

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Personnel Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 5, 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

Cynthia Lanzendorf-Carney, GTA President

Richard Francis

Theresa Dannaher

Rachel Rex

Adrienne Marden

Kerrie Donahue

Ruth Flaherty

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Prince called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Pope – yes

Chairperson Prince – yes

Kathy Clancy – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 4:32 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session.

(The meeting reconvened at 5:15 p.m.)

III. OPEN NEGOTIATION SESSION WITH GTA – Ms. Carney reported that Rachel Rex has assumed the role of Vice President of the GTA and Chair of the negotiating team.

Grievance Procedure – Attorney Stonberg asked the union to clarify the following matters:

- What is the purpose of the requested changes (expanding the scope to include matters outside the collective bargaining agreement, increasing all association time frames, and decreasing management’s response times)? What problems are they trying to fix? Attorney Stonberg asked for examples of what policies the union is trying to cover that are not covered now and how the current grievance procedure does not ensure fairness.
- Why is the union proposing a change from “school days” to “work days?” Attorney Stonberg noted that the district may have “work days” on which the teachers do not work.
- What is meant by the term “director”? Ms. Champagne indicated that in this context, it would be the superintendent or whoever is the next person in line to receive it.
- Why did the association delete the language in Section B2? Was it put in some other section of the grievance procedure?
- Under “Procedure,” why did the union add “after the aggrieved knew or should have known”? Attorney Stonberg stated that it should be 50 school days from when the event occurred, which she believes is a very generous amount of time. Ms. Teixeira Prince reported that this was discussed extensively with Jill Coleman at the last round of negotiations and they settled on 50 school days.
- Is Section C1 new language or was it taken from another section of the grievance procedure?
- In Section C2, the committee would like to add “nor the Gloucester Teachers Association.”
- The committee does not understand Section C6. Is the union saying that if a complaint is brought against a faculty member, the administration cannot investigate or talk to students about it? What does the union mean by protecting professional reputation?
- Section C7 is not necessary. Grievance hearings are never held during the day, and association representatives are always permitted to attend disciplinary hearings.
- Was it the association’s intention that the grievant does not have to attend the informal conference? Ms. Champagne stated that that was not the association’s intent.
- Level 1 – Why was the first sentence deleted? Why was the administration’s response time reduced? What is meant by appropriate district administrator?
- There was a discussion about the number of days to respond at each level. The committee would like to maintain the current response times.
- The committee does not agree to exclude the superintendent from the School Committee level grievance because he is the CEO of the district and is responsible for all personnel

matters. Ms. Champagne claimed that the School Committee has the authority to overturn a decision of the superintendent. Attorney Stonberg indicated that the MTA's lawyer stated that the School Committee has no role in determining transfers. Ms. Champagne stated that the association is not going to give up its right to bring personnel issues to the School Committee even though they have no remedy.

Ms. Champagne stated that the association is just trying to streamline the grievance procedure because it is confusing. She indicated that the association will caucus on the above matters and get back to the committee with a response.

Professional Autonomy – Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee believes it is very important to have organization and structure created by the district in collaboration with the teachers for student improvement. Ms. Champagne stated that based on surveys of the membership, they do not believe this is happening in an authentic way. She stated that teachers want to be able to use their education and expertise to deliver curriculum to students. Attorney Stonberg pointed out that teachers are responsible for collecting data, and Ms. Champagne stated that teachers should not have to give that data to somebody else for them to make decisions. Attorney Stonberg responded that they are consulting with other staff members who are responsible for those students. She asked what the association views as the role of instructional specialists. Ms. Champagne stated that they will caucus on this matter.

Extended Leaves of Absence – Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee is not interested in this proposal because sick days are for use when people are sick. She pointed out that a big part of the association's proposal has been not to remove teachers from the classroom, and here they are proposing removing a teacher for 50% of the time. Ms. Champagne stated that there needs to be some "labor peace" in the district and not having someone dedicated to working on that relationship is unfortunate. She asked that the committee reconsider because the union believes it is much needed. Attorney Stonberg responded that there is plenty of time to work on the relationship, noting that the administration and association are supposed to meet on a regular basis and the association has not taken advantage of that opportunity. The committee is not prepared to remove a teacher from the classroom for that purpose.

At this time, Ms. Champagne requested time for the association to caucus.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Mr. Pope – yes
Chairperson Prince – yes
Kathy Clancy – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 5:57 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session.

(The meeting reconvened at 6:16 p.m.)

III. OPEN NEGOTIATION SESSION WITH GTA (Cont'd) – Ms. Rex stated that the association would like to hear the rest of the questions the committee has on their proposals and feels like some of the lines of questioning have not been in the most collaborative sense and were meant to incite. The association wants to make it clear that they are always willing to collaborate to improve conditions for students and teachers. She asked that going forward the committee stick to the questions it has on the association’s proposals. The association will carefully review the questions, their proposals, and current language and will respond at the next session.

Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee is not trying to be argumentative. The issue of professional autonomy is an important issue for the committee because it believes we have been making wonderful progress, particularly at the elementary schools, and they commend the elementary teachers for doing that. Ms. Rex responded that she is aware of what has been happening and noted that there are a lot of extenuating circumstances that are not taken into consideration.

Health and Safety – Attorney Stonberg asked the association to clarify what is meant by “sufficient staffing and resources.” She noted that there is a crisis team and emergency management plans at every school and that ALICE is in the schools and plans for implementation are ongoing. She indicated that staff is continuously informed about safety issues and that drills took place in the spring of 2019. Ms. Rex reported that GHS did not have a drill last spring and she believes some of the elementary schools may not have either. Attorney Stonberg will provide a list of dates when the drills took place.

Attorney Stonberg reported that principals are scheduling the first round of drills for the current school year, which will take place prior to November 1st. She stated that staff is involved in the process of reviewing emergency management plans and protocols and reported that there were meetings over the summer with police, fire, DPW and the building inspector, who reviewed the emergency management plans, evacuation procedures, incident command structure, etc. Ms. Champagne reported that her understanding from staff is that drills and trainings are not happening. Attorney Stonberg requested a list of the schools where crisis team meetings have not taken place, where protocols are not in place, and where crisis teams are not functioning so that can be addressed.

Ms. Carney stated that there needs to be policies and protocols in place for the association to communicate with administration. Attorney Stonberg stated that the association is supposed to meet with the superintendent on a regular basis. Ms. Carney claimed that a lot of those meetings were canceled last year, and they are proposing methods in which they can have transparent communication. Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee is making its best efforts to resolve these issues but it does not belong in a collective bargaining agreement where it can be grieved.

Ms. Marden stated that the association would like something in writing that guarantees that drills and trainings will take place. Attorney Stonberg indicated that there is a mechanism in

place to address issues outside of the collective bargaining agreement. She also pointed out that the DPW controls the school buildings and that they have been making progress on them. Ms. Teixeira Prince stated that the Personnel Subcommittee will discuss crisis management teams at all of the schools.

Teacher Facilities – Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee is not interested in removing the language in Section A. Ms. Champagne claimed that someone from the DPW stated that for 20 years school maintenance was in a black hole, and their proposal is an effort to ensure that this is taken seriously. Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee has no way of ensuring that they are going to get funding to make some of the structural changes that may need to be made.

Attorney Stonberg reported that from 1/1/18 to 5/2/19, a total of 1,149 tickets were closed and 562 of the 1,167 tickets were closed in one day. Mr. Francis indicated that the univents keep breaking down after they are repaired and at some point they need to be replaced. Ms. Rex alleged that some tickets are closed without the issue being resolved, and Ms. Champagne claimed that not everyone knows about the DPW ticketing system or how to use the new phones in the classrooms.

Mr. Pope explained the process of coordinating capital requests for the schools with the DPW. He also noted that the open and closed tickets are reviewed at every Building & Finance Subcommittee meeting, and those are open meetings. In addition, Dr. Safier and Mr. Frisch meet with the DPW every other week and report to the Building & Finance Subcommittee on those meetings.

Attorney Stonberg stated the East Gloucester School Building Committee will be holding a public hearing on Monday at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall and they would love for the teachers to come and support the new school.

Attorney Stonberg asked the membership if they would be willing to waive the ground rule to end the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and stay later. Instead of finishing with the questions on their proposals, she suggested that the committee give them its economic proposal and some counterproposals. Ms. Rex requested that the committee send the remaining questions on their proposals in writing.

Attorney Stonberg reviewed the committee's counterproposals and distributed and reviewed the committee's economic proposal for Year 1. She noted that the committee used the DART communities in the comparisons and that their goal was to try to come up with some extra money to address some of the inequities raised by the association. Attorney Stonberg reported that the total cost of the proposal is approximately \$459,000. She noted that this proposal has not been authorized by the full School Committee but the negotiating team is strongly recommending it. Ms. Champagne stated that the association will caucus on it.

Attorney Stonberg requested that the October 2, 2019 meeting be rescheduled because Ms. Teixeira Prince will be away that day. The meeting was rescheduled for October 7, 2019 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Finally, Ms. Champagne requested that the physical requirements of safety care training be provided to her.

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

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

To enter into Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session only to adjourn.

(The meeting reconvened at 7:22 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 August 12, 2019 at 7:22 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*