

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

January 11, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum (7:04 p.m.), Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy (7:25 p.m.), Tessa McKinley, Paul Murphy, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Maya Minkin
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Brigid Bieber, Vice Chair.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** –
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Acton last day to obtain nomination papers - February 2
 - Acton last day to file nomination papers with signatures – February 6
 - Acton 2018 Town Election Calendar
 - Boxborough last day to file nomination papers – April 3
 - Boxborough 2018 Town Election Calendar

Deanne O'Sullivan and Dennis Bruce will not be running again from Acton. Brigid Bieber will not be running again from Boxborough. Diane Baum has pulled papers in Acton.
3. **Public Participation** - none
4. **FY19 ABRSD Superintendent Recommended Budget Presentation #2 – Bill McAlduff**
 - 4.1. Budget Update Memo
 - 4.1.1. Detail Line Item Budget
 - 4.1.1. 1.A FY19 Revenue Detail
 - 4.1.1. 2.A FY19 Character Code Summary
 - 4.1.1. 2.B FY19 Character Code Detail (posted separately)
 - 4.1.1. 3.A FY19 Admin Responsibility Summary
 - 4.1.1. 3.B FY19 Admin Responsibility Detail (posted separately)

Bill McAlduff presented the handful of changes from the preliminary budget. More adjustments may be made leading up to the final version as numbers are confirmed. The Governor's FY19 House 1 budget is scheduled to be released the Wednesday prior to Budget Saturday. The reduction from the preliminary budget 4% increase to the recommended budget of 3.8% is primarily due to the use of an additional \$150,000 from the Circuit Breaker Revolving Account. The one time busing cost is included based on one tier busing. Budget binders will be available on Jan 19.
 - 4.2. Capital Budget

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) totaling \$120M has been pared down to a “mid-range” listing of approximately \$14M in priority projects. The current FY19 budget identifies spending approximately \$885,000 from this list. Bill wants to develop protocols for developing future capital plans. In the past there have not been specific line items identified for these kinds of building based items, sometimes they were considered capital, and

sometimes they were in the operating budget. The Committee appreciated slide 22 outlining this process. Dave Verdolino reviewed the Table 6 numbers and how Appendix A of the Regional Agreement affects the assessments of our two towns.

4.3. Revolving Account Updates

4.3.1. Food Services - <http://www.abschools.org/departments/food-services>

Kirsten Nelson highlighted some of the new initiatives: breakfast is now served at McT, Merriam and Conant, Extended Day lunch is offered at all elementary schools and the Comm Ed After School Program, all ordering is done through the Point of Sale System, and recycling and composting is in full swing. The Cooking Club is very popular. Lunch prices are not expected to increase for next year. The increase in free lunches served has been dramatic – 19,600 in 2012-2013 to 46,324 lunches in 2016-2017. The department's fund balance remains at an appropriate level.

4.3.2. Community Education - <http://abce.abschools.org/>

Erin Bettez reported on Community Ed's goal of supporting the smooth transition of before and after school care programs. She said that it is hard to compare her department from year to year because so much changes every year. She noted that many more kids are participating in programs this year so that is great. She is very happy with the transition to the online Use of Facilities Reservation System, particularly since anyone can now check the buildings' use schedules. FY17 Comm Ed support to the District and community totaled \$522,357. In response to a question, Erin said that they are looking into ways to provide financial assistance to more children who want to participate.

4.3.3. Athletics -

Steve Martin presented stating that last year's increase worked out well for the department. He was very conservative this year because he wasn't sure how funding would be affected. For instance, new uniforms were not purchased. He is confident now about fund balances and is starting to invest in the programs again. He recommended that fees stay the same for next year, and requested step 2 of a 3 tier increase in the appropriated budget that began last year to expand coaching staff and have assistants at all varsity sports that do not have them. This would add 6 assistant coaches next year.

5. **School Building Committee Update** – *Mary Brolin*

5.1. Draft minutes from meeting on 12/13/17

With the Special Town Meeting vote successful, Mary Brolin stated that the MSBA determines the timeline for next few steps. John Petersen spoke from the audience asking if the Committee has considered reviewing the Regional Agreement re the assessments. Mary said they have not as it would be a major initiative and there are already several large projects in the works. Dennis Bruce reminded the Committee that they have the option of reviewing it after 5 years and next year is the 5th year. Amy Krishnamurthy said she will look into it.

6. **Merriam School Principal Update**

Marie Altieri reported that there are 15 Search Committee members and it is going well. The posting opened in early December and closed January 4. Twenty four applications have been reviewed and candidates have been selected to interview. A decision will be made in February.

7. **Kindergarten Registration Update**

Marie Altieri reported that 140 parents/guardians attended Kindergarten Night. Registrations opened January 10 and ends on March 1. A lottery will be done. Tours are starting.

8. **Superintendent Search Update** – *Bill McAlduff*

Three decisions were needed from the School Committee in order to move forward:

8.1. Review and Approval of the Candidate Profile – **VOTE**

Diane Baum informed the Committee that the Profile document was given to them by NESDEC on Monday (3 days before the meeting). It was distributed to the subcommittee on Monday night and to School Committee Wednesday night. She has not had time to digest all of the information and asked members if they would consider postponing the vote so they have time to fully understand the material.

Bill McAlduff reminded the Committee that an important part of the consultant’s work is taking all of the feedback from the survey and focus groups and incorporating it into the Profile document provided. This is one of the key reasons why the School Committee hired NESDEC. Although the schedule is tight, if they want to delay the decision, they would need an additional meeting before January 25. The profile is a major tool/guide the screening committee will use when they review application materials. He understands the need to be thorough, but the timing is important. There are a number of searches going on with similar deadline dates.

The members discussed the desire for more time to read the material coupled with the need to stay on schedule and allow NESDEC to do some of the work, as planned. Having two snow days recently (Jan 4 and 5) added to the difficulty.

Brigid Bieber felt the document was a good reflection of what she heard at the meetings, although she did not feel the last section of page 5 “Tasks the Community Wishes the New Superintendent to Focus Upon...” was appropriate to include. It was the sense of the committee that more time was needed to be sure the 5 pages accurately reflect the 60 pages of input. **They agreed to meet on Wednesday, January 17th at 7:30 a.m. in the Superintendent’s Conference Room 13 in the Administration Building.** Dennis Bruce will be unable to attend.

8.2. Recommendation for Members of Screening Committee – **VOTE**

Diane Baum reported that 12 very well qualified volunteers were being recommended and it was a difficult decision. Brigid Bieber thanked all who submitted their name. In response to a question, Diane said that only 2 community members volunteered.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the recommendation for the search screening membership the following people: Chidhi Aruanchalam, Amanda Bailey, Diane Baum, Kellie Carter, Mike Coppolino, John Fallon, Amy Krishnamurthy, Dana Labb, Leah Lally, Tessa McKinley, Steve Mucci, Kathy Simmons, Damian Sugrue, Kyra Wilson Cook

8.3. Recommendation for Salary Range – **VOTE**

Bill McAlduff spoke with Tony Bent about the importance of being able to share this information with people who are considering applying for the position. The committee appreciated the flexibility that approving a cap provided as opposed to a range.

Paul Murphy moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve a cap on the new superintendent’s salary of \$220,000.

8.4. Information on our site: <http://www.abschools.org/home/superintendent-search>

8.4.1. Search timeline

9. **Subcommittee Reports**

9.1. **Policy**

9.1.1. Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, File: IHB – Second Read – **VOTE-** Dawn Bentley
The subcommittee decided to create another policy involving Section 504 Plans, File: IHBA to follow IHB. Dawn Bentley proposed to vote on IHB and do a First Read at the meeting on February 1st for IHBA.
Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED:** to approve policy IHB.

10. School Committee Member Reports

Brigid Bieber reported that BLF met on 12/12/17. The Boxborough Finance Committee is looking for a couple of members. Health insurance is up 15% this year in Boxborough. This is different from Acton. A Special Town Meeting will be held on February 26 for a land purchase.

11. Consent Agenda

11.1. Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes

11.1.1. Minutes of 12/14/17 meeting

11.2. Donations to our Schools – Bill McAlduff

11.2.1. Recommendation to Approve \$16,000 Donation from the Friends of the Acton Libraries to the ABRSD libraries – **VOTE**

11.2.2. Recommendation to Approve \$2,000 Donation from Mark Lawrence Photographers, Inc. to the Jr High School to support student activities – **VOTE**

11.2.3. Recommendation to Approve \$1,000 Donation from Cain Electric for the Blanchard School Library – **VOTE**

The Chair asked if any of the items should be held from the consent agenda. There were none. Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda with thanks to the Friends of the Acton Libraries, Mark Lawrence Photographers and Cain Electric.

12. Open Meeting Law Complaint Decisions

Amy Krishnamurthy reported that two Open Meeting Law determinations were received this morning from the Attorney General. In the first, there was no violation found. In the second, the Open Meeting Law was violated based on a memo distributed to the School Committee one day prior to a scheduled school committee meeting because it constituted “deliberation” outside of that meeting. In their findings, however, the Attorney General ruled that there would be no additional relief as the memo had already been provided to the complainant and the contents of the memo was discussed at the scheduled School Committee meeting.

13. **FYI**

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants

Next Meetings:

ABRSC Budget Saturday Meeting, January 27 at 8:30 a.m. in the JH Library

ABRSC Meeting, February 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the JH Library

ABRSC Open Budget Hearing, February 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the JH Library (followed by regular meeting)