

# **GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**

## **FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Minutes of February 16, 2023 Meeting**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Sub-Committee Chairman Gitschier called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mr. Gitschier, Mr. Bahou, Mr. Sheehan

Members Absent: Mr. Nocco (absent at time of roll call; arrived @ 5:40 p.m.)

Also Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director  
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal  
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator  
Gregory Haas, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Alison Rihani, Director of Special Education  
Stacy Bezanson, Director of Cooperative Education  
Recording Secretary

Chairman Gitschier stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the FY24 budget.

Superintendent Davis asked School Business Administrator Michael Knight to join her in presenting the preliminary FY24 budget. She began by updating the subcommittee that the preliminary budget was developed based on the Governor's House Budget Proposal, as well as data and input from administrators, teachers, parents, and community partners and centered around improving student achievement in order to develop confident learners and skilled workers.

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 \$776.30, the rate for a special education student was increased \$1,323.87 and the rate for ELL students was increased \$363.23. In addition, low income categories were added in FY21 that did not exist before and continue to be maintained in FY24. We currently have a 61% low income percentage which places us in category 10; therefore, receiving \$6,540.53, which is an increase of \$697.89.

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 \$2,893,015, which is a 5.86% 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 \$2,893,015 is all net school spending required funding that needs to be spent each year in addition to future budget increases.

The preliminary FY24 total budget would be \$56,524,610, which is a 6% increase over FY23.

Operating Budget	52,442,515
Transportation	2,775,000
Debt Service	1,307,095
OPEB	0

The preliminary FY24 Budget assessment would be:

Min. Local Contribution	15,726,283	Chapter 70	36,516,232
Transportation Assessment	1,575,000	Chapter 71 (transportation)	1,200,000
<u>Debt Assessment</u>	<u>1,307,095</u>	<u>Excess &amp; Deficiency</u>	<u>200,000</u>
Total Assessment	18,608,378	Total Budget	56,524,610

Mr. Knight informed the committee that it was important to note that final budget numbers from the state have not been released as of yet. Therefore, the figures presented at tonight’s meeting are rough estimates only and solely based on his calculations according to previous percentage increases, as well as 4% inflation. Mr. Knight included that the Governor’s budget is expected to be released early March and our budget figures would be adjusted, if needed, based on the state’s figures at that time.

Committeeman Bahou questioned why there were no funds allocated for OPEB. Mr. Knight informed the members that the Health Trust has been doing well in keeping costs down with minimal increases; therefore, there was no current need to allocate funding at this time. Mr. Bahou recommended an amount of \$50,000 be allocated toward OPEB. Mr. Knight will review this area once the final figures are in to see if that is feasible.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the proposed budget priorities which primarily focused on:

- refining curriculum and instruction to expand opportunities for student voice and choice and strengthen ownership of their education, as well as opportunities to make connections between their academic and vocational coursework and real world experiences;
- ensuring class size mitigation and adequate course offerings and schedule flexibility for all students;
- allocating staffing driven by the need to align structures for students’ social emotional supports due to higher frequency and severity of mental health needs;
- maintaining educational technology, resources and equipment to ensure currency with industry and global trends; and
- providing relevant and personalized professional development and coaching to develop teacher capacity and to sustain high quality instruction to meet the needs of our diverse learners and deepen learning for all students as well as supporting educational equity and opportunity during a time of recovery and stabilization.

Superintendent Davis reviewed some notable expenditure changes which include Carpentry equipment replacement/shop floor project, display board/lobby projector upgrade, Culinary exploratory, ELE, and Plumbing shop redesign, as well as replacing two (2) vans with mini buses. Additional expenditures include health/dental insurance and benefits being large budget drivers, despite below market increase due to our position in the Mass Bay Health Trust. 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 and capital vehicle purchases.

Superintendent Davis continued with reviewing the proposed personnel expenditures. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (Mr. Haas), Director of Special Education (Mrs. Rihani), and Director of Cooperative Education (Ms. Bezanson), were present to answer questions by the committee.

Detailed information was provided for the following proposed staff additions: 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) 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, and one (1) Assistant Golf Coach.

The next Finance Sub-Committee meeting will be held on March 13, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m. to review and discuss any budget revisions and/or updates made as a result of the anticipated release of the Governor's budget.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Nocco to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 4 Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds  
Recording Secretary