

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, July 8, 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. 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 7:03 pm, who requested a moment of silence after offering condolences on behalf of the School Committee to the family of Ms. Lori Cyr, Special Education Administrative Assistant at Shrewsbury High School, who passed away recently.

I. Public Participation

Ms. Fryc noted that public participation is possible at virtual meetings and advised anyone interested to reach out to the School Committee via email.

Ms. Sanam Zaer addressed the Committee by reading a letter to Dr. Sawyer and the School Committee citing the recently conducted equity audit and expressing concern regarding inequalities in the English Language Learner (ELL) Department at Shrewsbury High School and requested additional staffing be considered for that department. Ms. Fryc advised that the Committee would take the information under advisement.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Palitsch advised that he would bring a resolution to the Committee for review at their next regular meeting requesting that the state guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Zaer for her comments; expressed condolences to the family of Ms. Cyr on behalf of the district; noted remote summer Extended School Year (ESY) programming began this week for special education students, and that planning was in process for some limited in-person services in July; and advised that planning for reopening schools in fall is underway for three potential scenarios: in-person, remote, and hybrid learning, adding that guidance is still pending from the state on a variety of issues including transportation.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Update on Equity & Anti-Racism Work

Ms. Fryc advised that the School Committee received a letter from Shrewsbury High School (SHS) alumna Kathy Bi which was signed by over 500 alumni, current students, staff, parents, and community members that was sent to SHS Administration requesting that the district increase its efforts around equity and anti-racism. Ms. Fryc noted she, Dr. Sawyer, SHS Principal Todd Bazydlo, and SHS staff would meet with Ms. Bi and other authors of the letter the following day to get additional clarification and guidance and thanked Ms. Bi and contributors for their efforts.

Dr. Sawyer thanked signatories for their passion and efforts around equity and anti-racism; noted the district is looking for participants on their Equity and Anti-Racism Coalition; advised that equity and anti-racism would be key topics for summer work for district leaders and for providers of professional development to staff; and noted that the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain* by Zaretta L. Hammond was chosen for book study by the district leadership team. He advised that the important work around equity and anti-racism will take time, and Ms. Heffernan noted the importance of having community partners and balancing urgency and structure to do the work right.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget: Update

Mr. Collins began by noting the district already entered Fiscal Year 2021 and was utilizing an allowance by the state to operate under a 1/12th budget (1/12th of the prior year budget is rolled forward) to cover current expenses. His report included two FY21 budget models utilizing different assumptions with different resultant gaps; an update on federal stimulus funds by type; potential COVID-19 related budget additions; a revised FY21 budget schedule; and an FY21 budget development chronology.

Committee members thanked Mr. Collins for his work, noting the complexity, volatility, and gravity of the current budget situation. Mr. Collins provided additional information regarding the use of relief funds, the potential for cuts, and the possibility of revisiting the budget during the year in light of current volatility in response to questions from Dr. Magee. Dr. Sawyer provided information in response to questions from Ms. Heffernan relative to a deadline (no specific deadline yet) and response (not expected unless plans differ markedly from the preferred model) from the state regarding the district's three plans for reopening schools in the fall.

B. Transportation Logistics and Fees for 2020-2021 School Year: Discussion

Mr. Collins advised he would be making a recommendation at the following meeting for a decision on transportation services for the upcoming school year. In his report, he noted

guidance and/or regulations from the state relative to transportation are still pending; discussed school start and end times and the potential for changes; addressed state and local timing of policy and protocol decisions; discussed service levels and state minimum requirements for transportation; provided 2019-2020 student ridership data; noted the potential for a different, approach to bus fees for the upcoming year; described cleaning protocols for buses; and advised regarding next steps. Committee members asked clarifying questions about restrictions on the number of available buses, costs for cleaning them, and the potential for revenue loss depending on the level of service available to riders; and noted the importance of looking at transportation service level options and decision-making through an equity lens.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meetings held on June 24, 2020 and July 6, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion that the School Committee enter into 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 Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:40 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 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. Letter re: ELL inequities
2. Letter to SHS Administrators re: Equity and Anti-Racism
3. FY21 Budget Update Slide Presentation
4. Transportation Considerations Slide Presentation
5. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above