

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2013**

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. John Samia, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Jason Palitsch, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Dr. B. Dale Magee; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Mr. Liam Hurley, Director of Business Services.

The meeting was convened at 6:30 PM by Ms. Sandra Fryc.

**I. Public Participation**

None

**II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports**

None

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Joseph Sawyer congratulated all the Shrewsbury athletic teams on outstanding seasons and mentioned the field hockey team's accomplishments at the state level. He said he appreciates the team and staff members' hard work as well as the sponsorship from Central One Federal Credit Union and the 15-40 Connection on behalf of the Coghlin and Conant families through the new Athletic Sponsorship program. Dr. Sawyer shared that the Shrewsbury Educational Foundation (SEF) has extended the deadline for nominations for the John P. Collins Awards until Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. Technology Update: Report**

Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Jonathan Green, Director of Technology and Media Services shared an overview of the current state of technology and future plans. Shrewsbury students from Oak Middle School and Elin Dolen, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at Oak Middle School discussed projects including creating public service announcements with iPads and engaging in a high level of project collaboration in the classroom. Next, Kate Lewis, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Literature Teacher at Oak Middle School and students from her class presented information about their project-based learning activities. Dr. Sawyer commented that he was extremely impressed with the students' work and that technology enables more details to be included in project and team work and enhance the scope of what can be accomplished and created. He also shared some information he recently learned at a conference that many of the jobs students will have as adults have not been created yet, knowledge is a commodity, and it is really what people can do with this knowledge that adds value. Dr. Sawyer said that employers will be looking for these skills and he is convinced that the district is on the right path for technology and education.

Mr. Green presented information and updates for Teaching and Learning programs, projects and initiatives. He shared that the district is growing the middle school Personal Learning Device (aka the

1:1) program, preparing students for high school and preparing interactive classrooms at the kindergarten and elementary levels. Mr. Green shared slides and a presentation illustrating the initiatives and plans through 2016.

The School Committee members asked questions regarding the level of progress the district is making on its technology plan and what the funding challenges are.

## **V. Curriculum**

None

## **VI. Policy**

None

## **VII. Budget**

### **A. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget: Public Hearing**

Dr. Sawyer shared a recap of his previous presentations on the State of the District and provided an orientation on district strategic priorities. Dr. Sawyer stated that the district requires resources and needs have been deferred for so long that the district is now compromising its core mission and the education it provides to students. Ms. Sandra Fryc invited interested meeting attendees to speak during the public hearing. Community members in attendance discussed a number of issues with focus on the impact of high class sizes on both academics and safety, concerns regarding the lack of funding, elimination of elective courses at the high school level, numerous requests for community involvement and maintenance of a budget that supports the schools. Mr. Henry Fitzgerald, chairman of the Board of Selectmen explained the budgeting process and that community members have been commissioned to do a fiscal study.

At the conclusion of the public hearing portion of the meeting Ms. Fryc stated that parents are welcome to send emails to share comments and there will be additional public hearings in early 2014.

### **B. Grants: Annual Report**

Mr. Liam Hurley, Director of Business Services presented the FY14 Grants Update Report to the School Committee. He shared an overview of the funding the district is receiving this year through these grants and how this funding is used. Mr. Hurley shared some key reflections and stated that overall the district saw a net decrease of \$77,249 or 4.03% across all grants and that this is not good news since it is a deterioration of funding. Mr. Hurley said the district projected a 5% reduction in our grant allocation and budgeted for this in the FY14 budget. In FY14, almost all of the federal and state entitlement grants saw a reduction, with the exception of the Full Day Kindergarten grant which was level funded. Mr. Hurley said that one of the fiscal strategies is to shift funding wherever possible and make the most of resources including grant funding. Responding to a question from the Committee, Mr. Hurley and Ms. Banios discussed the challenges with the grant application process including the fact that for some grants the Shrewsbury district does not fit the criteria for some potential funding opportunities. Dr. Sawyer said that many grant opportunities are focused on low-income and low-performing schools and that Shrewsbury does not fit these criteria. Dr. Sawyer also added that some grants would not be sustained due to their ongoing costs after the grant expires.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None

## **IX. New Business**

None

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the School Committee meeting for November 6, 2013.

## **XI. Executive Session**

At 8:51 PM, on a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations and return to open session for the purpose of adjourning. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

## **XII. Information Exlosures**

## **XIII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Canzano seconded by Dr. Magee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted  
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Technology Update: Report and slide show
- 2) Report to the School Committee: FY14 Grants Update: Report and slide show