

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
100 MAPLE AVENUE  
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS  
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP  
December 9, 2020**

**School Committee Workshop meeting opened at 6:02 PM.**

**Present:** Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; and Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources.

**Agenda items**

**State Budget Update**

Mr. Collins provided an update regarding the State Budget. Current projections are what was expected from August Town Meeting. No difference in Chapter 70 aid. One key change helpful to schools - New COVID grant program “one time COVID 19 response remote learning” to be distributed to schools - \$25 per capita, \$75 per student for those qualifying for free & reduced lunch. This translates into \$220K for Shrewsbury in form of a grant - won’t come in as general aid to the town. This will be in the form of allocation by district that SPS needs to apply for and advise how the money will be spent. Funding assumed to be good to end of current FY (June 30). We will know more by early January. This funding will be helpful to pay for COVID expenses - January 1 to June 30. This is restricted money for COVID-related expenses only. Federal - \$1.39M - must be spent by December 30, 2020, unless extended by the Federal Government. Circuit Breaker - level - dead even projection.

**Five year budget projection review**

Mr. Collins presented financial projections for Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) and the town over the next five years. Town Manager projects town wide deficit for the next five years. Reviewed history of SPS budget & town appropriations and future projections based on history, factoring in known and upcoming major costs or expectations into projections. Mr. Collins reviewed several Budget Projection Models for School Committee to understand the impact of town deficit on school budget. The committee & Central Office discussed mitigation strategy to off-set future budget deficits, including options available for increasing fiscal resources.

**Communication strategy re: FY 22 - structural and opening new Beal**

The School Committee discussed messaging to the public regarding school budget challenges for FY 22. What’s the message, and when and how we communicate these challenges, will be addressed at a future School Committee meeting. Mrs. Fryc encouraged transparency and Mr. Palitsch encouraged that we begin communicating as soon as possible, versus later. Dr. Sawyer suggested beginning these public discussions right after the new year given the likely impact on morale and the sense that the public will not be paying much attention just prior to the holidays. The committee discussed focusing a future meeting around revenue and other budget impact issues that the community needs to think about. Also discussed was community outreach through PTO Meetings. The overall consensus is that opening the new Beal School with adequate staffing is a key priority in FY 22 and any risk to that priority must be called

out as soon as possible. The committee discussed sending a budget summary letter to the Board of Selectmen to raise these concerns and communicate projections. As a result, on a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the School Committee voted unanimously to authorize Ms. Fryc to send a summary letter.

**Next Meeting**

The Committee discussed moving the January 13, 2020 Budget Workshop date to Tuesday, January 19.

**Motion to adjourn to Executive Session:** Mr. Palitsch; second: Mr. Wensky. Roll call: Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; and Ms. Heffernan, yes. The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 7:32pm.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; and Ms. Heffernan, yes.

**Minutes submitted by:** Mr. Wensky.

**Documents Referenced:** Budget Workshop Slide Presentation