

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, February 28, 2018**

Present: Dr. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Dr. Magee at 7:01 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

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

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer advised that in the aftermath of the Parkland, FL school shooting he has been communicating with families and staff, and continuing to partner with the Shrewsbury Police and Fire departments, on safety. He noted he believed it would be unwise to arm staff with guns. Dr. Sawyer advised he was aware that a national school walkout was being planned for March 14, and added that district leaders, students, faculty, and staff are discussing how to address a potential walkout and will provide clear information and guidance to the community in advance of March 14.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields: Update & Vote to Accept Donations**

Michelle Biscotti and Kathleen Keohane, Coordinators of Development & Volunteer Activities, provided a project update on the *The Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields*, noting they had raised over \$190,000 since their report on January 10 through donations, brick sales, and the

*Tailgate for Turf* event. They talked about future plans for fundraising and noted they will provide an update at the end of March. Mr. Collins thanked Ms. Biscotti and Ms. Keohane for their work and stressed the importance of timing as it relates to fundraising if the track and field are to be in place for Fall 2018.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$10,000 gift from Gene DeFeudis, a \$15,000 gift from Lifetouch, and a \$25,000 gift from Mel and Maria Chacharone for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **A. Curriculum & Instructional Technology Budgets: Report**

Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director of Information Technology (IT); and Ms. Shawna Powers, Director of Instructional Technology & Media Services, provided a budget overview for FY19 in their report.

Ms. Clouter began by providing information on: utilizing district priorities to empower learners; prioritizing and balance needs relative to ongoing investments; the relative stability of categories comprising the FY17 and FY18 budgets; the category changes (7 categories to 9) in the FY19 budget that reflect potential changes in grant funding; and the importance of building networks and connected learning in a complex world. Ms. Powers discussed how technology enhances learning through examples from Grade 4, noting various opportunities for real-time collaboration between students and teachers on projects. She also discussed ongoing evaluation of 1:1 devices and gave a quick comparison of Chromebooks and the iPads currently used in the district, noting that there was no compelling reason to change from the iPads at this time. Ms Clouter provided information on Curriculum and Instruction staff. Mr. L'Heureux gave an overview of the IT budget that addressed: increases for FY19 (continued iPad leases and mandated devices, classroom projector replacements); staffing (noting a high 1:1 device/IT FTE ratio in Shrewsbury relative to other communities); the integration of IT into multiple district operations (security, public address systems, etc.); and staffing requests. Ms. Clouter closed the report by noting upcoming challenges faced by the team, and summarizing recommendations for FY19 with a list of requested resources.

The Committee discussed the importance of ongoing device evaluation, the integration of technology into myriad district operations, and the importance of technology as it relates to educating students.

## **VI. Policy**

### **A. Employee Travel Policy: First Reading**

Dr. Magee advised that this agenda item would be addressed later in the meeting.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Tuitions & Fees: Recommendations for 2018-2019**

Mr. Collins began with an overview of the decision-making process and assumptions utilized in compiling the report on tuitions and fees in multiple areas. Noting that one bid - from AA Transportation (the current, local, provider) - was received for the recently released School Transportation Bid Package, he advised that the per bus cost of \$70,920 represented a rate increase of 17.5%. Mr. Collins then provided several FY19 revenue scenarios based on bus fee increases ranging from 3.6%-15%. He addressed Athletic Fee, Activity Fee, and preschool tuition options in a similar fashion. In a discussion of Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) fees, Mr. Collins offered scenarios that included reductions in fees to reflect the School Committee Strategic Priority of having universal, tuition-free, kindergarten for all Shrewsbury students in the next five years, and adopting a gradual tuition step-down plan to avoid potentially absorbing the total loss of tuition revenue in a single fiscal year. Mr. Collins recommended changes to fees for Extended School Care that included a 3% rate increase, adding that additional information would be presented at the March 14, 2018 School Committee meeting.

Committee members noted that Shrewsbury ranked high relative to other districts in a survey of fee categories and fees charged, acknowledged the importance of making free FDK available to all students, and advised against incurring a significant revenue loss in a single year by **not** stepping down FDK tuition incrementally.

### **B. School Choice & Charter Attendance: Report & Recommendation for 2018-2019**

Mr. Collins' report on Charter Schools included: a history of enrollment (which has been in decline since 2010-11); enrollment by grade and by school for 2017-18 (33 students total); tuition, aid, and net cost history; and preliminary FY 18 tuition and reimbursements. Addressing School Choice (Virtual School is a subset of this program), Mr. Collins provided enrollment history (in 2017-18, the district sent 30 students -an increase - and received 27,); grade level information (noting 6 students attend Worcester schools for full-day kindergarten); and tuition information for students both sent and received. Summarizing, Mr. Collins noted that the recommendation for 2018-2019 is to not open any new seats for School Choice students due to space limitations, and he acknowledged the importance of continued investment in our district to maintain program quality to ensure student retention and to stem the flow of tuition dollars to other districts.

### **C. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget & School Choice: Public Hearing (Public is invited to speak on either topic or both)**

There were no speakers at the Public Hearing.

## **D. School Choice for 2018-2019: Vote**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to not participate in interdistrict school choice for the 2018-2019 school year.

## **VI. Policy**

### **A. Employee Travel Policy: First Reading**

This agenda item was rescheduled from an earlier position on the agenda. Mr. Palitsch noted that he and Ms. Canzano are on the Policy Subcommittee, had reviewed the document, and had offered suggestions which were incorporated into the draft of the policy being presented. Mr. Collins advised that historically there had been no School Committee-level policy in place regarding employee travel, and that he had worked with the Town Manager's and Town Accountant's offices to create a policy that could be utilized by, and would provide parity among, all town departments. He noted that the comprehensive policy addressed prohibited items, spouse travel, and multiple reimbursement categories.

Dr. Magee advised that the policy draft would be posted for public viewing and comment in advance of a vote by the Committee at a future meeting.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None.

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Magee advised that this evaluation is done annually and utilizes a standard template that doesn't do justice to the scope and complexity of the work of the Superintendent, and added that there is a high level of communication between the Committee and Superintendent at all times.

Dr. Magee described the three goals set by the district and provided Dr. Sawyer's ratings on those goals:

- Student Learning Goal - Some Progress
- Professional Practice Goal - Exceeded
- Progress toward District Goals - Significant Progress

Dr. Magee then described the four standards established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and provided Dr. Sawyer's ratings on those standards:

- Instructional Leadership - Proficient (overall)
- Management & Operations - Proficient (overall)
- Family & Community Engagement - Exemplary (overall)
- Professional Culture - Exemplary (overall)

Committee members then had an opportunity to provide additional commentary. Noting that at a time when it is particularly challenging to be an educator - and especially a superintendent - they advised that Dr. Sawyer is the “definition of a public servant”; shows gratitude in a “multitude of ways”; exercises “good judgment” and provides “clear communication”; has a “multi-faceted job”; manages “complex issues that go beyond educating students”; and is “strategic and forward thinking.”

Dr. Sawyer thanked the Committee for their support, expressed his appreciation to all SPS staff, acknowledged that the current education landscape is challenging and increasingly complex, and noted he derives satisfaction and joy from what students accomplish at SPS.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on February 14, 2018, and the School Committee Workshop held on February 15, 2018, were accepted as distributed.

## **XI. Executive Session**

**A. For the purposes of negotiations with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association**

**B. For the purposes of negotiations with the Superintendent of Schools**

**C. For the purpose of reviewing and approving executive session minutes**

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purposes of negotiations with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association and negotiations with the Superintendent of Schools, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and to reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, on a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:19 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Turf Fields Update Report Slides
2. Curriculum & IT Budgets Report
3. Curriculum & IT Budgets Slides
4. Employee Travel Policy 935 Draft
5. Tuitions & Fees: Recommendations for FY19 Memo
6. Fee Changes Scenarios
7. FY18 Survey of Fees
8. Tuition & Fees Slides
9. Full Day K Tuition Rates
10. Full Day K Tuition Map
11. School Choice & Charter Attendance Report & FY19 Recommendation Slides
12. Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools
13. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above