

**ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES (approved 6/7/12)**

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

**May 3, 2012
7:00 p.m. Joint SC Meeting
Followed by ABRSC and APSC Meetings**

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Dennis Bruce, Xuan Kong, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Bruce Sabot (arrived 7:09 p.m.)
Members Absent: Michael Coppolino
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committees were called to order by Kim McOsker and Xuan Kong, respective Acting Chairs, at 7:04 p.m.

CHAIRMAN’S INTRODUCTION

- Deanne O’Sullivan was welcomed as the new School Committee member from Acton. She and Dennis Bruce were congratulated on winning their positions in the recent town election.
- ABRHS School Committee student representatives Jacob Johnson, Tess Little, and Nikhil Manocha were thanked for their efforts this year. Xuan Kong showed a video emphasizing the importance of listening to what young people are saying.
- John Petersen was thanked for his 4 years on School Committee, most recently as ABRSC Chairman.

APPROVAL of MINUTES and STATEMENT of WARRANT

The minutes of the 3/22/12 Joint/AB School Committee meeting were approved as amended by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee. Maria Neyland and Bruce Sabot abstained because they were absent. The minutes of the 3/22/12 Joint/APS School Committee meeting were approved as amended by the Acton Public School Committee. Deanne O’Sullivan abstained from both votes because she was not elected on 3/22/12.

The minutes of the 3/1/12 Joint/AB School Committee meeting were approved as amended by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee. Deanne O’Sullivan and Paul Murphy abstained because they were absent. The minutes of the 3/1/12 Joint/APS School Committee meeting were approved as amended by the Acton Public School Committee. Deanne O’Sullivan and Paul Murphy abstained because they were absent.

AB Warrant #12-021 dated 4/5/12 in the amount of \$1,475,974.03, #12-022 dated 4/19/12 in the amount of \$1,799,983.71 and #12-023 dated 5/3/12 in the amount of \$1,234,791.13 were signed by the chair and circulated for signatures. APS Warrant #201220 dated 4/3/12 in the amount of \$198,881.70, #201221 dated 4/17/12 in the amount of \$167,498.32, and #20122 dated 5/1/12 in the amount of \$34,896.01 were signed by the chair and circulated for signatures.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.1 ALG and Acton FinCom Report

Xuan Kong reported that it would be beneficial for a small group of School Committee members to work with Don Aicardi to look at long term financial models.

5.2 Acton Town Meeting Report

Xuan reported that the school budgets/assessment passed at Acton Town Meeting, as well as the Regionalization and Lower Fields Project articles.

5.3 BLF and Boxborough Town Meeting Rep

Maria Neyland reported on the BLF and plans for Boxborough Town Meeting which begins on May 14th.

5.4 FY'12 and FY'13 Budget Update

5.4.1 FY'12 Status Report – 3rd Quarter

Don Aicardi projected that the ABRSD would end the 3rd quarter of FY12 with a \$573,714 year end fund balance. He highlighted observations regarding Teaching Salaries, Substitute Salaries, Health Insurance, Unemployment and Pension Fringes, Property/Casualty expenses, Utilities, Special Education Tuition, and Student Transportation. Don emphasized the importance of the establishment of an OPEB account and the option that it opens up now when extra funding is available. The Excess and Deficiency (E&D) amount as of July 1, 2011 for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District has been certified by the DOR as \$2,238,394. This puts the District \$313,276 over the 5% statutory cap.

5.4.2 FY'13 Budget - Recommendation to Approve FY'13 TEC Bid

ABRSC VOTE

Bruce Sabot moved, Kim McOsker seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve The Education Collaborative (TEC) bid as proposed.

APS VOTE

Xuan Kong moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve The Education Collaborative (TEC) bid as proposed.

5.5 EDCO: Recommendation to dissolve the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc.

ABRSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that the ABRSC dissolve the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. by June 30, 2012 or as soon as legally possible thereafter, and further that our representatives for the EDCO Collaborative and the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. be authorized to take all necessary steps to transfer all programs, contracts and available assets, including the Seefurth Fund, from the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. to the EDCO Collaborative by the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2012, or as soon as legally possible thereafter.

APS VOTE

Dennis Bruce moved, Xuan Kong seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: that the APSC dissolve the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. by June 30, 2012 or as soon as legally possible thereafter, and further that our representatives for the EDCO Collaborative and the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. be authorized to take all necessary steps to transfer all programs, contracts and available assets, including the Seefurth Fund, from the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc. to the EDCO Collaborative by the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2012, or as soon as legally possible thereafter.

5.6 Health Insurance Trust Report

Kim McOsker reported on the 4/26/12 meeting. The Trust is projecting a loss of \$500,000 for the year, with approximately \$3.6 million in reserves. The contract with Borgatti Harrison was renewed. The Cook and Company contract will be reviewed next month. The Trustees agreed to request bids for the annual audit as well as a RFP for Stop Loss Insurance. Next meeting is May 24. Monthly meetings are held through the summer. John Petersen feels more secretarial report is required for HIT because of the

complicated nature of the topic, and the need for documentation. As a member of the public, he asked if the schools should provide secretarial support for the HIT. Xuan Kong stated that based on the number of school employees in the Trust, he felt someone from the schools should assist with the minutes. Kim will work with Dr. Mills to see what resources can be applied to this request.

5.7 Policy Subcommittee Update

5.7.1 Student Conduct File: JIC – **FIRST READING**

Liza Huber reviewed the proposed revision which combines the current JIC, JK-Student Discipline Guidelines and JK-R Suspension and Exclusion Procedures.

5.7.2 Assignment of Students from other Schools File: JCAC – **FIRST READING**

Marie Altieri reviewed the proposal saying that this a **FIRST READING** even though APSC looked at a earlier version that did not apply to students in grades 7 – 12

5.8 Superintendent's Evaluation

Xuan Kong reviewed the timeline and process. The School Committees evaluate the Superintendent every year. Public input is welcome by May 11. The public evaluation will be at the meeting on June 7. Steve's contract calls for the Committee to have an affirmative vote each year. An executive session will be scheduled for June 7th to decide the Superintendent's salary for next year, followed by an open meeting vote. Marie Altieri emphasized that the Districts are embracing this new evaluation method as a pilot this year. Evaluators will be in the classrooms much more often to do the evaluations. Evaluation Forms are at <http://ab.mec.edu/hr/hreducatoreval.shtml>. Dr. Mills urged the Committee to review his APS/ABRSD Staff Survey Results.

5.9 2011-2012 SMART Goals Update

Steve Mills reviewed the overall excellent progress made on this year's SMART Goals.

5.10 2012-2013 School Calendar revision (*JH/HS half days identified in addendum*)

ABRSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the FY13 revised School Calendar as proposed.

APS VOTE

Xuan Kong moved, Dennis Bruce seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the FY13 revised School Calendar as proposed.

5.11 Religious Holidays re: School Calendar (FY14) Discussion – Decision at 6/7/12 meeting

Dr. Mills asked for the Committee's direction on these holidays before creating the FY14 calendar in the fall. He emphasized that the discussion is not about respecting people's religious beliefs, it is about managing the school. The Committee's concern is at what point does the absence of a large number of adults/staff create an inappropriate environment for school to be held?

Brigid Bieber stated that her personal preference is that religious holidays not be "no school days" on the calendar, but the school must be run appropriately. To her it is not a policy question but an administrative question about running the school. She wonders if the survey's absence responses were influenced by how the question was asked. Paul Murphy agreed with Brigid. He prefers not to have religious holidays on the calendar but knowing there are logistics involved, he can work with that. Dennis Bruce stated that he will put more consideration into this issue now but he urged that school start after Labor Day. Maria Neyland asked, "At what point does any large group end up with control that results in making us close the schools?" She continues to not support religious holidays being on the calendar. Bruce Sabot has always advocated for keeping schools closed on the holidays, but he now feels that they should be kept open. If school is open, he thinks more teachers will work despite how they responded to the survey. If schools are open on religious holidays, he felt very strongly that it be mandatory that every teacher understand the policy about tests and homework on these holidays for those who observe them. The Committee strongly agreed. Xuan Kong said that he wants a sustainable guideline, if not a policy, for the Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

Administration to develop school calendars and close school on a particular day. He suggested that a regular survey be considered to see the pulse of how many staff/students might take a day off, not an annual survey.

Regarding starting school before or after Labor Day, Marie Altieri reported that 2/3 of the staff prefer starting before Labor Day based on the question asked on the survey done 2 years ago. This was not a general question, but based on the calendar that year. Parents were 50-50 on the Labor Day question. Marie feels it is important to start before Labor Day.

Xuan will work with Kim McOsker and Dr. Mills on a proposal for the next meeting regarding religious holidays and the school calendar.

5.12 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2012-2013

The summer meetings will be decided at the next meeting. The meetings falling immediately after a school vacation week will be discussed at the workshop meeting. It is very difficult to collect meeting materials during a vacation week.

APS SC is suspended at 9:27 p.m.. ABRSC continues.

ABRSC BUSINESS

6.1 Proposed changes to ABRHS FY13 Student Handbook

Dr. Alixe Callen said that the Handbook Committee, chaired by Susan Atwater Rhodes, proposes a number of changes to the policies, as outlined in her memo. A new policy is proposed regarding students bringing in their own devices to use at school. The School Committee will revisit this item and vote on it at their June meeting.

6.2 Policy Subcommittee Update

6.2.1 Graduation Requirements File: IKF – **SECOND READING** – **VOTE**

Brigid Bieber explained that the packet includes information regarding increasing the math requirement that came up at the last meeting. The policy subcommittee does not recommend this and agreed with the staff that some students would be put at a disadvantage if more math was required, although most AB students already do take more. When asked why only 2 years of math is required, Dr. Callen responded that AB is by many measures a “#1 math school”. She believes it is much better developmentally to let young people choose to take more math classes than to mandate it. 100% of our ABRHS students passed the math MCAS last spring. Xuan Kong stated that graduation requirements are a statement of values. He asked Dr. Callen what her opinion is of online learning. She said that the High School offered online classes but not enough students signed up. Students like the connections to people in classes with a real teacher. AB has moved toward a hybrid model, and recognizes that more opportunities for this will come up.

The proposed Graduation Requirements policy includes a new addition of one semester of Art beginning with the Class of 2016, and an increase of credits required from 80 to 100. The change in credits was approved 1/4/07 but the policy was not changed.

Kim McOsker moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was

VOTED: to approve the revised Graduation Requirements policy (File: IKF) as proposed.
(Yes: Bieber, Kong, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Sabot No: Bruce)

6.3 School Lunch Price Increase for 2012-2013 – **VOTE** –

Marie Altieri reported that the projected fund reports in the packet are very difficult to create due to all the uncertainty. Nutritional requirements change. Equipment needs repair or replacement. May and June are very volatile for food sales. Legally, the district must increase lunch prices by 10 cents.

Brigid Bieber moved, Bruce Sabot seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to increase the lunch charge from \$2.10 to \$2.20 effective 8/27/12

6.4 Update on Lower Fields Project
Steve Mills reported that FOLF has secured two anchor leases for the project. JD Head is working very closely with the Town departments. All are looking forward to Boxborough's Town Meeting vote.

6.5 Update on Regionalization Study Committee
Xuan reported that the Committee is preparing for Boxborough's vote. Next meeting is May 16th.

6.6 Recommendation to Approve Gift from the Society for Science & the Public and Intel to ABRHS – Paul Murphy moved, it was seconded and unanimously,
VOTED: to accept this gift from the Society for Science and the Public and Intel with gratitude

6.7 Recommendation to Approve Gift in Memory of Mary Michelman and Carol Holley from Acton Citizens for Environmental Safety to RJGJHS Library
Bruce Sabot moved, Kim McOsker seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept this gift from ACES to the RJGJHS Library in memory of Mary Michelman and Carol Holley with gratitude

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

7.1 ABRHS

7.1.3 Memo re Elimination of Italian 1 for next year

Principal Alixe Callen reported that a survey done a few years ago found that Italian and Latin were popular languages to offer. There was significant interest in Italian initially, but it has dropped. The small Italian classes now could not make up for the resulting larger classes for other languages. The school will continue to study what languages are popular, what best serve students and what they will sign up for.

Dr. Mills introduced Andrew Shen as the new R.J. Grey Junior High School Principal, effective July 1st.

ABRSC adjourned at 10:24 p.m. APS SC reconvenes.

Acton Public School Committee Business

8.1 Election of APS SC Officers for 2012-2013

Superintendent Steve Mills opened the floor for nominations.

Dennis Bruce nominated Kim McOsker for Chairperson of the APS SC for 2012-2013, Xuan Kong seconded the motion, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that Kim McOsker would serve as Chairperson of the APS SC for 2012-2013

Xuan Kong nominated Dennis Bruce for Vice-Chairperson of the APS SC for 2012-2013, Paul Murphy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that Dennis Bruce would serve as Vice-Chairperson of the APS SC for 2012-2013

Xuan Kong nominated Beth Petr for Secretary of the APS SC for 2012-2013, Kim McOsker seconded the motion and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that Beth Petr would serve as Secretary of the APS SC for 2012-2013

The Acton Public School Committee adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of documents used: agenda

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.