

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 17, 2016
7:00 p.m. Business Meeting begins
7:30 p.m. ABRSC School Choice Public Hearing
Followed by remainder of Business Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville
Others: Marie Altieri, Bonnie Bisbicos, Deborah Bookis, Clare Jeannotte, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

Chairwoman Kristina Rychlik called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Chairman’s Introduction

1.1. Annual Spring Town Elections (*Acton on 3/29, Boxborough on 5/16*)
Kristina Rychlik reminded everyone of the upcoming local elections.

1.2. Thank you to Michael Coppolino for 18 Years of AB School Committee Service
Several former School Committee Chairmen joined the School Committee in thanking Mike for his dedicated service on the Committee and to the community. John Ryder reminisced about the difficult override votes and building campaigns/bond issues that Mike worked on, as well as his many years of coaching Little League baseball and teaching so many valuable lessons on the field. John Petersen noted that Mike participated in 18 Budget Saturdays and that the secret sauce of AB is the quality of the volunteer service. John described Mike’s strengths as “disciplined dissent” particularly regarding complicated issues, and the importance of being able to disagree with the Committee at times. Xuan Kong appreciated how Mike met with him and answered questions when they were both running for School Committee and Xuan was new. Mike was always conscious of the financial impact of the Committee’s work on families. Dennis Bruce stated that he would not have served on the Committee if he had not been encouraged by Mike. He noted that Mike Coppolino has had a direct effect on the children of our community for many years. Committee members agreed with the sentiments, particularly Mary Brolin’s description of how Mike would agree with a position during a meeting and then state, “That said……” and continue on to strongly disagree with the group. The Committee thanked Mike for his dedicated commitment to the community.

2. Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes

Warrant #16-019 dated 3/10/16 in the amount of \$599,380.08 and warrant #16-019PR dated 3/17/16 in the amount of \$1,939,787.66 were signed by the Committee.
The minutes of the ABRSC meetings on 3/3/16 and 11/19/15 were approved as written.

3. Public Participation

Barbara Willson updated the Committee on the revised Acton Senior Center Study Committee plans. Article 26 in the Acton Town Meeting Warrant requests authorization to lease new appropriate space for the Senior Center.

4. ABRSC SCHOOL CHOICE PUBLIC HEARING

4.1. School Choice Hearing Memo – *Marie Altieri*

4.2. Participation in School Choice Program 2016-2017 –**VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

The School Choice hearing began at 7:37 p.m. The Committee discussed the memo in the packet. Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to continue in the School Choice program and limit openings to one seat in Kindergarten for FY17.

5. **ABRSD FY17 Budget Update**– *Glenn Brand*

The Superintendent briefly reviewed the proposed budget. Kristina Rychlik noted that both the Acton Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee voted to recommend the FY17 Budget.

6. **Excess & Deficiency (E&D) Certification, 6/30/15** – *Clare Jeannotte*

Clare Jeannotte reported that the certification was received yesterday. Kristina asked why the Department of Revenue emailed it to our Boxborough School Committee members. Clare will follow up. Marie pointed out that this figure is up from \$1.2 million last year, due to Clare's hard work. Clare said that part of the increase was due to one-time benefits but there were some other changes.

7. **Regional Financial Oversight Committee (RFOC) Annual Report per Regional Agreement** – *Clare Jeannotte*

7.1. Calculation of FY15 Per Pupil Expenditures by School

7.2. Elementary Schools (per the Regional Agreement)

7.3. Recommendation to Approve Regional Financial Oversight Committee Statement to be Read at Annual Town Meetings - **VOTE** – *Mary Brolin*

Clare Jeannotte reported this required data as outlined in the Regional Agreement. She stated that it is not known how consistent the districts are as far as their OPEB numbers. She did not include our OPEB figures in this information.

Reporting on the RFOC Benefits Tracking Form, Mary Brolin said that this information supports Clare's report of the lower per pupil cost.

The School Committee will vote to accept the subcommittee (RFOC)'s report at the School Committee meeting prior to Acton Town Meeting. Bob Evans was not at the last RFOC meeting when the statement was reviewed and Mary wants to be sure he agrees with it.

8. **Town Meeting Preparation** – *Kristina Rychlik*

Kristina will do her presentation at the upcoming League of Women Voters Forum. The Pre Town Meeting Meeting is March 31.

9. **ABRSD Capital Study Update** – *Glenn Brand*

9.1. Link to materials: <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>

9.2. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statement of Interest Application Process

9.2.1. Required Form of Vote to Submit a Statement of Interest

9.2.2. Core Program Statement of Interest Process Overview

9.3. Recommendation to Approve Statement of Interest – *Vote to be taken at ABRSC meeting on 4/4/16 prior to Acton Town Meeting*

9.4. Working Group and Visioning Team Membership

9.5. School Capital & Space Planning Community Meeting Flyer, 3/29/16, 7:00 p.m. in the Douglas School Cafeteria

Dr. Brand reviewed all of the efforts to date around the Capital Needs Study and the extensive report presented to the District last month by Dore and Whittier. Total identified improvements for all

buildings combined is approximately \$120 million. Three schools need notable attention: Douglas (\$17 million), Conant (\$17 million) and Gates (\$14 million). Having identified these issues, the District must explore viable options for financial assistance, including the MSBA. Dr. Brand stated that there is enough information now to submit a statement of interest from the ABRSC to the MSBA. This would raise a flag to tell the state that the district has some significant needs and would like to be considered for financial assistance in the future. The deadline for this submittal is April 8, 2016.

Diane Baum attended a roundtable discussion recently about this topic. She reported that the Executive Director of MSBA was there, as well as MA DOER, to be sure that any projects submitted were “green”. Diane stressed that it is a very competitive process and can take years. A public meeting will be held on March 29th at the Douglas School on this topic. The School Committee will meet on April 4, prior to Acton Town Meeting to review and vote the Statements of Interest (SOIs) before the deadline.

Dr. Brand recognized and thanked all of the members of the Visioning Team and Working Group for their commitment to this process.

10. **Recommendation regarding ABRSD Legal Resources – VOTE - Glenn Brand**

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

VOTED: that both the School District and the School Committee use the firm of Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP as well as Attorney Peter Ebb of Ropes & Gray LLP as counsel.

11. **ABRSC Draft Letter to Commissioner Chester re Conflict between DESE’s Recommendation for March Vacation Week & Standardized Testing Schedules – Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville**

(Draft letter is unchanged from last meeting)

This was passed over due to Maya Minkin and Kathleen Neville not being at the meeting.

12. **Demographic Survey Update – Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino**

A follow up meeting will take place with the Boston College professors. There is some concern about timing now because it is better to survey parents during the school year and it is getting late. Mary Brolin will share the domain document with the School Committee for their input and then send it to BC. Diane Baum said at the EDCO Roundtable they talked about surveying regarding holidays and the school calendar. She asked if the District should join this group’s effort. Marie Altieri said that there is a new Calendar Working Group that involves the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) so it may be best to just work with our group for now.

13. **FY17 Kindergarten Registration Update – Marie Altieri**

Marie reported that the District went live with the new online registration recently and it has worked very well. The lottery will be done in a couple of weeks. The projection was 284 students and we already have 302 students (not including 7 students who will be registered for the Pathways Program). This is 18 or 19 students more than the projection. Boxborough families’ students filled the Blanchard classrooms, so there is no room for Acton students to go to Blanchard at this time. More details will be provided at the next School Committee Meeting. Marie stated that they are watching the numbers very closely. Diane Baum commented that the Lexington Schools have a new model because they felt the cohort model being used consistently underpredicted their registration. Diane will share this information with Marie.

14. **Subcommittee Reports**

14.1. **Budget – Maria Neyland**

14.1.1. At the meeting on 3/16/16 they reviewed the FY17 proposed budget. Erin Bettez attended and they discussed an energy fee in addition to the rental fees because rentals currently are

not covering the energy costs. Erin will present to the Committee in April for a First Reading of this possible fee increase (procedures, not policy). Mike Coppolino suggested that they not throw all renters into one pot for consideration. He noted that Travel Basketball gives a lot of money back to the District while other groups do not. Kristina said they talked about being more transparent with outside groups and what we are currently doing. Maria said that there are a couple of groups outside the Group 1, 2 and 3 structure and that is being considered. The Committee agreed that the District cannot be losing money on these arrangements, particularly regarding energy costs.

14.2. Policy –

14.2.1. **Public’s Right to Know**, File: KDB – Second Reading – **VOTE** - *Brigid Bieber*
Mary Brolin moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the changes to this policy as proposed.

14.2.2. **School Committee Legal Status**, File: BB – Second Reading – **VOTE** - *Brigid Bieber*
Mary Brolin moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the changes to this as proposed.

14.3. Legislative – *Kristina Rychlik*

14.3.1. Recommendation to Adopt the Resolution Calling for Full Funding of the Foundation Budget Review Commission's Recommendations as proposed by the Suburban Coalition, 2/1/16 – **VOTE** – *Kristina Rychlik*

14.3.1.1. Updated Resolution and List of Communities in Support (3/1/16)
Kristina met with Clare Jeannotte to be sure there was no risk in approving this resolution. She thought it was fine. Kristina advocated for the Committee to support and take it to the two towns’ Selectmen and Finance Committees.
Paul Murphy moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the Chapter 70 Resolution as proposed.

14.3.2. Proposed Letter Rep. Jennifer Benson re Governor’s Budget, *Paul Murphy*
Comments were incorporated and the Committee agreed to sign the proposed letter.

14.4. Comparative Communities Study Update – *Michael Coppolino*

14.4.1. ABRSC Member to replace M. Coppolino as Subcommittee Chair
Michael Coppolino reported on the meeting held last night. Mary Ann Ashton offered to come up with the higher level numbers. She will send it out next week and they hope to meet in two weeks. They hope to have the report ready sometime in June. Diane Baum and Steve Noone have joined this Committee. An updated list of members will be in the next packet.

15. **School Committee Member Reports**

15.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Paul Murphy*

15.1.1. Minutes of meeting on 2/25/16

15.1.2. Materials from meeting on 3/15/16 – Paul Murphy reported on a discussion of the use of reserves. Marie stated that the only outstanding issue seems to be FY18 and FY19’s preliminary budget and revenue numbers and the Finance Committee’s view of them. These are very much preliminary numbers so there was consensus to put \$1.6M for use of reserves for FY18 and \$1.3M for FY19 as a reasonable compromise. No meeting on March 24.

15.2. Acton Board of Selectmen – The School Budget was presented and the BOS will recommend it. Paul Murphy will cover these meetings now that Mike retired.

15.3. Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update – Diane Baum reported that Mitchell Chester signed the amended MMT Agreement and there are 2 warrants for Acton Town Meeting.

16. **Superintendent’s Report/Updates** – *Glenn Brand*

- 16.1. MASS/MASBO School Finance Position Paper, 3/10/16
- 16.2. Dr. Brand introduced the Challenge Success Program that the District will be starting. He is proud to be part of an Administrative Team that is so concerned about the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of our students. Outreach information will go to families and staff in the first part of April with a very targeted survey for 6th graders and older. Results will be shared in the Fall. Everyone is very excited about this new effort.

Dr. Brand concluded the meeting by thanking Mike Coppolino for his advocacy and work on behalf of the students and families of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

- March 29 School Capital and Space Planning Community Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Douglas School Cafeteria with Superintendent Glenn Brand and Facilities Director J.D. Head
- April 4 Acton Town Meeting begins, 7:00 p.m. in the ABRHS Auditorium (ABRSC Meeting at 6:15 p.m. in High School Room XX for possible **VOTE** on MSBA Statement of Interest) Warrant found at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/7840>
- April 7 ABRSC Executive Session (*Strategy with respect to collective bargaining*) at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- April 28 ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- May 9 Boxborough Town Meeting begins, 7:00 p.m. in the Blanchard Gym
- May 19 ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library