

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

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Library  
Conant School

March 15, 2007  
7:13 p.m.

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*Members Present:* Michael Coppelino, Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz,  
Terry Lindgren, Sharon Smith McManus, Rebecca Neville,  
Bruce Sabot

*Also Present:* William Ryan, George Frost, Susan Horn, Elizabeth Huber,  
Sharon Summers, citizens and press

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The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm.

**STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

Warrant #2007- 019 in the amount of \$1,562,113.94 was signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Beth Petr, citizen, voiced about her concern about what happened at the ABRHS dance two weeks ago at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough. She asked for School Committee comments.
- Several members responded that they had heard from parents who were upset about the event, where students were arrested for drinking, and that rumors were rampant. Members concurred that this was a serious matter.
- Steve Donovan, ABRHS principal, gave an account of the incident. It was a semiformal dance (growing in popularity over the last few years) with over 700 students present, more than were expected. Also in attendance were two ABRHS administrators, two police, 11 chaperones and two advisors. Steve said it was too many students to supervise effectively. The high school administration and staff are looking at not running the event again. Maybe events should only be held on campus with more control. Staff are rethinking how to best handle social events. There were 16 total individual incidents. Two individuals were ambulated to Emerson Hospital, and an additional 10 individuals had parents called to drive them home. An additional four students were arrested by the Boxborough police. Steve noted that when things like this happen, it puts all kids at risk. Suspensions were given as appropriate, and athletic captain and student leadership roles have been taken away as directed by our policies.
- Bill Ryan noted that there is a senior prom coming up in May - maybe 800 at Gillette Stadium. We need to reach out to the parent communities to do everything we can to make it alcohol and drug free. We can't have events like this otherwise.
- Jonathan Chinitz said he had spoken to parents and students. He'd like to see a reevaluation of our policies and consequences, and that the administration examine procedures for the upcoming prom and issue written instructions to every parent about the expectations and consequences, including non-admittance at the door. If practical, he suggested using a breathalyzer at the door. He said that we have to take drastic measures. This is a matter of life and death. Steve Donovan agreed with these comments.
- Becky Neville noted that Steve Donovan does send out a letter every spring about consequences for seniors' misbehavior during the spring and eligibility for end-of-year senior activities and graduation participation.
- A member suggested releasing discipline reports to colleges to 'give teeth' to the suspension, but Steve said we cannot release records without permission. He explained why he gave a 3- day suspension to students - they were good kids, and were honest, and that was taken into account.

- Everyone was treated the same. He said the policies and procedures are being reviewed again.
- Terry Lindgren suggested CAFY members as possible future chaperones.
  - Bruce Sabot said maybe suspension could mean community service, not a day off. Use it as an opportunity to teach other kids.
  - Brigid Bieber thought it was probably necessary to use a breathalyzer, and Jonathan Chinitz stated that no more water bottles be allowed.
  - Sharon McManus felt we need to provide more education to kids. She recommended some worthwhile CAFY films and a doctor's talk about the effects of alcohol/drug use.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Bill Ryan congratulated the ABRHS Academic Decathlon Team! They placed first in the state - again. They will fly to compete in the Nationals in Honolulu. We are requesting any and all donations from the community to help fund the trip. He also noted that the ABRHS Marching Band will participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Boston.
- Bill Ryan read a letter from Don Johnson re: the Acton BOS's support of appropriating of up to \$400K for the purchase of the Douglas Modular Classrooms and that they would not support any additional appropriations at this time.

### **ALG REPORT**

- Sharon McManus reported on the most recent ALG meeting. The House 1 budget was discussed. Bill Ryan and Sharon brought a proposal to ALG recommending funding the Douglas modulars, and an additional amount for technology, personnel, capital at both local and regional schools, with the remaining Chapter 70 funds flowing into free cash (local) and E&D (region). They talked about sharing Chapter 70 with the town at the regular town/school split. Pat Easterly, Fin. Com., said ALG members agreed to go back to their respective boards for comments. The School Committee will report back to the Fin Com on April 3. Terry Lindgren found lots of assumptions troubling, and felt the decisions shouldn't be binding going forward. He objected to the term "windfall" when referring to the increased Chapter 70 aid. Jonathan Chinitz said this BOS memo certainly sets a precedent, and he would like to talk to them to see what precipitated this. We're not asking to spend that much more.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **1. ABRSD FY'08 Budget**

- Bill Ryan noted the increase in our Chapter 70 funds. He is confident that House I numbers (Chapter 70) will hold up during the budget process. This money is coming to the town for educational purposes, and he hopes we can add something to our budgets. He reviewed the five recommended increases: 2.0 FTE ABRHS Teachers; ABRHS Directed Study Stipends; JH 8th grade World Language on team .4 FTE, and .8 FTE Exploratory; Technology Replacement; Capital Equipment Annual Payment.
- Steve Donovan, ABRHS Principal, reviewed the charts of class summaries by department. He explained the proposed additions to the HS - 2.0 FTE High School Teachers and Benefits (\$116,054) and HS Directed Study Stipends (\$32,000). He has met with parents of incoming freshmen and freshmen will be fine in terms of reaching 990 hours. We are approaching 68% of all kids in compliance, as of today.
- Craig Hardimon, JH Principal, explained the additional JH 8th grade World Language "On-Team" .4 FTE and .8 FTE Exploratory, totaling \$71,319. It is in the best interest of students and teachers to bring 8th grade WL on team. It would help class sizes, and SPED students would also have more opportunity to take WL.
- Technology Replacement (\$30,000) - replacing HS and JH computer labs.
- Capital Equipment Annual Payment (5-year lease) - \$16K. George Frost explained the plan to purchase two trucks (dump & utility), two pickups and one mower. This would actually get some .

capital into our budget. We are trying to develop a model for replacing equipment in a systematic way.

- The proposed additional items total \$265,373.
- Bruce Sabot said ABRSD is a separate budget, and we should do what is right. ALG does not tell us what to do, it is a recommending group.
- Jonathan Chinitz liked putting more money into the JH, and suggested fully funding Stage One and Two and capital spending, rather than 990.
- Other members supported the administration's proposal.
- It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (Neville) and unanimously

**VOTED:** To approve the Administration's recommendation 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 \$35,020,693 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 \$5,337,923, 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.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Field Trip**

- It was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED:** To approve the ABRHS Academic Decathlon Team's trip to Honolulu, Hawaii, in April 2007 to compete in the national championship.

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

The Superintendent referred to several items.

**NEXT MEETINGS:** March 29 - 7 pm, Joint Exec. Session, JH Conf. Rm.  
7:30 pm, JH Library  
May 3 - 7:30 pm, JH Library

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary