

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High

March 1, 2007
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Michael Coppolino, Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, Terry Lindgren, Sharon Smith McManus, Rebecca Neville, John Ryder, Bruce Sabot
Also Present: William Ryan, George Frost, Susan Horn, Elizabeth Huber, citizens and press

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The Committee voted immediately to go into Joint Executive Session.

The Committee returned to open session at 7:30 pm.

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

- Senator Pam Resor presented a State Senate citation to the Committee in recognition of ABRHS receiving the Compass School award. ABRHS is one of 38 Massachusetts schools named, based on MCAS performance.
The Committee thanked Pam for the certificate, and asked her several budgetary questions.
- Terry Lindgren mentioned the problems with the 990 hour mandate and asked for her help in solving the problems.
- Bill Ryan announced that the Governor's budget has been released, and Chapter 70 has increased. The good news for Acton and AB is that the formula changes made last year continue on, and we have significant increases, even increases over our estimates. (APS: 42.1% increase; AB: 25.2% increase) When asked if these numbers will hold, Pam Resor said the total will be the same, and she is hopeful that the distribution will remain the same, but there will be pressure from urban areas for more funding. She said any changes in allocation would have to be a formula change. Terry Lindgren expressed a concern for adequate funding in districts where it is needed most. John Ryder mentioned the two mandates that we have to fund - 990 and SPED - and commented that we could not fund both without this increase in Chapter 70 aid. Becky Neville noted that 28% state aid to each town is the goal of the Chapter 70 formula.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 1 and 15, 2007 were approved as presented.

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #2007-018 in the amount of \$1,014,560.52 was signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. BLF Report

- Becky Neville reported that they are waiting for state aid numbers and will meet next week to continue budget discussions.

2. FY'07 Budget

- Bill Ryan referred to the letter from MA DOR certifying unencumbered E&D funds of \$632,349, as of July 1, 2006.

3. Health Trust Report

- Tess Summers reported that the Trustees will meet next Wednesday and will set rates for FY'08. ABRSC mtg.

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The trust fund is looking on target this year. Things are good, except for Master Health Plus. The trust will also discuss providing a PPO plan next year.

4. CAFY Report

- Susan Horn reported on the February 7th Youth Risk Behavior Survey forum coordinated by the schools and CAFY. It was well attended, and Jim Bryne presented the results. There were many thoughtful questions and concerns. We plan to share results with students in health classes, HS students at PE and Health Day. The survey is online, and parents are encouraged to read it.

5. Recommendation to Approve FY'08 ABRSD Proposed Budget

- John Ryder reported on the School Committee's presentation at the Acton Fin. Com. budget hearing this week. Fin. Com. urged the School Committee to place more capital items in the operating budget. Michael Coppolino said it would be interesting to see how salaries on the municipal and school side compare to the corporate world. Fin Com. suggested doing physical plant survey of the older school buildings. A Fin. Com. member advocated taking 10 choice students at APS per grade. Pat Easterly, Fin Com, commented that they really want the older school buildings looked at. She thanked the School Committee for their time and information. Bill Ryan called a couple of engineering firms and got estimates of about \$75K for a physical plant study for the older schools (Admin. Bldg, Conant, Douglas and Gates).
- Bill Ryan explained that the only changes in the proposed budget is an increase in the amount of Chapter 70 and a decrease in the amount of E&D we are using. This doesn't change the budget bottom line or the assessments.
- It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Neville) and unanimously

VOTED: The Administration recommends that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 be set at \$34,755,320 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$22,516,727, Boxborough \$6,029,634, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$5,072,550, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$36,521, Medicaid Reimbursement Fund in the amount of \$30,000, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$702,892, a transfer from E&D in the amount of \$365,000, a transfer from High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$1,302, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$694.

6. Director of Personnel/Admin. Services Position Search Update

- Bill Ryan reported that a committee has been formed to evaluate 13 applications. He hopes to make an appointment by the end of March.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Blanchard/Boxborough - School Choice Update

- Brigid Bieber reported that their School Committee will meet next week to vote on whether to participated in School Choice next Thursday. If voted, she anticipates the number of students accepted will be very low.

2. Recommendation to Participate in School Choice, 2007-08

- It was moved (Ryder), seconded (McManus) and
VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation to accept siblings of current Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Choice student, with a maximum of 13 new school choice students for the 2007-08 school year. (Vote: 7 yes, 1 abstention [Lindgren])

Terry Lindgren felt that school choice was an anathema to public education.

3. Proposal to Name the Lower High School Gym in Honor of Isadore Stearns

- Bill Ryan noted the Colonial Club's proposal to name the ABRHS lower gym in honor of Isadore (Izzy) Stearns.
- It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (Ryder) and unanimously
VOTED: To ask the Superintendent to set up a committee to evaluate the request, and report back to this committee at the March 29 meeting.

4. Recommendation to Accept Gift from AB Community Education.

- It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Neville) and unanimously
VOTED: To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of \$8,835 from Acton-Boxborough Community Education.

This gift represents a voluntary donation from Community Ed from the Winter term classes that were conducted for more than one session.

5. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Overnight Field Trip

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Sabot) and unanimously

- **VOTED:** To approve the ABRHS Overnight Field Trip (Varsity Baseball team) on March 30-31, 2007 to Nauset Regional High School.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Bill Ryan referred to several items.
- Susan Horn reported on the proposal to bring a bank in to ABRHS. It will be a real bank, as well as a training lab. at the HS, with no cost to us. We will keep the committee informed.
- Susan Horn referred to the program for Professional Development Day on March 9, and invited SC members to attend.

ISSUES OF THE COMMITTEE

- Michael Coppolino read Karen Coll's letter into the minutes (see attached) re: her concerns about the 990 hour requirement at ABRHS. Brigid Bieber reported that there is lots of confusion in the community about the 990 requirement. She and Sharon McManus volunteered to work on making improvements for next year. Bill Noeth, ABRHS math department chair, said students who are fully booked, except lunch, take 999 hours. Terry Lindgren felt bad and disappointed that he ignored the 990 situation without doing the research. He recognized that it had already been considered by other schools and thoughtful people. He was disappointed with the experimentation that took place at ABRHS this spring. Bill Ryan said that Steve Donovan,

ABRHS principal, will give an update on 990 at the March 29th School Committee meeting. Terry asked that an exploration be made on what has been done in other communities. Bill Ryan noted that former School Committees and administrators have previously discussed the issue, but not embraced it. One challenge was financial. Jonathan Chinitz had a sense that we need to do more around this at AB, and do more outreach. We need to better explain the process and make it easier

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to understand, and we need to communicate this to the public.

- Terry Lindgren referred to a parent letter about an athletic department injury, and wants to know what the expectations and timetable are. Bill Ryan replied that the intent is to come to the March 15th AB executive session at CONANT SCHOOL to review this. The AB executive session will take place from 6-6:30 pm, followed by open session from 6:30 - 7:30 pm. The Acton Public School Committee will begin at 7:30 pm.

NEXT MEETINGS: March 15 - at Conant School - ABRSC meeting

Exec. Session, 6 - 6:30 pm,

Open Session, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

March 29 - 7:30 pm, JH Library

The meetings was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary