

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 13, 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. Amy B. Clouter, 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 7:00 pm.

**Special Opening**

The Shrewsbury High School (SHS) A Cappella Choir, under the direction of Music Teacher Michael Lapomardo, performed “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Tumekuja Kuimba” (We Have Come to Sing).

**I. Public Participation**

None.

**II. Chairperson’s Report & Members’ Reports**

None.

**III. Superintendent’s Report**

Dr. Sawyer noted that Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) enjoyed a smooth opening, and thanked everyone who helped, especially Central Office staff, secretaries, and the Public Buildings Department. He added that SPS had an excellent first professional development day and thanked Ms. Amy Clouter for arranging nationally recognized speaker Chad Hymas to present to staff, noting that Mr. Hymas’s presentation garnered more positive feedback than any other outside speaker in Dr. Sawyer’s time at SPS. Dr. Sawyer advised that all of our schools are contributing to helping victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma by means of various fundraisers, which demonstrates staff and students’ commitment to community service and helping those in need.

#### **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

##### **A. Accept Gifts for SHS Athletic Fields Project: Vote**

Dr. Sawyer noted that SPS is in the midst of on an ongoing project to raise \$1.8 million in private funds to renovate athletic fields at Shrewsbury High School (SHS). He advised that Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields Committee Co-Chairs Jim and Paula Buonomo were making a personal gift of \$50,000, and Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union (SFCU) was committing to a \$50,000 sponsorship for naming rights to the concession stand. Mr. and Mrs. Buonomo and representatives from SFCU were not in attendance at the meeting, but Dr. Sawyer expressed his appreciation and advised they would be recognized at another time. Mr. Collins provided a brief overview of the Memorandum of Agreement with SFCU. School Committee policy requires that sponsorships involving an amount greater than \$5,000 must be approved by the School Committee. Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to accept the gift and sponsorship.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the memorandum of understanding regarding the proposed sponsorship for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School by Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union, including the acceptance of the \$50,000 in funds for this sponsorship.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a gift of \$50,000 from Mr. James and Mrs. Paula Buonomo for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School.

##### **B. Summer Programming: Report**

Ms. Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning, provided a report on Summer Programs for students in grades PreK-8. She discussed how the program provides value to community, helps transitioning kindergarteners, and provides English Language Education, Title I reading support, and summer reading opportunities. Ms. Isaacson cited 2017 summer enrichment registrations:

Elementary = 2,806 (a 40% increase since 2012)

Middle School = 1,032 (a 75% increase since 2012)

She also noted that Title I reading program participation decreased this summer, possibly due to transportation issues for students.

Ms. Isaacson presented information on some challenges the program experienced, including concern from participants regarding a \$10 registration fee for each summer enrichment class, but noted that the fee actually represents a portion of the overall cost of running the class, and that it might be better to denote it as a cancellation fee. She closed with a description of highlights of the program.

Committee members thanked Ms. Isaacson for her work, and asked clarifying questions around students with special needs and confidentiality, the registration fee, and climate control in the summer.

## **V. Curriculum**

None.

## **VI. Policy**

None.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Summer Facilities Work: Report**

Mr. Collins's report provided information on summer repairs and improvements at various schools that included window cleaning, a new kitchen floor, re-paving and new sidewalks, and new public address systems. He noted that approximately \$462,000 in capital repairs and improvements were completed, and that the new public address [PA] systems were installed at Parker Road preschool, Coolidge School, and Paton School at a total cost of \$110,377. Mr. Collins added the new PA systems incorporated advanced technology that included the ability to trigger school lockdowns remotely.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Collins advised that building projects are generally funded by the Public Buildings Department, and school-specific needs (lockers, PA systems) are funded by SPS.

### **B. Beal Building Project: Update**

Mr. Collins began his report on the the Beal Building Project by providing an overview of the project, and noted that SPS is currently in the Feasibility Study phase. He advised that this phase requires study and consideration of changing current grade configuration, and requires that two potential options be explored for the Beal project, either a Kindergarten & Grade 1 school or a Kindergarten through Grade 4 school. He noted that both options under consideration include redistricting that would occur sometime prior to a projected August 2022 opening of a new or renovated/expanded Beal. Noting the demanding timeline for the feasibility phase, Mr. Collins recommended that the Committee make a determination on future grade configuration at their October 25, 2017 meeting.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about the academic impact of grade configuration, the volume of work associated with the Feasibility Phase, and the mechanics of the subsequent redistricting that will eventually occur. Dr. Sawyer advised that Ms. Clouter would be tasked with overseeing the impact to the academic program, and Mr. Collins noted that advanced technology tools and parent/community feedback would be utilized to assess potential redistricting configurations when the time comes.

### **C. Food Services: Annual Report**

Ms. Beth Nichols, Director of Food Services, began by noting that the timing of her annual report had been changed to September to provide a more complete look at the previous school year. Ms. Nichols provided information on program offerings, staff, training requirements, menu, and legislative updates. Noting that DESE and the John Stalker Institute Partnered and funded the Massachusetts Smarter Lunchroom Initiative, Ms. Nichols added that Oak Middle School was Awarded Silver Recognition. Ms. Nichols noted the success of the Meal Magic Point of Sale (POS) System with 96% of current sales being account debits versus cash sales. She recommended no increase to meal prices for 2018, provided information on participation (district/free/reduced/paid), revenue, and financial information for FY 2017, and recommended a small increase to the Substitute Labor Rate to help attract and maintain the substitute labor pool.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about special dietary needs and the ability of Food Services to reach out directly to manufacturers as a result. Regarding a newly available link to information from Health and Human Services on free/reduced eligible families, Ms. Nichols advised that the number of families qualifying for subsidized meals remained constant at about 16%. Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Nichols for the report and noted that the planning for the online POS system rollout started several years ago and has contributed to increased sales and lower overall costs being enjoyed at present by Food Services.

### **D. Food Services Substitute Pay Rate: Vote**

In her Annual Report cited previously, Ms. Nichols recommended a small increase to the Substitute Labor Rate to help attract and maintain the substitute labor pool.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to change the rate for substitute food service workers to \$11.88 per hour.

### **E. Personnel Hiring: Update**

Ms. Malone's report provided an overview of personnel changes in the district for the 2017-2018 school year. She detailed the rigorous process used for professional hires and added that only 1% of those who applied were appointed to a professional position with SPS. In contrast, 8% of those who applied were appointed to a paraprofessional position, and Ms. Malone noted that this might be a reflection of a stronger economy. Overall, 61 professional searches were conducted with 44 external hires appointed to positions and 17 existing staff appointed to transfer or promotional opportunities, and 35 staff were appointed to paraprofessional or other positions. Ms. Malone noted increased turnover in the areas of performing arts and foreign languages was due in large part due to employees choosing to teach in other districts after looking elsewhere when their positions were slated for possible elimination during the budget process in the spring.

In response to questioning from the Committee, Ms. Malone advised that qualified personnel had been found for the open arts and foreign language positions, and that the need for

paraprofessional staff was ongoing due to new families moving into the district and new needs for existing students being realized.

### **VIII. Old Business**

None.

### **IX. New Business**

#### **A. Bullying Statistics: Annual Report**

In his annual report to the Committee on bullying, Dr. Sawyer advised that SPS is once again statistically in a good place with low numbers, noting allegations decreased (minimally) and qualified incidents increased (minimally). He noted that most instances occurred in school. Dr. Sawyer advised that while instances of bullying were few, there is opportunity to improve the social and emotional environments in our schools, and that work on social emotional learning (SEL) will factor into upcoming strategic planning work this fall.

#### **B. Appointment of Superintendent as Representative to Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors**

Dr. Sawyer provided a brief history of the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) and noted that annually the Committee must vote to appoint the Superintendent as Representative to the AVC Board of Directors. If appointed, Dr. Sawyer would continue to serve as the Chair of the AVC Board of Directors for the 2017-2018 school year.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools, as its representative to the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2017-2018 school year.

### **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on August 23, 2017 were accepted as distributed.

### **XI. Executive Session**

None.

### **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Summer Facilities Report
2. Summer Facilities Slide Presentation
3. Food Services Report
4. Food Services Slide Presentation
5. MOU Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union
6. Beal Project Slides
7. 2017 Personnel Report
8. 2017 Personnel Slides
9. 2017 Summer Programs Report
10. 2017 Summer Programs Slides
11. Bullying Annual Report
12. Set(s) of minutes as listed above