

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, June 10, 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 7:00pm.

**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**

Mr. Wensky thanked the leadership team at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) for a great week of graduation activities honoring the Class of 2020. Ms. Fryc advised that the Beal Building Committee recently toured the site of the new school with the architects, LPA/A, and builders, Fontaine Brothers, and noted the project was progressing on time, adding that the Committee, architects, and builders comprise a good team. Ms. Heffernan thanked all PTOs for the support they provide to schools, and noted the Walter J. Paton School PTO had recently arranged a surprise farewell parade for Principal Wendy Bell who is leaving the district at the end of the academic year.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer concurred with Mr. Wensky's and Ms. Fryc's comments on graduation activities and the Beal Building project; thanked staff at all schools for organizing the return of students' belongings; thanked educators, students, and families for their ongoing work on remote learning; and discussed upcoming plans for addressing racism and equity in the district.

#### **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

##### **A. School Committee Resolution Condemning Racism: Vote**

Mr. Palitsch commended Dr. Sawyer for his statement the prior week on the murder of George Floyd and racism, adding he felt it was important for the School Committee to go on record as well. Noting his draft resolution that was presented previously to the Committee had been slightly modified, Mr. Palitsch highlighted the changes.

Mr. Palitsch requested a motion to adopt the resolution as read aloud in its entirety:

*The Shrewsbury School Committee hereby:*

- *Condemns the murder of George Floyd that took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020*
- *Recognizes and condemns the ongoing impact of racism, both overt and structural, on black Americans that continues in our nation. All individuals and organizations, including Shrewsbury Public Schools, have an obligation to recognize and work to remove attitudes and barriers that lead to inequitable treatment based on race*
- *Recognizes that education is an important vehicle to address racism; we must better understand our history as it relates to racism, and engage in critical conversations on the topic*
- *Re-commits to the elements of our Shrewsbury Public Schools Core Values that our district:*
  - *honor each person's individuality, celebrate our community's diversity, and support school cultures of mutual acceptance and respect.*
  - *strives to create opportunities for all students to achieve success.*
- *Commits to supporting the Superintendent's announced intention that we will do better for our students, families, and staff members of color, and that a conscious and deliberate effort be made on that front*

Dr. Magee seconded the motion. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted unanimously to support the motion.

##### **B. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School Closure: Report**

Dr. Sawyer began the report with a summary of key messages, and updates on planning and potential scenarios for reopening schools. Ms. Belsito presented information from the Department of Student Services that included an update on guidance received from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for potential Extended School Year

(ESY) services. Mr. Collins provided an update on the FY21 Budget and provided details on COVID-19 related funding and expenditures. Ms. Clouter thanked the Allied Arts program at SPS for meeting the challenges of remote learning, and Dr. Lizotte and Staples for providing postcards to families that allow access to multiple summer learning programs with a single QR code; noted resources were being compiled on the topic of racism for students; and addressed next steps for the district relative to the Student Opportunity Act.

### **C. Student Recognition: SHS Esports State Champions**

Mr. Steve McKinstry, Esports Coach, provided a history and overview of the sport, described how the program is structured at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), and detailed the program's achievements, noting SHS teams have won all seven Esports State Championships in both leagues - *Rocket League* and *League of Legends*. Mr. McKinstry introduced student leader Jerry Du, who detailed the SHS Gatekeepers' success in the *League of Legends*, and student leader Riley Crowell, who detailed the SHS CEOs' success in the *Rocket League*.

Dr. Sawyer and the Committee congratulated the teams, and Mr. McKinstry provided additional information in response to questions regarding the number of SHS teams, future plans, and female participation in the program.

### **D. Staff Recognition: Retiring Staff Members**

Ms. Malone recognized the following retirees:

#### Teachers/Professional Staff

Nancy Bedard, Norma Chico, Linda Derosier, Anne Ernest, Sara Honig, Amy Johnson, Nancy Lowery, Cathy McDonagh, Kathleen Scibelli, Robert Secino, Katie Zimmerman

#### Paraprofessionals

Mary Benjamin, Donna Collins, Deborah Durnin, Sharon Laramée, Jane Pineda, Kathy Mangan, Harold (Hal) Newman, Cyndee Tozeski, Nancy Watson

#### Secretarial/Administrative Assistants

Barbara Bourassa, Gail King

Ms. Bourassa, Ms. Derosier, Ms. Scibelli, and Ms. Durnin were in attendance at the virtual meeting; Ms. Honig, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Secino, and Ms. Zimmerman were in attendance and gave brief remarks about their experiences at SPS; and Ms. Malone read prepared statements on behalf of Ms. McDonagh and Ms. King. Dr. Sawyer and the Committee offered thanks and congratulations to the retirees.

### **E. Colonial Connections Program: Update**

Dr. Lizotte addressed this agenda item and agenda item IV.F. in her presentation. She introduced Shrewsbury Town Manager Kevin Mizikar, a member of the Colonial Connections Advisory Board, who provided background information on the Colonial Connections program and described real-world learning projects it initiated that gave students and municipal leaders opportunities to work together. Dr. Lizotte introduced Colonial Connections board member Mary Simone, General Manager, Worcester AC Hotel by Marriott, who discussed the composition, work, and goals of the Advisory Board. Dr. Sawyer and the Committee thanked Dr. Lizotte, Mr.

Mizikar, and Ms. Simone for the work done by the Colonial Connections initiative, then Mr. Mizikar and Ms. Simone left the meeting.

Dr. Lizotte went on to provide an overview of her work in the role of Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being since July 1, 2019. She discussed empowering learners through events with alumni; work on the Colonial Fund and establishing an alumni network; initiatives and partnerships supporting the district's strategic priority of enhanced well-being for all; social emotional learning programming and efforts; and engaging and communicating with the community.

The Committee expressed appreciation to Dr. Lizotte for her work in the role and for the additional financial resources it generated, and asked about the potential for surveying members of the expanding alumni network on their experiences at SHS. Dr. Sawyer thanked Dr. Lizotte for her work, and also expressed appreciation to Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union, who funded the Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being position in its entirety for the 2019-20 academic year.

#### **F. Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being: Report on Inaugural Year**

Please see the previous agenda item.

#### **V. Curriculum**

None.

#### **VI. Policy**

##### **A. School Department's Release of Use of the Beal Early Childhood Center Building & Land Contingent Upon New School Opening: Discussion**

Dr. Sawyer provided a preview of a future vote by the Committee relative to releasing the property occupied by the existing Beal Early Childhood Center when the new Beal School opens. He described a number of requisite steps in the process that allows the town to sell the property for reuse, including a vote by the School Committee at their next meeting to release control of the property back to the Town of Shrewsbury, contingent upon not requiring the building any longer due to the opening of the new Beal School. There were no comments or questions from the Committee.

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

##### **A. Fiscal Year 2021 Compensation for Non-Union Represented Staff: Vote**

Advising that information was presented at prior meetings around the potential for a greatly increased FY21 budget gap and a need to adjust payroll, Mr. Collins recommended that the compensation of all non-union staff for Fiscal Year 2021 be frozen at FY20 levels, noted that the SPS administrative team would be reduced by one position by not backfilling the vacancy created by the opening of the principal position at Paton School (where Dr. Lizotte will serve as acting principal), and illustrated the combined resultant savings. He also recommended that Extended School Care (ESC) salaries be frozen at FY20 rates, and noted the savings to the ESC fund.

Dr. Sawyer expressed regret at recommending a salary freeze but acknowledged the need to take steps to address the pending budget gap and preserve the existing program at SPS. Committee members concurred.

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously that the compensation of all non-union staff for Fiscal Year 2021 be frozen at the level as of June 30, 2020. 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 June 3, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

### **XI. Executive Session**

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

A. for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (“Purpose 7”), Open Meeting Law,

G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes; and

B. for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A; Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B; the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association; and/or the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Dr. Magee, 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 9:21 pm.

### **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch: yes; Mr. Wensky: yes; Ms. Heffernan: yes; Dr. Magee: yes; and Ms. Fryc: yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Revised Draft School Committee Resolution Condemning Racism
2. Update on COVID-19 Response Report Slides 06-10-20
3. SHS Esports Slide Presentation
4. 2020 Retiring Staff Memo
5. Colonial Connections Donations Summary
6. Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being Slide Presentation
7. Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being Position Update
8. Beal Building Reuse Response Letter 03-19-18
9. FY21 Non-Union Compensation Slide Presentation
10. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above