

**JOINT
ACTON/ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 1, 2007
7:05 pm

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

The joint meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the respective chairs.

CHAIRPERSONS' INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:06 pm, it was moved, seconded and unanimously

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 7:45 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The joint meeting minutes of January 4 and January 20, 2007 were approved as read.

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

School Committee members honored Marie Altieri, who resigned from the Committees in January. They commended her dedication and commitment, and recognized that her expertise in so many areas will be greatly missed. Bill Ryan also thanked Marie for her seven years of service on the School Committees, and presented a certificate of appreciation to her on behalf of the entire school community.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recommendation to Approved School Transportation Bid

Acton-Boxborough RSC action:

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

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation to award the bid to lease 22 new school buses to New England Transit Co., in the amount of \$11,966.74 per unit, totaling an annual payment of \$263,268.28, due every September 1st for five years.

Acton SC action:

It was moved(McManus), seconded (Coppolino) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation to award the bid to lease 22 new school buses to New England Transit Co., in the amount of \$11,966.74 per unit, totaling an annual payment of \$263,268.28, due every September 1st for five years.

2. School Committee Vacancy Update

On February 12 , at 7:40 pm in the Acton Memorial Library, a joint meeting of the Acton School Committee and the Acton Board of Selectmen will be held to discuss the appointment of a School

Committee member to complete the year until the March election.

3. SC Policy Subcommittee Member

Becky Neville noted that we need another School Committee member (from Acton) to serve on the SC Policy Subcommittee. This will be discussed at the February 15th meeting.

The Joint Session was suspended at 8:00 pm.

The Acton-Boxborough meeting continued (see ABRSC minutes).

The Acton meeting (under Joint Session) resumed at 9:02 pm.

4. APS Warrant Approval

- Warrant 2007-16 in the amount of \$131,615.63 was signed by the Chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signature.

5. ALG Report

- John Ryder reported on the January 10 meeting. There was discussion about how to pay for the new Douglas modulars, and the consensus was that they should be bonded. If the warrant article to fund Douglas modulars is approved at Town Meeting, the recommendation is that the bonding for year one be taken from free cash. There was also discussion of Bill Mullin's proposal not to raise taxes to the levy limit of 2 1/2. Bill Ryan and John Ryder will present the Douglas modular plans at the February 6 Finance Committee meeting. There will be a tour of Douglas at 6 pm that night for any interested Finance Com. members, who were urged to attend.
- Sharon McManus reported on the January 31 meeting. They discussed a Fin. Com. proposal to tax at less than 2.5% (1.4%) next year, as a way of giving back to the taxpayer in a year that revenue looks much better and the free cash situation is good. The next step is that all boards will discuss the proposal, and ALG will meet on Feb. 13 to wrap it up. Sharon referred to the spread sheet in the Addendum which was done for the Acton BOS for illustrated purposes only. She said this is basically a political decision. We will need to get it back the next year. If the Fin. Com. proposal is agreed to, the budget shortfall will be covered by approximately \$600K in free cash in FY'08. NESWC funds: we don't know the available amount yet, and we don't know its use and allocation.
- John Ryder was concerned about risking losing the schools' capital override in the following year.
- Bob Evans, Fin. Com., asked whether NESWC funds will be used for operating vs. capital uses. John Ryder said he thought it was recommended that NESWC not be used for operating budgets. Bill Ryan said this would be brought back to ALG for discussion.
- Bill Mullin, Fin. Com. spoke about his proposal to tax less in FY'08. Each year is different, but this is a unique year, and never before have we had such reserves. If we cannot give citizens a break, then when? What happens next year, will happen next year, and we will deal with it. This opportunity won't happen again, and he hoped the School Committee will support it.
- Lauren Rosensweig, BOS, said the proposal was a nice idea, but we will have to raise taxes the following year. The schools have capital needs, as does the town (fire station in N. Acton). NESWC liability numbers are owed back, so we are not sure how much will be available. Some reserves will be needed soon. If we don't tax to the levy, we won't be ready for harder times.
- Michael Coppelino wished the other two School Committee members were present before voting on this proposal. The Committee decided to meet again on February 8 at 7:30 pm, if the other two members are available.

The Acton School Committee meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton,
Secretary