

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 29, 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; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Ms. Barb Malone, 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 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

Ms. Fryc advised 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 reported that a Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) Virtual 5K is planned for the community at the weekend, and noted several upcoming appreciation events: School Lunch Hero Day (May 1); National School Principals' Day (May 1); and Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8), which includes National Teacher Day (May 5) and National School Nurse Day (May 6).

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Update regarding the school district's response to the COVID-19 school closure

Dr. Sawyer began the report by providing an overview of key facts, and noting that a survey had gone out to families earlier in the day seeking feedback on remote learning at Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Clouter presented an update on remote learning that included data on the use of technology by students, and information on Professional Development for educators for the technology platforms being utilized; and Ms. Belsito's update on virtual Individual Education

Plan (IEP)/504 meetings included detailed information on the role of team members and the process of prioritization.

Ms. Clouter provided additional information in response to questions from the Committee on opportunities for parents to learn more (including the potential for self-directed tutorials) about the technology platforms used by students, and from Ms. Heffernan on homework assignments going forward (number, frequency, and feedback from teachers) and on “office hours” for students and when it is appropriate for parents to be involved.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Update on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Finance & Operations: Report

Mr. Collins provided background information and details on the proposed school transportation contract amendment with AA Transportation; described pay continuity decision-making considerations by group for: a) administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, clerical and IT support, and paraprofessionals, b) door monitors and crossing guards, c) food service staff, and d) extended school care staff; detailed unemployment cost forecasting; and noted differences between furloughs and layoffs. Dr. Sawyer added his recommendation, based on this information, that crossing guards, door monitors, and extended school care staff be furloughed from close of business May 1, 2020 until start of business on the morning of June 15, 2020. Mr. Collins went on to address items relevant to forecasting for both the current fiscal year and for FY21.

B. Contract Amendment with AA Transportation for School Closure Period: Vote

Please see agenda item VII.A. Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to approve the proposed transportation contract amendment with AA Transportation.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously that in accordance with the Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance issued on March 27, 2020, and in the mutual interest of Shrewsbury Public Schools and AA Transportation Co., to approve the amendment Between the Shrewsbury Public Schools and AA Transportation Inc. [of Shrewsbury, MA] dated April 29, 2020, contingent upon the final approval of the Shrewsbury Town Manager who is the municipality’s Chief Procurement Officer. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

C. Payroll Continuity for Staff During School Closure Period: Vote

Please see agenda item VII.A. Dr. Sawyer provided historical information on payroll continuity since the onset of the pandemic; described tables - constructed by Mr. Collins - illustrating pay information broken down by various criteria that provided a framework for decision-making relative to payroll continuity; and detailed his recommendations on payroll continuity for staff by group.

Committee members expressed support for the recommendations while acknowledging regret that difficult fiduciary decision-making in the current, challenging environment could have a negative impact on SPS staff.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the continued compensation of the following salaried and hourly employees during the school closure period, at their contractual rates of pay based on their typical time worked per pay period, for the remainder of their contractual work year during Fiscal Year 2020, which ends June 30, 2020: professional educators in the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A; paraprofessionals in the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association; unclassified staff including secretaries, clerical support staff, and information technology staff; administrators in the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B; and all non-represented school administrators. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees for at least the dates of May 5 through May 15 of the mandated school closure for the COVID-19 pandemic, at their contractual rates of pay based on their typical time worked per pay period. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to place the following positions on furlough effective with the end of business on Friday, May 1 through the start of business on the morning of Monday, June 15: all crossing guards, all door monitors, and all Extended School Day positions, with the exception of the Director of Extended Learning and the Assistant to the Director of Extended Learning. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, 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 22, 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 Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, on a roll call vote: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:31pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 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:

1. Update on COVID-19 Response Report Slides 04-29-20
2. Update on Impact of COVID-19 on Finance & Operations Report Slides 04-29-20
3. Bus Contract Amendment Memo
4. Bus Contract Amendment
5. Commissioner's Memo - Payments for Contracted Services
6. Payroll Continuity Memo - 04-29-20
7. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above