

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Present: 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 attendance 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

Dr. Megan Brault, Clinical Psychologist and Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) parent, participated (by phone) and addressed anxiety in children and adults relative to the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggested ways to address it. Mr. Gary Chalmers, Shrewsbury Education Association (SEA) President, addressed the Committee (by phone) on behalf of SEA members to advise that their number one priority is safety of people (children and adults) and having safe public school buildings, and that the SEA must continue to be participants in all ongoing conversations relative to safety.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked Dr. Brault and Mr. Chalmers for their comments and suggestions during Public Participation, and acknowledged the retirement of SPS Coordinator of Safety, Security, and Transportation Mr. Stephen Rocco, and expressed appreciation for his service.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Project 351 Service Project: Presentation

Preston Karp, Shrewsbury High School student and 2017 Project 351 Ambassador, and Carolyn Casey, Project 351 Founder and Executive Director, presented information (by phone) on a new

online fundraising component of their 9/11 Tribute Service program, the *National Day of Service Online Donation Database!* The program seeks \$9.11 donations to support the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund (MMHF) which recognizes fallen heroes' service and provides support to their families.

Ms. Heffernan, who lost a family member on 9/11, noted the importance of impactful support as a component of the thoughtful remembrance of 9/11. Dr. Sawyer added that the 2020 Project 351 Ambassador, student Emma Keeley, was unable to present to the Committee in the spring due to the pandemic, but would hopefully appear at a future meeting.

B. Plan for Reopening School for the 2020-2021 School Year: Recommendation & Vote

Dr. Sawyer began the report with a summary of key messages, expressed appreciation for input to the plan from all stakeholders, described Shrewsbury Public Schools' (SPS) approach in the context of the current environment, provided local and national data on COVID-19 positivity, summarized the recommended reopening plan and important information for families, and described recommended changes to the SPS 2020-2021 school year calendar. Director of Nursing Noelle Freeman presented information on health and safety in schools, including mitigation strategies and protocols for COVID-19 scenarios. Ms. Clouter discussed reopening options; noted the reopening timeline; provided the rationale for, and structure of, the proposed hybrid model; described remote learning days; detailed the stand alone remote learning option, and contrasted it with homeschooling. Ms. Belsito's report from the Department of Student Services addressed hybrid cohort assignment, provision of Individualized Education Program Services and Section 504 Accommodation Plans, team meetings, early childhood special education services for preschool students, supports and safe learning environments, and student well-being. Director of Information Technology, Brian L'Heureux, provided information on student devices, home internet access, and the different learning platforms utilized by SPS families. Mr. Collins addressed school transportation, food services, facilities, extended school care, athletics, and after school clubs/activities. Dr. Lizotte noted the importance of staff well-being, described the multiple tiers of support available to staff, and detailed suggested action steps for the upcoming school year. Ms. Malone addressed aspects of workforce planning including leaves/anticipated leaves of absence, and critical questions and planning relative to current and future staffing.

Committee members, in turn, offered comments and asked clarifying questions on a variety of issues including cohort determination, nurse staffing, staff anxiety and well-being, and building ventilation. All members expressed support for the plan. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's recommended school reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year as presented and authorize its submission to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Revised Calendar for 2020-2021 School Year: Vote

Dr. Sawyer summarized the proposed changes to the Shrewsbury Public Schools 2020-2021 School Year Calendar, which were presented in agenda item IV.B. and are based on direction received from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the revised Shrewsbury Public Schools 2020 - 2021 School Year Calendar as presented.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Revised Fiscal Year 2021 School Department Budget Recommendation:

Recommendation & Vote

In his report, Mr. Collins addressed the challenging reality of the FY21 budget and the strategy for addressing it; provided an update on state aid; noted the current budget status (\$1.1M estimated remaining gap); noted relevant budget factors in the short term; and recommended the Committee vote to approve a budget of \$67,995,283 for approval at the Annual Town Meeting on August 8, 2020.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend a School Department Fiscal Year 2021 budget of \$67,995,283 for approval at the Annual Town Meeting to be held on August 8, 2020.

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 July 22, 2020 and July 29, 2020, and the School Committee Workshop held on July 29, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. 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.

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.

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 Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:49 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 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. 2020-2021 SPS Reopening Plan Report
2. 2020-2021 SPS Reopening Plan Slide Presentation
3. Revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar
4. Revised FY21 Budget Recommendation Slide Report 08-06-20
5. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above