

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Special School Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 7, 2011

School Committee Chambers – District Office

4:45 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson (6:00 arrival)
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Michelle Sweet
Roger Garberg
Tony Gross

Administration Present

Interim Superintendent Dr. Joseph Connelly
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham
William Goodwin, GHS Principal
Debra Lucey, O'Maley School Principal
Ellen Sibley, Beeman Principal
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal
Jean Perry, West Parish Principal
Cherylann Parker, Veterans Principal
JoAnne Reiss, SPED Director
New Superintendent Dr. Richard Safier

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools and welcomed the following guests: Cindy Juncker, Andrea Pretzler, Principals Bill Goodwin, Tammy Morgan, Debra Lucey, Ellen Sibley, Jean Perry and Cherylann Parker, Ann McCarthy, JoAnne Reiss, new superintendent Dr. Richard Safier, and CFO Tom Markham. She indicated that Ms. Teixeira will be at the meeting shortly.

Chairperson Gilman thanked the B&F Subcommittee, as well as Dr. Connelly and Tom Markham, for the rigorous and detailed six-hour meeting earlier in the day, which she believes will make the next step much more productive. She noted that Cape Ann TV was invited to attend the meeting but was not present.

Chairperson Gilman stated the importance of the School Committee working collaboratively with the City Council. She stated that the School Committee will soon have a better understanding of what the city's new revenue will be and is eager to learn how much of it will be allocated to the School Department's budget, recognizing that the city is experiencing very challenging times now. She stated that Mayor Kirk was unable at the last meeting to be specific about local aid cuts and increased health insurance costs, which makes the budget expectations more unclear for the Superintendent and our committee.

Chairperson Gilman thanked all of the members of the administrative team for working collectively with Dr. Connelly for months to come up with the level of detail that is included in the budget backup information referenced in the binders. She indicated that impact statements will be part of the School Committee's analysis when recommending reductions to the budget. She also noted that the loss of \$890,000 in federal ARRA funds which have allowed us to get through until this year is a challenge for Gloucester as well as other communities throughout Massachusetts.

III. DISCUSSION

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

- E. FY 2012 School Budget Timeline** – Dr. Connelly stated that because of some confusion as to the City Charter at the last meeting, the budget timeline has been revised as follows:

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. – School Committee Meeting
Location: School Committee Chambers – Fuller District Office
Agenda: Finalization of budget to be presented at the public hearing

Tuesday, March 22, 2011 – Place notice in local paper advertising public hearing

Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. – School Committee Public Hearing
Location: Fuller School Auditorium
Agenda: Proposed FY 2012 School Budget

Friday, April 22, 2011 – School Committee finalizes FY 2012 budget and submits it to the Mayor.

Dr. Connelly also reviewed the content of the public notice.

Chairperson Gilman requested that Mr. Markham provide a budget book to the City Clerk for public examination. She also thanked City Council President Jackie Hardy for her help in interpreting the City Charter, and both the superintendent and chair recognized her for being a team player.

Note: Chairperson Gilman recognized Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr, who arrived at 5:00 p.m.

- A. Report on the Internal Control Over Financial Reporting, Compliance, and Federal Award Programs** – Dr. Connelly stated that the city auditor received an audit report which contained findings on the free and reduced lunch program, Title I, and special education. Mr. Markham reviewed the report and explained the improvements that will be made to address the findings. He stated that there are not likely to be any budget impacts as a result of the audit report.

- B. Review Options and Pending Actions on FY 2011 Budget Total** – Dr. Connelly stated that the FY11 budget is still in flux because of the MOU with the city. He indicated that it is currently \$33,550,680 and that \$336,932 may be transferred back to the School Department. Dr. Connelly stressed that the Draft 1 FY12 budget of \$35,217,301 is not a “wish list” budget but a “bare bones” level service budget and that the gap between the adjusted FY11 budget and the Draft 1 budget is \$1,329,689. However, Mayor Kirk indicated last week that it appears that both the city and the schools are going to have to come up with level funded budgets.

Kathy Clancy reported on the Building & Finance Subcommittee meeting that was held earlier in the day.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 5 in favor, zero opposed, that the final budget for FY 2011 is \$33,887,612.

- C. FY 2012 School Budget Review and Finalization of Proposed Budget for Presentation at Public Hearing** – Dr. Connelly stated that the B&F Subcommittee met for six hours earlier today and reviewed the budget in detail in preparation for making reductions. He emphasized that the School Committee is proceeding on Mayor Kirk’s statement that there is no more new money and that if there is any new money, the School Committee would expect to get their fair share to offset the gap. Dr. Connelly stressed that the School Committee should feel free to present a budget at the public hearing that is not completely balanced.

Dr. Connelly noted that the new green copy of the budget represents a \$30,000 increase to the FY11 budget due to the fact that the city gave the School Department the additional \$50,000 in free cash but we have not yet received the \$20,000 transfer.

A list of least harmful budget reduction recommendations was presented to the School Committee, representing two months of work by the budget holders. Dr. Connelly reviewed the “Tier I” least harmful budget reductions and impact statements, and the following matters were discussed for possible future consideration and analysis:

- Crossing guards/locations vs. number of students who are crossed/possible opportunities to have a bus stop at a current guard location so students can still get to school safely
- Need for a dedicated bus for the charter school
- Teacher retirements
- Use of Title I money to fund direct services, such as literacy coaches (net loss of .4 literacy coaches)
- Substitute coverage for nurses
- Other school personnel trained to administer an “epipen”
- Noontime supervisors

Note: Ms. Teixeira joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

- Projected increase in health insurance (may be able to reduce health insurance even further by changing plans)
- Restructuring of nurses' grant for other nurse coverage, and staffing of nurses next year
- Clustering of paraprofessionals and elimination of positions no longer required by IEPs (still in compliance with IEPs)
- Explanation of the \$10,000 reduction in GHS non-salary items.
- Preschool revenue of \$20,000 represents 11 new students.
- Seniority with respect to elimination of Grade 5 West Parish teacher and the fact that four classes will no longer be required at West Parish in any of their upcoming classes. This elimination of a 5th grade class will not affect our optimal class size.

D. Review and Take Action on Required FY 2012 Budget Reductions

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

VOTED: 6 in favor, zero opposed, that the budget for FY 2012 is \$34,367,426, which reflects a level service budget of \$35,217,301 less Tier I budget reductions of \$849,875.

Dr. Connelly explained that Tier I was identified as the least harmful reductions and Tier II as more harmful reductions. Mr. Markham explained the \$8,000 difference in transportation between the yellow and green copies of the budget.

Kathy Clancy pointed out that the proposed budget represents a \$471,814 increase over last year's spending level, which is only a 1.4% increase despite increasing health insurance and special education costs and the loss of ARRA funds.

Chairperson Gilman stressed the importance of the new level of transparency and detail in the budget, which will be recognized as a significant budget process improvement by the City Council, the city CFO and Mayor Kirk.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, that the Tier III budget reductions necessary for level funding be taken off the table due to our work today.

Mr. Gross stated that it is not the School Committee's job to deliver a budget that balances the city budget but to try to get the best services we can for our district, which was applauded by the budget holders.

Chairperson Gilman suggested that Dr. Connelly and Kathy Clancy, as B&F Subcommittee chairperson, share with the press four or five highlights of what was discussed in as positive a manner as possible *and emphasize* that teaching and learning staffing needs are minimally jeopardized. She also requested that Dr. Connelly share this press release with the City Council.

Dr. Connelly presented a summary of the Tier I budget reductions. Kathy Clancy requested that Mr. Markham add a line for East Gloucester School non-salary items, indicating that they have already been reduced.

Ms. Teixeira thanked the B&F Subcommittee for the six-hour meeting earlier today.

Dr. Connelly stated that the next step is to run a new Draft 2 budget reflecting the action that was taken tonight, together with an action memo summarizing the changes that were made to the Draft 1 budget. This Draft 2 budget should be shared with the City Council. There was a discussion about whether there will be more changes made to the budget before the public hearing and who would do the presentation at the public hearing. It was agreed that it should be a shared presentation between Superintendent Connelly and Chairperson Gilman.

IV. ACTION – None

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Special School Committee Meeting of March 7, 2011 at 7:15 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*