

**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