

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

Present: Dr. B. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Ms. Sandra Fryc, Mr. John Samia, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Schools; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal of Shrewsbury High School

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Dr. B. Dale Magee

Special Opening:

The Shrewsbury High School (SHS) A Capella Choir performed the National Anthem and a selection titled *Can You Hear Me*.

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 AA Transportation bus company for having very few issues and this helped with the smooth opening of the Shrewsbury school year.

Dr. Sawyer shared that Mr. Stephen Rocco, a Shrewsbury resident and former Naval Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) employee, has joined the district team as the new Transportation, Safety and Security Coordinator. Dr. Sawyer said Mr. Rocco's background and experience with the NCIS makes him extremely qualified for this role.

Dr. Sawyer shared that Michelle Biscotti and Kathleen Keohane have begun work as Coordinators of Development and Volunteer Activity and they will work with development and sponsorship efforts for the district. He said that Ms. Biscotti will coordinate volunteer efforts for pre-school through grades 6 and Ms. Keohane will coordinate volunteer efforts for grades 7-12. Dr. Sawyer welcomed them as new staff members.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Celebration in the Garden Funding: Vote

Dr. Magee welcomed members of the Host Committee for the 6th Celebration in the Garden. Host committee members presented a \$60,000 donation check to the Shrewsbury School district. Ms. Beth Cassavant spoke on behalf of the Host Committee and asked that the funds be used for technology funding. Dr. Sawyer and School Committee members thanked the volunteers and sponsors for their hard work and very successful fundraising efforts.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to accept the report and the \$60,000 donation from the Host Committee for the 6th Celebration in the Garden. On a motion by Mr. Jason Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Sandra Fryc, the School Committee members voted unanimously to accept the report and the \$60,000 donation.

B. SHS Accreditation Findings: Report

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal at Shrewsbury High School, presented findings from the accreditation report conducted in April by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and shared some highlights of the process with community members. He said that the final NEASC report from the visiting team was provided to School Committee members this summer. Mr. Bazydlo said this 73 page report is posted on the Shrewsbury Schools website and can be viewed in its entirety. He said that some SHS positive findings from the study acknowledged quality teaching instruction, committed staff members, a high level of community engagement and empowered stakeholders. Mr. Bazydlo shared that some of the NEASC recommendations for SHS included addressing class sizes, a formal curriculum review cycle, professional development, an in-district support program and a long-term maintenance plan. Mr. Palitsch told Mr. Bazydlo that he and his team did a great job and asked if there is a way to update the NEASC regarding the decision the community made to allocate more resources to the schools. Mr. Bazydlo said there is an opportunity in October for updates and he will look into this at that time. Mr. Bazydlo said the NEASC SHS accreditation report has provided a great opportunity for the SHS educators and staff to reflect on all the good work that has been done. He said that an overwhelming theme of the NEASC accreditation process has been that SHS is doing a lot with very few resources. Mr. Bazydlo said the accreditation process has been long but very positive. Dr. Magee thanked Mr. Bazydlo for a great presentation and report on behalf of the School Committee members.

C. Personnel Update: Report

Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources, presented a report on the new staff hired for the 2014-2015 school year. She shared a report describing the personnel changes in the district and a listing of the individuals hired for administrative and teaching positions. Ms. Malone said that being part of the recruitment and hiring process for the district this past summer was the highlight of her human resources career. She said there was a total applicant pool of approximately 5,000 for the open positions and the individuals hired for positions in the district are highly qualified and went through a thorough and rigorous interview process. Ms. Malone said that as of August 29, 2014 the district appointed 110 professional positions including long-term substitute teachers and 36 paraprofessional positions for a total of 146 positions. She said 74.4 positions including 61.5 professional positions were created through the override budget and the rest were created through retirements, non-renewals and backfills for educators appointed to new roles. Ms. Malone said that it looks like the department will be coming in under budget for hiring personnel and that she will have more information about this available in October.

D. Summer Programming Report

Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Schools, shared the 2014 Summer Programming Report with the School Committee. She said this summer there were over 1,500 registrants in the Shrewsbury School Summer Program and the programs serviced students in the Pre-K through the high school levels. Programs provided students with opportunities in the areas of Special Education, Academic Support, Transition and Enrichment. Ms. Banios thanked all the staff members involved with the School Summer Program for their hard work and the Shrewsbury Montessori School for allowing use of their playground while Shrewsbury School updates were taking place. The Committee asked various questions concerning types of materials used for various courses, the course selection process and Title 1 participation statistics. Dr. Magee thanked Ms. Banios on behalf of the School Committee for providing a good presentation on the summer programming.

E. Return on Investment Study: Report

Dr. Sawyer shared findings from a July 2014 report by the Center for American Progress, a Washington D.C. public policy research organization. He said the report rated over 7,000 K-12 school districts across the nation comparing student achievement in English language arts and mathematics versus how much districts spend. Dr. Sawyer said Shrewsbury was among only 1.8% of districts in the United States to receive the highest rating on all three measures of return on educational investment compared to other districts within their state. He said that Shrewsbury was one of only four districts out of 174 in Massachusetts to receive the highest rating in all three categories (top 2.3%). Dr. Sawyer said that while there are many factors that go into measuring the quality of a school district, the study indicates that taxpayers receive an excellent return on their investment in the Shrewsbury Public Schools. School Committee members thanked Dr. Sawyer for presenting this report and said they were pleased to hear about the study's findings.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

None

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

A. Appoint representative to Assabet Valley Collaborative: Vote

Dr. Magee shared that each year the School Committee must vote to appoint the superintendent as the district's representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) Board of Directors.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to appoint Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer as the Shrewsbury Public Schools' representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer as the Shrewsbury Schools' representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors.

X. Approval of Minutes: Vote

Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings on June 11 and June 18, 2014 and the School Committee workshops on June 25 and August 18, 2014 a correction for a typographical error. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings on June 11 and June 18, 2014 and the School Committee workshops on June 25 and August 18, 2014.

XI. Executive Session

At 8:33PM, on a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations. On a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Dr. Magee, yes.

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for September 3, 2014. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM. On a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Dr. Magee, yes

Respectfully submitted

Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Gifts from the Celebration in the Garden Party memorandum
- 2) Personnel Update: Presentation
- 3) Summer Programming: Report
- 4) Return on Investment: Report
- 5) PARCC memorandum