

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, December 20, 2023**

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Ms. Rachel Sharifipour; Mr. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

**II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports**

Ms. Fryc reported serving as a judge at the Sherwood Middle School (December 8) and Oak Middle School (December 15) Spelling Bees, congratulated the winners, and expressed appreciation to the Middle School PTO for facilitating the events.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer thanked all parties who contributed to the Family Dinner held at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) on December 15 for families staying in the Emergency Homeless Shelter in Shrewsbury, and reported that the Colonial Fund's year-end campaign is seeking donations for the purchase of a three-dimensional anatomy table for use by SHS students taking science courses and participating in the Biomedical and Health Sciences Innovation Career Pathway program.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Athletics Sponsorship: Vote**

Ms. Fryc introduced presenters Mr. Jason Costa, Director of Athletics, and Cornerstone Bank AVP Senior Market Manager Mr. Joel Laureano, and provided details of Cornerstone Bank's proposed sponsorship donation in exchange for the conveyance of corporate logo placement on the Shrewsbury High School Stadium scoreboard.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the enclosed memorandum of understanding with Cornerstone Bank regarding the proposed conveyance of corporate logo placement on the Shrewsbury High School Stadium Scoreboard.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept annual donations of \$5,000 each for the next five years, for a total of \$25,000, for this sponsorship, with the funds to be allocated to the Shrewsbury High School Artificial Turf Field Project

Fund.

After the votes, Mr. Laureano and Ms. Fryc signed the approved memorandum of understanding.

### **B. Gifts to the RISE Program: Vote**

Dr. Lizotte presented details of a donation from Ms. Babs Donahue and the Irving James Donahue, Jr. Fund to the RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) Program to provide funding for student wages for work outside of the school day at the *Maple & Main* retail business.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$15,000 donation to the RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) Program from the Irving James Donahue, Jr. Fund to provide funding for student wages for work outside of the school day at the *Maple & Main* retail business presented by RISE.

Ms. Belsito presented remarks on behalf of the Turpin family (Ms. Belsito is a member of the Turpin family) and provided details on a donation from the family to the RISE Program to sponsor a learning space at the *Maple & Main* retail business.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$5,000 donation to the RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) Program from the Turpin Family to sponsor one of the learning spaces at the *Maple & Main* retail business presented by RISE.

### **V. Curriculum**

None.

### **VI. Policy**

None.

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

#### **A. High School & PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Update: Report**

Dr. Sawyer reported that the Statement of Interest (SOI) submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for overcrowding at Shrewsbury High School was not selected for the eligibility phase (only 19 of 63 SOIs were chosen), added that the district was welcome to submit again, and recommended that the School Committee and Select Board submit another SOI for the upcoming submission cycle. Committee members concurred that lack of space would continue to be an issue at SHS and supported submitting another SOI.

Mr. Girardi provided historical information on creation of the Preschool-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee and its work to date, noted upcoming meetings in January and February 2024 would include discussion of current and future preschool enrollment and programming options, and advised that the Study Committee planned to present their recommendations to the School Committee in March 2024.

Committee members noted that holding Preschool-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee meetings at all five elementary schools provides opportunities for study committee members to experience a variety of different school environments, and that the potential for mandated preschool in the future should be a factor in decision making.

### **B. Grant Funding Acceptance: Vote**

Mr. Girardi provided detailed information on the five grants being presented for the Committee's approval - High Quality Instructional Materials Purchase Grant [165], Special Education Program Improvement Grant [274], Chronic Absenteeism Grant [CFDA 84.425U], MyCAP Development and Implementation Grant [598], and Instructional Leadership Institute Participant Stipend Grant [654] - and recommended that the Committee vote to accept the grants. Dr. Sawyer noted the grants, along with the sponsorship and donations voted on earlier in the meeting, represented funding sources for the district outside of the appropriated budget and recommended that the Committee vote to accept the grants.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the five Fiscal Year 2024 grants as presented and use such funds for their intended purpose.

### **VIII. Old Business**

#### **A. Vacation Enrichment Program Tuition Fees: Vote**

Noting a prior vote (December 6, 2023) by the Committee to increase summer vacation enrichment program tuition fees (to support higher teacher stipends) did not include language to increase February and April vacation tuition fees similarly, Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote again for the same reasons using broader language to encompass school vacation enrichment programs. There were no questions from the Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to increase the class fee for vacation enrichment classes to \$100 per class.

### **IX. New Business**

#### **A. Assabet Valley Collaborative Update: Report**

Dr. Sawyer reported that the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) Fiscal Year 2023 annual audit included no findings relative to budget and finances, and reflected a carry-forward general fund surplus of 12% (the maximum allowed by state statute and regulation is 25%). Dr. Sawyer added that there continues to be strong demand for AVC's programming, and that space being renovated at their Marlborough location is near completion and will be utilized for programming and returning the space currently being used for hosting professional development.

#### **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on December 6, 2023, 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 Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association, 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. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:55 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Sharifipour, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Cornerstone Bank Memorandum of Understanding

PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Update Report

MSBA Letter re: SHS Statement of Interest

PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee Roster

Grant Funding Memo

Grant Funding Spreadsheet

Assabet Valley Collaborative FY23 Audit Letter

Assabet Valley Collaborative FY23 Audit Report

Assabet Valley Collaborative FY23 Audit Board of Directors Letter

Set(s) of minutes as referenced above