



## GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 18, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gitschier called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

#### ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: None

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director  
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal  
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator  
Greg Haas, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment  
Alison Rihani, Director of Special Education  
Kathryn Palladino, Director of Language Acquisition  
Carol Chisolm, Math & Science Cluster Chair  
Paul Myette, ELA & Social Studies Cluster Chair  
Christine Messina, Director of Practical Nursing Programs  
Tracy Encarnacao, Director of School Counseling & Health Services  
Lauren Friedman, Special Education Social Worker  
Recording Secretary

#### PUBLIC APPEARANCE

There was no public appearance.

#### SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

There were no School Committee communications.

#### REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Gitschier introduced this year's Student Representative, Cameron Koza and welcomed him for the 2023-2024 school year. Cameron 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 September 21, 2023.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**REPORT OF DISTRICT TREASURER**

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**MOTION:** by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve expenditures for the sum of \$5,792,857.00 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2124A	dated 10/06/2023	Payroll #923	1,209,996.51
Warrant 2124B	dated 10/20/2023	Payroll #925	1,332,491.22
Warrant 2123-2	dated 09/29/2023	Accounts Payable	930,823.49
Warrant 2124	dated 10/13/2023	Accounts Payable	1,515,943.01
Warrant 2123-5	dated 09/29/2023	Sales Use/Meals Tax August 23	21.15
Warrant 2124-4	dated 10/13/2023	Mass Bay Health	800,765.66
Warrant 2124-3	dated 10/13/2023	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees	2,815.96

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

There was no report of general counsel.

**REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR**

Superintendent Davis began by asking Assistant Superintendent Michael Barton to the table to present a Letter of Commendation awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Program to 12<sup>th</sup> grade Design & Visual student Riona Reis. Mr. Barton informed the members that Riona’s PSAT scores were among the highest in the school, as well as the highest among 34,000 students in the country. Mr. Barton added that commended students are recognized for the exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT. Mr. Barton read a brief biography of the student and congratulated her and her family on the tremendous accomplishment and presented Riona with the commendation award.

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that the number of senior students participating in cooperative education employment opportunities reported as of September 30<sup>th</sup> has increased from 140 senior students to 174 senior students as of the night of the meeting.

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that she was seeking their approval to accept three (3) separate vehicle donations. The first is for a 2003 Ford Explorer with an approximate value of \$700.00 from Mr. Phillip Bonanno of Haverhill, MA.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. LeMay to accept the 2003 Ford Explorer donation.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Ms. Davis continued with the second donation, which was a 2001 Kia Sorento with an approximate value of \$1,200 from Mr. Jack Cornellier of Tewksbury, MA.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to accept the 2001 Kia Sorento donation.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Ms. Davis concluded with the third donation, which was a 2024 Mustang EcoBoost with an approximate value of \$10,000 from Ford Motor Company and McGovern Ford of Lowell. This vehicle was involved in flooding at one of their plants and cannot be sold, but has been cleaned by the dealership in preparation for donation and is in otherwise good condition.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to accept the 2024 Mustang EcoBoost donation.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis added that all three vehicles would be used in the Automotive Department for educational purposes until it is no longer viable.

Superintendent Davis asked the Director of Practical Nursing Programs – Christine Messina, to the table to review the changes to the Practical Nurse Program Student Handbook and answer any questions before asking for approval. Ms. Messina reviewed the proposed revisions individually before answering a few questions. Upon completion, Chairman Gitschier asked the members for a motion for approval.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the 2023-2024 Practical Nurse Program Student Handbook.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis asked the Assistant Superintendent/Principal Michael Barton and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment – Mr. Gregory Haas to join us to provide an MCAS Performance update. Also present were Alison Rihani, Carol Chisolm, Paul Myette, and Kathryn Palladino to provide clarification and feedback, if needed.

Mr. Haas' presentation included the scores from the MCAS 2023 administration before moving into the accountability scores. Highlights noted in several areas began with English which showed a 5% increase in Meeting/Exceeding Expectations (M/EE) between 2022 and 2023, with a 23% increase between 2019 and 2023. Moving on to Math, Greater Lowell had a 12% increase in M/EE between 2022 and 2023, with a 14% increase between 2019 and 2023. Science & Technology showed a 2% increase in M/EE between 2022 and 2023. All three content areas showed positive growth.

Mr. Haas continued with data on standard growth percentile which is a factor on accountability system showing the gains the students have been from their score in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to their score in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The growth in ELA is far surpassing the average student at the state level. In Math, COVID learning loss was significant and both Greater Lowell and the State have recovered and are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Haas continued with the scores from the English Learners. Greater Lowell is 6% above the state average with similar trends in Math where Greater Lowell is 8% above the state average, as well as 1% above the state in Science & Technology in 2023.

Students with disabilities population showed fluctuations with English 3% below the state, Math at 4% below the state, and Science & Technology at 3% below the state. However, scores still remain higher than 2019 where this was the group that saw the biggest impact due to the pandemic and continue to see positive trajectory. Additional information presented included data on low income students (significant gains in all three (3) categories), racial and ethnic student populations. The Asian group is a group we have historically struggled when compared to the state average. Although we are reflective of that fact that there is still work to be done, we must also consider the differences in the group between Greater Lowell and the State and how that affects the percentages. The Hispanic group made significant gains (19% above the state in ELA, 18% above the state in Math, and 10% above the state in Science & Technology.)

Moving on to the accountability ratings, Mr. Haas began with a breakdown on how the state looks at different targets; MCAS Achievement (40% of accountability metrics), Growth (20%), High School Course Completion (20%), English Language Proficiency (10%), and Absenteeism/Advanced Coursework (10%). Progress toward improvement targets is at 80% (meeting or exceeding targets.) Greater Lowell was classified as requiring assistance or intervention due to low student group performance in the Asian group. Additional data points were reviewed to show comparison data across vocational/agricultural schools in the state. Overall, Greater Lowell saw phenomenal improvement and growth in all Accountability Measures and moved from the 33<sup>rd</sup> %ile in 2022 to the 48<sup>th</sup> %ile in 2023.

Superintendent Davis asked Assistant Superintendent/Principal Michael Barton to provide information regarding three (3) separate out-of-state travel requests and answer any questions before asking for approval. Mr. Barton turned the first request over to Mrs. Lauren Friedman, Special Education Social Worker and Tracy Encarnacao, Director of School Counseling & Health Services. Mrs. Friedman informed the members that she was there to request their approval for four (4) staff members to attend the 2023 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health in New Orleans from December 4th - 7th. Mrs. Friedman provided the members with an overview of the conference

which brings mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention to students and staff as part of a multi-tiered system of supports.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the out-of-state travel for four (4) staff members to attend the 2023 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health in New Orleans from December 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton continued with the second out-of-state travel request. He informed the members that this request was approval for Early Childhood Educator instructor Susan O’Hare to attend the OSHA Trainer Certification course in Manchester, NH from December 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Barton noted that this was a renewal of her OSHA Trainer license which authorizes her to provide OSHA 10-Hour Cards to the students as well as keep informed of updates and best practices in health & safety regulations.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Bahou to approve the out-of-state travel for Early Childhood Education instructor Susan O’Hare to attend the OSHA Trainer Update Course in Manchester, NH on December 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton concluded with the final out-of-state travel request. He informed the members that this request was approval for Special Education instructor Jason Roaf to attend CPI Training in New Bedford, NH on October 19, 2023. Mr. Barton added that this was a renewal of his CPI certification which is required in order to continue to train staff in the building.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the out-of-state travel for Special Education instructor Jason Roaf to attend the CPI Training Course in New Bedford, NH on October 19, 2023.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

## **REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER**

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 \$358,903.20.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 6 Yes, 3 Absent (Mr. Nocco, Mr. Hogan – unavailable at time of roll call)

Mr. Knight informed the committee that he was looking for their approval to execute a letter of intent with CPower regarding the possibility of using battery electric power on campus. Similar to

how solar power agreements work, there are no cost options to the school that offer significant savings on the school's electricity bills, with preliminary estimates showing an annual savings of about \$30,000 or \$330,000 over the ten-year life. The Letter of Intent (LOI) to work with a company is the next step for them to look at this possibility with the utility companies over the next year. If a viable project is found, they would be able to assist us in moving forward. If no viable project exists, we both walk away without penalty. However, should a project exist and the school decides to walk away, we would incur a 'break fee' of \$6,000. Questions regarding ownership, liability of maintenance and upkeep were asked. Chairman Gitschier asked Mr. Knight asked if it was possible to have the company come in and present to the committee to ask further clarifying questions before committing.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. Nocco to request CPower to provide a presentation on the battery power to the committee.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Mr. Knight provided the committee with an update on the building expansion project. He informed the members that the school was recently awarded the permits to proceed with the project. We have since posted for bids which are set to close on November 2, 2023. Mr. Knight anticipates having a further update available soon after and will reach out to the Chairman to either call a Building Expansion Committee meeting and/or provide an update at the next school committee meeting.

## **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 informed the members that, although School Business Administrator Michael Knight has been providing building expansion project updates to the committee, the minutes of all of the Building Expansion Committee meetings are in need of approval. Mr. Gitschier asked if there were any objections to approving all the minutes in one motion. Committeeman Sheehan made the motion to include all minutes in one motion.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the Building Expansion Committee minutes of 09/21/2023, 06/15/2023, 12/15/2022, 11/03/2022, 10/20/2022, 09/28/2022, 07/28/2022.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Hogan to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds  
Recording Secretary

**Meeting Documents:**

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes for Approval: September 21, 2023

Approval of Building Expansion Committee Reports: September 21, 2023, June 15, 2023, December 15, 2022, November 3, 2022, October 20, 2022, September 28, 2022, July 28, 2022

September 2023 Cooperation Education Report

Copy of Proposed 2023-2024 Practical Nurse Program Student Handbook

Copy of MCAS Data Presentation

Copy of Out-of-State Travel Information

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding Budget Power Letter of Intent

Budget Transfer Request

Year-to-Date Budget Report