

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, June 14, 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. Magee at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

State Senator Michael Moore presented recently graduated Shrewsbury High School senior Jared Sarnie with the Thomas M. Reilly Memorial Scholarship. Senator Moore sponsors the scholarship, which is named in memory of Mr. Reilly, who possessed a strong passion for writing, trivia and literature, and was a teacher and columnist for the *Millbury-Sutton Chronicle*. Mr. Sarnie gave brief remarks about the essay he wrote, and was invited up to take photos with Sen. Moore and the Committee.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer offered heartfelt thanks to Ms. Banios, who is leaving the district effective July 1, 2017 after accepting the position of Superintendent for the Windsor Central Supervisory Union in the Woodstock/Killington area of Vermont. They acknowledged Ms. Banios' many contributions to the district over the years in areas including, but not limited to, the improvement of the overall educational program and the implementation of innovative practices, including the use of technology and project-based learning.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that:

- Oak Middle School(OMS) had an outstanding showing at the MA Middle School Science and Engineering Fair. There were six projects (five individuals and one team) representing OMS, and all six projects received an award. There were two honorable mentions, two 3rd place awards, one 2nd place award, and one 1st place award.

- The 7 Fireball Winners Destination Imagination Team placed 15th (out of 135 teams) in the Destination Imagination Global Finals at Knoxville, TN in the Scientific Elementary division. The Committee had voted to approve the trip for these students at their meeting on April 12, 2017.
- He and Mr. Collins visited Shrewsbury High School teacher Jennifer Steinberg's class along with local Vietnam veterans. Ms. Steinberg's students had created Public Service Announcements (PSA) which focused on the needs and issues of veterans, and were inspired by elements of Tim O'Brien's novel *The Things They Carried*. Some of the PSAs were selected to be shown on several Shrewsbury TV channels.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Staff Retirements: Recognition

Ms. Malone advised that ten educators were ending their education careers with a well-deserved retirement, noting they had served the students of Shrewsbury Public Schools for 222 years, which represents an average of 22.2 years of service.

The following retirees were recognized (those in **bold** were in attendance at the meeting):

Ms. Deborah Bonneau, Music Teacher, Sherwood Middle School

Ms. Jean Brunell, Family Consumer Science Teacher, Shrewsbury High School

Ms. Barbara DePalo, Grade 7 Science Teacher, Oak Middle School

Ms. Ann Early, Grade 2 Teacher, Walter J. Paton Elementary School

Ms. Kristine Gustafson, Grade 2 Teacher, Walter J. Paton Elementary School

Ms. Elyse Malins, Special Education Teacher, Walter J. Paton Elementary School

Ms. Virginia Rekemeyer, Grade 6 Mathematics and Science Teacher, Sherwood Middle School

Ms. Jill Wensky, School Nurse, Beal Early Childhood Center

Ms. Nancy Chabot, Child Specific Aide, Oak Middle School

Ms. Amy Lenardson, Child Specific Aide, Floral Street Elementary School

All the retirees in attendance gave brief remarks about their experiences at SPS. The Committee and Dr. Sawyer offered their thanks and congratulations to the group, then the retirees were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and to receive a token of appreciation for their service to our students, schools, and community.

B. Student Travel – French Trip to Martinique: Vote

Ms. Heather Leger, French Teacher, Shrewsbury High School (SHS), Mr. Robert Arnold, French Teacher, SHS, and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, SHS, provided information to the Committee on a proposed student trip to Martinique for high school French students. Mr. Arnold discussed the rationale for choosing Martinique as a destination, and Ms. Leger discussed a potential itinerary, service learning opportunities, and fundraising options.

Ms. Leger, Mr. Arnold, and Mr. Bazydlo addressed questions from the Committee on travel insurance, cost, fundraising, and participation. Ms. Fryc noted the importance of students having immersive experiences, and Mr. Palitsch voiced his support for the trip. Dr. Magee expressed concerns that the trip could be exclusionary because of cost, and that the student travel opportunity was based on money, not merit.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted 4-1 to approve travel by Shrewsbury High School French students to Martinique from April 14 through April 21, 2018, with Dr. Magee casting the dissenting vote.

V. Curriculum

A. Vocational Technical Education: Discussion

Dr. Magee began the discussion by noting that recent admissions policy changes at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School (ARVTHS) resulted in approximately half the number of SPS students being admitted for the next school year than were normally accepted. Dr. Sawyer provided statistics, noted that this was the second cohort of students from SPS that had been reduced due to the new admissions policy, and added that an attendance of 20 students would represent a decrease of 15 from a historic average of 35 from SPS. He advised that historically there have always been more students wanting to attend vocational school than there are available slots.

Mr. Collins noted that while school enrollment overall in the state has declined, the demand for vocational technical education opportunities currently exceeds supply. He advised that there might be opportunity to add capacity in a targeted way at existing regional vocational schools in the state, adding that ARVTHS had increased total enrollment by 10% in the past five years. Mr. Collins went on to provide an overview of Massachusetts Department of Education Chapter 74-approved vocational technical education programs. Regarding developing a Chapter 74 program at SPS, he advised that there were a number of statutory requirements and regulations associated with the process, and that it would be lengthy.

Highlights of the conversation included: acknowledgment that vocational education opportunities are in great demand; discussion noting space and licensure requirements for vocational education; needing to determine what opportunities students were seeking in vocational education; finding ways to meet the needs of students at SPS who were not admitted to ARVTHS; and consensus that this is a state-level issue that must be addressed with officials at the that level.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2017 Budget: Report & Vote on Fund Transfer

For his final report on the FY 2017 Budget, Mr. Collins presented an overview and recap, predicting that the district would end the year having fully expended the FY 2017 appropriation. He noted surplus funding from favorable budgets relative to vocational and special education

allowed for the completion of various year-end projects, and added that overall variances would net one another out to a \$0 balance. In response to a question on costs for administrative contracted services from Mr. Palitsch, Mr. Collins and Dr. Sawyer noted that these represented special education legal expenses and significant transportation expenses associated with a special education student with medical needs.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize the administration to make budget transfers from the original budget plan as necessary to eliminate deficits and surpluses with the intent of fully expending the total FY17 appropriation by June 30, 2017 and balancing all accounts.

B. Fiscal Year 2018 Non-represented Staff Compensation Adjustments: Vote

Ms. Malone advised that rate changes were being requested for non-classified staff. The first change, for 15 secretaries, represents phase two of a two-part plan to transition them to the proper classification on the secretary scale. The second change requested is for a 2% COLA increase for all non-classified roles, including secretaries, information technology, and other roles not negotiated through association (union) contracts. Ms. Malone advised that both requests were part of the FY 18 school budget as approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

On motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to adjust Non-Represented Employee Group compensation rates by an increase of 2.0%. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to change compensation lane categories for 15 secretarial employees to reflect changes in the complexity of these roles and market conditions, as described in the attached memorandum.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

Dr. Magee requested an opinion from the Committee regarding whether it would be an appropriate time to initiate the development of focus groups among different groups within the community so as to understand their concerns and ensure that their needs are being met.

Committee members were supportive of this endeavor, noting that: our community is diverse and different groups might have unique needs; English Language Learners have unique needs; this could provide groups with a voice they might not have otherwise; it would provide the Committee with valuable information to learn from; and it is important to get all perspectives.

Dr. Magee also noted the importance of being thoughtful about approaching groups in a way that doesn't make communities feel they are being "targeted", and ensuring that participants feel comfortable about sharing concerns honestly without fear of adverse consequences, when focus groups are being established.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on June 7, 2017, and workshop minutes from: September 7, 2016; December 14, 2016; January

5, 2017; January 18, 2017; March 13, 2017; May 3, 2017; and June 6, 2017 were approved as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

A. Approving and/or Releasing Executive Session Minutes

Dr. Magee requested a motion for the School Committee to enter into executive session for the purpose of approving and/or releasing Executive Session Minutes, adding that the Committee would reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, on a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:50 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion from Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, open session was adjourned at 9:02 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. FY2017 Budget Status: Final Report
2. 2017 Retiree Recognition Memo
3. Memo re: Non-Classified Staff Hourly Rate Adjustments/COLA
4. Pay Rate Spreadsheet
5. Field Trip Permission Form
6. School Committee Policy #537
7. Martinique Field Trip Memo
8. Martinique Field Trip Proposal
9. Sets of minutes referenced above