

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING  
Minutes (of Open Meeting, approved 12/17/15)

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

December 3, 2015  
6:00 p.m. Executive Session  
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

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*Members Present:* Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin (6:45 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan (6:05 p.m.) , Kristina Rychlik  
*Members Absent:* none  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Marilyn Bisbicos (7:30 p.m), Deborah Bookis (7:30 p.m), Clare Jeannotte (7:30 p.m), Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

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1. **Call to Order** (6:00)

2. **ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 6:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session, pursuant to MGL chapter 30A, section 21 (a)(7), to comply with any general or special law requirements (i.e., c. 30A, § 22(f) and(g)) for the approval of releasing executive session minutes for: 10/9/14, 12/11/14, 1/22/15, 3/19/15, 6/25/15, 7/22/15

(YES – Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, Rychlik)

At 6:01 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session pursuant to MGL c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation (i.e. Decision dated November 13, 2015)

(YES – Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik stated that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session at approximately 7:00 p.m.

3. **ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:03 p.m. the ABRSC was polled to go out of Executive Session and returned to their open meeting.

4. **Chairman’s Introduction**

5. **Statement of Warrant**

Warrant #16-011PR dated 11/25/15 in the amount of \$2,370,122.15 and warrant #16-012 dated 12/3/15 in the amount of \$517,605.67 were signed by the Committee members.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

6.1. The minutes of meetings on 11/5/15 and 11/19/15 will be voted at the next meeting.

7. **Public Participation** - none

8. **FY17 Fees Review/Recommendations Presentation –Second Read – Glenn Brand**

8.1. Athletics –

8.1.1. Memo from Steve Martin 11/30/15

Dr. Brand noted that the only change to the FY17 Fees as proposed at the previous meeting, was to maintain the Athletic family cap at 4 seasons or \$1,000 so Steve Martin could collect more data.

Mary Brolin moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to approve the FY17 revised Athletics fees as proposed.

8.2. All Day Kindergarten –

Mary Brolin moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to approve the FY17 All Day Kindergarten tuition as proposed.

8.3. ABRSD Early Childhood Program –

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

**VOTED:** to approve the ABRSD Early Childhood Program as proposed.

8.4. Occupational Development Program (ODP) –

Maria Neyland moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to approve the ODP tuition as proposed. Paul clarified that this tuition is for out of district students.

Kristina Rychlik noted that no public input was received on any of these proposed fees. Kathleen Neville stated that she will have a full day Kindergartener next year and asked for clarification around abstaining from a vote. Kristina explained that as long as a member can be impartial, they can vote. If a member would have a personal impact from a decision that would prevent them from voting objectively, they should abstain.

Deanne O’Sullivan appreciated the family cap being lowered than initially proposed. She cautioned the School Committee against increasing fees too often because families pay by more in booster fees, uniforms, etc, in addition to the fee charged. Kristina Rychlik noted that the district does not have many options to address the athletic account deficit. The last year the athletics fee was raised was 2011. Mike Coppolino stated that there are other ways to address the issue. Thoughtful elimination of 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls basketball teams or a team due to other opportunities in town to play and a limited schedule of other 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams to play could be considered, rather than increasing fees.

9. **FY17 Budget Pres. #1- “Setting the Stage/Superintendent’s Budget Overview – Drivers & Priorities” – Glenn Brand**

Dr. Brand delivered the first of his FY17 Budget presentations, noting that the greatest challenge is to provide the capacity and resources necessary to meet the needs of all students in light of rapidly increasing at-risk and higher needs students (Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL) and Low Income.

Mary Brolin asked why the debt service is increasing if the district is not adding any debt. Clare Jeannotte replied that when the refunding happened in FY14, there were certain benefits available in FY15 that made some payments required in FY16 and FY17.

Brigid Bieber referred to the expected increase in ODD tuition, and asked if CASE had finished “right sizing” their program. Dr. Brand was not sure but stated that CASE does not set their rates much farther than the next year, and the district does not have the sizable credit this year that we had last year. Mike Coppolino asked how many learning centers were in each elementary school. He feels that if the goal is 3, we might be “going overboard”. Marie Altieri explained that traditionally we had 2 in each school, and last year we added one at Gates and transferred one from Blanchard to Douglas. Now there are 3 at Douglas, Blanchard and Gates and we are gradually moving that way. Mike asked about the number of psychologists per school. Bonnie explained that due to their training and

experience, psychologists are more qualified to do student testing, than counselors. Mike cautioned the administration not to move toward a standard of 1 psychologist per school. In response to a question, Marie will report on what other communities have at the next meeting. Clare Jeannotte will bring back the future payments for the next 10 years. Regarding slide 8, the Capital Needs Assessment Overview was done on November 19, not December.

10. **FY17 Special Education Program Recommendation**– *Mary Emmons*

Mary Emmons thanked Joe Gibowicz and Lynne Laramie for their work on the FY17 K-3 Pathways Program for students with autism spectrum disorder that was being proposed.

The 4 Full Time Equivalent staff members (FTEs) will come from two who will follow students who are entering the program and two FTEs who are transitioning from students who will not need them next year. Without this new program, the 6 students who have been identified would go out of district. This proposal is good for the budget, but more importantly (in Mary Emmons' words), it is what is best for these kids. It was suggested that Slide 14 add the materials and technology costs. It was noted that Slide 12 does not include summer services.

Mary Emmons explained that all of our programs are inclusion programs, with the exception of the Occupational Development Program (ODP). It is all about giving kids the least restrictive environments for their education. Mike Coppolino stated, "It is wonderful that you are building this program."

11. **MCAS Report** – *Deborah Bookis*

Deborah Bookis presented the preliminary 2015 MCAS results noting that scores are still embargoed so she cannot talk about the specifics. She will distribute a memo when the information is public. December 18<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for districts to submit a final decision on whether to use PARCC or MCAS. Deborah said that AB students would be taking the MCAS in Spring of 2016. Mary Brolin appreciated the focus on decreasing anxiety around writing. At Blanchard they used PARCC and the timing aspect of it was very stressful.

12. **Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Search Update** – *Marie Altieri*

- 12.1. Job Posting
- 12.2. Timeline
- 12.3. Memo to Staff and Parents

Marie Altieri updated the Committee on the Search that is about to start. Brigid Bieber asked about the qualifications for this position, specifically regarding licensure. Dr. Brand explained that the intention is not to find someone with only the special education certification, because Mary Emmons has the certification required. The expansion of this position will allow us to widen the candidate pool. Dr. Brand does not see this as a lack of requirement.

Brigid responded that given the increase in the population of special education students, she would encourage hefty experience in special education. There is a lot of liability in this area. The deadline for applications is December 29.

13. **MASC District Governance Program Update** – *Kristina Rychlik*

- 13.1. Recommendation to Approve ABRSC Goals – **Second Reading** – **VOTE**
- 13.2. Final Workshop on January 6 at 7:00 p.m.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to approve the ABRSC 2015-2016 Goals as proposed.

14. **Recommendation to Accept Gift of \$15,100 from the Friends of the Acton Libraries to the ABRSD Libraries** – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Paul Murphy moved with gratitude, Maria Neyland seconded, and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to accept this gift from the Friends of the Acton Libraries with gratitude.

## 15. Subcommittee Reports

### 15.1. Budget

Maria Neyland reported that they met last Monday and got a preview of the Budget presentation for tonight, and reviewed the warrant signing procedures. They will meet again on 12/9/15.

### 15.2. Policy –

#### 15.2.1. *School Councils*, File: BDFA – **Second Read** – *Glenn Brand*

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

**VOTED:** to accept the revision to the policy as proposed.

#### 15.2.1.1. Procedures: School Improvement Plan, BDFA-R-1, Submission and Approval of the School Improvement Plan, BDFA-R-2, Conduct of School Council Business, BDFA-E-3

#### 15.2.2. *New School Committee Member Orientation*, File: BIA – **Second Read**

Mary Brolin moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to accept the revision to the policy as proposed.

### 15.3. Demographic Study Update -

Mike Coppolino reported that a conference call was done with the Boston College professor and they will meet on 12/7/15 to come up with a list of specifics for the survey.

### 15.4. Legislative –

Paul Murphy reported that they last met just before Acton Special Town Meeting. He may follow up with Senator James Eldridge. Paul is reviewing a list of bills and initiatives that the School Committee may consider in the future. Paul will draft a letter for the Committee to consider asking the state to fund circuit breaker to the fullest extent of the law.

## 16. School Committee Member Reports

### 16.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Kristina Rychlik, Paul Murphy*

#### 16.1.1. Meeting minutes of 10/29/15

Kristina reported that ALG did not meet Nov 17 but will meet next week. She will bring up the idea of a 5 board meeting instead of one for each town.

### 16.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF)

16.2.1. Three Board Meeting on 11/30/15 – Mary Brolin said it was very well received and she thanked all who came. The Fincom liaison asked that if there is something formally presented to the Board of Selectmen in Acton, Boxborough would like it as well.

### 16.3. Acton Finance Committee – *Kristina Rychlik, Deanne O’Sullivan*

#### 16.3.1. FY15 ABRSD Budget Presentation done on 11/24/15

The Acton Finance Committee did presentations at Gates PTO and JH/HS PTSO about their Point of View document. This will be in the next School Committee packet, fyi.

### 16.4. Acton Board of Selectmen –

Mike Coppolino reported that Associated Environmental Systems is moving into Acton’s Post Office Square and have offered parking for our buses. This came up at Acton Town Meeting.

### 16.5. Minuteman Tech Update –

Diane Baum reported that the Minuteman Working Group met for the first time this morning (Diane, Pam Nourse, Mike Majors, Janet Adachi). The Selectmen representatives from all towns met last night and it seems like all towns will probably have special Town Meetings in February.

They will create a new Regional Agreement proposal. Perhaps as many as 4 towns may withdraw, meaning increased costs for member towns. They are concerned about keeping on track for their building project. There is a real push to educate about this issue in the communities, including making State Reps aware. Diane said it was encouraging to hear that consensus was reached with the member towns on a revised Regional Agreement. Ann Chang suggested that bus trips and tours to Minuteman Tech be offered as a way to educate the communities.

### 16.6. PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs– *Deanne O’Sullivan*

The Co-Chairs met on November 9 and will meet again on December 7 for general updates.

**17. Superintendent's Report – Glenn Brand**

17.1. Update on Leary Field Track Scoreboard

The scoreboard hardware was installed in November. It will be up and running in the spring.

17.2. Long Range Strategic Plan, Wellness and Safety Task Force Updates

The Wellness and Safety Task Forces are running. There is some variation between the schools on their safety procedures. Wellness is focusing on sleep and fatigue, among other topics. There are School Committee reps on both Task Forces. The District's Leadership Team (DLT) of approximately 50 people, will start work on the new Long Range Strategic Plan.

**18. Senior Leadership Administrative Restructuring Proposal Update - Glenn Brand**

Dr. Brand asked for more time before finalizing this important decision. He has met with all principals and cabinet members and they are providing input to ensure that he comes up with the right recommendation for our Senior Leadership. He expects to bring a proposal to the Committee at their next meeting, after gathering final input.

**19. FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

19.1. 2016-2017 ABRSD Kindergarten Registration Schedule – Tue Jan 12.

19.2. Family Learning Series: Janell Burley Hoffman 12/2/15 –

This presentation discussed raising children with today's portable technology and the issues of balance and wellness. Ms. Burley Hoffman encouraged parents to stand with their children while they learn to use technology. Using the analogy of a cookbook, she said that you wouldn't throw stuff on the counter and tell kids to cook something. A parent would stand with them and help them learn how to use the recipe.

19.3. Pulitzer Prize-Winning Poet Tracy K. Smith Chosen as 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Robert Creeley Award Winner (Presentation on 3/29/16)

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

Dec 17	ABRSC Meeting	7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
Jan 6 (Wed)	Final Governance Workshop	7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
Jan 14	ABRSC Meeting	7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
Jan 23	FY17 Budget Saturday Meeting	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library