

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**Personnel Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

Monday, June 10, 2019

District Office Conference Room

2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

4:30 p.m.

**Members Present**

Melissa Teixeira Prince, Chairperson

Kathy Clancy

Jonathan Pope

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Gary Frisch, Director of Finance  
and Operations

**Also Present**

Michelle Sweet

Attorney Naomi Stonberg

Charmaine Champagne, MTA Representative

Kevin Tierney, MTA Representative

Andrea Tarantino, GTA President

Cynthia Lanzendorf-Carney

Richard Francis

Theresa Dannaher

Rachel Rex

Adrienne Marden

Kerrie Donahue

Ruth Flaherty

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairperson Prince called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.
- II. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Teixeira Prince – yes

Kathy Clancy – yes

Mr. Pope – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 4:36 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session.

*(The meeting reconvened at 5:04 p.m.)*

**III. OPEN NEGOTIATION SESSION WITH GTA** – Ms. Carney suggested the following dates for the next negotiation session: July 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 15, and 16, August 12-15, and August 26-28, 2019. Attorney Stonberg indicated that the negotiating team will discuss those dates when they caucus. Ms. Champagne asked whether the School Committee is changing their bargaining team, and Attorney Stonberg stated that Mr. Pope is the alternate for Tony Gross, who is still recovering from surgery.

Ms. Carney stated that this is the last bargaining session where proposals will be exchanged, if necessary. Attorney Stonberg stated that she anticipates that the union will be responding to the School Committee's proposals at this meeting, since the committee responded to the union's proposals on April 22, 2019. Ms. Carney responded that they are not prepared to respond to those proposals today. Ms. Champagne stated that she had told Attorney Stonberg that the union wants all of the proposals on the table before they start making counterproposals.

Ms. Carney distributed and reviewed the association's salary proposal (Assoc #12), which includes a market adjustment plus 3% in Year 1, 3% in Year 2, and 3% in Year 3, which they believe will keep the teachers aligned in comparison to other districts and will help the district retain teachers. Ms. Champagne reviewed the following supplementary documents:

- Comparative teacher salary rankings (DART districts and comparable MIAA districts) – Ms. Champagne reported that their market analysis focuses on trying to get teacher salaries into the top 10 among the districts, which the majority of GTA members believes is respectful and honors the work of teachers.
- GTA market adjustment with 3% and scattergram
- GTA recommended salary schedule to match top 10 currently
- GTA recommended updated vocational salary schedule (7% increase)
- Comparative data of superintendent in comparable districts – Ms. Champagne pointed out that Dr. Safier is in the top 10 and requested the same respect and consideration for the people that are actually in the classrooms doing the job.

Attorney Stonberg noted that under their proposal, the least a teacher would receive would be 5% plus a step. Ms. Champagne responded that that is because they are trying to get into the top 10 and they are that far away from teachers that do the same job in other school districts.

Attorney Stonberg asked how the union suggests that the district pay for their salary proposal. Ms. Champagne distributed a chart prepared by David Enos listing the 22 districts that DESE views as comparable to Gloucester suggesting that the school budget is \$35,550,676 and that only 33.33% of the city's budget is dedicated to the schools.

Ms. Teixeira Prince questioned the accuracy of that number and asked whether school choice and the portion of tuition that Gloucester pays to Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School was included. Mr. Pope indicated that the School Department's budget is \$43 million, not \$35.5 million.

Ms. Champagne stated that the association tried to coalesce with the School Committee to figure out how to make the city realize that the buildings are not in good shape because nobody was paying attention to them for 20 years. She stated that it is due time that the committee pays attention to how much teachers are paid and to how the buildings are maintained. Ms. Champagne indicated that the association intends to have a conversation with the City Council but stated it is the School Committee's responsibility to advocate for what is necessary because it is unacceptable.

Attorney Stonberg responded that the School Committee agrees that there are major issues with the buildings and indicated that the committee addresses the condition of the buildings all the time with the city. She also stated that the committee has a budget that is funded by the city, and the committee fights to get as much money as they possibly can.

Attorney Stonberg indicated that it is unlikely that the city will pass an override and asked what the union expects the committee do. Ms. Champagne responded that if the committee keeps up with a negative attitude of never trying to get more money into the school system, then they are never going to get more money into the school system. She stated that the committee has not done anything big in the district or the city to change the dynamic for the school system. Ms. Teixeira Prince responded that the committee does everything it can to try to get more money from the city. She also noted that there have been very few people at City Council public hearings over the last 12 years and that teachers should come to budget meetings.

Ms. Carney stated that other districts get it done and it concerns her that the committee thinks it is unlikely that the city will get an override for salary increases. She indicated that other districts are voting for overrides because they are committed to funding their schools. She is asking the School Committee to advocate for them, for equality, equity, and attracting and retaining teachers so that Gloucester can be the community that other districts want to regionalize with and families want to choice into.

Attorney Stonberg stated that the School Committee fights very hard for increases in the budget. She indicated that the CFO will cost out the union's proposal, noting that the requested salary increases range between 5% and 14%, plus a step. Ms. Champagne reported that the cost of the current proposal (market adjustment plus 3%) would cost the district \$1,864,798.

Ms. Champagne stated that some members are requesting that the School Committee support the Promise Act, which would generate \$800,000 more for the city. Kathy Clancy reported that the committee has been advised by the state legislators that they are working hard to get much more targeted money as it relates to low income and special

education and are still working through what the best possible financial outcome would be for Gloucester.

Ms. Champagne asked when was the last time the School Committee went to the city and requested a market adjustment because our teachers are not paid even near what teachers in other districts make. She claimed that the city told her that they do not believe the School Department spends the money the way that it should be spent. Ms. Teixeira Prince requested the name of the person who said that because she had a conversation with a city councilman yesterday who told her the opposite. Ms. Champagne responded that she has good reason to believe that at least three City Councilors believe that the School Committee is not accountable to the money and they would give 2% increases every year if they had faith that the money was being spent appropriately.

Attorney Stonberg reported that every city and town that she is involved with is always saying they don't like the way the schools spend their money because they don't have authority over line items in the school budget. She indicated that if they tell her who the three councilors are she could set up a meeting and answer their questions about the budget.

Ms. Champagne stated that at the last session, she asked four times for the parties to coalesce and form a committee to do some polling and education to see what the community would accept as far as generating more money for the schools. Ms. Teixeira Prince asked why teachers are not speaking at public hearings on the budget. Ms. Champagne responded that the budget does not reflect the things that they value, such as more than 4% increase in salary for the superintendent. Dr. Safier explained that he received a 2% increase last year and that he asked that his annuity be transferred into salary, so it was not an increase in his salary.

Ms. Champagne claimed that the School Committee shifts money around with no explanation of how it happens and that it should be more transparent. Ms. Teixeira Prince indicated that every transfer has to be approved by the Building & Finance Subcommittee at their monthly meetings. She stated that the city auditor knows where all the money is in the budget.

Attorney Stonberg stated that if Ms. Champagne has a question about the budget, the committee would be very glad to have a fact-finding meeting and explain it to her instead of her drawing her own conclusions. Ms. Champagne responded that the budget should be plain for everybody to understand. Attorney Stonberg stated that instead of going to unnamed people on the City Council, they should request a meeting with representatives of the School Department to have their questions addressed.

Mr. Pope pointed out that the association just distributed a document that is \$7 million off what the actual School Department budget is. Ms. Champagne stated that she did not do that research but that the total budget is not of concern to the association; it is how the committee spends the money in the budget. She agreed to set up a meeting for some

other time to go through the budget. Ms. Teixeira Prince stated that the association's claim that the city only allocates 33.33% of its budget to the schools is wrong, and Ms. Champagne responded that it is not wrong because a member did the analysis. Attorney Stonberg requested the backup sheets used to create the dollar amounts on that list.

Mr. Frisch provided a budget book to Ms. Champagne, and Dr. Safier stated that every salary and every cost is in the book. Ms. Teixeira Prince indicated that Jim Destino just reported to her by text that the school budget is \$41 million, plus another \$19 million of school expenses on the city side, and represents 52% of the city budget.

Ms. Carney reviewed Assoc #13, new Appendix A.

Ms. Carney reviewed Assoc #14 and reported that Section C.2 paragraph (b) reflects current practice at O'Maley. In reviewing the proposals, Ms. Carney stated that they are not shared with their members before the negotiation sessions.

In a discussion regarding after-school hours, Attorney Stonberg indicated that the School Committee's feedback from elementary teachers is that they are very excited about what is going on in their schools. Ms. Champagne stated that the elementary teachers overwhelmingly indicated to her that this has been an issue and accused the School Committee of "direct dealing" with its members, i.e. communicating with teachers outside of the contract and soliciting input on something that is subject to negotiation. Attorney Stonberg responded that she is insulted by Ms. Champagne's comment. She stated that principals are running these programs in consultation with their staff and they are receiving feedback that their staff is buying into the programs.

There was a discussion about a survey taken of teachers at one of the elementary schools, professional learning communities, and the inequity of data meetings being held outside of the school day for elementary classroom teachers versus literacy and math coaches. Attorney Stonberg pointed out that the association also proposed having administrators collect data and questioned whether they are suggesting that coaches be eliminated. Ms. Carney responded that there are other things that the coaches do besides collect data. Ms. Champagne stated that the association would like to caucus on this matter.

Ms. Carney reviewed Assoc #15, Article 27, new Section B regarding a budget committee. Kathy Clancy pointed out that there are teachers on the site-based councils who make recommendations on the budget. Ms. Champagne responded that teachers would like to weigh in on where the money is being spent. Kathy Clancy asked why teachers do not come to the School Committee's budget review meetings or public hearing to comment on the budget. Attorney Stonberg stated that a trusting relationship needs to be established between the parties before collaboration on the budget can happen.

Ms. Carney reviewed Assoc #16, Article 27, new Section C regarding quarterly meetings between the School Committee and GTA.

Attorney Stonberg distributed and reviewed the School Committee's proposals and Ms. Champagne requested data regarding the committee's claim of a high rate of teacher absenteeism, broken out by absence reason.

**III. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Teixeira Prince – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Pope – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 6:42 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session.

*(The meeting reconvened at 6:55 p.m.)*

**III. OPEN NEGOTIATION SESSION WITH GTA (Cont'd)** – Attorney Stonberg suggested proposed dates for the next negotiation session, and the parties agreed to meet on Monday, August 12, 2019 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

**IV. ACTION** – None.

**V. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Mr. Pope, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 3 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the Personnel Subcommittee Meeting of June 10, 2019 at 6:57 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*