



# LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## *REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*

<b>Date:</b>	Saturday, June 24, 2023
<b>Time:</b>	10:15AM
<b>Location:</b>	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](mailto: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. ROLL CALL**

**On a roll call at 10:25 a.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun and Ms. Delrossi.**

### **2. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**2.1.** In accordance with the Lowell School Committee rules, Section 2, based on the request of the members of the School Committee, Mayor Sokhary Chau has called a special meeting for the purpose of interviewing the candidates for the Interim Superintendent of Schools position and to vote to select the Interim Superintendent for the Lowell Public Schools.

#### **2.1.1. SALUTE TO FLAG**

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

**3.1.** The following candidates will be interviewed in public session on Saturday, June 24, 2023 starting at 10:15AM:

- Kevin McCaskill
- Liam Skinner
- Latifah Phillips
- Lunch-1:15PM-2:15PM
- Jannell Pearson-Campbell
- Robin Desmond



Mayor Chau stated that this Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee was called for the purpose of selecting an Interim Superintendent. He thanked everyone involved in the process on behalf of himself and his colleagues. The interviews were open to the public

Mayor Chau opened the meeting and read the posted notice. He then informed the public that each candidate would be interviewed by the Committee in a one (1) round fashion and if time permitted additional questions could be asked. Mayor Chau then welcomed the first candidate.

Mr. McCaskill was the first candidate interviewed. Mr. McCaskill started with an opening statement. He stated that he is very excited to share his background and answer questions. He stated he is a thirty-five (35) year educator. He stated that he wants to share his passion and experience with the Lowell Public Schools and is excited for the opportunity.

Each School Committee Member questioned Mr. McCaskill starting with Ms. Doherty.

Mr. McCaskill made a closing statement stated that this is a welcoming, caring community and again thanked the Committee for the opportunity. He stated that he is authentic and genuine and believes he has the strength and characteristics to lead this district. He concluded by saying that he looks forward to hearing from the Committee regarding their decision.

Mr. Skinner was the second candidate to be interviewed.

Mr. Skinner started with an opening statement. Mr. Skinner stated that it is a privilege to be here and thanked the Committee for the opportunity. He stated that the Committee is familiar with his resume. He stated that he is from Ireland and had a very humble upbringing. He stated that he and his family lived in a tiny house with only two bedrooms (2) and had to use an outhouse, because the house didn't have a bathroom. He stated that they were poor, but stated that everyone around him was equally as poor. He stated he had a very happy childhood and wonderful parents who promoted education which led him to appreciate education and educating youngsters. He stated he has five (5) sons and two (2) of them are presently in Lowell schools. He stated that his other three (3) children also attend Lowell schools and did very well.

Each School Committee Member questioned Mr. Skinner starting with Mr. Lay.

Mr. Skinner made a closing statement. He concluded by stating that he was sad for the process to come to end and that he doesn't feel like he had enough time. He stated that equity is very important to him. He stated that his two (2) step sons are black and he often worries about if they will be treated correctly. He stated that he is not political and that he has not looked for an opportunity to call the Committee. He stated that he has a reservoir of good will from the community. He stated that he stands by his work and that he has been respectful. He stated that he's open, transparent and genuine. He stated that he has lived and worked in Lowell since the day he got off the boat. He concluded by thanking the Committee for the opportunity.

Ms. Phillips was the third candidate to be interviewed.



Ms. Phillips started with an opening statement. Ms. Phillips stated that she had three (3) things to share. She stated that she was the first to graduate from college in her family and that she speaks multiple languages. She stated that in the last ten (10) years she has been in senior executive roles. She stated that she believes it is important to be intentional and aware of how you make decisions. She stated that she believes that education is a fundamental right and that it is very personal to her. She stated that she leads with conviction and a service systems level equity approach. She stated that it's not possible for one (1) leader to know everything. She concluded by stating that she has worked in two (2) countries and six (6) states.

Each School Committee Member questioned Ms. Phillips starting with Ms. Martin.

Ms. Phillips thanked the Committee for the opportunity to be considered in her closing statement. She stated she is qualified and has the heart to serve and that she wants to champion voices that haven't been heard. She stated that before she knew about Lowell she heard that there is a lot to like about Lowell, but now believes that there is a lot to learn from Lowell.

The Committee took a planned one (1) hour recess.

**On a roll call at 2:16 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun and Ms. Delrossi.**

Ms. Pearson-Campbell was the fourth candidate to be interviewed.

Ms. Pearson-Campbell started with an opening statement. She stated that presently she is the Interim Superintendent in NorthHampton. She stated that she received her education at UMass Lowell and is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation educator. She stated that she is glad to be here as well as for this opportunity today.

Each School Committee Member questioned Ms. Phillips starting with Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Pearson-Campbell thanked the Committee for this opportunity. She stated that she likes to think outside of the box. She stated that she believes in education and supporting each other. She stated that she will work and listen to her School Committee members.

Ms. Desmond was the final candidate to be interviewed.

Ms. Desmond made an opening statement and stated that she is very excited for the opportunity today to speak about her vision and to continue the work. She stated that she is a thirty (30) plus year educator in various roles and for the last seven (7) years has been an Assistant Superintendent. She stated that she has a vast background and she is excited to move forward. She stated her work will include student outcomes, the budget and doing these through a lens of equity. She stated that she believes that every child needs to succeed in the Lowell Public Schools.

Each School Committee Member questioned Ms. Desmon starting with Ms. Chhoun.



Ms. Desmond made a closing statement and thanked the Committee. She stated that she is passionate about the success of the Lowell Public Schools. She stated that she received a great education from the Lowell Public Schools as well as having a great support system. She stated that she chose to work in Lowell and that her son graduated from Lowell High School. She stated that she wants to continue to advertise all good things about the Lowell Public Schools via social media. She stated a wonderful thing about Lowell people is that they support each other. She stated selecting her with keep the schools going.

### 3.2. Discussion and Vote to select the Interim Superintendent for the Lowell Public Schools.

Mayor Chau thanked all the candidates that came forward today and asked the body how they wanted to proceed.

Ms. Doherty stated that she believed we should move forward and that she is willing to make a decision today. She stated that a lot of factors went into her decision and it was difficult. She stated that there is a lot to rebuild and at the end of the day it's about relationships and that she needs a leader that she can trust and that will listen to all perspectives and do what is best for our students.

Mr. Lay stated that he believes Lowell Public Schools are in chaos and we don't need more than we presently have. He stated that he was nervous and couldn't decide and wasn't sure because everyone is strong and believes that all of the three (3) internal candidates can be the Superintendent. He stated that he found the interview to be very helpful and this person he has chosen can unify the whole system.

Ms. Martin stated that all five (5) candidates were really strong and that the three (3) internal candidates impressed her and that there was a quality of talent. She stated that she still believes that the district needs to go with an external candidate.

Ms. Thompson thanked all five (5) candidates and stated that they all poured their hearts out. She stated that one (1) candidates stood out to her though.

Mayor Chau stated that all the candidates are qualified. He stated that two (2) candidates have earned it and gave decades of their life and felt that Mr. Skinner and Ms. Desmond both were great.

Ms. Chhoun stated that it was a very tough decision and that there was a few she wanted to vote on and her choice is the candidate that spoke heartfelt.

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to vote to select an Interim Superintendent for the Lowell Public Schools; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Martin made a motion that each member of the Lowell School Committee vote for their selected candidate by name on a roll call vote; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED**

Ms. Doherty, **Mr. Skinner**, Mr. Lay, **Mr. Skinner**; Ms. Martin, **Ms. Pearson-Campbell**; Ms. Thompson, **Mr. McCaskill**; Mayor Chau, **Mr. Skinner**; Ms. Chhoun, **Mr. Skinner**, Ms. Delorossi, **Mr. McCaskill**. Four votes, **Mr. Skinner**; therefore, **Mr. Skinner** is voted to be the new Interim Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools.



Ms. Martin asked that the record reflect her changing her vote to Mr. Skinner.

Ms. Doherty, **Mr. Skinner**, Mr. Lay, **Mr. Skinner**; Ms. Martin, **Mr. Skinner**; Ms. Thompson, **Mr. McCaskill**; Mayor Chau, **Mr. Skinner**; Ms. Chhoun, **Mr. Skinner**, Ms. Delorossi, **Mr. McCaskill**. Five votes, **Mr. Skinner**; therefore, **Mr. Skinner** is voted to be the new Interim Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools.

The Committee took a recess and Dr. Hall contacted Mr. Skinner to inform him of his selection to the position of Interim Superintendent of Schools and to receive confirmation of accepting said position.

**On a roll call at 4:13 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Doherty, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun and Ms. Delorossi.**

**Ms. Doherty made a motion that the Lowell School Committee appoints Mr. Skinner, subject to the successful negotiations of a mutually agreeable contract of employment between the Lowell School Committee and Mr. Skinner; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to recess at 6:40 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Nutter. 7 yeas APPROVED**

#### **4. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

##### **4.1. Items:**

- i. For The Purpose of Discussing Contracts for Non-Union Personnel, and for Incoming Interim Superintendent, of which Open Discussion May Detrimentially Affect the School Committee's Position.
- ii. Discussion of Bargaining Proposals and MOAs for LSAA, SEIU and UTL

This item was tabled.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,

**Sokhary Chau, Chairman of the Lowell  
School Committee**

SC/mes