr. Cook indicated they will still be able to run almost all of the business courses they are running this year and there will be a diversity of offerings.
- English Teacher Retirement at GHS – Mr. Cook stated that this reduction will narrow the elective offerings.
- Math Intervention Teacher at O’Maley – Ms. Lucey reported that there are two co-taught courses per level.
- Bridge Program Counselor at GHS – Mr. Cook stated that the academic coordinator can provide counseling but the number of sessions will be reduced.
- Education Support Professionals – One is GHS library assistant, one is electrical shop aide (only 11 students enrolled at different times of the day). Ms. Wegmann

explained the impact of the reductions. Dr. Safier stated that the deadline for paraprofessionals to become highly qualified was September 1, 2017 and there are still 14 who are not highly qualified. Those 14 have received letters indicating that they will be terminated on June 30th if they have not received their highly qualified status by that time.

- Culinary Teacher at GHS – Mr. Cook reported that there is enough space in other electives for students who are currently in the culinary program.
- Administrative Position at GHS – This position is the Assistant Principal, who also holds a vocational technical administrator license. Ms. Teixeira noted that the district is out of compliance with the vocational section of the CPR and stated that the vocational program desperately needs more attention. She expressed concern about the district's ability to improve the program without someone who holds a vocational technical administrator license. Dr. Safier stated that administration needs to be more focused on the vocational program but there is the potential for a learning curve.

Dr. Safier stated that he anticipates Circuit Breaker coming in at about \$300,000 for this year at the end of June, which can also be applied to the budget and would likely save the positions listed on Lines 13-22 of the spreadsheet. He cautioned that whatever we use FY18 contingency and Circuit Breaker funds for this year will come out of the base budget next year. He noted that there is only \$200,000 in contingency funds built into the FY19 budget and if we have unanticipated expenses, we would need to request a supplemental appropriation from the city.

The committee reviewed and discussed the reductions listed in Lines 13-22 of the spreadsheet. Mr. Bach stated that it was very hard for the principals to make decisions about reductions and indicated that all of the positions listed in Lines 13-22 would be very hard to do without. Dr. Safier stated that cutting those positions may not be necessary and recommended sending a budget with a 3.05% increase to the city.

Chairman Pope indicated that the committee will only be sending a bottom line number to the city and will not know the final number until early to mid-June, at which time the committee will need to finalize the budget by making cuts. Mr. Lafleur reminded the committee that the administration is contractually obligated to notify some employees of the reduction in force by May 4th.

In response to questions from Ms. Teixeira, Mr. Lafleur reported that there have only been six changes to health insurance plans to date and substitute costs are down slightly from last year.

Chairman Pope discussed some factors that may result in increased revenues, such the Fuller project, the Cameron's project and the Maplewood School project. Ms. Teixeira added that the sale of marijuana beginning in January will result in revenue that could be used to fund the school resource officer.

Finally, Kathy Clancy noted that the proposed 2.09% increase suggested by the city will not even cover raises and Step and Track increases.

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

VI. ACTION/DISCUSSION – Ms. Teixeira stated that she is not ready to vote on specific cuts to the budget tonight because the city has not determined all revenues yet. Mr. Favazza noted that the committee was instructed by the mayor last year to negotiate three-year raises at 2%/2%/2% and that increase to last year’s budget should be a given. He believes the committee should advocate for what it truly needs. Kathy Clancy noted that those raises are consistent with city raises and that school employees deserve parity with city employees.

Ms. Teixeira stated that right now, she feels comfortable with cutting Lines 1-10 on the list of proposed reductions. She made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sweet, to approve an FY19 budget in the amount of \$42,655,743 for submission to the Mayor and the City Council. After discussion about including Line 12 in the reductions, Mr. Favazza amended the motion as follows:

On a motion by Mr. Favazza, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Teixeira – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes
Mr. Favazza – yes
Mr. Gross – no
Chairman Pope – yes
Ms. Sweet – yes

To approve an FY19 budget in the amount of \$42,393,743 for submission to the Mayor and the City Council.

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the School Committee Workshop of April 24, 2018 at 6:27 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*