

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

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

March 7, 2019
7:00 p.m.
followed by Executive Session at approx. 9:15 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo (7:05 p.m.), Mary Brolin, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin (7:40 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Baum.

2. **Chairman's Introduction**

2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections

- Acton Election is March 26 – Contested race for School Committee
- Boxborough deadline to submit papers is April 2 for Election on 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.

Christine Russell spoke from the Acton Finance Committee requesting that the School Committee develop a policy regarding the new stabilization fund.

Amy Maruskin, a 2002 AB grad and former swim team member asked that a request that she made 16 years ago, to name the High School pool after Coach Jeff Johnson, be reconsidered given his recent passing. She outlined Coach's impressive 45 years of service to the towns' young people. She began an online petition for this request and it now has over 1100 signatures. (It has not been presented to the School Committee yet.) Acknowledging the Committee's Naming policy FF, Amy made a formal request to bypass the 3 year waiting period and asked for a unanimous vote to name the pool after Jeff Johnson by the new Fall season. Another parent and a former student spoke strongly in favor of this request. Other supporters were in the audience. The Chairperson thanked everyone for voicing their support and Amy for her dedication to Coach Johnson. She read policy FF and the procedures so everyone would be informed about the process. The request will be forwarded to the Policy Subcommittee for consideration and they will bring a recommendation back to School Committee later in the spring about how to proceed.

4. **Student Reps Updates**

4.1. School Committee Representative

Michael Cheng highlighted Proscenium Circus' excellent work winning 2 state awards. Course recommendations were made last week from teachers and they will be selected next week and then the Administration's "magic" of creating the schedule will begin. This is world language week where the department hosts various events, the sharing of cultures and embracing our diversity.

4.2. Project 351 Representative - <https://project351.org/>

Principal Shen introduced Elizabeth Brooks and Marion Stuntz, 8th graders from Acton and Boxborough. This program helps chosen students who want to make a difference to develop leadership skills. They work with

students from all over Massachusetts. Five or 6 service dates are done throughout the year. Their Cradles to Crayons drive will begin on March 25. The students enthusiastically looked forward to this work.

5. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**

- 5.1. Meeting Minutes of 2/13/19 will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 5.2. The warrants were reviewed and signed by the members. See listing.

6. **Superintendent's Update – Peter Light**

The Superintendent shared the community's sadness about the death of "a beloved member of the AB community", Coach Jeff Johnson. Jeff coached boys swimming since 1977 and boys/girls swimming since 2002. He will be missed.

The Superintendent also congratulated the High School Boys Basketball Team on their success. He shared that the FY2020 Budget and warrant articles have been voted support by both Select Boards and the Acton Finance Committee.

7. **Presentations: School Improvement Plan Updates**

- 7.1. C.T. Douglas School, *Principal Chris Whitbeck*
https://douglas.abschools.org/about_us/school_council
- 7.2. Paul P. Gates School, *Principal Lynne Newman*
https://gates.abschools.org/about_us/school_improvement_plan

8. **Presentation: Cybersecurity Overview and Discussion – Amy Bisiewicz, Director of Educational Technology**

- 8.1. 2018 NSBA Cyber Risk Report: School Board Communication at Risk, *National School Boards Association*
- 8.2. Presentation Slides

Amy Bisiewicz thanked the Committee for inviting her to start the discussion about this important topic. Schools are being targeted by cyber criminals for the large amount of valuable information that we have. Reducing cyber risk in as many ways as possible is key. It is about finding the right balance. She and her department will be working with a Cyber Security Services firm in the near future. Amy noted that the Belmont and Cambridge schools are doing a lot of work in this area and she is speaking with them.

The Committee discussed the importance of this topic. Dual authentication is a valuable tool. The Open Meeting Law is helpful in this regard as business cannot be conducted online. Amy is just starting this process so is not sure about future costs but some additional funding will be necessary to meet some of the thresholds. We currently have back up servers and procedures but there is always more that can be done. Amy stressed that it really is about educating our users and making them aware. One member noted a concern about protecting the identifiable data of everyone using the system. He felt that this could be more of a concern than an outsider coming in to infiltrate our systems. The Committee will hear more about this topic in the future.

9. **Recommendation to Approve Revised EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement as approved by the Board of Directors on January 17, 2019 – VOTE – Peter Light**

The Board approved the amendments based on the recommendation from the Commission of ESE. The changes were fairly minor and procedural.

Paul Murphy moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the changes as presented.

10. **Capital Improvements Update – JD Head**

- 10.1. Support for Initial Charter Road Redesign Plans

The Superintendent asked for the Committee's support to accelerate the engineering designs so work outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan could begin this summer and be completed before school starts. On Charter

Road, a new bus route would be created between the Junior High and High School and the Parker Damon Building lot would be repaved. The paving is also due to a preferential contract that is currently in place. This would be a slight change, but not a major redesign to the lot. Analysis will be done. \$59,300 would be spent for the engineering. The total for all of this work will be \$92,000 but not all of that needs to be spent by July 1. JD Head spoke with the Capital Improvement Subcommittee and they agreed to this plan. This is just moving funds from one part of the budget to another, not asking for more funds. Traditionally the Superintendent has the authority to move funds like this, but given that it is part of the Capital Plan, Mr. Light wants to give the School Committee a chance to voice any concerns if they have them. This would increase the safety of Charter Road for pedestrians and drivers.

The Committee appreciated the discussion and expressed support, especially because it meant work could be done this summer. In response to questions, JD explained the connection between this work and the Kelley's Corner Project. He expects a seamless transition. That part of the Kelley's Corner Project Massachusetts Avenue up to the Junior High tennis court entrance. The school work addresses improvements to Charter Road and the school campuses that align it. In response to a questions, JD explained that the Town Sidewalk Committee looks more at streets that do not have sidewalks, not so much at Kelley's Corner where sidewalks currently exist.

11. **School Building Project Update** – *Mary Brolin*

11.1. Meeting minutes of Jan 30 and Feb 14

The Building Project is now in the Schematic Design Phase. On March 13 they are meeting with the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee and will share our design and how the building will meet some of our educational plan, as well as how the Construction Manager will be chosen. The Building Committee will vote in late June on the schematic design to give to MSBA in early July. These designs are complete enough to have costs included. The outcome of their meeting will reveal how much MSBA will pay. The current thought is that the Acton and Boxborough Special Town Meetings and Ballot Question votes on the project will be in mid-November.

The percentage reimbursement rate for this next phase will be different from the rate the MSBA gave the district for the feasibility study. There are also some items that are not reimbursable. If we decide to keep those items in the plan, the MSBA will tell us what is included and what is not. The Building Committee will work hard to avoid non-reimbursable items in the building design. Most schools build a little extra, by choice, and that is explained as being a possible reason why the rate can look different when presenting information to the public. This is an important point to understand.

The Educational Program is the best document to justify what will be asked for. A second gym is something that will be discussed and that we will have to justify. This is because the MSBA views a consolidated school differently from what we are proposing which is to house two separate educational programs together in one building. As a result, it's possible the MSBA may say a second office space may not be reimbursable, but we will try to explain that it is essential for our programs. We may need to take it on without reimbursement. Once the design is approved by the MSBA board, we will know the approximate cost and will start educating the public in an effort to get the project passed at concurrent Town Meetings in mid-November, followed a week later by a concurrent ballot vote in both Towns.

12. **Annual Town Meeting Preparations** – *Diane Baum*

(Acton Town Meeting begins April 1 - Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 13)

12.1 Acton Town Meeting Warrant (2/25/19 draft)

12.1.1 ABRSD Articles

- #7 Assessment
- #8 Capital
- #9 Authorize Stabilization Fund

12.1.2 FYI: Complete Warrant Article Index

12.2 Babysitting Service for Town Meetings

The District will have 3 articles this year instead of the usual one for the Budget Assessment. Mary Brolin asked for additional information for the Boxborough warrant write up that is due March 18. Tessa McKinley explained Boxborough's complicated Town Meeting schedule this year. Acton members do not need to attend because it is not clear what night the schools' articles will come up. Typically, all members attend Acton's Town Meeting, which is expected on the first night, April 1. Babysitting will be offered at Acton Town Meeting and possible at Boxborough Town Meeting as well.

13. Discussion and Approval of ABRSC Statement of Support for the Proposed Kelley's Corner Infrastructure Project – *Maya Minkin*

Maya read the drafted School Committee Resolution in Support of the Kelley's Corner Project which was written in response to the presentation at the last School Committee meeting.

Amy Krishnamurthy moved to approve the Resolution. Paul Murphy seconded.

In response to a question, Acton Selectperson Katie Green explained that the Town of Acton has funded design money and this Town Meeting is requesting more related to the project's design and appraisal. All Acton money will be leveraged by state and federal transportation aid for this project. The rest of the funding must be secured at this year's Town Meeting to get this reimbursement funding.

The Committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the statement.

14. Subcommittee and Member Reports

14.1. Policy – *Amy Krishnamurthy*

14.1.1. Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment, File: GCE – Second Read – VOTE – *Marie Altieri*

Edits were made based on additional feedback received. The procedures were also updated.

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

VOTED: to approve policy GCE as proposed.

14.1.2. Nonresident Tuition Charges, File: JFABA – First Read - *Marie Altieri*

This policy speaks to two different types of tuition charges. The only one that is really used involves the special education students (such as in the preschool), otherwise they would be considered choice students and we have not participated in that program for quite awhile. Comments were requested by Friday March 15.

14.2. Budget – *Amy Krishnamurthy*

Town Meeting and the Selectmen presentation by Peter Light and Marie Altieri were discussed. Next meeting is March 19.

14.3. Capital Improvement - *Adam Klein*

JD Head spoke about the work to be done over the summer.

14.4. Acton Leadership Group Update (ALG) – *Paul Murphy*

14.4.1. Materials from meeting on Feb 28, 2019

This was a brief meeting. ALG will meet one or two more times this year.

14.5. Boxborough Leadership Forum Update (BLF) – *Tessa McKinley*

14.5.1. Agenda from meeting on Feb 19, 2019 with approved minutes from Jan 8, 2019

Town Meeting dates and the stabilization fund were discussed. Next meeting is March 19.

14.6. Others

14.6.1. Acton Board of Selectmen

Paul Murphy reported that the upcoming warrant articles were discussed. Peter and Marie presented the school budget and it was very well received. Minute Man Tech was also there. Their building project is still on time and on budget. They will open in Sept 2019. They have received Blue Ribbon Status and a new Veterinary Tech Program will be starting in the fall.

15. **FYI**

- 15.1. Monthly Student Enrollment, 3/1/19
- 15.2. Acton and Boxborough 2019 Election Calendars
- 15.3. League of Women Voters Acton Candidates Forum, *Saturday, March 16 at 1pm at Conant*
- 15.4. Thank you from ABRSD to ABSAF and Middlesex Bank
- 15.5. West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee Forum, *Thursday, March 14 at 7pm, Town Hall*
- 15.6. CASE Collaborative Family Community News & Resource Pages, Feb 2019
- 15.7. This Month in the Division of Open Government, February 2019
- 15.8. ABRSD Naming District Facilities Policy FF and procedures FF-R

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:30 p.m., Diane Baum stated the need to meet in Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discussion strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Office Support Association (OSA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. She stated that the Committee would return to Open Meeting for the sole purpose of adjourning.

Paul Murphy made the motion, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by ROLL CALL: to meet in Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discussion strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Office Support Association (OSA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA).
(YES: Baum, Bo, Brolin, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Minkin, Murphy, Tso, Zhang)

The ABRSC returned to Open Meeting and adjourned at 9:57 p.m. with the motion made by Paul Murphy and seconded by Tessa McKinley.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants

NEXT MEETINGS:

- March 21 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the **Administration Building Auditorium**
- New: Monday, March 25 – ABRSC Workshop at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- Acton Town Meeting begins on Monday, April 1
- April 11 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- Boxborough Town Meeting begins on Monday, May 13