

**SPECIAL GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, June 5, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Kyrouz Auditorium – City Hall

**-MINUTES-**

**Present:** Vice Chair, Steven LeBlanc, Jr.; Councilor Melissa Cox; Councilor Valerie Gilman (entered the meeting at 7:18 p.m.); Councilor Kenneth Hecht; Councilor Jennifer Holmgren; Councilor Scott Memhard (entered the meeting at 7:10 p.m.); Councilor Sean Nolan; Councilor James O’Hara;  
**Absent:** Councilor Lundberg  
**Also Present:** Joanne Senos; Jim Destino; Kenny Costa; John Dunn; Joel Favazza; Fire Chief Eric Smith; Dr. Richard Safier; Jonathan Pope; Melissa Teixeira; Michelle Sweet; Kathy Clancy

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. The Council President announced that this meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law.

**Flag Salute & Moment of Silence.****Approval of Minutes from Standing Committee Meetings:**

1. FY19 Budget Review Meetings: B&F 5/10/2018, 5/17/2018, 5/24/2018, 5/29/2018, 5/30/2018 (Approve/File)  
(under separate cover)

**By a unanimous vote of the Council the minutes of the FY19 Budget Review Meetings were accepted.**

**Scheduled Public Hearings:****1. PH2018-0028: Public Hearing on FY19 Proposed Budget (FY19 Mayor’s Recommended Budget**

**This public hearing is opened at 7:04 p.m.**

**Members of the Public who offered their opinions on the FY19 budget:**

**Ainsley Smith**, 14 Pine Street, expressed the concerns on behalf of the Clean City Commission regarding the Public Works Department’s FY19 budget highlighting a \$100,000 increase in the Sanitation/Recycling curbside pick-up contract and asked for the reason for the increase and if there was any way to negotiate a reduction. Further highlighted was the overall DPW proposed budget just under \$11 million, about a 3.92% increase over FY18 yet beach revenue is estimated to increase by 27% to \$1.8 million. The Commission is suggesting that with the increase in tourism in the city, funding should be used to maintain beaches and public spaces with appropriately increased trash removal. Other suggestions offered were: beach and park trash barrels to be emptied daily during peak season to include collections on weekend days and holidays; and to coordinate DPW and Police Dept. budgets to enhance funding for enforcement of littering violations citywide (statement submitted for the record).

**Theresa Danna**, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade O’Maley Innovation School teacher, spoke to keeping the educational experience and privileges the same for all students of the Gloucester Public Schools as that was offered to the students graduating this June from the city’s school system. She read her remarks that were offered by her under “Communications” (previously submitted to the Council), urging there be no cuts to the special education budget or its staff and enumerated other proactive programs of the city’s schools shepherded by a dedicated staff. She also encouraged the Council to support a fulsome school budget to create students who enter society as whole individuals with essential skills to make them successful members of society.

**Alice Morris**, 2 Kent Road, asked that the school budget not be cut. Mentioning she is a newer resident of the city, she expressed concern for her daughter, whom she described as not a traditional academic student but rather a student who appreciates the arts, especially photography and film studies, but needs substantive encouragement which would not necessarily be the case with funding cut to certain support programs and staffing. She highlighted the arts and other school programs available to her daughter were what drew her to Gloucester.

**Barbara McLaughlin**, 7 Radcliff Street, mentioned she was recently participating in the Sawyer Free Library Strategic meeting at the Rocky Neck Cultural Center noting many senior participants when asked what was important to them, it was support for the schools and valuing of the city’s school system. It is not only the young people who are concerned but retirees, she pointed out.

**John McElhenny**, 19 Allen Street, expressed appreciation for the difficult decisions the Council has to make with the FY19 budget. He acknowledged having two children in the city’s school system at the O’Maley Innovation

School and East Gloucester Elementary School and a third child entering school in 1 ½ years. He mentioned the Gloucester Education Foundation as an example of a private non-profit assisting in the funding the city's schools highlighting that such partnership of private and city funding is working well. He conveyed he has friends that choose to send their children out of the Gloucester Public Schools highlighting the importance of sending the "right" message to parents considering coming to Gloucester or choosing in their students that funding be adequate for the city's schools. He noted that there are good things happening for his own students -- that his son at O'Maley School is thriving and his daughter at East Gloucester School has learned to love math. He pointed out that the schools have improved of late and that he asked there be an adequate level of funding for them.

**Joel Favazza**, 28 Middle Street speaking as a citizen, not as an attorney or member of the School Committee, asked the Council when deliberating on future budgets to consider how the budget relates to long-term planning. He pointed out that by City Charter and Code of Ordinances the Administration is required to do a five- and ten-year capital plan. He suggested that the FY19 budget should "tie into" those plans. He asked where the capital plans are pointing out that many of financial challenges faced by the city is due to a lack of forward-looking capital planning. Continuing on this path will not find the city in a better situation, he suggested, mentioning issues with the central Fire Station and the city street light LED replacement program issues as an example. He urged the Council to look at a plan and if the budget helps to achieve capital planning goals.

**Jessica Bean**, 19 Corliss Avenue, asked the Council to support funding city schools noting she has a daughter entering fourth grade and that she is a Special Education paraprofessional working with moderately disabled High School students. She advised that were there to be budget cuts somehow they'll manage but expressed concern for her daughter who is learning disabled and would benefit from a paraprofessional's assistance to help her to become a successful student. She mentioned that as a Girl Scout troop leader, the girls she works with have great math and verbal skills which she pointed out speaks to a great school system. She offered her support of Ms. Dannaheer's and Ms. Morse's comments saying she didn't want to see cuts made to the city's school system.

**Sophie Donnelly**, 9 Sumner Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher and Middle School Science Coordinator, advised that the best investment the city can make is in its youth. She conveyed that there is a group of talented educators that are invested in the city's schools and will do the best they can with whatever they are given, but that after 18 years she advised they are at a, "breaking point." If they keep cutting services will be reduced, she pointed out highlighting that teachers are writing grants continuously for things like supplies and equipment, but that doesn't pay for teacher time. Studies show small class sizes are important, she added.

**Jonathan Pope**, Chair of the Gloucester School Committee, 16 Marble Street, advised he was speaking as a private citizen. He made the following comments: There is a difference of \$462,000 between what the School Committee voted as the FY19 district budget and what the Council has before them. The School Committee's job is to forward a budget that fulfills their mission which is dictated by parents, students, teachers, Mass. General Law and the federal government. The School Committee will resolve their budget, the only department that can do that. It is understood that the city is faced with not a lot of money to fulfill its residents' expectation of services. The issue is fundamentally a revenue issue.

**Mr. Pope** reviewed the state formula to distribute Chapter 70 funds to the city. He then reviewed like cities with similar property value revenues highlighting that the city needs to look at its revenue issues not its expenditure issues.

**Communications: Theresa Dannaheer**, 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at the O'Maley Innovation School expressing concern for cuts to the school budget affecting special needs students submitted by email.

**Councilor Questions: None.**

**This public hearing is closed at 7:35 p.m.**

**Councilor LeBlanc** thanked the audience on behalf of the Council for their presence and participation.

**A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Dana C. Jorgensson*  
Clerk of Committees

**DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING:**

- **Written statement by Ainsley Smith, 14 Pine Street**