

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 23, 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.

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The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None. Ms. Fryc noted that anyone wishing to participate in public participation should reach out to the School Committee via email.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked all involved parties for their contributions to a challenging but successful reopening of schools, and noted more information would be presented in the subsequent report.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Opening of the 2020-2021 School Year: Report

Dr. Sawyer presented a summary of key messages, reasons to be proud around the reopening of schools, photos of students back at school (in-person and remote), and current local and state public health data. Director of Nursing Noelle Freeman discussed mitigation strategies for

students and staff, noted COVID-19 related occurrences and communications, and summarized findings from the Mathematica study “Operating schools in a Pandemic: Predicted Effects of Opening, Quarantining, and Closing Schools.” Mr. Collins and Transportation and COVID Operations Coordinator Karen Isaacson presented an update on finance and operations that included information on reopening preparations and de-densifying schools (with student volunteers making a significant contribution to the effort); the work of COVID Operations Assistants; physical modifications and cleaning at schools; and transportation and food service adaptations. Director of Technology Brian L’Heureux presented data on technology tickets for summer and reopening of schools (noting a significant increase from last year); noted successes and challenges; and acknowledged the Information Technology team for their work. Ms. Malone discussed employee outcomes for extended school care and cafeteria workers, and noted challenges relative to hiring and managing leaves of absence. Ms. Belsito addressed communication and work with families relative to student learning plans, and detailed a professional development opportunity for staff provided by personnel from the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) Program on the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, student wellness, and accessing supports. Dr. Lizotte’s report on staff well-being described professional development presentations to staff by Dr. Kim Kusiak, Consulting Psychiatrist for Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) - *The Science of Resilience* - and Jenny Maddox, Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) Director, and noted ongoing ways that staff support themselves and each other. Ms. Clouter presented information on experiences all students have in common; ways teachers continue to learn; and detailed learning experiences by level: elementary, middle, and high school. All presenters thanked their respective teams for work done around reopening of schools.

Committee members thanked the presenters for the work done around the safe and successful reopening of schools; asked clarifying questions about budget and COVID-related hiring, and about free lunches for students in the context of individual family finances; and expressed concern regarding the heavy workload being experienced by the Information Technology Department.

B. Fall Athletics: Report & Vote on Athletic Fee

In their report, Mr. Collins and Athletic Director Jay Costa presented information on Athletics participation and physical exam requirements; the four athletic seasons for 2020-2021 and sports being offered; expectations of coaches, student-athletes, and parent/guardians; Cohort D student participation; individual sport modifications; transportation of athletes; modified league makeups, protocols, and game schedules; student registration and participation; current information on user fees for 2020-21; and a proposed recommendation to lower user fees due to modifications to athletics resulting from the COVID pandemic. Dr. Sawyer advised that he supports the recommendation. Committee members expressed support for the recommendation, and asked clarifying questions about the ability to plow the turf field to allow for the additional February through April season and about the geographic pods limiting the number of schools that will compete against each other.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2020-2021 Athletic Fee be set at \$275 per sport with a \$825 annual cap, and \$40 per sport with a \$120 annual cap for students eligible for Free or Reduced Price lunch, due to

modified seasons and competition schedules per current Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association [MIAA] protocols based upon COVID conditions.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

None.

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 September 9, 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 Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:06pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Fryc, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. 2020-21 School Year Reopening Slide Presentation
2. Fall Athletics Report Slides
3. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above