



GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 18, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gitschier called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mr. Richardson, Mr. Hogan, Mr. LeMay, Mr. Nocco, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Bahou, Mr. Morin, Mr. Gitschier

Members Absent: None

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator
Christine Messina, Director of Practical Nursing Program
Jen Machado, Practical Nursing Admissions Director
David Bradley, District Treasurer
Recording Secretary

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

There was no public appearance.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

There were no School Committee communications.

REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Student Representative, Cameron Koza provided an update of recently held clubs and sporting events.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 14, 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF DISTRICT TREASURER

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Morin to waive the reading of the warrant.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

MOTION: by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve expenditures for the sum of \$4,905,948.01 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2126C	dated 12/29/2023	Payroll #935	1,339,098.56
Warrant 2127A	dated 01/12/2024	Payroll #937	1,194,415.39
Warrant 2126-1	dated 12/12/2023	Accounts Payable	622,149.78
Warrant 2127	dated 01/05/2024	Accounts Payable	310,672.07
Warrant 2127-1	dated 01/19/2024	Accounts Payable	641,981.02
Warrant 2126-4	dated 12/22/2023	Sales Use/Meals Tax Nov. 23	2,693.03
Warrant 2126-5	dated 12/22/2023	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees Nov. 23	2,785.36
Warrant 2127-2	dated 01/05/2024	Mass Bay Health Jan 24	783,137.87
Warrant 2127-3	dated 01/19/2024	Sales Use/Meals Tax Dec. 23	2,144.53
Warrant 2127-5	dated 01/10/2024	Credit Card Dec. 23	6,870.40

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL

There was no report of general counsel.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

Superintendent Davis began by recognizing Junior Information Technology student Madisyn Koza. Ms. Davis informed the committee that Madisyn won this year's Third District Congressional App Challenge and was presented her certificate by U.S. Representative Lori Trahan at Greater Lowell on December 19th. Ms. Davis added that she has been invited to the House of Code, a special program in celebration at the Capital in April and also earned the chance to attend a 3-month class at the Penguin School of Coding & Action at no cost. Madisyn won the challenge by creating an app called CarbonCalc which helps users understand what a carbon footprint is, what their own carbon footprint consists of, and learn what they can do to lessen it so that users can better understand their impact on the environment. Madisyn was invited up to the table to demonstrate her application for committee.

Superintendent Davis continued with recognizing senior Electrical student Gabriel Stickney. Ms. Davis added that, unfortunately, Gabe was ill; therefore, unable to be present, but took a moment to congratulate him for winning the 150 lbs. weight class in this year's George Bossi Lowell Holiday Wrestling Tournament. Ms. Davis added that Gabe has recently been accepted to New England College where he will continue his wrestling career.

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that the number of senior students participating in cooperative education employment opportunities reported as of December 31st is 225 senior students which is 41% of the class of 2024. Ms. Davis added that junior students will begin to go out on February 5th and will be able to present those numbers beginning at the next meeting.

Superintendent Davis invited the Director of Practical Nursing Christine Messina and the Admissions Director Jen Machado to join the meeting to answer questions pertaining to Mr. Bahou's request made at the previous meeting regarding lowering/restructuring the down-payment for in-district residents, as well as provide enrollment data requested by Committeeman Hogan.

Ms. Messina began with enrollment data which reflected 50 in-district students, 24 out-of-district students, and 3 out-of-state students. She noted that this data fluctuates from year to year and is dependent on admittance through the admissions process. Ms. Messina included that this year there was a relatively high number of in-district students where this number typically runs between 40-44 students.

Committeeman Bahou began by commending the program before inquiring about the cost breakdown sheet. Mr. Bahou made particular note to the down-payment of in-district in comparison to out-of-district and out-of-state. He noted that the in-district residents, at times, may not have the required upfront funds and asked if there was a way to lower the down-payment that's due by June 28th of the \$3,500. Ms. Messina replied that the payment could not be lowered and explained that students are informed, upon interview, what their options are to pay for the program. She added, the down-payment is not covered by financial aid and the students are informed of that upfront. Once the students receive their admission letter, they are informed of the down-payment requirement, which is a little less than 50% of the total cost. If they are not qualified to receive financial aid, they are given options, which includes a monthly payment plan. Students are also spoken to about cutting back on their work hours due to the rigorous program requirements. Due to that, Ms. Messina noted the program strives to keep the monthly payments as low as possible, as students may not be earning as much income while participating in the program. She added that if the \$3,500 down-payment is removed, then the amount they owe would increase to \$2,516.70 instead of \$1,350.00 for three months, which is a substantial increase at a time when they would be earning less income. Ms. Messina noted that students must be paid in full or have been awarded financial before Term II (mid-December) or they will be dismissed from the program.

Committeeman Bahou asked about the options for scholarships or financial aid available to students. Ms. Machado replied that financial aid is not looked at until they have received acceptance into the program. Once that occurs, the Director of Financial Aid reaches out to the student to notify them of their eligibility of a Pell Grant or a loan (subsidized or unsubsidized). Students who are not eligible for financial aid have the option of the payment plan. Ms. Machado noted that over 60% of students result in eligibility for financial aid. Committeeman Bahou asked if there were many students who withdrew due to finances. Ms. Machado replied that while there have been students that have withdrawn, in most cases, the reasons for withdrawal were not due to finances.

Superintendent Davis asked Ms. Messina to speak regarding her request to change the LPN institutional name of the program. Ms. Messina informed the committee that the name of the program is currently the Greater Lowell Technical School Practical Nurse Program. Ms. Messina is proposing to change the name to Greater Lowell Technical School of Practical Nursing to make it more individualized, noting the program itself remains the same and only results in a name change. Ms. Messina informed the members that there are several other schools in the area that have programs with this type of individuality and she is requesting to do the same.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the request to change the name of the program from Greater Lowell Technical School Practical Nurse Program to Greater Lowell Technical School of Practical Nursing.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis asked Cheer Coach – Jen Riley and Assistant Cheerleading Coach – Mya Medina, along with our Senior Captains – Myra Pires and Maddie Bradley to provide information regarding the out-of-state travel request and answer any questions before asking for approval. Ms. Riley informed the members that the Cheer Team recently participated in the virtual National Competition due to the scoring received at the State Competition and winning the CAC Leagues. As a result, they were awarded the Ruby Package Award and invited to compete at the AmeriCheer competition in Orlando, FL. Ms. Riley added that the families of the Cheer athletes, anticipating that the team would be competing at a higher level, had been fundraising since the Fall of last year. She informed the members that these parents have raised \$12,000 to put toward the cost of the trip and was looking for the School Committee’s approval to travel out of state, as well as for their assistance with the remaining cost balance.

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the out-of-state travel request for the Cheer Team members (16) and chaperones (3) to attend the AmeriCheer International Cheer High School Competition in Orlando, FL.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER

School Business Administrator Mr. Knight informed the committee that he was looking for their approval to accept a donation of \$250 from the Kruse Delgado student assistance fund to aid to students in the automotive technology area.

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the donation of \$250 from the Kruse Delgado Assistance Fund.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Mr. Knight revisited the battery backup project discussed, noting that after hearing from C Power in November about the potential battery backup project, the letter of intent was tabled to continue exploring the process. Mr. Knight asked the committee members if they would like to continue the exploration of the project and begin the year-long process of checking engineering and utilities to verify feasibility of a project. He added that should a project exist and Greater Lowell decides to walk away from the project, the utility and engineering information would be provided to us; however, a “break fee” of \$6,000 would be incurred. Chairman Gitschier asked for Mr. Knight’s recommendation on moving forward and if this could result in significant cost savings. Mr. Knight responded absolutely, on the low end \$350,000 over ten (10) years with a possibility of closer to a million over (10) years which is significant savings. He also noted having a battery back-up offers some hidden benefits because the battery it could power the school for a total of four (4) hours. Committeeman Hogan inquired about the toxicity involved in the battery, as well as the clean up process. He asked if it was bondable or insurable site specific. Mr. Knight responded that if we went through with the project, he was relatively positive that we would have to have a performance bond in place. Mr. Knight added that he would need to wait to look at the final proposal to see what the proposed value of the battery is before determining the percentage of the bonding. Committeeman Lemay inquired about the location of the battery. Mr. Knight noted that it is still in the preliminary stages and would be determined as part of CPower’s exploration of the project and based on how our power goes from the building and where the transformer is located. After further discussion and no additional questions, a motion to approve was made.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the execution of the LOI with CPower, after successful review by school counsel.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Mr. Knight informed the committee that the ELA department has several books and textbooks that are no longer in need, adding a list of those items were listed on the second page of the memo provided to them. The textbooks are over twenty (20) years old and no longer reflect how literature is taught, adding the supplemental materials for these texts are also unusable (VHS tapes and cassettes). Mr. Knight informed the committee that we will reach out to our member communities to see if they are interested before we move to other methods of donation.

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to declare the novels and texts surplus and have the district follow disposal and donation procedures.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Mr. Knight provided the committee with an explanation of the transfer requests within the various departments and asked for approval totaling in the amount of \$223,048.75.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the budget line item transfers.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

OLD BUSINESS

Outstanding Items from Previous Meetings

1. Superintendent's Wall (O'Hare)
2. Building Security (Sheehan)

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

COMMITTEEPERSON MOTION

There were no committeeperson motions.

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Chairman Gitschier asked for a motion to approve the Building Expansion Committee minutes of December 14, 2023 provided to them.

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the Building Expansion Committee minutes of December 14, 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,


Colette Edmonds
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents:

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes for Approval: December 14, 2023

December 2023 Cooperation Education Report

Copy of LPN Program Cost Sheet

Copy of Out-of-State Travel Cost Projections

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding Donation Approval

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding Battery Power LOI

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding Surplus Books & Texts

Budget Transfer Request

Approval of Building Expansion Committee Report: December 14, 2023

Year-to-Date Budget Report