

Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 5, 2015

Chairman John F. Doherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Theresa M. Manganelli, Richard K. Hayden, Robert P. Palmer, William Wallace, Bernard P. Nally, Jonathan R. Eaton. Excused: None

Shawsheen Technical High School:

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Charles Lyons, Superintendent, Melanie Hagman, Assistant Superintendent-Director/Business, James Gillis, School Committee Member

Mr. Lyons- Handed out expanded Winter/Spring Adult Education brochure, rebranding calling Shawsheen Technical institute. Handed out documents explaining the problems with Chapter 70 formula and some of his recommendations to modify. Reviewed power point presentation.

Mr. Lyons- First question he likes to answer is how our programs are doing with getting students jobs. As of today 63% of our seniors are on Co-op. Example the electrical program has 24 of 26 students are working, 92%, as of January 30th. Numbers are going to improve for Cosmetology, kids can't work until they have 1,000 hrs and after 16 years of age. Explains they track hourly Co-op paid to seniors by the program: In technology 10 or 11 students working IBM making \$15/hr, Culinary and cosmetology hourly gets a lot of tips. Weekly Co-op wages, students to work at least 30 hrs/wk on an average of \$10.75/hr. State report, kids go to agricultural school (3 of them), last year 666 juniors and seniors in those courses only 11 working co-op at the end of the year, 1.7% working. 47% of towns have CBC programs, about 2% of their students working. All other regional tech schools, not including Shawsheen was about 20%, we were at 52.8%, best Co-op placement in Massachusetts. Explains State Co-Op employment report for 2013-2014 for juniors and seniors. Baker transition Committee, key recommendation per February 4, 2015 report recommends expanding Voc Tech schools that have excess demands (which Shawsheen does); service areas of educational need, and deliver strong academic and career placement options. Nobody has better career placement options and no Voc. Tech school can compete with us on MCAS performance. Based on findings, he wants to invest to bring all vocational schools up to a level of quality that makes them relevant and effective options for students seeking high quality careers. What he really likes, he wants to focus the success of school based on outcome. Redefine the relationship between state and districts to focus less on compliance and inputs, and more on quality (with autonomy for districts and schools to attain student outcomes). As a start, conduct a thorough audit of existing state initiatives and regulations, with a goal of reducing the burden on schools and freeing up leaders to focus on innovation and achievement.

Mr. Lyons- Reviewed FY16 budget. Compare facts and fiction first thing he always looks at is the past, have to ask yourself, how much have you increased spending over the last multiple number of years. State at end of every year publishes per pupil spending, don't include items like capital and don't include adult education. Shawsheen has had one of the lowest increases in per pupil spending in the state, from FY08 to FY14 we are up by 5% in total, in the same time period our local schools have increased as low as 18% in Bedford to a high of 41.8% in Wilmington. Explains his per pupil expenditures by district, we are higher because we are not a chalk board school, we are an expensive place to run, but our per pupil cost went from \$17,000 in FY08 to \$18,600 in FY14. Average Voc. Tech. School in the state spent \$20,265 per pupil in FY14. Shawsheen spends \$18,652 per pupil. State has a foundation rate per pupil, which means at a minimum you should be spending X amount of dollars per pupil. Reviews FY14 net school spending as compared to

foundation budgets – source DESE, Bedford spends 152.0%, Burlington 160.5%, Wilmington 136.5%, Shawsheen 112.2%.

Mr. Lyons- How success is measured at Shawsheen. 2014 – 4 year high school graduation rate, one of the highest in the state. 2014-4 year graduation rate for students with disabilities, we have amongst the highest in the state. High school dropout rates went up to 0.4% this year (4 kids), have had amongst the lowest in the state, annually 2% of high school students drop out. Shawsheen student success indicators: 97.1% highest average daily attendance last year, if kids come to school they learn. Are we serving disabled kids? Yes number of student with Disability took MCAS at grade 10 (our 3 largest towns combined have 57 in grade 10). Only those in the high school with disabilities. Percent of students scoring advanced or proficient in 2014 MCAS: 97% of our first time students score advanced or proficient in English language arts, 84% in math and 80% in science. MCAS ELA student growth percentile, tells you statewide the measure in the 8th grade based upon your kids if they progressed at the same level they would be at 50 percentile, 2011 our sophomores were at 81st percentile, 2012 at 80 percentile, 2013 at 83rd percentile, number 2 in the state. 2014 we were at the 73rd percentile, about 50 in the state, always the highest. Every time we are amongst the highest growth rate in the state for academic performance as measured by the 8th grade, that's ELA. Explained measuring MCAS from sophomores to seniors, academically these kids prosper because you spend a lot of money on them, hire very competent teachers, they come to school every day and they like what they are doing.

Mr. Lyons- Population Statistics 2004 -2014. Enrollment in Wilmington Public schools, change due to full day kindergarten so kids went from being counted from ½ to a whole, only down 5.79%. Shawsheen's enrollment went up 8 kids, 12.74%. Enrollment change for public school in our district for the last 10 years; Tewksbury lost 22.2% of its population, Billerica 30% come to Shawsheen, Wilmington has less migration, they don't lose a lot to private school; Shawsheen gets approx 14% of Wilmington kids, approximately 275 kids.

Mr. Lyons- Budget is up \$882,798, total percentage increase of 3.27%, operating budget going up 2.72%, due to the need to spend \$150,000 for a rain garden which is a conservation requirement from the Town of Billerica. Total assessment going up \$771,171. Have to do an actuarial study required by Federal Government \$7,000, robotics increase \$10,500, because of the new parking lot built have to do catch basin clearing (town) \$14,000, OPEB started funding last year have to increase every year by 5%, Aspen training one year cost, Medicare \$20,000, retirement increase \$21,000, total utilities going up \$29,000, NEASC accreditation every 2 years \$40,000, contract cleaners \$60,000 (5 maintenance men, contract out the cleaning), Retirement cost up \$73,000, Rain garden required by the town of Billerica \$150,000, health insurance going up first time in a few years 5%, Brief discussion on insurance, no deductibles, 85/15 split, award from BCBS for our wellness program has been a major impact on claims. All other costs such as raises, steps going up \$256,500.

Mr. Lyons- Longevity cost is about \$86,000, not a lot of money. We want to keep our great employee's. Brief discussion on utilities increased \$29,000, spending up about 2%. Met with managers on 15th, projected assessment for Wilmington is \$3,711,905, less than last year. If we get another 10 kids next year it may go up. Total assessment is up by \$771,000. Explained how the assessment is calculated.

Mr. Lyons- Explained mass foundation budget review commission and his testimony (handout). When a kids comes to Shawsheen the state does shift any of the aid over, my aid went up \$20 per pupil even though he picked up 47 more kids from Billerica. What the state does is shift the local required contribution. Believes contribution should be changed and follow students. Shawsheen, Wilmington, Bedford and Burlington are not getting state aid it calls for. Governor fully funding the best he could with the current formula currently on the books, made sure places like Wilmington & Shawsheen gets the aide they received last year and added at least \$20 per pupil. Our Chapter 70 went up. Gave example based on his testimony.

Mr. Lyons- Brief discussion on history of and how chapter 70 works. Chapter 70 is the state contribution to foundation budget. Would hope Chapter 70 would have a more realistic foundation budget and would be phased over 7 years.

Mr. Doherty – Asked what is the balance in excess. It was \$1,423,000 which was \$123,000 too high. Used that balance for next year's assessment, about 5%.

Mr. Nally - Increase of kids from Billerica (47). Asked what happens if other towns want to have more kids go to the tech. Asked if there is capacity. Everyone has a percentage, Bedford & Burlington don't use their minimal percentage, reallocated based upon number of kids apply. Most of Wilmington kids who met requirements got in to Shawsheen last year. Explains the criteria and interview process.

Mr. Doherty – Other than bonding for athletics, asked if there are any capital improvement with any other bonding. They are currently paying off two bond issues, about \$500,000. Have 2008 and 2012 bond issue, roof and HVAC replacement 2008-2018 payoff, health life science wing 2011-2021. Total capital budget \$1,030,000, \$534,000 is debt and interest, phase in the new bond issue and payoff the 2008 bond issue in 2018.

Mr. Doherty – Asked whether it will be a 5 or 10 year bond issue. Probably 10 year. Very progressive school committee that wants to keep school up and not let it fall apart. Explained they replaced every door, window, air conditioner, roof, lights in parking lot, replaced parking lot, and the pool. Brief discussion on other vocational schools that are talking about building new high schools.

Mr. Wallace – Asked what the class duration is on the academic side. Between 41 and 43 minutes, 8 classes a day, no study periods. Brief discussion on class sizes.

Mr. Doherty – When you get a student that can't read, asked if there is a comment to the district they came from on why they aren't reading. May not be the district's fault, might just be a situation at home. They can't make that determination. They assess kids for mathematics and reading, place them in the appropriate class. We do a very good job at assessing the kids and placing the kids in the proper class.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if they see a difference in kids mathematical abilities, based on which district they came from. Tewksbury has done a good job on mathematics. Brief discussion on why some 8th grade students can't read. Brief discussion on audit and students going to college. Discussion on evening adult education which is offered and positive feedback.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Jonathan Eaton, seconded by Theresa Manganelli. Approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30p.m.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2015.
Respectfully submitted,

Recording secretary