

GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 19, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Morin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Chairman Morin stated in accordance with 940 CMR 29.10 (remote participation) adopted by the Greater Lowell Technical School Committee April 17, 2014, Committeeman O'Hare, Committeeman Sheehan, and Student Representative Karen Vinal will be participating at tonight's meeting remotely. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted.

ROLL CALL

Members

Present: Mr. Tatseos, Mr. Giggey, Mr. Gitschier, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. O'Hare, Mr. LeMay and Mr. Morin.

Members Absent: Mr. Bahou (was not present at the time of roll call, but arrived @ 6:41 p.m.)

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent-Director
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator
Christine Messina, Director of Practical Nursing and Continuing Education Programs
David Bradley, District Treasurer (Remotely)
Recording Secretary

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Chairman Morin stated that the public appearance portion will be suspended and going right into the meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

There were no School Committee communications.

REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Student Representative Karen Vinal gave an update of upcoming and recently held events.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Giggey to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 15, 2020.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Bahou)

REPORT OF DISTRICT TREASURER

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay seconded by Mr. Giggey to waive the reading of the warrant.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Bahou)

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos seconded by Mr. Giggey to approve expenditures for the sum of \$4,648,508.94 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2088M	dated 10/26/20	Payroll Warrant #767-M	28,930.00
Warrant 2088V	dated 10/26/20	Payroll Warrant #767-V	(28,625.60)
Warrant 2088B	dated 10/22/20	Accounts Warrant #769	1,057,608.94
Warrant 2089A	dated 11/05/20	Accounts Warrant #771	995,684.14
Warrant 2089B	dated 11/19/20	Accounts Warrant #773	1,053,382.98
Warrant 2088-2	dated 10/30/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	554,794.59
Warrant 2089	dated 11/12/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	232,659.54
Warrant 2089-3	dated 11/12/20	Accounts Payable Warrant (Mass Bay)	751,262.41
Warrant 2088-9	dated 10/30/20	Lowell Five Debit Card (1049)	855.00
Warrant 2088-8	dated 10/30/20	Direct Disbursement of Google Voice (1058)	567.05
Warrant 2089-4	dated 11/13/20	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees (1050)	1,096.64
Warrant 2089-5	dated 11/13/20	Lowell Five Debit Card (1049)	293.25

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Bahou)

REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL

There was no report of general counsel.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

Superintendent Davis began by informing the committee that Greater Lowell Tech has been awarded a \$15,000 Targeted Assistance Grant to support improving outcomes for our Asian subgroup based on our 2019 accountability status.

Superintendent Davis asked for the committee’s approval on two separate donations. The first approval was to accept a \$10,000 donation from CVS (which was a \$5,000 increase from their initial donation) to be given as scholarships for graduating seniors. Ms. Davis took a moment to thank Mr. Jonathan DaSilva and CVS Health for their generous donation, as well as for their partnership with Greater Lowell over the years.

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve the \$10,000 donation from CVS for senior scholarships.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Bahou)

Superintendent Davis noted the second approval was to accept the donation of a 1999 Dodge Dakota 4x4 from Mr. John Driscoll to the Automotive Technology Shop to use as an educational tool with an estimated value of \$2,185.

MOTION: by Mr. Giggey seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the donation of a 1999 Dodge Dakota 4x4 from John Driscoll for use in the automotive technology shop.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Absent (Mr. Bahou)

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that Greater Lowell currently has 78 senior students participating (and 12 pending) in cooperative education employment opportunities as of the night of this meeting.

Superintendent Davis began a discussion regarding the need to increase the LPN tuition due to the allowable student-teacher ratio in the clinical facilities (from 10:1 to 5:1) resulting in an increase in the number of staff needed. She asked Michael Knight, School Business Administrator and Christine Messina, Director of Practical Nursing and Continuing Education Programs to join the discussion to speak in more detail about the request and present the different options.

Mr. Knight informed the committee that the LPN has seen increased costs for reasons related to COVID-19. The total cost increase of \$191,000 was outlined as due to:

- Instructional costs of \$121,000
- Testing costs of \$60,000
- Simulation Software of \$10,000

He noted funds received from the CARES Act was able to cover the increased costs this school year; however, the program would not be able to sustain the increase costs moving forward. When asked if the increase in costs were only due to the COVID pandemic and be temporary, Ms. Messina responded no. She stated she had reached out to the clinical facilities about the student-teacher ratio increase being temporary and was told that currently there was no plans to change back to the 10:1 ratio.

Mr. Knight presented three options to the committee for allocating the costs to tuition. Option 1 was an increase in cost based on current enrollment and the percent of revenue that each group of students (in-district, out-of-district, and out-of-state) creates. Option 2 was a cost increase to out-of-district and out-of-state students only. In-district tuition would remain the same. Option 3 would be allocating the cost to all students equally.

Current enrollment within the program is capped at 80 students (40 day/40 night) and have maintained this enrollment count from year to year with minimal students denied acceptance. Ms. Messina, when asked, noted that typically 50% of the students are in-district and 50% are out-of-district/out-of-state. Acceptance is based on test requirements, paperwork requirements, and an interview process. Committeeman Giggey inquired about the possibility of losing applicants if there was too much of an expense increase. Ms. Messina noted that even though there is no way to predict, past enrollment has been steady over several years even with prior tuition increases.

Committeeman Bahou asked if the district could absorb \$71,000 (testing costs/simulation software costs) of the \$191,000 cost increase in order to lower the amount of increase distributed to the students and revisit the budget at a later time. Mr. Knight informed the committee that the program would be able to utilize existing carryover funds to absorb that amount.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. LeMay to increase the overall expenses for the LPN Program to \$121,000 starting calendar year 2021-2022 with cost increases to In-District students of \$1,000 over the current costs and the Out-of-District and Out-of-State students have an increase to sustain the remainder as needed.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that she was seeking approval to amend the current Snow Day Policy to allow for a 'Remote Learning Day' to take place during the Hybrid Learning model when weather conditions/power outages dictate a change in the normal opening of the school day in order to minimize loss of instruction time.

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier seconded by Mr. Bahou to approve the temporary amendment of the Snow Day Policy.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that due to the recent change in the definition of a close contact, as well as a change to the public health metric and guidance on interpreting the metric, she was seeking approval to revise the Fall Reopening Plan.

Ms. Davis outlined the first revision regarding the change in definition of a close contact to read as follows: "all students and staff members who were within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period*. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset or for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection until the time the patient is isolated."

The next revision involved a change to the public health metric and takes into account the population size of a community in addition to the positive COVID cases, as well as the percent of positive tests when determining a color code. The final revision pertained to the guidance on interpreting the metric and the breakdown of the color-coding of communities and the student learning expectations (in-person, hybrid, remote) based on the communities' color designation.

Superintendent Davis updated the committee on the DPH Public Health COVID-19 Report released at 5:00 p.m. The Average Daily Incidence Rate number of cases per 100,000 residents (last 14 days) for the City of Lowell is 64.2, up from 42.1 last week and puts Lowell in the “red” or “higher risk” category again this week. The percent positivity rate is 8.85%, up from 6.45% last week. She noted that Lowell is one of the cities with the highest COVID-19 caseloads and test positivity rates as a result of a significant municipal spread and also includes an increase in young adults who are contracting COVID-19.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the Fall Reopening Plan revisions as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that Greater Lowell is one of 134 schools who will have access to a rapid COVID-19 test (BionaxNow) for students and staff who show symptoms while in school. This is an antigen test which consists of a nasal swab which will give results within 15 minutes. She did note that if the test showed positive, it must be confirmed with a molecular test. When asked about the administration of the test, Ms. Davis confirmed it would be done by the nurses.

REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER

Mr. Knight provided budget updates to the committee which included:

- officially closing out FY20 financials and submitting the end of year report and balance sheet to the Department of Education & Department of Revenue;
- Excess and Deficiency increase from \$1,656,461 (beginning of FY20) to \$1,770,511 (after closeout);
- possible increase in the projected reimbursement of transportation from the current state budget which could result in offsetting member communities’ assessments next year; and
- current budget appears to be at a healthy level at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Outstanding Items from Previous Meetings

1. Policy Sub-Committee and the Superintendent develop a District Wellness Policy for the school that may include the distribution of condoms to students. (Boutin)
2. Athletic Hall of Fame (O’Hare)
3. Superintendent’s Wall (O’Hare)
4. Alternative Energy Subcommittee meet to discuss the possibility of securing additional net metering credits. (Boutin)
5. Superintendent examine feasibility regarding card swipe security for each employee and associated cost to implement same. (Giggey)
6. Superintendent research the probability of adding modular classrooms to the campus to develop comprehensive academic programs at Greater Lowell Technical High School.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Morin updated the committee regarding the Facilities Naming Committee meeting. He noted the meeting, originally scheduled for this week, has been postponed until next Tuesday, November 24th.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the School Business Administrator.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the three-year contract (2020-2023) for the Superintendent-Director.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Bahou to approve the three-year contract (2020-2023) for the Assistant Superintendent/Principal.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

COMMITTEEPERSON MOTION

The motion made by Mr. Gitschier was withdrawn after additional information was obtained and discussed. Ms. Davis informed the committee that several options were currently being explored and would include the ability to increase the amount of technical week instruction as soon as possible. She informed the committee that a second Reopening Task Force was currently being formed to discuss and develop a plan to reopen when deemed safe with as many students returning to in-person learning as possible. Discussion included the possibility of having school committee members on the task force to contribute. After further discussion and recommendations regarding communication, Ms. Davis informed the committee that she will continue to keep them updated on the progress and status of the task force throughout the process.

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

There were no sub-committee reports.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Morin requested a motion to enter into Executive Session 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 litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares - Local 1404 Maintenance Employees and Security Personnel.

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Bahou to enter into executive session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Vote will be taken in open session after Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened at 8:27 with a roll call vote of 8 present.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Greater Lowell Technical High School and the AFL-CIO, State Council 93, Local 1404 Maintenance Employees and Security Personnel.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Giggey seconded by Mr. LeMay to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents:

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes for Approval:

October 15, 2020

Copy of Targeted Assistance Grant Award Letter

Copy of CVS Donation Letter

Copy of Vehicle Donation Letter

October 2020 Cooperation Education Report

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding LPN Program Tuition Adjustment

Memo from Mr. Barton Regarding Temporary Amendment of Snow Day Policy

Copy of Fall Reopening Plan revisions

Memo from Mr. Knight regarding Budget Updates

Year-to-Date Budget Report