

**ACTON PUBLIC AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES (approved 8/22/13)**

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

**June 6, 2013
7:00 p.m. AB Regional School Committee Meeting
7:05 p.m. Joint APS/ABR School Committee Executive Session
7:30 Joint APS/ABR School Committee Meeting
followed by ABR School Committee Meeting**

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce (8:00), Michael Coppolino, Paul Murphy, Kim McOsker, Maria Neyland, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Deanne O’Sullivan,
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr, Tess Summers

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Superintendent Stephen Mills.

2.0 Election of Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Officers for 2013-2014

Dr. Mills ran the annual election of School Committee officers.

2.1 Chairperson

Brigid Bieber moved, Michael Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve Maria Neyland as ABRSC Chairperson for FY14.

2.2 Vice Chairperson

Kim McOsker moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve Michael Coppolino as ABRSC Vice Chairperson for FY14.

2.3 Secretary

Mary Brolin moved, Kim McOsker seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve Beth Petr as ABRSC Secretary for FY14.

The Acton Public School Committee was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Vice Chair Kristina Rychlik.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:06 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

(**YES** – Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, Rychlik)

Maria Neyland declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session.

At 7:06 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton Public School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

(**YES** - Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session.

ABRSC polled to go out of Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

APSC polled to go out of Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPEN MEETING

CHAIRMEN'S INTRODUCTION

Dr. Mills recognized and thanked ABRHS Principal, Dr. Alixe Callen, for her outstanding 5 years of service to our school district and community. Dr. Callen is moving to Seattle to become the Upper School Director at the Lakeside School. Dr. Mills believes that Alixe will eventually become a nationally recognized educational leader of the highest regard. The School Committee also thanked Dr. Callen for her commitment to our students and families and presented her with an engraved clock.

9.1 New ABRHS Leadership Team (taken out of order)

Dr. Mills introduced the new ABRHS Leadership Team headed up by Dr. JoAnn Campbell as Interim Principal. Beth Baker is the new Interim Associate Principal, and Steven Martin and Maurin O'Grady are the new Deans of Students. Dr. Campbell is excited to work with the new team.

APPROVAL of MINUTES and STATEMENT of WARRANT

AB warrant #13-024 dated 5/16/13 in the amount of \$2,057,676.20 and warrant #13-025 dated 5/30/13 in the amount of \$1,784,020.91 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures. APS warrant #201324 dated 5/28/13 in the amount of \$70,261.17 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

Minutes of the 4/25/13 ABRSC Meeting were approved as written. The following minutes will be considered at the next meeting: 3/7/13 Joint/AB/APS, 4/10/13 Joint/AB and 5/2/13 Joint AB/APS.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Parent John Raguin spoke from the audience about the Richard E. Dow Track Renovation Project that he is proposing. He has been working with a team of people "to address the track's dilapidated state" that he feels is a significant safety hazard. He said that other coaches refuse to come to AB or use the AB track for fear of their kids getting hurt. Emphasizing that track and cross country are by far the most participatory activities in our Junior High and High Schools, he said that 850 students pay the athletic fee for it. He estimates the cost of the project at \$650,000 – 750,000. He plans to raise \$345,000 from private donors with the remaining funds coming from the school district and towns. He would like to raise the funding by July 31, 2013 and stated that this support will end in calendar year 2013. His goal is to have the track and facility ready for Spring 2014. He distributed a handout that will be posted with the meeting materials. Maria Neyland acknowledged John's efforts and generosity. She and Dr. Mills are meeting with John tomorrow morning to begin the discussion.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

8.1 Recommendation to Approve Gifts from Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSASF)

Rich Guzzardi and many student members of ABSAF presented a check for \$17,000 to the School Committee for FY13 and an additional \$83,000 as a gift for FY14. The \$17,000 added to their earlier gift of \$54,945 brings ABSAF's total FY13 donation to \$71,945.

ABRSC VOTE:

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept ABSAF's additional FY13 gift of \$17,000 and their FY14 gift of \$83,000 with much gratitude.

8.2 The Visual Arts Department Presentation by Diana Woodruff will be at the next meeting.

8.3 Presentation by FUTURES of APS and ABRSD Special Education Reviews

Michael Neiman, Ph.D. and Michael Palladino, Ph.D. presented their findings. They were impressed that "Every one in this district feels ownership of the kids in this community." as well as how counselors and psychologists share resources so smoothly. See slides of Program and Financial Review

recommendations. They concluded that the APS and ABRSD programs offered to students with disabilities are “both programmatically sound and fiscally responsible”. Full reports are in the packet. The audit cost \$25,000 over two years and did point out a valuable new revenue source to consider as well as eliminating one bus route.

Bill Guthlein spoke as co-chair of AB Sped PAC. Initially they were worried about this audit, but they really appreciate the good news. He was pleased that FUTURES looked at the Bridges/Connections proposal and that their support helped move it forward. He still has some concerns about testing of children with disabilities and how their outcome can be improved.

Liza Huber thanked her staff for their extensive efforts and dedication to the programs and students.

8.4 Superintendent’s Annual Evaluation and FY14 Contract – to be done at meeting on 6/20/13

8.5 Regionalization Report, 6/3/13 Acton and Boxborough Special Town Meetings

Maria Neyland reported the great news that K-12 Regionalization was passed at both Town Meetings. Dennis was thanked for a great job presenting. The July workshop will focus a lot on what needs to be done moving forward. Mary asked if another grant could be written to help fund this transition year. Dennis recognized the extensive efforts and dedication of Peter Ashton, Mac Reid, Xuan Kong, Mary Brolin and other members of the Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC). Kim thanked everyone in the two towns who came and voted. Mary noted that for future efforts like this, having the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee reps on the Study Committee was key. She said that those members gave incredible time and brought in different perspectives that were essential.

8.6 School Committee Member Reports

Dennis Bruce reported that at the Acton Finance Committee meeting (prior to the 6/3 Town Meetings) they voted to not support Regionalization, although 4 members did speak in favor. He emphasized that all members need to open a good line of communication with the Finance Committees as the new region rolls out. He noted FinCom’s letter in the packet regarding their strong feelings about year end expenditures.

8.7 Policy Subcommittee Update

8.7.1 Security Camera Systems, File: EEAEB – SECOND READING

ABRSC VOTE

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the new Security Camera Systems policy as proposed.

Brigid Bieber pointed out the importance of the public being made aware of this new policy. It will be noted on the website and signage is going to be installed by Facilities staff.

APS VOTE

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the new Security Camera Systems policy as proposed.

8.7.2 Family and Medical Leave (FML) Policy, File GCCC/GDCC: – FIRST READING

Marie Altieri presented this revision at the recommendation of our attorney based on new laws.

8.7.3 Small Necessities Leave (SNL) Policy, File GCCCA/GDCCA: – FIRST READING

Marie noted that a new law is creating the need for this new policy.

8.8 FY14 School Calendar

Early Release/Late Start dates are added. Dr. Mills proposes no school on 12/23/13 and ending school on 6/13/14 because Monday 12/23/13 should really be no school given the vacation week. Many parents and staff have expressed concern about this.

ABRSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the FY13 school calendar as amended.

APSC VOTE

Mike Coppolino moved, Kim McOsker seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the FY13 school calendar as amended.

8.9 FY14 APS/ABR School Committee Meetings Calendar Draft

The Committees will need to add transitional school committee meetings for FY14. This will be considered at the July meeting.

8.10 Recommendation to Approve Non-Union Employee Benefits Manuals – VOTE

Manuals are posted at <http://ab.mec.edu/hr/hrcontracts.shtm>

Marie Altieri reported that this was a perfunctory vote due to clerical changes.

ABRSC VOTE

Kim McOsker moved, Mike Coopolino seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Non-union Employee Benefits Manuals as proposed.

APS VOTE

Paul Murphy moved, Kim McOsker seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Non-union Employee Benefits Manuals as proposed.

8.11 Recommendation to Approve Food and Related Products Bid (TEC) – VOTE

ABRSC VOTE

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Food and Related Products Bid as proposed.

APSC VOTE

Paul Murphy moved, Kim McOsker seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Food and Related Products Bid as proposed.

8.12 Recommendation to Approve Naming of Acton Public Preschool - VOTE

Liza Huber explained the process used to bring this recommendation to the School Committee for a vote. See memos. This discussion began at the March 21, 2013 School Committee meeting and followed the “Naming School Facilities policy and procedures (File: FF and FF-R). The consensus of all involved was to name the preschool the Carol P. Huebner Preschool. Carol is retiring this year after starting the preschool in 1994.

APS VOTE

Paul Murphy moved that the program be named the Carol P. Huebner Preschool and it was seconded.

In response to a question, Liza said that the process began when her staff came forward and asked that the preschool be named after Carol. Committee members asked if this was the same process used for naming the Parker Damon Building, Edward Leary Field and Dick Dow Track. They questioned whether naming a program is the same as naming a facility. Dennis expressed general hesitation about the openness of the process. Brigid Bieber noted that while she has been on the Committee, there have been several instances of naming a place, and in each case the Committee didn’t ask extensive questions. The namings resulted from someone being inspired to come forward and suggest it. In her opinion, “This sounds like it went exactly as it should.” Kristina referred to the May 14 memo agreeing that the naming committee was appropriate and included people who know the school. Dennis disagreed and felt the Committee should have been broader.

The Committee

VOTED; to name the Acton Public Preschool, The Carol P. Huebner Preschool as proposed.
(Yes = 4, No = 1, Dennis Bruce voting no)

The Acton Public School Committee adjourned at 9:31 p.m. *The ABRSC Meeting continued.*

ABRSC BUSINESS

9.1 New ABRHS Leadership Team – done earlier in the meeting

9.2 Recommendation to Authorize Bond Refunding and Refinancing of ABRSD Debt – VOTE

Don Aicardi and Tess Summers presented. Our District's financial advisor at First Southwest is recommending that the District's bonds be refunded and refinanced to save interest costs and taxpayers money. This is because the bonds issued in 2004 and 2005 can be "called" or paid off after 10 years and refinanced. This is expected to save about \$100,000 on the assessment for each of the next ten years.

AB VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: That in order to reduce interest costs on outstanding debt, the District is authorized to issue bonds or notes for the purposes of refunding all or any portion of its \$5,500,000 General Obligation Bonds, dated December 1, 2004, and its \$18,705,000 General Obligation Bonds, dated December 1, 2005, that are outstanding as of the date of this vote, including, if any, the payment of any premium and accrued interest associated therewith, and all other costs incidental and related thereto, under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority.

The School Committee will have to vote final approval on this matter in late July or early August.

9.3 ABRSD FY'13 Year End Review and Expenditure Initiative

9.3.2 Letter from Acton Finance Committee dated 5/30/13

Don Aicardi presented the three considerations for year end funding:

1. Priority based purchases not included in the FY14 budget
2. Additional funding of OPEB trust fund
3. Additional funding of E&D to maintain ABRSD reserves

The current FY13 year end estimate is \$620,000. No vote is required but the Administration asked for the Committee's input and affirmation on the proposal to spend \$247,000 on lighting at the High School (\$122,000), safety equipment (\$60,000), and science tables at the Jr High (\$65,000), and replenish E&D with \$373,000. It was noted that \$770,000 of E&D was used to underwrite the FY14 budget. The challenge is always to find the right balance. Dr. Mills mentioned the FinCom letter that specifically requests that year end funds not be spent on "Science room tables" because they should be in the annual operating budget.

Andrew Shen and Mary Fran Doiron (JH Science Chair) spoke about the need for the science tables, a request included on Budget Saturday. These are a one time purchase, to replace the 12 year old ones.

Mike Coppolino agreed with FinCom's point that essential needs should be in the annual budget. Dennis Bruce is inclined not to support the science tables for that reason and stated that if \$60,000 was needed to fix the front entrance of a school for safety reasons, he would have supported that in the annual budget. Kim McOsker appreciates the concern but saw the need for the tables at the Open House. Mary Brolin agreed saying that when she sat at one of the current tables, it was difficult to interact with the teacher. She considered them educationally needed. Paul agreed.

Maria Neyland agrees with purchasing the tables, and emphasized how the Committee has to "battle for increases for level service" while important needs still exist. Spending some year end money will still leave a healthy fund balance. Andrew Shen appreciates Fincom's point but his job is to tell the Committee how to give kids a better education and what they need. He outlined that at Budget Saturday and the March School Committee meeting. He has to adapt the space to what is educationally best. Right now a

quarter of the science students have their backs to the teacher who they're taking notes from because of the existing tables.

The majority of School Committee members agreed with purchasing the tables included in the proposal for year end spending.

9.4 Recommendation to Approve FY'14 Nonresident Tuition Charges -VOTE

Don Aicardi reviewed the packet memo. We currently have no students in this category.

ABRSC VOTE

Mike Coppolino moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the tuition rate of \$14,696 for non-resident students in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the 2013-2014 school year.

9.5 Lower Fields Quarterly Report

The Lower Fields are in full use by the schools and tenants. There have been delays in completing the auxiliary parking lot due to trouble with the general contractor. As of May 31, 2013, FOLF has collected \$207,122.59 in rental revenues with a projected cash flow for FY13 of \$221,646.59. The concession stand opened on May 25th. The advertising plan is in place and two local businesses have signed contracts to purchase signs.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Dr. Mills highlighted the Boston Globe article on Student Stress (5/30/13), and the letter from MA Commission on Energy Resources re U.S. Dept of Education's 2013 Green Ribbon School District Award to ABRSD.

NEXT MEETINGS

- June 20, 7:00 pm, RJGJHS Library, Joint APS/ABRSC followed by APS SC meeting

The Committee adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda