

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES (approved 3/25/10)**

**Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**March 4, 2010  
7:00 pm Joint Executive Session  
7:30 pm Joint Open Meeting  
Followed by AB Regional Meeting  
Followed by APS Meeting**

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*Members Present:* Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, Mike Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Terry Lindgren, Sharon Smith McManus, Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Sue Horn, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr, Tess Summers

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The Joint School Committee Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. by Sharon McManus and Xuan Kong, respective chairs.

**JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:06 p.m., the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the governmental body, and to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.”

At 7:06 p.m., the Acton Public School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the governmental body, and to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.”

At 8:15 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session.

**APS/AB JOINT MEETING**

**CHAIRPERSON’S INTRODUCTION**

**1. Conant Principal Update**

Ann Marie Testarmata spoke from the audience asking if there would an interim principal. Dr. Mills said that he did not expect to do that. She emphasized how many parents have had experience in searches for the Conant Principals, and how many children have had multiple Principals while at the school.

**STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

There were no warrants.

**APPROVAL OF JOINT, AB, and APS MINUTES**

The Joint, AB, and APS Meeting minutes of February 25, 2010 were unanimously approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional and the Acton Public School Committees.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Bill Guthlein asked that as School Committee deliberates whether or not to offer School Choice for next year, the Committee consider whether it is appropriate to add students to our district when class sizes are too large.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### **1. Director of Finance Search Committee Update**

Marie Altieri reported that nine candidates were interviewed and three are being considered by Dr. Mills. They will visit next week. A recommendation will be made at the March 25, 2010 School Committee meeting.

### **3. Health Insurance Trust Report**

The Committee met today. John Petersen reported that the Trust is generally operating on a break even basis according to Tim Harrison. YTD the cash flow shows a loss of \$430K due to a very unfavorable variance in the current month. Reinsurance reimbursement of \$100K is expected resulting in a projected net loss of \$300K for FY10. The trust decided to unify rates for the town and the schools based on the assumption that the town and school plans will be comparable in FY11. Rates were voted for FY11. A special meeting of the Trust will be held March 18 at 8am to review the projected impact of the new rates on the Trust balance at the end of FY11. Dr. Mills attended part of today's important meeting and complimented John Petersen on his participation.

### **4. FY'11 Budget Update**

Dr. Mills reported that the Level 1-4 cuts represent a reduction of approximately \$1.7 million, or almost 3% of the entire budget. He strongly advocated for restoring \$965,000 of level 5 cuts. This number is slightly less than previously stated because Steve Desy will be increasing some of the athletic fees and having some expenses (swim suits) covered by participants. The Committee appreciated the timeliness and manner in which the budget process was handled. Prioritizing potential cuts was especially helpful.

## AB REGIONAL MEETING

At 9:00 p.m., the Acton Public School Committee meeting was suspended and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting began.

### **5. Recommendation to Approve Revised FY'11 ABRSD Budget and Assessments**

The Committee discussed Acton's Waterfall model and the impact it would have on Boxborough if additional Chapter 70 funds are received. Brigid Bieber shared Boxborough resident John Fallon's concerns with the Committee and said that some residents are confused. Tess Summers said that Chapter 70 money comes into the treasury of the Region, not into the town. Becky Neville asked if additional Chapter 70 money comes in, would the Boxborough portion be used to restore cuts or reduce the Boxborough assessment and not be applied to the Acton waterfall proposal. The Committee said yes.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation that the total for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 be set at \$38,276,079 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$24,115,163, Boxborough \$6,187,433, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$6,578,140, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of**

**\$88,879, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$605,806, a transfer from E&D in the amount of \$700,000, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$658.**

#### **6. Corporate Sponsorship Update**

ABSAF President Nick Finamore and Athletic Director Steve Desy presented. ABSAF has agreed to a one year pilot program with an oversight committee to ensure cultural consistency. Nick is hearing some excitement about this new opportunity. Businesses are asking if those who already donate are being recognized. Sharon McManus and Mike Copolino offered to be on the committee.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. Recommendation re: ABRSD Participation in School Choice, 2010-2011**

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

**VOTED: To participate in the state's School Choice program for 2010-11 by only accepting siblings of existing Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Choice students, and current 6<sup>th</sup> grade Choice students from the Blanchard School in Boxborough who will be entering R.J. Grey Junior High School in grade 7.**

Marie Altieri reported that in future budgets, some of the staff that is currently being funded by choice revenue may need to be moved into the appropriated budget or cut. John Petersen said that this is very important because there is confusion about how some things are funded in our system.

##### **2. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS International Trip to China**

It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: To approve the ABRHS International Trip to China on June 26 – July 14, 2010**  
Xuan Kong abstained because of a potential conflict of interest. Steve Mills takes responsibility only for our AB students.

##### **3. Freshman Orientation Proposal Discussion**

Alix Callen shared a proposal from the Transition to High School committee that resulted from students saying that this is an overwhelming transition. Ryan Steege and Todd Chicko (committee co-chairs) proposed the start of the year schedule be altered to have only freshmen attend on the first day of school and upperclassmen start on the next day. All staff would still start work on the first day and would help orient the freshmen. Two members expressed some concern. Dr. Callen said that there is precedence across the state for this. The committee endorsed the proposal.

#### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- Dr. Mills recognized the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Robert Creeley Award Presentation to take place on March 16<sup>th</sup> with a special event for High School students on March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Mills thanked Margaret Murray, Information Technology Specialist, for her valuable PowerSchool Cost-saving Initiatives document dated 2/23/10.

**The AB REGIONAL MEETING adjourned at 9:45pm**

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL MEETING

### APS UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### **1. Acton Finance Committee Update**

Sharon McManus asked the School Committee for guidance on whether they support the waterfall proposal as recently revised by the Acton FinCom. ALG will meet tomorrow morning. She noted that an increase in E&D does not involve the waterfall. It is Chapter 70 money only.

Jonathan Chinitz made a motion to “support the original waterfall proposal as proposed by Jonathan Chinitz on February 6, 2010.” The motion was seconded, and then tabled until after the APS budget vote.

#### **2. Approval of FY’11 Acton Public School Budget**

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED: To approve the administration’s recommendation that the School Year 2010-2011 Acton Public Schools’ Budget be set at \$25,910,449. This budget covers the period July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.**

#### **3. Superintendent’s Update**

Dr. Mills plans to address some of the needs of our elementary principals by reassigning two of the curriculum support specialists to four of the elementary schools for the rest of this school year. Assignments will be finalized by Sue Horn, Marie Altieri and the elementary principals. (see memo) He was thanked for being pro-active so quickly. This item was discussed out of order due to the late hour and the parents that were in the audience.

#### **1. Acton Finance Committee Update (continued)**

The Committee continued to discuss whether to commit to a version of the waterfall proposal or not. John Petersen said that having just voted the two school budgets implies that the Committees want to fund them. He felt that this was a clear enough statement regarding what the budget numbers should be.

It was moved, seconded and

**VOTED: To endorse the waterfall proposal as originally presented on February 6, 2010.**

(Yes: Chinitz, Coppolino, Kong, Lindgren and McManus No: Petersen)

### NEXT MEETINGS:

March 18 – 7:30 pm, APS SC meeting at Douglas School

March 25 – 7:30 pm, AB SC meeting, followed by APS meeting, Jr High Library  
(serves as April meetings)

April 1 – Acton Pre-Town Meeting Meeting, 7 pm, Acton Town Hall

April 5 – Acton Town Meeting begins

May 10 – Boxborough Town Meeting begins

The APS meeting adjourned at 11:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr