

# ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

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Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High

January 4, 2007  
7:30 p.m.

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*Members Present:* Michael Coppolino, Marie Altieri, 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, Sharon Summers, citizens and press

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The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION**

### **STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

Warrant #2007-013 in the amount of \$1,202,975.05 and warrant #2007-014 in the amount of \$610,946.41 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of December 7, 2006 were approved as read.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **1. BLF Report**

- Becky Neville reported that Boxborough is starting to pull the budget and warrant articles together. They are trying to keep the budget increase under 5% this year.

### **2. ALG Report**

- Marie Altieri reported that ALG discussed a range of options for the municipal/school split of Acton tax revenues (tax levy and excise tax). After discussion, a 31.25%/68.75% split was agreed to, and members were asked to bring that proposal back to their boards for comments. The Acton School Committee voted to support this split at their December meeting. How much free cash and E&D will be used in the FY'08 budgets was also discussed. They talked about using a large amount of free cash (about \$1M - about half of the total.) Discussion about this will continue. It was suggested that most or all of E&D could be used this year, since Chapter 70 funds will flow in next year.
- Sharon McManus added that the last ALG meeting was excellent, in terms of ideas and the positive attitude of those around the table.
- Terry Lindgren thought the 'Stone formula' was good, but added that he was not getting some of the meaning and would like more detail and discussion at that level. What were some of the items that were important to the town to make the split decision?
- Marie Altieri commented that the town has been clear that they want more capital put into the operating budget this year. The municipal budget is much more capital-oriented; Schools are more personnel oriented.
- Bill Ryan said ALG needs to decide who wants to be the keeper of the ALG spread sheets.

### **3. FY'07 Budget**

- Bill Ryan gave an update on the SPED deficit (about \$100-\$175K, due to more students in out of district placements), and a probable deficit in some of our utility accounts. We will keep watching.

these line items.

#### **4. Health Trust Report**

- Marie Altieri reported that we have the audit for FY'06. In summary, we began the year with a negative fund balance. The end of year balance is still negative, but has improved by \$600K in one year, which is good news. We are now building reserve in the trust. They recommended using a 12.5% increase for next year. The trust will set rates for next year as soon as possible.

#### **5. CAFY Report**

- Terry Lindgren noted that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey results forum will be held on February 7 at 7 pm in the JH Auditorium. School Committee members and the public are encouraged to attend.

*The Committee went into Joint Session at 7:55 pm.*

*The Joint Session was suspended at 9:25 pm, and the AB meeting continued.*

#### **6. 990 Update**

- ABRHS Principal Steve Donovan reported that he met with ABRHS students in English classes to talk about 990, and did mock schedules with them. It helped students to see how it would work out. He said that Kirsten Kunz has been recommended to take the position of 990 Coordinator. Steve said the final course offerings for September will be in the Feb. School Committee packet. He referred to the submitted response (12/15/06) to DOE on the high school's plan for 990. Staff is still looking alternative courses, the Virtual HS, and other online programs. Staff have analyzed graduation requirements, and now propose an increase (20 credits) in graduation credits, to be phased in over a two-year time period. Increasing the requirements would give additional incentive for underscheduled students to take additional classes. Steve reported that staff will use the March Professional Day day for input from teachers about all these changes. When asked about the Virtual High School, Steve commented that it is an exciting program, and they'd like to be part of it, if funding is available.
- It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Neville) and unanimously  
**VOTED:** To increase the ABRHS graduation requirements over a two-year period  
as follows:      Graduating Class of 2008 = 90 credits to graduate;  
                         Graduating Class of 2009 = 100 credits to graduate.

#### **7. FY'08 Budget - see Joint Agenda**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Friends of Acton Libraries.**

It was moved (Neville) seconded (Lindgren) and unanimously

**VOTED:** To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of \$7,500 from the Friends of the Acton Libraries (\$4,000 to ABRHS Library, \$3,700 to R.J. Grey Library).

##### **2. Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Cross Country Ski Team**

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

**VOTED:** To accept, with gratitude the generous gift of \$842 from the Cross Country Ski Team. The gift will be used to purchase cross-country trails' grooming equipment.

##### **3. Recommendation to Accept Gift to the ABRHS Science Department**

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

**VOTED:** To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift to the ABRHS Science Department of surgical tools, valued at approximately \$60,000, from Ms. Jena Reitsma, an ABRHS parent.

#### **4. Recommendation to Approve R.J. Grey Field Trip**

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

**VOTED:** To approve the R.J. Grey ski trip to Waterville Valley, NH on February 3, 2007.

#### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- The Superintendent referred to several items. He noted that we will be advertising for a Director of Personnel and Administrative Services, a replacement for Deputy Superintendent George Frost.

#### **ISSUES OF THE COMMITTEE**

- Mid-Year Committee process review - Bruce Sabot reported on the 'bucket' items that the School Committee identified at last summer's workshop to be addressed during the year. In 'Bucket #4', items to be discussed by the committee as a whole, five goals were identified (AB class size, AB overall vision, changing demographics, state aid-phase 2, tech infrastructure-capital plan), and the Committee has been covering three of them so far. Bucket 3 identified items (succession planning, electronic revenue, negotiations prep, electronic information, health insurance) to be discussed by subcommittees, which are meeting, but there has not been much reporting back to the committee at large. No action has been taken on any of the study items in Bucket 2 (revenue generation, gender learning, JH). Looking at Bucket 1, a reality check, the Committee's modus operandi seems to be working pretty well. John Ryder asked for a timeline on the gender study, being done by a volunteer. Sue Horn replied that we will have a report sometime this summer.
- Marie Altieri announced that she will resign her position from the School Committees, effective after this meeting. She has taken on a full-time job, is taking courses, and feels she needs to focus on her career. She has served seven years on the School Committees. Michael Coppolino thanked Marie for all her hard work and dedication to improving our school systems. She is always well prepared, and we will miss her tremendously. John Ryder asked that she attend the next meeting on February 1, to be properly recognized. Marie said she was willing to continue serving on the Health Insurance Trust through the spring, if that is what School Committee members wish. She asked that a member shadow her on that committee.
- Terry Lindgren announced that he will not seek reelection in the spring.
- Michael Coppolino announced that he would run again.

#### **JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:00 p.m. it was moved, seconded and

**VOTED:** To go into executive session to discuss strategies relative to collective bargaining or litigation under Chapter 39, Section 23 B, paragraph 3. Each member was polled individually and each member voted to go into executive session for the stated purpose.

The Committees returned to open session at 10:50 p.m. The Regional Committee meeting was adjourned. The Acton Committee continued to meet (see Joint Minutes).

**NEXT MEETINGS:** January 20, All-Day Budget Workshop - AB session, 8:30 - 12 noon

February 1, 7:30 pm, RJ Grey Junior High Library - OPEN BUDGET HEARING

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary