

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2014**

Present: Dr. B. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Ms. Sandra Fryc; Mr. John Samia; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Cecelia Wirzbicki, Director of Business Services; Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal of Shrewsbury High School, Ms. Alexandra Wilson, Shrewsbury High School, Science Teacher

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Dr. B. Dale Magee

**I. Public Participation**

None

**II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports**

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer said he wanted to reassure the community that the district is paying close attention to issues related to viruses. He said that Mr. Rocco would be participating in a conference call for municipal employees tomorrow to discuss these topics. Dr. Sawyer said the district continues to follow good protocols for health and that our nurses in particular are monitoring symptoms within our schools.

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the SHS golf team on winning the Midland League championship and he congratulated Julia Ford for being the individual champion for this competition.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. Student Recognition: Superintendent's Awards**

Dr. Sawyer selected SHS seniors Kayla Freeman and Sonali Razdan as the recipients of the Superintendent's Awards on behalf of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Ms. Freeman and Ms. Razdan currently hold the two highest GPAs at SHS. Dr. Sawyer provided highlights of each student's achievements and Ms. Freeman and Ms. Razdan made statements about being honored to receive the awards. The student award recipients were invited to shake hands with School Committee Members and received award certificates. Dr. Sawyer said that he and Mr. Bazydlo, SHS Principal, will attend the annual Worcester County School Superintendents Award luncheon in January with Ms. Freeman and Ms. Razdan.

**B. Proposed SHS Student Travel: Vote**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, and Ms. Alexandra Wilson, SHS Science Teacher, presented information and requested that the SC members vote to approve travel by some SHS students to the Island of San Salvador to participate in scientific field research in support of the science curriculum during late June/early July 2015. Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Wilson discussed the positive academic and personal experiences that students will have on the trip. Committee members asked questions about students' safety and security during the trip. Committee members made positive comments and indicated students who participate will benefit from learning opportunities. Dr. B. Dale Magee stated that although he appreciates the detailed information shared and that it is clear the trip would benefit students, his concern remains that some students will be excluded from participating in this opportunity due to financial constraints.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to approve travel by Shrewsbury High School students to the Island of San Salvador to participate in scientific field research in support of the science curriculum during late June/early July 2015. On a motion by Mr. Jason Palitsch, seconded by Mr. John Samia, the School Committee voted four to one to approve the trip, with Dr. Magee dissenting.

Next, Mr. Bazydlo presented information and requested that the School Committee vote to approve travel by Shrewsbury High School students to the Dominican Republic for a community service learning and leadership opportunity during April 2015. Ms. Sandra Fryc suggested that SHS share more information with the public and community about the benefits of these trips to help get the word out to potential corporate sponsors. Mr. Bazydlo said he plans to have some SHS students who have participated in travel trips present at a future School Committee meeting. Mr. Jason Palitsch said he understood the trip was a success last year and Mr. Bazydlo said that SHS was working with the same EF travel company and planning a similar trip. Committee members asked some clarifying questions about cost per student, availability of financial assistance and other travel trips offered at SHS and spent some time discussing a concern over student participation associated with cost.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to approve travel by Shrewsbury High School students to the Dominican Republic for a community service learning and leadership opportunity during April 2015. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted four to one to approve the trip, with Dr. Magee dissenting.

Further discussion ensued regarding the cost of student travel for high school students and whether students are unfairly excluded from such experiences based on their family's financial status, whether such travel in some cases may provide better access to such experiences for families in middle income ranges, and the issue that some students may be reluctant or constrained from traveling due to reasons other than financial, such as medical concerns.

### **C. PreK-12 Student Enrollment & PreK-8 Class Size: Report**

Dr. Sawyer presented a report to Committee members on the district's enrollment and class size data for the current school year effective October 1, 2014. He said this report information is also shared with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Dr. Sawyer shared key points and data and said the current student enrollment for the district of 6,017 is at an all-time high with three more students than last school year. Dr. Sawyer said that due to the successful override, the overall situation for smaller class

sizes within the district is very positive. He said the Shrewsbury district is in excellent shape for keeping very close to the suggested class size guidelines. Mr. Palitsch said that thanks to the successful override last spring this is an incredible success for the district. Committee members asked a few questions regarding the jump in the number of SHS students leaving the district to attend private schools and projections for the number of school-age students that could come about with the addition of building more apartment complexes in Shrewsbury. Dr. Sawyer replied that anecdotally he heard some SHS parents say that they were exploring other options for their children in case the override did not pass. He said he will be interested to see if the number of students leaving SHS to attend private schools shifts and is smaller in the future. Regarding the increase of students due to the building of additional apartment complexes, Dr. Sawyer stated one of the things he will be exploring and bringing back to the Committee may be to ask the New England School Development Council to do a more detailed projection for the Shrewsbury district when more information regarding potential apartment complex building through the Chapter 40B program is available.

## **V. Curriculum**

None

## **VI. Policy**

### **A. Fingerprint-based background checks: Second Reading and Vote**

Mr. Palitsch referred to the document for the second reading of the policy for the fingerprint-based background checks. He said the feedback from some community members on the district policy for fingerprint-based background checks was appreciated by the Committee. Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to approve the new Shrewsbury district policy on fingerprint-based background checks. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the new Shrewsbury district policy on fingerprint-based background checks.

## **VII. Budget**

### **A. Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Guidelines & Priorities: Discussion and Vote**

Mr. Samia discussed the goals of the fiscal guidelines as put in the overview for the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Guidelines and Priorities which include: sustaining improvements in class sizes; continuing to invest in materials and personnel; making sufficient investments in technology; making investments in district-based programming and resources. He said that feedback on the proposed budget guidelines and priorities was received from the community and Mr. Palitsch said the comments were helpful. Mr. Samia said that Mr. Morgado, Shrewsbury Town Manager, provided some feedback and had a good suggestion. Mr. Samia said he suggests adding an additional assumption to the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Guidelines and Priorities that is consistent with Mr. Morgado's suggestion. He said the suggested addition to the assumptions could be:

“7. Consistent with prior practice, the initial budget proposal will take into consideration the town's financial constraints.”

Committee members said they think the proposed budget priorities and guidelines set the Shrewsbury district on a good path for the budget in the future. Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Priorities and Guidelines as amended. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Priorities and Guidelines as amended with the addition of the seventh assumption.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Superintendent's Goals for 2014-2015: Vote**

Dr. Sawyer presented his goals as superintendent for the 2014-2015 school year. He said that school safety and security is one goal he will focus on during the 2014-2015 school year. Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to approve the superintendent's goals for the 2014-2015 school year. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the superintendent's goals for the 2014-2015 school year.

### **X. Approval of Minutes: Vote**

Mr. Palitsch requested that an amendment be made to the October 1, 2014 School Committee meeting minutes that he made the motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Samia. In addition, he requested a typo be corrected and that the vote to adjourn was unanimous, not the motion to adjourn. Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the October 1, 2014 School Committee meeting minutes as amended. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the October 1, 2014 School Committee meeting minutes as amended.

## **XI. Executive Session**

### **A. For the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A**

At 8:27PM Dr. Magee requested a motion for the School Committee to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A.

## **XII. Information Enclosures**

None

## **XIII. Adjournment**

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for October 15, 2014. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 8:49PM. On a roll call vote: Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Dr. Magee, yes

Respectfully submitted  
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Biographies for students receiving Superintendent's Awards
- 2) Community Service Project in the Dominican Republic: Memorandum
- 3) Proposed Trip to San Salvador: Memorandum

- 4) Shrewsbury Public Schools Preschool-Grade 12 Enrollment Report and Preschool-Grade 8 Class Size Report
- 5) Fingerprint-based background checks: Revised Draft Policy for Second Reading at October 15, 2014 School Committee Meeting
- 6) Priorities & Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Development: Draft Report
- 7) Superintendent's Goals for the 2014-2015: Report