

**JOINT GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL & SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.  
O'Maley Innovation Middle School Library  
**-MINUTES-**

**CITY COUNCIL:**

**Present: President, Councilor Paul Lundberg; Vice President, Steven LeBlanc, Jr.; Councilor Melissa Cox; Councilor Valerie Gilman; Councilor Ken Hecht; Councilor Jen Holmgren; Councilor Scott Memhard; Councilor James O'Hara**  
**Absent: Councilor Nolan**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE:**

**Present: Mayor Sefatia Theken; Chair, Jonathan Pope; Melissa Teixeira; Kathy Clancy, Vice Chair; Michelle Sweet; Joel Favazza; Anthony Gross**  
**Absent: None.**

**Also Present: Joanne M. Senos; Dr. Richard Safier; Interim Police Chief McCarthy; Tom LaFleur; Gregg Bach**

**1. Call to Order of the School Committee:**

**School Committee Chair, Jonathan Pope** opened the joint meeting of the School Committee with the City Council at 7:01 p.m. stating that the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools is for all students to be successfully engaged lifelong learners.

**2. Call to Order of the City Council:**

**Council President Paul Lundberg** opened the joint meeting of the City Council with the School Committee at 7:01 p.m. The Council President announced that this meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law.

**3. Flag Salute & Moment of Silence** was dedicated to the victims of the Parkland, FL shooting and all who were affected by it, **Council President Lundberg** said.

**4. Status of MSBA Process Re: East Gloucester Elementary School**

**Mr. Pope** conveyed the following information: In December 2017 the Council voted on the funding for a school feasibility study. On February 14, 2018, Superintendent Safier, he and Council President Lundberg attended the MSBA board meeting at which the Board voted to accept Gloucester into the feasibility phase of the process of building a new school. That process consists of: 1) hiring an Owners Project Manager (OPM). The East Gloucester/Veterans' Memorial Elementary Schools Building Committee (Building Committee) comprised of 15 people has established subcommittee to manage the hiring of an OPM. The OPM provides technical support for the management of the feasibility process and the schematic designs, which is the second phase of the study, as well as all phases and stay to the close out. The OPM reviews all submittals such as technical analysis and data, and handles presentations and assists in the generation external and internal communications and hold to MSBA policies. The OPM helps to put together the budget as well. The city's Purchasing Agent is assembling a Request for Services (RFPS). The RFS has been submitted to the MSBA for review which then moves on to the MSBA's central register (state advertising for municipally funded projects). The Purchasing Agent will review the applications for the OPM first to ensure people are qualified and then pass them along to the Building Committee. Following the MSBA process, the Building Committee subcommittee will reduce the applicants to the top three or four candidates; interview the firms, tracking their answers as is required. They are then ranked in numeric order; negotiations then begin with the first choice candidate. If unsuccessful they revert to the second choice, and negotiate a contract and continue until there is a signed contract. The MSBA has to approve the OPM contract. It is anticipated to have an OPM hired by the end of June 2018. The next step would be to hire a design team once the OPM is on board (OPM is also known formerly as "Clerk of the Works"). The process for hiring a designer is different from an OPM. A designer is chosen and then the district enters into a review of existing facilities and

review of all possible sites and work to the point of a “preferred schematic design” which will have a located building site, monetized, educational purpose explained; the costs will be roughed out. At that point it is submitted to the city for funding.

**Mr. Pope** advised that in order to accomplish this project the city will have to have a debt exclusion approved by the community by vote. He conceded it will be a tight schedule and is hoped to have a debt exclusion question on the November 2019 municipal ballot. He said if the debt exclusion passes they move on to have the designer develop the contract documents which takes about one year; then construction starts, taking about two years. This means that a new East Gloucester/Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School would open its doors in September of 2022.

**Council President Lundberg** referring to his attending the Feb. 14 MSBA Board meeting with Mr. Pope and Dr. Safier, he explained that the MSBA receives its funding from the state f sales tax, a penny from every dollar, and that the MSBA is the “dispensing organization” for school buildings. The MSBA funding will pay for about half of its cost, he pointed out. He conceded there is a seemingly bureaucratic structure but said it is helpful. He noted that an MSBA staff member is assigned to the Gloucester project providing coaching and assistance which helps to assure the city meets all the deadlines and has all the necessary required documentation in place. He pointed out that the OPM, as they learned with the building of the new West Parish School, was very important. The funding of the proposed new school will be a community effort, he said.

**Dr. Richard Safier**, Superintendent of Schools, said the MSBA will work with them during the feasibility study, OPM hiring, designing; and working on the district’s educational plan. There is the consolidation (of two schools) to consider and what goes with that, considering and merging distinctions are between the “products.” They then have to then formalize that during the feasibility study phase. It takes into account the utilization of space that ultimately goes into the design.

**Melissa Teixeira**, School Committee member, noted the November 2019 date for a vote by the community to fund the new school. She asked about plans for communications to the community to get the word out so there are no surprises. **Mr. Pope** said the Building Committee has established a communications subcommittee. **Kathy Clancy**, School Committee member, said their communications at this time are about the project itself and has a website framed out but isn’t yet live and are adding content as things come in. They’re trying to ensure it has all the relevant documents and timelines; and keeping parents engaged in both school communities and the community at large. As things progress, they’ll work to find the best vehicle to yield public buy in, she advised.

**Councilor Gilman** noted when this was done for West Parish and put forward information so that everyone knew the updates it was on the school website and didn’t glean as much hits as they hoped. She suggested that not only to put information on the website, but when there are major updates, maybe the city could put an update on their city’s homepage with a link to the school site, and be used for social media to broaden the availability of information. **Mayor Sefatia Theken**, also a School Committee member, said people want input as where the school ends up for than they care about the feasibility study. Once there is agreement where the school is located it will be easier to communicate with the community.

Responding to **Councilor O’Hara’s** inquiry, **Mr. Pope** explained that when the original statement of interest was submitted to the MSBA, it was for East Gloucester School. In the process of eligibility, the endorsed plan of the School Committee was to consolidate East Gloucester and Veteran’s Schools is very much about economic feasibility which is more realistic, he pointed out. The MSBA said they have to keep just East Gloucester on all communications because that was the school that was approved by them although they completely endorse the consolidation.

**Councilor Hecht** asked for a student count at each school. **Mr. Pope** said the total will be about 450 students. Enrollment projections were done by the MSBA. As to the staff, he said that there will be some consolidation of staff but how much is not known at this time with about 35 staff per building. He added that a school built to house four classes per grade versus the three classes per grade in West Parish, it would require six more classrooms for a new school. There’d also be a need to make a bigger gym but in terms of structural mass, the school wouldn’t be a much larger structure.

**Councilor Cox** asked which the sites are under consideration. **Mr. Pope** advised they’re required to look at the existing sites. The Building Committee identified city-owned properties as: Swinson’s Field/The Pines; Green Street, and on property on Harrison Avenue. He noted there is some city-owned land on Eastern Avenue on the Rockport border but it doesn’t appear viable. On further inquiry by **Councilor Cox**, **Mr. Pope** said that the OPM and designer will look at these sites and determine which sites are buildable and best suited. He reiterated that an OPM won’t be hired until the beginning of July, a designer on board in September and so that determination in the fall and then they’ll meet to talk about the consolidation.

**Council President Lundberg** pointed out that with a municipal election in Nov. 2019; what people will want to know where the new school will be located; will the schools be consolidated, and what it will cost me. If they are thinking as advocates of this project, those will be foremost questions in the voters' minds -- the sooner they know that information the better. **Ms. Teixeira** asked what the city intends to do during that process -- if they're thinking of the November 2019 election for the funding question to the residents -- if the Veterans property isn't deemed proper for a school and they chose to combine the schools, is there interest to use that property for, say, a safety building and consider an omnibus override. **Mayor Theken** said that is difficult to determine at this time. She said they'll identify a need when the time comes and learn what people want. The city has to do its own analysis and make a reasonable determination. Once they have the support of the citizens to go forward, then they'll make that determination.

**Councilor Cox** said she agrees with Ms. Teixeira about figuring out what they can do with the buildings that are left with the building of a new school and are the biggest concerns she has heard to date. They have to be "thinking proactively" about where they'll be and what they'll do with the empty schools if it isn't feasible to build a new school on those sites. **Mayor Theken** said if Fuller purchase goes through, some of that money will be used to hire someone to work on that to survey all city facilities. She said she didn't want to put something forward first without having all the facts in hand. Eventually they'll need other facilities but right now it is hard to say that they're going to move on this. **Councilor Cox** rejoined that they need to look at the whole picture once the site is determined where to build the new school. **Council President Lundberg** said Councilor Cox's point was well taken, and advised that while they don't know the answer to those questions now; they will have a plan year from now.

**Councilor Gilman** said she understood how difficult the budget is. The two schools that will be lagging are Plum Cove and Beeman, assuming East Gloucester and Veterans goes forward. She said it will be a while for the two schools in her ward to be attended to and asked that the city ensure those schools are kept on the radar not necessarily to immediately start new replacement schools, but for something that's important to each of the schools. She suggested a community playground for Beeman, and perhaps something special that the Administration sees for Plum Cove, to engage those two school communities so they feel they aren't being left behind. **Mayor Theken** said once they have the funding, if Fuller goes through, then they'll be able to afford to make a five-, 10-, 15-, 20-year facilities plans for the city that is actionable and a plan as to how that all of it will be funded.

## 5. Safety Measures in the Gloucester Public Schools

**Council President Lundberg** said this item was added after the Parkland, Florida tragedy. Several issues are to be reviewed such as security for school procedures and a potential issue next week for the schools and community, a possible student protest. He mentioned a letter sent to parents by Dr. Safier after the Parkland shooting (on file).

**Dr. Safier** conveyed the following information:

There are six elements to the approach to school security -- collaboration with the Gloucester Police Department, Fire Department and Health Department; an emergency management plans; an on-going planning and review of emergency procedures for the district; drill preparedness which is continuing to be worked on with the Police; addressing psychological issues amongst the student population based on an understanding of their needs, and intervention; everyday building security.

Collaboration with the Police Department: There is a Memorandum of Agreement between the Police and School Department based on a template provided by the Essex County District Attorney's office which enumerated general principals of cooperation with the Police Dept.; how information is shared; reporting processes; necessary notifications under MGL Ch. 71, Sec. 37H-1/2 which has to do with the more dangerous kinds of incidents that can occur; search and seizure procedures and any prosecutorial diversion programs. At this juncture the presence of Interim Police Chief John McCarthy was noted by **Council President Lundberg**.

**Dr. Safier** continued that: Their emergency management plans for each school is tailored to their particular school. The mission and goals are to protect life and properties, to respond to emergencies promptly and properly, and coordinate emergency operations, plans and community resources and to aid in recovery from disasters. There are three:

- Direction and control (based on type of incident) who is in charge and who becomes the incident commander and is based on circumstance.
- Functional protocols are the ways in which schools react to specific situations such as lockdown procedures, ALICE (Alert/Lockdown/Inform/Counter/Evacuate) which is the newest method for reacting to an armed intruder. Each can be specific to various kinds of events. A brief rundown of types of events

were touched on. ALICE “empowers teachers to make decision to remain in place or evacuate their students and how to handle that evacuation, and examples were briefly recounted.

- Emergency management plans have an ongoing review. Each school as its own crisis team comprised of nurses, teachers, social workers, social services personnel, Administration, which looks at the plans on an annual basis and “tweak” them accordingly.
- Drill practice and preparedness -- there are simulations that are practiced; and with certain real life incidents they’ve learned from those situations. It was advised they are working with the Police Dept. due to the changed philosophy on armed intruders and are modifying drills for the spring. The younger the children, the more they emphasize the training and preparation with staff.
- Addressing mental issues. It was acknowledged that students do experience mental health issues and on occasion that can create a concern to be potential injurious to self or others. It is important that the school as a community recognizes the need to report issues of concern. There are formalized plans -- at GHS there are nurses, adjustment counselors; a psychologist, four guidance counselors and the staff and Administration. All have received youth mental health training. The middle school has three guidance counselors, a student assistance counselor, two nurses; a school psychologist, an adjustment counselor and two assistant principals--they’d like to bring that youth mental health training to the middle school in the fall. Each of the elementary schools has a school psychologist, an adjustment counselor. All of the schools have child study teams, looking at the academic, social and emotional situations. There is considerable outreach to a number of community agencies.
- Daily security -- there are procedures in place to such as all doors are locked at the start of school with only one entrance available and a camera at that entrance and asks for entry by speaking in an intercom. It is essential to channel entry and have formal entry procedures to know where everyone in the school is at all times and safe exit of the building as well.

**Councilor Hecht** said the experience of a teacher in the moment of crisis he said he couldn’t imagine, and asked if there is off-site training, or is training held on site to be ready for that moment. **Dr. Safier** said this is where the GPD comes in who have sent their representatives in to conduct training at the high school and at times the other schools. This is dealing in an extraordinary situation, he said. They are mindful of it and will maintain the training sessions and the drills, **Dr. Safier** assured.

**Councilor LeBlanc** said he reached out to Councilor Lundberg several weeks ago to get this matter on the agenda. This is an everyday topic of discussion with their kids and there is no real true answer how to stop this, he pointed out. He expressed appreciation for what the school district is doing. He highlighted that there are schools throughout the country that have a small satellite offices of their police departments in the school. GHS has a police talented resource officer, but that the police force might wish to consider a satellite office in one or two of the schools. He pointed out now they have to focus on having children be made aware of their surroundings not just in school but everywhere. He said that situational awareness for their children starts at home where parents have to work with their children to have a plan. He reiterated he appreciated what the schools are doing but that it is important there is situational awareness not just in the schools but everywhere. He also reiterated that a satellite office of the Police Department in city schools can act as an important deterrent and is a place to start.

**Mayor Theken** said they’ll be asking the Council for a \$33,000 appropriation to continue officer training; 13 officers have been trained by the U.S. Marshals for active shooters. She noted that Lt. Gossom is one of the department trainers. There are programs in place, she said, to protect the city’s children.

**Interim Chief John McCarthy** highlighted that in conjunction with the schools they borrowed Beeman School in the summer and hosted training with the federal people for active shooting incidents. They got 18 officers trained out of 60. He reported that he asked the Mayor when Free Cash was certified, for \$34,000. The Air Marshals have a facility at Hanscom Air Force Base -- the offer is for free training, but overtime has to be paid for and will train all GPD officers in active shooters. He remarked that “ALICE” is fairly new which gives more on-site ability to a plan as incidents unfold. There are two instructors on the department for ALICE training (Lt. Gossom and School Resource Officer Mike Scola) and have trained Pathways staff and all school personnel. They’ve opted to go into city buildings, he noted as the training isn’t unique to school facilities. Lt. Gossom has done ALICE pre-training at Senior Care. There is the Kops & Kids program which is going into the elementary schools four times a semester. They tell their officers to stop in the schools to be visible which also acts as a deterrent. They will try to work with the Mayor with one GHS resource officer but the department audit recommended they have three resource officers which he said will take some budgeting and take time to get that done. They’d like to have one resource officer at the high school, middle school and one officer who would float around the elementary schools, he said.

**Interim Chief McCarthy** assured the School Committee and Council that there are plans in place but they will not give that information out, “We have measures.” There were several instances with the real thing this year, he

pointed out. There is a grant from the Mass. Dept. of Public Health along with Beverly, Manchester, Essex, Danvers and Ipswich for a full-time mental health imbedded counselor and the city will have that counselor two days a week and should be in place by April. He advised one counselor is shared by Danvers and Salem who has with a caseload of 350 cases between the two towns.

**Council President Lundberg** asked from the Chief's experience what value comes from having a resource officer in the schools. **Interim Chief McCarthy** said it was his belief a resource officer is invaluable. He explained that the GHS resource officer is very well loved and works every day; that any time there's a problem he is involved no matter what the issue. The GHS Resource Officer goes to all the school events, knows every student and runs a student police academy which is always oversubscribed. The officer has taken ownership to his area, the high school. If they had another resource officer, they would like to see them placed at the middle school. **Ms. Clancy** recounted that when Lt. Gossom spoke to the School Committee, he told them they're teaching kids skills that they can use everywhere from these training programs to give them general "know how." **Mayor Theken** lauded Officer Mike Gossom's presentation. She said they're doing everything possible to be ready, but she urged parents to help make their children situationally aware no matter where they are. She touched upon the needs for pediatric mental health assistance through local resources, saying they want the city's children to be safe.

**Councilor Gilman** asked whether school driver's buses will be trained. **Dr. Safier** said there is mandatory bus training twice a year. He said he didn't know if they were trained to deal with an intruder. **Interim Chief McCarthy** said he hasn't heard of the police going to the bus company and would have to ask. **Councilor Gilman**, noting the everyday building security, asked if an independent group in the city spot checks to see what kinds of gaps their might be. **Dr. Safier** said they are aware as is the DPW; execution of these daily security matters are reviewed frequently, he noted. **Councilor Gilman** asked if there is a plan in place to connect with parents on specific new initiatives they're teaching the children and how that information is shared with parents for the transferrable new skills their student may have learned. She suggested that would be helpful. **Interim Chief McCarthy** it would start with kids going home and telling their parents what they did in school that day. Parents will be notified that there will be a drill so that there are no panic comes forward, he advised. **Dr. Safier** said they do want to keep some things in-house so it isn't being disseminated, but that they do notify parents by letter to how they handle certain situations and that the suggestion to convey the information to parents is a point well taken.

**Councilor O'Hara** said they're talking about a very important issue, expressing his empathy with the Mayor noting this will cost a lot of money. He expressed his concerns about school security. He pointed out if Woburn has an active shooter they have assets coming in from all aspects but Gloucester is at the end of the road and suggested that the Chief's resources could be limited. He mentioned a draft of his Council Order about metal detectors. He said the city's schools are old and don't necessarily have the safety measures and enclosures they should, which concerns him as well. He mentioned the school buses as an issue that Councilor Gilman raised. **Interim Chief McCarthy** said that they can get plenty of officers available to respond in any emergency with the appropriate resources available in the city and in neighboring communities, reiterated by the Mayor. **Council President Lundberg** cautioned they are only expressing areas of concern this evening.

**Tony Gross**, School Committee member, pointed out that the Student Resource Officer's true value is the advanced social work they do with the kids, especially those kids that live on the edge. They develop a healthy relationship with a police officer that can change their lives for a lifetime. It is invaluable, he noted. Mentioning situational awareness, he said it's been worked on for some time and can be incorporated into all sorts of discussions. He mentioned the new mental health counselor under the new grant. **Interim Chief McCarthy** said that person will be able to be directed to where they are needed. **Mr. Gross** said it is about mitigation because by correcting issues early on prevents future issues. **Mayor Theken** addressed the issue of heightened cell phone service in the schools for emergencies.

**Councilor Holmgren** noted she attended last week's School Committee meeting and said after that meeting and this one it was "abundantly clear" that everyone involved with their children in the school system cares deeply about their safety, "social, emotional and physical health. She expressed appreciation for Councilor O'Hara's expressed concern for the city's children safety. She extended her appreciation to the Mayor Theken for her efforts, to Dr. Safier and Interim Chief McCarthy for their emphasis on children's social and emotional health and "social safety nets." She pointed out they can't quantify the value these professionals provide but do know that mental health counselors and resource officers are effective and can keep their children safer. She said they can't have enough of these people, pointing out that the bonds children make with these professionals could save lives. She said she would support any funds expended that help in that way. She said she has a seven year old attending West Parish, and it is their intention to keep her in the city's public schools. She reiterated that they can't underestimate the value of more mental health counseling.

**Ms. Teixeira** said working in Gloucester’s District Courthouse every day she sees the many police officers on duty in the city constantly. She pointed out that one can petition through the court or the Police Department under MGL Ch. 123, Sec. 12E for a person with mental illness. Getting that counselor to come to Gloucester is so vital, she said. She highlighted the reminders for school staff and that doors are open in the late spring for fresh air but is a security breach. She pointed out that when there are food deliveries it can create security issues and that there are more safety protocols that could be put in place to assure the community they are taking these matters seriously. Teachers and parents have pointed out not all doors have locks on them and should. Simple things like that they can pay attention to, she pointed out, and that they can be proactive.

Mayor Theken reported that on Feb. 27 was a meeting to review of facilities to get these things types of things remedied. At that meeting were: Tom LaFleur, GPS Director of Finance & Operation; Mark Cole, Assistant DPW Director; Grant Harris, GPS IT Director, Dr. Safier, Tony Gross; Mike Hale, DPW Director. She then very briefly enumerated issues at some of the schools and assured they are hearing the parents, she said. She pointed out that Lt. Gossom conveyed that he has his children in the public schools and that as he protects his own children he protects them all.

**Council President Lundberg** said Councilor O’Hara’s Council Order is being worked on to ensure it is consistent with the City Charter. He said he was impressed with the processes in place. **Mr. Gross** added that West Parish has the necessary safety procedures and security measures in place, and all new schools will, and replacing the schools will be safer. Mayor Theken said they are starting.

**6. Fiscal Year 2019 School Budget**

**Council President Lundberg** discussed briefly what would be presented to the joint meeting under this heading. **Mr. Pope** said the School Department develops its own budget, voted on by the School Committee and forwards it to the Mayor and then they negotiate the final budget that is funded and then the Mayor submits that budget to the city. They are developing a level service budget, he noted, and pointed out that they’re aware this is not the budget they’ll not end up with.

**Dr. Safier** noted documentation (on file) on the FY19 Draft Level Service Budget Proposal. He then reviewed as follows:

- A budget calendar.
- District Initiatives for the 2018-2019 school year were touched upon such as curriculum review and revision, examination of the Preschool through Grade 8 literacy; Individual needs/intervention systems; special education; technology; next generation MCAS preparation; English Language Learners; professional culture and community. **Mr. Gross** noted that Veterans has 20% ELL students which is a large number. Beeman has 12% ELL students.
- Summary: Annual Increases to the Budget: COLA; Health Insurance increases for active & retired teachers; increase in Special Educational costs; Step increases; Lane changes; anticipated grant reductions; unanticipated expenses
- FY19 Draft Budget Total: Level Service
 

FY18 Budget	\$41,038,897
Draft FY19 Budget Total	\$43,272,273
Proposed Increase	\$ 2,233,377
Percent Increase	5.44%
- Significant Cost Increases to the Budget:
  - Health Insurance (Active) \$87,576; Retired increases \$31,179 for a total of \$118,755
  - Step Increases \$396,614; Lane Changes \$235,748; Special Education (increase to out-of-town tuition is \$411,087 for subtotal of \$1,162,204 plus SPED out-of-district transportation; anticipated 10% increase to bus fleet lease; contractual increases, less retirements of \$147,514 the subtotal is \$602,560 for a total of \$1,754,764
- Out-of-District Tuitions: From FY16 at \$4,103,366 (63 students) to FY18 to \$4,452,834 (64 students)
- Grant reductions were noted briefly. All five elementary schools are anticipated to be Title I schools. Highlighted was the Title I grant reduction.
- Salaries funded by grants not in the operating budget totals \$1,0326,746
- Salaries funded by Revolving Funds not in the operating budget: \$1,217,770

- Cuts Required to Reach Percent Increases were noted at each percentage increment starting at 2.25 percent representing \$1,310,001 in cuts and up to 5% which equated to \$181,432 in cuts. He said they will await the guidance of the Mayor's office.

**Council President Lundberg** noted the School Committee will have a public hearing on April 4 on their FY19 budget, and the School Committee will vote on it April 11. This budget is a work in progress, he noted, saying it isn't a final budget, and that the Council's B&F Committee will explore the final budget further. **Mr. Pope** added they've not voted on this budget. They'll vote a budget for public hearing towards the end of the month. After they've gotten public input they'll vote the budget to forward to the Administration and what comes forward to the Council for its review and vote from the Administration won't necessarily be what the School Committee voted..

#### **7. Issues Regarding School Facilities Maintenance**

This matter was covered under issues in Agenda Item #5.

**A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Dana C. Jorgensson*  
Clerk of Committees

**DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None.**