

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**Amended  
Special School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

GHS Library

5:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Val Gilman, Assistant Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Roger Garberg  
Tony Gross  
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent (6:54 p.m.)  
Hans Baumhauer, Dir. of Finance and  
and Operations

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Recorded by Cape Ann TV

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

**II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

**III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

1. Amended Executive Session Minutes of August 29, 2012 (**Confidential**)
2. School Committee Governance Workshop of December 3, 2012
3. Program Subcommittee of December 6, 2012

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

**VI. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**A. Update on School Security** – Dr. Safier reported that a letter went out on Friday to parents/guardians about how to speak with children when catastrophes happen, followed by an “all call” on Saturday informing parents that there is information on the website about this matter. He indicated that he met with Police Chief Campanello yesterday, and Chief Campanello has increased the presence of police in and around the schools. The police have also looked at the doors of the school buildings to see if repairs are necessary. The administration is in the process of looking into those issues.

Dr. Safier indicated that the middle school and elementary schools now have buzzers and cameras on their front doors and that they are ensuring that everyone is following the necessary protocols to lock other doors once students enter the building. At the high school, the DPW has a lock specialty company looking at and making necessary repairs to the locks. He stated that they are also in the process of putting out an RFP for a secure entrance at the high school and noted that there are surveillance cameras there to assist with security.

Dr. Safier reported that the district is part of the STARS program, which is a prescribed emergency response program put out by the Northeast Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council. The police and fire departments have maps of the buildings, all doors are numbered, and all relevant information associated with emergency responses is kept with the police and fire department.

Dr. Safier indicated that the district's emergency plans are aligned with the National Incident Management Society and are being reviewed. There are plans for lockdowns, off-campus evacuations, including staging areas and destinations, reverse evacuation, fire drills, shelter in place, and duck and cover. The plans also include taking action for intruders, hostage situations, active shooters, hazardous materials, structural failures, severe weather, earthquakes, and nuclear power issues, including efforts for family reunification, crisis intervention, and working with the media.

In summary, Dr. Safier stated that the district's security plans are in place, training schedules and drills are being reviewed, crisis teams are in place at each of the schools, access points to the schools are being reviewed, and communication protocols and crisis response are spelled out. At the request of Mrs. Gilman, he will report to the committee at a later date on the status of necessary drills.

Mr. Garberg mentioned the ALICE program, which seems to be strongly recommended by a number of national organizations and involves a much more active response to intrusion. Dr. Safier indicated that Chief Campanello brought up the same issue and stated that the idea of lockdowns is now being questioned. So, ALICE is something that we should be taking a look at and working with the police on, as well, if we are to make a shift in that kind of a plan.

Mayor Kirk reported that on Friday morning at 9:30, bells will be rung across the country for each of the Sandy Hook victims. She invited the School Committee to join her at City Hall for the ringing of the bells. She also thanked Dr. Safier for his quick responsiveness to families and stated that the city administration will work diligently to make sure that all of the provisions for security are in place throughout the schools. The Mayor suggested that at the high school, this should include policies, protocols and vigilance to make sure that the school is secure. At a future time, she would like Dr. Safier to report not only on the facilities component at the high school but also on the deployment.

Chairman Pope stated that in many of these tragic cases, the perpetrators give some sort of indication on social media, etc., and suggested that we may want to investigate training that may be available to staff and students to pick up on these indicators. In

addition, it may be effective to have somebody in the schools that can pick up on those indicators, as well.

Finally, Kathy Clancy reported that at the Board of Education meeting yesterday, many of the board members had questions about the state guidelines and how they impact districts. She stated that Commissioner Chester went through the state's requirements and was very clear that security plans are school-based as opposed to district-based. She believes that some of the Board of Education members would like to have a further discussion on the topic to see if they can influence stronger measures being enacted.

## VII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Program Subcommittee of December 6, 2012** – Chairperson Gilman reported that the Program Subcommittee reviewed the Anti-Bullying Policy at its meeting on December 6, 2012. Dr. Safier provided the report of incidents at each school last year and to date this year.

## VIII. ACTION

- A. Free Cash** – Dr. Safier reviewed the latest draft of Requests for Access to Funding from City Free Cash, which is in prioritized order (A and B). He noted that the “A” list includes unanticipated special education expenses and tutoring, including the anticipated 9C cut to Circuit Breaker, in the amount of \$248,418. The total request for free cash is \$691,318. In addition, the request includes a note regarding anticipation of additional funds needed for students enrolling from the charter school.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 1 present (Mayor Kirk) to approve the prioritized Requests for Access to Funding from City Free Cash 2012-13, as amended by removing the text under Item A.3.

Chairman Pope reminded the committee that the money expended on unanticipated expenses is beyond what was budgeted for contingencies.

- B. Approval of Amended Fuller School MOU** – The revised MOU was distributed to the committee.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Agreement by and between the City of Gloucester and the City of Gloucester School Committee dated December 19, 2012 regarding Fuller School.

Mayor Kirk stated that the city will support this agreement, and she and the rest of the committee signed it.

**IX. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Status of Charter School** – Dr. Safier noted that he received an email from an associate deputy for charter schools requesting contact information for the district for parents of charter school students. Dr. Safier replied that any parent can contact the Central Office and request information about the district and/or enrollment. They may also contact the principal of the school in their catchment area. Either action would initiate an orientation to a particular school, as well as the process of enrollment.

Dr. Safier stated that our job is to educate the children of Gloucester in a way that we continually seek to improve and to do so with the expectation that students who are entering the district are going to be making a positive contribution to our challenge to continuously improve. He stated that the district welcomes any and all students and expressed confidence that we are prepared to accommodate any and all students and their families should they choose to enroll in the district.

Dr. Safier reported that, at the elementary level, 85 percent of our grades are prepared to take in the numbers of students that might be anticipated. There are a handful of grades where the numbers are a little bit higher. Based upon our intradistrict policy and the best educational interests of all students, in some rare instances we may need to consider where the proper placement would be for a particular child.

Mayor Kirk reported that she met with DESE officials last week to understand how refunds come to the city based on the difference in projected enrollment and actual enrollment at the charter school. She learned that the calculation is done every quarter. However, in order to access the refund in the middle of the year, it has to be done before the start of the fourth quarter. The Mayor indicated that she will probably recommend to the finance team that the money be accessed quarterly and be placed somewhere until it is needed so that it does not get tied up in free cash. This will allow the school district to make a supplemental appropriation request of the city, if necessary, to address expenses that may occur between now and the end of the fiscal year. Dr. Safier stated that the kinds of issues that would lead to such a request would be composition of the classrooms and resources for special needs students.

Mayor Kirk also reported that her office has been in discussion with the DESE and the charter school board regarding an orderly transition of their students. She believes it is important for the school to remain open until the end of the school year, and the best way to maintain an orderly transition is to ensure that their funding is secure (i.e. that their enrollment is maintained between now and the end of the school year). She hopes that the district will send a consistent message that principals will be made available at the pace of the families, that there is no rush, and that they can maintain the stability of the school year for their children. Finally, Mayor Kirk stated that charter school families need to be provided with the intradistrict school choice policy (File JF, Admission of Students to Elementary Schools). Dr. Safier indicated that the leadership team will be working on a plan that is not presumptuous but is informative and provides charter school parents with the information they need at the pace at which they require it so they can make their decisions in an informed and comfortable manner.

Kathy Clancy hopes that the district will highlight all of the wonderful things going on in our schools at different points during the end of the school year. She believes this information will be helpful to everybody in the community.

Mrs. Gilman suggested working with the charter school board on easing the transition of their students into the district. Mr. Garberg noted that there was a lengthy discussion at the O'Maley site-based council meeting about accommodating students coming back from the charter school, and he does not see the School Committee having a role in that process. Dr. Safier views this as an operational matter and indicated that the leadership team will work with the staff at the charter school.

Mr. Gross believes it may be premature for the School Committee to be discussing the future of charter school students. He hopes that they will be able to get through the school year with enough enrollments, and in the spring the committee can discuss these matters with the charter school leadership team.

- B. Fuller School Referendum Question** – Mayor Kirk distributed a certificate of vote that the City Council took on December 11th, 8 in favor one opposed (Councilor Ciolino), on a nonbinding ballot question for the 2013 election regarding the future use of Fuller School either as an “under one roof” municipal complex or a public school or to be leased or sold. She reported that she vetoed this measure and provided an explanation to the City Council as to why she did so.

Mayor Kirk believes that a renewed use of Fuller as a public school fails to take into consideration the input of the School Committee, which has sole authority as to which buildings are considered schoolhouses for the purposes of the educational program. In addition, it is a well-documented fact that the School Committee settled its policy on this question. Therefore, it is grossly misleading to the public, should that option prevail, that the School Committee would reopen a policy that has been set in stone and affirmed many times over.

The question also fails to acknowledge that in order to open Fuller as a school, at least two elementary schools in the district must be closed. Mayor Kirk encouraged each School Committee member to ask their City Councilors what schools they want to see closed should this question prevail and to ask whether the City Council has a grander plan for the configuration of the elementary schools.

Mayor Kirk reported that the veto was submitted to the City Clerk's Office today, and she believes they will take it up at their next meeting on January 8th. A two thirds vote is needed in order to override the Mayor's veto. She requested that the School Committee members explain to the City Council the implication of this question on parents and families and try to convince them that this is a simple approach to a very complicated question.

Mr. Garberg asked about the city survey regarding Fuller School. Mayor Kirk noted that the School Department survey asked whether Fuller should be recommissioned as a school. Therefore, the city did not pose that question in their survey. There were 807 responses to the city survey, and the most supported/least opposed option for Fuller School was a recreational complex that allowed for a preschool and municipal

offices in part of the building. The most opposed option was retail. In addition, 71 percent of responders indicated that when they do business at City Hall, they visit other businesses downtown.

- C. **Workshop with Mike Gilbert** – The workshop was scheduled for Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 4:45 p.m.
- D. **Charter School Funding** – Kathy Clancy complimented Mrs. Gilman on putting legislative liaison roles in place. She also recognized the committee’s effort to advocate for certain changes in legislation and to raise awareness of the impact of some of the legislation. She noted that Mrs. Gilman made a comment that this year, there is an underfunding of charter school reimbursement from the state so that our district is going to have less money coming than was due to us under the state guidelines because the legislature did not fund it properly. This issue was raised at the Board of Education meeting yesterday because they are going through another round of charter school approvals in February.
- E. **Referral to Subcommittee** – Dr. Safier requested that the policy on Admission of Students to Elementary Schools, File JF, be referred to the Program Subcommittee.

On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to refer File JF, Admission of Students to Elementary Schools, to the Program Subcommittee.

- X. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Garberg – yes  
Mrs. Gilman – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes  
Mayor Kirk – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 6:52 p.m. to discuss negotiations and a Level III grievance and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment.

- XI. **ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of December 19, 2012 at 7:22 p.m.

*All reference documents and reports are filed in the Superintendent’s office.  
Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary*