

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 6, 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; 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.

Special Opening

The Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Chamber Choir, under the direction of Mr. Michael Lapomardo, SHS Teacher - Performing Arts, Music, Choral - performed "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The students who performed were:

Soprano

Mikayla Boucher

Arpan Chhabra

Diya Gopal

Rebekah Powers

Alto

Aditi Ashokkumar

Keira Fitch

Aanchal Karthik

Gianna Tan

Tenor

Nicholas Claros

Callan Fitch

Chase Kinsky

Carter Siebels

Bass

Cristian Salvan

Sebastian Salvan

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that the following school day would follow an Early Release Schedule due to extreme heat and provided Early Release times and cancellations by school and program; noted attending an assembly the prior day at Shrewsbury High School which featured student Kubra Mohammadi sharing her personal story with the school community about fleeing Afghanistan as a refugee; and expressed appreciation to staff and students on executing a successful opening to the school year.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Acceptance of Donation for Oak Soccer Program: Vote

Dr. Lizotte expressed appreciation to Lexus of Northborough for their offer to donate \$5,500 to Shrewsbury Public Schools to support establishing a soccer program at Oak Middle School (OMS), and introduced Mr. Mitch Cook, President of Lexus of Northborough. Mr. Cook acknowledged Shrewsbury as a strong community supporter of Lexus of Northborough and noted the donation was an opportunity to give back to the community. Committee members and Dr. Sawyer expressed gratitude for the donation and noted the soccer program at OMS represents an expansion of student opportunities at the middle school level.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$5,500 from Lexus of Northborough to Shrewsbury Public Schools to support the addition of Girls Soccer and Boys Soccer to the athletics program at Oak Middle School.

B. School Facilities Summer Maintenance: Report

Mr. Girardi gave brief remarks and introduced Public Buildings Division Manager Mr. Bill Tuttle, who provided an overview of Public Buildings Team Members; highlighted summer projects at Floral Street School (HVAC renovation, recarpeting, gym floor resurfacing), OMS (LED lighting in the Auditorium), and Sherwood Middle School - SMS - (gym floor resurfacing); and noted a variety of miscellaneous foreseen and unforeseen school-based projects. Committee members and Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation for the strong partnership enjoyed by Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) and the Public Buildings Division.

C. Homeless Students: Report

Dr. Sawyer shared background information on the Emergency Homeless Shelter that opened in Shrewsbury in May 2023, provided a current census of SPS emergency shelter students by school and grade, and detailed state funding being provided for these students. Mr. Girardi described resources being added in the district to support homeless students and provided information on costs associated with transporting some Emergency Shelter homeless students (currently 10) to their district of origin. Committee members noted benefits derived from the summer programming provided to homeless students, and asked clarifying questions about interpreting services (in-person is better) and their formalization, after-school activities and transportation for homeless students, and increased paperwork and reporting requirements (Mr. Girardi noted important work is ongoing around relevant coding of expenses and grant funding).

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Capital Planning Update: Report

Mr. Girardi shared enrollment history and projections (2002-2031) for SHS and provided a timeline for the SHS Statement of Interest (SOI) recently submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, noting SHS was one of 30 out of 63 project submissions selected to move forward to the Senior Study stage with the MSBA. Dr. Sawyer described the goals for the district's PreK-4 Capital Planning Process, detailed the makeup of the PreK-4 Capital Planning Committee being formed (noting the Collins Center for Public Management through UMass Boston would assist with facilitation by a consultant, providing a third-party perspective with expertise in capital planning), and shared a timeline for the work going forward.

B. Fiscal Year 2024 Federal Grants: Report & Vote to Accept Grants

Mr. Girardi shared highlights from his report on FY24 state and federal grants, including that all CARES ACT Emergency Fund Grants (ESSER and ESSER II) had been fully expended, all CARES ACT Emergency Relief Fund Grant (ESSER III) funds are on track to be fully expended by September 2024, and two homeless grants included in the report are dedicated to supporting a specific set of students. Additional information was provided in response to questions from the Committee on a Special Education Entitlement Grant (federal formula is based on population, special education needs, and income) and Title I funding (federal formula is based on a low-income demographic).

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept all FY24 grant funds noted in the enclosed chart and use such funds for their intended purpose.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Bullying Statistics: Annual Report

Dr. Sawyer provided the legal definition of "bullying" utilized in the report, noted the number of qualifying incidents for the year was low and compared it to data from the 2021-2022 school year, and advised that all allegations were addressed. He detailed the types of confirmed situations reported (e.g. verbal bullying), advised the race and ethnicity of students involved was recorded and reviewed but not published (due to low sample size and the potential for inadvertently identifying students), and noted that school safety tips can be reported anonymously by way of the SPS website. In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer advised that potential alternatives to student suspensions include restorative justice practices, counseling, and peer mediation.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on August 22, 2023, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:41pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms.Sharifipour, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

School Facilities Summer Maintenance Slide Presentation

Homeless Students Report

Homeless Students Slide Presentation

PreK-4 Capital Planning Process Recommendation Memo (April 2023)

Capital Planning Slide Presentation

FY24 Federal Grant Report

Bullying Report Memo

Set(s) of minutes as referenced above