

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Present: Mr. Jason Palitsch, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. B. Dale Magee; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.
Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations and Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources were not present for the meeting.

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

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

I. Public Participation

Noreen Christie, representing the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association (SPA), gave a description of their work and asked for safer working conditions and a raise for paraprofessionals. Kevin O'Connor, an ABA Technician at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), described his work and asked for a fair contract for the SPA. Mr. Palitsch expressed appreciation for the work done by paraprofessionals but noted he is unable to discuss the particulars of any contracts under negotiation.

Shrewsbury resident Bryan Moss asked the Committee to revisit the decision to install an artificial turf field at SHS, and to instead install organically maintained natural grass fields, citing potential resultant financial issues. Mr. Moss did not provide any written materials. Mr. Palitsch advised that the Committee did not intend to revisit the decision.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Canzano reported that she and Dr. Sawyer recently attended a productive meeting of the Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) that included conversation around transitions of students for the following school year.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer congratulated all of the students at SHS who were recently inducted into the National Honor Society. He noted the ceremony included remarks from Paul Richard, the Executive Director of the Shine Initiative, whose mission is to recognize mental illness in children and young adults as a mainstream health issue, as well as from Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal of SHS, who spoke on the importance of pursuing happiness.

Dr. Sawyer advised that the SHS Art Festival, which always features outstanding pieces, would be held the following evening in the Largess Commons at SHS and would include a recognition program.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Student Recognition: Speech & Debate State Champions

Mr. Marc Rischitelli, Head Coach, noted that the team finished second in the state and introduced the following state champions in attendance: Sherraina Song - Prose Reading; Prisha Singh - Children's Literature; Ahana Mukhopadhyay - Radio Broadcasting; and Will Stewich, Sophia Peng, Leah deHaemer, Megan German & Max Evers - Multiple Reading. The students talked about their experiences, and answered questions from the Committee about why they chose their pieces and the differences between individual and group performances. The Committee and Dr. Sawyer congratulated the students, who were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and presented with certificates.

B. Project 351 Ambassador: Report & Recognition

Dr. Ann Jones, Principal, Oak Middle School, discussed Alina Shkurikhina's qualifications to be the Town of Shrewsbury's Grade 8 Project 351 Ambassador, and shared comments from teachers on why Alina was nominated. Alina gave a presentation on her experience that included information on Project 351, which is a non-profit that promotes leadership and service each year with 8th grade students representing each of the state's 351 cities and towns. She shared a timeline of events and activities, and noted the success of her clothing drive at Oak Middle School to benefit the Cradles to Crayons service organization. Committee members and Dr. Sawyer thanked Alina for her work, and noted the importance of service to the community by students at all grade levels.

C. Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields: Vote to Approve Memorandum of Understanding with AI's Oil and Vote to Accept Gift

This agenda item was addressed later in the meeting.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Transitions Program: Report

Todd Bazydlo, Principal SHS, gave a brief history of the Transitions program at the high school which included a description of its predecessors, and introduced Susan Donofrio, the Clinician/Program Leader, and Kelli McSweeney, the Academic Coordinator. Ms. Donofrio and Ms. McSweeney gave a detailed report that included information on: being part of the BRYT (Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition) program; who the program serves (students who have been absent from SHS due to medical reasons, such as concussions, or due to mental health reasons); program components; year one data at SHS; data from other local BRYT programs; a student case study; components of the Transitions toolkit; exit criteria; feedback from a parent survey; and goals for the second year of the program.

In response to questions from the Committee, the presenters provided additional information on: capacity (13 slots plus 4 vacancies; highest participation has been 26); value provided by the BRYN network; the potential for mentoring by former participants; coordination with outside health providers; and the program's referral process (it is not a drop-in program). Dr. Sawyer expressed his appreciation to the presenters, Mr. Bazydlo and SHS administration, and Ms. Meg Belsito, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, for the successful implementation of the program, and noted he looked forward to seeing the evolution of the program in its second year.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. School Safety & Security: Annual Report

In their report, Mr. Stephen Rocco, Coordinator of Transportation, Safety & Security, and Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director of Information Technology, provided detailed information to the Committee on: school safety and security goals and objectives; the school video surveillance camera (VSC) system; standard response protocols (SRP); emergency management tabletop exercises (TTX); the building assessment team (BAT); training; future considerations; and the remote functionality (lockdowns/lockouts) associated with new public address systems at Parker Road Preschool, Calvin Coolidge School, and Walter J. Paton School, with summer installation planned for Spring Street School. Mr. Rocco noted that in the aftermath of the recent school shooting in Parkland, FL, many recommendations for school safety were being suggested by experts, and many of these recommendations have already been implemented at SPS.

Committee members and Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the depth of the safety program at SPS, and noted the level of close collaboration between the district; school resource officers; and local, state, and federal entities (including the Department of Homeland Security) to help ensure student safety. Dr. Sawyer also noted the addition of more resources in the budget over time to address the increasing use of technology in safety and security spheres.

VIII. Old Business

A. Town Meeting Warrant Article to Ban Polystyrene & Potential Impact on School Department: Discussion & Potential Vote

Mr. Palitsch provided background information on a citizen petition article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant which would prohibit the dispensing of prepared food in disposable food service containers made from Expanded Polystyrene. He noted that at the School Committee meeting on May 9 Mr. Collins and Ms. Nichols, Director of Food Services, gave a presentation addressing the potential impact that passage of this warrant article would have on Shrewsbury Public Schools; the petitioners gave a presentation on the warrant article; and a public hearing on the topic was held. Mr. Palitsch noted that the Committee had received feedback from the community after that meeting, and invited members to participate in a discussion on the topic. Dr. Magee noted it was a complicated issue, that he was still uncertain about potential health risks and pollution from styrofoam use and/or combustion, and that he prefers the use of reusable materials to single-use materials. Mr. Wensky noted he was similarly unsure as it is a complicated issue, and expressed concern with the increased costs that would accompany the use of alternate materials. Ms. Fryc suggested addressing what needs to be done from a health and cost perspective if the article passes the legislative body, and looking at it from a policy perspective if the article does not pass. Ms. Canzano suggested waiting to see what the legislative body decides, and giving the Chair the opportunity to communicate information on the impact to SPS from passage based on Mr. Collins' and Ms. Nichols' presentation. Ms. Canzano noted she was personally leaning towards supporting the ban, and found the student petitioners' arguments in some areas to be persuasive. Mr. Palitsch noted two questions, with one concerning the specific nature of the warrant article, and the second concerning styrofoam, with SPS being a big purchaser. Mr. Palitsch suggested that the Committee take no formal position on the warrant article since it is not specific to SPS. He suggested that SPS potentially move away from styrofoam over time, but expressed concern about passing on additional costs that could result from such a change. Mr. Palitsch suggested deferring questions around how SPS would adapt, should the ban pass, to Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins. He further suggested that the Committee take no formal position, but recommended a vote to authorize the Chair to summarize the Committee's discussion for Town Meeting members. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to summarize the Committee's discussion for Town Meeting members.

IX. New Business

A. Shrewsbury Master Plan Update: Report & Vote

Dr. Sawyer began with a brief overview of Master Plan reporting. He advised that the updated spreadsheet draft presented was comprised of goals assigned to the School Committee (that varied by breadth and term) and that the Master Plan Implementation Committee was looking for progress and feedback on those goals. Dr Sawyer added that SPS administration would be

submitting a separate spreadsheet with the status of their goals. Dr. Sawyer recommended a vote to approve the update. Mr. Palitsch added that some items noted “no progress” due to a lack of resources.

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the draft of the School Committee’s Master Plan update for submission to the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on May 9, 2018, were accepted as distributed.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

C. Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields: Vote to Approve Memorandum of Understanding with Al’s Oil and Vote to Accept Gift

Mr. Palitsch noted that this item was rescheduled from an earlier time slot on the agenda. Dr. Sawyer advised that Al’s Oil Service would be recognized as the lead scoreboard sponsor on the Shrewsbury High School Stadium Scoreboard in exchange for a donation of \$100,000 to the Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields, per the memorandum of understanding (MOU) presented. Dr. Sawyer gave thanks to Rebecca Edwards, Al’s Oil Service; Sean Flynn, Managing Member, Al’s Oil Service; and Edward Flynn, longtime leader of Al’s Oil Service, who were not in attendance at the meeting, and recommended that the Committee vote to approve the MOU and to accept the funds for the sponsorship.

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the memorandum of understanding with Al’s Oil regarding the proposed sponsorship for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School.

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept \$100,000 for this sponsorship.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Palitsch noted that no Executive Session would be held.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Project 351 Ambassador Memo
2. Project 351 Ambassador Slide Presentation
3. AI's Oil MOU
4. SHS Transitions Program Report Slides
5. School Safety & Security Report
6. School Safety & Security Slide Presentation
7. School Committee Master Plan Progress Report
8. Set(s) of Minutes as Referenced Above