

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; 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.

Not present: Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:02 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Heffernan reported that she attended the AP (Advanced Placement) Information Night held recently at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) and was impressed by the resources and staff available, and the number of attendees.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the SHS Esports Rocket League team on capturing their second consecutive State Championship; reported the upcoming Topping Off Ceremony at the new Beal School Building site; acknowledged the 100th Day of School for Shrewsbury Public School students; and commended students at Walter J. Paton School for performing over 6,000 acts of kindness during the national Great Kindness Challenge.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. SHS Government Class Project with Municipal Departments: Student Presentation

Dr. Lizotte introduced presenters Mr. John Aloisi, Teacher, Social Sciences, and SHS grade 12 students Andrew Pitney, Jacob Tran, and Matt Searbo; and acknowledged Town Manager Mr. Kevin Mizikar, Assistant Town Manager/ED Coordinator Ms. Kristen Las, and multiple municipal leaders for partnering with students on the project. Mr. Aloisi described the objectives of the program, and noted how students shared information and provided reflections on what

they learned. The students described their individual topics, advised which municipal offices they partnered with, and shared what they learned about local government.

Committee members noted the value of interacting with local government officials, and of providing project-based learning experiences for students, and asked clarifying questions about student participation and next steps for the program. The students were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and Dr. Sawyer, and presented with certificates.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Revised Policy on Public Participation at School Committee Meetings: First Reading

Ms. Fryc and Mr. Palitsch comprise the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Fryc provided background information on the rationale for reviewing the policy and noted they had received input from legal counsel; Mr. Palitsch advised it had been 25 years since the policy was amended, noted that recent litigation and court rulings prompted the review, and added that the proposed policy draft's specificity regarding when the Chair can terminate speech differed significantly from that of the existing policy.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about the timing and formality of requests from the public to participate. Dr. Sawyer added that the proposed policy did not include language some other districts use limiting public participation on topics not yet addressed in a meeting by the Committee. Ms. Fryc noted that the feedback from the Committee on the draft would be discussed at the next Policy Subcommittee meeting.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Special Education Fiscal Year 2021 Budget: Report

Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, and Ms. Meghan E. Bartlett, Assistant Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services gave the report. Ms. Belsito and Ms. Bartlett took turns describing areas of focus for the Department; student demographics; disability categorizations; placement options and associated statistics; budget information; out of district enrollment history, enrollments, and costs; funding information (including a recent change to the use of a federal special education grant); contracted services information; extended school year services; staffing information; and recommended strategic investments, including the addition of two adjustment counselors at the elementary level to assist students having social, emotional, and/or behavioral issues.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about out of district placements; differences between public and private day settings and how their rates are set; gauging the level of need for additional adjustment counselors; and changes to the use of funding from the federal special education grant. Dr. Sawyer recognized Ms. Bridget Nichols, Team Chair, Parker Road Preschool, who was in the audience, and noted the great work being done on behalf of Special

Education students and their families, and all students, by SPS staff working in a multitude of roles.

B. Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation, Athletic, & Activity Fees: Options & Discussion

Mr. Patrick Collins and Mr. Jason Costa, Director of Athletics, gave the report. Mr. Collins described the decision-making process, gave FY20 budget estimates for fee revenues, and noted assumptions about the impact of fee increases. For transportation, Mr. Collins provided the FY20 average cost per pupil relative to the total cost of the services; fee option scenarios for FY21 including additional new revenue that would be generated; and bus fee comparisons with other districts. For athletics, he noted sources of funding (with Mr. Costa acknowledging funding from the SHS Athletics Boosters and Friends of Shrewsbury Crew) including athletic fee revenue, fee option scenarios for FY21 including additional new revenue that would be generated, and fee comparisons with surrounding communities; provided details on a potential interscholastic sport fee at Oak Middle School which could be implemented as early as Spring 2020, potential service and cost reductions relative to reduced schedules and transportation (detailed by Mr. Costa), and potential revenue generating ideas. For music fees (which pay 100% of the cost of services), Mr. Collins noted current rates and proposed rate increase scenarios.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about music lesson rates, planning athletic schedules, and transportation to Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School; requested breakdowns of athletic costs by various criteria; and requested additional information and scenarios that illustrate the impact to families from fees that are being imposed. They discussed the potential for concerns about simultaneously reducing athletic schedules while raising fees, and about safety if bus transportation to events is reduced, and noted a preference for raising fees incrementally on a regular basis to address inflation versus implementing less-frequent, larger increases.

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 February 5, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

A. For the purpose of reviewing and acting upon a student residency issue

B. For the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A

C. For the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury

Paraprofessional Association

D. For the purpose of negotiations with non-represented staff

E. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of: reviewing and acting upon a student residency issue; collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A, collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and negotiations with non-represented staff, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; 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 Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:10 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch: yes; Ms. Heffernan: yes; Dr. Magee: yes; Ms. Fryc: yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SHS Class Project with Town Manager Report
2. SHS Class Project with Town Manager Slide Presentation
3. Existing School Committee Policy 123
4. Draft Updated School Committee Policy 123
5. Special Education FY21 Budget Report
6. Special Education FY21 Budget Slide Presentation
7. FY21 Fee Report Slide Presentation
8. MA Public School Fee Survey compiled by Dick and Sharon Hawkins
9. Athletic Fee Comparison compiled by Midland Wachusett League Athletic Directors
10. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above