

GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

August 20, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Morin called the meeting to order at 6:36 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, Mr. O'Hare 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. Gitschier, Mr. Bahou, Mr. O'Hare, Mr. Tatseos, Mr. Giggey, Mr. LeMay and Mr. Morin.

Members Absent: Mr. Sheehan (was not present at the time of roll call, but arrived @ 7:02 p.m.)

Also

Present: Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director
Michael Barton, Interim Assistant Superintendent-Director
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator
Atty. Michael Maccaro, School Attorney (participating remotely)
Kathy Tierney, Director of Human Resources (participating 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

Chairman Morin noted there was no report of the student representative at tonight's meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Bahou to approve the minutes from the meeting of June 18, 2020.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 Yes, 2 Absent (Mr. Sheehan, Mr. O’Hare (technical difficulties))

REPORT OF DISTRICT TREASURER

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 Yes, 2 Absent (Mr. Sheehan, Mr. O’Hare (technical difficulties))

MOTION: by Mr. Giggey seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve expenditures for the sum of \$9,196,037.25 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2085-A	dated 07/01/20	Payroll Warrant #753	417,805.09
Warrant 2085-B	dated 07/15/20	Payroll Warrant #755	274,347.97
Warrant 2085-C	dated 07/29/20	Payroll Warrant #757	298,750.22
Warrant 2086-A	dated 08/12/20	Payroll Warrant #759	254,231.09
Warrant 2084-1	dated 06/26/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	565,501.22
Warrant 2085	dated 07/10/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	759,481.35
Warrant 2086	dated 08/07/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	1,130,074.02
Warrant 2086-1	dated 08/21/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	358,166.64
Warrant 2085-2	dated 07/10/20	Mass Bay Health July 20 (1065)	736,455.24
Warrant 2085-3	dated 07/10/20	Meals & Sales Use Tax June 20 (1058)	4.80
Warrant 2085-1	dated 07/24/20	Accounts Payable Warrant	834,010.88
Warrant 2085-4	dated 07/24/20	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees June 20 (1050)	182.96
Warrant 2086-2	dated 08/07/20	Mass Bay Health August 20 (1065)	729,834.05
Warrant 2086-3	dated 08/07/20	Lowell Five Credit Card Fees July 20 (1050)	165.85
Warrant 2086-4	dated 08/07/20	Lowell Five Wire Fees Jul 20 (1063)	40.00
Warrant 2086-5	dated 08/07/20	Meals & Sales Use Tax July 20 (1058)	62.54
Warrant 2086-6	dated 08/07/20	Middlesex Retirement (1058)	1,307,090.00
Warrant 2086-8	dated 08/21/20	US Bank Bond	1,529,833.33

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6 Yes, 2 Absent (Mr. Sheehan, Mr. O’Hare (technical difficulties))

REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL

There was no report of general counsel.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

Superintendent Davis began by informing the committee that we had recently been notified by Governor Baker’s office that Greater Lowell Tech has been awarded an FY21 Summer and Vacation

Learning Program Grant of \$24,000 to provide summer and/or school year learning programs for students in response to the educational impact on school closures.

Superintendent Davis continued by notifying the committee that the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board has awarded FY21 WIOA Title I Youth Services funds in the amount of \$45,644 to Greater Lowell Technical High School to provide services to in-school youth.

Superintendent Davis also updated the committee that Greater Lowell has been notified by Governor Baker's office that Greater Lowell Tech has been awarded a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Partnership Implementation Grant of \$200,000, pending final FY21 state and federal appropriations.

Superintendent Davis asked the committee to ratify the collective bargaining votes taken during the June 14th executive session meeting.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Morin to approve a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the non-contractual employees.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the District Treasurer.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Lemay to approve a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 and the addition of proposed language, as well as the contract period of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023 for the Senior Assistant Principal.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Bahou to approve the salary increase for 2020-2021 and addition of proposed language, as well as the contract period of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023 for the Director of Human Resources.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Lemay to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the Administrators.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Tatseos to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the Cluster Chairpersons.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. LeMay to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the Maintenance Employees.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the Custodial Employees.

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

MOTION: by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Tatseos to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase for 2020-2021 for the Security Employees.

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

Superintendent Davis asked for the committee's approval of the revised school calendar to reflect a 170-day school year as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This would move the return to school date for students to September 14, 2020 to allow for 10 days of professional development and planning for all staff as required.

MOTION: by Mr. Tatseos, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the revised 2020-2021 School Calendar.

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

Superintendent Davis asked Interim Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Mr. Barton to present the 2020-2021 Substance Use Prevention & Education Plan, as well as the 2020-2021 Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan for approval. Mr. Barton gave a brief overview of the proposed changes to the committee members.

MOTION: by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Tatseos to approve the 2020-2021 Substance Use Prevention and Education Plan.

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

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the 2020-2021 Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan.

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

Ms. Davis began her discussion on the Reopening Plan by thanking the Assistant Superintendent and the members of the Reopening Task Force for their work and efforts in developing the Reopening Plan. She noted the goal of the Task Force was to develop a plan to safely transition as

many students as possible back to in-person learning, at the same time taking into consideration all the health and safety considerations in order to minimize risk. She explained a variety of factors were considered by the Task Force which included health and safety factors (optimum 6-foot distance supported by the CDC), teaching and learning options, and opportunities and limitations of our physical building (classrooms, classroom sizes, technical program areas), as well as financial and human resources. Ms. Davis informed the committee it was determined that many of the classrooms could not meet the optimum 6-foot safety distancing and could not safely fit the 2,311 students in the building; therefore, proposing a hybrid learning model on a continuum with a phased approach back to in-person learning. The hybrid model consists of 3 modes (A, B & C). Ms. Davis explained the breakdown of all three (3) modes and the timeline of movement from phase to phase which is outlined in the Reopening Plan with the final phase being full in-person return. This phase would be the most challenging and would only be possible if current safety and health restrictions are lifted in order to safely fit all students. Ms. Davis also explained that a full remote option is available to parents if they choose (due to personal and/or medical reasons).

Ms. Davis went over key components of the plan, which included various health and safety protocols put in place throughout the building, some of which include masks, hand sanitizing, physical distancing, etc. Mr. Barton provided the committee with information regarding the curriculum and instruction in the hybrid model and noted the full Program of Studies would be available to our students. He noted teachers would be delivering new curriculum and skills based on the DESE Curriculum Frameworks, the VTE Frameworks, and industry standards and how this would be provided both in-person and remotely to students. Ms. Davis touched upon the facility cleaning and disinfecting protocols which include daily and weekly cleaning using industry-standard cleaning procedures. Recognition was given to Mr. Byrne, Director of Facilities and the custodial staff for the outstanding work done since March in preparing the building for reopening and how their work is extremely appreciated. She continued with the details of the HVAC and ventilation system in the building (filters changed, unit filters being upgraded to MERV13 filters, outside air dampers, outside air cycle, etc.), details pertaining to food services and the current plan for providing breakfast and lunch, as well as bus transportation protocols. Ms. Davis noted the Plan is fluid and changes could occur at any time depending on the current health and safety data.

Committeeman Morin inquired if the deep cleaning was going to be done by in-house staff. Ms. Davis replied yes. Committeeman Giggey asked if there was a testing method to make sure the deep cleaning is effective and working. Ms. Davis noted she would need to check into that further to see if there is something available.

Superintendent Davis also updated the committee regarding use of facilities. Outside groups are currently not permitted the use of the facilities for extracurricular activities inside the building, but will be permitted the use of outside areas.

Committeeman Gitschier noted his concern about the After Dark program in partnership with the City of Lowell and bringing in additional students at night and asked if the start of the program

could be delayed. Superintendent Davis commented she would need to look into that forward and if it was a concern, she would contact the State to see if there are any available options.

Mr. Bahou asked Superintendent Davis if hallway and stairway markings would be installed to direct traffic and distancing. Ms. Davis confirmed and noted that the process of installing these markings were already taking place to ensure completion before the start of the school year.

Committeeman Bahou asked Superintendent Davis if temperature checks would be conducted. Superintendent Davis reported that temperature checks would not be conducted per the recommendation of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the CDC. The recommendation is for parents to do a self-assessment on their child at home prior to sending to school. Ms. Knight, School Business Administrator noted comments received through remote participants (administrators and Mr. Maccaro, legal counsel) that the CDC is not recommending temperature checks as it is not a reliable tool as it could have inaccurate readings. Ms. Tierney, Director of Human Resources noted (remotely) that staff would need to be properly trained with regard to taking student temperature, as well as providing staff protective gear. She noted the high probability of sending students home and isolating based on inaccurate readings. Committeeman Giggey noted the temperature checks being used as one screening tool and not the soul determination. Mr. Giggey stated his concern is to make sure everything is being done as a school to ensure the safety of students coming into the building. Superintendent Davis stated she will look into temperature checks further with regards to cost, availability, administering, staffing, etc. and report back to the committee.

Committeeman Giggey noted his concern over phase I and wanted options on how to bring more students back into the building safely, wanting to provide more in-person technical education. Committeeman Gitschier raised concerned about the lack of hands-on shop hours by starting with Mode A. He noted the lack of in-person technical hours that students would be receiving (12 hours a month) with the remaining hours done remotely. Mr. Gitschier, citing local number of COVID cases, recommended going to 3-foot distancing to accommodate additional students.

Mr. Barton noted one of several challenges discovered in the inability to bring back all of the technical programs utilizing the 3-foot or 6-foot distancing guidelines is due to the number of students in certain popular technical areas. Additional factors were noted with regards to the availability of supervision when utilizing additional classroom space to accommodate distancing guidelines. He noted the hope would be, as more students go out on co-op, the class sizes would be reduced which would allow more students to be brought back in the building. Mr. Barton was asked if academic classes were considered for use. Mr. Barton said they were considered; however, at the current guidelines, amongst other factors, we're unable to feed the increased number of students (1,100) six feet apart.

Some options brought to the table by the committee throughout the discussion included:

- All academics remote with all technical in-person on the opposite week utilizing the academic classrooms to accommodate sizing

- Starting with Mode B which would increase the technical in-person days to 2 days per week
- Utilization and/or reorganization of various areas/classrooms to increase the number of students in-person
- Use of the gymnasium for additional classroom space; however, due to the commitment of the Program of Studies, this option was not available due to physical education classes being conducted
- Accelerate the program or go with the Superintendent's recommendation
- Moving to phase 2 after three weeks if nothing occurs

Committeeman Tatseos asked whose decision it is to move from phase to phase. Superintendent Davis noted that it is the school's decision. The phases would move according to what the quarterly data shows and if the distancing was relaxed with regards to busing and classrooms. Ms. Davis noted the Task Force believes that starting off at 3 feet leaves no room for risk.

Interim Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Mr. Barton noted as school opens, monitoring will occur of how many businesses hire our students for cooperative education, potentially allowing us to bring more students in. Another factor is the number of families who opted exclusively for remote learning, but figures will not be available until school starts. Once that data is available, a more informed decision about accelerating to phase 2 can be made.

After further discussion including accelerating to phase 2, Superintendent Davis and the Task Force believe it is critical to begin with optimal safety by starting with Hybrid A due to several factors, including getting students acclimated back to the building, masks, mask breaks, rules for eating, and distancing guidelines.

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan with possibly accelerating to the next phase after review of data at the October School Committee meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 No (Mr. Gitschier)

Michael Knight, School Business Administrator provided the committee with an overview of the revised FY21 budget. Mr. Knight noted that these are still preliminary numbers and waiting for federal guidance; however, should there be additional funding we'll adjust the budget at that time.

Proposed Revised FY21 Budget:

Assessments:	\$16,085,626 (-\$416,973 change)
State Aid:	\$31,034,787 (-\$1,540,589 change)
Total Revenue:	\$47,420,413 (-\$1,957,562 change)

Notable Budgetary Items:

FY20 NSS to address FY21 Budget Changes:	(-\$284,931)
Salary Adjustments	\$29,841
SOA Items/Positions Removed from Budget:	(-\$1,244,409)
Equipment Purchased in FY20	(-\$121,000)
Transportation Revolving Acct. Established	(-\$337,063)
Total Budget Reduction:	(-\$1,957,562)

Mr. Knight commented that equipment, supplies and software requested in the SOA funds in the original budget were almost completely funded through FY20 budget savings and grant funds.

Mr. Knight informed the committee, that as a result of closing school early, net school spending was missed and therefore appropriate funds from FY20 had to be spent early in FY21. In order to do this, the county retirement assessment was paid with FY20 funds and reallocated the county retirement assessment to project needs in FY21 and reduce the budget. He also noted the ability to keep two critical needs regarding personnel expenditures identified in the SOA plan despite funding, as well as the ability to fund two new technical positions almost completely through grant funds.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the revised FY21 budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER

Mr. Knight informed the committee that he was withdrawing the motion regarding the Community Eligibility Provision Food Service. After examining further, it was no longer feasible at the percentage the school is currently at to participate and was recommending to table the motion 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

Committee Chair Morin informed the committee that it was brought to his attention that a vote of the School Committee to name the Gymnasium after George Kouloheras could not be found in the School Committee's minutes, despite the fact the dedication of the Gymnasium to Mr. George Kouloheras has already occurred. Therefore, he is requesting a formal vote of the School Committee to name the Gymnasium after Mr. George Kouloheras.

MOTION: by Mr. LeMay, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve the naming of the gymnasium after George Kouloheras.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

COMMITTEEPERSON MOTION

There were no committeeperson motions.

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Committeeman Sheehan asked to speak regarding the Facilities Naming Committee. He would like to suspend all Facilities Naming Committee meetings until further notice until the committee meets with legal counsel.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: by Mr. Giggey, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to enter into executive session for collective bargaining

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Votes will be taken in open session after Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened at 9:46 p.m. with a roll call vote of 8 present.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase and the addition of proposed language for 2020-2021 for the Greater Lowell Paraeducators Organization.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 Yes, 1 Abstain (Mr. O'Hare)

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to approve a one-year contract extension with a 2% salary increase and the addition of proposed language for 2020-2021 for the Greater Lowell Educational Support Staff.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mr. Sheehan seconded by Mr. Tatseos to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Colette Edmonds
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents:

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes for Approval:

June 18, 2020

Copy of FY21 Summer & Vacation Learning Program Grant Award Letter

Copy of MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board Funds Letter

Copy of Career & Technical Education (CTE) Partnership Implementation Grant Letter

Proposed Revised FY21 School Calendar

Copy of 2020-2021 Substance Use Prevention & Education Plan

Copy of 2020-2021 Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

Proposed FY21 Fall Reopening Plan