



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	February 15, 2023
Time:	6:30PM
Location:	City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

Members of the public may view the meeting via LTC and those wishing to speak regarding a specific agenda item shall register to speak in advance of the meeting by sending an email to the Superintendent indicating the agenda item, a phone number and email address so we can provide a zoom link to access the meeting. Email address is mpalazzo@lowell.k12.ma.us. If no access to email you may contact us at 978-674-4324. All requests must be submitted before 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

1. SALUTE TO FLAG

2. ROLL CALL

On a roll call at 6:37 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Delrossi, Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau and Ms. Chhoun.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

3.1. Spotlight On Excellence – Family Leadership Institute

The Spotlight on Excellent featured the Family Leadership Institute. The presentation included an overview of student demographic data, review of core beliefs and fundamental commitments, review of the mission and overarching goals of the Family Leadership Institute identified in Spring 2022, as well as a report on current workshops and courses being planned and implemented for Spring 2023.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to suspend the rules to take item #10.2. Modular Project at Cawley Memorial Stadium-Update and Committee Action out order; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 years APPROVED

4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 and Monday, February 6, 2023; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 years APPROVED



4.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 and Monday, February 6, 2023; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

4.3. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Monday, February 6, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 and Monday, February 6, 2023; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: February 15, 2023

Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter: seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

6. MEMORIALS

6.1. **Evangeline Manolopoulos**, Mother of Retired Pyne Arts Principal William Manolopoulos and Mother-In-Law of Butler School Teacher Gerrilynn Manolopoulos

6.2. **Clifford Roland Leroux**, Father of Cari-Ann Leroux, a McAvinnue School Teacher.

6.3. **James Parrington**, Brother of Joan (Parrington) Marais, Administrative Assistant Data Processing at Lowell High School, Cousin of Colleen Parrington, Washington School Teacher and Michaela Parrington, Shaughnessy School Teacher

7. MOTIONS

7.1. **[By Susie Chhoun]**: Request the School Committee accept the recommendation of the current City Solicitor and allow the current Solicitor no more than one month to determine and review the types of claims that actually exist related to the former solicitor's letter prior to hiring outside counsel to ensure the School Committee can review the current Solicitor's researched advice prior to a vote to retain a particular counsel.

Ms. Hondros, Ms. Chea and Ms. Forsythe all registered and spoke to have this motion removed.

Ms. Chhoun stated that she's conflicted about this, but wants to give the Solicitor time to do a deep dive before a decision is made.

Ms. Doherty stated that she believes that motion 7.1 & 7.2 are out of order and reconsideration from the vote on February 6, 2023 was not followed. Ms. Doherty asked the Law Department what their



capacity is to get this done. She stated that she has experienced delays. She stated that she is aware that the city will be dealing/working with two (2) major lawsuits in the spring and asked the Solicitor if she will be giving this immediate attention.

The City Solicitor stated that the law department is down 50%. She stated that office only has four (4) attorneys and not the full complement of eight (8). She stated that she and Attorney Williams met with someone who came in today and stated that she can do this is two (2) to three (3) weeks.

Ms. Doherty stated that the Committee took Attorney McKenna's advice and went with outside counsel. She asked the City Solicitor who gave her the authority to investigate and why was she looking for information if the Committee voted for outside counsel. She asked the Solicitor who contacted her to do this.

The City Solicitor stated that people called them and Attorney William and herself met with them.

Ms. Doherty asked the Solicitor how many investigations she has done and who those clients are. She also asked if she spoke with Attorney Anderson who previously worked in the law department.

The City Solicitor stated she has done family law and criminal investigations. She stated that she has spoken with Attorney Anderson and that she provided some information.

Ms. Delrossi stated that we need to follow the grievance process and if we don't do that we are going to be out of order with Principals who have autonomy. She stated that maybe what's happening is wrong, but not sure it is illegal.

Ms. Doherty stated that we had a meeting on February 6, 2023 and you can't have a motion that contradicts and believes they're out of order. She stated that we have (2) motions that contradicts what was voted on.

The City Solicitor stated I'm asking the Committee to hold off so we can do an investigation.

Mayor Chau thanked the speakers. He stated that the Solicitor is not saying that we're not going to hire outside counsel, we just need to get the appropriate information. He stated that he is for outside counsel, but we shouldn't skip over the Solicitor's office. He stated that he believes there is not sufficient information to go forward and the city needs to be part of the process. He asked the Solicitor what is the difference from last week to this week and that there needs to be a deadline given to them from the Solicitor's office.

The City Solicitor stated two (2) to four (4) weeks. She stated that maybe other people will be interviewed if they come forward.

Ms. Martin stated that not a single person has stated that they don't believe something is wrong, but it's just around the legality. She stated that this is about protection and we are an institution and stated that the law department protects the city and this needs to be done by an external agency.

Mr. Lay thanked the speakers. He stated that we need to look at the cause of the problems and that the motion on the floor is to take the Solicitor's advice.



Mayor Chau stated that at the February 6, 2023 meeting there was a misunderstanding on the floor on the motion Mr. Lay was making and if it was in conflict with the motion already voted on, so the Committee didn't continue with the motion.

Ms. Thompson stated that we can't put a cost on someone's experience. She stated that speakers came forward to say they felt compelled to speak. We need someone with HR & municipal background. She stated that she sees that it is a challenge for the Solicitor. She stated that people have reached out to her asking her why the Committee started something and then not finishing it.

Ms. Delrossi stated that she knows how it feels and then for them to realize they have no control.

Mayor Chau made a friendly amendment with no objection from the maker of the motion to receive a recommendation by March 15, 2023.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Lay. 4 yeas, 3 nays (Ms. Doherty, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson) APPROVED

7.2. [By Dominik Hok Lay]: Motion to accept the City solicitor's recommendation to postpone the process of hiring outside firm to investigate HR Department.

This motion was withdrawn.

7.3. [By Dominik Hok Lay]: Motion to ask CFO to report total expense of sending students to services outside of district, including costs of services as well as cost of transportation.

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.4. [By Dominik Hok Lay]: Motion to request and schedule a Finance Subcommittee Meeting.

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.5. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request every school have a health program and that it be included in this year's budget planning.

Ms. Doherty asked that it should be every middle school and to have further discussion around this at a Curriculum subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.6. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request a Joint Facilities Subcommittee meeting be held to discuss building at Cawley Stadium.

The motion was withdrawn.

7.7. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request superintendent ensure each school committee member is able to receive emails from the LPS website.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



8. SUBCOMMITTEES

8.1. Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee: Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, January 26, 2023 [Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Ms. Martin reported out on this at the February 1, 2023 School Committee meeting.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the reports as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.2. Family and Community Engagement Subcommittee Meeting: Report and approval of the Meeting of Monday, January 30, 2023 [Eileen DelRossi, Chairperson]

Ms. Delrossi informed the Committee that the purpose of the meeting was to further discuss the Key Performance Indicators: Quarter One Report. The meeting discussed attendance, substitute teachers and translators.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.3. Policy & Governance Subcommittee Meeting: Approval of the Meeting of Monday, January 30, 2023 [Jackie Doherty, Chairperson]

Ms. Doherty reported out on this at the February 1, 2023 School Committee member. Ms. Doherty also stated that they discussed communications to the Committee and stated that moving forward that all communications to the Committee should appear on the agenda.

Ms. Martin made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.4. Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee Meeting: Report of the Meeting of Wednesday, February 8, 2023 [Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Ms. Martin stated that she will report out on this at the next Committee meeting when the minutes are provided.

8.5. Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee: Report of the Meeting of Wednesday, February 8, 2023 [Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Ms. Martin stated that she will report out on this at the next Committee meeting when the minutes are provided.



9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

9.1. Update On Data Driven Decision Making

Mr. Skinner provided an update on data driven decision making. The report included the following:

- Our theory of action for Districtwide Improvement
- Strategic goal #2: Data-Driven Decision Making
- Steps to a Data-Informed Culture: Our ongoing work to build a culture of Data-informed Decision-making across all Schools and Departments
- Next Steps for Translating Theory into Practice

He stated that we are expanding early learning opportunities from birth to age 5, through a coordination of services with community partners, ensuring that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally and socially ready for kindergarten on Day 1. He stated that we are increasing access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, including an expansion of high demand programs and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools. He stated that we are aligning the curriculum and secondary school programs with the expectations of colleges and the requirements of the future workforce, and leveraging the richness of Lowell's diversity by focusing all of our work on our fundamental commitment to equity.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.2. Response to Motion 24. COO of 02/01/23 by Eileen DelRossi Regarding the Crossing Guards

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that the Safety Coordinator emailed Sgt. Kelly of the Lowell Police Department to inquire about crossing guards for both schools on February 10, 2023.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.3. Response to Motion 23. COO of 02/01/23 by Eileen DelRossi Regarding Lockdown Devices

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that the Safety Coordinator and the Facility Managers have assessed various safety devices to enhance security and reduce risks. The report stated that Nightlock has an extensive line of security products to properly address these threats and provide everyone peace of mind to focus on education. Dr. Hall stated that administration will be requesting permission for 1200 units for the Committee's approval this summer.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9.4. Response to Motion 04. CFO of 08/10/22 by Dominik Lay Regarding City Chargebacks and Contribution to School Budget

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer provided a report to the Committee that stated that per the MOA with the City and Schools, it has been agreed upon to use a method of allocating indirect costs of the City to the Schools. The method is in accordance with 603 CMR 10.04. The report included non-discretionary expenses that count towards Net School Spending, discretionary expenses (with approval of the Committee) that count towards Net School Spending, expenses not counting towards Net School Spending, and payment to other school districts.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.5. Response to Motion 08. COO of 07/13/22 by Jackie Doherty Regarding the Status of the LHS Construction Project

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that included a monthly report produced by the General Contractor, as well as a summary from Lowell High School related to the impacts of construction on the daily lives of students and employees. Mr. Fiato, Head of Schools provided the following information:

Update on Construction Project Positives:

- Steel erection for the new main entrance and the new Freshman Academy building is in progress.
- Steel erection for the new south bridge column and the new back addition to the 1980 building is scheduled to begin the week of February 24th.
- The change in the construction schedule for drilling eliminated noise concerns during the school day.
- The walkway from the 1980 building to the gym and kitchen has been wrapped to cut down on wind and weather for traveling students and food service workers.
- A true team effort was appreciated and recognized during the weekend of extreme cold weather to remediate the issues from frozen pipes and sprinkler heads.

Concerns:

- Troubleshooting of the HVAC units on the roof of the 1980 building continues. Many parts have been repaired or replaced but the temperature is still not optimal. The city and construction team just received a comprehensive report on what is still needed to be done to optimize these units.
 - A new concern regarding exhaust smell in the 1980 building arose last week. The construction team shut down all work while they determined what was causing the odor. They discovered it was caused by steel cutting and welding and the doors were sealed up to eliminate this issue.
 - Though most leaks due to the construction in the 1980 have been mitigated, there were still a few small leaks during the last storm.
 - There have been some concerns with the electrical outlets in the 1980 that are being addressed.
- Summary Overall things are going well with the building project and the construction.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9.6. Monthly Incident Report

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report to the Committee that stated that during the month of January, eighty-one (81) incidents were reported using the online reporting system. The report stated that eighty-two (82) investigations were completed within this timeframe, seventy-two (72) of which were related to incidents reported within this timeframe and ten (10) that carried over from prior months. A synopsis of the investigation findings and administered consequences were included in the presentation. During the month of January 2023, the completed investigations took an average of one (1) school day to launch an investigation and an average of two (2) school days to complete. The district is continuing to hold our bi-monthly meeting with community partners to discuss improvements to the Equity Office's monitoring, support and response to incidents which are reported, especially as relates to racism and discrimination. This includes developing trainings for investigators which address interviewers' bias and other areas which will ensure fair and respectful investigations for all involved in the process.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.7. Monthly Enrollment Report

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that as of February 9, 2023, there are 14,305 students enrolled with the Lowell Public Schools. Since March of 2022, families complete the registration process online using the Aspen online registration portal (OLR). Families create an Aspen account, enter their child's information required for registration, and upload the required registration documents directly to their online registration. The required registration documents are: child's birth certificate, child's vaccination, parent photo identification, proof of Lowell residency (one of the following: gas bill, cable bill, electricity bill, lease, or mortgage). Additionally, high school students will need to provide transcripts and Special Education students the current, signed IEP. The Family Resource Center (FRC) registration clerks work on processing student registrations in the OLR portal. The OLR portal is housed outside of the Aspen student database. Families are not inputting information directly into the district's student database. The clerks review the information inputted by the parent and make any necessary corrections to typing errors. Information inputted is cross referenced to the submitted documents to ensure that it matches. Once a registration is processed, the clerk will accept it and at that point, the registration is sent into the student database and will be found in the FRC category on the district enrollment report. The report stated that once in the FRC category, the next step would be for the student to be assigned a school.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.8. Home Education

Superintendent Boyd recommended that the following parents/guardians be allowed to home educate their child:

Rosaling Rosario
Katie and John Bergeron

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED



Ms. Delrossi made a motion to recess @ 9:18 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Lay. 4 yeas, 3 nays (Ms. Doherty, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Chhoun) APPROVED

On a roll call at 9:38 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Delrossi, Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau and Ms. Chhoun.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1. Discussion, Consideration and Selection of Outside Counsel to Conduct the Previously Approved Internal Complaints Investigation

Three (3) law firms were contacted and two (2) responded with pertinent information to conduct an internal complaints investigation. The firms provided a statement of interest and relevant experience.

Mr. Lay stated that he disagreed with voting on this and he would not do so.

Ms. Thompson stated that this vote is to choose a firm as well as to be able to notify them and have them be ready to start after the March 15, 2023 School Committee meeting.

Ms. Doherty stated that the Committee has met nine (9) times and now waiting until March 15, 2023. She stated that we need to move forward and reach out at least for an initial interview with the law firm selected. She stated that in the two (2) months that this has been going on she does not believe the law department has the competency or capacity to do this and we need an expert.

Mayor Chau stated that we can select, but not meet with them.

Ms. Martin stated that we should at least let the chosen law firm know as a professional courtesy.

Ms. Doherty stated that she has heard wonderful things about Foley & Hoag, but is also impressed with BHPK and the price is reasonable.

Ms. Martin stated that she agreed with Ms. Doherty about BHPK and stated that the rate per hour is attractive and the materials provided were on point. She stated that members state that they're not derailing this, but she believes it appears that way.

Ms. Delrossi stated that she wants to make sure this is accurate data.

Ms. Chhoun stated that we need to get our research from the Solicitor.

Ms. Thompson stated that the vote passed and now we are waiting until March 15, 2023 to move forward and this vote would be mute if the Solicitor meets the needs to do this investigation. She stated that now it sounds like there needs to be more clarity from some Committee members. She stated that we have been making people wait since November.

Ms. Doherty stated that the Committee voted in favor on December 14, 2022 and on February 6, 2023 and now Committee members feel like they don't have the information. She stated that the previous



Solicitor who had been in the district for twenty-seven (27) years provided a letter stating that there were issues. She stated that we are making ourselves liable.

Mayor Chau stated that the Solicitor's Office has made progress and that they are not delaying the process.

Mr. Lay stated that he will be voting no.

The three (3) law firms contacted were King & Nolan, Foley & Hoag and BHPK. King & Nolan declined at this time.

Ms. Doherty made a motion for selection of an outside counsel to conduct the previously approved internal complaints investigation; seconded by Ms. Martin. Ms. Delrossi, Abstain; Ms. Doherty, BHPK Mr. Lay, No; Ms. Martin, BHPK, Ms. Thompson, BHPK, Mayor Chau, Abstain and Ms. Chhoun, Abstain. Three (3) votes, BHPK; Three (3) votes, Abstain; One (1) vote, No. FAILS

10.2. Modular Project at Cawley Memorial Stadium-Update and Committee Action

Mr. LeLacheur registered and spoke on this item

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that bids are still being processed for the modular units at Cawley Stadium and stated that it would be in late March or April when bids would be ready for a School Committee vote. He stated that it appears that the modular units could be installed by June, but there are no guarantees due to supply chain issues and the demand for modular units. The School Committee previously projected approximately \$1,400,000.00 for this project and some of these funds are already committed. He stated that an alternative proposal would provide for a permanent building and it appears this project would cost more than the money available, or approximately \$1,500,000.00. If the School Committee was willing to commit \$1,100,000.00 toward this alternative project, a permanent building could be produced, if the City committed funds toward the balance of the project. This building likely could be constructed by the end of the summer. Dr. Hall recommended that the School Committee consider this alternative which appears to be a greater value for what will be spent. The report included a proposed design. The "ownership" of this building and its upkeep would need to be discussed between the City and the School Committee. Additionally, it would have rental value and we would need to reach an agreement on whom would manage the rentals and the use of those funds.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve building a permanent building @ Cawley Stadium; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.3. Budget Transfer

Ms. Martin made a motion to table items 10.3 and 10.4 until the next School Committee meeting; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.4. Permission to Post: Cafeteria Operations Assistant



Ms. Martin made a motion to table items 10.3 and 10.4 until the next School Committee meeting; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.5. Approval of Payment for FY21/22 Expenditures in Accordance with MGL Chapter 44 Section 64

Ms. Martin stated that she wanted comparative data from last year.

Ms. Martin made a motion to forward Approval of Payment for FY21/22 Expenditures in Accordance with MGL Chapter 44 Section 64 to the Finance Subcommittee for further discussion; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

11. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to adjourn at 10:01 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

**Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D., Superintendent and
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

JDB/mes