

MINUTES

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll Call

Meeting Called to Order by Co-chair, Ms. Cook at 7:01 pm

Present: Ms. Joyce, Ms. Keeling, Mr. Dupuis, Mr. Mara, Mr. Joyce, Ms. Cook, Ms. Pezza and Mr. Rizzo

Absent: Ms. Ferreira

Also Present: Attorney Piccirilli, Dr. Renee Palazzo

- 3) Pledge of Allegiance
 - 4) Public Comment Related to Open Session Agenda Items
- None at this time

Discussion and/or Public Action on the following

- 5) Approval of Meeting Minutes (June 22, 2026)

- a) Open and Executive Session Meeting

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the minutes of the Open meeting on June 22, 2026

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the minutes of the Executive Session meeting on June 22, 2026

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

- 6) Approval of Monthly Bills (June & July)

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the monthly bills dated June 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$1,389,556.86

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the monthly bills dated July 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 in the amount of \$1,762,666.48

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

- 7) Finance Update –Budget and Finance

- a) Revenue & Expense Monthly (JUNE & JULY)

Dr. Palazzo reviewed the revenue and expenses for June and July. Ms. Pezza stated that the amounts were wrong. Mr. Mara clarified that the column heading for the 2026-27 sheet needs to be updated from FY 2026 to FY 2027, however the numbers are correct.

- b) Foster and Glocester Local Appropriations Receiveables

1st Quarter payments from both towns of Foster and Glocester were less than the invoiced amount. Attorney Piccirilli has been in touch with the Town solicitors and they will speak with their town councils.

- c) School Lunch Program

Letter in the packet. Proposal is to increase \$.25 for students and \$.50 for adults.

Discuss with Sodexo on giving too many choices of food. May need to cut down on choices. See if Sodexo can either come to a meeting or answer in a report.

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the increase of \$0.25 for the school breakfast and lunch program for students

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the increase of \$0.50 for the school breakfast and lunch program for adults

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

8) Superintendent's Report

- a) Personnel - Resignations, Appointments, Retirements, Leaves, Lay Offs, Job Sharing, Non-Renewals, Recalls and Other Personnel Actions – Informational
 - i) Welcome the New Hires
Tabled -- will come to September meeting
 - ii) Approval of Assistant Director of Technology Contract
 - iii) Approval of Sabbatical

Motion by Ms. Pezza supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the Superintendent's Report as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

9) Approval of Student Assistance Services AY2026-27 Contract

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Joyce to approve the Student Assistance Services AY2026-27 Contract as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0-2

Ms. Pezza & Mr. Dupuis abstained

10) 2026-H 8531 Relating to Education - Compulsory Attendance

Tabled

11) Review Independent Investigation report of Ret. Judge William Smith regarding alleged inappropriate relationship between student and staff member at Ponaganset High School

The School Committee Attorney spoke with Judge Smith and the Judge stated he would answer questions from school committee members if they had any. Mr. Mara stated that the investigation was good and what are our next steps. Dr. Palazzo stated that there are some steps in place. Get a task force together - we will use our school improvement team, student leadership groups to help with the task force. Will discuss at the Admin Meeting next week for more PD opportunities for parents. Mr. Mara asked how neighboring districts addressed this. Mr. Mara also mentioned that we need to reach out to the community to let them know what we are doing. Mr. Dupuis asked about a tip line. Could be a valuable tool.

Mr. Steere, Gloucester asked who is paying for the investigation.

Ms. Heidi Andrews, Gloucester stated that the anonymous tip line is a good idea. She also stated that in her opinion the investigation was questionable.

Trish St.Onge, Gloucester asked about investigation

School Committee Member Ms. Pezza stated that the investigation should not have been done in the superintendent's office.

Gary King, Gloucester asked where did the recommendation of the Judge come from.

School Committee Member Mr. Rizzo stated that everyone demanded an independent investigation, but now that one was done, it seems like no one is happy because no one was found negligent.

Ms. Heidi Andrews, stated that they did ask for an independent investigation, but not one that is clearly filled with lies. The report just covered the school.

School Committee Member Mr. Mara, Foster was pleased we were able to hire the Chief Justice Retired Judge. He had full access to whoever he wanted to speak with.

Brian Kelly, Gloucester asked if any other names of investigators were provided to the school committee by the superintendent. The administration should have brought names forward.

12) Communication Process with Parents/Guardians

Discussions are on going. Newsletters are being prepared.

13) Facilities Update

Mr. Essex gave an overview. Electrical is being worked on. Everything is going as planned with the boiler at HS. The hot water heaters are in place, first to be completed at the high school and then the middle school. Lighting project - HS 99% complete, MS 95% complete. Tennis Courts - 60 to 65% complete. First 3 courts complete, working on the 2nd set. Moisture issues in the IT department started with flooring, and should be done by the end of week. Security System - in process; we are up to date with disconnecting with HS,

General repairs:

The science rooms have neutralizing tanks and each and every tank has been cleared and limestone replaced. To Mr. Essex's knowledge no service has ever been done with them before.

High School library - air condenser motor has been replaced

Covered Bridge - fully repaired - insurance claim

Purchased Lockdown Window dressing for all classrooms

Electrical distribution -- will bring to Capital Projects, has some reports for review

Fleet Maintenance of vehicles (12) is complete.

Ms. Pezza thanked Mr. Essex and asked about the Lockdown Window dressing

14) Greenovation Lab Update

One year in the making. Energy conservation. Drawings that were provided by Studio Jade at no charge have been approved by the building inspector and fire. Moving forward and has made progress and will hit the ground running. Mr. Mara stated he would help with design with the education side. The deadline is July 2027.

15) Athletic Facility

Tabled. New Athletic Director. Once he is up to speed, will come back.

16) Policies

a) Reaffirm: Affirmative Action Policy #GBA

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Pezza to approve to reaffirm the Affirmative Action Policy #GBA as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

b) 2nd Reading - Personal Electronic Device Policy #GBEF

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Keeling to approve the 2nd Reading - Personal Electronic Device Policy #GBEF as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

c) 2nd Reading - Procedure for School Cancellation Policy #EBCE

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Pezza to approve 2nd Reading - Procedure for School Cancellation Policy #EBCE as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

17) Sub Committee Structure & Calendar

The calendar is being prepared.

18) Communication between School Committee Members

Mr. Mara mentioned that DECA was doing a fundraiser, Class of 2028 was having a fundraiser and Mr. Stanley had one also at Pezza Farm. Ms. Pezza stated that there are two more food truck events if anyone else is interested in participating in a fundraiser.

19) Agenda Items requested by School Committee Members

None

20) Public Comment Related to Open Session Agenda Items

Mr. Dupuis took this time to thank Mrs. Wendy Gallucci and Mr. Reese Babington for their dedication to Foster Gloucester. Ms. Keeling wanted to thank Mr. Babington for all he has done.

Mr. Walt Steere, Gloucester is concerned about not having a voter approved budget and the student proration.

21) Vote to Convene in Executive Session at 8:36 pm to Discuss and/or Vote on the Following Matters
Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Pezza to Seek to Convene to Executive Session to Discuss and/or Vote on the following matters: **MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0**

- a) Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(8) (Homeschooling)
- b) Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(2) - Collective Bargaining
 - i) Grievance 2526-04 Article XVI Salaries - compensation of master's degree
 - ii) Update on Negotiations ESP (Non cert) & NEARI (Teacher)
- c) Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(2) Legal Advice & Pending Litigation
 - i) Update - Potential Litigation regarding alleged teacher misconduct/Internal Investigation Report
 - ii) RIDE Decision 25-074A RE: Warwick v. Barrington et. al - CTE tuition rate chart

Return to public session at 8:39 pm and announcement of votes. Chair announces 1 (one) vote re: homeschooling was taken

22) Reconvene to Open Session

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Pezza to reconvene to open session.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

23) Vote to Seal the Minutes of Executive Session

Motion by Ms. Pezza supported by Mr. Dupuis to seal the minutes of executive session.

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0

24) Adjourn Meeting

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Ms. Pezza to adjourn Public Meeting at 8:48 pm

MOTION PASSED: 8-0-0