

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
MINUTES (approved 2/26/15)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

September 4, 2014
7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Liza Huber, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Kristina Rychlik, Chairperson. She thanked the Administration and staff for Tuesday’s wonderful Opening Day program where she gave a few words of welcome.

1. Chairman’s Introduction

1.1. First Day of School Report – *Glenn Brand*

Mr. Brand said that it had been a great week full of energy and enthusiasm. He was able to visit many of the schools on the students’ first day. With each day that goes by, transportation gets a little smoother and more efficient, with all of the details being addressed. It can take up to two weeks to get the system worked out with all of the new bus stops. Staff are taking the required e-learning modules on blood borne pathogens, civil rights/bullying and harassment, and life threatening allergies.

1.2. Introduction of Dr. Perry Davis

Mr. Brand’s New Superintendent Induction Program coach, Dr. Perry Davis, was introduced. Dr. Davis described the program and the value of new superintendents developing a network of people to learn from as well as a strong leadership team. Dr. Davis will be doing observations of Mr. Brand in the schools.

2. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

The following Acton Public School warrants were signed by the Committee: #201503 dated 8/5/14 in the amount of \$19,005.45, #201504 dated 8/19/14 in the amount of \$311,951.99 and #201505 dated 9/2/14 in the amount of \$28,725.65.

The following ABRSC warrants were also signed by the Committee: #14-029A dated 6/30/14 in the amount of \$72,766.88, #15-003 dated 8/7/14 in the amount of \$978,237.28, #15-004 dated 8/21/14 in the amount of \$1,186,776.16 and #15-005 dated 9/4/14 in the amount of \$2,432,803.36.

2.1. The minutes of the School Committee Workshop on 7/24/14 and Meeting on 8/4/14 were approved as amended.

2.2. The minutes of the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Transitional/ABRSC Meetings on 6/28/14 were approved as amended.

3. Public Participation - none

4. Recommendation to approve High School field trip to Nicaragua, July 2015 – VOTE

Mr. Brand described the trip and introduced teachers Michael Csorba and Emily Fishkin who are proposing it. Acknowledging that this is a time of increasing concern for safety around the globe, and although there are no warnings for this area at this time, they will monitor the situation and watch State Department information that could impact security in Nicaragua.

Committee members were told this trip would be open to any High School students, even those who would graduate in June. Emily and Michael said more chaperones would be added if more students were participating. The organization requires an 8 – 1 ratio. Kristina Rychlik added that there is High School trip planned next summer for Costa Rica and there will be security concerns there as well. She asked if it would be as easy to buy travel insurance for this trip as it is for the Costa Rica trip. Emily stated that insurance is offered but she is not sure when the deadline is. Michael stated that if the organizer cancels the trip, all money that has not been spent already will be refunded. Mike Coppelino asked how the chaperones are selected and approved. Marie Altieri stated that the High School principal decides.

Paul Murphy moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the High School field trip to Nicaragua in July 2015.

5. **Discussion of Process of Naming Elm Street Basketball Courts**

The Committee was asked to decide whether or not they wanted to proceed with the process of naming the Elm Street Courts. After some discussion and acknowledging the policy and procedures in place, the Committee agreed to move forward with the process of naming.

Maria Neyland reviewed the memo found in the packet. This information will be publicized. Nine people are needed for the Screening Committee. Maria and Dennis Bruce will go through the list and choose these people. The School Committee will be given the 3 possible names by the Screening Committee and then vote on one at their meeting on 10/16/14.

6. **Recommendation to Accept Gifts from AB Community Education to Conant, Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools – VOTE**

Mike Coppelino asked why there was such a discrepancy between the schools' amounts. Marie Altieri replied that these programs are one source of revenue to the schools and the programs are very different sizes. This an allocation based on total amount that comes in from each program. 75% goes back to the school and 25% covers administrative fees.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the gifts from AB Community Education to Conant, Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools as proposed.

7. **Staffing Update – Marie Altieri**

7.1. 2014-2015 New Professional Staff

7.2. Staff Recruitment Forms (since 8/4/14)

7.3. Agenda from Orientation held 8/27/14

Marie Altieri stated that the District is almost fully staffed, but they do need a few more bus drivers. They are also looking for a .6 psychologist at the elementary level. The average salary level being budgeted for is at 3M, but the average now is probably closer to 6M or 7M. She is not overly concerned about the delta because the salaries of the retirees who have left are close to that amount. When asked why the psychologist position was hard to fill, Marie replied because it is part time.

8. **Finance Department Update** – Clare Jeannotte

8.1. Recommendation to Accept Gift and Grant Funds from the Town of Acton– **VOTE**

Clare Jeannotte stated that all of these funds will go toward the same expenses as they have in the past, but this vote is a result of regionalization. Some grant funds for Acton have not been quite nailed down yet because they extend to the end of August. As a result, she may need to bring a small amount back for a vote at a future meeting.

Maria Neyland moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, Sec. 53A in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement signed March 17, 2014, to accept the following grants and gift funds from the Town of Acton, as outlined in item 9.1 totaling \$680,537.50, to be held as separate accounts and spent by the District for the same purposes as the prior Town of Acton fund, grants or gift.

8.2. Recommendation to Accept Gift and Grant Funds from the Town of Boxborough – **VOTE** –
Clare Jeannotte

Mike Coppolino moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, Sec. 53A in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement between the District and the Town of Boxborough dated May 22, 2014, to accept the following grants and gift funds from the Town of Boxborough, as outlined in item 9.2 totaling \$675,596.15, to be held as separate accounts and spent by the District for the same purposes as the prior Town of Boxborough fund, grant or gift.

8.3. FY14 Update - no information ready at this time

8.4. Discussion of Recommendation to Establish Transportation Revolving Account per M.G.L. c. 71, Sec. 16C amended (*to be voted at next meeting*)

Clare Jeannotte explained the new statute and suggested that this could be voted at the next meeting. Establishing this account gives regional districts some flexibility in their budget process. Clare said that she has spent a good amount of time with counsel preparing the previous two votes for the two towns and she is convinced that this could be helpful to the District. She described it as “a unique opportunity to add a tool for flexibility.” It could be a very transparent part of the budget process. She explained that it is a revolving account only to be used for transportation. More guidance from DOR and DESE will be coming out soon. Glenn Brand agrees about the value of this flexibility, for instance providing a cushion if the reimbursement rate ends up below the estimate.

8.5. Recommendation to Approve Bus Lease – **VOTE**

Clare Jeannotte described this as a housekeeping item. Procurement law requires leases over 3 years be voted on by the School Committee. Mike Coppolino asked if there was any discrepancy between what was budgeted and what was spent in the prior years. Clare stated that she has not verified that.

Maria Neyland moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the new five year lease for six additional buses with New England Transit as proposed.

9. **School Committee Member Reports**

9.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Dennis Bruce next one is Thursday morning*

9.1.1. Minutes of meeting on 7/31/14

Mike Coppolino asked for clarification of the \$40M in cash referred to on page 2, under #5 Global cash flow.

10. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brand will use this new section to highlight some things each meeting. He is in the middle of his Entry Plan and scheduling meetings with staff, parent/guardians/students so he has met with many of them by end of October when he will report back to School Committee.

The Track project has been completed and a final financial report will be given at the next meeting. The District website is being renovated. A prominent PowerSchool button would be helpful. Parent Online for Food Services should also be added. Deanne O'Sullivan would like to see all teachers with their own websites. The Superintendent has over 140 Twitter followers. He intends to use this as an additional communication medium.

11. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

11.1. Parent Communication Map

Mr. Brand highlighted this important resource.

11.2. Summer Professional Learning Memo

Deborah Bookis elaborated on these opportunities. The Conflict Resolution workshop always has a wait list. Our District has been invited to present at a DESE conference in October.

11.3. FY15 School Improvement Plans

Mr. Brand has reviewed the School Improvement Plans and intends to do this much earlier in the year next year. School Improvement Plans are part of policy BDFE E-1 and involve the School Councils.

Dennis Bruce noted the many changes in the District from a technology perspective. He asked for an update from Amy Bisiewicz with a thorough review of the District's technology and what it looks like going forward.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

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

10/21/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library

10/28/14 Joint Acton Finance Committee/Acton Board of Selectmen/ABRSC Social/Meeting 6:15 p.m.