

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School
16 Charter Road, Acton, MA

April 11, 2019
7:00 p.m. Open Business Meeting
7:25 p.m. FY20 School Choice Program Public Hearing
7:30 p.m. (approximately) Return to Business Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo (7:05 p.m.), Mary Brolin, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Paul Murphy, Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Maya Minkin
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Baum.
2. **Chairman’s Opening Remarks**
 - 2.1. Acton Town Meeting Update
Diane Baum reported that all 3 warrant articles passed. Boxborough Town Meeting begins on May 13. Acton School Committee members were asked to attend.
 - 2.2. Annual Spring Town Elections
Diane reported that 13% of voters voted. She congratulated Ginny Kremer on her reelection and welcomed John Petersen back to the Committee. John thanked voters for their support and urged the Committee to learn from their mistakes and acknowledge the challenges while sharing the accomplishments of being a Committee member. He noted the importance of modeling behaviors for our students, and having some fun on the Committee.

Eileen Zhang was thanked for her 3 years of service. A member called her “a voice that has not been part of the School Committee before” and several remarked how much Eileen helped them better understand some of the cultural issues. Her commitment to the students and the community was noted.
3. **Public Participation - none**
4. **Student Representatives Updates**
 - 4.1. School Committee Representative – Michael Cheng
Student elections are coming up the week after vacation. This will include: Class Leader, Student Council, RSAC and Rep to the School Committee. The Administration had a wellness themed week with a variety of activities including a “no cell phone day” and an inside pep rally in the English and Social Studies wing by Mr. Arsenault and the ABRHS Marching Band. Health and Wellness Day is always the Friday before break and is very popular.
 - 4.2. Regional Student Advisory Council (RSAC) – Christina Lai
Christina described this group as a multi-school student council comprised of 50 – 100 students. She is on the mental health, school climate and culture committee. They surveyed 6 different Massachusetts regions on various questions and received 600 responses from all over the state and are compiling a guide. Christina plans to take some of this information back to her student council.
5. **Superintendent’s Update – Peter Light**
Mr. Light asked if the Committee had a preference for when his updates come out. At the start of the year, he wrote them in time for the posted packet, but by meeting time, some news felt “old”. Now, he writes them the afternoon of the meeting and emails them to all families and staff and posts them to the website the next day.
6. **Subcommittee and Liaison Reports**

6.1. Policy (see separate agenda item)

6.2. Budget

Two new policies for reserves and a stabilization fund were discussed and will be shared with the Acton and Boxborough Finance Committees and Policy Subcommittee. It is expected that a First Read will be done at the May 9 School Committee meeting. In response to a question about how much volatility would exist to cause the District to make use of the stabilization fund, it was explained that this fund would focus on two areas – repairs that we know are coming up (like a new roof) and unexpected events like if a boiler breaks down. It could also be used in a year where there was an anticipated budgetary shortfall and debt service would have to be covered.

6.3. Capital

Adam Klein reported that they met last night and also discussed the two new proposed policies.

6.4. ALG

Diane Baum reported that an Open Meeting Law complaint was reviewed at the last meeting.

7. New Business

7.1. **PUBLIC HEARING: FY20 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program**

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:41 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Baum. Marie Altieri reviewed the Participation Memo. The ABRSC has not voted to take new School Choice students in grades 9-12 for about 10 years. A limited number of seats have been offered for siblings of current Choice students. The Boxborough Public Schools did accept new students for several years before full regionalization. The Public Hearing was unanimously adjourned at 7:42 p.m. as moved by John Petersen and seconded by Mary Brolin.

7.2. FY20 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program Participation – **VOTE**

Adam Klein moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to continue in the school choice program and limit openings to one seat in Kindergarten for the 2019-2020 school year.

8. Reports

8.1. School Improvement Plan Update - Merriam School

Principal Juliana Schneider and Assistant Principal Bryant Amtrano presented the Merriam School Improvement Plan followed by questions and comments. Juliana also reported briefly on her Entry Plan as she is concluding her first year as Principal.

8.2. Physical Education Department Update

Director David James presented highlights of the K-6, 7-8 and 9-12 programs, including the many “life time” activities being introduced. In response to a question about the health curriculum, he explained that the new state frameworks have not been rolled out yet, but they will include vaping, gender identity respect, opioids and other topics. The District already includes these topics, but will do more. The Department communicates through the website mainly to parents/families. At the beginning of each new school year, the health teachers share the new material with parents. Peter Light commented that one of our 3 core values is Wellness. At the K-6 level, our offering of 45 minutes of physical education per week is inadequate. Additionally, health education ends at grade 9 but the need for health education extends through grade 12. He described it as a big opportunity being missed. As we look forward to more programming, we need to look at this area, the time kids are engaged in Physical Education. We don’t have the staff or class time to expand some of these great offerings. In comparison, Lincoln Sudbury has 11 PE teachers and AB has 5.

8.3. Performing Arts Department Update

Director George Arsenaault shared the department’s new website and calendar at <https://performingarts.abschools.org/calendar-of-events> which includes financial aid and instrument acquisition assistance as well as a simplified process for joining the elementary instrumental music

program. He outlined the many exciting opportunities that students find in the performing arts in our district. A question was asked about the level of competitive spirit that is found in our programs and whether the Director felt it was “healthy competition”. George responded that we are competitive but healthy depends on the young person. Some students need and want it, some do not. He and his peers often wonder whether the district needs the medal based systems to show we are successful. He is not sure that they do and wants kids to do their very best even if no one is watching them.

9. Ongoing Business

9.1. School Building Committee Update – *Mary Brolin*

Mary Brolin reported on the very informative presentation by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance. She emphasized the importance of all School Committee members understanding the laws around the use of public resources and permissible actions by appointed public officials regarding ballot question elections. She will distribute a summary of the presentation.

Peter Light reviewed the Statement of Interest (SOI) for the Conant School, which is very similar to the previous SOIs. As a result of the feasibility study, we have removed the Conant School from the current Building Project. Mary Brolin noted that this SOI does not reflect the work done as a result of the Capital Plan. Next year’s submission will include that work.

Adam Klein moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 11, 2019, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 11, 2019 for the Luther Conant Elementary School located at 80 Taylor Road which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: Priority 2 to eliminate overcrowding, Priority 5 to replace or modernize outdated facility systems, and Priority 7 because the building space needs have made the current building obsolete; 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 the 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.

New ABRSC Debt Strategy Subcommittee (oral)

Superintendent Light noted that it is the School Committee’s responsibility to decide how they want to manage the debt of the School Building project and recommended that the School Committee appoint a subcommittee to explore bonding options. The Chair invited interested members to email her and described the subcommittee as a multi stakeholder group with representation from the School Committee, the Finance Committees in both towns, the District Finance Director and Treasurer, the Boxborough Town Accountant, and the Acton Town Treasurer. It was suggested that the deliverable would be explaining how the tax rates would change over time.

9.2. Annual Superintendent Evaluation Process – *Diane Baum*

Diane reviewed the rubric and asked veteran members to speak to how they go about gathering and organizing supporting evidence. Members will be provided with an evaluation template at the next SC meeting and may begin their written, summative evaluation after the Supt. gives his final update at the 5/9 business meeting. She reminded members that all responses are public documents.

Peter explained that he aligned his goals with elements of the rubric so there is a clear connection for them to evaluate on it. Members may also include information on any other part of the rubric. His aligning should not limit their focus. They may also include things beyond those four areas as well.

9.3. Policy – *Amy Krishnamurthy*

High School Pool Naming Update

Adam Klein reported that the policy subcommittee decided not to waive the 3 year waiting period to respect the time to grieve. John Petersen agreed with the decision adding that there are activities that can be done in the short term. Mary Brolin was surprised by the decision and felt that three years is a long time to wait. She suggested perhaps waiting a full year and then having the group apply again in the second year. Adam added that the policy subcommittee did not preclude the group from coming back to the School Committee at any time to ask again. They wanted to honor the policy that the School Committee voted to accept, and not make an exception creating a loophole.

Second Read: – Possible **VOTE**

Nonresident Tuition Charges, File: JFABA

Ginny Kremer moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the policy as presented.

First Read:

Notice of Nondiscrimination, File: AC

Students Who Are Homeless: Enrollment Rights and Services, File: JFABD

(NEW) Educational Opportunities for Military Children, File: JFABE

(NEW) Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care, File: JFABF

Dawn Bentley explained that MASC does not have model policies for these. The four drafts have been approved by our attorneys and DESE. Comments should be sent to Amy before the May 9 meeting. It was clarified that policy JFABE does not give military children a priority for kindergarten.

9.4. ABRSC Meeting Draft Schedule and Venue for 2019-2020

The draft dates for next year appeared to be acceptable. Beth will survey members about the summer dates. Diane asked members for feedback on changing the School Committee's permanent business meeting venue to the Administration Building auditorium. Members spoke in favor of moving to the Adm. Bldg. Several members had concerns about the positioning of screens for optimal viewing of PowerPoint presentations and the space capacity for larger groups. One member favored remaining in the Jr. High Library for business meetings. Diane concluded that Maya (who was absent) will be given a chance to weigh in and then she will decide.

10. Statement of Warrants

Warrants were read and signed.

11. CONSENT AGENDA – **VOTE**

11.1. Minutes of 3/21/19 School Committee Meeting - HOLD

Adam Klein moved that the minutes of 3/21/19 be approved as amended. There was no second. Due to the number of comments and proposed amendments being made, it was agreed to postpone the vote to approve the 3/21/19 minutes until the next meeting. It was emphasized that minutes are a summary, not a transcript.

11.2. Minutes of 3/25/19 School Committee Workshop Meeting - HOLD

Ginny Kremer moved to approve the minutes of 3/25/19 as amended in the handout with the feedback that Beth received in time to include. Paul Murphy seconded. Angie Tso made a friendly amendment to include a bullet saying "Wellness and achievement are like twins working together." Ginny Kremer seconded the amendment. The Committee voted to unanimously

support the amendment. The Committee then voted on the amended motion and the amended minutes were approved with one abstention from Michael Bo.

- 11.3. Approval of Nordic Ski Team Trip to Norway, 2/14/20 – 2/23/20
- 11.4. Approval of Exchange Trip to Spain, 4/17/20 – 5/1/20
- 11.5. Acceptance of \$900 Gift from Danny's Place Youth Services to the ABRHS Envirothon Club

Mary Brolin moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the Consent Agenda.

12. **FYI**

The ABRSC voted to adjourn at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see warrants and agenda list

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List of Documents Used

1. **ABRSC Call to Order** – *Diane Baum (7:00)*
2. **Chairman’s Opening Remarks**
 - 2.1. Acton Town Meeting Update
 - 2.2. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Thank you to Eileen Zhang for 3 years of service
 - Welcome to Acton’s new member, John Petersen
 - Boxborough Election is May 21
3. **Public Participation**

Per policy BEDH, members of the public may speak for up to 2 minutes on items not included on this agenda. Comments regarding items on the agenda should be made during that part of the meeting. Typically, the Committee/Administration will not respond to comments during public participation.
4. **Student Representatives Updates (7:05)**
 - 4.1. School Committee Representative
 - 4.2. Regional State Student Advisory Council
5. **Superintendent’s Update** – *Peter Light (brought to meeting) (7:15)*
6. **Subcommittee and Liaison Reports (7:20)**
 - 6.1. Policy (see separate agenda item)
 - 6.2. Budget
 - 6.3. Capital
 - 6.4. ALG/BLF
 - 6.5. Other
7. **New Business (7:25)**
 - 7.1. PUBLIC HEARING: FY20 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program
 - 7.1.1. Call to Order / Participation Memo / Adjourn
 - 7.2. FY20 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program Participation – **VOTE** – *Marie Altieri*
8. **Reports (7:30)**
 - 8.1. School Improvement Plan Update - Merriam School, *Principal Juliana Schneider (7:30)*
 - 8.2. Physical Education Department Update – *Director David James (7:50)*
 - 8.3. Performing Arts Department Update – *Director George Arsenault (8:10)*
9. **Ongoing Business (8:30)**
 - 9.1. School Building Committee Update – *Mary Brolin*
 - 9.1.1. Meeting Updates: March 27 (draft minutes), April 10
 - 9.1.2. MA Campaign Finance Law Presentation, April 10 at 7 pm in the Jr High Library
Jason Tait, Director of Communications/Public Education, Office of Campaign & Political Finance

- 9.1.3.Recommendation to Approve MSBA Core Project Statement of Interest/Conant – **VOTE**
- 9.1.4.Flyer for Town Meetings
- 9.1.5.New ABRSC Debt Strategy Subcommittee (oral)
- 9.2. Annual Superintendent Evaluation Process – *Diane Baum*
 - 9.2.1.Evaluation Overview, Timetable, Rubric and Examples
- 9.3. Policy – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
 - 9.3.1. High School Pool Naming Update
 - 9.3.2.Second Read – Possible **VOTE**
 - 9.3.2.1. Nonresident Tuition Charges, File: JFABA
 - 9.3.3.First Read
 - 9.3.3.1. Notice of Nondiscrimination, File: AC
 - 9.3.3.2. Students Who Are Homeless: Enrollment Rights and Services, File: JFABD
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- 9.4. ABRSC Meeting Draft Schedule and Venue for 2019-2020

10. Statement of Warrants (9:30)

11. CONSENT AGENDA – **VOTE** (9:35)

- 11.1. Minutes of 3/21/19 School Committee Meeting
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- 11.3. Approval of Nordic Ski Team Trip to Norway, 2/14/20 – 2/23/20
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12. **FYI**

- 12.1. Monthly Student Enrollment, *April 1, 2019*
- 12.2. Boxborough Town Meeting Warrant - <http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/home/news/2019-annualspecial-town-meeting-may-13th>
- 12.3. Boxborough 2019 Election Calendar
- 12.4. Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members as of April 4, 2019
- 12.5. ABRSC Statement in Support of MA Teachers Association (MTA) Fund Our Future Campaign
- 12.6. Suicide Prevention Training QPR, *AB Cares, April 25 at 6:30 pm and May 30 at 10 am*
- 12.7. Out of the Darkness, AB Campus Walk, *April 27 at 10 am*
- 12.8. The New Look of Nicotine Addiction, *Mary Cole, MPH, CHES, April 30 at 7pm, JH Auditorium*
- 12.9. This Month in the Division of Open Government, March 2019

13. Adjourn (9:45)

NEXT MEETINGS:

- April 10 – **Building Committee Meeting: MA Campaign Finance Law** with Jason Tait, Director of Communications/Public Education, Office of Campaign & Political Finance, 7:00 p.m., Jr High Library
- May 9 – **ABRSC Meeting** at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- **Boxborough Town Meeting** begins on Monday, May 13 and may continue: May 14, May 16, May 20, May 22 and May 23

At ABRSD, our mission is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

WELLNESS - EQUITY - ENGAGEMENT