

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

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Library  
R.J. Grey JH School

August 2, 2007  
8:00 p.m.

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*Members Present:* Bruce Sabot, Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, Sharon Smith McManus, Rebecca Neville, John Ryder,  
*Also Present:* William Ryan, Marie Altieri, Susan Horn, Elizabeth Huber, Sharon Summers, citizens and press

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The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Bruce Sabot, Chairperson

**CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

**STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

Warrant #08-002 in the amount of \$1,961,397.34 and warrant #08-003 in the amount of \$767,286.25 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of July 12, 2007 were approved as read.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Scott Wilson, representing a group of concerned citizens and parents, raised their concern about the play, 'The Laramie Project,' which will be performed by Proscenium Circus at ABRHS this fall. He said it is extremely controversial in nature, and is beyond what is appropriate for a HS audience. The play is extremely violent, and recounts a horrific murder in detail, with harsh language. Scott said he has met with Steve Donovan, HS principal, and Linda Potter, Drama Director, and has not had a sympathetic ear. Concerned parents are putting together a public forum at ABRHS to address things that weren't addressed in the play, to give the other side. Scott said he was afraid the forum will be squashed because of a technicality. He said they want the forum to be constructive. He encouraged kids and community members to read the script and attend the forum. A parent in Newton said they had put together a forum like this in Newton. People heard different perspectives and useful communication took place. Another parent said the play had a good basic message, but did ask if the extreme language could be modified. She had heard it could be done. Bill Ryan said Linda Potter was looking into this. There may be contractual issues.

Bill Ryan responded re: use of school facilities for the forum. He said the schools have never said no to space requests, as long as space is available. We have an open policy, and have always encouraged citizens to use our buildings. Bill encouraged school committee members to read the play. He said he and the HS staff are aware of the controversy. He explained the process which was followed in choosing the play, and said there was support from faculty and students. Many other high schools have given the play. Bill stated that he and Steve Donovan strongly support the production. He said that he believes the play encourages us to consider how the seeds of intolerance in a community can lead to violence. Bill said that he is confident that the play will be received well by our community. Becky Neville said that she supports the group going forward with the forum.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. ALG Followup Discussion**

- Sharon McManus reported on the July 16 meeting. Members agreed on guidelines for the year. They also talked about Jonathan Chinitz's revenue sharing modeling. Jonathan will make his

presentation at the 8/13 and 8/14 BOS and Fin Com meetings, respectively. By mid-Oct, ALG will decide whether or not to go for an override and will put together milestones. They will also start looking at the Capital Plan.

## **2. FY'07 ABRSD Budget Update**

- Bill Ryan reviewed the almost final budget by object summary in the packet. Salary accounts are very close. Health insurance migration continues slowly to less expensive plans. There is a deficit in buildings and grounds accounts, the sub. account, and SPED accounts. Allen Nitschelm asked for the approximate amount in E&D next year. Bill estimated that it will be between \$1.2M and \$1.4M.

## **3. Health Trust Report**

- Tess Summers reported the Trust meets again in September, and will be looking at the GIC (state health insurance plan). Bill Ryan said that he and Tess would attend an information session on GIC on August 7th. In October we will have a good sense of where we are on health insurance.

## **4. Staffing Update**

- Marie Altieri referred to the list of 39 new K-12 certified staff. She announced that Larry Fliegelman, RJGrey Ass't Principal, has just been appointed to a principalship elsewhere, so we now have a vacancy. We will be looking for an interim appointment ASAP, and the search committee will be reconvened. Two elementary teacher positions have also just opened up. Allen Nitschelm asked if this was an unusually high number of new staff. Marie replied that this was not unusual, and it is actually lower than some years previous.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Acton-Boxborough Youth Baseball**

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED: To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of \$54,000, from Acton-Boxborough Youth Baseball.**

These funds will be used for the campus Athletic Lighting Project.

Special thanks to Michael Coppelino for his leadership in the project.

### **2. Recommendation to Transfer Interest to Class of 2007 Student Activity Account**

- It was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation to transfer \$4,826.98 from the Student Activity Interest Account to cover the deficit in the Class of 2007 Student Activity Account.**

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- The Superintendent referred to several items.
- Tess Summers reviewed the musical instrument bid process. Parents rent musical instruments for their children in the ABRHS band. We were advised to put out an Request For Proposal for bids, and received three. We are recommending Coffey Music and Arts Center in Norwood, MA, the lowest bidder that fits our criteria. Jonathan Chinitz asked how much more the Minor Chord, Acton bidder, would be, as it would be good to support local businesses. Sharon McManus noted that band parents do not pay Minor Chord directly, but pay Rayburn Music in Boston.
- Coordinated Program Review: Liza Huber and Sue Horn reported the good news - we are almost in total compliance.

**ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

**1. School Committee Rep. to ABRHS Principal Search Committee**

Sharon McManus will serve.

**2. Report of 990 Hours Subcommittee**

Sharon and Brigid have talked with ABRHS administration and will work together with them as a team. After the summer, the subcommittee will have another report.

3. List of Committee assignments will be discussed at the September meeting.

4. John Ryder mentioned the Capital Plan item.

**NEXT MEETING:** September 6 - 7:30 pm, JH Library

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary