

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, April 27, 2016

Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; 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

Not present - Dr. B. Dale Magee,

The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm by Mr. Samia.

Mr. Samia asked for a moment of silence for long-time educator Mrs. Alice Brennan who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

Ms. Canzano congratulated students and staff who were recognized at a community service celebration earlier that day for their many hours of service. She noted that a total of 19,000 hours had been accumulated during the year. Mr. Samia added that including the previously accumulated 62,000 hours, the students and staff have totaled an impressive 80,000 plus hours of community service for the 10,000 Hour Challenge.

Mr. Samia mentioned that he would address these two topics later in the meeting: the passing of a warrant article for the Beal Early Childhood Center project and the second budget hearing.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer also offered his condolences to Mrs. Brennan's family stating that she was a wonderful leader and terrific colleague. He noted that her legacy in the community is very deep and she will be dearly missed.

Dr. Sawyer announced that the Robotics team won the Chairman's award for the second year in a row. This award is considered to be the most prestigious honor and allows them the opportunity to attend the New England competition. He also commended the Speech and Debate team for their first ever win as a team. He congratulated the students, parents, assistant coaches and Mr. Marc Rischitelli, the team coach. Finally, he joined Ms. Canzano in his recognition of the community service celebration, highlighting the the student commitment, and the efforts of Ms. Dawn Vigliatura. who has been instrumental in helping students make this such a successful program. He noted that Ms. Vigliatura will be retiring later this year and wished her well.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Student Recognition: Destination Imagination

Dr. Sawyer introduced Mr. Eric Craft, team manager for the Destination Imagination (DI) program. Mr. Craft presented an overview of the program and the value it provides. Mr. Craft then introduced team members and managers to speak about their projects. The first team was an all girl team from the middle school who placed first at states. Their project was to hold a community service event at Abbey's House, a homeless shelter in Worcester. They spoke about what they learned from this experience and the value they gained from participating.

A second group of girls from the elementary level who placed second spoke about their challenge which entailed a performance and a structural endeavor. These students also spoke about the skills they utilized, what they learned and what they needed to be successful.

Committee members asked various questions of each group regarding how they came up with their ideas, how they worked together and what skills they felt were important for success. Dr. Sawyer and the Committee congratulated the students on their success.

B. Destination Imagination Travel to World Championships: Vote

Dr. Sawyer explained that details of the trip were included in a packet to the Committee and he recommended this overnight field trip. Mr. Eric Craft, DI Manager, Mrs. Amber Khan and Mr. Anil Gupta explained in more detail to the Committee the travel plans, and answered various questions from the Committee regarding what happens at the competition.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve overnight travel for Destination Imagination teams to participate in the Global Competition.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

A. Update to Medication Policy: Second Reading & Vote

This agenda item was postponed to next meeting date.

VII. Finance and Operations

A. Beal Building Committee: Vote to Appoint Member

Dr. Sawyer provided a brief review of the Beal Building project which is currently in the 270-day eligibility phase. At a recent special town meeting the town authorized the formation of a building committee. The Massachusetts Building Authority (MSBA) requires that a building committee must be formed during the 270-day period. This committee, to conform with MSBA regulation and the town bylaws, must consist of one elected School Committee member, and the Superintendent of Schools along with the other seven members. Dr. Sawyer noted that Mr. Collins will also be included.

Mr. Wensky nominated Ms. Sandra Fryc to serve as the School Committee appointee and Ms. Canzano seconded the nomination. On a roll call vote: Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; and Mr. Samia, yes.

B. Athletic Fees: Vote

Mr. Samia noted that there was no communication or feedback to the Committee's request to hear from constituents regarding raising the per season/per sport athletic fees from \$290 to \$300 with a family cap of \$900, as well as an increase in the fee from \$25 to \$30 for families that qualify for free or reduced

lunch status. Mr. Collins noted that the net impact in increasing fees was to reduce the operating budget by \$5,000 due to the projected revenue from the fee increase.

Committee members stated they want to be sensitive to the fact that bus fees have also increased but feel comfortable with a modest increase to athletic fees to avoid larger adjustments in the future that would make a bigger impact on families. Ms. Fryc also asked Mr. Collins to remind the community about the total operating budget for athletics and what percentage the fees cover. Mr. Collins stated that the fees cover approximately 45 percent of the total operational cost for the district's athletic program. Dr. Sawyer noted that he concurs with the recommended fee increase as a solution for offsetting costs.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the increase of Shrewsbury High School Athletics fee to \$300 per sport with a \$900 family cap and to increase the fee for students eligible for free or reduced lunch to \$30 per sport.

Mr. Collins asked to make a related comment regarding bus transportation registration noting that over 1,300 families have already registered and reminded others to register. He also noted that over 400 payments have been received and over 95% of the payments have been through the new online payment option. He also informed the Committee that the district has received over 700 payments totaling nearly \$46,000 for Food Services.

C. School Choice: Vote

Dr. Sawyer stated that information, presented at the previous meeting on Monday, April 2,5 regarding another approach to mitigate the reality of not reaching a level-funded budget was to increase revenue by offering the option for School Choice. He stated that the School Choice option was created as a result of the 1993 Education Reform Act. Districts are required to notify the Department of Education by the June 1st deadline as to whether they would participate at any level or opt out. He noted the success of the pilot program 5 years ago where 20 spots were made available at the high school level, and how the revenue was used to offset staff positions from being eliminated during the four years that revenue was collected from these school choice families. He explained that the district is proposing to add 30 very targeted spots with 9 students in grade 2, 6 students in grade 4, 5 students in grade 5, and 10 students in grade 6. He also noted that this option does not require adding any resources and therefore does not add cost to the district.

Next, Mr. Collins elaborated on the marginal costs versus average costs per pupil as an example of how allowing students seats through school choice does not negatively impact the budget or exceed the School Committee's guidelines for class sizes.

Mr. Samia addressed the question of additional planned housing options impacting the overall enrollment. He confirmed that the impact has been considered and the Committee feels confident that this addition of 30 students placed in a targeted manner will not have a negative effect and will serve to close the gap in the budget deficit. Ms. Fryc, Ms. Canzano and Mr. Wensky also offered their views on the importance of securing revenue through alternate sources and their confidence that this targeted option is a positive approach.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to open limited seats for inter-district School Choice for the 2016-2017 school year as follows: a maximum of 9 seats in grade 2, a maximum of 6 seats in grade 4, a maximum of 5 seats in grade 5, and a maximum of 10 seats in grade 6.

D. Fiscal Year 2017 Budget: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Samia noted that on April 6, which was the first public budget hearing, the School Committee offered their first revised budget recommendation that reduced the gap amount from \$3.99 million to \$2.221 million. Then, on Monday, April 25, the second public budget hearing took place and at that time a revised recommendation was presented which brought the gap down to \$1.3 million dollars.

Dr. Sawyer emphasized that the administration has been trying to provide a high level of transparency throughout the process of determining the final budget recommendation which was a reduction of \$270,000 from the April 6th amount. He explained that some of the dynamics that affected the final recommendation were the decreased number of students attending Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, and a decrease in costs to replace an additional retirement, resignation and maternity leave that occurred after the initial recommendation date.

He also noted that the full-day kindergarten grant of \$62,000 would be included since it was included in both the Governor's and the House Ways and Means budgets. There was also a slightly higher Circuit Breaker final number which attributed to the reduction of the budget offset. He stated due to this reduction offset and on feedback he received, two media aide positions had been restored at a cost of \$24,000.

Next, Dr. Sawyer addressed some of the program reductions and part-time positions that were included to reduce the overall final budget amount, emphasizing how few staff reductions will actually occur given the amount of the gap.

Finally, Dr. Sawyer summarized the budget recommendation information stating that the total operating budget request being put forth is \$60,407,383 appropriated from the town, which is an increase of \$1,951,864 (3.34%) over the current fiscal year.

Mr. Samia added that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) unanimously supported closing the gap of \$1.295 million at their meeting on April 26, 2016. He thanked the BOS and Mr. Morgado for their support. Ms. Canzano, Ms. Fryc, and Mr. Wensky added their appreciation for the process of budget determination and all the support given by Mr. Morgado and the BOS. The Committee also thanked the Central Office administration for their work.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve and recommend to Town Meeting the Shrewsbury Public Schools Fiscal Year 2017 Operating budget of \$60,407,383 as illustrated in the enclosed document titled "Shrewsbury Public Schools Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Revised April 27, 2016".

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes

None

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the represented employees including Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A; cafeteria workers and or non-represented employees including the Superintendent of schools where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. At the conclusion of executive session, the Committee will adjourn to open session solely for the purpose of adjourning for the night. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, on a roll call vote: Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8: 36PM.

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 PM. On a roll call vote: Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes.

Respectfully submitted
Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Destination Imagination Slide Presentation
2. Athletic Fees Memo
3. School Choice Memo
4. Shrewsbury Public Schools Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Revised - April 27, 2016 Report