

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. John Samia, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jason Palitsch, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee; Ms. Erin Canzano; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Liam Hurley, Director of Business Services; and Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources

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

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

Ms. Erin Canzano informed the committee that she and Mr. Jason Palitsch attended the Community Services Awards Ceremony at Shrewsbury High School (SHS). During the ceremony, Mrs. Amy O'Leary received an award. Mrs. O'Leary is in her 50th year of teaching.

Ms. Sandra Fryc shared that the Shrewsbury Master Plan Update is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. This is a public event and everyone is invited to attend.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer shared that it was wonderful to see the Community Services Awards Ceremony at SHS and see Mrs. O'Leary receive her award. He said he wanted to express appreciation to the staff and faculty for all the hard work that is taking place during this busy time of the school year. Dr. Sawyer thanked parents of Shrewsbury students for emphasizing and placing an importance on their children's education.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. SHS Student Achievement Recognition

Dr. Sawyer recognized students winning awards in academics and the arts. Student awardees gave demonstrations of talents during the School Committee meeting and students shared information about achievements. The student award winners were represented in the categories of Speech and Debate State Champions, National All Honors Choir: 3rd Place in Chorus Competition, Mass Science Olympiad, and the Visual Arts (Digital Work and 2014 Scholastic Art and Writing National Award). Students presenting at the School Committee meeting expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Shrewsbury Public Schools for letting them explore their interests and develop skills and talents. Mr. Todd Bazydlo said that these are just a few examples of the great accomplishments of Shrewsbury students. He said he is concerned about the future and whether we will be able to provide Shrewsbury students with these great opportunities. Mr. Bazydlo said that it is important to continue to provide students with opportunities to help them to become young adults and great community contributors. He said his greatest concern is that the talents, interests and values of students will go to waste. Dr. Sawyer discussed student

accomplishments and how the students represented have become the best in the state. He stated his concerns that the quality of education in the Shrewsbury schools is at risk. Dr. Sawyer said that teachers, who spend a great amount of time and energy working with students as faculty advisors and coaches, are stretched with other demands due to lack of resources. He said teachers may not feel that they have the time to serve as advisors for extracurricular activities. Dr. Sawyer said he is concerned that students will miss opportunities and not pursue passions and careers. He congratulated the students present on their accomplishments, students were presented with certificates and students shook hands with School Committee members and administrators.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

A. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Update: Discussion

Dr. Sawyer shared the Shrewsbury School District budget recommendations for a yes vote for the Town operational override and a no vote for the Town operational override. He said it is a situation for the Shrewsbury schools where it is very important to invest now or pay more later. Dr. Sawyer said that some needs can no longer be deferred or further dismantling of the Shrewsbury school district will occur. He said the quality of education for students has already been compromised. Dr. Sawyer said if more families opt out of the Shrewsbury schools the impact on the district will be significant. He said that if we do not increase the Shrewsbury in-district capacity there will be much higher out of district costs. Dr. Sawyer said there is a need to increase the Shrewsbury district budget for education. He said if more students have to be sent out of the district for special education then it will be much more costly. Dr. Sawyer reviewed the School Committee budget priorities to bring class size within guidelines, provide resources to align and implement curriculum and to implement the School Committee's strategic priorities to the extent possible. He shared the revised budget recommendations for the two cases.

FY 2015 Revised Recommendation (No Override):

\$55,468,239

Increase: \$1,427,593 (2.74%)

FY 2015 Revised Recommendation (Yes Override):

\$57,196,278

Increase: \$5,155,632 (9.91 %)

Dr. Sawyer discussed the monetary figures for the scenario regardless of a yes or no override including the increase in special education costs for 2014-2015, the district's operational fixed costs and several critical needs. Funding for mathematics materials to align the curriculum is a critical need and Dr. Sawyer emphasized that it is important to align the math program to keep it strong for the students. Other critical needs discussed by Dr. Sawyer included technology and new special education coordination for the elementary level. Dr. Sawyer said the problem is that funding critical needs will create a deficit in the budget in a non-override scenario. He said that closing the gap will include cuts and reductions that will effect programs including the athletics, technology and school department discretionary budgets. Dr. Sawyer said that faculty and staff positions will also need to be cut. He said the total reduction would total \$752,266. He discussed the negative impacts if reductions are made including the result that class

sizes will be as high as 27-29 in elementary schools. Dr. Sawyer invited Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal at SHS, to join him to discuss the impacts the potential reductions will have on SHS and students' education. Mr. Bazydlo discussed four key issues: class sizes remaining high, students not being able to have primary and secondary elective course selections due to staffing, some elective classes will be cut and not offered to students and some students will not be able to enroll in advanced placement class offerings. Dr. Sawyer stated that a yes situation for the Town operational override creates a much better situation and it fixes the problem. He said a yes override situation provides critical funding for restoring positions, addressing deferred investments and the funding would put the district in a much better situation. Dr. Sawyer said the question for people to consider is: What kind of schools do we want for our kids in Shrewsbury? Ms. Fryc asked Mr. Bazydlo if a lack of funding and a decline in the quality of education will change the school profile for Shrewsbury that is sent to colleges. Mr. Bazydlo said that he cannot qualify this as to how it will impact students' opportunities for being admitted to colleges. He said a lower quality school profile will have a substantial detrimental effect. Dr. Magee stated that he believes the override is simple. He said that with an override the taxes in Shrewsbury will still be at least 20% lower than neighboring towns. Ms. Canzano said that a no vote for the override guarantees that Shrewsbury will see a decline in academic and athletic opportunities, a decline in property values and residents will pay more later. She said that she thinks there is a great case for the operational override. Mr. Palitsch said that the status quo is unacceptable. He said he thinks the choice for the community is exceptionally clear. Mr. Palitsch said this is a giant step forward, it does not address everything, but it helps. Mr. Samia said if the situation with the declining quality of the Shrewsbury schools is not rectified then new businesses and new families will not choose to come to Shrewsbury. Ms. Fryc thanked Dr. Sawyer and said that the slides from tonight's School Committee meeting will be displayed on the School Department website.

VIII. Old Business

A. Massachusetts School Building Authority: Update

Dr. Sawyer shared an update on the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) invitation for Shrewsbury to enter into the eligibility period phase for a future potential school building project. He said the Town of Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen recently voted not to move forward with this project with the MSBA right now. Dr. Sawyer said the Board of Selectmen felt this was not the right time for this project due to the Library project and the potential operational override being put before the Town. He said the next time the Town of Shrewsbury can submit a statement of interest to the MSBA for this building project is spring 2015. Dr. Sawyer said that he and Mr. Morgado will be communicating with the MSBA Board.

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes

No Meeting Minutes

XI. Executive Session

None

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Samia; Ms. Fryc, yes;

Documents referenced:

- 1) Superintendent's Revised Budget Recommendations: Report