

Ponaganset High School Library
137 Anan Wade Road
Glocester, RI 02814

MINUTES

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

Meeting Called to Order by Chair, Ms Keeling at 5:01 pm

Present: Mr. Rizzo, Ms Ferreira, Ms. Keeling, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Dupuis

Absent: Ms. Joyce

Also present: Dr. Palazzo, Attorney Piccirilli, Assist Superintendent Pat Dubois

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. School Spotlight

- a. West Glocester Elementary School

West Glocester students recycled 1030 items and showed their work. They made posters, art work, etc which has contributed to saving the ocean. Thanked teachers Ms. McPhee and Mrs. Cavanaugh, and Principal Mrs. Zambarano who all helped with this project. Mrs Shield and Mrs. Long, 1st grade teachers, worked with Mr. Matt Lite (three time superbowl champion) founder of the Lite Project. Blended reading, writing and exploration of the outside. The students were awarded stars for reading and a picnic. First graders were awarded medals for participating.

- b. Fogarty Memorial Elementary School

no students reporting today

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

5. Approval of School Committee Minutes (May 8, 2025)

- a. Open and Executive Sessions

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the minutes of the Open meeting on May 8, 2025

MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1

Mr. Joyce abstained

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the minutes of the Executive session on May 8, 2025

MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1

Mr. Joyce abstained

6. Approval of Bills - (5/13/25 to 5/28/25)

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the monthly bills from April 2, 2025 to April 29, 2025 in the amount of **\$111,357.22**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

7. Finance Update (May)

- a. Revenue & Expense Monthly

Transfer of \$151,000 from referendum

- b. NRIC funds to the General Operating Fund

October NRI Collaborate funds went into the general fund

8. Disposal of Surplus School Equipment/Books

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the Disposal of Surplus School Equipment/Books as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Recycle all disposable equipment

9. Superintendent's Report-Personnel: Leaves/Lay-offs/Resignations/Non-Renewals/ Appointments/Recalls and other Personnel Actions – Informational

Mr. Dupuis, on behalf of the school committee, wanted to thank Mrs Mumford for her service at West Glocester Elementary School.

a. Approval of Leave of Absence

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the Leave of Absence as presented in the packet in the Superintendent's Report.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

10. Approval of Northwest RI Special Education Collaborative Agreement

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo the Northwest RI Special Education Collaborative Agreement as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

11. Facilities Update

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to approve the gutter cleaning and repair at West Glocester Elementary School as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Mr. Gras asked that the gutter cleaning and repair at WG be approved, they are in very bad condition and need to be repaired. The cost will be \$9,900 and should be reimbursable. Preliminary design for Pfast from North East water solutions for WG. Fogarty's well 4 pump failed and had to be replaced. 6 years since it was functional. Need to connect once school is out. Started replacing worn out cafeteria chairs at Fogarty.

On behalf of the school committee, Mrs. Keeling thanked Mrs. Zambarano for her years of service at West Glocester Elementary as Principal and that she will be missed. Mrs. Ferreira wanted to personally thank her, as her children attend/ed WG.

12. Budget Update

a. 2025-26 Proposed Budget

Dr Palazzo explained the budget and the process of how it is presented. Based on the Town Council, the school committee budget needed to be reduced by approximately \$840,000. Reduced where they could, but majority is in staffing - 13 Teacher Assistant positions laid off. Approximately \$859,000 reduction.

Mrs. Ferreira questioned Dr. Palazzo about the budget; How much do we pay in unemployment?

Motion by Mr. Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to accept budget as presented in the packet

MOTION PASSED: 4-1-0

13. Town Council Update - Update on activities relating to the School Department

No update at this time

14. Public Comment

Erin McPhee: Art Teacher at WG & Fogarty and co-president of GTA union. Schools are like family. Need to find a way to stop these cuts or it will be the dismantling of our educational system. High test scores, 5 star ratings and after school programs will be gone. Can not compare to other districts. They have accepted no raise for 1 contract that became 6 years. Starting classes over student caps. Regardless of who is to blame, asking to do more. There must be other options. SC responsibility to ensure a quality education. Students need your voice. Left a packet of testimonies, stories, testing, letters, etc. and asks that they be entered into the minutes of meeting. Afraid it will become work to rule. We have to do more. (Glocester School Committee Attorney, Greg Piccirilli, advised not to add to minutes).

Nolan Flynn 5th grade teacher. A look at a day in his classroom. Interventionists would have helped his students that do not get support through 504, IEP, etc. Without an interventionist, he will only have less than 2 minutes individually per student.

Pam Lang, Intensive Resource Special Education Teacher. 4 TA's in her classroom. They all know her students. TA's are their voices and advocates. There is no prep time, as there are always students in the classroom. Work is brought home to do especially with a new curriculum.

Kayla Silva, parent of 3 students at WG. She asked her daughter how would your day be without a TA, she said not good. Was a student in the district. Teaches hands on and is capped at 10 students.

Doris Reilly School Secretary at Fogarty, Union President. 4 and 5 star schools because of the staff at the schools. School Committee "not our fault", Town Council "not our fault" – Here we are, make it right. Make the Town Council fund these two amazing schools. Do whatever is necessary.

Jennifer Ware, Teacher Assistant at preK class and resident. Describes the necessity of TA position and the math interventionist.

Tasha Elderkin, TA at WG, tax payer and parent. Warning that if you don't adequately staff our schools it will become an unsafe environment. Stated again, Children will not be safe if the school is not properly staffed. Gave an example of what occurred with a student.

Hope Curry, Special Education TA at WG, taxpayer, and parent. If we cut positions, there will be a safety concern. Teacher assistants are crucial in de-escalating students. Teacher assistants also lead small groups in math and reading, modify coursework. They are essential partners in education. If positions are cut, schools will not be safe or supportive places for anyone.

Kristen Fecteau, resident, parent. Employee for 6 yrs. Special Education TA at FMS has developed bonds with students. Consistent, understanding each other, and learning to navigate changes. Has introduced new foods to the students. Class has become a family. Why do children have to bear the brunt of the mistakes of adults?

Hayley Baccaire, parent of 2 students. Glocester schools are so successful and our children are thriving. What do the IEPs look like, what is the cost? What is the work, what will be the work?

Judy dePerla, you have heard what the teachers and teacher assistants do. Raised her children here and now watching her grandchildren. A good school system, solid school. Those who are in a position of making decisions need to "Find the Money".

Amanda Lewis, Mom of a special ed student. Asked what the plan was? Her student was one who was mentioned. One of the TAs that may be laid off works with her child. This TA cannot be let go, he has thrived with her. Will take further action if TA working with son receives pink slip.

Hayley Baccaire

Scott Lynch parent of Glocester schools, His students will be relying on teacher assistants. Questions if SC knows the values of Teacher Assistants. How will the school committee solve this problem? It will show where your priorities are.

Will Worthy, resident of Glocester, stands with you (teacher/teacher asst). This is horrible, will try to find a solution. Went to state to see if it can go to 5%. Will take more time. We need to pressure the state. Will work with the Superintendent to try to make it better.

Ms. Keeling addressed the public and stated that they will work with the town council and will continue to work throughout the summer on this issue. Ms Ferreira stated that does not agree with cutting a .7 special ed teacher. Why doesn't anyone have questions? Asked for certain things on agenda, but they have been postponed. Need to reach out to state representatives. Need to advocate for our schools. Fight for unfunded mandates. We need to be creative. Where can we get more funding, volunteer programs? Asked fellow school committee members if they are in agreement with cutting a .7 special education teacher. Ms. Keeling stated that we need to break to executive session at this time and these concerns can be addressed at a future school committee meeting.

15. Seek to Convene to Executive Session to Discuss and/or Vote on the following matters:

Motion by Mr, Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to Convene in Executive Session to Discuss and/or Vote on the Following Matters:

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

- a. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(8) Privacy of Student Records
 - i. School Assignment
- b. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(1) Job Performance
(Any discussion of the job performance of an individual provided that such person or persons affected shall have been notified in advance in writing that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting)
 - i. Approval of Contracts
- c. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(2) Legal Advice
 - ii. 2025-26 Budget

Return to public session at 7:06 pm and announcement of votes, if any

Chair announces any votes: **1 vote was taken**

Reconvene to Open Session

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

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Vote to Seal the Minutes of Executive Session

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

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Adjourn Public Meeting (until after Foster Glocester Regional School Committee)

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to adjourn Public Meeting at 7:08 pm and return after the Foster Glocester Regional School Committee meeting to executive session.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Seek to Reconvene to Executive Session at **8:26 pm** to continue to Discuss and/or Vote on the following matters:

Motion by Mr, Dupuis supported by Mr. Rizzo to Convene in Executive Session to Discuss and/or Vote on the Following Matters:

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

- a. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(8) Privacy of Student Records
 - iii. School Assignment
- b. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(1) Job Performance

(Any discussion of the job performance of an individual provided that such person or persons affected shall have been notified in advance in writing that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting)

ii. Approval of Contracts

c. Per RI General Law 42-46-5(a)(2) Legal Advice

iv. 2025-26 Budget

Return to public session at 9:05 pm and announcement of votes, if any

Chair announces any votes: **0 additional votes were taken**

16. Reconvene to Open Session

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

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

17. Vote to Seal the Minutes of Executive Session

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

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

18. Approval of Contracts

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to approve the 2025-26 Superintendent (Dr. Renee Palazzo) contract as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to approve the 2025-26 Director of Facilities (Mr. Gary Gras) contract as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to approve the 2025-26 Assistant Director of Facilities (Mr. Steve Essex) contract as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to approve the 2025-26 Administrative Assistant/School Committee Clerk (Ms. Kyle Fraatz) contract as presented in the packet.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0

19. Communications From/To Members of the School Committee and/or School District

Nothing at this time

20. Future Agenda Items – Identification of Future Agenda Items

none at this time

21. Adjourn Public Meeting

Motion by Mr Dupuis supported by Mr Rizzo to adjourn Public Meeting at **9:11 pm**

MOTION PASSED: 5-0-0