

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 12, 2014

Present: Dr. B. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. John Samia, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Ms. Sandra Fryc, Mr. John Samia, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal at Shrewsbury High School

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Dr. Joseph Sawyer.

I. Election of Officers

Dr. Sawyer called the meeting to order according to the guidelines of School Committee Policy 112 for the first meeting following the town election when the School Committee members elect officers. Dr. Sawyer requested nominations for the School Committee Chairperson and Dr. B. Dale Magee was nominated by Ms. Sandra Fryc. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Jason Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to elect Dr. Magee as Chairperson for the School Committee. Dr. Sawyer asked School Committee members for nominations for the Vice Chairperson of the School Committee and Ms. Erin Canzano nominated Mr. Palitsch. On a nomination by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to elect Mr. Palitsch as Vice Chairperson for the School Committee. Dr. Sawyer requested nominations for the Secretary of the School Committee and Mr. John Samia nominated Ms. Canzano. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to elect Ms. Canzano as Secretary.

II. Public Participation

None

III. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

None

IV. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Fryc for her work in the role as the Chairperson for the School Committee and congratulated Dr. Magee and the new School Committee officers. Dr. Sawyer thanked Dr. John Martin for running as a candidate for the School Committee and said it is very positive to have people interested and good for democracy.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

None

VI. Curriculum

None

VII. Policy

None

VIII. Budget

A. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Recommendations: Summary

Dr. Sawyer said he thought it was important for those tuning in to the School Committee meeting to see the two budgets for a yes override and a no override. He said throughout the budget process he has discussed the issue of the importance of investing now in the Shrewsbury Public Schools or paying more later. 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 that some needs can no longer be deferred or further dismantling of the Shrewsbury school district will occur. Dr. Sawyer said the quality of education for students has already been compromised. He 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. Dr. Sawyer 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. Dr. Sawyer shared that budget recommendation changes that have occurred since March 19 are updated circuit breaker costs and a reduced estimate for homeless transportation. He discussed the critical needs recommended for funding including teaching positions, mathematics materials needed to align the curriculum, a math coordinator position, technology device program, MS projects at Oak Middle School, and an elementary special education coordinator position. Dr. Sawyer said there is already coordination for special education in place at the middle and high school levels. He discussed the budget recommendations in a situation of a failed override vote. Dr. Sawyer shared that the total budget reduction would total \$752,266. He said the additional full day kindergarten tuition for \$30,000 would be allocated toward offsetting the budget. Dr. Sawyer said that closing the gap will include cuts and reductions that will impact programs including the athletics programs with an estimated budget reduction of \$75,000; the technology areas with an estimated budget reduction of \$75,000 and technology replacements deferred; cuts in the foreign language department; and level school department discretionary budgets. Dr. Sawyer said that over the years PTO groups have been using funds raised for school enrichment programs to supplement the budget and cover portions of basic educational needs. He said that faculty and staff positions will also need to be cut in areas such as music, health and full time elementary teacher classroom positions. Dr. Sawyer said the numbers of students in classrooms will remain high and the cuts will make a bad situation worse. He discussed a yes override scenario and said the problem will be solved with the addition of teaching positions, curriculum and materials support, mental and behavioral health resources, the addition of the high school In-School Support Program and technology resources. Dr. Sawyer said a yes override restores resources and provides funding for critical needs. He said the important question for the Shrewsbury community is: What kind of schools do we

want for our students? Dr. Sawyer said these budget recommendations will be put forward and voted on at the upcoming Town Meeting.

B. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Recommendations: Public Hearing

Attendees at the School Committee meeting made comments, voiced opinions and asked questions during the public hearing portion of the meeting. Several community members who spoke stated that they support a yes override vote scenario and comments included:

- residents previously moving to Shrewsbury for the good public school system
- the community will be in the process of dismantling the public school system with a no override vote scenario
- the problem of large class sizes needs to be addressed and teachers need resources to do their jobs
- the tax rates in Shrewsbury are very low
- The positive results for future success when there are opportunities for students to receive individual attention from teachers, take electives and enroll in AP classes
- Parents discussed needs for arts classes and writing needs
- Students are not currently receiving an adequate education in overcrowded classrooms
- PTO and other organizations that provide resources for the Shrewsbury Schools are stretched and at the maximum point
- a declining school system in Shrewsbury will result in lower housing values

Comments supporting a no override vote scenario included:

- Teachers' salaries are too high and the step payment structure for educators needs to be addressed before an override is passed
- Other towns in Massachusetts such as Natick have passed an override and then a few years later there has been requests for additional overrides.

During the public hearing, Dr. Sawyer discussed the goals of the Shrewsbury district to align the mathematics program with the state mathematics curriculum. He shared that the math program is being piloted in the Shrewsbury district this year. Dr. Sawyer said the district is being fiscally responsible to purchase the curriculum materials needed to implement the mathematics program.

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal at SHS, presented information regarding a no override vote situation. He shared examples of how the profile of SHS will be negatively impacted and student demand for classes will not be able to be met. Mr. Bazydlo said he believes students will be at a real disadvantage for getting into top tier colleges.

Dr. Magee thanked everyone for taking the time to speak during the public hearing portion of the School Committee meeting and said that everyone's comments made a positive contribution. Dr. Sawyer thanked the people who attended the School Committee meeting and the viewers watching from home. Dr. Sawyer encouraged voters to make an informed decision and encouraged people to ask questions and feel free to contact him if there are questions he can answer.

IX. Old Business

None

X. New Business

None

XI. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the School Committee Meeting Minutes for March 26 and April 9, 2014. On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the March 26 and April 9, 2014 meeting minutes.

XII. Executive Session

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Samia, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM. On a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia; Dr. Magee, yes

Respectfully submitted
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) FY 2015 Budget Recommendations: Summary