

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2020**

Present: 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; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

A complete audio/visual 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**

None.

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

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

In his report, Dr. Sawyer thanked educators for participating in a recent successful Professional Development day; noted information was sent to the community on a make-up Professional Development early release day rescheduled to March 23; recognized National School Counselor Week; congratulated the Shrewsbury High School E-Sports team on winning their third consecutive League of Legends' State Championship; and provided an update on the district's response to the coronavirus outbreak, including the cancellation of a planned student trip to China in April.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Sherwood Middle School Maker Space: Student Presentation**

Ms. Clouter introduced Mrs. Sarah Matthews, Grade 5 Teacher; Ms. Hilary Clegg, Media Specialist; and Sherwood Middle School (SMS) students (Grade & Team): Shamini Biju (5 Grey); Diya Sankar (5 Grey); Shanaali Patil (5 Grey); Siddharth Gowtham (5 Green); and Reagan Clifford (5 Green), who gave the report and acknowledged contributions to the program and presentation from Ms. Litza Rivera, IT Support Specialist. The teachers defined what a "maker space" is and described how it is utilized at SMS in a variety of ways that enhance student learning. The students described their experiences and gave detailed information on prototypes they developed for pencil holders. After taking questions from the Committee, the students presented Dr. Sawyer with a pencil holder and the Committee with business cards they

had made. In turn, they were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and presented with certificates.

### **B. Beal School Building Project: Report**

Mr. Walter Hartley, Project Manager, PMA Associates, and Ms. Natalie Gabrielle, Architect, LPA/A gave the report. Mr. Hartley provided: an overview of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process, a construction update that included photos and video, information on budget development (the project is presently under budget), and a summary of the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) agreement from Fontaine Brothers that was approved by the Shrewsbury Beal School Building Committee on January 28, 2020. Ms. Gabrielle gave a design update that included information on: a collaboration with Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students and Town Historian Michael Perna for a planned history display in the new school's lobby regarding the history of the school site and Major Howard W. Beal; the Beal "furniture fair", where different types of school furnishings are on display for viewing and feedback in preparation for the opening of the new Beal School; and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification process.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about the steel and construction schedules, and noted that the project - which is on time and under budget - is a good news story. Dr. Sawyer thanked all parties working on the project, including PMA Associates, LPA/A, and Fontaine Brothers (construction management company for the project).

### **V. Curriculum**

None.

### **VI. Policy**

#### **A. School Year Calendar for 2020-2021: Vote**

Ms. Fryc noted a school calendar draft was presented to the Committee at the meeting on January 22, 2020, and posted afterward for public review and comment. She advised that feedback was received relative to the Good Friday holiday and professional development days. Ms. Fryc provided clarifying information on school policy relative to religious holidays and excused absences per Massachusetts law, and noted that because professional days are negotiated with the Shrewsbury Education Association (SEA), any changes would need to be discussed at the next contract negotiation. Dr. Sawyer summarized the changes to the proposed calendar that he presented at the January 22, 2020 School Committee meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2020 - 2021 School Year Calendar.

### **VII. Finance & Operations**

#### **A. Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation Budget: Report**

In his report, Mr. Collins provided information on types of transportation services and providers; vehicles and routes; ridership and fee payer data (indicating which services are mandated by

law); costs and funding sources (noting a shift in the use of a federal Special Education grant away from funding transportation that results in a significant increase to the Town Appropriated School Department budget); detailed, line-item budgets; and refining the FY21 proposed budget.

The Committee asked questions about transportation services for athletics, the use of bus monitors, how the planned opening in 2021 of the new Beal school might impact the transportation budget, the “actual cost” of transportation versus fees charged, and the subset of costs to the district for students it is not mandated to transport; and noted that factors beyond the control of the district can have a significant impact on the transportation budget.

### **B. Fiscal Year 2021 Strategic Priorities Budget: Report**

In his report, Dr. Sawyer noted the district’s mission and strategic priorities, highlighted what is the same and different about the FY21 proposed budget, and advised that with inadequate funding to maintain even the status quo budget, it will be critically important to consider the impact of potential cost reductions to recent strategic investments that have benefited students.

Committee members noted the importance of acknowledging the realities of the budget situation and the potential impact of cuts relative to meeting the needs of students and the community’s expectations of the district as defined in its strategic priorities; discussed the challenges around making difficult budget decisions that could have additional unintended consequences; and noted the importance of alternative funding sources while acknowledging their inconsistent nature.

### **VIII. Old Business**

None.

### **IX. New Business**

None.

### **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on January 15, 2020 and the School Committee Meeting held on January 22, 2020, were accepted as distributed.

### **XI. Executive Session**

None.

### **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Sherwood Maker Space Report
2. Sherwood Maker Space Slide Presentation
3. Beal School GMP Summary
4. Beal School Report Slide Presentation
5. Proposed 2020-2021 School Year Calendar
6. FY21 Transportation Budget Report Slide Presentation
7. FY21 Strategic Priorities Budget Report
8. FY21 Strategic Priorities Budget Slide Presentation
9. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above