

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

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

June 13, 2019  
7:00 p.m.

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Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso  
Members Absent: none  
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

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**1. Welcome! Call to Order and Routine Business**

- a. Chairperson Diane Baum called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She thanked the School Committee for their efforts this year and for allowing her to serve as Chair. The next meeting will be the workshop on July 16 co-chaired by Diane and FY20 Chairperson Tessa McKinley.
- b. Public Participation - *none*
- c. Superintendent's Update – *Peter Light*  
Mr. Light congratulated all of the seniors who graduated and thanked the students, faculty, staff and administrators for a wonderful first year at AB. He noted that Dawn Bentley will shift her title to Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (DEI) as of July 1, as she leads our work around DEI and Social-Emotional Learning. The District will also be partnering with the Anti-Defamation League to bring its “A World of Difference” program to the High School this fall.

**2. New Business – Reports**

- a. Visual Arts Presentation – *Leo Muellner, Director*  
Mr. Muellner described a significant reform to our elementary schools’ art curriculum as one of the major initiatives being worked on. The Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) model focuses on the teacher telling the student, “You choose. I support.” as opposed to the traditional “I do it. You do it.” Results have been amazing as seen in students’ creations and enthusiasm. This is moving forward with increased STEAM learning in the fall. Deb Bookis will be sharing more about this at a future School Committee meeting. Members were invited to visit a class in the fall and were welcomed to send additional questions to the Superintendent to be forwarded to Mr. Muellner.
- b. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Presentation – *Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver (absepac.org)*  
Amanda and Carrie shared the SEPAC mission, role and outreach/support efforts for FY19. They have developed valuable partnerships and continue to share their many resources and educational opportunities for our students and their families. Their revised handbook will be published in July. It was noted that SEPAC voted in March to recommend that the District move to universal All Day Kindergarten. A report on their 2019 Parent/Guardian Survey will be shared in the Fall.
- c. Appointments – *Peter Light*
  - i. Move to Appoint Deborah Dixon as Interim Director of Special Education – **VOTE**  
Because the candidate pool is very small for this type of position, and the timing of our search is late, it was decided to hire an interim for one year. Adam Klein advocated for an early candidate pool so the ultimate hire can get familiar with the large projects that AB has coming up. The Superintendent agreed and intends to post the position in December and have a candidate by February.

Paul Murphy moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to appoint Deborah Dixson as Interim Director of Special Education.

ii. Move to Appoint Margaret Dennehy as ABRSD Treasurer – **VOTE**  
Mr. Light explained that this annual vote is specified in the District’s Regional Agreement. Amy Krishnamurthy moved to appoint Margaret Dennehy as ABRSD Treasurer. Adam Klein seconded. Michael Bo had requested Ms. Dennehy’s resume for the packet and he thought it would be helpful to see it. John Petersen stated that the Regional Agreement may be flawed about requiring this annual vote, and it should be noted for the next time the Agreement is reviewed.

The School Committee unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to appoint Margaret Dennehy as ABRSD Treasurer.

d. Capital Plan Update – *JD Head, Director of Operations*

i. Summer Capital Projects

JD Head informed the Committee and the public that the campus site work including the Bus Loop project scheduled for the summer was on hold. In February/March the School Committee approved fast tracking some of the master plan work to be on schedule for FY20. This included the milling/paving at the High School and Parker Damon Building, and a connection between the Junior High and High School bus loop. The design work was done in March to see if it was possible. When he learned that it was, JD met with some of the neighbors. He will be working on their numerous questions and concerns as design work continues but given that it cannot be done by September, he will wait and bring it back next year to be sure it is done properly. The plan is to couple this bus loop with the Charter Road project and the other parking areas. JD shared his report with the Capital Subcommittee at their meeting last night.

When asked what would happen if the Accelerated Repair grant is not awarded by the MSBA, JD explained that the project is fully funded in the FY20 budget. If the money is awarded, we will have those funds left to cover something else. Michael Bo asked if an actual cost column would be added to the JD’s chart if/when funding comes through. Mr. Light is working with Amy Bisiewicz on a new Capital page of the website where the public can look at this kind of graph and see it this kind of information updated quarterly. Angie Tso asked why Conant projects are not listed very often even though that building also needs work. JD replied that when the Capital Plan was written, it was decided not to roll up a lot of Conant’s projects because there were MSBA Statements of Interest (SOI) being done. Anything that is a safety issue is handled right away. The Committee was reminded that an SOI for Conant was submitted again in April.

The Committee discussed the definition of “capital”. JD Head thinks of it in terms of lifespan - a one time capital investment that will sustain 7 years or larger if bigger scale. The capital plan has a \$100,000 line item each year to cover needs that come up. Technology is another significant capital item, but Amy Bisiewicz covers her needs in her operating budget. The next large tech item will be a district phone system. The hub of it may be part of the new school building and that could be very helpful. It was agreed that a common definition of the word “capital” would be good. The Capital Subcommittee has discussed this particularly when they worked on the new Capital Stabilization Fund Policy.

ii. Move to Authorize the ABRSD to Enter into the Bus Lease Agreement with New England Transit, Inc. (NET) – **VOTE**

The Committee recommended two additional bus routes for next year. This coincides with a bus lease that is terminating this year, so the new ones will roll into this purchase of seven buses total. JD is trying to be as cost/carbon conscious and nimble as possible. When asked

what the options at lease end are for these buses, JD replied the we have buyout options but it creates a mechanical liability.

John Petersen moved to authorize the ABRSD to enter into the Bus Lease Agreement with New England Transit, Inc. (NET). Paul Murphy seconded the motion and there was discussion.

Michael Bo asked if the cost had changed from the previous lease. JD said it had and that the greatest fluctuation driver are the interest rates, in JD's experience. Technology in the buses has also gotten more sophisticated and added cost. John Petersen suggested that for these kind of purchases that get done every year more data could be provided. One of the buses is accessible. Adam Klein noted that this could be an opportunity with our new Director of Special Education to be creative. JD is watching the electric buses closely but the price point is still significantly high.

The Committee unanimously, **VOTED** in support of the motion.

- e. FY20 School Improvement Plans – *Peter Light*
  - i. Cover Memo and FY20 School Improvement Plans
  - ii. FYI: School Councils Policy File: BDFA
    - 1. Procedures: School Improvement Plan, File: BDFA-R-1
    - 2. Submission and Approval of the School Improvement Plan, File: BDFA-R-2
    - 3. Conduct of School Council Business, File: BDFA-R-3

Mr. Light asked that members review the schools' Improvement Plans and send feedback by June 21 to him with cc to Beth. Peter will share and discuss input with the principals who will in turn review it with their School Councils. Peter will review and approve the principals' final versions. The principals were asked for 3-5 goals per school. Peter did not want them to do extensive work for next year because the strategic plan will be redone this fall. He will bring a graphed alignment strategy regarding the district goals to School Committee in the fall. Next year's plans will have a consistent format with similar components. There was a question about the June 1 approval date in procedure BDFA-R-2. The superintendent will review this administrative detail.

### 3. Ongoing Business

- a. Superintendent's Annual Summative Review – *Diane Baum*
  - i. Memo from the Chairperson
  - ii. Summative Evaluation Report
  - iii. ***Motion:*** Move to Accept the Annual Summative Review for Superintendent Peter Light dated XXX as presented/amended – **VOTE**

Diane thanked the members for writing such thoughtful evaluations for Peter's first year. She read the summative review into the record. A rating of proficient was given on the four indicators.

Amy Krishnamurthy moved to accept the annual summative review as presented. Tessa McKinley seconded and there was discussion.

Members thanked Peter and praised him for an excellent year. One member noted that his lack of prior Superintendent experience had not been issue. His hard work, thoughtful leadership and dedication to listening to people and embracing the community were all appreciated. The way Peter keeps the focus on the students and what is best for kids was a highlight. Another member appreciated his integrity and deep thoughtfulness particularly when facing hard conversations, as noted in his Entry Report. His collaborative style was a strength as seen when he always thanks everyone on the team. Diane concluded that the mark of a great leader is to achieve scope and in getting people to achieve scope and that is what Peter has done in this first year.

The Committee unanimously, **VOTED**: to accept the annual summative review as presented. (John Petersen and Nora Shine abstained.)

Peter thanked everyone adding that he felt embarrassed about getting credit for all of the work done by everyone. He thanked the administrative team from the principals to the Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents, calling all of them “amazing”. He stated that the quality of the people in the district is unsurpassed and he is excited about the work coming up.

- iv. Current Superintendent’s Contract of Employment including Addendum I & II
- v. Discussion of Superintendent’s FY20 Salary Increase
- vi. ***Motion***: Move to set the Superintendent’s salary at \$XXXX for FY20 and approve the proposed amendment to Addendum I to Mr. Light’s contract – **VOTE**

The Committee discussed compensation for the Superintendent for next year. They reviewed a handout from the Chairperson showing comparable communities’ salaries. Members were urged to look at the contract and consider everything in it besides salary because it all adds up to a total package. Peter’s contract is “clean without extra stuff in it” so this should be kept in mind when considering a salary figure. Cost of living/relative compensation should also be considered as well as understanding the financial circumstances in our community.

Diane spoke with Peter and he would like to be compensated with a 2 ½% increase, similar to others in the district. While the average in the comparable communities is 3.6% , the median is 2.85% . A member stated that it only mattered what our community does. Various amounts were discussed. A 2 ½% increase would translate to \$201,925 for FY20.

Paul Murphy moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to set the Superintendent’s salary at \$201,925 for FY20 and approve the proposed amendment to Addendum I to Mr. Light’s contract.

- b. School Building Committee Update – *Adam Klein*
  - i. ABRSD presentation to MSBA for the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee Review
  - ii. MSBA's response to the Preferred Schematic Report
  - iii. Preschool forums in Boxborough presentation
  - iv. Flyer for June 10<sup>th</sup> Community Forum
  - v. Meeting minutes of May 8 and May 29

The MSBA’s response to the Facilities Assessment Review of the proposed designs was very positive. The Committee voted unanimously to go with a Construction Manager at Risk approach for the project. Twenty eight community members attended the June 10 forum. It is now available on Acton TV. The SBC will have a table at Fifer’s Day on Saturday.

- c. Updates:
  - i. Acton Selectmen and Boxborough Select Board  
Both towns officially waived their option of calling a Special Town Meeting regarding the School District’s budget transfer to the new Stabilization Fund.
  - ii. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) / Blanchard Leadership Forum (BLF) – May 28
    - 1. Meeting minutes
  - iii. Subcommittee Assignments Introduction
    - 1. 2018-2019 Subcommittee Assignments

Diane and Tessa briefly described each assignment. Every member needs to take on some of this commitment. Everyone should email their areas of interest to Tessa by the July workshop. Assignments will be done at the August 6<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting. Subcommittees will be limited to 5 members to make it easier to get a quorum for meetings.

With Mary Brolin's retirement from School Committee, the Health Insurance Trust (HIT) has an opening. John Petersen is interested in it and has background knowledge. It was the sense of the School Committee that John should fill that role given that meetings are taking place.

iv. **ABRSC Meeting Venue for 2019-2020 – Diane Baum**

Diane and Peter met with Brendan Hearn and Acton TV. They are working through the details of the MOU and the technical aspects of the move to the Administration Building Auditorium sometime in the fall. Peter said that they are looking to outfit the auditorium with good technology and expand the functionality of the space for the community and Community Education students.

**4. Statement of Warrants and Approval of Minutes**

The warrants were circulated to the School Committee members for their signatures.

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED**: to approve the minutes of 5/23/19 as written.

(Abstained: Ginny Kremer)

**5. Recommendation to Accept Donations to the High School from ABRHS Friends of Drama, MA Educational Theatre Association, ABRHS Class of 2008 and Regeneron Science Talent Search – 2019 School Award – VOTE – Peter Light**

Adam Klein moved, Nora Shine seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED**: with gratitude to accept the donations to the High School from ABRHS Friends of Drama, MA Educational Theatre Association, ABRHS Class of 2008 and Regeneron Science Talent Search – 2019 School Award.

**6. FYI**

Mr. Light thanked an anonymous donor for \$500 to benefit homeless ABRSD students. A discretionary fund has been set up to benefit students with needs. Dawn Bentley will be the administrator.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of documents used: see agenda with documents used, warrants

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**Agenda with List of Documents Used**

1. **Welcome! Call to Order and Routine Business** – *Diane Baum (7:00)*
  - a. Chairperson’s Opening Remarks
  - b. Public Participation
  - c. Student Representatives Update
  - d. Superintendent’s Update – *Peter Light (brought to meeting)*
  
2. **New Business – Reports (7:10)**
  - a. Visual Arts Presentation – *Leo Muellner, Director*
  - b. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Presentation – *Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver*
  - c. Appointments – *Peter Light*
    - i. “Move to Appoint Deborah Dixson as Interim Director of Special Education” – **VOTE**
    - ii. “Move to Appoint Margaret Dennehy as ABRSD Treasure” - **VOTE**
  - d. Capital Plan Update – *JD Head, Director of Operations*
    - i. Summer Capital Projects
    - ii. “Move to Authorize the ABRSD to Enter into the Bus Lease Agreement with New England Transit, Inc. (NET)” – **VOTE**
  - e. FY20 School Improvement Plans – *Peter Light*
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3. **Ongoing Business**
  - a. Superintendent’s Annual Summative Review – *Diane Baum*
    - i. Memo from the Chairperson
    - ii. Summative Evaluation Report
    - iii. **Motion:** Move to Accept the Annual Summative Review for Superintendent Peter Light dated XXX as presented/amended - **VOTE**
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  - b. School Building Committee Update – *Adam Klein*
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    - iv. Flyer for June 10<sup>th</sup> Community Forum
    - v. Meeting minutes of May 8 and May 29
  - c. Updates:

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

- i. Acton Selectmen and Boxborough Select Board
- ii. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) / Blanchard Leadership Forum (BLF) – May 28
  - 1. Meeting minutes
- iii. Subcommittee Assignments Introduction
  - 1. 2018-2019 Subcommittee Assignments
- iv. ABRSC Meeting Venue for 2019-2020 – *Diane Baum (oral)*

4. **Statement of Warrants and Approval of Minutes**

- a. “Move to approve the Minutes of 5/23/19”

5. **Recommendation to Accept Donations to the High School from ABRHS Friends of Drama, MA Educational Theatre Association, ABRHS Class of 2008 and Regeneron Science Talent Search – 2019 School Award – VOTE – *Peter Light***

6. **FYI**

- a. Thank you for Anonymous \$500 Donation to Benefit Homeless ABRSD Students
- b. FY20 Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members & Meetings
- c. Use of School Facilities Procedures, Policy File: KF-R
- d. Dismissal Times for Last Day of School on Wed, June 19<sup>th</sup>
- e. Fall 2019 Schools Open Schedule and Open House Schedule
- f. This Month in the Division of Open Government, May 2019
- g. CASE Collaborative Family Community News & Resource Pages, May 2019
- h. Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes of 4/30/19
- i. Policy Subcommittee FY19 Report
- j. June 1, 2019 Student Enrollment
- k. Thank you for \$200 Donation from Your Cause to ABRHS

7. **Adjourn**

**NEXT MEETING:**

- **ABRSC Workshop, July 16** at 5:00 p.m. at the Sargent Library, Boxborough
- **ABRSC Meeting, August 6** at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library