

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Approved Minutes

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 16, 2017
7:00 p.m. Open Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. FY18 School Choice Public Hearing
Followed by return to Business Meeting
9:30 p.m. Executive Session (approx. following Business Meeting)

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

1. The ABRSC was called to order by Chairperson Mary Brolin at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Chairman’s Introduction** – *Mary Brolin*
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Acton Election is Tuesday, March 28. Four candidates are running for 3 School Committee seats.
 - Boxborough deadline to submit papers is March 28 for Election on May 16
3. **Statement of Warrant** – The warrants were reviewed and signed by the Committee members. See attached.
4. **Approval of Minutes** – to be done at the next meeting
 - 4.1. ABRSC Meeting of 2/16/17, 2/2/17 and Budget Saturday on 1/21/17
5. **Public Participation** - none
6. **ABRHS Students Presentation: Transitioning from Reliance on Bottled/Imported Water** – *ABRHS Students Chantal Raguin and Anna Rychlik*
 - 6.1. Presentation
 - 6.2. Recommendation to Accept Gift of Water Bottle Filler at the Junior High– **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*
Ms. Raquin and Ms. Rychlik gave an excellent presentation on their policy proposal and bottle filling station donation. Their objective is to promote consumption of local water and minimize the importation of resources already available to the community. See getontap.weebly.com

They surveyed all High School students and 99% of them own a refillable water bottle. They think it’s a matter of getting the kids to use them instead of buying bottled water. They have reached out to the elementary schools to start educating the younger students as well. Maria Neyland suggested that they consider sharing their efforts during spring sports and at Team Nights or having Athletic Director, Mr. Martin mention it. When asked why the goal is to eliminate all imported water and not just limit it, as in the vending machines, the students agreed that a slower goal would be ok, but their ultimate goal is to eliminate it. A committee member stated that she doesn’t want to see water replaced by sugary drinks in vending machines. The students want to focus only on tap water because that could replace the bottled water.

Regarding the policy proposal, the policy subcommittee will consider it at their next meeting. A First Reading could be at the April School Committee meeting followed by a vote at the May meeting. Kristina Rychlik stated that she is related to one of the presenters. The students were thanked for their enthusiastic efforts.

Diane Baum moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the gift of a water bottle filler at the Junior High with gratitude.

7. **ABRSD Director of Finance Decision - Glenn Brand**

7.1. Recommendation to Appoint Mr. David A. Verdolino as Director of Finance– **VOTE** – Glenn Brand
After a thorough search with the assistance of Dr. Tony Bent of the NESDEC, Dr. Brand recommended Mr. Verdolino for this position.

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

VOTED: to appoint Mr. David Verdolino to the position of Director of Finance, effective July 1, 2017 and to set compensation at \$141, 500.

8. **ABRSD Budget Update – Glenn Brand, Clare Jeannotte (none)**

9. **Regional Financial Oversight Committee (RFOC) Annual Report per Regional Agreement – Mary Brolin, Clare Jeannotte**

9.1. FY16 Per Pupil Expenditures by School (per Regional Agreement Section 11 & App A Section e)

9.2. Tracking of Financial Benefits

Mary Brolin reviewed the numbers. There was nothing unusual to note.

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

The RFOC asked for the School Committee’s approval of their statement.

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

VOTED: to approve the Regional Financial Oversight Committee’s statement to be read at the Acton and Boxborough Annual Town Meetings.

10. **THE ABRSC SCHOOL CHOICE PUBLIC HEARING was called to order at 7:30 p.m.**

10.1. School Choice Hearing Memo – Marie Altieri

10.2. Participation in School Choice Program 2017-2018 –**VOTE** – Glenn Brand

Marie Altieri reviewed the School Choice process and recommendation.

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

VOTED: to continue in the School Choice program and limit openings to one seat in Kindergarten for FY18.

The ABRSC School Choice Hearing was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

11. **RETURN TO BUSINESS MEETING**

12. **ABRSD Auditor's Agreed Upon Procedures – Clare Jeannotte**

12.1. High School Student Activity Funds, 6/30/16

12.2. School District End of Year Financial Report, 6/30/16

12.3. ABRSD School Activity Programs and Accounts Policies, File: JJ and JJF

In the past, the District’s previous auditor did not have any audit findings but with our new auditor, there were several in each area. Clare is preparing proposed changes for the next policy subcommittee meeting and then on to School Committee. The DESE made some changes in some of these areas a couple of years ago and the District needs to bring processes up to date. The End of Year Report finding was relative to how we captured statistics regarding special education transportation services. The largest part of this transportation for our district is through the collaboratives.

Brigid Bieber commented that the District is a huge operation and when there is a change like a new auditor it doesn't surprise her that there are a couple of findings like this. Nothing that she read concerns her greatly. Clare thanked Karen Alderisio at the High School who handles a lot of the financial responsibility. She has done a great job.

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

On-line registration was completed on 3/7/17. As of 3/16/17, 325 children have been registered for kindergarten compared to the projected class of 298. One additional elementary class section was budgeted for for next year. Given these registration numbers, that section will be a kindergarten class at Blanchard. The Committee discussed the current interest in universal kindergarten, particularly related to the building projects, but it really is a financial decision. Kristina Rychlik hopes that people understand how difficult it would be to pay for.

14. **ABRSD Master Plan / School Building Project Update**

14.1. Massachusetts School Business Authority (MSBA) Update – *Glenn Brand*

14.1.1. Slides

14.1.2. Letter and Press Release regarding the C.T. Douglas School, 2/15/17

14.1.3. Initial Compliance Certification – ABRSD/C.T. Douglas Elementary School (due 5-3-17)

Dr. Brand explained that with the acceptance of the Douglas School application into the MSBA funding process, the District's "clock" of 270 days starts on April 3rd and must be completed by December 29th for the funding assistance process to continue. The Initial Compliance Certification must be received by the MSBA by 5/3/17. Dr. Brand offered to have counsel review the document before the next meeting when the Committee will be asked to vote on it, however he does feel like it is a standard MSBA form that may not be alterable. The Committee had no comment. The next step after that is that the School Building Committee (SBC) must be formed and submitted to the MSBA by June 2, 2017.

Initially it was thought that the DMPRC would transition to become the Building Committee but Mary Brolin does not feel that is appropriate now. People with specific technical expertise are needed for the Building Committee. Mary proposed that a few people work with her to recruit members for the Building Committee and they would bring names to the School Committee for their consideration. She asked that one School Committee member, Glenn Brand, Marie Altieri and JD Head work with her. Kristina Rychlik volunteered to help. The public was asked to contact Mary if they have these skills/expertise and would be interested in volunteering for this important work.

14.2. District Master Plan Review Committee (DMPRC) Update – *Mary Brolin, Kristina Rychlik*

14.2.1. Meeting minutes of 3/1/17 and 3/8/17

14.2.2. Public Forum Presentation slides and handouts

14.2.3. Public Forum Flyer

14.2.4. Memo: Douglas and Gates Schools' Septic Systems Remain in Good Order, *JD Head*

Mary Brolin reviewed all the work being done. An informal presentation was done for the League of Women Voters, which was very helpful. It was recommended that some of the characteristics of the proposed buildings be outlined before presenting the options. The first public forum is on Monday in Boxborough. All forums will use the same slides and handouts for consistency.

Kristina Rychlik reviewed the outreach efforts. An email was sent to an extensive list of community groups with a description of the DMPRC and the upcoming forums. There will be an information table at Acton Town Meeting. Kristina will be recording a forum by end of next week at the Acton TV studio so people can watch it and then provide electronic feedback. Mary will set up the form. A question has come up from the public about the state of the septic system in the Douglas/Gates area. JD has confirmed that this is not an issue at this time. The feasibility study would certainly confirm this when it is done.

14.3. Recommendation to Authorize the Superintendent to Resubmit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statements of Interest (SOIs)
While the Douglas School remains our priority project, the District has been advised to resubmit SOIs for Conant and Gates Schools. This lets the MSBA know we have multiple school building issues.

14.3.1. The Luther Conant School – **VOTE** – Glenn Brand

Minor edits to the document in the packet were explained. See blue handout.

Diane Baum moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED:

*To authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated March 16, 2017 for the **Luther Conant School** located at 80 Taylor Road in Acton, MA 01720 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future*

Priority #2 Elimination of existing severe overcrowding:

The Conant school's capacity based on gross square footage and MSBA guidelines is 307 students, compared to 451 students as of 10/1/16.

Priority #5 Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility:

The Conant School was built in 1970 with essentially no renovations, other than roofing in 1986.

Priority #7 Replacement of, or addition to, obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirement:

Lack of proper accessibility and space at the Conant School affects programs that may be offered to these students.

; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

14.3.2. The Paul P. Gates School – **VOTE** – Glenn Brand

Minor edits to the document in the packet were explained. See blue handout.

Brigid Bieber moved, Kathleen Neville seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED:

*To authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated March 16, 2017 for the **Paul P. Gates School** located at 75 Spruce Street in Acton, MA 01720 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future*

Priority #2 Elimination of existing severe overcrowding:

The Gates school's capacity based on gross square footage and MSBA guidelines is 300 students, compared to 404 students as of 10/1/16.

*Priority #5 Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility:
The Gates School was built in 1968 with essentially no renovations, other than roofing in 1986.*

*Priority #7 Replacement of, or addition to, obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirement:
Lack of proper accessibility and space at the Gates School affects programs that may be offered to these students.*

; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

15. Recommendation to Withdraw from MA Electric School Bus Grant Program – VOTE – Glenn Brand

15.1. Memo from JD Head

JD Head recommended that the District withdraw from this program because it has not developed as planned. Originally, due to extra costs that would be incurred, the District decided not to participate but the State pursued us and encouraged JD to accept their invitation. At this point, JD feels strongly that the District should not spend the additional funds to participate. The Committee discussed the situation and given that we do not need another bus at this time, and would have to buy and install, additional equipment such as security cameras, radios, a charging station, etc. they agreed with JD. A final comment was that the cost to replace the vehicle's battery would be very high as well.

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

VOTED: to withdraw from the MA Electric Bus Grant Program as recommended.

16. Recommendation to Approve JH/HS Early Dismissal Days on FY18 School Calendar for Oct 12, Feb 8 and Mar 29 – Second Read – VOTE - Glenn Brand

Brigid Bieber moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was,

VOTED: to approve the Early Dismissal days on the FY18 School Calendar as proposed.

Maria Neyland abstained. All others voted YES.

17. Subcommittee Reports

17.1. Budget – Maria Neyland reported that the Regional Financial Oversight Committee report was reviewed along with their statement for the Town Meetings. The Audit report and financial policies were also discussed at the last meeting.

17.2. Policy

17.2.1. Studying Controversial/Sensitive Issues, File: IMB - Second Read - **VOTE** - *Brigid Bieber*

At the First Read, the Committee asked for additional detail to be added so the policy subcommittee did that with Deborah Bookis' advice. Katie Neville remarked that "balance" came up at the previous policy subcommittee discussion and she asked if it was considered at the last meeting when she was absent. Deborah explained that in her opinion, it is not necessarily a 1:1 balance, but more about the environment that teachers create. Katie thought that "balanced" should mean "fair" so all sides are given equal time in a discussion. Maria Neyland commented on how "fair" could be defined. Brigid Bieber encouraged members to read the whole policy as together she felt it accurately captures what the committee intends. The policy subcommittee was thanked for the added detail and attention.

Katie Neville moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the changes to Studying Controversial/Sensitive Issues policy, File: IMB, as proposed.

- 17.2.2. School Volunteers, File: IJOC – Second Read – **VOTE** - *Brigid Bieber*
Diane Baum moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the changes to School Volunteers policy, File: IJOC as proposed.

- 17.2.3. Mission, Vision, Values, File: AD and AD-E – First Read

This revision is to update the policy for our current Long Range Strategic Plan.

- 17.3. Outreach (including PTO Co-chairs) – February 2017 Update - *Kristina Rychlik*
The March Update will go out before Acton Town Meeting.

18. School Committee Member Reports

- 18.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – Marie Altieri reported that the ALG plan has been updated to include projections for FY19 and 20.
18.1.1. Minutes of 2/16/17 meeting and Materials from 3/9/17 meeting
- 18.2. Acton Finance Committee – The Committee voted to support the school budget unanimously.
- 18.3. Boxborough Finance Committee- The Committee voted to approve the budget as well.
- 18.4. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – Maria Neyland reported that there was some discussion about the Hager Well. Clare Jeannotte and JD Head met with Katie Neville to start to focus on this issue.
- 18.5. Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update – Diane Baum reported that Kevin Mahoney was at Acton Finance Committee and the Fincom voted to recommend the MMT budget. They will go to the Board of Selectmen next week to ask for their approval.
- 18.6. Acton Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Update – Kristina Rychlik reported that they met March 1 and began work on a joint presentation for Acton Town Meeting regarding capital needs on both the town and school side. Kristina Rychlik and Steve Noone will present.
- 18.7. OPEB Trust 3/3/17 Board Meeting Report – Mary Broolin reported that the money manager from Bartholomew & Co presented the annual report. District Treasurer Margaret Dennehy makes the decisions with input from the Committee. The District looks good financially compared to other school districts. It was recommended that a policy be adopted on this now that we have transitioned. Mary stated that we have set targets for a few years out and this is the type of policy that we should be setting. The policy may not set a specific amount. A sample policy has been requested. We are waiting for the 12/31/16 Report and it will be included in the School Committee packet when it is received.

19. Recommendation to Accept \$500 Gift from the AB Regional Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) to the R.J. Grey Junior High School – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

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

VOTED: to accept the \$500 Gift from the AB PTSO to the R.J. Grey Junior High with gratitude.

20. Recommendation to Accept Grant from Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance Math & Science to Gates School – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

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

VOTED: to accept the grant from Exxon Mobil to the Gates School with gratitude.

21. Recommendation to Accept Grant from Target Field Trips/Scholarship America to Conant School – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Maria Neyland moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the grant from Target to the Conant School with gratitude.

22. Recommendation to Accept Gift from ABRHS Track Boosters for Assistant Coach – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Diane Baum moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the gift from the Track Boosters for the Asst Coach with gratitude.

23. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Exchange Trip to Spain – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the ABRHS Exchange trip to Spain.

24. **Superintendent's Report/Updates** – Glenn Brand

24.1. Gatekeeper Training is being provided for all school personnel.

25. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

25.1. Monthly Student Enrollment, 3/1/17

25.2. Annual Town Meeting Budget Book

25.3. Kid Friendly Movie Night at Acton Town Meeting, 4/3/17 and 4/4/17

25.4. 2017 Chair Ceremony Honoring Staff with 20 Years of Service to the District

25.5. ABRSD Financial Reports as of 2/28/17

25.5.1. Revenue vs Budget

25.5.2. Expenses vs Budget

25.5.3. Special Revenue

25.5.4. Grants

25.6. 2016-2017 School Calendar voted 3/1/17 with Revision to 2 March dates & 3 Snow Days

25.7. 17th Annual Robert Creeley Awards Presentation, March 29, 2017 at 7:30 pm, ABRHS

25.8. Acton Candidates' Night, Wednesday, March 15th at 7:00 p.m., Acton Town Hall

25.9. Family Learning Series Presentations:

25.9.1. April 5, 2017, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Presenter: Dr. David Miele

24.10 Town of Acton Appoints New Police Chief

26. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

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

(YES – Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Minkin, Neville, Neyland, Rychlik, Zhang)

Mary Brolin stated that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session solely to adjourn.

The ABRSC returned to Open Session at 9:55 p.m. and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants

NEXT MEETINGS:

- Acton Town Meeting begins on Monday, April 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium
 - Link to the Town Meeting Warrant: www.acton-ma.gov/warrant
- April 27 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (material posted Mon, April 24)
- Boxborough Town Meeting begins on Monday, May 8
- May 18 - ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (material posted May 12)