



**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**May 27, 2020
7:00 pm**

**Town Hall -100 Maple Avenue
Selectmen's Meeting Room**



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

May 27, 2020 7:00pm
Virtual Meeting

THIS MEETING IS NOT OPEN TO PHYSICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC. TOWN HALL IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. IF AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION FOR THE PUBLIC BECOMES AVAILABLE WE WILL PUBLISH THAT INFORMATION SEPARATELY.

On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing.

The Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. "Adequate, alternative means" may include, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time. A municipal public body that for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts is unable to provide alternative means of public access in real time may instead post on its municipal website a full and complete transcript, recording, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as practicable afterwards.

In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Items

Suggested time allotments

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| I. | Public Participation | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">7:00-7:10</div> |
| II. | Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports | |
| III. | Superintendent's Report | |
| IV. | Time Scheduled Appointments: | |
| | A. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School Closure: Report | 7:10 – 7:25 |
| | B. Safer Schools Grant: Vote | 7:25 – 7:35 |
| V. | Curriculum | |
| VI. | Policy | |
| | A. Resolution Regarding Federal Funding for Public Education to Address Financial Impact of the Pandemic: Vote | 7:35 – 7:45 |



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

- VII. Finance & Operations
- A. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Status Update: Report 7:45 – 8:15
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. Approval of Minutes 8:15 – 8:20
- XI. Executive Session 8:20 – 9:00
- A. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) "[t]o discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual." ("Purpose 1") – Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Patrick Higgins.
- B. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" ("Purpose 7"), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.
- C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares" ("Purpose 3") - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, and/or the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association.
- XII. Adjournment 9:00

Next regular meeting: June 3, 2020



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear thoughts and ideas from the public regarding the operations and the programs of the school system?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Copies of the policy and procedure for Public Participation are available to the public at each School Committee meeting.

ITEM NO: II. Chairperson's Report/Members' Reports

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from the Chairperson of the School Committee and other members of the School Committee who may wish to comment on school affairs?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee to comment on school affairs that are of interest to the community.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

School Committee Members
Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson
Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson
Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Committee Member
Mr. Jason Palitsch, Committee Member

ITEM NO: III. Superintendent's Report

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item allows the Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools to comment informally on the programs and activities of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

ACTION RECOMMENDED FOR ITEMS I, II, & III:

That the School Committee accept the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:** MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**
**A. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School
Closure: Report**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer and other district administrators will provide an update on how the school district's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic school closure has evolved during the past two weeks.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.

MEMBERS & STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Other district administrators as needed



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:
B. Safer Schools Grant: Vote

MEETING DATE: 5/27/20

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In February 2020, Governor Baker's Administration announced a second round competitive grant program to improve school safety. In the first round, Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) obtained \$70,000 to replace and upgrade the Shrewsbury High School public address system. In the second round, SPS applied for, and was awarded, \$50,000 for a replacement emergency communications/public address system for Floral Street School. Contingent upon the Committee's acceptance, the system will be installed in June 2020.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to accept the \$50,000 Safer Schools Competitive Grant and use such funds for their intended purpose of improving safety and security communications at Floral Street School.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

19 May 2020

To: School Committee

Subj: RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT SAFER SCHOOLS GRANT: \$50,000

Background

In February 2020, the Governor Baker Administration announced a second round competitive grant program to improve school safety. We were successful in the first round in obtaining \$70,000 to replace and upgrade the Shrewsbury High School public address [PA] system and that work was completed last October 2019.

In the second round, we applied for a replacement emergency communications/public address system for Floral Street School. This is the same system that has already been installed at Parker Road Preschool, Coolidge School, Spring Street School, Paton School, Oak Middle School, and Shrewsbury High School. The system has the capability of placing the entire school into lockdown via the PA system with a push of button. That lockdown button broadcasts a pre-recorded lockdown message from the school principal and simultaneously notifies by text and email the School Resource Officers, Central Office administrators, all building principals that the school has gone into lockdown mode. Additionally, there is a web-based interface that allows Central Office staff to remotely [from our office] place one or more schools into lockdown mode if we have information that would warrant such action.

As we all know, in the event of an emergency seconds count in terms of the effectiveness of a response. This system shortens the time and allows multiple staff at each school to initiate a lockdown and notify multiple people simultaneously.

Process

We completed the application in March 2020 and provided supporting documentation to justify our request. We showed the state that we had been installing this system over time in all of our schools but had not done so yet at Floral Street School due to lack of budget resources. The total cost of equipment, installation, and training is \$50,000. We were pleased to receive news in mid April that we had been awarded our full request of \$50,000. Contingent upon your acceptance, we plan to install the system this coming June 2020. This will afford us the time to receive funds, order equipment, and coordinate an orderly installation with no disruption to school operations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the School Committee vote to accept the funds using the following motion:

"I move that the Committee accept the \$50,000 Safer Schools Competitive Grant and use such funds for their intended purpose of improving safety and security communications at Floral Street School."



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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 23, 2020

Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent
Shrewsbury Public Schools
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Dear Superintendent Sawyer:

Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that the **Shrewsbury Public Schools** has been awarded **\$50,000.00** for the Safer Schools and Communities "*Local Equipment and Technology*" grant opportunity offered by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research (OGR).

Additional correspondence, including all the necessary documents required to make this award official will be forthcoming from OGR.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Emily Fontaine, Program Coordinator, at Emily.Fontaine@mass.gov or 617-725-3313.

Once again, congratulations on your award and we look forward to working with you and your community on this important public safety initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles D. Baker".

Governor Charles D. Baker

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karyn E. Polito".

Lieutenant Governor Karyn E. Polito



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

**A. Resolution Regarding Federal Funding for Public Education to Address
Financial Impact of the Pandemic: Vote**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the meeting on May 13 Ms. Fryc advised she had drafted a resolution advocating for additional federal education funding for public schools to address the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was provided to the Committee for their review in anticipation of a potential future vote. Tonight, the Committee will have an opportunity to vote to approve the enclosed draft resolution.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to approve the draft Shrewsbury School Committee Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education dated May 13, 2020, and to provide a copy of this resolution to the district's federal congressional delegation.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chair

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

May 13, 2020

**SHREWSBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED
FEDERAL SUPPORT AND STIMULUS FUNDING FOR PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental and unprecedented challenge, emerging quickly and demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country; and

WHEREAS, the nation's public schools remain committed to delivering high-quality instruction while ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff; and

WHEREAS, to date the 872 employees of the Shrewsbury Public Schools have worked around the clock to continue to provide our 6,251 SPS students and families with access to remote learning, iPads, Wi-Fi, and other educational needs, as well as distributing meals; and

WHEREAS, the Shrewsbury Public Schools and the Town of Shrewsbury have maintained payroll for over 872 full and part-time district employees, providing stability to our community during economic uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, these challenges will persist and likely grow as COVID-19 affects our economy and destabilizes funding for public schools; and

WHEREAS, reputable economists have predicted the end of the nation's economic expansion and forecast a recession that may be deep and long-lasting; and

WHEREAS, the numbers of unemployment claims are already the highest we have seen since the Great Depression and may only grow; and

WHEREAS, public school systems are facing difficult decisions about how to allocate dwindling financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services for students and families over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, revenue shortfalls will unequivocally result in budget cuts and personnel reductions in public school systems;

WHEREAS, these budget cuts will be happening at the same time that public school systems will be working to address the immense instructional challenge of unfinished learning that many students will face coming out of this school year; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT (ARRA) of 2009 provided

\$100 billion in education funding with investments in both the education stabilization fund and various federal categorical programs for public schools, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, Congress followed ARRA in 2010 with \$10 billion in additional funding for the Education Jobs Fund to help school districts retain existing employees, recall former employees, and hire new ones; and

WHEREAS, by comparison the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides only \$13 billion for education stabilization funding, which is less than half of one percent of the total \$2.2 trillion relief provided in the CARES Act and is far below the investment that the federal government provided in 2009 and 2010 in ARRA and the Education Jobs fund; and

WHEREAS, public education is one of the largest employers of any organization, public or private, in the nation; and

WHEREAS, published economic research has demonstrated a strong connection between a country's GDP growth and its investments in elementary and secondary education; and

WHEREAS, research has repeatedly found a strong causal relationship between levels of schooling and wages that individuals earn over a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, for public schools to thrive and for our students to realize a bright and productive future, the federal government needs to make a substantial new investment in our wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the National School Boards Association and others have called for some \$ 200 billion in relief for the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, this level of funding is the minimum needed by the nation's public schools to sustain and accelerate their academic achievement trends over the past decade, including gains in reading and math achievement that outpace the national average; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee join in urging the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, including our United States Senators and House of Representative members, to advocate for and approve additional federal education funding for our nation's public schools.

On roll call, the order was approved by the following vote:

Yea:

No:

Abstain:

Signatures:

Sandra M. Fryc, Chairperson

Jon Wensky, Vice Chair

B. Dale Magee, M.D., Secretary

Lynsey Heffernan

Jason Palitsch



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

A. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Status Update: Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer & Mr. Collins will present an update on the status of the FY 2021 Budget. Because of expected significant reductions in the amount of state funding that the Town of Shrewsbury will receive in FY21, and because significant funding will need to be provided to cover a variety of costs related to how schools might operate over the next school year in light of the pandemic, the district may need to reduce costs next year by approximately \$4.2 million to \$4.8 million *in addition to* the \$1.7 million reduction plan that was already planned *prior to* the coronavirus crisis.

The report will explain the magnitude of the current projections, which could result in devastating reductions in educational programming and staffing absent any mitigation of these circumstances. Potential mitigating factors (such as the actual amount of state funding for Chapter 70, Circuit Breaker, etc. or the ultimate amount of federal stimulus funding targeted for public education or local government that will be provided) are unknown at this time and will likely be unknown until later in the summer, which poses great difficulties regarding the planning for the upcoming school year.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

FY21 Budget Status Update

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent

Patrick C. Collins, Asst. Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Topics

- Revised Budget Schedule
- FY21 Budget Process Evolution
- Preliminary New Covid-19 Related Expenses to Add to Budget
- Revised FY21 Budget Gap/Deficit Range-as of May 20, 2020
 - Subject to change
- Environment of Wide Fiscal Uncertainties
 - Federal stimulus
 - State Aid
 - Local Receipts
- How to Proceed

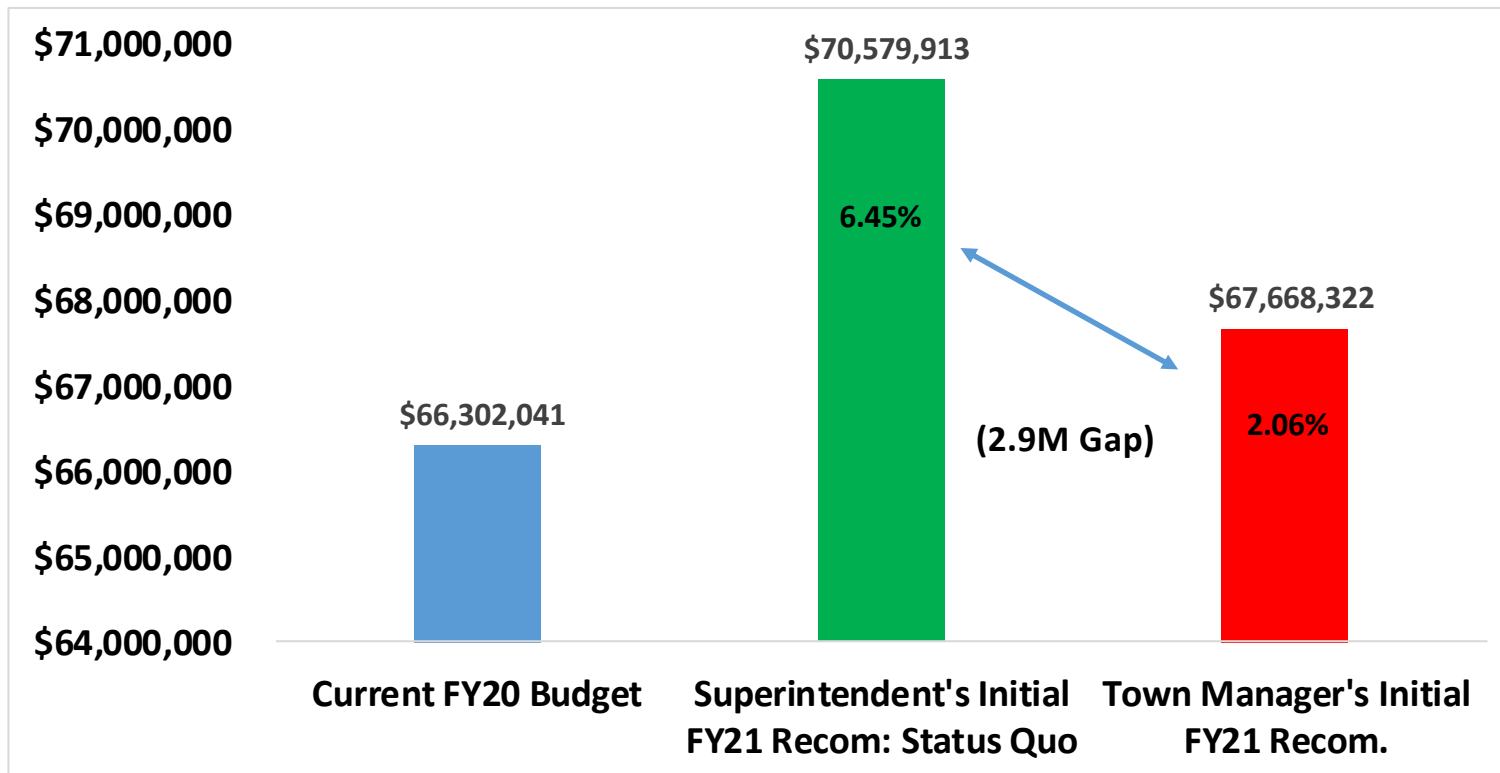
Revised Budget Schedule

- According to recent discussions amongst the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager, the Annual Town Meeting will very likely be postponed until late July or even later.
- This allows us to get more certain information regarding state aid for Shrewsbury and make a more precise and informed FY21 budget, potentially avoiding unnecessary reductions.

Revised Budget Schedule

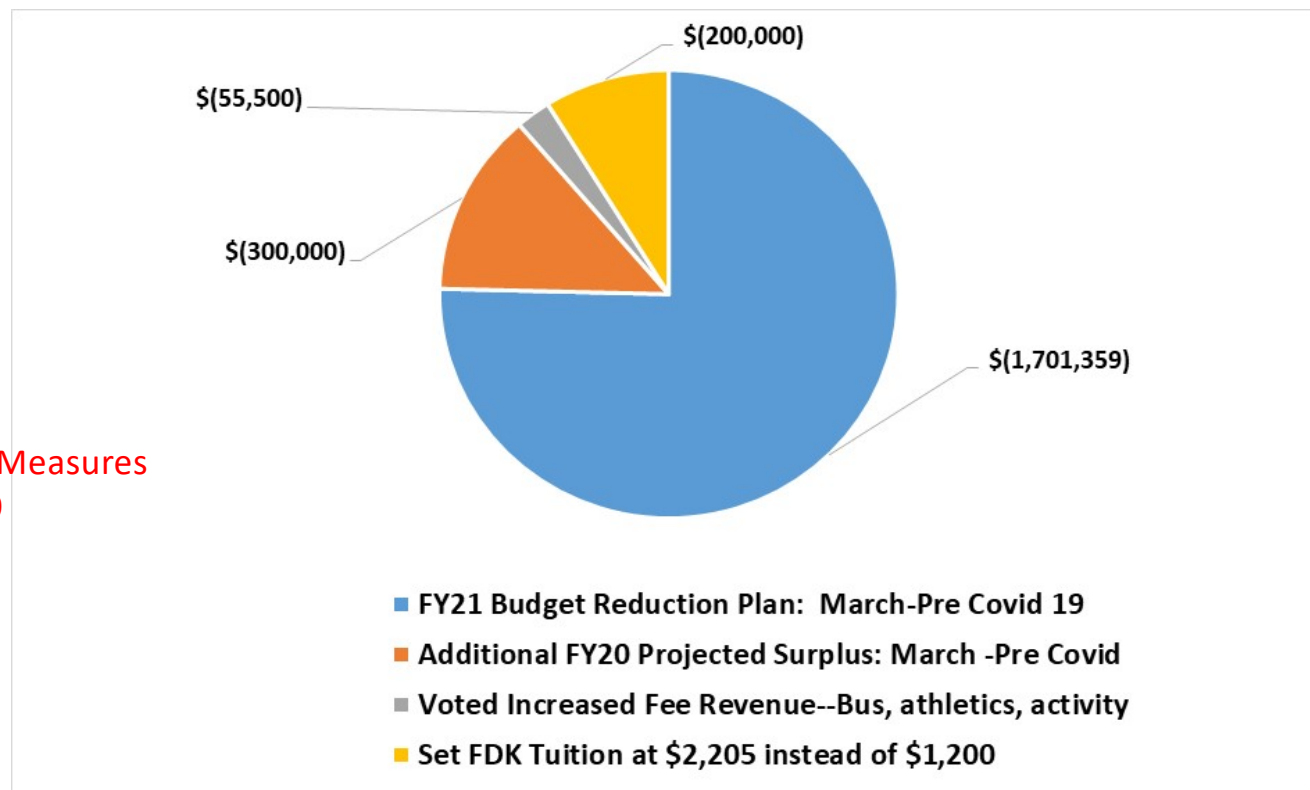
- The complication for the School Dept. is that a delayed process causes uncertainty about staffing levels for the start of the school year.
- How do we make plans for student classroom and course/schedule assignments with uncertain staffing levels?
- When do we notify staff of layoffs or furloughs? [Some level of layoffs or furloughs will be required.]

FY21 Budget Process Evolution: January 2020

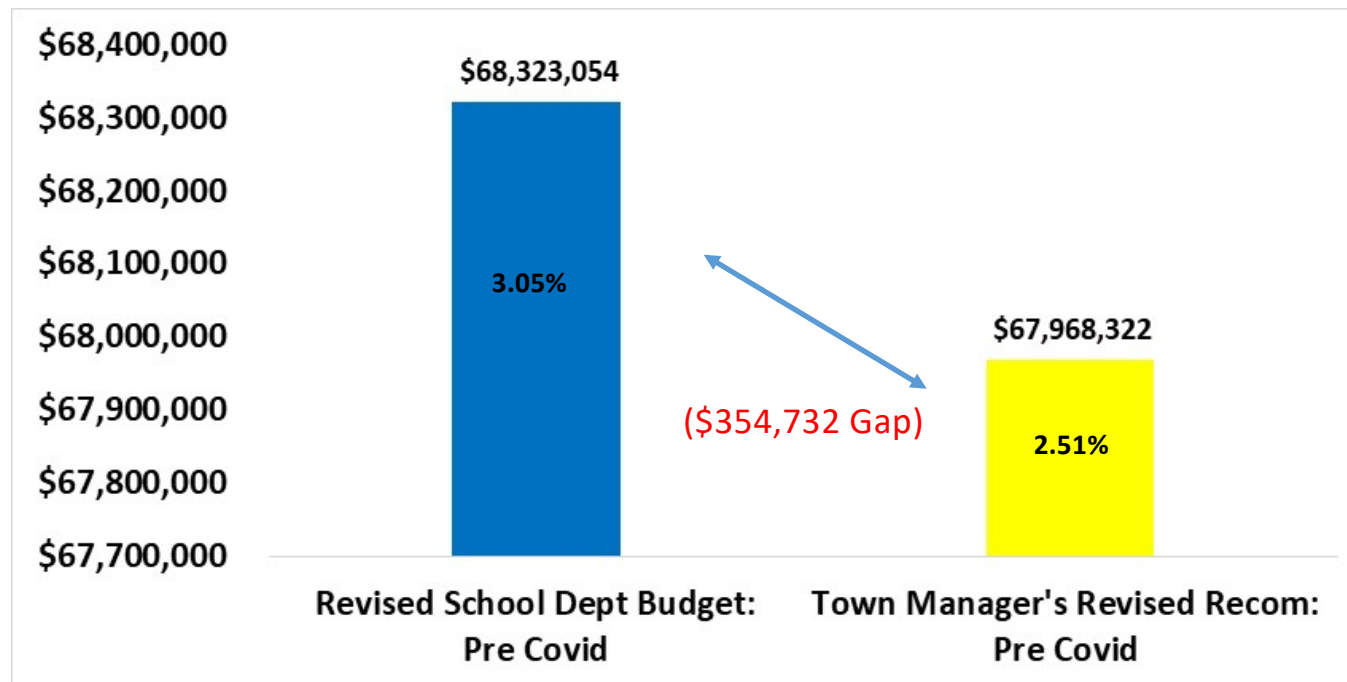


FY21 Pre-Covid Budget Reduction Plan

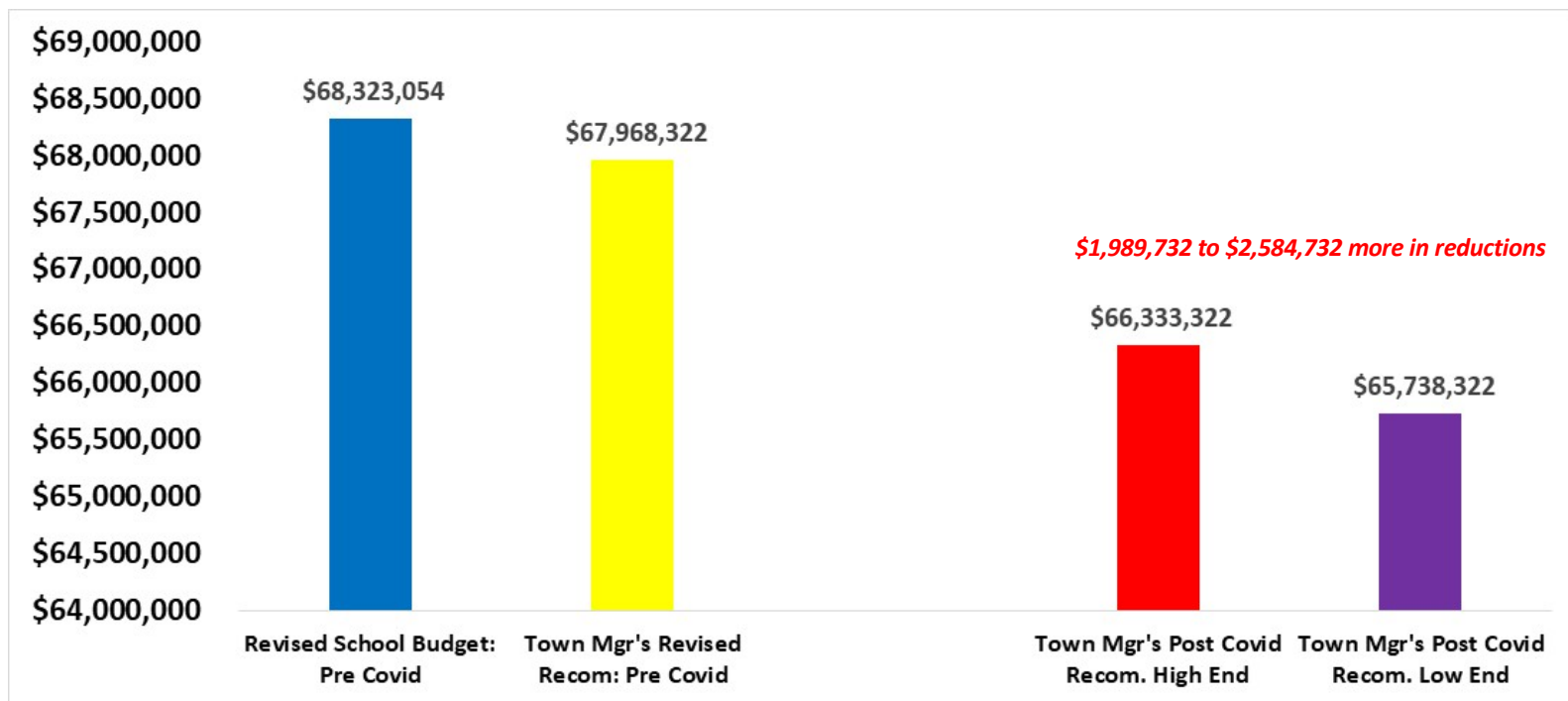
Budget Reduction Measures
totaled \$2,256,859



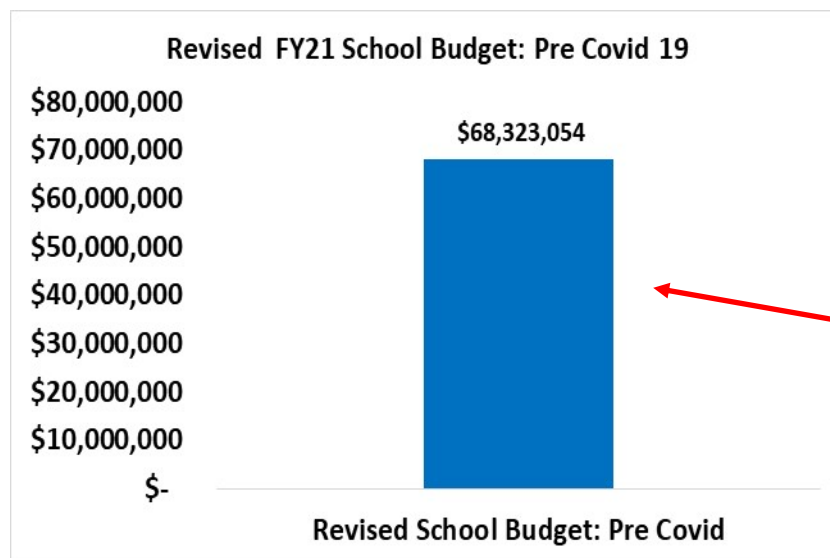
FY21 Pre Covid Revised Budget Status



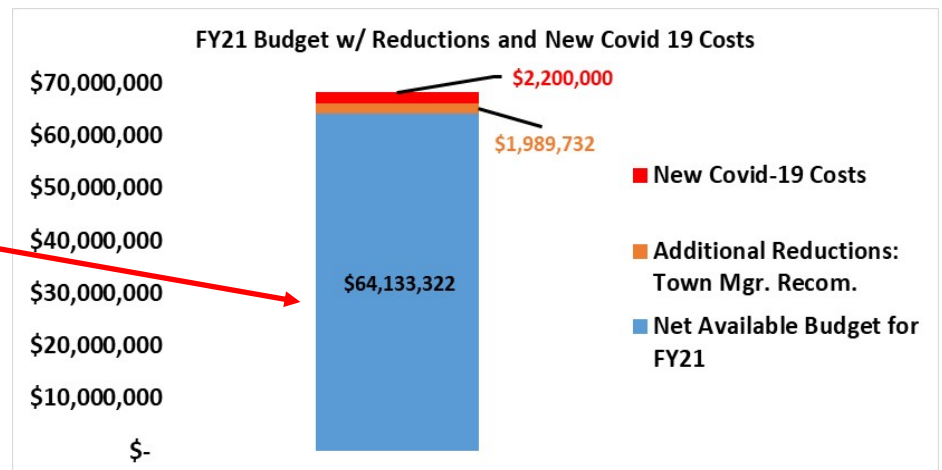
Post Covid Budget Status: More Reductions



Compounding Negative Effect: Additional Reductions and New Covid 19 Related Costs

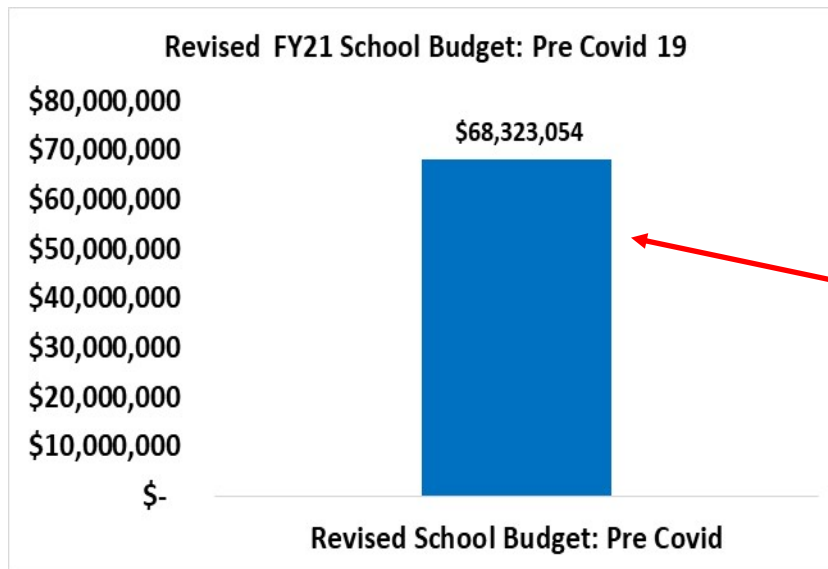


Town Mgr. "Low-end" request of \$1.9M for reduction plan.

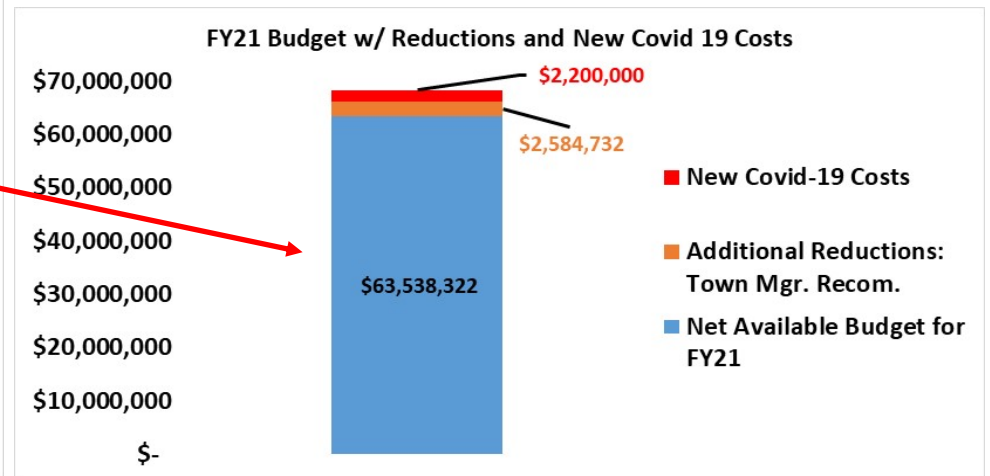


\$4.2M Net Negative Impact

Compounding Negative Effect: Additional Reductions and New Covid 19 Related Costs



Town Mgr. "High-end" request of \$2.6M for reduction plan.



\$4.8M Net Negative Impact

Revised FY21 Budget Gap/Deficit Range: as of May 20, 2020

Beyond the \$1.7M Reduction Plan and factoring additional revenue from FDK and fees we need to make further reductions.					
Low-End Gap	\$1,989,732	Based on Town Mgr. Guidance from 4.9.2020			
New Costs	\$2,200,000	See Budget Adds-caution as this could be far too low			
Updated Gap/Deficit -Low End	\$4,189,732				
Higher-End Gap	\$2,584,732	Based on Town Mgr. Guidance from 4.9.2020			
New Costs	\$2,200,000	See Budget Adds--caution as this could be far too low			
Updated Gap/Deficit-High End	\$4,784,732				

Preliminary New Covid-19 Related Expenses to Add to FY21 Budget

This is a Preliminary List That Will Definitely Change

Potential Covid-19 Related Budget Additions	Estimate	Notes
Circuit Breaker decrease	\$ 465,000	From 74% to 63% state reim =15% decrease or 11% pts
Additional LTS and Sick Time	\$ 375,000	Additional funding projected for CV-19 related absences
Special Education Services	\$ 350,000	Required to make-up for student lost learning/services
iPads for Grades 2-4	\$ 286,230	Add'l 1:1 devices needed to support future remote learning
Bus Fee Revenue decrease	\$ 187,500	25% planned reduction in fee-paying riders[\$750K to \$563K]
Vocational tuition based on Assabet acceptances	\$ 153,387	Add 9 more placements to Gr. 9 for total of 35 budgeted
Teacher salaries for FDK and Preschool teachers	\$ 125,000	Less funding on account available due to closure and refunds
Covid Supplies [Masks, shields, dividers]	\$ 100,000	Plus have CARES act funding of ~130K+-
Learning Platform Software	\$ 85,000	Provides ongoing curricul and student assessment capacity
Nursing/CNA support	\$ 50,000	Anticipates add'l medical-type services for temp. checks
Officials fees	\$ 20,000	Significant decrease in gates Receipts
Busing		Contingent on return to school CV-19 protocols, add'l busing may be required
Preliminary Estimate	\$ 2,197,117	This total ADDS to our Gap/Deficit

Environment of Wide Fiscal Uncertainties

- What will return to school look like?
- What CV-19 related requirements will be in place?
- What costs are involved in a localized outbreak in Shrewsbury?

Environment of Wide Fiscal Uncertainties

- What costs are involved in educating medically fragile students who cannot safely return to school?
- How do we cover staff absences for medically fragile staff, staff who may contract the virus, and those who have their own family sick care and/or childcare needs?
- In a regular school day there is not sufficient time or money to operate additional bus runs to accommodate social distancing, then take temperatures before the school day begins.

Environment of Wide Fiscal Uncertainties

- Because we are unable to provide any measure of certainty around these issues now or even before the budget gets approved, we need to set aside **a reserve of uncommitted funding** that is sufficient in amount to flexibly allocate when and where needed.

CARES Act- Direct Funding to Schools:

Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief [ESSER] Grant

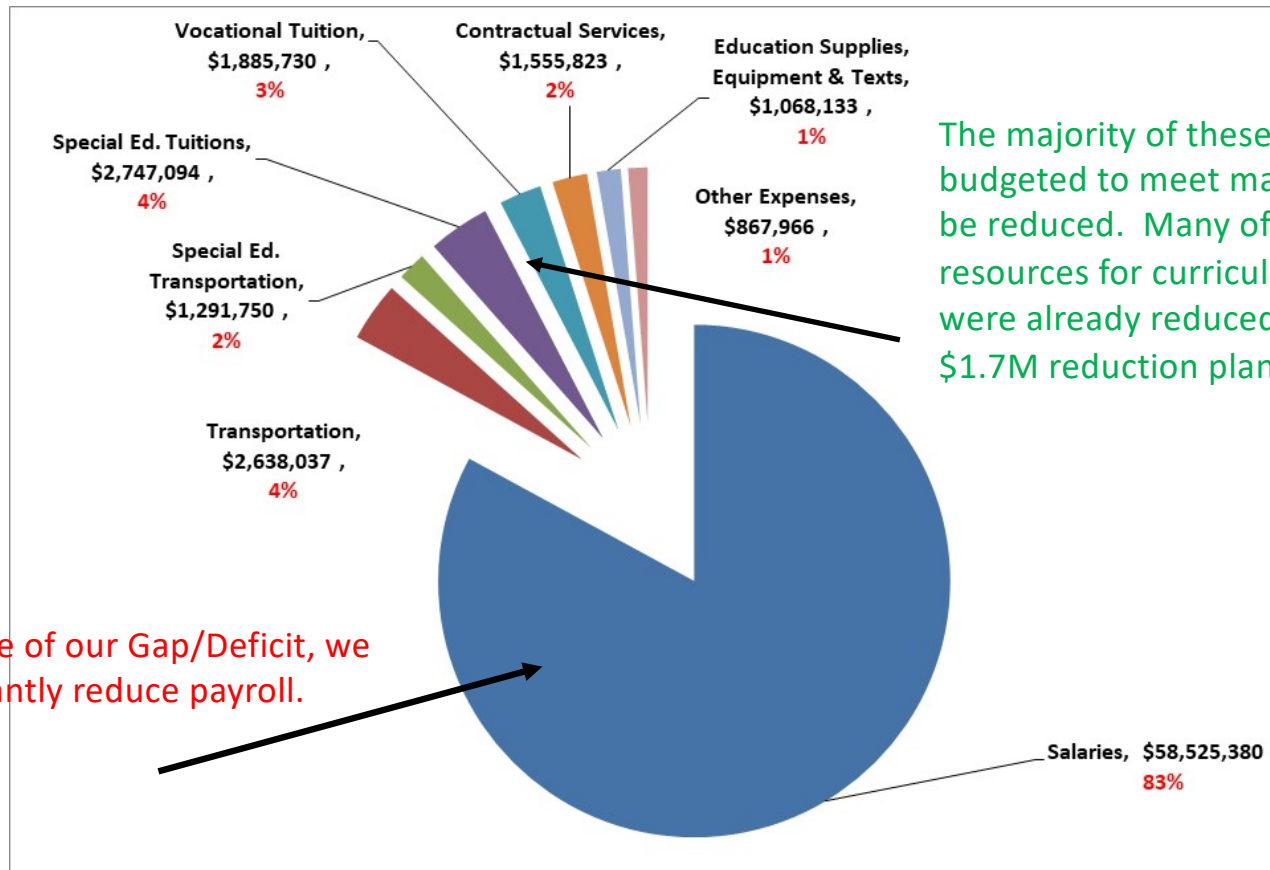
- \$13.2 Billion federal fund distributed to all school districts who are eligible for Title 1 funds via their respective state education department.
- Funds are allocated using the same formula to distribute Title 1 funds which is an assessment of number of students below the federal poverty level.
- Shrewsbury will receive \$162,060 but a **net of approximately \$133,820** since \$28,240 will go to private schools.
- Federal law requires that DESE-approved private schools receive a share of the funds on a per student basis.

CARES Act- Direct Funding to Schools:

Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief [ESSER] Grant

- Our plan now is to defer the use of the \$133,820 CARES Act/ESSER grant funds to FY21 and not specifically commit them at this point.
- While this is a **very small amount** in comparison to our overall budget of \$66-68M, it can offer some ability to respond to some smaller unforeseen costs.

How to Proceed



The majority of these other resources are budgeted to meet mandates and cannot be reduced. Many of the “discretionary” resources for curriculum and supplies were already reduced as part of the \$1.7M reduction plan.

Given the magnitude of our Gap/Deficit, we will need to significantly reduce payroll.

Administrator Salaries

- Having Dr. Lizotte serve as the Interim Paton Principal reduces our budget by \$119K by effectively not backfilling the vacancy with Ms. Bell's departure, reducing our administrative team by one position.
- Dr. Sawyer already recommended his compensation be frozen under our Pre Covid budget reduction plan.
- Recommendation to freeze all other non-union administrator compensation.

Next Steps

- We have already prepared a \$1.7M budget reduction plan that eliminated 28.6 full-time equivalent positions and reduced significant dollars for curriculum materials, school supplies, technology, and transportation.
- Additionally, we are facing another \$4.2M to \$4.8M in reductions or shifts in funding from staff and programming to Covid-19 related costs.
- The ultimate level of state funding and whether the federal government provides additional aid for public education will be critical factors. These are unknown at this time.

Next Steps

- Reducing \$4,200,000 to \$4,800,000 *in addition to the \$1.7M reduction already planned would be devastating.*
- This would be the equivalent of 65 to 75 teaching positions at an average salary of \$65,000
 - This is **NOT** our plan but is provided to give context to the order of magnitude of the budget gap.
- A second reduction plan will be presented later in the budget process.

Next Steps

- We will continue to monitor the federal and state budget processes
- We will continue to refine our reduction planning scenarios but also integrate new information and financial impacts for CV-19 return to work and school protocols
- As always, we will continue to work closely with the Town Manager to keep current on this evolving situation. We know all MA communities will be eligible for CARES Act funding/reimbursement as well and await more details.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **X. Approval of Minutes**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on May 13, 2020 are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on May 13, 2020.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson

Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 MAPLE AVENUE
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

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

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this meeting was not open to physical participation by the public, but was broadcast live on SELCO Channels 29 & 329 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website. A complete audio/video recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00PM.

I. Public Participation

Ms. Fryc advised that public participation was suspended due to the meeting being virtual, but noted viewers could email questions and comments to the School Committee.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Per request, Ms. Fryc read a letter to Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Administration, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee, from a group of parents/guardians of students in the Class of 2020 requesting information on plans for celebrating students' graduation.

III. Superintendent's Report

Citing concerns about conducting a candidate search during the pandemic, and uncertainties and challenges for next year, Dr. Sawyer announced that Dr. Jane Lizotte will serve as acting principal of Walter J. Paton School for the 2020-2021 academic year, replacing Ms. Wendy Bell, who is leaving the district to become principal of the Memorial School in Upton. He noted Dr. Lizotte will retain the title of Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being and will continue to shepherd some of the work in this area as possible, with the understanding that her leadership duties as acting principal at Paton School will be her primary responsibility.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School Closure: Report

Dr. Sawyer began the report with an overview of key messages; Ms. Belsito provided information on timelines, progress monitoring, and the extended school year in her update from the Department of Student Services. Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Bazydlo, SHS Principal, addressed the letter from parents (read earlier by Ms. Fryc) and the work being done by SHS Administration to meaningfully honor the Class of 2020. They reported SHS Administration is working to plan ways to celebrate graduating students, but noted difficulties around guidelines that continue to change over time; issues related to ensuring equity; and challenges when working with vendors while trying to plan events in the present environment. Regarding sharing information about potential events for students, Mr. Bazydlo expressed a desire to be able to deliver what they propose, and Dr. Sawyer noted that communications to parents/guardians will provide more clarity after additional guidance is received from Governor Baker.

Committee members thanked community members for their input regarding ways to celebrate graduating seniors, and acknowledged the frustrations inherent to planning meaningful events in the context of changing guidelines.

B. Continuation of Partnership with Mindfulness Director Institute: Vote

Dr. Lizotte presented an update on Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) offerings and participation from January-June 2020, including programming through school closure; Ms. Maura Egan, Grade 8 ELA Teacher at Oak Middle School, described the development of a book discussion group for middle and high school staff on *Mindfulness and Racial Justice*; Mr. Bazydlo described the Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement (MSPE) program for the SHS Girls Track Team, and shared testimonials from some of the student participants. Dr. Lizotte requested the Committee's approval for continued MDI programming for the 2020-21 school year.

Clarifying information was provided in response to questions on funding for the program (\$7500 from the Colonial Fund is available from an event cancelled earlier in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic); additional mindfulness opportunities for students in the classroom; MDI leadership; program participation; and metrics of effectiveness (some data could not be collected due to school closure). Dr. Sawyer and several Committee members expressed support for continuing the program, noting it represented a very cost efficient way to provide health and well-being opportunities in times of enhanced stress due to the pandemic. Dr. Magee advised he did not support the request given that the program reaches a small percent of the population, and represents an additional nonessential cost to the district in the midst of a very challenging fiscal environment.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted 4-1 to approve the continued partnership between the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) and the Shrewsbury Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year per the terms of the enclosed Memorandum of

Agreement. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, no; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

V. Curriculum

A. Survey Feedback on Remote Learning Program During School Closure: Report

In her report, Ms. Clouter provided response rate by level; noted the potential for “stress” and “change” as factors to have an impact on the results; detailed successes, opportunities, and common themes in Preschool - Grade 4; detailed successes, opportunities, and common themes in Grades 5 - 12; summarized key findings for all grade levels; and described next steps for remote learning.

Committee members expressed appreciation for how much has been achieved in the district around remote learning since the onset of school closure, and acknowledged that challenges relative to equity are exacerbated when students work from home. Ms. Clouter provided additional information in response to questions from Dr. Magee on assessing how much content is absorbed by students, discerning best practices among teachers, and providing classes for parents on how to coach students.

VI. Policy

A. Resolution Regarding Federal Funding for Public Education to Address Financial Impact of the Pandemic

Noting Mr. Collins’ and Dr. Sawyer’s regular updates on the profound impact of the pandemic to the district’s finances and operations, and acknowledging the need for additional federal assistance to public school districts to maintain future educational programming and staffing, Ms. Fryc advised that she drafted a resolution advocating for federal funding for public education to address the financial impact of the pandemic. The draft resolution was being provided to the Committee for their review with the potential for a vote to approve it at their next meeting. Mr. Palitsch expressed his support for the resolution as drafted, and expressed a desire to have a copy, if approved, sent to the district’s federal congressional delegation.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Acceptance of Grant Funding for Oak Middle School Design Lab: Vote

Mr. Collins reported that Mr. Jeremy Mularella, Oak Middle School teacher, was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the NEA foundation to improve the STEM curriculum at Oak Middle School. Committee members and Dr. Sawyer congratulated Mr. Mularella on securing the competitive grant.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the \$5,000 NEA Foundation Grant and use such funds for their intended purpose of

improving the STEM curriculum at Oak Middle School. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

B. Refunds or Credits for Fiscal Year 2020 Fees & Tuitions: Vote

Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation for feedback from the community on this topic, and noted decision-making for his recommendations to provide proportional refunds was driven by determining what was fair and equitable to families who paid the fees and tuitions. He presented detailed refund information, by category, for the following: Food Service, Transportation, Extended School Care, Preschool & Full-Day Kindergarten, and the After School Activities Program. Mr. Collins provided additional information on the sources of funding for the refunds.

Committee members expressed support for the recommendations, and Ms. Fryc noted that the Committee would be looking at policy relative to refunds going forward into the next academic year. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proportional refund of tuitions and fees paid for optional programming and services that were not provided due to the closing of school due to the coronavirus pandemic, as illustrated in the memorandum from the Superintendent of Schools dated May 12, 2020. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

C. Pay Continuity for Food Service Department Workers: Vote

Dr. Sawyer provided background information on payroll continuity decision making in the district since the onset of the pandemic, and recommended the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees through the end of the school year. Mr. Collins described the ongoing work of Food Service staff on the “Meal Support Program” for families in need in the district, illustrated the fiscal impact of retaining staff, and noted reasons to provide pay continuity.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees during the school closure period, at their contractual rates of pay based on their typical time worked per pay period, for the remainder of their contractual work year during Fiscal Year 2020. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on May 6, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

A. For the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following: the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff.

B. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following: the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:46 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SHS Class of 2020 Parents/Guardians Letter
2. Update on COVID-19 Response Report Slides 05-13-20
3. Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) Memo
4. MDI and SPS Memorandum of Agreement
5. MDI Partnership Slide Presentation
6. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback Memo
7. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback Slide Presentation
8. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - SHS

9. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - OMS
10. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - SMS
11. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Paton School
12. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Spring St. School
13. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Floral St. School
14. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Coolidge School
15. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Beal School
16. Remote Learning Parent Survey Feedback - Parker Rd. School
17. Draft Resolution - Federal Funding for Public Education
18. NEA Foundation Grant Memo
19. Refunds/Credits Recommendation Memo
20. Food Service Pay Continuity Memo
21. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **5/27/20**

- A. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) "[t]o discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual." ("Purpose 1") – Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Patrick Higgins.**
- B. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" ("Purpose 7"), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.**
- C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares" ("Purpose 3") - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, and/or the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Executive session is warranted for these purposes.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee enter into executive session for the purpose of:

- A) addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) "[t]o discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual." ("Purpose 1") – Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Patrick Higgins;
- B) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" ("Purpose 7"), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes; and
- C) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares" ("Purpose 3") - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, and/or the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Barbara A. Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**