

ACTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Library
Conant School

March 15, 2007
9:05 p.m.

Members Present: Jonathan Chinitz, Michael Coppolino, Terry Lindgren,
Sharon Smith McManus
Also Present: William Ryan, George Frost, Susan Horn, Elizabeth Huber,
Sharon Summers, citizens and press

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 p.m. by the Vice Chairperson.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #2007-19 in the amount of \$109,601.59 was signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 15, 2007 were approved as written.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

EDUCATION REPORT - Conant School

Philip Benincasa, Interim Principal, reported on the state of the school. He said that Conant is in a very healthy place, and is well prepared for the transition to a new principal, Christine Price. He has met with the School Council to gather information for the incoming principal. They used questionnaires for staff and parents to determine areas of concern and satisfaction. He commented that this is the best staff he has ever worked with and the best kids, with very few troubling issues. There is an enormous amount of diversity in school (about 38%), and its overall effect on the school community has made him feel more positive than when he arrived. Kids look past differences, and since they will be living in a world of diversity like this, it is a positive and valuable thing to experience. Diversity is a plus, not a minus, and he recommended looking at our other schools in light of this. He noted that there are stresses on the schools, like the other elementary schools, due to limited resources. A topic of concern is how to deliver support services best. School Committee members and Bill Ryan thanked Phil for his report and for a successful year at Conant.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. ALG Report

- See ABRSC minutes.

2. Health Insurance Trust Report

- Tess Summers reported that the balance is good this year. The Trust approved rates for next year. She noted that Master Health Plus (MHP) rates will increase 25%, while the HMO plans will increase about 6%. In addition, the Trust approved offering another plan, a PPO. The Trust consultant predicts there will be migration from MHP to the PPO.

3. FY'07 Budget Report

- Bill Ryan noted that we continue to watch the Utilities and Legal line items.

4. FY'08 Budget

- Bill Ryan recommended the following additions/adjustments to the budget/warrant articles, given the increase in Chapter 70 funds:
 - Two New Douglas School Modulars - \$377,500 (*to be funded with increased Chapter 70 funds*)
 - .5 FTE Custodian/Benefits - \$30,274
 - Curriculum Position/Benefits - \$48,388
 - Administrative Technology Replacement - \$30,000
 - Capital Equipment Annual Payment (5-yr. lease) - \$16,000
 - ABA/Autistic Trainer - \$17,500
- Michael Coppolino asked that we consider adding some classroom assistant hours to the budget so that the school PTOs will not have to bear so much of the cost.
- It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (McManus) and unanimously

VOTED: That a warrant article be on the Town Meeting agenda to fund the new Douglas School's modulars at an amount not to exceed \$377,500 , and be taken from available revenue (Chapter 70).

- It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (McManus) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation that the FY'08 Acton Public Schools ' budget be set at \$23,309,773.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Professional Day Report - March 9

- Susan Horn reported that it was a very productive day. Conant staff spent the day learning about autism spectrum disorders, Douglas worked on writing/language arts, Gates worked on math, McT focused on literacy and ESL, and Merriam staff discussed parent involvement. Art teachers visited a museum, and P.E. teachers worked on aligning adventure activities with new regulations. Office support staff participated in a WORD workshop.

2. Recommendation re: State School Choice Participation, 2007-08

- It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation that the Acton Public Schools will NOT participate in School Choice, 2007-08.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Superintendent referred to several items.

NEXT MEETINGS: March 29, Joint Exec. Session - 7 pm - JH Conf. Rm.

March 29, APS Meeting following AB Meeting - JH Library

April 9, 6 pm, ABRHS Conference Room

May 17, 7:30 pm, Merriam School

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary