



**School Committee  
Meeting Book**

**April 22, 2020  
7:00 pm**

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



## SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

### AGENDA

April 22, 2020 7:00pm  
Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room  
100 Maple Avenue

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.   | Update regarding the school district’s response to the COVID-19 school closure   | 7:00 – 7:30 |
| II.  | Continuity of funding of Assabet Valley Collaborative services during school closure : Vote  | 7:30 – 7:40 |
| III. | Approval of Minutes  | 7:40 – 7:45 |
| IV.  | Executive Session  | 7:45 - 8:15 |
| A.   | For the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following:<br>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.   |             |
| V.   | Adjournment  | 8:15        |

**Next regular meeting: Wednesday, April 29**



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **I. Update regarding the school district's response to the COVID-19 school closure** MEETING DATE: **4/22/20**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The situation regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to evolve. The district is closed through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year per mandate by Gov. Baker for all schools in the state. At the meeting, Dr. Sawyer and other district administrators will provide an update on how the school district's response to the pandemic has evolved during the past week.

**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: II. Continuity of funding of Assabet Valley Collaborative services during school closure : Vote**      MEETING DATE: 4/22/20

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) is an educational organization made up of local districts who join together to pool resources in order to provide cost-effective educational services for its members. Shrewsbury Public Schools has been a charter member district since 1976. Per Governor Baker's mandate, AVC will be closed for the remainder of the school year. Dr. Sawyer will present information regarding the importance of member districts like Shrewsbury to continue the funding of AVC special education and contractual services during the closure period. The enclosed memorandum contains additional information.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee vote to authorize the district administration to take necessary actions to continue the funding of special education and consultation services contracted with the Assabet Valley Collaborative, with the understanding that those services are being modified as necessary during the school closure period, within the approved Fiscal Year 2020 budget.

**STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



## SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Margaret M. Belsito  
Assistant Superintendent  
Student Services

Amy B. Clouter  
Assistant Superintendent  
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Patrick C. Collins  
Assistant Superintendent  
Finance & Operations

Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
Community Partnerships & Well-Being

Barbara A. Malone  
Executive Director  
Human Resources

April 22, 2020

To: School Committee

From: Joe Sawyer

Re: Continuity of funding of Assabet Valley Collaborative services during school closure

Dear School Committee:

As you know from previous memos and meetings during the school closure period, the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Jeffrey Riley, is advising Massachusetts public school districts to continue to pay contracted service vendors, such as out-of-district special education organizations and school transportation companies, in order to avoid issues where those providers are unable to recommence operations when school resumes.

The Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) is an educational organization made up of local districts who join together to pool resources in order to provide cost-effective educational services for its members. Shrewsbury Public Schools is a charter member of the collaborative, with shared responsibility for its current and future solvency. AVC provides various services to both member and non-member school districts, including special education services and consultations and special education transportation. As you know, I am our school district's representative in the AVC Board of Directors. Last Friday, the AVC board recognized that it is critical to member districts that AVC remain on solid financial ground during the school closure period, and unanimously advocated that all member districts continue to provide funding for the services AVC continues to

provide remotely to students and districts as possible and to enable its transportation contractor, Van Pool, to remain viable.

In order to maintain the crucial partnership between our school district and AVC, it is important that our district continue its contractual relationships with AVC for various special education and consultation services that are part of the current fiscal year budget. While the budget approved by the School Committee already authorized these expenditures, given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the pandemic closure situation I wanted to highlight this partnership and ensure that the Committee understands the importance of maintaining it. In order to further validate the approach during school closure, I recommend that the School Committee vote to approve the following suggested motion:

*That the Committee vote to authorize the district administration to take necessary actions to continue the funding of special education and consultation services contracted with the Assabet Valley Collaborative, with the understanding that those services are being modified as necessary during the school closure period, within the approved Fiscal Year 2020 budget.*

I look forward to answering any questions you have regarding this recommendation at your meeting this evening.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **4/22/20**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on April 15, 2020 are enclosed.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on April 15, 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, April 15, 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 7:00 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

Ms. Fryc noted 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**

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer thanked the school community - students, families, staff, and the leadership team - for their ongoing work to support students and families during school closure; thanked community members for continuing to practice social distancing; offered condolences to families who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic; announced that Ms. Wendy Bell, Walter J. Paton school Principal, had accepted a new position to become the principal of the Memorial Elementary School in Upton effective July 1, 2020, and thanked Ms. Bell for her work at Shrewsbury Public Schools; and advised that next steps would be forthcoming regarding finding Ms. Bell's replacement.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Update regarding the school district's response to the COVID-19 school closure**

Dr. Sawyer began the report by noting key messages and facts; advising how to find COVID-19 related information on the website; and noting how to communicate with the district during school closure. Ms. Belsito provided an update from the Department of Student Services that

described communication from the department and gave examples of supports, resources, instruction, and services available to students and families. Director of Nursing Noelle Freeman detailed ways that school nurses are supporting the school community, and also - through collaboration with the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance - the greater community. Dr. Lizotte's update included information on different ways Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) is partnering with various entities to provide physical and emotional support to the community. Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding mindfulness classes for students, and supports for families and students experiencing stress, and expressed appreciation for the extracurricular opportunities available to students.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **A. SPS Remote Learning: Report**

In her report, Ms. Clouter provided information on remote learning in the district that included a timeline detailing state and federal guidance and associated SPS actions; described early successes, opportunities for growth, challenges around meeting new needs in a new environment, and planning with best practice in mind; defined "remote learning" and gave examples of opportunities by grade level; and examined SPS' response to the pandemic at multiple levels and in the context of implementing innovative work that requires new skills and new ways of thinking.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Clouter detailed the district's response to issues around engaging students, accessibility, technology, and translation assistance for students and families, and provided clarifying information on "office hours" and other means of communication with teachers.

## **VI. Policy**

None.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Update on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Finance & Operations: Report**

In his report, Mr. Collins provided a status on ongoing negotiations between AA Transportation and area school districts for a bus contract amendment agreement that would modify payment terms but still ensure readiness for when schools reopen. Mr. Collins illustrated hourly staff pay continuity information in tables broken down by category, decision-making criteria, and associated impact; provided a schedule for pay continuity decision making; addressed payroll information by group for paraprofessionals, clerical workers, food service employees, and extended school care workers; and noted estimated budget savings resulting from the pandemic.

Based on this information, Dr. Sawyer recommended that the School Committee vote to continue pay for all SPS employees through Friday, May 1. Committee members expressed support for the recommendation.

## **B. Payroll Continuity for All Staff During School Closure Period: Vote**

Please see agenda item VII.A.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the continued compensation of all Shrewsbury Public Schools employees through at least May 1 of the mandated school closure for the COVID-19 pandemic, including both salaried and hourly employees, at their contractual rates of pay based on their typical time worked per pay period. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, 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 April 8, 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 Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:09 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to

adjourn the meeting at 9:26 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch: yes; Mr. Wensky: yes; Ms. Heffernan: yes; Dr. Magee: yes; Ms. Fryc: yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Update on COVID-19 Response Report Slides 04-15-20

Remote Learning Report

Remote Learning Slide Presentation

Update on Impact of COVID-19 on Finance & Operations Report Slides 04-15-20

Payroll Continuity Memo 04-14-20

Set(s) of minutes as referenced above



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IV. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **4/22/20**

- 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.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Executive session is warranted for these purposes.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the School Committee enter into 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 purposes of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, 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

ITEM NO: **V. Adjournment**