

GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

March 16, 2023 – 5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Gitschier called the Public Hearing to order at 5:39 p.m.

Vice-Chairman Gitschier stated in accordance with 940 CMR 29.10 (remote participation) adopted by the Greater Lowell Technical School Committee April 17, 2014, Committeeman LeMay will be participating at tonight's meeting remotely due to geographic location.

ROLL CALL

Members

Present: Mr. Nocco, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Gitschier, Mr. Morin, Mr. Richardson, Mr. LeMay (remote)

Members Absent: Mr. Bahou, Mr. Hogan

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator (Remotely)
Recording Secretary

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to open the Public Hearing.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 Yes, 3 Absent (Mr. LeMay – lost remote connection, Mr. Bahou, Mr. Hogan)

Superintendent Davis, along with School Business Administrator Michael Knight, presented an overview of the proposed FY24 budget. Ms. Davis asked School Business Administrator Michael Knight to join her in presenting the proposed FY24 budget information resulting from the recently released Governor's House Budget. Ms. Davis and Mr. Knight reviewed updates pertaining to the proposed budget, as well as the data and input used for its development.

The Massachusetts House, Senate and Governor approved a change in the state funding formula for public education. The bill provides an investment of \$1.5 billion into schools over the next six (6) years and is aimed at tackling inequity, specifically for school districts with higher percentages of low-income students, English language learners and Special Education students in order to close the achievement gap. The base rate for a vocational student was increased \$793.05; the rate for a special education

student was increased \$1,351.77; the rate for ELL students was increased \$384.46; and low income category places us in category 10; therefore, receiving \$6,579.86, which is an increase of \$737.22.

Superintendent Davis informed the members that based on the new rates of pupil expenditures set by the state and our current enrollment, the Foundation Budget increased by \$2,872,431, which is a 5.82% increase over this year's budget. She included that this is year 3 of a 6-year SOA implementation; therefore, we should expect roughly the same budget increase over the next three (3) years. She noted that \$2,872,431 is all net school spending required funding that needs to be spent each year in addition to future budget increases.

School Business Administrator - Michael Knight gave an overview of the three (3) categories of revenue, via slide presentation, which include Excess & Deficiency, Assessment, and State Aid.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the proposed budget priorities which primarily focused on refining curriculum and instruction; ensuring class size mitigation and adequate course offerings and schedule flexibility; allocating staffing; maintaining educational technology, resources and equipment; and providing relevant and personalized professional development and coaching.

Mr. Knight reviewed notable expenditure changes such as increases to retirement, as well as health/dental insurance and benefits. The use of Excess and Deficiency was decreased from \$200,000 to \$100,000 and comes from the need to meet net school spending.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the following proposed personnel expenditures: Special Education – one (1) Paraprofessional (offset by exiting School Counseling Paraprofessional) and one (1) Adjustment Counselor; Main Office – one (1) Adjustment Counselor/Social Worker; Plant Services – one (1) 2nd shift Custodian; Cooperative Education – one (1) Cooperative Coordinator (offset by reorg and replacing worksite aide); and Athletics – one (1) Unified Basketball Coach, one (1) Unified Assistant Basketball Coach, one (1) Jr. Varsity Field Hockey Coach, one (1) Assistant Golf Coach, and one (1) Freshman Boys Volleyball Coach.

In addition, discussion was held regarding increasing the substitute daily rates in order to remain competitive with surrounding school districts. Due to the lack of current substitute availability, it was determined that the proposed increases would be brought to a vote at the upcoming March School Committee meeting in order to become effective immediately, rather than waiting until the FY24 school year. The proposed increases are as follows: substitutes with no degree would increase to \$147.50; substitutes with a Bachelor's degree would increase to \$162.50; and substitutes who are teacher certified would increase to \$177.50. It was noted that this change would not affect the budget, as the substitute line has not been able to be fully spent in the past.

Mr. Knight included the use of Excess and Deficiency was increased from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and will be used for expenses that do not qualify for net school spending, such as Medicaid filing, OPEB and capital vehicle purchases. Mr. Knight noted that after reviewing the budget numbers, he was able to include the addition of \$50,000 into OPEB as requested.

School Business Administrator Mr. Knight continued the budget discussion, noting that he included additional slides outlining the proposed capital project (Track & Field) that would ultimately affect the

overall final budget. He included an additional budget summary which included the cost figures of the capital project as a comparison for the members. The track project is estimated to cost \$4,000,000 with the funding projected to come from three (3) sources – a special earmark grant for \$1,000,000; an appropriate in the state budget for \$1,500,000; and use of Excess and Deficiency in the amount of \$1,500,000.

Mr. Knight informed the members that the use of E&D would reduce the balance from \$2,200,000 to \$500,000 and includes the amount used for the operating budget as well as the capital project. Mr. Knight noted that there would also be a transfer to the operating budget of \$1,500,000 from the LPN and Adult Education accounts. This funding is a markup charge for building use costs (utilities, maintenance, custodial fees, etc.) to these funds that were not done and were absorbed by the general fund in the past. Therefore, the transfer to operating would eventually close out back to E&D assuming it is unused in the budget year and would not affect the net school spending requirements or ability to meet net school spending.

The proposed FY24 Expenditure Budget, with the inclusion of the capital project, would be \$59,504,026, broken down as follows:

Operating Budget	53,871,931
Transportation	2,775,000
Debt Service	1,307,095
OPEB	50,000
Capital Project	1,500,000

The proposed FY24 Budget revenue sources, with the inclusion of the capital project, would be:

Min. Local Contribution	14,996,648	Chapter 70	37,225,283
Transportation Assessment	1,575,000	Chapter 71 (transportation)	1,200,000
Debt Assessment	1,307,095	Excess & Deficiency	1,700,000
		<u>Transfer to Operating</u>	<u>1,500,000</u>
<u>Total Assessment</u>	<u>17,878,743</u>	<u>Total Budget</u>	<u>59,504,026</u>

Vice-Chairman Gitschier asked if there were any public participants wishing to speak on the FY24 budget. With none present, Mr. Gitschier asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to close the Public Hearing at 6:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 Yes, 2 Absent (Mr. Bahou, Mr. Hogan)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bahou called the school committee meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. following a recess after the Public Hearing and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Chairman Bahou stated in accordance with 940 CMR 29.10 (remote participation) adopted by the Greater Lowell Technical School Committee April 17, 2014, Committeeman LeMay will be participating at tonight's meeting remotely due to geographic location.

ROLL CALL

Members

Present: Mr. Nocco, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Gitschier, Mr. Morin, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Hogan, Mr. LeMay (remote), Mr. Bahou

Members Absent: None

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator (Remotely)
Recording Secretary

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

There was no public appearance.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

There were no School Committee communications

REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Bahou informed the members that Student Representative Nellie Chan was unable to join the meeting due to a prior athletic commitment. Members were provided with the update of recently held clubs and sporting events to review.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Morin to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 16, 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. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve expenditures for the sum of \$4,631,384.08 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2116B	dated 02/24/2023	Payroll # 891	1,391,797.91
Warrant 2117A	dated 03/10/2023	Payroll # 893	1,109,342.44
Warrant 2117	dated 03/03/2023	Accounts Payable	701,506.66
Warrant 2117-1	dated 03/17/2023	Accounts Payable	620,530.62
Warrant 2117-3	dated 03/03/2023	Mass Bay Health	803,819.48
Warrant 2117-5	dated 03/17/2023	Sales Use/Meals Tax	1,837.68
Warrant 2117-4	dated 03/17/2023	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees	2,367.29

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL

There was no report of general counsel.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that Greater Lowell was awarded an Improving Ventilation & Air Quality in Public Schools Grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the amount of \$331,848. The grant funds will be used to upgrade ventilation and air quality in the Auto Technology and Auto Collision Shops.

Superintendent Davis asked for the Committee's approval to accept a donation totaling \$4,169 from the Greater Lowell Community Foundation grant. Of the \$4,169 donated, \$1,000 was donated from the Merrimack Valley Rotary Club for the Lawrence L. Day Memorial Scholarship Fund for tools scholarship and \$3,169 was donated from Mark & Elisia Saab for the GLTHS Student Activities Fund to provide annual support for student activities.

MOTION: by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to accept the \$4,169 donation from the Greater Lowell Community Foundation Grant on behalf of the Merrimack Valley Rotary Club and Mark & Elisia Saab.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis asked for the Committee's approval to accept a donation in the amount of \$500 from the AAA Northeast Charitable Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. The donation was given behalf of AAA Northeast employee Daisy Delgado and will be utilized by our Students Assistance Fund to assist incoming students with uniform needs in the automotive technology area.

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Richardson to accept the \$500 donation from the AAA Northeast Charitable Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation on behalf of employee Daisy Delgado.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that the number of senior and junior students participating in cooperative education employment opportunities reported as of February 28th totaled 209 students (184 senior students and 25 junior students). Ms. Davis noted to date the number increased to a total of 227 total students (188 seniors representing 36% of the class of 2023 and 39 juniors representing 7% of the class of 2024.)

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that she was seeking their approval on the proposed Late Night & Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel Policy based on Mass. General Laws Ch. 71, Section 37N. Ms. Davis summarized the draft policy provided to the members, summarizing the following: approval process, transportation/carrier guidelines and process, time of travel recommendations, etc. With no questions from the committee, Superintendent Davis asked for their approval.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the Late Night & Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel Policy.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

For the last item on the Superintendent's report, Ms. Davis asked Assistant Superintendent/ Principal - Mr. Barton to provide information regarding the out-of-state travel requests and answer any questions before asking for approval. Asst. Superintendent/Principal Barton informed the committee that he was looking for approval to send Electronics instructor Yunwei Knight to attend the Instructor Certification Training in Manchester, NH from May 22nd through 26th, as well as approval to send Electronics instructor Michael McNeil to attend the Instructor Recertification Training in Manchester, NH on May 10th and 11th. Mr. Barton noted the course was for both Certification and Recertification endorsement for soldering and fully supported their request in order for the them to be able to instruct and certify their students.

MOTION: by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the out-of-state travel request for Yunwei Knight and Michael McNeil to attend the Instructor Certification/Recertification training in Manchester, NH.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER

Mr. Knight spoke briefly to the committee, noting the Public Hearing on the proposed FY24 budget that occurred prior to the start of the School Committee meeting. With no further questions pending, he asked for approval of the proposed FY24 budget as presented at the Public Hearing.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the transfer of \$700,000 from the Adult Education account and \$800,000 from the LPN account to the FY 2024 operating budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the presented FY24 budget of \$59,504,026.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

OLD BUSINESS

Outstanding Items from Previous Meetings

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

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Bahou stated that it was time for the annual re-organization of the Board to be effective April 1, 2023.

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Nocco to nominate Mr. Gitschier for Chairman.

Chairman Bahou asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he stated that nominations were closed.

BALLOT VOTE: Number of votes cast was 8. Mr. Gitschier received 8.

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to nominate Mr. Sheehan for Vice Chairman.

Chairman Bahou asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he stated that nominations were closed.

BALLOT VOTE: Number of votes cast was 8. Mr. Sheehan received 8.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to nominate Mr. Morin for Secretary.

Chairman Bahou asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he stated that nominations were closed.

BALLOT VOTE: Number of votes cast was 8. Mr. Morin received 8.

COMMITTEEPERSON MOTION

Chairman Bahou read the motion by Vice-Chairman Gitschier to increase the daily substitute rates of pay by \$42.50. (Non-Degree - \$147.50; Bachelor's - \$162.50; Certified Teacher - \$177.50).

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to increase the daily substitute rates of pay by \$42.50. (Non-Degree - \$147.50; Bachelor's - \$162.50; Certified Teacher - \$177.50) effective April 1, 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 and March 13, 2023 Finance Sub-Committee meetings.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Bahou requested a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares – AFSCME (COUNCIL 93, LOCAL 1404).

MOTION: by Mr. Morin, seconded by Mr. Hogan to enter into executive session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Chairman Bahou requested a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a)(2) – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel – Senior Assistant Principal.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to enter into executive session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Mr. Gitschier asked if there would be a potential vote on ratification discussed during executive session. Superintendent Davis responded possibly; therefore, the committee would be returning to open session.

The meeting ended to go into Executive Session at 6:56 p.m. with a roll call vote of 8 present.

The meeting reconvened at 8:06 p.m. with a roll call vote of 8 present.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the salary adjustment for Level A employees of the AFSCME contract effective July 1, 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Nocco to approve the 3-year contract for the Senior Assistant Principal as proposed for July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Morin to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents:

Meeting Notice

Agenda

February 16, 2023, February 16, 2023 (Finance Sub-Committee), March 13, 2023 (Finance Sub-Committee)

Copy of Greater Lowell Community Foundation Donation Letter

February 2023 Cooperation Education Report

Copy of the proposed Late Night & Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel Policy

Copy of out-of-state documentation

Year-to-Date Budget Report