

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Minutes (approved 9/4/14)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

August 4, 2014
7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce (arrived at 8:00 p.m.), Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Michael Coppelino, Maya Minkin
Others: Marie Altieri, Glenn Brand, Liza Huber, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

Chairperson Kristina Rychlik called the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee to order at 7:31 p.m.

1. Chairman's Introduction

Kristina Rychlik recapped the annual School Committee Workshop held on 7/24/14:

- The policy subcommittee will work on proposed policies regarding public participation at school committee meetings, public emails detailing personnel matters, a mission statement and an update to the general homework policy.
- The outreach subcommittee will develop a proposed PR plan for the School Committee
- Increasing Committee members' "facetime" in the schools will be encouraged.
- Mr. Brand will discuss the class size issues with the staff and report back to School Committee at a later date with a recommendation.
- Regarding school start times, the Junior High and High School administrators will be asked for input before the Committee decides whether and how to proceed with this issue.
- One tier elementary busing will not be implemented at this time, but the Committee would like to know the financial implications of this option as soon as practically possible.
- A specific update to the Demographic Values Survey will not be done at this time.
- The Committee agreed to participate in an Acton "three boards" meeting regarding long-range planning, as proposed by the Acton Finance Committee Chair, Steve Noone.

Kristina emphasized that the first priority this year is positive integration of the new expanded region, and asked the Committee to be cognizant of the work that continues to be involved in that, as well as the work required to take advantage of the opportunities that full regionalization will bring.

Brigid Bieber asked the Committee to consider writing a letter of support for a MassWorks Infrastructure Grant that the Boxborough Planning Department is submitting for funding a sidewalk along route 111. The Committee agreed that Brigid's draft letter could be slightly edited and signed by the Chair in time for the August 14 deadline. Kristina noted that this is consistent with the Committee's encouragement of "walkers". As Chair of the Sargent Library Trustees, Mary Brolin said that they are also endorsing the grant.

2. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the School Committee Workshop on 7/24/14 and the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Transitional/ABRSC School Committee Meetings on 6/28/14 will be approved at the next meeting.

3. **Citizens' Request to Name Elm Street Basketball Courts**

Kristina reported that the letter in the packet was received on 7/31/14. Louis Levine and D. Biggs spoke from the audience about the request to name the Elm Street courts after Mr. Paul Cartwright who recently passed away. Mr. Cartwright was one of the founders of travel basketball and participated for more than 17 years. He was described as "an ordinary person who was an ordinary hero. He was all about the kids."

Kristina reviewed the Naming of School Facilities Policy and Procedures, File: FF and FF-R, found in the packet. She stated that with full regionalization, the courts are now school property and although some Acton Community Preservation (CPC) funding was used for previous renovations, it would not affect how the Committee may, or may not, name it, as was the case with naming the Edward Leary Field. Mr. Levine stated that Travel Basketball helped to fund much of the renovations as well, and that they would fund the naming as well, if chosen.

Kristina stated that the School Committee must first review the appropriateness of naming this facility. If they decide it is appropriate to name, then they must follow their procedures, including the announcement of a deadline for the submission of nominees' names to the Screening Committee. School Committee must establish this Screening Committee "of nine representatives of various interest groups in the community". Their role is to review all suggested names and recommend three for the School Committee to choose from.

Kristina urged members to consider "why the Committee feels it is appropriate to name these basketball courts" in preparation for the 9/4/14 School Committee meeting. Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber, Deanne O'Sullivan and Mary Brolin volunteered to be involved. Although in favor, Brigid Bieber suggested that this policy be reviewed because the last few times it has come up it has been because members of the public have asked for consideration of a request.

4. **Recommendation to Accept Gift to McCarthy-Towne Gift Fund – VOTE**

Paul Murphy moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the \$2,000. gift to McCarthy-Towne School with gratitude.

5. **Confirmation of 2014-2015 Subcommittee Assignments - VOTE**

Paul Murphy volunteered to join the Negotiations Subcommittee. Correction was made that Brigid Bieber is the EDCO Advisory Member, not Glenn Brand. Glenn is the EDCO Board Member. Brigid Bieber moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the 2014-2015 ABRSC Committee Assignments list as amended.

Dennis Bruce arrived at 8:02 p.m.

6. **Recommendation to appoint Clare Jeannotte as Chief Procurement Officer for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (Chapter 30B, Section 2) – VOTE**

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to appoint Clare Jeannotte as Chief Procurement Officer for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District per Chapter 30B, Section 2.

7. **Finance Director's Update**

7.1. FY14 and FY15 Status Memo

Clare Jeannotte described the closing out of Fiscal Year 2014 as the closing of three budgets (ABRSD, Acton Public and Boxborough Public), and all of the complexity that that involves. Within the next three weeks there will be a more solid sense of the numbers. Clare will report back at the 9/18/14 School Committee meeting. The annual audit is scheduled for the end of August. That report is expected in November.

Regarding the FY15 budget, the final State budget was released earlier in August. After working with the Superintendent, Clare plans to recommend possible adjustments to the budget, if there are any, to the Committee in September. Revolving accounts will be on the 9/4/14 agenda. Everyone is learning to use the new MUNIS Chart of Accounts, created for the expanded region. With over 1250 lines now for expenses, some time was needed to train the staff on all of the changes.

8. Acton Finance Committee Update

Acton Finance Committee Chair, Steve Noone, presented slides used at the 7/31/14 ALG meeting regarding “Maintaining Excellence” and how to sustain the budgets going forward 5 – 10 years. He stated that the only solutions are to raise taxes or change spending/services. The Finance Committee invited the School Committee and Acton Board of Selectmen to a joint meeting to get to know each other better and begin some long term planning. Mary Brolin emphasized that the School Committee must meet and discuss any information before it is shared with the Finance Committee, or any other Board.

9. Staffing Update

Marie Altieri reported that staffing is going well with 31 new professional staff hired. Although salaries are budgeted at Master’s level 3, a number of staff have been hired higher than that. The people that they are replacing, however, have had higher salaries. Brigid noted the high number of resumes that have come in for some of the positions.

10. School Committee Member Reports

Acton Leadership Group (ALG)

Kristina Rychlik reported on the meeting held 7/31/14. The charter and ground rules were reviewed. Meeting dates were set for the remainder of 2014. Glenn Brand reported that Marie Altieri will join him as a voting member at the table. Clare Jeannotte will also attend ALG as a non-voting member. Kristina and Dennis Bruce will represent the School Committee.

11. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

11.1. DOER Green Communities 2014 Grant Awards Memo

Mr. Brand highlighted this valuable award. JD Head stated that it allows some of the important projects like replacing boilers to be done immediately.

11.2. Financial Difficulties Letter for Families – August 2014

Mr. Brand highlighted this important letter and the need to be sure that families have access to it.

11.3. Open Invitations for the Committee

Kristina urged Committee members to attend as many of these school events as possible.

JD Head reported that new bus routes are being formalizing to include the six elementary schools. Conant will have its own buses this year. JD hopes this will shorten the time needed for McT-Merriam-Conant dismissal. He will probably present to the Committee in October on single tier transportation. JD confirmed that bus passes will still be permitted, according to current policy and procedures that are in place.

The School Committee adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

9/4/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library

9/18/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library