

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Approved Minutes

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 1, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Maya Minkin, Deanne O’Sullivan
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy.
2. **Chairman’s Introduction** – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Acton last day to obtain nomination papers - February 2
 - Acton last day to file nomination papers with signatures – February 6
 - Acton 2018 Town Election Calendar
 - Boxborough last day to file nomination papers – April 3
 - Boxborough 2018 Town Election Calendar
 - Katie Neville announced that she will be moving out of the district and regretfully submitted a resignation letter effective May 22, 2018.
3. **Public Participation** - none
4. **2nd Quarter FY18 Financial Report through Dec 31, 2017** – *Dave Verdolino*

Revenue projections are unchanged from the Q1 report. The projected estimated budget surplus of \$491,400 does not reflect the \$710,000 appropriation from E&D for the building feasibility study. In response to a question, Bill McAlduff explained that the Building Committee will approve expenses as they come up, not the School Committee. Also as the District submits bills, they will be charged against the MSBA’s share of the costs, and would be paid by MSBA. The District does not actually receive reimbursement from MSBA.
5. **FY19 ABRSD Superintendent Preliminary Budget Update** – *Bill McAlduff*
 - 5.1. Superintendent’s Memo
 - 5.2. ALG & BLF Update
 - 5.2.1. ALG Meeting on 2/1/18 and Minutes of 1/11/18

Marie Altieri reviewed the ALG spreadsheet and documents from the meeting that morning. ALG will meet again on February 8th. Brigid Bieber reported from the BLF that their budget process has just starting. They have a Special Town Meeting on February 28. Brigid offered to the BOS and Fincom that a School Committee member could present to them if they would like.
 - 5.3. Questions, comments and input

Bill McAlduff stated that changes to the budget will be folded into the proposal that is used for the Budget Hearing on February 15 based on tonight's discussion. This includes the line that contains the new superintendent's salary which will be moved from \$195,000 to \$215,000 based on some of these savings, per the question at Budget Saturday.

Dawn Bentley discussed the proposed new Junior High program. Establishing this program will allow 3-5 students who may have had to go out of district to stay in. Keeping students in district is a key priority. She and her colleagues are working with the 3-2-1 foundation, a non-profit that helps include students with substantial disabilities within a district. They have been very helpful in assisting Dawn and her staff to think through the new program. Dawn described the placement process for students and what a difficult and lengthy process it can be.

Dennis Bruce referred to staffing slide #77 from Budget Saturday that showed the proposed addition of 9.4 FTE resulting in the net adjustment of 4.4 FTE. Dawn stated that to add the proposed program, a few part-time assistants and one full time teacher would be added so the number would go to 10.4 FTE. The line item detail will be updated for the Budget Hearing, including the head count slide. It will be emphasized that the added staff would cost less than the tuitions that would have to be paid if these students have to go out of the district.

Committee members commented on the benefit that Boxborough taxpayers received this year from a decrease in assessment, understanding the shift was due to Schedule A of the Regional Agreement. The importance of "remembering that we are all in this together" was stressed. In a few years, Boxborough's assessment will be going up. Members must do the best they can to advocate for the school district budget. John Petersen spoke from the audience stating that the largest percentage increase is Acton's at 4.25%. This will limit the ability to draw on higher services.

Amy Krishnamurthy emphasized that the proposed budget allows for single tier busing, changes the start times at the Junior High and High School and OPEB continues to be funded. It also provides a million dollars in capital projects. Considering all that it includes, the assessment is reasonable in her opinion. Mary Brolin noted that the budget is only up 3.3%, and Acton's assessment is up more because they took their share of savings early and now it is Boxborough's turn.

5.4. FY19 Budget Hearing on 2/15/18 at 7:05 p.m. in the Jr High Library, followed by ABRSC meeting

6. School Building Committee Update – Mary Brolin

6.1. Study Enrollment Certification, submitted 1/23/18

Marie Altieri reviewed the Enrollment Certification stating that it landed exactly where the District hoped it would. She and Bill were impressed with how the MSBA worked to understand our district and the way it operates. Amy thanked Marie for her tremendous effort to get to this point on enrollment.

6.2. Feasibility Study Budget – Exhibit A

Bill McAlduff explained how this budget was put together. He asked that the Committee vote to authorize him to sign the Feasibility Study on behalf of the district so it can be sent to MSBA for the meeting on February 14. The Legal Certification also needs to be submitted to MSBA to show who can sign off on all of the documents. After reviewing the Regional Agreement and other district documents, Bill found no language authorizing the Superintendent to sign. Absent that documentation, MSBA asked that School Committee vote to authorize an individual to sign the agreement.

Paul Murphy moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: that the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee authorize the Interim Superintendent of Schools to sign, on behalf of the District, the Feasibility Study Agreement as provided by the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

MSBA will work with the Building Committee to create a Project Scope where this authorization will be needed again. It was noted that the person should be identified by title, not by name.

7. Merriam School Principal Update – Marie Altieri

7.1. Finalist Announcement

Twenty four applications were reviewed and following preliminary interviews, Dr. Christine Price, Ms. Juliana Schneider and Dr. Stefanie Reinhorn were chosen as finalists. They will visit the district next week and meet with staff and the Superintendent. Community meetings are next Thursday, February 8th in the Merriam library. All are welcome. Bill McAlduff hopes to appoint the new principal by February vacation.

8. Subcommittee Reports

8.1. Policy

8.1.1. NEW: Section 504, File: IHBA – First Read – Dawn Bentley

Dawn reviewed the proposed new policy again. (It was initially presented on 1/11/18. It was asked that FAPE be spelled out in the documents. Comments should be sent to Dawn.

9. School Committee Member Reports - none

10. Superintendent Search Update – Diane Baum

10.1. Candidate Profile

10.2. Information on our site: <http://www.abschools.org/home/superintendent-search>

Diane Baum reported that 25 applications were received and reviewed. NESDEC has scheduled the preliminary interviews. The search committee expects to choose 3-5 finalists on February 12th and announce them at the School Committee meeting on February 15th. Next steps will also be reviewed.

Diane asked the Committee for input regarding site visits and finalist interviews. Other communities are on similar search schedules. The search subcommittee will bring recommendations to the February 15th Committee meeting.

It was agreed that once the finalists are identified, it will be easier to plan the schedule. Although a month seems like enough time, an additional meeting could be added. Amy and Bill are comfortable having the Budget Hearing first on February 15th, and then devoting the rest of the meeting to this process. One option is to have three different nights of interviews (one per finalist) and a 4th night for deliberation, or everything could be done at once. Dennis Bruce felt that there was a lot of value in having 3 separate candidate visits/nights last time (2014), and then a final Saturday when all 3 finalists did their public interviews. Sally from NESDEC will attend the meeting on the 15th and she will offer advice.

Mary Brolin agreed with Brigid Bieber that the finalists should come on separate days. In the past, the site visits to their own districts were not that helpful because only the best points came out. Paul Murphy agreed that if site visits are done, having the same people do all of the visits is best for consistency, although it is a lot of time.

11. Consent Agenda

11.1. Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes

11.1.1. Minutes of 1/22/18

11.2. Donations to our Schools – *Bill McAlduff*

11.2.1. Recommendation to Approve \$11,000 Donation from Acton-Boxborough United Way to the ABR High School to support the Healthy Teen Initiative – **VOTE**

Amy Krishnamurthy read the warrant summary and asked if the Committee wanted to hold anything. They did not.

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that the Consent Agenda be approved with gratitude for the donation.

12. **FYI**

12.1. DESE Draft History and Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks Revision

12.2. Annual Education Report for the Acton & Boxborough Town Meeting Books

12.3. January 1, 2018 Enrollment Report

12.4. Family Learning Series - FY18 Calendar of Presentations

12.4.1. Attunement & Somatic Regulation: A Body Based Approach Toward Increasing Understanding & Resilience Within Your Child, Heather Finn, LICSW, February 6th at 7:00 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Junior High School

Middlesex Savings Bank was thanked for donating \$50,000 to the Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSASF). The Superintendent noted that that gift will come before the School Committee in May when the ABSAF donation is presented for acceptance.

The ABRSC adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda, List of warrants, MSBA Feasibility Study Agreement and motion language