

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, November 9, 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; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00pm, who noted the meeting would begin with Chairperson's Report & Member's Reports, and that Public Participation would be held after the Time Scheduled Appointments.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Wensky congratulated the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) football team on their recent victory over hometown rival St. John's High School.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer noted he attended a retirement ceremony honoring Pamela and Russell Krause, respective head coaches of Girls and Boys Crew at SHS, and congratulated them their on their long and outstanding careers as rowing coaches.

Dr. Sawyer also advised that principals at SPS schools reported that post-presidential election discussions at schools were productive, and that SPS strives to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Beal Building Committee: Report & Discussion

Beal Early Childhood Center Building Committee members Mr. John Masiello (Vice Chair), Mr. Patrick Collins, Ms. Erin Boucher, Mr. Chris Girardi, Ms. Sandra Fryc, Mr. Robert Cox, and Dr. Joseph Sawyer attended the meeting. Committee members Mr. Jim Kane (Chair) and Mr. Dan Morgado were unable to attend the meeting. Members provided a report that included information on building with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), progress on milestones, enrollment certification, local vote authorization, and financing the feasibility study.

The committee advised that the project timeline leads up to a Special Town Meeting that would convene on December 5, 2016 to vote on a warrant article appropriating funds for the Beal Early

Childhood Project Feasibility Study, and recommended that the School Committee vote at their November 16, 2016, to vote to affirm their support as a body for the appropriation.

The School Committee asked clarifying questions, and were advised that the projections in the report did factor in planned 40B housing communities in the district, and that the December 5 Town Meeting vote would be for the funding of the feasibility study phase of the project only.

Dr. Sawyer thanked the group for their work, noted that interested individuals could tour Beal School at open houses on November 15 and 29 at 7:30pm, and added that the projected Feasibility Study amount to be funded by Town Meeting (projected at \$1.2 million and reimbursable by MSBA at 50.16%) was based on comparative studies studies from other towns.

B. SHS Athletic Campus Improvements: Report & Vote

Mr. 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; and Mr. Peter Spanos, Civil Engineer, Gale Associates, addressed the Committee. They provided a vision for the future plans for an artificial turf field at the SHS stadium, discussed the project goals, gave examples of weather impact on grass fields, and described current field conditions.

The group then addressed questions posed by the Committee at the October 19 meeting about excessive heat issues with artificial turf, Microban coating on Envirofill, schools doing their own turf studies, revenue potential, special equipment needs, chemical exposure to the environment and athletes, natural grass options that would meet the stated needs, turf lifespan, fundraising and the potential for inflation, organic field durability, and access to fields. They also provided a list of resources on Envirofill, Brock shock pads, and turf carpet, and provided government agency information on synthetic turf fields. Mr. Collins went on to recommend that the Committee approve Phase I of the SHS Athletic Campus Improvement Plan.

Dr Magee thanked the district staff for all of their work on the health and environmental report. He also stated that Gale Associates should have anticipated the need for information on the health and environmental effects of the turf fields and that they should consider providing this for their clients in the future. The Committee asked additional questions on topics including turf warranties, replacement costs, recycling of materials, and fundraising. Mr. Collins discussed possible fundraising options including having a company pay to have their logo on the field for a period of time, and reaching out to individuals who might want to donate to improve the athletics program and have their name attached to the project. In response to questioning, Mr. Costa advised that matches occasionally have to be moved from SHS to other schools because of poor field conditions, and that additional fees for busing are incurred in addition to the loss of a home field advantage.

I. Public Participation

Lilly McManus (Grade 11) and Matt Ward (Grade 12), SHS athletes and Student Ambassadors, spoke to the Committee in support of adding turf fields, and noted that spring sport tryouts have historically been held indoors because of poor field conditions. They noted concerns regarding limited drill capabilities indoors, the need to give away home game advantage for games that are moved, and added that college athletic recruiters prefer scouting teams that play on turf versus grass.

Mr. Bryan Moss and Ms. Catherine Rajwani, members of the group Sustainable Shrewsbury, addressed the Committee for the second time regarding their concerns around artificial turf fields. Mr. Moss reiterated his support of the plan to improve the fields, but added that he was in possession of a petition signed by 112 citizens who felt that organically managed grass fields were a better option than turf. He added that SHS might not be getting the usage it desired from the existing field because of current poor conditions. Ms. Rajwani noted that she felt it would be irresponsible to approve Phase I of the project because of potential long term health and environmental consequences. She also listed what she felt were three myths associated with the project concerning safety, upgrading a natural field versus replacing with turf, and the need for a new field due to maintenance issues.

Mr. Anthony Tizzano, President of SHS Athletic Boosters, addressed the Committee. He noted that in addition to supporting to the Director of Athletics, the Boosters contribute to the athletic program, and he stated his support for the turf fields because they would allow for increased playing time, increased revenue, and increased access to the field by youth sport programs.

The Committee acknowledged that a huge amount of information had been presented by the SHS Athletic Campus Improvement team, and that several meetings had already been held on this project beginning in June 2016. They also thanked the public participants and others who provided feedback on this important project. Discussion then ensued around usage, revenue, safety, drainage, sustainability, equity of access, and enhancing value to the community.

Dr. Sawyer thanked community members for their feedback, and Mr. Collins and his team for their work on behalf of the project. He noted that other communities using turf reported favorable results. Dr. Sawyer added that the desired improvements did not represent some type of vanity project, but an attempt do what would be best for students, the athletic program, and the community, and that turf fields meet the goals of the project to increase the frequency of use and the quality of the playing surface. He noted that many colleges use artificial turf, that safety concerns had been sufficiently vetted, and that he had no objection to selecting the Envirofill infill project without Microban coating if the School Committee felt it was unnecessary.

Dr. Magee suggested the following motion, which was moved by Mr. Wensky, and seconded by Ms. Canzano. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Phase 1 of the Shrewsbury High School Athletic Campus Improvement Plan as detailed in the document entitled "Shrewsbury Track and Field Renovations - Schematic Cost Estimate" dated 10-6-16 and proceed to final design and preparation of construction documents -using synthetic turf carpet and shock pad materials as provided in our meeting documents and infill material will be Envirofill without Microban. We authorize related fundraising activities to begin immediately. If any new

information regarding materials becomes available during the fundraising portion of the project, the School Committee can revisit this topic.

V. Curriculum

VI. Policy

A. Revised Policy on Fingerprint Background Checks: First Reading

Mr. Wensky advised that the Subcommittee on Policy - Mr. Wensky, Dr. Sawyer, and Ms. Canzano - met the previous week, and noted that several proposed policy changes were to be reviewed, beginning with 635A, CHRI (Fingerprint/SAFIS).

Ms. Malone advised that new information led to the Department for Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommending changes in policy, that included the designation of a Local Security Agency Officer (LASO). Proposed changes were quite detailed, and include requirements around policies being up to date, procedures, and security of information. Updated verbiage noting proposed changes was provided to the Committee, and Ms. Malone answered clarifying questions about the potential for audits. Dr. Sawyer noted that the following language would be added: *This policy will be reviewed five years from the policy effective date.*

B. Revised Policy on Physical Restraint of Students: First Reading

Mr. Wensky noted that the existing Policy 325 on Physical Restraint, while ahead of its time when drafted, did require more detail on procedures as per DESE requirements. Updated verbiage noting proposed changes was provided to the Committee. Dr. Magee noted that the draft did not include an example of a scenario where physical restraint could be used, and Dr. Sawyer noted he would reach out to Ms. Belsito to see if this type of verbiage can be added. He also noted that many of the requirements of the policy were already being met, but that additional detail would be needed to fully meet the latest requirements.

C. Revised Policy on Substance Abuse & Education: First Reading

Mr. Wensky noted that policy 751 on Substance Abuse and Education was being updated, using a as a model a policy from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) in part to make the language more contemporary. Updated verbiage noting proposed changes was provided to the Committee, and Mr. Samia recommended that language be added to the policy to reflect that it was applicable to “any school function, *wherever located.*”

Dr. Sawyer noted that Policy 751 is a revamp of the existing policy. He added that the information provided on Substance Abuse education was designated as Policy 751A, but would be updated to reflect a policy number in the 500’s, which address Education Policy.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2017 Grants: Report & Vote

Ms. Elizabeth Callahan, Executive Assistant for Business Services, provided the Committee with a report on FY 2017 Grants that included information on State and Federal Entitlement Grants, as well as other grant opportunities. Ms. Callahan noted that State and Federal grants represent a small portion of the Operating Budget - approximately 3%. She added that in FY 2017 two state grants were eliminated and most federal grants saw a decrease or remained flat resulting in a net decrease of \$154,601, or an 8.07% drop.

Ms. Callahan noted that competitive grants provide an opportunity for additional funding and some examples were given. Dr. Sawyer advised in response to questioning that while the district will continue to pursue competitive grants, many competitive grants are targeted towards underperforming districts, or districts that have a different demographic makeup than Shrewsbury. Dr. Sawyer added that the district had also researched private companies that procure grants for schools, but it was determined that if any money was procured, it would not necessarily be in areas where it was needed. Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Callahan for her work and described her as an extremely valuable team member.

The Committee began hearing the report on Staffing Levels, then returned to discussion of FY 2017 grants to vote. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Samia, the Committee voted unanimously to accept Fiscal Year 2017 Grant Funds.

B. Fiscal Year 2017 Staffing Levels: Report

Ms. Malone noted that the Staffing Report is very resource intensive, and acknowledged the efforts of Jessica Johnson, Human Resources Representative; Diane Abbott, Registrar; and Elizabeth Callahan, Executive Assistant for Business Services in its compilation. She advised that Shrewsbury Public Schools is working on its own Municipal Information Systems (MUNIS) position control project in addition to DESE required reports, and that these will vary slightly because of different reporting requirements. Ms. Malone's report provided information on existing staffing as well as anticipated needs, and she noted that the staffing information for October 1, 2016 was due to the DESE by December 1, 2016. The report provided detailed information on staffing, as well as a chart showing Actual Staffing versus Staffing Levels projected at the May 2016 Town Meeting. Ms. Malone noted that staffing needs are dynamic and subject to change, and are often mandated. Regarding solutions, Ms. Malone added that when there is turnover, resources are constantly being thoughtfully analyzed and shifted to best meet the immediate needs of the district.

Dr. Sawyer noted thanked Ms. Malone for her work managing the dynamic and resource intensive needs of the district around staffing.

C. Fiscal Year 2017: Budget Update

Mr. Collins noted that this was the first update on the FY17 Budget, which included a 3.3% update from FY16, and that the district was currently one-third of the way through the fiscal year. Mr. Collins provided detailed information on several of the nineteen reportable categories. He noted that the budget category for Aides, ABA, and Paraprofessionals was trending toward deficit due to Special Education and English Language Learner mandates, but noted that vocational tuition had dropped due to the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School modifying its acceptance policy, which resulted in 18 SPS students being enrolled versus the 35 who were budgeted for, and was projecting a surplus in that category. Mr. Collins advised that the current projection was for a surplus of approximately \$126,000, representing a 0.21% variance.

Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Collins for the report and noted the tremendous amount of volatility inherent in budget forecasting. He also acknowledged the work of Ms. Malone who provided staffing information for the report.

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

A. Appointment of School Committee Member as Representative to Master Plan Implementation Committee: Vote

Ms. Fryc noted that the Committee needed to appoint a member to the Shrewsbury Master Plan Implementation Committee as per a request from the Town Manager's office. Dr. Magee nominated Mr. Wensky, and Ms. Canzano seconded. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Wensky as Representative to the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on October 19, 2016.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with represented employees including Shrewsbury Education Association, Units A and B, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Samia, on a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:40 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. MSBA Enrollment Certification Letter
2. Beal Building Project Update Report/Presentation Slides
3. Memo to School Committee on Background Checks
4. School Committee Policy 635A 10/19/16 Revision Draft -Background Checks
5. Memo to School Committee on Physical Restraint
6. School Committee Policy 325 Revision Draft - Physical Restraint of Students
7. School Committee Policy 751 Memo
8. School Committee Policy 751 Revision Draft - Substance Abuse & Education
9. School Committee Policy 751A Proposed Revisions
10. Existing Policy 751
11. FY 2017 Grants Report
12. Staffing Report Presentation Slides
13. Staffing Report Memo
14. Staffing Report Spreadsheet
15. FY 2017 Budget Update
16. SHS Athletic Campus Improvements/Turf Reports and Slide Presentation