

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. John Samia; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Not present: Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources

The meeting opened at 6:00PM and immediately adjourned to executive session for the purposes of discussing and voting on a grievance, and discussing negotiations with represented and non-represented employees, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

The Committee returned to open session at 6:34PM, and the meeting was recessed.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:01PM by Ms. Fryc, who asked for a moment of silence in observance of the passing of Mr. Dennis Cummins, who was the Assistant Superintendent of Public Buildings/Plant Manager at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) for many years.

I. Public Participation

Mr. Bryan Moss and Ms. Catherine Rajwani, members of Sustainable Shrewsbury, addressed the Committee regarding their concerns around artificial turf fields. Both advised that they had health and environmental concerns not just about crumb rubber infill, but about turf fields in general. They added that while they were supportive of goals to improve existing sport fields, they hoped that the Committee would consider new or improved natural grass fields as an option. Mr. Moss and Ms. Rajwani provided the Committee with a report: *The Dirt on Turf, What You Need to Know About Synthetic Turf and Natural Grass for Athletic Fields*.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Canzano reported that she attended the MassCUE (Computer Using Educators) technology conference with a team of educators and students, and noted that the SHS Student Innovation

team had done a presentation at the event. Mr. Wensky attended the Fall Concert at SHS the prior week and congratulated students and staff on a job well done. He also attended a film screening of *If Only* the prior evening at Oak Middle School, which was about the current opioid crisis, and was presented by Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention Education (SCAPE) and produced by James Wahlberg, Executive Director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer attended the *If Only* screening and acknowledged the efforts SCAPE; moderator Jessica Rice, SHS School Counselor; SPS nurses Noelle Freeman (Director of Nursing), Brenda Filiere, and Pamela Johnson; and principals Dr. Ann Jones and Mr. Todd Bazydlo.

Dr. Sawyer also offered his condolences on the loss of Mr. Cummins who - outside of his work on behalf of the Town of Shrewsbury and SHS - enjoyed performing music and writing.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Donation for Coordinators of Development & Volunteer Activities: Vote

Dr. Sawyer thanked Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union (SFCU) and Audubon Shrewsbury for their donations of \$7500 each in support of the position of Co-Coordination of Development and Volunteer Activities. SFCU has donated for many years, and Audubon Shrewsbury - who recently purchased Avalon Shrewsbury - elected to continue donating funding to support the efforts of Co-Coordination Kathleen Keohane and Michelle Biscotti.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$7,500 from Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union and a donation of \$7,500 from Audubon Shrewsbury to be used as funding for the Coordinators of Development & Volunteer Activities.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

B. Innovation in Learning Study Group: Report

The Innovation in Learning study group is comprised of:

Tiffany Ostrander (Elementary Administration) *unable to attend meeting*

Erin Kendrick (Elementary)

Heather Gablaski (Middle Administration) *unable to attend meeting*

Moiria Cristy (Middle ELA 6)

Megan Graham (Middle Math/Science 5)

Melissa McCann (Middle Curriculum Coordinator/Math)

Ann Jones (Middle Administration)

Jeremy Mularella (Middle Science 8)
Maura Egan (Middle ELA 8)
Jose Schroen (SHS Science/Math)
Jill Carter (SHS Science) *unable to attend meeting*
Sarah Powers (Special Education)
Shawna Powers (K-12 Department - Instructional Tech and Media) *unable to attend meeting*
Mary Beth Banios (District - Curriculum and Instruction)
Erin Canzano (School Committee)
B. Dale Magee (School Committee)

and was established to examine innovative practices at various successful schools, in an effort to seek out best practices that confirm the district's current strategic approach and that may inform the future direction of the Shrewsbury Public Schools. Federal grant funding for professional improvement was used to support the group's work.

Ms. Banios and the group presented information on schools they visited that represent innovative learning environments, and common themes across those environments: a clear vision; a sense of community; inclusion and equity; an empowered mindset; project-based learning; and flexible scheduling/structures. Ms. Banios noted that Shrewsbury has a great reputation with excellent results, but added that we need to look more closely at our students post-graduation to see if they graduate from college, and are un- or under-employed, to see how well-prepared they are for the world they are entering.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about immediate next steps, potential barriers, best practices in the short-term, time needed to get stakeholders aligned as it relates to the district's strategic priorities, and what the team learned that they did not expect.

Dr. Sawyer thanked the team for their work on the project, for stepping forward as leaders, and for taking on the extra time commitment required to do this important work. He also noted that the district's motto "empowering *learners*" applies to *everyone* at SPS, which benefits students in the short- and long-term, and makes SPS an exciting place to be an educator.

Ms. Banios left the meeting after the presentation.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

C. SHS Athletic Campus Improvements: Report & Recommendations

The presentation was given by Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Mr. Jason Costa, Director of Athletics; Ms. Michelle Biscotti, Co-Coordinator of Development & Volunteer Activities; Ms. Kathleen Keohane, Co-Coordinator of Development & Volunteer Activities; Ms. Angela Snell, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cemeteries; Ms. Kathy Hervol, Project Manager, Gale Associates; Mr. Peter Spanos, Civil Engineer, Gale Associates.

In order to increase the use of the SHS stadium field and improve playing conditions compared to the limitations inherent in a natural grass field, the project team recommended the installation of a synthetic turf field that uses an infill called Envirofill, an acrylic-coated sand product, in lieu of the more common crumb rubber infill, primarily due to its longer lifespan and recyclability as well as maintaining cooler field surface temperatures (it was noted that a side benefit to this recommendation is to allay concerns regarding using crumb rubber infill due to an ongoing controversy surrounding that substance). The other topics discussed included the project origins and a status update, the rationale for improvements because of poor current field conditions, benefits of turf fields, potential community use rentals, other districts using turf, field construction, drainage construction, maintenance costs and cost comparisons, health and environmental considerations, alternative infill costs and cost comparisons, the funding plan, and what action was required to continue the process. Regarding the timeline, Mr. Collins advised that if approved by a vote at the November 9 meeting, the fundraising process would begin, and a bid process would be prepared but not let out until sufficient funds were raised.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about heat retention with turf fields, equipment needs associated with turf, physical properties of the recommended Envirofill infill product, rental revenue opportunities, funding for future replacement of the turf, and the durability of organic and natural field options.

Dr. Sawyer thanked the project team for their work, and President Tony Tizzano and the SHS Athletic Boosters for funding the initial project study. He also thanked Mr. Moss and Ms. Rajwani for the information they provided in the public participation portion of the meeting, but cautioned that when reviewing any research, attention must be paid to the source of the information because of the potential for bias in the findings, whether pro or con. Dr. Sawyer advised that he was unaware of any natural field options that would meet the goals for increased stadium field usage and quality set by SPS, and concluded by recommending that the Committee vote to move forward with the project at the November 9 meeting.

V. Curriculum

VI. Policy

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2018 Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Collins presented the Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines for FY 2018, which provides the community with information about the School Committee's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2018 School Department Budget and is designed to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Department administration regarding the development of its initial Fiscal Year 2018 School Department Budget proposal. A draft of the document had been presented at the October 5, 2016 School Committee meeting, and Committee members noted that they had

received one question from the public, and some feedback from the Coordinating Council afterwards.

On motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2018 Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines.

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

A. Marijuana Legalization State Ballot Question: Discussion

On November 8, the voters of the Commonwealth will decide whether to approve a citizens' petition, commonly known as a state ballot question, which would permit the possession, use, distribution, and cultivation of marijuana in limited amounts by persons age 21 and older and would remove criminal penalties for such activities. It would provide for the regulation of commerce in marijuana, marijuana accessories, and marijuana products and for the taxation of proceeds from sales of these items.

Dr. Magee noted that he had reached out to medical experts in the field of addiction, and expressed concerns of the negative impact should usage increase among students if the question were to pass, including inadvertent access and edibles, as well as the documented research on the negative impacts of marijuana on the developing adolescent brain. Committee members engaged in a discussion that touched on concerns related to access, the potential impact to health and wellness of school-age students, edibles, and the costs associated with regulation and marijuana legalization. Dr. Sawyer advised that the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) opposes the ballot question, and added that he had spoken to several superintendents in districts in Colorado where marijuana has been legalized who were not pleased with the results as they relate to public schools. Based on this, Dr. Sawyer noted that as Superintendent he was opposed to Ballot Question 4, and felt the responsible choice was to vote against it.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Samia, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the School Committee meeting on October 5, 2016.

XI. Executive Session

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Samia, the committee unanimously agreed to

adjourn the meeting at 9:51pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. FY 2018 Budget Guidelines & Priorities
2. Alternative Infill Comparison
3. Envirofill Lab Test Results
4. Federal Research on Recycled Tire Crumb Used on Playing Fields
5. Gale Letter To Planning Board
6. Loudon Cost Comparison
7. MA Department of Public Health FAQs on Artificial Turf Fields
8. Naming Rights Legal Opinion Report
9. SHS Athletic Campus Evaluation and Feasibility Study Draft
10. SHS Athletic Campus Improvements Presentation Slides
11. USG Envirofill Product Overview
12. Wellesley Turf Field Maintenance Costs Report
13. Innovation in Learning Team Report
14. Innovation Study Group Presentation Slides