

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

Present: Dr. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Jason Palitsch; 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.

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

The meeting was convened by Dr. Sawyer at 7:02 pm in advance of the election of officers.

I. Election of Officers

Dr. Sawyer requested and accepted nominations for the Chairperson of the School Committee. Ms. Fryc nominated Dr. Magee for Chairperson, and Mr. Wensky seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Magee Chairperson of the Committee. As the elected Chairperson of the School Committee, Dr. Magee requested nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson for the School Committee. Mr. Palitsch nominated Mr. Wensky and Ms. Canzano seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Wensky Vice Chairperson of the Committee. Dr. Magee requested nominations for the position of Secretary. Mr. Wensky nominated Ms. Fryc and Ms. Canzano seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Ms. Fryc Secretary of the Committee.

II. Public Participation

None.

III. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

IV. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Fryc for her work on behalf of the Committee as Chair for the past year. He congratulated students who were recently recognized at the annual Service Learning Celebration at Shrewsbury High School, noting student Marlie Atlabachew won the Amy O'Leary Award. Dr. Sawyer also noted winners at the State Science Fair:

2nd Place

Joshua Choi (Grade 9) Defying Death: Antibacterial Resistance of E. Coli to Neomycin Sulfate

3rd Place

Vikram Pathalam (Grade 12) and Varun Swamy (Grade 12) (team project) Automated Diagnosis of Dementia through Supervised Learning Classification Algorithm

Honorable Mention

Vishnu Penubarthi (Grade 10) C “No” 2: A Novel Method to Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Motor Vehicles

Honorable Mention

Anshuman Madhukar (Grade 10) Effect of Depth and Angle of Indentation on Drag Reduction caused by Surface Dimples

V. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Central One Federal Credit Union Sponsorship: Vote

Mr. David A. L'Ecuyer, President/CEO, Central One Federal Credit Union (COFCU) announced that COFCU was donating \$750,000 to Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) as sponsorship of the Shrewsbury High School synthetic turf field project. He added this was in keeping with the existing close relationship COFCU enjoys with SPS, and illustrates COFCU's commitment to being a community-based entity.

Dr. Sawyer thanked COFCU for the very generous donation and gave a brief history of the turf field project. He acknowledged the efforts of all members of the Project Team, and highlighted the contributions of Mr. Collins; Michelle Biscotti and Kathleen Keohane, Coordinators of Development & Volunteer Services; and Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs Jim and Paula Buonomo, Maureen Harrington, and Debra Mooney. Dr. Sawyer added that this was the largest single donation to the school district in its history, and that naming rights would be conferred to COFCU as a result of their sponsorship, where the stadium would be named Central One Federal Credit Union Stadium. The Committee thanked Mr. L'Ecuyer and COFCU for their ongoing support of SPS. Mr. Collins noted the Memorandum of Understanding between the parties had been thoroughly reviewed by legal counsel for SPS.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the memorandum of understanding regarding the proposed sponsorship for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School by Central One Federal Credit Union, including the acceptance of the funds for this sponsorship.

B. Shrewsbury High School Student Advisory Committee: Report

Benjamin George, Student, Class of 2018, SAC Chair; Vikram Pathalam, Student, Class of 2017; Mark Bray, Student, Class of 2017; and Prisha Singh, Student, Class of 2019 gave the presentation (SAC member Maya McCollum, Student, Class of 2018, was not present). Their report provided information on events at SHS including summary of performing art successes, senior events, and activities associated with Spirit Week and the Class Cup competition. They went on to discuss student advocacy, providing information on iPad and Schoology surveys; the first Hackathon competition sponsored by the Student Innovation Team (SIT), and the Learnathon.

In response to clarifying questions from the Committee, the students discussed timing challenges, and the difference between “events” and “assignments,” in Schoology. Dr. Sawyer noted the importance of students having a voice at SHS, thanked the group and their advisor Mr. Andrew Smith, SHS Teacher, and invited them up to be recognized by the Committee.

C. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment: Vote to Appoint

Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Mary Beth Banios, current Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, and provided an overview of the intensive search process for the next Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction. Dr. Sawyer announced that he had determined that Amy Clouter, who has served as Principal of Calvin Coolidge School (CCS) for eleven years, was the candidate who is the best fit for this role. Regarding her qualifications for the role, Dr. Sawyer noted that her leadership at CCS has resulted in strong academic improvement, including Coolidge being named a Governor’s Commendation School in 2011, and added that Ms. Clouter has a deep understanding of how curriculum, instructional practice, assessment, and professional development work in concert to ensure students’ learning.

Dr. Sawyer also acknowledged the many strengths of the other remaining finalist for the position, Dr. Jane Lizotte, Principal of Sherwood Middle School. These included Dr. Lizotte’s leadership skills, particularly around developing strong cultures to meet the needs of the whole child, including students’ academic, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Dr. Sawyer indicated, given the great strengths of each finalist and the long track record of success each has in Shrewsbury, that it was the single most difficult hiring decision he has made in his career.

Dr. Sawyer and the Committee noted that the strong internal candidates for the position reflect well on the district, and acknowledged that the position description was robust and demanding. After Dr. Sawyer recommended Ms. Clouter for the position, on a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Mrs. Amy Clouter as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment for the Shrewsbury Public Schools effective July 1, 2017.

After the vote, Ms. Clouter briefly addressed the Committee, and noted that she was humbled and energized by, and thankful for, the opportunity to serve in the role.

VI. Curriculum

A. Profile of a Graduate: Report

Ms. Banios began by naming all the Profile of a Graduate (POG) Working Group Members, and noted that many were in attendance at the meeting. Presenting the report with Ms. Banios were Karen Gutekanst, Assistant Principal at Sherwood Middle School; Kristen Clifford, Special Education Teacher at Floral Street School; and Michael Robillard, Parent/Community Member. They reported that when high functioning organizations are faced with a changing landscape, they pay attention, investigate and explore, develop a thoughtful response, and take action. After providing background on POG, they noted that the group was tasked with determining what students need to know by the time they graduate from SPS, and went on to describe the process.

The work so far resulted in the POG Working Draft presented at the meeting, which would be debated and improved over time. The draft included information on global citizenship, collaboration and communication, resilience and focus, innovation, critical thinking and content mastery, and leadership. The group finished by describing some ideas warranting further discussion.

Discussion between the Committee and POG group included acknowledging the breadth of knowledge of group members, noting the importance of “soft skills”, meeting all students’ needs, concerns with measurement, and the importance of students being able to think critically. Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Banios and the group for their ongoing work, and noted that work on the POG project would continue in the early fall and would assist in developing new Strategic Priorities for the district.

B. Strategic Priorities Progress Report: Increasing Value to the Community

In 2011, SPS set strategic priorities for the district for the next five years, 2012-2016, with one being “Increasing Value to the Community.” Ms. Banios began her report by describing the key goals of continuing to consistently achieve results placing Shrewsbury among top performing districts, preparing students for success on future assessments, raising \$2.5 million in new, supplemental funding through a capital campaign, competitive grants, and/or sponsorships, and providing 50,000 hours of student community service. Evidence presented to support achievement of these goals included strong SAT and AP scores for the district, performance recognition for SPS from Newsweek and US News, and numerous art and theatre awards. Curriculum revision and the 1:1 Technology program at SPS helped to prepare students for the transition to computer-based testing. Ms. Banios noted that the district, with assistance from entities including the Shrewsbury Education Foundation and the Colonial Fund, had raised \$1,580,457, and Dr. Sawyer noted this did not include the \$750,000 gift from Central One Federal Credit Union announced earlier in the meeting. The additional funding allowed for a SHS television studio upgrade, the purchase of interactive media boards, and work on the Profile of a Graduate program. Regarding community service, Ms. Banios noted that for school years 2011-2017, a total of 95,293 student volunteer hours had been contributed.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about assigned curriculum, and voiced their support for evidence boards. Dr. Sawyer advised that he was proud of the results presented, and noted the importance of continuing to try to hit all targets, with strong academic results being most important.

VII. Policy

None.

VIII. Finance & Operations

A. Recommendation re: Article 13 of the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting: Vote

Dr. Magee began with a history of the planning for the renovation of the Shrewsbury High School Athletic Campus. It was noted that twelve individuals submitted a citizen's petition - Article 13 -for the May 2017 annual town meeting warrant calling for a "resolution" opposing the installation of artificial turf fields at Shrewsbury High School, but that the Committee has authority over the project and that the resolution was symbolic. Additional discussion ensued and the Committee noted that a tremendous amount of time, effort, and consideration had been given to the project. The Committee found that data shows the synthetic turf to be safe, noted it would allow for increased playing time for students and the community, and would decrease water usage.

On motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that Town Meeting defeat Article 13 of the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting. After the vote, Mr. Collins added that the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee had also voted unanimously to recommend the defeat of Article 13.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. New Business

None.

XI. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on April 26, 2017 were approved as distributed.

XII. Executive Session

None.

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch , the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Memorandum of Understanding - COFCU
2. Student Advisory Committee Agenda
3. Profile of a Graduate Report Memo
4. Profile of a Graduate Report Working Draft
5. Profile of a Graduate Working Group Roster
6. Profile of a Graduate Slide Presentation
7. Strategic Priority - Increasing Value to the Community Report
8. Strategic Priority - Increasing Value to the Community Slide Presentation
9. Article 13 Recommendation Memo
10. School Committee Policy 912 Sponsorship and Advertising
11. Superintendent's Recommendation for Assistant Superintendent Memo
12. Resume for Assistant Superintendent