

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Special School Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 13, 2011

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary
Roger Garberg
Michelle Sweet
Tony Gross (7:10 p.m. arrival)

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent Brian Tarr
CFO Tom Markham

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Gilman stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools, noted that Roger Garberg is recording the meeting, and thanked Cape Ann TV for televising the meeting.

III. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Building and Finance Sub-Committee Report of June 1, 2011** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the B&F Subcommittee discussed the COPS grant.

IV. DISCUSSION/ACTION

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

B. COPS Grant

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

VOTED: 5 in favor zero opposed, to appropriate \$5,000 for the COPS grant from any end-of-year unspent balance for the installation of a security system at Gloucester High School.

Note: Mr. Gross joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

- A. FY 2012 Budget Shortfall** – In preparation for the discussion of the budget shortfall, Mr. Markham reviewed End of Year Projection Report #5, revised as of June 10, 2011. Chairperson Gilman recommended not taking any action on this report since it is not on

the agenda for tonight's meeting. She stated that it will be discussed at the Building and Finance Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday night.

Dr. Safier reviewed three possible budget adjustment scenarios that could be implemented depending on whether or not the joint resolution passes and the \$350,000 below level funding is added back into the budget. He also reviewed the options to address these scenarios, including some remaining Tier II and Tier IIa options. The following matters were discussed:

- Anticipated loss of Title I funds
- Possible return of funds to the district as a result of a successful charter school lawsuit
- Reduction in unemployment compensation
- Elimination of Pathways subsidy of \$42,292
- Offset from Preschool Revolving Fund
- Elimination of GHS math teacher

- Offset for Transportation from Athletics – Mr. Markham explained that the \$31,500 is a projected end-of-year balance in Athletics next year, based on the performance this year, and that the \$112,000 line item in the budget would be reduced by the \$31,500. Ms. Teixeira suggested using that amount to reduce user fees as opposed to putting it into the budget. Dr. Safier indicated that the \$31,500 would stay in the revolving account and possibly reduce user fees next year, or rather take it from the \$112,000 remaining in the operating budget and put that somewhere else. Mr. Markham reminded the committee that we are still carrying a small negative balance in Athletics from last year. He also mentioned the possibility of tapping the transportation revolving account to provide more services that it does not charge back to the district.

- Reduction of Central Office Administrator and elimination of elementary SPED teacher – Chairperson Gilman suggested the administration consider the possibility of larger class sizes at the middle school as an alternative to some of these proposed worst case scenario cuts.

- Additional bus runs for charter school students if the number of students increases. It was noted that the charter school was obligated to report to the district on this matter by April 1st. Chairperson Gilman requested that Brian Tarr follow up to see how many charter school students will be taking the bus next year.

- Reduction in projected special education requirements – Chairperson Gilman stated that she would be comfortable reducing this amount by \$40,000 with the possible use of free cash in the fall. Dr. Safier will obtain more specific information from JoAnne Reiss about newly known special education requirements, and this matter will be further discussed at the B&F Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday night.

- Elimination of GHS Asst. Principal/Voc Director – Ms. Teixeira expressed concern about the elimination of this position, especially since student involvement in the program is increasing and because of the need to address the findings of the CPR audit. She suggested looking at the possibility of larger class sizes as a way to save this position or eliminating an Asst. Principal instead of the Asst. Principal/Voc Director.
- Elimination of O'Maley Asst. Principal – Chairperson Gilman stressed the importance of this position in light of the house system at O'Maley and new requirements. She believes it would be a hardship for two assistant principals to deal with three grade levels in the current house system and reminded the committee that retaining our current Assistant Principal/Guidance Counselor infrastructure was one of the committee's agreed budget goals.

Ms. Teixeira stated her understanding that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to make decisions about providing notices to nonprofessional staff by June 15th in a worst case scenario as opposed to trying to figure out what specific cuts to make at this time. Since there is no decision yet from the PEC, she is uncomfortable making any cuts tonight but recommended giving pink slips to all 30 non tenured teachers to be compliant with the June 15th date.

There was a discussion about how many non tenured teachers would need to be notified by June 15th and the political fallout of sending out pink slips and then recalling them. Chairperson Gilman stated that she is not comfortable giving out 30 pink slips and Dr. Safier stated that the likelihood of a worst case scenario is very low.

Mr. Gross and Mr. Garberg expressed concern about undoing the work that the administrators have done to come up with what they believe are the least harmful cuts in order to save some of those positions. However, Dr. Safier will speak to Dr. Goodwin about another way to hold onto the vocational director position since that was not one of the positions identified by Dr. Goodwin as least harmful. Ms. Teixeira feels very strongly about that position and cannot support eliminating it.

The School Committee authorized Dr. Safier to issue notices to the nonprofessional staff identified in the budget options presented in order to meet notice requirements and, in addition, to go back to Dr. Goodwin to talk more about the consequences of eliminating the AP/Voc Director position, with the flexibility of looking at alternative ways to come up with that cost savings.

Because of the moving targets involved in this budget process, Chairperson Gilman stated that she will get an update on the City Council's target dates for budget decisions so that our remaining B and F and School Committee meetings are timely.

V. OTHER COMMUNICATION – None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the Special School Committee Meeting of June 13, 2011 at 9:35 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*