

# REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 17, 2010

The regular meeting of the Lowell School Committee took place in the Council Chambers, City Hall, at 7:00 pm, on the above-mentioned date.

## ROLL CALL

On roll call at 7:05 pm, all members were present, namely: Connie A. Martin, Mayor/Chairman James L. Milinazzo, David J. Conway, Jacqueline A. Doherty, Alison P. B. Laraba, John J. Leahy and James D. Leary

## SPECIAL ORDER of BUSINESS

1. Presentation and Introduction of the Recruiter for the Lowell High Headmaster: Donald McCallion, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators.

Donald McCallion stated that he has done a lot of work with Superintendent Scott. He accomplished the task of finding 3 more qualified candidates for the Headmaster of Lowell High School position. There were now presently 16 candidates. Mr. McCallion recommended the following changes in the search process for selecting a Headmaster for the second largest high school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

- Have the Superintendent and her cabinet do the initial interviews of candidates in **Executive Session**
- Do not ask for 3 letters of recommendation up front due do to the fact that candidate's present employer will consider them *Lame Ducks* (puts candidate in bad position if not selected)
- Do not release the 16 candidates' names.
- Only release the names of the finalists.
- The Selection Committee will interview the finalists in open session
- Cori checks should be done on the finalists.
- The Selection Committee gives their recommendation to the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent makes the final decision.

Donald McCallion closed by stating all his experiences as a consultant. He was very successful in helping Framingham select their new Superintendent last year.

Mayor Milinazzo thanked Donald McCallion for his suggestions, input, and for taking the time to come before the Lowell School Committee tonight.

**MINUTES**

- 1. Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2010

Ms. Martin moved to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Minutes APPROVED

**PERMISSION TO ENTER**

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, presented and recommended the following contracts for School Committee approval:

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 CITY OF HAVERHILL \$ 15,669

4 Summer Street

Haverhill, MA 01830

To amend the existing contract to provide for the additional out-of-district tuition costs for one (1) student plus (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the School Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

COTTING SCHOOL, INC. \$ 67,323

453 Concord Avenue

Lexington, MA 02421

To amend the existing contract to provide for the additional out-of-district tuition costs for one (1) student plus (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the School Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

EASTER SEALS NEW HAMPSHIRE, INC. \$ 77,485

555 Auburn Street

Manchester, NH 03103

To amend the existing contract to provide for the additional out-of-district tuition costs for one (1) student plus (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the School Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

JUSTICE RESOURCE INSTITUTE, INC. \$ 76,215

545 Boylston Street

Boston, MA 02116

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for five (5) students plus two (2) additional students enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL, INC. \$ 21,169

25 Wellman Avenue

No. Chelmsford, MA 01863

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for one (1) student plus one (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

MELMARK NEW ENGLAND, INC. \$ 33,849

461 River Road

Andover, MA 01801

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for one (1) student plus one (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTER, INCORPORATED \$ 31,508

101 Mill Road

Chelmsford, MA 01824

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for five (5) students plus one (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM \$ 2,401

112 Sohier Road

Beverly, MA 01915

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for three (3) students enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

SEEM COLLABORATIVE \$ 20,768

92 Montvale Avenue, Suite 3500  
Stoneham, MA 02180

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for one (1) student plus one (1) additional student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL, AT HARTFORD, FOR THE DEAF \$ 2,381

139 North Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107

To amend the existing contract to provide for the out-of-district tuition additional costs for one (1) student enrolled and receiving services as outlined in their special education IEP.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Tuition Account

TOWN OF OXFORD \$ 18,000

325 Main Street  
Oxford, MA 01540

To provide transportation for one (1) special needs student to and from the Oxford House in Oxford, MA to the Grow School in Dudley, MA

Funding provided by the Special Education Transportation Budget

TUFTS-NEW ENGLAND MEDICAL CENTER \$ 9,242

750 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02111

To provide testing for various special needs students who are hospitalized.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Budget – Special Education Testing Account

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the 12 special education contracts for permission to enter; seconded by Ms. Laraba. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Mr. Leary moved:

For a **Suspension of the Rules** to take up Public Participation and Motion #1 out-of-order and to bring Motion # 1 on the floor now; seconded by Mr. Leahy. **Suspension**  
APPROVED

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

1. William Taupier, to speak on Motion #1.

**For the record**, the following motion is now on the floor:

1. (by David J. Conway) – To enhance the transparency of the operation of the Lowell Public Schools by asking the Superintendent to require all reports prepared by the Lowell Public School staff at the request of the School Committee, to include the total number of staff hours needed to produce the report and the associated costs of preparing the reports; seconded by Ms. Martin for discussion.

Mayor Milinazzo recognized former City Manager and former School Committee member, William Taupier.

Mr. Taupier stated that the School Committee was very important to the City. They do collective bargaining. The City Council does not. The one function of the School Committee was to establish policy. They also elect the Superintendent. It was important that School Committee members have good relationships with their Superintendent. They cannot afford to give up that relationship. Members should be careful of the motions they submit. They have no direct line to the teachers or school personnel. Mr. Conway's motion addresses the school staff. It is very important that School Committee members ask the Superintendent for information. They should not step over their bounds.

Mayor Milinazzo thanked William Taupier for his input. He asked Mr. Conway if he wanted to **withdraw** his motion. Mr. Conway responded in the negative.

On roll call on Motion #1, Mr. Conway had the only affirmative vote. All other members voted in the negative. One yea; six nays. Motion #1 **DEFEATED**

**For the record**, we are now back on the regular agenda.

**MEMORIALS** - The Committee as a Whole stood for a 'Moment of Silence' in memory of the following:

(by the Committee as a Whole):

1. William Bellegarde, brother-in-law of Debbie Bellegarde, Pawtucketville Memorial Elementary School paraprofessional, uncle of Melissa Kouy, Lincoln School Teacher and brother of Thomas Bellegarde, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries for the City of Lowell.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Permission to Post - Special Education Director

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that she met with Unit B representatives. They agreed on working 222 days per year; not 205. They realize the deficit shortfall the School Department is currently facing.

Ms. Martin stated that she wanted to take the recommendation of Donald McCallion, the Recruiter for the Lowell High School Headmaster, and eliminate:

- 3 letters of reference from the job description

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve permission to post the position of Special Education Director **as amended**; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – taken up under a **Suspension of the Rules**

### **MOTIONS**

2. (by David J. Conway) - To ask the Superintendent to invite Mr. Ted Leonsis, Lowell native and alumni of Lowell High School, to the City of Lowell in order for our schools and our community to host a book-signing event in recognition of his newly published book, "The Business of Happiness"; seconded by Mr. Leahy.

APPROVED

3. (by Jacqueline A. Doherty) - Request the Superintendent prepare a report updating the Committee on the district's investment in dropout prevention programs, specifically noting any changes between the 2008 and 2009 school years that may have caused the rate to double, as well as identifying June 09 budget cuts or other issues that could impact the current school year; seconded by Mr. Leary.

APPROVED

Ms. Doherty stated that the drop-out rate between 2008 and 2009 school years has doubled. She wanted to know why.

4. (by Jacqueline A. Doherty) – Request an annual Spotlight on Excellence to highlight the middle-school sports programs; seconded by Mr. Conway. APPROVED

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

1. Finance/Facilities/LHS - Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 4, 2010, by James D. Leary/Chair/Finance; John J. Leahy/Chair/Facilities; Jacqueline A. Doherty, Chair/Lowell High School

The following items were discussed:

- Advanced Placement Exam
- Lowell High School Scheduler position
- Custodial Services
- Molloy Alternative High School
- Latin Lyceum
- Professional Development Activities
- Vertical Articulation

After discussion, Ms. Laraba moved:

To accept the Finance/Facilities/Lowell High School Subcommittee report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary. APPROVED

2. Finance - Report of the Meeting of March 17, 2010, by James D. Leary, Chair

Mr. Leary stated that his Finance Subcommittee met tonight prior to this regular School Committee meeting. The Finance Subcommittee unanimously recommended that the position of Lowell High School Scheduler be posted at a stipend of **\$60,000 - \$70,000**.

Mr. Leary moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Finance Subcommittee to post the Lowell High School Scheduler position at a stipend of **\$60,000 to \$70,000**; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Mr. Leary also reported that there will be a 4.6 cut in Chapter 70 funds for the school year 2010/2011. The School Department budget will have a shortfall between 4.8 to 7 million dollars.

After discussion, Mr. Leary moved:

To accept the Finance Subcommittee oral report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Leahy. APPROVED

## **REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, presented and recommended approval of the following reports:

### 1. Level 4 School Process

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has designated the Charlotte Murkland Elementary School as Level 4 school. She gave a detailed summary of what was expected from students, teachers, and administrators to turn the school around. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has given the Murkland Elementary School staff 45 days to come up with a process.

After discussion, Ms. Laraba moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leahy. APPROVED

### 2. Charter School Update

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has agreed to grant a 5-year probationary renewal charter to the Lowell Community Charter School for grades K-4. As of September 2010, there will be no 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in the Lowell Community Charter School. As of September 2011, no 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be enrolled. This means that 150 additional 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be welcomed to the Lowell Public Middle Schools for the 2010-2011 school year. For the 2011-2012 school year, the Lowell Public Schools will welcome an additional 150 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to their middle schools. Dr. Scott stated that the students will be enrolled equally throughout all the middle schools. Class sizes will be kept to a minimum of 30 students.

After discussion, Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary. APPROVED

### 3. Long Term Use of Consultants

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, presented a detailed report of long-term consultants used in the Lowell Public Schools. The consultants support teachers' knowledge of strategies to enhance students' performances in mathematics, literacy, writing, differentiating

instruction, analyzing student's work, and life and physical Science (grades 4-12). The consultants also provide leadership skills for administrators and department heads.

Ms. Martin wanted to know if the teachers' responses to the long-term consultants have been evaluated or is the evaluation in the performance achievement of students.

Deputy Superintendent Jean Franco stated that she has asked teachers if they liked the program and why. There is a growth pattern in student achievement.

Ms. Laraba stated that the teachers she has talked to praise the program.

After discussion, Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary.  
APPROVED

#### 4. Release Day Feedback Report

Ms. Doherty stated that she wanted to know if the early-release days were really benefiting to teachers for improving instruction to students, especially at the high school, before she would approve early-release days for the 2010-2011 school year.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To refer the Release Day Feedback Report to the Curriculum Subcommittee for further discussion, and to have the Curriculum Subcommittee report back to the Committee as a Whole; seconded by Ms. Martin. APPROVED

#### 5. 2010/2011 School Year Calendar

Ms. Doherty stated that she could not approve the 2010-2011 School Year Calendar with the early-release days for the Elementary and Middle School on them. She would approve the early-release days for the high school.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that she would remove the early-release days for the Elementary and Middle schools now until the Curriculum Subcommittee made a decision about them.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the 2010-2011 School Year Calendar **as amended** (Elementary/Middle school early-release days removed; Lowell High School early-release days left in); seconded by Mr. Leary. Motion as **amended**  
APPROVED

6. 2010 Graduation Dates

Ms. Doherty stated that the Lowell High School graduation was scheduled at the same time and on the same date as the regular School Committee meeting of June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To **cancel** the regular Lowell School Committee meeting of June 2, 2010; seconded by Mr. Leahy. **Cancellation APPROVED**

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the June 2<sup>nd</sup> graduation date for Lowell High School and the June 4<sup>th</sup> graduation date for Adult Education; seconded by Ms. Laraba. **APPROVED**

7. List of Eligible Teachers

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Martin. **APPROVED**

8. Personnel Report - Pursuant to Chapter 71 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education's Reform Act of 1993, the Personnel Office hereby informs the Committee of the retirements, resignations, and new hires since the last regular School Committee meeting of February 3, 2010.

Ms. Laraba moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Conway. **APPROVED**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. New England College of Optometry: "The Child Self Refraction Study"

Superintendent Scott stated that this was a proposal from the New England College of Optometry giving students in grades 7-12 failing their annual vision screening, a free comprehensive eye examination. If needed, they will be assisted in purchasing eye glasses.

Deputy Superintendent Jean Franco stated that their main purpose is to get glasses to needy students as quickly as possible.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

## CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

The Superintendent presented and recommended approval of the following convention/conference requests:

1. Field Trip Request: LHS Music Teacher and Chaperone Patricia Fitzpatrick, along with one LHS Vocal student, to attend the *2010 MMEA All State Festival* to be held on Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, March 20, 2010 in Boston, Massachusetts. Participating students from various schools will share accommodations at the hotel. The student cost will not exceed \$425. A substitute teacher is required for two days at a cost not to exceed \$200 to be funded by LHS Individual School Funds.
2. Kelly King, Bartlett School Teacher, to attend and present at the *2010 New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO) Conference* in Portsmouth, NH. from Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The only cost to the district is \$300 for a substitute teacher which will be paid by the Individual School Funds.
3. Stoklosa Principal Steve Gross to attend the *New England League of Middle School [NELMS] Annual Conference* to be held from Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Providence, Rhode Island. All costs will be funded by NELMS. No Substitute Teacher is needed.
4. Karen Haakenstad, Murkland School Paraprofessional, to attend part two of a workshop entitled *Managing Student Behavior to Support Staff (MSBSS)* in Orlando, Florida from Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, April 11, 2010. The AFT/UTL will fund all costs associated with the conference. No substitute teacher is needed.
5. Linda Mendes, Lincoln School Paraprofessional, to attend a workshop entitled *Managing Student Behavior to Support Staff (MSBSS)* in Orlando, Florida from Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, April 11, 2010. The AFT will fund all costs associated with the conference. The cost, not to exceed \$200, for a substitute teacher will be paid for by District Professional Development fund.
6. Early Childhood District Support Staff Terry O'Neill and Pat Murphy-Painchaud to attend the *Parent Child Home Coordinators Training* on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 in New York. Registration Costs of \$3750, which includes the cost for follow-up training, along with the cost of \$900/each for travel/lodging/meals will be paid for by the Community Family Engagement Grant funds.

7. LHS Advisors Nila Swenson and Jill McNamara, along with approximately 16 students, including 4 students from the Class of 2012, to attend the *Business Professional of America [BPA] National Leadership Conference* on Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Anaheim, California. Two substitute teachers will be needed for four days with a cost not to exceed \$800 to be funded by the High School Professional Development funds. All other costs will be funded by BPA fundraising; student personal funds; Perkins Grant.
8. Previously Approved on February 8, 2009: Stephen Gervais, LHS Chair of Foreign Language, along with four chaperones and 24 LHS students to travel to *France* during February Vacation of 2011, leaving on Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup> and returning on Sunday, February 27, 2011. There is no cost to the School Department Budget. No Substitute teachers are needed. No school time will be missed.

Date Change Request: April vacation week - Friday, April 15, 2011 through Saturday, April 23, 2011 - no school days will be missed and no substitute teacher is needed.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To take all 8 convention/conference requests and the Date Change request together; seconded by Ms. Martin. APPROVED

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve all eight convention/conference requests and the Date Change request; seconded by Ms. Martin. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

## **PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL**

The Superintendent presented and recommended approval of the following requests:

1. The members of the SEIU888 Lowell Public School Clerks hereby request to donate: five sick leave days to Special Education Clerk Georgia Karamousianis.
2. The members of the United Teachers of Lowell hereby request to donate: twenty-one sick leave days to Sullivan School Teacher Elizabeth Skrekas.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve both donation of sick leave requests; seconded by Mr. Leahy. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Mayor Milinazzo reminded Committee members that the Knowledge Bowl finalists competition would take place at the Butler Middle School, tomorrow night (March 18, 2010), at 6:30 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Doherty moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Leary. This meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent and  
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee

CAS: jms

Enclosures