

# GREATER LOWELL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

March 19, 2026 – 5:45 P.M.

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Morin called the Public Hearing to order at 5:49 p.m.

Chairman Morin announced that Vice Chairman LeMay would be participating in the meeting remotely.

### ROLL CALL

Members

Present: Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Gitschier, Mr. LeMay, Mr. Bahou, Mr. Morin

Members Absent: Mr. Nocco, Mr. Hogan (absent @ time of roll call – joined remotely @ 6:06 p.m.),  
Mr. Richardson (absent @ time of roll call – joined @ 6:02 P.M.)

Also

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

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 Yes, 3 Absent (Mr. Nocco, Mr. Hogan, Mr. Richardson)

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that, along with School Business Administrator Michael Knight, they would be presenting the FY27 budget. Superintendent Davis stated 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.

Ms. Davis reminded the members that the Massachusetts House, Senate and Governor approved a change in the state funding formula for public education in 2015 with the Student Opportunity Act. The bill provided an investment of \$1.5 billion into schools and this is the last year of funding under the current plan. This bill is aimed at tackling inequity, specifically for school districts with higher numbers of English language learners and students with disabilities in order to close the achievement gap. Superintendent Davis stated the school received a 1.07% (\$409,888) increase to from last year's budget to the Chapter 70 aid, making the total Chapter 70 aid \$38,740,488. Superintendent Davis announced that the preliminary budget she would be recommending to the committee of \$61,126,858

includes more than \$2,006,056 in additional spending, which is a 3.39% increase over this year's budget.

The base rate for a vocational student was increased by \$692.67, the rate for a special education student was increased by \$1,131.26 and the rate for ELL students was increased by \$408.28. Also noted was the low-income percentage (currently at 50.87% – down from 54.11%) and as a result places us in category 9 (dropping from 10); therefore, receiving \$7,932.63.

Superintendent Davis continued with the new rates of pupil expenditures set by the state and our current enrollment; the overall Foundation Budget increased by \$964,511, which is a 1.75% increase over this year's budget. She added that this amount is all net school spending required. Superintendent Davis added the significant drop from last year was attributed to the reduction in LPN program enrollment; however, she was happy to report that the enrollment is restored back to the 80 students so there will be a change in next year's budget. Ms. Davis also added that there was a drop in low-income students which had a major impact on the budget which is something that is not in our control. School Business Administrator Michael Knight spoke about the low-income reduction, detailing that although we did see an increase in the rate we receive per student on a year-over-year basis, it feels like a decrease for us because that is significantly lower than we would have seen had we maintained level and/or maintained the number of students that qualified for low income. The drops respectively were a result of the decrease in the student count of seventy-six (76), accounting for about \$756,000 and the drop in levels from ten (10) to nine (9) accounts for about \$600,000, resulting in well over a million dollars in funding loss. Mr. Knight added on a positive note that, with the additional LPN students next year, it should have a positive impact on next year's budget by approximately \$480,000.

Superintendent Davis and School Administrator Mr. Knight spoke on the revenue budget consisting of Excess and Deficiency, Other School Revenue (interest income and Medicaid reimbursements), Assessment to the member communities, and State Aid. Mr. Knight added that the assessment to the towns includes an increase of \$1,046,168 from last year and based off the minimum contribution increases dictated by the state by the enrollment per town sending to our school. Mr. Knight reminded the members that last year, excess transportation funds were put into a revolving account to offset this year's budget. However, the amount is down from last year, as well as an increase in the transportation contract that went out to bid this year. Committeeman Gitschier requested to make it noted that the school is not asking for more contributions from the member communities, only the state assessment per city/town. Mr. Knight confirmed that information. Mr. Knight continued with beyond our assessment, the biggest part of our funding comes from the state with \$38,740,488 in Chapter 70 funding and a reimbursement for transportation of an estimated \$1.5 million dollars, bringing the total revenue to \$61,126,858.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the proposed budget priorities, detailing the priorities in each of the following areas:

- High Quality Curriculum Instruction and Authentic Assessment
- Student Supports and Advanced Learning
- Equipment and Technology for Innovative Learning Environments
- College & Career Planning and Community Partnerships

Mr. Knight spoke regarding the proposed FY27 expenditure budget; noting fixed charges, which insurance is the primary driver, along with transportation costs that continue to increase annually. The instructional line shows small increases despite contract obligations requiring much larger amounts. Supply budgets were reduced by \$964,000 across equipment, texts, and materials to balance the budget. Plant services department expenses were reduced by \$133,500, as well as a reduction in our debt service of \$26,050. The biggest increase being health insurance costs are experiencing double-digit percentage increases affecting the benefits and retirement budget line.

Superintendent Davis reviewed the personnel expenditures to allow for the new Veterinary Science Program, as well as position reductions by attrition, and eliminations in order to balance the budget due to funding constraints. Reductions by attrition included one (1) Advanced Manufacturing Instructor. Current instructor is retiring and position is not being refilled due to reduced numbers in the program. Additional reductions include one (1) part-time Hall Monitor and one (1) Grounds Keeper. Position eliminations include four (4) tutors (2 ELE and 2 Math) and one (1) Human Resources staff member. Additional positions include one (1) Veterinary Science Instructor needed to open the Veterinary Science program. Committeeman Bahou asked if there were a couple of people retiring from the Advanced Manufacturing program. Superintendent Davis clarified that there was one (1) person retiring from the program. Ms. Davis added that another person has announced their retirement, and due to lack of interest in the program over the last seven (7) years, are looking to close the program with the idea of using some of the equipment in the program to integrate into some of the other programs, such as engineering, technology and CADD. Ms. Davis noted that there is a new process to close a program through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the application now required has been submitted.

Mr. Knight spoke regarding FY27 funding changes and the use of Excess and Deficiency. His recommendation to use \$525,000 comes from the need to meet net school spending. Expenses that do not qualify for net school spending include Medicaid filing (\$7,000), OPEB contribution (\$25,000), and operating budget support (\$493,000).

Superintendent Davis and Mr. Knight provided a summary of the proposed FY27 budget as follows:

Operating Budget	57,115,233
Transportation	2,759,395
Debt Service	1,227,230
OPEB	25,000

The preliminary FY27 Budget assessment would be:

Min. Local Contribution	17,424,745	Chapter 70	38,740,488
Transportation Assessment	1,259,395	Chapter 71 (transportation)	1,500,000
<u>Debt Assessment</u>	<u>1,227,230</u>	Excess & Deficiency	525,000
Total Assessment	19,911,370	<u>Other School Income</u>	<u>450,000</u>
		Total Budget	61,126,858

Chairman Morin asked if there were any public participants wishing to speak on the FY27 budget. With none present, Chairman Morin announced the vote on the FY27 Budget would take place during the regular School Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. and asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to close the Public Hearing at 6:21 p.m.

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

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Morin called the school committee meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. following a recess after the Public Hearing.

Chairman Morin announced that Vice Chairman LeMay and Committeeman Hogan would be participating in the meeting remotely.

### **ROLL CALL**

Members

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

**Members Absent:** None

Also

**Present:** Jill Davis, Superintendent-Director  
Michael Barton, Assistant Superintendent/Principal  
Michael Knight, School Business Administrator  
David Bradley, District Treasurer  
Recording Secretary

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

There was no public appearance.

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no School Committee communications

### **REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

Student Representative, Anna DiBona provided an update of recently held clubs and sporting events.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 12, 2026.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**REPORT OF DISTRICT TREASURER**

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve expenditures for the sum of \$6,447,874.55 allocated as follows:

Warrant 2152B	dated 02/20/2026	Payroll # 1047	1,465,882.25
Warrant 2153A	dated 03/06/2026	Payroll # 1049	1,383,419.33
Warrant 2153B	dated 03/20/2026	Payroll # 1051	1,439,163.54
Warrant 2152-1	dated 02/27/2026	Accounts Payable	564,554.50
Warrant 2153	dated 03/13/2026	Accounts Payable	720,611.46
Warrant 2152-4	dated 02/27/2026	Cafeteria Plan (2152B)	6,936.84
Warrant 2153-2	dated 03/13/2026	Cafeteria Plan (2153A)	6,656.84
Warrant 2152-5	dated 03/27/2026	Mass Bay Health	855,353.35
Warrant 2153-6	dated 03/13/2026	Lowell Five Cr Card Fees	3,248.74
Warrant 2153-5	dated 03/13/2026	Sales Use/Meals Tax	2,047.70

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

**REPORT OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

There was no report of general counsel.

**REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR**

Superintendent Davis welcomed members of our Cheer Team, along with their coaches, head coach Jen Riley, and Assistant Coach Mya Medina. The team had an incredible season and captured several titles including 2026 State Vocational Grand Champions, CAC League Champions, North Regional Division I Champions, Mass. Division I State Champions. She asked the members to individually introduce themselves, along with a personal highlight of their season.

Superintendent Davis notified the Committee that this year’s ‘Day on the Hill’ is scheduled for Monday, March 30, 2026 at the State House in Boston for any member who would like to attend. Ms. Davis added that, once again, Culinary students, along with Chef Matulonis, would be attending, along with other schools, to provide a luncheon for the attendees.

Superintendent Davis informed the committee that the Cooperative Education report provided indicates 229 senior students participating in the program as of the end of February, representing 43% of the Class of 2026 and 17 Junior students, representing 3% of the Class of 2027. Ms. Davis provided an update, that as of the night of the meeting, there were 34 junior students (out of 560) participating in Co-Op which is 6% of the class of 2027.

Superintendent Davis asked for the Committee's approval to accept the donation of \$797 from the Greater Lowell Parent Organization and \$1000 from the Greater Lowell Community Foundation. Ms. Davis added that both donations will be used to support project-based learning during the school day, as well as purchase supplies for after-school craft-based activities to build community, connections, and form new friendships via the Library Media Services Department.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Bahou, seconded by Mr. Richardson to accept the donation from the Greater Lowell Parent Organization and the Greater Lowell Community Foundation.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Superintendent Davis asked Assistant Superintendent/Principal Michael Barton to join the meeting to provide information regarding two (2) out-of-state travel requests, adding that each need approval by the Committee.

Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton began with the first request for 2 wrestlers and 2 coaches to attend the 2026 NHSCA High School Wrestling Nationals in Virginia Beach, VA from March 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Barton added that the approximate cost of the trip would be approximately \$5,570.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitscher, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the out of state travel request for 2 coaches to attend the 2026 NHSCA High School Wrestling Nationals in Virginia Beach, VA from March 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton continued with the second request for Sean O'Donnell from the Media Services Department to attend the 2026 Avidex Tech Showcase and Conference in Nashua, NH on March 26, 2026 at no cost to the district.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the out of state travel request for Sean O'Donnell to attend the 2026 Avidex Tech Showcase and Conference in Nashua, NH on March 26, 2026.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

## **REPORT OF BUSINESS MANAGER**

Mr. Knight announced the Public Hearing on the proposed FY27 budget had occurred prior to the start of the School Committee meeting. With no further questions pending, he asked for approval of the proposed FY27 budget as presented at the Public Hearing.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Gitschier, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the FY27 budget of \$61,126,858.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

School Business Administrator Mr. Knight provided the committee with an explanation of the budget line transfers request and asked for approval totaling in the amount of \$479,861.87. Committeeman Bahou asked for clarification on the transfer regarding health insurance and the reason awaiting licenses. Mr. Knight replied that awaiting licenses is from the savings side, noting that when vocational teachers are hired, oftentimes they come from field and not from education, so they do not have a teaching license, which affects how they are placed on their salary schedule until they get licensed. Mr. Knight added that as we approach the end of the year, the likelihood of all of them attaining their licenses hasn't been met; therefore, taking the savings from there and moving to health insurance which was slightly deficient in our budget this year.

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

**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 Morin stated that it was time for the annual re-organization of the Board to be effective April 1, 2026.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Bahou to nominate Mr. LeMay for Chairman.

Chairman Morin asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Mr. Morin stated that nominations were closed.

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

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

Chairman Morin asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Mr. Morin stated that nominations were closed.

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

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

Chairman Morin asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Mr. Morin stated that nominations were closed.

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

## **COMMITTEEPERSON MOTION**

Motion by Committeeman Sheehan to hire Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Michael Barton as the next Superintendent-Director pending successful contract negotiations. Committeeman Sheehan stated that he asked this motion to be put on the agenda. He noted that this item was discussed in executive session during the last meeting after Superintendent Davis announced her retirement. Committeeman Sheehan stated he believes it is a natural progression to keep the school moving in a positive direction established under current Superintendent Davis's leadership. Adding, he personally felt that it is the right choice to succeed Ms. Davis and all of her accomplishments. Mr. Sheehan reiterated that the motion he put included pending successful contract negotiations. Chairman Morin asked for any comments from the members.

Committeeman Richardson asked to go on the record with, although he agreed with Committeeman Sheehan's comments about keeping the school moving forward, he believes the board should entertain some type of a process. Committeeman Richardson inquired about there being a public interview that the public would be able to watch or attend and whether the board could do this legally. Superintendent responded that she could not speak to that, and that it would be the School Committee's process. Committeeman Sheehan stated that he has spoken with the school's attorney to inquire that the appointment could be done this way and the attorney confirmed that a formal search process was not required for the appointment. Committeeman Bahou added they had a similar situation in Lowell and they did not have a Superintendent search and someone was nominated on the floor, which Mr. Sheehan is doing, ultimately having a vote and person offered a contract to be Superintendent with no lawyer involved. Committeeman Richardson expressed the has always been a fan of hiring from within and the staff member being discussed has been a committed employee for many, many years. He added that he thought it look better for him if there was some kind of a process, but is fine if everyone feels comfortable moving forward.

Superintendent Davis highlighted Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton's 20-year tenure at the school, his progression from teacher to leadership roles, and his contributions to school's achievements over past six years. Ms. Davis added that where the school is now is a testament to Mr. Barton's hard work and feels he would be the only choice in her opinion. Committeeman Hogan stated he felt the candidate was more than qualified and asked to move the question to vote.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Gitschier to hire Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Michael Barton as the next Superintendent-Director pending successful contract negotiations.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Assistant Superintendent/Principal Barton expressed appreciation for the committee's support and his commitment to continuing the school's positive trajectory brought by Superintendent Davis. Mr. Barton added that her direction that this school has been brought in has been utterly remarkable and, for her remaining time here, would like to applaud her and everything she's given to the school.

## **REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Finance Sub-Committee meeting.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

## **ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Nocco, seconded by Mr. Richardson to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** 8 Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Colette Edmonds  
Recording Secretary

### **Meeting Documents:**

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes for Approval: February 12, 2026, February 12, 2026 (Finance Sub-Committee)

Copy of 2026 Cooperative Education Report

Out-of-State Travel Information

Budget Transfer Request

Year-to-Date Budget Report