

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Mr. John Samia; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools. Ms. Erin Canzano was not present for the meeting.

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

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

I. Public Participation

Mr. Bryan Moss, member of the group Sustainable Shrewsbury, addressed the Committee regarding concerns around artificial turf fields. Mr. Moss noted that while Sustainable Shrewsbury is supportive of goals to improve existing sport fields, they would like the Committee to consider new or improved organically-managed natural grass fields instead. Mr. Moss indicated that he believed that a natural grass field could be managed to provide a sufficient number of events to meet the school district's needs. Mr. Moss added that he is concerned about heat generation relative to turf fields, and presented the Committee with a document titled *Effects of Global Warming in Massachusetts*.

Dr. Sawyer noted that any discussion around number of field uses had to consider weather conditions, that weather conditions cannot assumed to be optimal, and that unlike any type of natural grass, artificial turf can be utilized during wet conditions. Ms. Fryc added that root systems presented an additional consideration, and that natural fields require down time and rest periods that artificial turf does not require. She added that a tremendous amount of information had been reviewed during the decision-making process, that a prior vote by the Committee to proceed with the turf field project was unanimous, and that the process had already moved into the fundraising phase.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Committee Member John Samia advised that while it had been his honor and privilege to serve on the Committee for more than nine years, he would not seek re-election later this year. Mr.

Samia thanked his colleagues on the Committee, Dr. Sawyer, and Shrewsbury Public School (SPS) administrators, and noted that he might pursue other public service opportunities in the future. Ms. Fryc thanked Mr. Samia for his service and for letting the public know, and advised that she would seek re-election this year.

Ms. Fryc noted that the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) were looking for input regarding candidates being sought to replace retiring Town Manager Daniel Morgado. Ms. Fryc advised that a strong working relationship would be necessary between the new Town Manager and Dr. Sawyer, and composed a letter to the BOS on behalf of the Committee requesting that Dr. Sawyer be appointed to a search committee should one be created. The letter also included attributes the School Committee believed were necessary for a future Town Manager to be effective and successful.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the efforts of students and staff at Walter J. Paton school, who were celebrating their annual *Kindness Challenge Spirit Week*. He also expressed his appreciation to the Shrewsbury Education Foundation (SEF), who recently hosted a celebration of educators that recognized beneficiaries of grants totaling approximately \$12,000, and recipients of John P. Collins Awards for excellence in education:

Leadership

Ann Jones — Principal, Oak Middle School

Paraprofessional

Kevin O'Connor — Special Education Aide, Shrewsbury High School

Janet Pope — Media Aide, Sherwood Middle School

Professional

Elizabeth Camire — Special Education Teacher, Sherwood Middle School

Carolyn Jepsen — Music & Drama Teacher, Beal Early Childhood Center & Oak Middle School

Kathleen Scibelli — Science Teacher, Oak Middle School

Support

Judith Adair — Secretary, Spring Street School

Ken Gordon — Bus Driver, AA Transportation (Bus #9)

SEF Community Service Award

Daniel Morgado, Shrewsbury Town Manager

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

None.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Program of Studies for 2017-2018: Recommendation for Changes

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School, and Ms. Maureen Monopoli, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School (SHS), began their presentation on proposed changes to the SHS Program of Studies (POS) for 2017-18 by describing the course selection process. They went on to address efficiency - noting that 95% of students get placed into selected courses, and advised on challenges around occupancy - noting that increasing enrollment has led to 96% of classrooms being used continuously.

Ms. Monopoli advised that because of continued projected enrollment increases, proposed changes to the POS were minimal, and would be in the following subject areas: Physical Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Science, Foreign Language, and Instructional Technology and Media Services (ITAMS). It was noted that the *Spanish II Language and Culture* course was being proposed to assist students needing extra help to meet the two-year foreign language requirement at most colleges and universities.

Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Monopoli answered clarifying questions from the Committee on the process for making changes to the POS, and on limitations posed by enrollment and space issues. Mr. Bazydlo noted that multiple schools sharing staff created an additional factor in scheduling courses at SHS. Ms. Fryc and Dr. Sawyer noted the challenges at SHS around flexibility, space, and staff; thanked Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Monopoli for their report and thoughtful approach to scheduling; and acknowledged the already robust POS available to students at SHS.

VI. Policy

A. Student Activity Account Policy Updates: Second Reading & Vote

Ms. Wensky, Policy Subcommittee Member, noted that changes to School Committee Policies 941- Management of High School Student Activity Account Funds - and 942 - Management of Student Activity Funds (Pre-K-8) - were procedural, and that the policies were being updated to reflect recommendations resulting from an external audit of the Student Activity Funds last fall. He added that this was a second reading, and that no public input had been received since the first reading on January 11, 2017. Dr. Sawyer recommended approval of the changes to the policies.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee to voted unanimously to approve revised Policy 941: Management of High School Student Activity Account Funds and revised Policy 942: Management of Student Activity Funds (Pre-K-8).

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2018 Budget: Superintendent's Recommendation

Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins presented the Superintendent's Recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget, and Dr. Sawyer began by thanking Mr. Collins and Ms. Elizabeth Callahan, Executive Assistant Business and Finance, District, for their work on the budget information. Dr. Sawyer went on to discuss information about the budget (noting it was in keeping with School Committee guidelines and priorities for a "level service" budget, and met any mandated services required), key questions about resources and funding, a budget recap (the total recommendation is \$64,083,917, which represents a 6.09% increase), fiscal year 2018 investment of funds by category, growing enrollment (especially at Shrewsbury High School), and increased need for English Language Learner services.

Due to enrollment and mandated requirements, Dr. Sawyer recommended new staff to proportionally meet the expected enrollment increase of 1.6%: Assistant principal, S.H.S.; 2.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teaching positions, S.H.S.; Adjustment counselor, S.H.S.; Special education team chair, middle schools; 8.0 FTE paraprofessionals for specialized educational services.

Mr. Collins presented information on budget history that illustrated recommended versus appropriated funds (showing resultant funding gaps); reminded the Committee of Dr. Magee's presentation from the previous meeting that state aid for Shrewsbury has not been keeping up with inflation by design, due to a recalculation in 2007 that began taking into account a community's aggregated wealth; and advised that the Governor's FY 18 Budget currently estimates that additional state aid will be \$20/student, or an additional \$120,780, which would represent a very small portion of the overall budget for Shrewsbury Public Schools. Mr. Collins addressed other revenue opportunities within the district's control, and advised that these - various fees, private grants and sponsorships, School Choice enrollment, rental of Shrewsbury Public School (SPS) facilities - have already been maximized. He noted that in terms of efficiency and value, per pupil expenditure at SPS is 12% less than the state average, and that Shrewsbury's rank is 261/323, which is in the bottom 20th percentile. Regarding taxes, Shrewsbury has the lowest rate (\$12.83/\$1,000) of many nearby and comparable communities, and the tax levy (\$67,548,981) represents just 54.58% of the total budget, and can only be increased 2.5% each year.

Dr. Sawyer noted that as a result of the revenue cap on property tax and flat or declining state aid and other resources, there is an inherent and ongoing structural issue with the budget and funding, and advised that the administrative team has begun preliminary planning on FY 18 cost reductions. He addressed the timeline for next steps, expectations from the community for schools, and noted that SPS had been recognized as a national leader in "return on education investment" by The Center for American Progress, a non-partisan educational institute. Regarding the budget, Dr. Sawyer noted three key points: the need for \$3.7 million in additional funding to maintain the current program and address enrollment growth; there will be considerably less funding available to meet these needs; and the school district will create a cost reduction plan that would result in changes to the educational program and fewer staff. He finished by advising that the key question going forward would be: *What will our community do to solve the structural funding dilemma that jeopardizes the future quality of public education in Shrewsbury?*

Committee members thanked Mr. Collins and Dr. Sawyer for their work on the budget recommendation, and noted that the information reflected the “level service” budget requested. They also addressed the importance of - and resultant costs associated with - having adequate personnel to keep class sizes low; noted that the SPS budget does not include health care (which is paid from the town) and healthcare costs are currently outpacing 2 ½%; acknowledged that state aid and grants are flat or declining; and noted that SPS is already efficient and successful. Ms. Fryc summarized by noting that SPS controls spending, is expected to -and does - provide more and different services to students, and advised that how Shrewsbury moves forward and prioritizes education will be a town decision and not a solely a school decision.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Assabet Valley Collaborative: Notice of Application for Mortgage

Dr. Sawyer noted that Massachusetts General Laws have been strengthened around financial disclosures and notification to member district school committees of a collaborative’s application for a mortgage. He advised that Assabet Valley Collaborative is applying for a mortgage to purchase space for professional development opportunities, that there would be no direct cost to SPS, and that notification was being made for informational purposes to satisfy legal requirements.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on January 11, 2017.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, and to return to open session only for the purpose of adjourning. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:48 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SHS Program of Studies 2017-18 Memo
2. SHS Program of Studies 2017-18 Draft
3. SHS Program of Studies Slide Presentation
4. School Committee Policy 941 Proposed Changes Draft
5. School Committee Policy 942 Proposed Changes Draft
6. FY 2018 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation
7. FY 2018 Budget Slide Presentation
8. Assabet Valley Collaborative Mortgage: Notice of Application for Mortgage
9. Letter to Board of Selectmen regarding Town Manager Attributes