

# Special Joint City Council and School Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

O'Maley School Library

6:30 p.m.

## City Council Members

Jacqueline Hardy, President  
Sefatia Romeo Theken, Vice President  
Robert Whynott  
Greg Verga  
Steve Curcuru  
Joseph Ciolino  
Paul McGearry  
Bruce Tobey  
Ann Mulcahey

## School Committee Members

Val Gilman, Chairperson  
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson  
Kathleen Clancy, Secretary  
Michelle Sweet  
Roger Garberg  
Nancy Harrison (absent)  
Mayor Carolyn Kirk

## Administration Present

Dr. Joseph Connelly, Interim Superintendent  
Brian Tarr, Assistant Superintendent  
Tom Markham, CFO  
Jeffrey Towne, CFO  
James Duggan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Linda Lowe, City Clerk  
Michael Hale, Director of Public Works  
Mark Cole, Operations Manager of Public Services  
Suzanne Egan, General Counsel  
Michael Lane, Chief of Police

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

## **CALL TO ORDER**

President Hardy called the meeting to order on behalf of the City Council at 6:37 p.m.  
Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order on behalf of the School Committee, stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools, and thanked Cape Ann TV for recording the meeting.

## **FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Chairperson Gilman requested a moment of silence after the flag salute for her stepbrother, Mitch Cohen, a key member of the community who passed away last week. She then introduced everyone present at the meeting.

**1. For Council Vote:**

a. Acceptance of Massachusetts Citizen Corps Grant (Gloucester CERT)

On motion by Councilor Joseph Ciolino, seconded by Council President Jacqueline Hardy, the City Council voted unanimously, 9 in favor zero opposed, to approve the acceptance of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) in Massachusetts Citizen Corps Grant Program Funds, to be expended by the City of Gloucester acting as host agent for the City of Gloucester Community Emergency Response Team (Gloucester CERT) as in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53A. Said grant funds are from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that are passed through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

**2. Vandalism to City Property**

a. Reporting Policies – Dr. Connelly reviewed the School Committee policy on vandalism. Councilor Whynott stated his opinion that any act of vandalism should be automatically reported to the police.

b. Enforcement – Dr. Connelly reviewed the section of the student handbook regarding vandalism, as well as his memorandum to the School Committee dated August 17<sup>th</sup> regarding the action plan put into place in light of the recently discovered vandalism at the high school. Dr. Connelly stressed that the vandalism occurred over many years and that the current student population is not responsible for it. He also stated that the GFAA has donated money for a refurbishing project. Councilor Ciolino expressed concern about using funds allocated for maintenance to repair vandalism. Dr. Connelly stressed the importance of seeking full restitution.

d. Cameras – There was a discussion about cameras being used as a deterrent and to identify the perpetrators. Chief Lane stated that the police department stands ready to document, investigate and prosecute any acts of school vandalism.

Councilor Tobey expressed concern about violation of civil liberties. Mayor Kirk reviewed her memorandum to the City Council dated October 19<sup>th</sup> regarding the city's review of surveillance cameras. A discussion was held on the placement of cameras and the location of monitors. Councilor Curcuru stated that the issue of cameras in the city is on the agenda for the Budget and Finance Committee meeting on Thursday.

There was a discussion about the type of cameras to be used and whether the police department would have a live feed to monitor the cameras at the high school on nights, weekends and during the summer.

On motion by Councilor Tobey, seconded by Councilor Whynott, the City Council voted unanimously, 9 in favor zero opposed, to refer Mayor Kirk's memorandum to the City Council dated October 19, 2010 to the Ordinances and Administration Committee for continuing oversight.

**3. MSBA**

- a. Green Repair Project Certification – SOI Status – Dr. Connelly reviewed the summary report on this project and stated that the MSBA is now reviewing the SOIs that were submitted. He indicated that we should hear by Thanksgiving whether or not they are approved. Dr. Connelly stressed that the money must be spent by September 2011, so the work would need to be done during the summer of 2011. President Hardy recognized Councilor McGeary for bringing this matter to the attention of the City Council.
- b. West Parish School Project – Dr. Connelly presented a summary of the SOI submitted to the MSBA in November 2009 and his tentative time line for the project. A discussion was held about funding the \$500,000 for the feasibility study and what the study would include. There was also a discussion of funding the project in general, including an override or debt exclusion override. Mr. Towne reported on the process of a debt exclusion override and cautioned about overtaxing.

Dr. Connelly reviewed the MSBA reimbursement process and stated that if the project is delayed, we would have to reapply at a later date. Mr. Hale stated that every school is in a state of emergency at this time. Councilor Verga stated that issues have been pointed out year after year and have been continually put off. He expressed that we should find a way to do it. Chairperson Gilman stated that this issue will be discussed at the Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting and stated that we need to have a better handle on where we are going to find the \$500,000. Ms. Teixeira requested a commitment from the City Council that they will support the West Parish project regardless of what happens with the charter school.

**4. Fuller School**

- a. Future – Mayor Kirk Memo dated October 5, 2010 – President Hardy read the memorandum from Mayor Kirk to Dr. Connelly into the record. Chairperson Gilman expressed concern that the School Committee was not able to discuss the plan before it was made public. She believes the School Committee should decide what the plans are in light of the issue of the charter school, among other things.

A discussion was held on the future use of Fuller School, including leasing the property, the funds that would need to be expended in order to be able to lease it, and having any lessee share the cost of any necessary improvements. Chairperson Gilman stated that the School Committee will not be able to make a decision on the use of the property until after December 21<sup>st</sup> because of the charter school decision and that the School Committee should have a better idea by late winter on what they would like to do with the property. Councilor Whynott stated that this issue should be the subject of a separate meeting. Councilor Theken suggested finding out the value of the property and waiting to find out what happens with the charter school before any decisions are made.

**5. MOU**

Mr. Hale presented the MOU update report prepared by himself and Mr. Tarr and updated the City Council and School Committee on implementation of the MOU. Mr. Hale stated that the budget is grossly underfunded and that the request next year would be for an additional \$1 million for facilities. That figure does not include energy costs or personnel. He expressed concern with a few gray areas in the MOU, such as food service and the revolving fund for building use fees.

**6. Status Related to the Continued Voting at Schools**

Linda Lowe updated the City Council and the School Committee regarding the disadvantages of having polling places located in schools, the possibility of consolidating to a fewer number of polling places, and where those polling places would be located. Ms. Lowe invited the School Committee to attend the City Council meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> at which she will be making a presentation on this issue.

**7. Superintendent Search Update**

Chairperson Gilman reported to the City Council on the attributes that were deemed the most important for the next superintendent as a result of the 17 focus groups that were conducted on this issue, as well as the steps that will be taken to advertise for, interview and hire a new superintendent. Chairperson Gilman presented a letter to President Hardy requesting that a member of the City Council serve on the advisory committee and asked her to discuss this matter with the City Council.

*Note: Mayor Kirk left the meeting at 8:35 p.m.*

**8. GPS Strategic Planning Sessions**

- a. Community Outreach – Chairperson Gilman reported to the City Council on the survey that will be online next week to supplement the strategic planning process.

- b. Possible Assistance from Council – Chairperson Gilman presented a letter to the City Council members requesting that they help spread the word to the community about the focus group sessions and encourage people to attend. She requested that Greg Verga speak about the importance of participating in the focus group at his ward meeting on Thursday.

*Note: Councilor Tobey left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.*

**9. Open Meeting Law**

Linda Lowe reviewed the importance of the Open Meeting Law, which was dramatically revised a year or so ago. President Hardy referred anyone who has questions about the law to General Counsel Suzanne Egan or Linda Lowe.

**10. School Lunch – Point of Purchase Software Installation & Status**

Mr. Markham updated the City Council and School Committee on the installation of the “Meal Magic” program in the schools and the training of clerks. Mr. Markham stated that the goal is to have the system in place by December 1<sup>st</sup>. There was a discussion on the number of stations purchased and how they were funded. Mr. Markham indicated that many of the district’s computers were recycled and upgraded for this project at relatively little cost. A discussion was also held on the issue of confidentiality for free and reduced lunch students and what type of lunch they will get.

*Note: Councilor Whynott left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.*

**11. Job Postings – Exchanging School Side & City Side Postings**

President Hardy stated that she would like the School Department to share their job postings with the city, to the extent possible. She stated that the city tries to exchange their job postings when possible and that she would like an even exchange of job postings. Dr. Connelly agreed to this.

**12. Schedule Next Joint Meeting**

Chairperson Gilman suggested that the next joint meeting be scheduled for early January. President Hardy agreed and stated that if the councilors had anything to add to that agenda, they should let her know.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Councilor Verga, seconded by Chairperson Gilman, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Special Joint City Council and School Committee Meeting of October 19, 2010 at 8:55 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*