

**School Committee Workshop
Shrewsbury High School
Principal's Conference Room
64 Holden Street
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts**

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Mr. John Samia, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Mr. Patrick Collins, Mary Beth Banios, Barbara Malone, Meg Belsito - Not Present: Erin Canzano

Ms. Fryc called the meeting to order at 5:35.

FY 18 Budget Overview

Dr. Sawyer reviewed the initial budget proposal to provide context to School Committee. He advised anticipate challenges, even with level service budget plus resources that align with School Committee priorities.

Mr. Collins reviewed the 10 year history of budget and noted that SPS received half of what the original ask was for FY 17. He advised that the budget focus was purely on appropriated dollars. Mr. Collins also reviewed a budget comparison over a 4-year period including projections.

FY 18 budget includes newly negotiated Unit A contract with a 2% carry over. Added unplanned SPED staff and carried into FY18. Reviewed COLA & Steps that carry over into FY18 recommendation. Market based adjustments considered as well. Mr. Collins also reviewed the challenges with Special Education costs, including many “one-off” spikes in unplanned, required services provided to SPED students (i.e. transportation needs, medically complicated situations, etc.) – stressing the challenges of how volatile these costs can be. Additionally, out of district costs increased & SPS is not receiving any additional grant funding to offset the expense, as a result, the excess expense had to be picked up by FY17 budget. Overall, SPED Tuitions will see an increase of \$829K increase and SPED leadership is already planning for next year's placements, which will see a 2% rate increase. Mr. Collins has planned for \$3.4 million in Circuit Breaker reimbursement and is confident in this number. Mr. Collins advised that the budget number assumes no increase in fees and no new teaching positions.

Unit A & Personnel Costs

Mr. Samia requested a review of Unit A and asked if the assumption of their contract is inclusive of heads and higher than what was costed out at \$1.6M? Mr. Collins said this number was partly impacted by reduction of Full Day K tuition, planning for fewer sessions to be available. Labor market-modeling takes existing staff and stepping them and assuming that all staff stays and no staff retire. What this doesn't account for is associates making “lane changes”. 91 people made lane changes this year (\$1700, \$2100, etc.). Mr. Collins noted that budget for Unit A (Category A2) continues to carry all existing staff, even with some initial retirement announcements, all salaries had to be carried over into the projection.

SPED Costs

Mr. Samia requested clarity around what factors lead to the SPED increase – why is it so high and what is behind this number? Mr. Collins reviewed placements, rates, and head counts. Mr. Samia requested clear & concise talking points to explain SPED costs to the average citizen & town leaders.

SPED Costs (Continued)

Ms. Fryc inquired about school restructuring as it pertains to SPED – when child in a specific school, does district have a say in IEP direction of placement of school? Ms. Belsito advised that her team looks at most cost effective option of the student that provides the services needed, always leveraging collaborative services first before going to private services. She advised that she is always proactive toward looking at most cost effective method.

Enrollment, School Choice, and Fees

Mr. Collins reviewed projected enrollment numbers by school. When establishing enrollment numbers, Mr. Collins took higher of 2 projection numbers (Town Manager vs. NESDEC). He noted that it is difficult to project what district students will move in to and acknowledged there appears to be higher enrollment in the Coolidge district. Dr. Sawyer advised that if we had a heavier influx of kids it's unlikely to spike in one place and Coolidge Grade 1 is already over the current class size guideline – could be a challenge, but will be monitored. No place to recommend cuts and be close to class size limits – already pushing middle school limits...going backwards if you do, to pre-override levels.

The committee collectively discussed School Choice and the recommendation to not add more in FY 18 given the stress on seats. Additionally, the committee discussed whether or not to consider raising fees for a second consecutive year.

The committee discussed the focus for the January 25 budget presentation and expressed the need to convey what a level service budget looks like given the continued increase in student enrollment and the required personnel to support students and low class sizes.

Long Term Fiscal Projections

As part of the fiscal projection initiatives, Dr. Magee is reviewing foundation budget, net school spending, per pupil expenses and looking at overlaps, commonalities to identify where these funding sources are coming from (State or Town?). His review is focused on what is reasonable based on inflation looking at other districts and our district looking at our trends.

Mr. Samia's projection focus is to explain the realities of the SPS school budget and assess budget efficiencies (i.e. per pupil expenses) and areas of opportunity. Mr. Samia wants to lay out a budget roadmap and explain these are very real costs. The end result should be a living, breathing school budget projection document that can be used annually.

The School Committee Fiscal Projection roll out will occur after 1/25 SPS budget presentation along with School Talk show. Feb 8 SC meeting.

Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee , seconded by Mr. Samia, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:09pm. Roll call votes are as follows: John Samia, Yes;; Jon Wensky, yes; Dale Magee, yes; Sandy Fryc, Yes;

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Wensky
Secretary

Documents Reviewed: FY 18 Budget – School Committee Workshop #1