

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

Present: Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Sandra Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee, and Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The meeting was convened at 7:02 PM by Mr. Samia

Special Opening:

The Shrewsbury High School (SHS) A Capella Choir performed the National Anthem and a selection titled *In My Life*.

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

None

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked the SHS A Capella Choir for joining the School Committee meeting and congratulated the group on an excellent performance.

Dr. Sawyer shared the news of the extremely smooth opening of the school year and thanked all the faculty and staff members in the Shrewsbury district for a great team effort. He recognized the efforts of the Public Buildings staff in their preparation of the schools. He commended the high school on an exceptionally successful roll out of the new iPad program. He recognized and thanked the efforts of the administrative team, and especially Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director of Information Technology, and his team. He noted the success of the Summer Institute headed by Assistant Superintendent Mary Beth Banios.

Dr. Sawyer also mentioned that Richard Peng and Ben Harris, members of the Speech and Debate team gave a remarkable performance of excerpts from the book "Boys in the Boat" to staff at the opening day meeting. He also shared that eight staff members were chosen to receive the Superintendent's Awards. They were Jean Brunell, Susan Conley, Lisa Daly, Jennifer Flemming & Camille Viscomi, David Lowy, Marylou Luukko, and Amy Prior. He also shared that Mr. Bryan Mabie, Spring Street School Principal was selected to receive the Thomas M. Kennedy Award and the Jayne M. Wilkin Award was presented to Mrs. Pamela LeBlanc, Director of Visual Arts.

Dr. Sawyer also thanked the staff and students for their tolerance and understanding during the very warm weather and uncomfortable conditions.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Celebration in the Garden Funding: Vote

Mr. Samia welcomed members of the Host Committee for the 7th Celebration in the Garden. Host committee members presented a \$35,000 donation check to the Shrewsbury School district. Ms. Hannah Kane spoke on behalf of the Host Committee. She mentioned that the total amount of funds raised over the years was \$240,000. She also mentioned this would be the last year for this event and the team was excited to plan something new. Dr. Sawyer and School Committee members thanked the volunteers and sponsors for their hard work and very successful fundraising efforts.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee members voted unanimously to accept the \$35,000 donation.

B. State Representative Kane: Legislative Update

Representative Hannah Kane updated the Committee regarding the status of state budget. She indicated that despite starting with a deficit of \$1.8 billion legislators came away with a \$38.1 billion dollar budget that contained no new taxes, held spending growth to 3.5% and did not draw from the “Rainy Day” Fund. Local aid and education funding were the top priorities, along with funding for transportation, homelessness, substance abuse and increasing the earned income tax credit. The final budget included a \$4.5 billion allocation for Chapter 70 education aid. Shrewsbury’s allocation was \$19.15 million. She noted that this amount is the minimum increase of \$25 per student. She shared that there was an increase of \$85 million for Charter Schools, which is a 5% increase.

The budget also had significant reimbursements for towns and cities to help offset costs in special education (circuit breaker) and regional school transportation costs. Circuit breaker reimbursement was funded at \$271.7 million. Representative Kane noted that all areas were incrementally funded. She shared that after meeting with Dr. Sawyer she advocated for the non-resident vocational transportation line item, which had \$0 funding, to be increased to \$2.24 million. Ultimately \$1.75 million was added to this line item. Representative Kane also shared that kindergarten expansion grants were funded through a veto override. She explained there were discussions regarding scaling back on full day kindergarten grants, so therefore funding may be lost next year. Looking ahead to next year, Representative Kane noted that transportation, health care and education related costs are areas that are driving the budget.

Representative Kane wrapped up her update with information regarding her work on the task force for Financial Literacy and the Central Mass Opioid task force and finally critical issues being discussed at the state level which are the Foundation Budget task force review, high stakes testing, charter schools expansion, just cause termination, and the civics bill.

Committee members, Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins asked questions and commented on the information.

C. Proposed Charter School: Report & Vote

Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations presented information about a proposed biotechnology charter school and its potential financial impact to Shrewsbury Public Schools. They also provided a recommendation for communicating feedback in the form of a letter stating opposition to this proposed school to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Their presentation contained information about redundancy of programming, other public school options already available, the negative financial impact

and the questionable viability of the proposal. Committee members discussed the information and agreed the Committee should send a letter to the DESE stating their opposition for these reasons.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the submission of the letter enclosed in the meeting materials stating the opposition of the proposed Biotechnology Charter School to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

D. Summer Programs: Report

Ms. Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended School Programs, presented a report on the programs offered throughout the district during the summer. She explained the programs fall under two basic categories, which are student support and enrichment. Her report and presentation included information regarding the wide range of student needs, participation, changes in programming and locations from the previous years, collaboration with Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, and highlights from some of the 11 programs offered. She also noted the addition of extended day programs and STEM options. Ms. Isaacson explained that the summer enrichment programs are self-funded and are affordable options for families. She ended her presentation with a thank you to Jean Brunell and Kristen Minio, the coordinators of the Enrichment and Extensions programs. Finally, she thanked Madison Busick, SHS Class of 2016 for being the official photographer and for preparing a video of which a portion was included in the presentation. She explained that the entire video is available on the website.

Committee members asked various questions about the programs, and commented on all the advantages of the program and the value to the community.

E. Personnel Update: Report

Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources, presented a report on the new staff hired for the 2015-2016 school year. Her report described the rigorous hiring process, personnel changes in the district and a listing of the individuals hired for administrative and teaching positions. Her report indicated there was a total applicant pool of approximately 994 for the open professional positions and 737 applicants for open positions at the paraprofessional level. Ms. Malone said that as of September 1, 2015 the district appointed 38 professional positions (excluding internal transfers) and 32 paraprofessional positions for a total of 70 positions.

Committee members asked a few clarifying questions about the types and quantity of applicants. Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Malone for her efforts especially in the amount of time she spent coordinating the hiring process for the district.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

A. Update on Summer Activities

Mr. Collins provided the Committee with an update on transportation, which included the ways in which they attempted to contact families who were not registered as well as bus change requests, safety and security updates, and facilities and grounds maintenance. Mr. Collins presented a list of work done over the summer months and work scheduled to take place throughout the year, which was provided by Mr. Robert Cox, Superintendent of Public Buildings.

B. Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Calendar: Vote

Mr. Collins presented a recommendation for events and actions in regards to a budget timeline for the 2017 Fiscal Year.

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the budget calendar for the Fiscal Year 2017.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes: Vote

None

XI. Executive Session

None

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for September 9, 2015. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Dr. Magee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes

Respectfully submitted
Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Gifts from the Celebration in the Garden Party memorandum
- 2) Biotechnical Charter School Opposition Letter and Slide Presentation
- 3) Summer Programming: Report and Slide Presentation
- 4) Personnel Update: Report and Slide Presentation
- 5) Memo Re: Finance and Operations Update
- 6) Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Calendar