

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

August 4, 2010

A Special 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 7:19 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

Mayor Milinazzo stated that there was one order of business on the agenda tonight, and that was the report of the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting, which took place prior to this Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee tonight.

**SUBCOMMITTEE**

1. Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting of August 4, 2010 – David J. Conway, Athletic Chair; and Jacqueline A. Doherty, Lowell High School Chair

Mayor Milinazzo acknowledged Jacqueline A. Doherty, Chair of the Lowell High School Subcommittee.

Ms. Doherty stated that another Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting needs to be scheduled, because they still need more information regarding the clubs at Lowell High School. Before the Lowell School Committee tonight was a formal recommendation from the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee. The motion brought before the joint subcommittee was made by Ms. Laraba; seconded by Mr. Leahy was to restore money into the Athletics Line Item in the FY2011 Lowell School Committee Budget. She wanted to make that in the form of a motion tonight.

Ms. Doherty moved:

That the Committee as a Whole accept the recommendation of the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee to restore **\$176,668** into the Athletics Line Item in the FY2011 Lowell School Department Budget; seconded by Ms. Laraba.

In discussion, Ms. Martin stated that she planned on supporting the motion. It is still a hard decision to make, because it is at the expense of other things in our district. She appreciated the individuals who had come for the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting. It was always great to hear from the parents. What honestly made her make her decision was after listening to Lowell High School students who spoke at the numerous budget sessions this

year. Their compassion and the impact of sports at the high school made her realize how important these sports are to them. After hearing from the individual coaches (at the Joint Athletics and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting) tonight, about their recommendations, there are liability issues. She doesn't think the Committee can receive an answer tonight. If the Committee supports the motion on the floor tonight, which does (as the Committee realizes) eliminate assistant coaches, additional information is needed regarding liability. Coaches have stated publicly (at the Joint Athletics and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting) there is an issue regarding safety. Those public statements, she believes, leaves the Committee wide open to liability and could put the Committee in an extremely dangerous position. She is requesting, through the administration, that they do whatever is necessary to determine if the actions the School Committee takes tonight doesn't leave our City wide-open to liability suits against us based on the decision the Committee makes regarding the motion presently on the floor.

Ms. Laraba stated that she wanted to echo what Ms. Martin stated regarding liability. If there aren't ultimate funding sources for additional coaches, she feels that they should reduce the number of students participating in the sport. It is great to have a big football or crew program, but when it comes down to these cuts and there is a safety issue, but by all means she hoped they would be looking at reducing the number of kids (even though she hates to say that) in that program.

Mr. Leary stated that he wanted to thank Superintendent Scott and Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, for doing yeoman's working with the Athletic Director and the Headmaster of Lowell High School. The report (Lowell High School athletics Clubs and Activities) contains a lot of information about sports, not only about the money involved, but information that will help the Committee make sensible decisions. We have to sit down with our unions and go over, not only coaches' salaries, but of the programs we value and the where we are to go from here. There were inconsistencies, but what inconsistency didn't occur was between boys' and girls' sports. That was equal, and hats should be going out to the high school for that, because it is important, very important. As he listened to discussions (at the Joint Athletics and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting tonight), the JV (Junior Varsity) sports issue seems to be skeptical at this point. Initially, Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, drafted this report, a commitment was received from the administration (at Lowell High School) to work hard to try to keep JV sports. Ultimately, right now they do not have a solid foundation to keep JV sports in a lot of areas. The Crew Team has 86 individuals. They are on the river (Merrimack River), these kids are in a boat, and the fact that they are off a highway on the river rises concern. We cannot make it secure like a football field or a gymnasium. Swimming at the Lowell High School pool are areas where we need additional coaches. The numbers alone call for them. As far as football is concerned; it is the second if not the most dangerous sport. Cheerleading is number 1. When Jim DeProfio (Athletic Director of Lowell High School) stated there were 147 students signed up for football, he didn't believe the numbers. If there are 106 signed up already without even looking at the freshman students, you are bound to get 150 students. Maybe 25 to 50 students may drop off because they can't play for whatever reason. You're still going to end up with over a hundred

kids playing football. Seeing it is a violent, collision sport, you are going to need assistant coaches. Wrestling is another sport even though it is one on one; it is a contact-collision-aggressive sport. He is happy the Ski Team is back in. A lot of kids want to try to ski, but they can't afford it so he is appreciative that this sport was looked at as well. Without any disrespect to the administration or his fellow colleagues, he was going to put a **Substitute Motion** on the floor.

Mr. Leary moved for a **Substitute Motion**:

To add an additional **\$20,000** to the recommended budget of **\$176,668** for a total value of **\$196,668**, and for the administration to use that **\$20,000** to go through and add assistant coaches where safety issues need to be; seconded by Mr. Leahy.

Mr. Leary stated that his explanation was that with the \$362,000 monies carried over from last year and the recommended numbers from the administration that is \$207,000 rounded. Reducing that by \$20,000 leaves \$187,000 in additional funds. They still do have issues with clubs and library media specialists, whom we have asked for a recommendation from the administration on how to deal going forward with that. There have been cuts to the sports programs. We have to sit down with our unions and look at the salary structures and the inequities seeing that this is a contract year. At this point given the safety issues, given the fact that some of the JV (Junior Varsity) programs might be in jeopardy; we need to add additional funds to do that. He feels strongly that crew needs to have an additional coach. In football too where you have a hundred kids running into each other and a new football coach. There is no way that coach is going to know all the kids on the football field the first few months. With 33 concussions last year alone, it means you need that supervision. Volunteers are good, but you need people on the payroll so if we do get into potential issues we have defense for the City Solicitor if we have issues to defend.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that she does have to follow-up with Committeewoman Martin's concerns with regards to the liability exposure. That is the first time (at the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting prior to this regular School Committee meeting) that she and Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations learned that there were over 30 concussions in football last year. She did not appreciate the football coach bringing that on the floor without her and her administration having any prior knowledge of it. The report in front of the Committee tonight states that some programs are not funded to what they need to be, and other programs need to be cut so that we adequately support programs so these issues don't come to the floor. For example, if the football coach is telling us as a body that there are safety concerns, that there are concussions (she personally doesn't know a lot about football), but she can't ignore what the football coach said to us and bring forward this recommendation without asking for

1. either a cut within the present budget, and fully fund football to the safety levels that the experts say
2. have the football coach sign off on a statement saying that the staffing is at a safety level

If we don't have that, this Committee and this administration are exposing themselves to a lawsuit position. Safety of students needs to come first. We are responsible to make sure safety is first and foremost. That may mean, as Ms. Laraba said, that we cap the number of players on the football team. That is an option. She would like some discussion around this particular point to find what our options are. The first thing she is doing tomorrow is to have a conversation with the Athletics Department on the comments that were said here tonight, and what we are planning to do to address them. If Mr. Leary's **Substitute Motion** goes forward, and we can have 20 extra children, fine. How many children can we safely coach? That is really what we have to wrestle with now.

Ms. Laraba thanked the Superintendent for stating things so plain. She stated that she had a problem with throwing a number out of thin air without stating what that number would do. Why not say \$30,000 or \$40,000? As she has stated before, you cannot hold the Athletic Department harmless. It is up to them to look at their budget line and try to reduce it, or look at the possibility of capping the program if needed. We have cut teachers, we have cut librarians, we have cut all over the place, and to just throw another number out in the air she feels is irresponsible. You can't just throw a number out there without knowing what that number means. She cannot support the **Substitute Motion**, but she will support the main motion.

Mr. Conway stated that he didn't think the **Substitute Motion** was irresponsible. As Committee members they listened to speakers that came before them (at the Joint Athletics and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting, prior to this meeting). After the football coach spoke, there was obviously a concern knowing that we have trimmed that coaching staff down to 4 coaches instead of the 6 or 7 that they have had. That right there constitutes the thought of bringing in additional money to fill that void. He wanted to remind the Committee that when he hears 31 or 33 concussions last year in football, that was with a larger staff than the proposed staff for this year. He was going to support Mr. Leary's **Substitute Motion**.

Ms. Martin stated that she could appreciate the Superintendent's concern. To hear at a public meeting for the first time is unfortunate, because we have been having these conversations for several months. She understands that there have been changes in personnel, and a lot has been going on. They are past the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. They are well past the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and, again, without adequate information this Committee is being asked to make decisions. This is not a good environment, especially with the edge of the season having these poorly informed discussions. She thinks perhaps Ms. Laraba's suggestion of shaving down the students is one of the few options available to the Committee in the current financial situation. She realizes that can be a challenge. She also realizes that people come into these positions with certain expectations whether it is coaches, or parents, but the reality is that our situation has changed. It has been no secret in this community, and it goes far beyond the boundaries of Lowell. This was an incredibly challenging budget season where cuts were being made. It is unfair to say that we brought people on with certain expectations, and now we find ourselves in a situation where we have to make cuts. When we made the decision to cut Assistant Coaches, we weren't given the information (for example 33 concussions last year in football). Having come to the conclusion of supporting this **\$176,668**, she is not comfortable going further than that. We have to find our safety on the other side of this equation. She doesn't like the idea of more aggressive cuts or limiting the number of students, but she doesn't see any other solution. There has been absolutely no movement to save money in this area in terms of the

stipends, in terms of trying to come up with an agreement in working with our unions, or working with the individuals that are holding these positions, absolutely no movement. This Committee has moved over and over again in this athletic area. We have brought on motions with more and more money on the table, because of our sincere concern for students and the recognition of the important role athletics play. There certainly has been no movement in the middle and even in-between that. The only option that remains to the Committee is to pare down these programs to ensure the safety of students who are able to participate, and hope we can find other options for those unable to participate.

Mr. Leahy stated that he didn't even know where to begin. The report the Committee received tonight at the subcommittee (Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee Meeting prior to this regular School Committee meeting) meeting, you can tell a lot of work has been done. There is still a lot more work to be done. The seven of us sit here and have to make these decisions, and he makes his comments with respect to all parties. As was mentioned here, to start off, this has been going on for months. In his eyes no genuine effort from the teachers union (United Teachers of Lowell) who is in charge of these coaches to negotiate. Coaches have come up to him and stated that they would coach for free. Can they or can't they donate their salaries back? Can kids buy their uniforms? How can teams participate without imposing a \$200 or \$300 fee? This should have been in the discussion. There are safety issues. As he stated, the Committee has tried to negotiate salaries with this, but nothing has moved. Everybody says they want to help, but there is no plan in progress. He does support putting another \$20,000 into it. We did have a proposal from the clerks. We deferred it for the last two years. He would put the question out, what is one more year. We have heard from the administration. The administration has ideas, and you want these 5 days. Can these clerks come in and make up that time in regular time? Let's have this discussion with them. There is some money there that we can use if we wanted to. He thinks it is a shame that it all comes down to the students that have to suffer, because we as adults cannot come together. He has an article here that he pulled off of the internet today. It talks about furloughs as a thing of the past. People aren't taking furloughs anymore. They are actually taking a cut in pay to help out, to save jobs, to save programs. That's where we are now. He thinks it is a shame, because they are in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour trying to do this. The kids are suffering. He thought the initial motion was great. Mr. Leahy's **Substitute Motion** adds another \$20,000. This could be the clerks' donation, or it could come from another thing. This should be done. It should have been done today. Coaches should have talked to the administration. The Athletic Director should have conveyed information to Assistant Superintendent Lang who worked so hard on this (Lowell High School Athletics, clubs and Activities report). Maybe we can tweak this and pull another 20 grand out of these numbers who knows? As Ms. Martin brought up there are safety issues. We have to find ways to do this even if we do not get cooperation from the unions.

Ms. Doherty stated that she would not support throwing more money at this without a plan. She agrees with what her colleague on the left has stated. If we cannot do the sports safely that we are thinking of putting back in, then we have to cap the sport. Perhaps we have to look at eliminating, and she would hate to go that route. She is sitting here tonight remembering the passionate speeches the Committee heard when we had to cut librarians. She remembers last year's speeches over class sizes at the high school. We had dance students coming up telling the Committee how much dance meant to them. We have consistently made very painful cuts, and this year on top of last year was

very difficult. Paraprofessionals are out of our elementary classrooms. When we talk about money coming in from the Charter School whatever that amount is, let's not forget that money is accompanied by the children who are going to come here. These children are going to have needs. Children who have to be taught and many of them are going to be below grade level and will need additional support. That is our core responsibility. She was an athletic kid when she went to high school. She has two children at the high school this coming year, and they both will be involved in sports and clubs. She definitely values the role they are playing, but their core mission is instruction. When we look at stipends that are above industry standards in the context of the cuts we have made, it is enough to reinstate the **\$176,668** right now. We have a lot more to look at. We have a year to go over the programs, look at the way the money is being spent, and how we are using the *Friends of Lowell High School* funds. Maybe we should be looking at less athletic scholarships and more at actually funding the programs. The ultimate issue of safety and what Ms. Martin had said earlier that was brought up by a coach (Head Football Coach). Whether it is a librarian near to tears telling us how important librarians are to kids and their education, or a coach talking about the sport he loves, people are standing and fighting for their job or area. She doesn't doubt the comments that were made by the football coach, but she needs a report. What are the safety standards not only for football, but for all our sports? If we need to rethink those programs, then we'll do it. To just add another \$20,000 now, we are getting this from other programs. The **\$176,668** we are getting is being taken from other programs. It is being taken from books, computers, and technology. That is where we are getting this money. We're not sitting on a large pile of dough. It is a very painful decision. We need to work with our staff. We need to work at the table as Mr. Leahy stated to find solutions. The solution is not to keep throwing money at it. That is not a solution. She knows it was commented earlier that they have equity. She doesn't feel that confident about equity. There are 18 offerings for boys, 17 offerings for girls. We are spending \$125,000 more on boy sports than on girls. There is a lot to be done in the next year. Tonight she was going to support the recommendation that was brought forth by the administration that would keep our sports program intact, and we have to look very carefully at the safety issue to know what our next move needs to be.

Mr. Leahy stated that as far as equity, he has a daughter that played three sports in high school and again in college. He would defend girls' sports over boys' sports. They should have that under Title IX, equal amount of money as the boys. He thought they did. Crew Team is an item that is not properly funded. There should be more coaches for the Crew Team. He respects Ms. Martin tremendously, but he thinks they should be adding sports and clubs. A lot of kids would like to make a team, but they are not good enough to make a team, because there are not a lot of spots. When you have 147 kids on a football team, 86 in crew, and 100 in track; they are not all participating at the same time. That is a fact. He thinks they should be trying to increase sports and clubs. As far as the Library Media Specialists, that was a terribly vote. Mr. Leahy and he have been proactive in having administration come up with a plan to bring a lot of those positions back. As far as being irresponsible money out of the air, he could easily do this himself. In his own opinion he would add one maybe two football coaches; at least one more crew coach. He wasn't trying to be disrespectful to the Committee and the efforts put into the report by Assistant Superintendent Lang. The reality is that some of these sports require more supervision, because of the pure numbers and the actual athletic events taking place. There are a lot of inequities that he has not mentioned, the Lacrosse Team. Why don't we have a freshman Lacrosse Team for both boys and girls? We have it

for baseball. You would have a lot of freshman kids trying out for a Lacrosse Team. We cannot solve those issues today. He thanks the administration for putting **\$176,668** into the sports program, but he doesn't want to be called irresponsible by people. He is not irresponsible. This is something that means a lot. We do have the funds in certain areas to do it. We are not overlooking teachers. We are not overlooking instruction. Luckily this is what keeps a lot of kids in school and keeps them coming to Lowell High School. Again, if his colleagues don't want to vote for his **Substitute Motion**, he respects that. The amount of **\$916,668** is a number they can salvage. To say that he got that **\$20,000** out of thin air is simply wrong and a little disrespectful. He takes exception to it.

Ms. Laraba stated that she certainly didn't mean to offend Mr. Leary. It does seem, however, that the number (\$20,000) came out of thin air. When she said, irresponsible, that was a poor choice of words, but to throw more money into sports is putting the cart before the horse. They have a Superintendent and staff who have heard about safety issues and that's the Superintendent's job to look at this. If she after looking at this finds she needs more money, it is her responsibility to come up to the Committee and say, "*We have looked at this situation. The coaches have brought up safety issues. We realize we didn't look at this critically the first time around, and we have to make adjustments.*" For us (the Committee) to quarterback it based on comments that were made, she does not feel it is the right thing to do. In terms of accepting the clerical unions offer, she thinks it is unfortunate to be brought up here (on the Committee floor). They have already discussed that offer. The administration has already said that they felt it was important to have those people in place, in school those times. We as a group (Committee) supported that decision and did not accept the offer from them that they would not work. The decision was made that we need them. Certainly if they want to donate that time, that would be wonderful, but you can't make somebody work for free. To bring this up now at a last minute conversation, she felt was not being supportive of the administration, especially when they have had that conversation many times. She has already stated that she would not support the \$20,000 more. If the Superintendent after looking at this situation cannot find cuts and finds that it is not feasible to make caps, we can bring this discussion up again. As Ms. Martin has said, this has been discussed over and over again for many months. The Athletic Department cannot be held harmless, but she certainly doesn't want to have any safety issues. She is not comfortable with throwing more money back in.

Mr. Conway moved:

To move the question; seconded by Mr. Leary. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

**For the record**, the **Substitute Motion** by Mr. Leary is now on the floor, which reads as follows:

To add an additional **\$20,000** to the recommended budget of **\$176,668** for a total value of **\$196,668**, and **for** the administration to use that **\$20,000** to go through and add assistant coaches where safety issues need to be; seconded by Mr. Leahy. On roll call the votes were: Ms. Martin, no; Mayor Milinazzo, no; Mr. Conway, yes; Ms. Doherty, no; Ms. Laraba, no; Mr. Leahy, yes and Mr. Leary, yes. Three yeas; four nays. **Substitute Motion DEFEATED**

**For the record**, the original motion by Ms. Doherty is now on the floor, which reads as follows:

That the Committee as a Whole accept the recommendation of the Joint Athletic and Lowell High School Subcommittee to restore **\$176,668** into the Athletics Line Item in the FY2011 Lowell School Department Budget; seconded by Ms. Laraba. Unanimously approved on roll call. **Original Motion APPROVED**

Mayor Milinazzo stated **for clarification**, that the amount was **\$176,668**.

The Chair acknowledged Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent.

Superintendent Scott stated that the recommendation embedded in this report (Lowell High School Athletics, Clubs and Activities report from Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations) clearly states that if we have determined that a sport at the present recommendation cannot be fully supported, then we recommend the elimination of another team so the teams that are operating can operate within the safety zone within the proper parameters. We did hear for the first time this evening from the football coach (Head Football Coach) that has clearly put us on notice that we are liable with these present staffing levels. With these present staffing levels that are in this report, she is left operationally to go forward doing two things:

1. to reduce the enrollment operationally
  - a. as suggested by Ms. Martin and Ms. Laraba

These staffing levels for the football team have just been voted in for that amount of money. Tomorrow morning she will speak with the Athletic Director (Jim DeProfio) and ask him to please ensure that the enrollment for that team (football team) is at safety levels. That is what she will do based on this conversation tonight. She knows the crew issue has come up, but again she has had that conversation again tonight with the Athletic Director that safety was not a concern when it came up on that particular unit. But when safety issues are brought to her attention, it is her responsibility to take a stand with you (the Committee) and say, "*Hey, we have to address this issue.*" The other option as she sees it is the recommendation in this particular proposal is:

2. to look at the most expensive sport and make a cut
  - a. so the programs we do offer, we know we are operating them safely

Those are her two options and she just wanted to be clear with the Committee, because she knows this is a sensitive issue. She knows that there are going to be a lot of people with different opinions. She wanted feedback.

Ms. Martin stated that she would make the recommendation and certainly would appreciate any feedback from her colleagues as well. Based on what the Committee has heard tonight, and based on where they find themselves right now, her recommendation would be:

1. To have the Superintendent go back to the Athletic Director to find volunteer coaches or other monies.

2. If there is no solution and if that support does not meet safety criteria options, pair down the team to the level of the coaches.

Ms. Martin stated that we all know how generous this community is and how strong the support is for our athletic teams. We have been bombarded by so many people who have been vested and want to be part of the solution. The Athletic Director has stated that there is cause for optimism. If we can get volunteers to fill some of these positions whether it is parents or sports people who just want to be part of the solution. She can see that as a viable solution and wants to put it forth as a motion.

Ms. Martin moved:

Have the Superintendent go back to the Athletic Director:

1. to find volunteer coaches or other money
2. if there is no solution and that sport does not meet safety criteria, the option is:
  - a. to pare down the team to the level of the coaches

Motion was seconded by Mr. Leahy.

In discussion, Mr. Leahy stated that he wanted to speak before Ms. Martin made her motion. He didn't even know what her motion was. We just voted to add money back in, but if there is going to be safety issues, we are not going to have any programs. We trimmed all our staffing levels down over the last few years so I just heard we are not going to have football, cross country, crew; what does that mean?

Mayor Milinazzo stated to Mr. Leahy that the Superintendent was going to meet with Jim DeProfio (Athletic Director) tomorrow. The fact that this money has been put back into the Athletic budget, we need clearances from the Athletic Director that the safety of the students is paramount. It might be a cutting down from 147 football players to 130 football players because of not enough assistant coaches. The Superintendent will bring back a recommendation to the Committee.

Mr. Leahy stated that he thinks that is wrong. That is his opinion. No one needs to tell him that a hundred kids on the river with two coaches isn't safe. He knows it is not safe. It is so frustrating! It blows his mind that we are sitting here talking about this when we are trying to do something good here.

Ms. Doherty stated that she wanted to throw her two cents into this. As distasteful as it is to think about limiting the number of students who can go out for a particular sport, she would prefer that route to eliminating the entire sport. She would prefer keeping all our offerings intact and just reducing the numbers. The two teams we are concerned about safety is football, because the football coach (Head Coach) brought it up and crew, because we are aware that we have 86 children on the river. She does think the safety issue needs to be cleared up right away. If we

are looking at options, she prefers to limit the number of enrollment in a sport than eliminating a sport at this point.

Mr. Conway stated that one statement was made tonight and all of a sudden we have a knee-jerk reaction. We are talking about capping students and eliminating sports, because one statement was made. Before we jump to any conclusions, we have to take a step back and as the Superintendent said, she'll be sitting down with the Athletic Director, but he would include the Headmaster (Edward J. Rozmiarek) and the City Solicitor (Christine O'Connor). Let's have the City Solicitor do some research on this. He thinks also what they need to do is to take some comparisons in nearby cities and towns to find out what the ratio they might have in their athletic programs and see if we are off. He thinks when we take a look at surrounding cities and towns; we are not going to be far off at all. We'll probably be right in line, but that is guesswork on his part. Let's get all the figures and facts in front of us, and then we can go from there.

Ms. Laraba stated that just to make the party bigger have the coaches be part of the conversation. Mr. Zacharer (Christopher Zacharer, Ski Coach) mentioned that he had ways to save money in his budget line. His point was that if you cut the Ski Team, it is gone for several years (if not forever). Have the conversations with the coaches and say, "Your budget is thousands of dollars, how can you cut it?" A discussion on the coaches' salaries, but not only the coaches' salaries, but their equipment. Try to work some ways to save some money. They are the ones who are dealing with this day-to-day. They would have those kinds of ideas.

Ms. Doherty stated that kind of recommendation is something we will be discussing all through the year. In terms of the safety issue upfront, I should think the first thing is to have the Athletic Director check with the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) on what are the guidelines. We have been playing Lowell High School football for many years. She is sure they have information. As her colleague on the right stated, "*Perhaps it isn't as out of whack as we were lead to believe by one statement.*" She just thinks we need more information. She hopes this gives the Superintendent more information as to where we are coming from as far as the safety issue is concerned.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that, again, she cannot overstate the fact. She cannot have a Head Coach from the football team come and make the statement that over 30 children received concussions last year. A coach saying because of the staffing level by this administration, by this proposal; we are putting children at risk for concussions and her, as Superintendent, not making an issue of this on the floor tonight. It is not just a fact. It puts us all and children in harm's way. We take that safety issue very seriously. She appreciates Ms. Martin's motion. She thinks this is a good way to go forward. She does think to fund it at its optimal level will not bring people to the table to creatively think about how we are going to fund these programs that we can no longer afford. We can only, based on safety standards, your point Ms. Doherty, and there are standards out there. When we do surveys with other towns, which we have already done for stipends and others, you will find that our teams are more heavily staffed than other towns, but we can bring that information forward as well. Even at these levels the safety issue tonight, quite frankly, she did not appreciate nor the Committee, these comments on the Committee floor. Safety is first and foremost for all of us in this room for

our students. If it was an approach to assure that team got everything it needed, it really has us over a barrel, because it does require us, and we will make sure our staffing levels for football are at industry standards and our children are safe. To do that, if we can afford a hundred children to play football, it will be a hundred. The reason she likes that particular formula, because that will encourage, in fact if they want more children to play, have the booster clubs fundraise for the additional coaches. That is what we have to do in the context of cutting millions of dollars out of our classrooms across the board. They have the fundraising arm that our chemistry teacher does not have, that our English teacher does not have, that these booster clubs do. She thinks we should leave a margin of, *“Let the community rise to the occasion the best that they can.”* We need to go forward to fund these programs. She wanted to make it clear, *“I do not think the Committee is overly concerned or over-reacting to the comments of the Head Football Coach tonight.”*

Mayor Milinazzo called for a roll call vote on Ms. Martin’s motion.

**For the record**, Ms. Martin’s motion reads as follows:

Have the Superintendent go back to the Athletic Director:

1. to find volunteer coaches or other money
2. if there is no solution and that sport does not meet safety criteria, the option is:
  - a. to pare down the team to the level of the coaches

Motion was seconded by Mr. Leary. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, stated that they were not going to handle the clubs at the high school tonight. That will be deferred until another night when he receives more information. The memo (entitled, *Lowell High School Athletics, Clubs and Activities*) he provided to the Committee tonight, on page 4 under **Clubs and Activities at Lowell High School**, he recommended that the Committee take his two recommended actions prior to their adjournment.

Mr. Leary moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Lang to transfer the line item within the Lowell Public Schools Fiscal Year 2011 Budget of **\$72,845** for Student Activity Advisor Stipends to the Lowell School Committee Suspense Account; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Lang to request a report and recommendations from the staff at Lowell High School detailing each club/activity for the 2009-2010 school year. Information within the report should include the following:

- name of club
- club advisor
- stipend paid
- purpose of the club/activity
- number of club/activity participants
  - overall number of members as well as actual participation rates for meeting/events
- schedule of times club/activity met
- outcome of meetings/product(s)
- annual report submitted by club advisor documenting:
  - activities/participation/effectiveness
- if students are required to pay dues (added by Ms. Doherty)

Ms. Doherty's motions was seconded by Mr. Leary. Unanimously approved on roll call.

APPROVED

Mr. Conway moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Lang to convene a meeting of the Lowell High School Subcommittee to review the report and recommendations prepared by the Lowell High School staff during the month of August and consider formal action with regard to funding the various clubs and activities at the September 1, 2010 Lowell School Committee Meeting; seconded by Ms. Martin. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

**ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Martin moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Leary. This meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

CAS: jms

Enclosures