

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 27, 2024**

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Ms. Rachel Sharifipour; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; 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. Boucher reported attending a visit by MA Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler and MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper to Shrewsbury High School (SHS) on March 15. Secretary Tutwiler and Secretary Tepper spoke with SHS students about the Teaching with Trout program, Project Lead The Way classes, and the Biomedical Science course.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the cast and crew on a successful production of the musical *Little Shop of Horrors* at Shrewsbury High School (SHS); reported attending the visit to SHS by Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler and Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper; and announced the district had been awarded a \$24,000 grant from the One8 Foundation for Project Lead The Way work at the middle level.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee: Report**

In his report, Dr. William Lupini, Consultant at the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, shared: an overview and timeline for work in the district on Capital Planning; the PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee's charge and key questions for consideration, project methodology, and schedule; small group questions addressed by the Committee; key recommendations; variables impacting Capital Planning work; potential future solutions; and a summary of salient takeaways from the work. Committee members shared their perspectives in turn, with all expressing appreciation for the work done by the PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee, and for the plurality of options presented for consideration going forward. Dr. Sawyer added that while no changes were imminent, the work provided a good foundation for future work on capital planning for preschool through Grade 4 space and building needs. In response to a question from the Committee, Dr. Lupini advised that the four key possible future

solutions/options presented assumed that modular classrooms would not remain where they currently exist at Coolidge, Paton, and Spring Street Schools.

### **B. Fiscal Year 2025 Career & Technical Education Budget: Report**

Dr. Lizotte began the report by noting that a key investment for the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget was a personnel request for the addition of a Career and Technical Education Coordinator (CTEC) position at SHS. Dr. Lizotte and SHS Principal Todd Bazydlo detailed key areas of responsibility for the position - engaging students and strengthening life skills; expanding Career & Technical Education (CTE) opportunities; collaborating with businesses, CTE organizations, and colleges/universities; and creating internship opportunities - before summarizing CTE financial resources that include grants and donations. Committee members and Dr. Sawyer expressed support for adding the CTEC position. Additional information was provided in response to questions from the Committee on areas including Project Lead The Way startup investments, consumables, and future recurring costs (projecting \$6800/year for Biomedical and \$5000/year for Engineering for consumables), and on making CTE connections going forward (Dr. Lizotte will collaborate with the new Career and Technical Education Coordinator).

### **C. Fiscal Year 2025 Community Partnerships & Well-Being Budget: Report**

Dr. Lizotte began the report by sharing examples of Community Partnerships and Well-Being initiatives in the district, and noting different ways Shrewsbury Public Schools alumni give back (including meeting with students via the “Lunch and Learn” program at SHS). Dr. Lizotte noted key areas of budget responsibility, discussed advancing community partnerships, and detailed efficiencies through the use of grants and donations for Fiscal Year 2025. While addressing the advancement of well-being initiatives, Dr. Lizotte described a change in fund use for FY25 around shifting \$85,000 away from the existing full-time Mindfulness Director position and into the contracted service budget to address a variety of funding needs (giving examples) for student and staff wellness during the course of the fiscal year. Committee members noted extant wellness groups and multiple stakeholders in the district could assist in identifying the best path going forward. Dr. Sawyer expressed support for the transitioning of funding to support developing areas of need for student and staff well-being.

### **V. Curriculum**

None.

### **VI. Policy**

#### **A. Student Opportunity Act Plan Renewal: Vote**

In her report, Ms. Clouter presented an overview of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA); noted it was historically associated with Chapter 70 state funding and that Shrewsbury Public Schools is a minimum-aid district; detailed what public schools are required to do now, by law, to support SOA; shared some of the 2024 SOA Program Categories alongside associated evidence-based program examples; and described next steps in the renewal process while noting there is no longer a tie to state funds. In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Clouter advised the district must submit and vote on a formal plan every three years, report out on metrics each year, and solicit community feedback every three years (which was accomplished in this phase through the district’s recent strategic plan and goal-setting processes). Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to approve the district’s plan. On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the district’s plan for meeting the requirements of the Student Opportunity Act as presented.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Fiscal Year 2025 Fees & Tuitions: Vote**

Noting information on fees and tuition was presented at the previous School Committee meeting, Dr. Sawyer advised that based on feedback from the Committee, support from the community provided by the 2021 override, and Shrewsbury Public Schools being a high-fee district relative to its peers, he recommended no changes be made to transportation and high school athletic fees, preschool tuitions, or music lesson fees. Dr. Sawyer did recommend increasing the Oak Middle School (OMS) athletic fee from \$100 to \$125 per season (family cap per year would increase from \$300 to \$375) to address inflationary costs associated with the expanding program, and raising Extended School Care tuition by 8.0% to cover the costs of the self-funded program.

Committee members shared their detailed perspectives in turn, with all expressing support for the increase to Extended School Care tuition.

Members were not in agreement on increasing the OMS athletic fee, but all expressed support for engaging in discussions around the long-term approach to levying fees in the district. Ms. Heffernan did not support the increase, citing free/reduced lunch data indicating that fees may create a barrier to program participation for low-income families. Ms. Sharifpour shared similar concerns about affordability but saw benefits to investing in the OMS athletic program and supported the increase for now. Ms. Boucher supported the modest increase in the short term given that the program had expanded considerably and the new fee would be more equitable relative to other fees currently levied in the district. Mr. Wensky shared his rationale - including initial concerns around keeping the program operational and sustaining growth - for supporting the small fee increase in the short term. Ms. Fryc was not in favor of increasing the fee, citing additional financial pressures on families in the community and fee dependence in the district. Dr. Sawyer expressed support for conversations around long-term fee planning in the district. Given the lack of consensus, Ms. Heffernan suggested the Committee delay the vote on the OMS athletic fee if it would not delay future planning in the district. Dr. Sawyer advised that delaying the vote on the OMS athletic fee would not impact planning and Ms. Fryc agreed to table the vote.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the adjustments to Extended School Care tuition for Fiscal Year 2025 as illustrated in the Superintendent's recommendation memo.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None.

## **IX. New Business**

None.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on March 6, and the School Committee Meeting held on March 13, 2024, 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;

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; and

C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” – non-union clerical and support staff and/or administrators (“Purpose 2”), 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 Ms. Sharifipour, 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 9:09 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm. 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:

PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee Report  
PreK-Grade 4 Capital Planning Study Committee Slide Presentation  
FY25 Career & Technical Education Budget Report  
FY25 Career & Technical Education Budget Slide Presentation  
FY25 Community Partnerships & Well-Being Budget Report  
FY25 Community Partnerships & Well-Being Budget Slide Presentation  
Student Opportunity Act Plan Memo  
Student Opportunity Act Plan Slide Presentation  
FY25 Fees & Tuitions Recommendation Memo  
FY25 Fee Rate Information- Financial Assistance Data Memo  
Set(s) of minutes as referenced above