

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Personnel Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 12, 2019
District Office Conference Room
2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Kathy Clancy, Vice Chairperson
Jonathan Pope

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Gary Frisch, Director of Finance
and Operations

Also Present

Attorney Naomi Stonberg
Charmaine Champagne, MTA Representative
Cynthia Lanzendorf-Carney, GTA President
Theresa Dannaher
Rachel Rex
Kerrie Donahue
Ruth Flaherty

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chairperson Clancy called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
- II. OPEN NEGOTIATION SESSION WITH GTA** – The parties agreed to the following dates for future negotiation sessions: December 12 and 17, 2019; January 9 and 23, 2020; and February 3, 2020. All sessions will take place from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the District Office conference room.

Ms. Rex distributed and reviewed the association’s counterproposal to the committee’s salary proposal, noting that they have accepted the proposal for Year 1 except that they would like it to be retroactive to the beginning of the school year. She stated that in their research, they found that teachers in the MA+30 and MA+60 steps are grossly underpaid. Attorney Stonberg pointed out that the committee’s analysis of those steps shows Gloucester as being fourth among the DART communities. Ms. Champagne stated that the association does not accept the committee’s analysis of the data and pointed out that their counterproposal is much less than what they originally asked for. She also indicated that they do not yet have a response to the grievance procedure.

Attorney Stonberg distributed and reviewed the committee’s responses to the association’s April 1st proposals.

Assoc #1, Substitute Teachers – Ms. Champagne reported that paraprofessionals are being pulled from their jobs to fill in for teachers and asked whether the district is having

trouble finding substitutes. She stated that her survey of staff indicated that Aesop was not working properly. Ms. Carney indicated that it is happening across the board in the elementary schools and that the issue started when the district started using Aesop. Dr. Safier stated that we can identify the number of absences during a certain period, how many required a substitute, and how many were filled. He noted that there may be more absences on a certain day than we have substitutes for or the substitute pool is too low to meet the needs.

Ms. Carney questioned whether the substitute rate of \$75 per day is affecting their willingness to work, which is why they are suggesting raising the rate. Attorney Stonberg responded that the district spends approximately \$371,000 per year on substitutes and is not inclined to increase the rate but will look at whether or not we are having problems recruiting substitutes.

Assoc #2, Proper Relationships between Employees and School Committee – Attorney Stonberg stated that the administration and School Committee value the input of teachers and believe that there are currently vehicles in place to address this proposal, including meetings between the GTA president and the superintendent. Ms. Champagne asked whether we could add to Article 33 that the GTA president can request that other members of the administration attend those meetings, and Attorney Stonberg agreed.

Assoc #3 and #4 – Agreed.

Assoc #5, Academic Freedom – Ms. Champagne stated that she does not believe the School Committee wants any accountability in reference to its policies and the association wants to be able to grieve the policies if they are not being enforced. Dr. Safier commented that in the nine years he has been in the district, no one has ever come to him to say that a policy is not being enforced. He also noted that he is duty bound to rectify any breach of School Committee policy.

Assoc #8, Professional Autonomy, -- Ms. Champagne stated that teachers have a lot more education than most other professions and want to combat the encroachment on their professionalism and telling them what to teach, when to teach it and who to teach it with. She indicated that the intent of their proposal is to ensure that the teaching profession is not eroded by the constant intrusion of other people telling them what to do and to combat the constant removal of people to talk about data when children are losing valuable teaching time. Ms. Carney noted that their proposal does not take away from collaboration, stating that teachers do that on a daily basis; they would just like the data meetings to be restructured so they can be done outside of classroom time. Dr. Safier agreed that the parties should have a conversation about that.

Assoc #9, Extended Leaves of Absence – Ms. Champagne stated that good labor management and dedicated time to deal with the multitude of labor issues is sorely needed in the district. Kathy Clancy stated that their proposal does not fit the criteria of the GTA Sick Bank, which is for sick time only. Ms. Carney stated that she is curious about what prompted the change in the district's value of release time for the GTA president to deal with labor issues before they get to the grievance stage. Attorney

Stonberg stated that the committee does not agree philosophically that the GTA president needs release time to properly perform his or her functions.

Assoc #10, Health and Safety – Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee shares the concerns of the teachers and takes safety very seriously but cannot guarantee everything the association is asking for. She noted that there is a difference between agreeing to it and including it in a collective bargaining agreement. Ms. Carney reported that there were 12 injuries in one classroom in the last two months due to lack of staffing and training and that that teacher has now left the district. Dr. Safier responded that that particular teacher was not up to the job and needed to go and it was not simply a matter of insufficient staffing. He referenced the Massachusetts Lemon Law, and Ms. Carney indicated that that teacher was in their third year and had no negative performance evaluations. Dr. Safier apologized, stating that he was thinking of somebody else. Ms. Carney stated that there are plenty of teachers leaving the district because of a lack of support in staffing and training.

Ms. Champagne claimed that nobody knows what handbooks, emergency management plans and emergency medical response plans are. Ms. Rex stated that she is aware of the emergency plan for GHS but there is not one in every classroom and she does not know if the substitutes know what the emergency response plans are. She does not believe the plans are consistent throughout the district. There was a discussion about securing the buildings after use by after-school programs. Attorney Stonberg state that this will be discussed with the principals.

Assoc #11, Teacher Facilities – Ms. Champagne stated that the association will review the committee’s response. Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee would love for the association to join them in trying to get new schools.

Assoc #12, Section C, Salary Payment – Agreed. The association distributed their counterproposal to the committee’s salary proposal at the beginning of the meeting.

Assoc #13, Teaching Hours and Teaching Load – Attorney Stonberg reported that the committee is not interested in capping after-school assistance to students at 30 minutes per week. Ms. Carney stated that that has been past practice for at least 17 years. Attorney Stonberg disagreed, stating that GHS does more than 30 minutes per week.

Attorney Stonberg stated that the matter of not using Wednesdays for after-school meetings will be discussed with the principals. Ms. Carney clarified their proposal in #5, stating that it relates to “Meet the Teacher” night, “Demonstration Night/Evening of Excellence,” and parent/teacher conferences. Ms. Rex pointed out that there is no consistency throughout the district.

Attorney Stonberg stated that the committee will get back to the association regarding Sections B1 and B2, and Ms. Champagne stated that the association will get back to the committee on Section C3.

Assoc #14, Section C2(b) and C3(c) – The association will review and get back to the committee.

With respect to Section C3(f), Attorney Stonberg stated that this issue has been litigated and is working well. Ms. Champagne reported that the elementary teachers feel it was a bait and switch and claimed that it was not bargained, which is why there is no trust on the part of teachers. She stated that it was not completely fleshed out, and Ms. Carney stated that the arbitrator made her decision based on the contract language, which is very arbitrary. She indicated that they went by what was said at the table, where Attorney Stonberg said it would be extra prep time. Ms. Flaherty stated that teachers are not feeling heard and this has caused morale to tank. Attorney Stonberg responded that it was a very open and collaborative process and the committee's understanding from the principals is that amazing things are happening at the elementary schools.

Assoc #15 – Attorney Stonberg noted that association members have input on the budget through staff meetings and that the principals present the results to the School Committee. Ms. Champagne claimed there is no input on the budget at staff meetings. Ms. Carney requested a list of teachers on the site-based councils. Ms. Champagne stated that the district is about to get a lot more money because of the efforts of the association, and Kathy Clancy noted that the committee has been lobbying for it for many years. Ms. Champagne stated that the association wants to ensure that they have quality input on where that money is spent since they are the ones doing the job. Attorney Stonberg indicated that the School Committee and Building & Finance Subcommittee meet on a regular basis and welcome the association to participate in the meetings. The committee can also talk to the principals about consulting with teachers about their needs. Mr. Pope pointed out that there is a public hearing on the school budget every year, and Ms. Champagne stated that the association does not attend because they do not believe it is going to make a difference. Ms. Carney stated that they are asking for decision-making ability and requested a voice at committee meetings. Attorney Stonberg stated that the School Committee is responsible for the final decision on the budget but the association is welcome to give input. Ms. Champagne indicated that their proposal does not say that they are requesting a vote in the final decision-making. Ms. Carney acknowledged that she did say “decision-making” but that is not what the proposal states.

Assoc #16 – The committee will get back to the association on this matter.

Housekeeping – Ms. Champagne stated that one of the 12 priorities is no longer part of DESE and the association would like to change it. The parties reviewed the requested change and Ms. Champagne stated that the document needs to be part of the contract.

Ms. Champagne thanked the committee for their input and stated that the association will meet as a team and counter what the committee has proposed. Attorney Stonberg indicated that the committee will get back to the association on their counters at the next meeting.

III. ACTION – None

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

VOTED: By Roll Call Vote

Kathy Clancy – yes

Mr. Pope – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 8:47 p.m. for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategies with the GTA and to enter back into regular session for adjournment only.

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

VOTED: 2 in favor, 0 opposed to adjourn the Personnel Subcommittee Meeting of November 12, 2019 at 9:10 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*