

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
MINUTES (approved 12/14/17)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

Monday, November 20, 2017
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Deanne O'Sullivan (7:14 p.m.), Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: none
Others: Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Tony Bent (NESDEC), Sally Dias (NESDEC)

1. The ABRSC was called to order by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy at 7:05 p.m.
2. **Recommendation to Approve Agreement Between the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and the ABRSD for Superintendent Search Consulting Services – VOTE – Bill McAlduff**
 - 2.1. Agreement from NESDEC

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED:** to approve the Agreement between NESDEC and the ABRSD for Superintendent Search Consulting Services.

3. **ABRSD Superintendent Search Orientation – NESDEC**
 - 3.1. Orientation Overview Memo

Sally Diaz reviewed the material in the NESDEC folder provided. Superintendent McAlduff and Beth Petr will be the liaisons for the School Committee with NESDEC. Particular attention was paid to the proposed timeline. In response to a question about why the Screening Committee would be confirmed after the Needs Assessment, Sally said this committee could be put together at any time. The proposed timeline has the Needs Assessment being done in December/January and Screening Committee selected in January with their first meeting on January 25, 2018. The new Superintendent would be selected in February/March. It was noted that Budget Saturday is January 27, 2018.

Screening Committee:

It was agreed that thought needs to be given to the makeup of the Screening Committee. This group will work with NESDEC and review all of the resumes. The Screening Committee should be decided sooner rather than later because acting as a subcommittee, they can make recommendations to the School Committee.

The time commitment for serving on the screening committee would include 2 mandatory workshops for orientation. There would be approximately 6 night meetings to interview about 9 candidates in 3 interview nights plus a night to narrow the list and send 3-5 finalists to the School Committee. Members may attend focus group sessions, but are not required to. The Screening Committee is a subcommittee of the School Committee and subject to the Open Meeting Law.

Amy Krishnamurthy asked if any members were interested in serving on the subcommittee that would become the Screening Committee. Amy, Tessa McKinley and Diane Baum said that they were.

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to appoint Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley and Diane Baum to be School Committee representatives on the Screening Committee and to do any sub work for the School Committee that may be needed.

Advertising:

Sally said that NESDEC knows the network and will work on the advertising. Candidate pools for superintendents are smaller than they used to be because the jobs are more complicated than in the past. Tony stated that it is very much a 2-way street when interviewing good candidates - they are also interviewing the District. NESDEC facilitates that process but the School Committee makes the decisions.

Bill McAlduff recommended authorizing NESDEC to do some of the fee based advertising with both online components (see page 7 of the Agreement).

Diane Baum moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: that NESDEC place an advertisement in “Top School Jobs”, the online advertising service of Education Week that would run for approximately 30 days at an additional cost of \$395 and in addition an announcement in the “Job Bulletin” section of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) website that would run for approximately 30 days at an additional cost of \$410.

Focus Groups:

Focus groups should begin soon. Concern was expressed about doing them in December when people are busy, but also doing a community survey, as has been done in the past, would help address this. Sally stated that NESDEC can do the survey and it is valuable. They would provide a link that can be posted on our website.

The Committee discussed doing the focus groups in December with perhaps one or two in January. They discussed how many groups to do. The Agreement includes up to 6, but NESDEC could do more if requested.

Brigid Bieber explained that in the past two searches, the focus groups were a chance for people not involved in other ways to give input. All of the input is put together to create the profile and the screening committee uses this profile to assess the applications and develop interview questions. Mary Brolin stated that she does a lot of focus groups and noted that for some groups, only people in that group should be included because “outsiders” could sway some input. For example, she suggested that teachers should have only NESDEC staff at their focus group, and she felt the same for the Administration group.

Mary Brolin suggested that they do one elementary teachers/staff focus group and one secondary teachers/staff group. The elementary one should be in West Acton or Boxborough. There should be an administrative group, one student (High School) group and one parent/community group in Acton and one parent/community group in Boxborough.

Dennis Bruce stated that of these 6 groups, half are school staff. He advocated for more community groups. Bill McAlduff explained that the staff is really one group, just splitting it into two for convenience and timing due to school schedules. Sally reminded the Committee that a lot of input will come from the survey.

If only two community groups are done, one must be day and one evening. Participation in the online survey must be widely published. Town boards will be invited to the community groups.

NESDEC can contact any particularly important members if desired. The Town of Acton just invited the School Committee to their community sessions so the Committee should do the same.

Paul Murphy asked members to raise their hands if they felt another parent group should be added to make 7 group meetings based on Dennis' comment. Members did not support that idea. Bill McAlduff felt Mary's suggestion was a good one.

Paul Murphy moved, Maya Minkin seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve Mary's suggestion for the number and make up of the focus groups.

Announcement Letter:

Bill McAlduff asked if the Committee wanted to approve the draft Announcement Letter that was emailed to members (and brought to the meeting) subject to the honors section being completed by staff.

Dennis Bruce asked about the "minimum requirements" regarding the qualifications and if they are hard and fast for the search committee. Sally stated that "minimum means minimum" in the Letter. NESDEC will not bring an application forward to the screening committee if one of the minimums is not met. She added that this makes it important to use "preferred", not required or minimum, if there is any leeway. It is important not to cut out someone who may be terrific, but slightly low in one area. Tony urged the Committee to stay as flexible as possible at this stage. Mary Brolin agreed that the Committee should cast a wide net, go through all of the information from the focus groups and survey, etc. and then be picky about candidates.

Eileen Zhang disagreed and wanted to keep some minimum requirements. Tessa McKinley felt ok saying something is required but without a number of years attached. Mary Brolin was comfortable saying that teaching/admin experience was required, or with a number of years preferred. Brigid Bieber agreed with Mary and asked if either central office or building based management experience would broaden or narrow the request.

There was general consensus to go with a minimum of 5 years of administration and teaching preferred. After more discussion, it was agreed to keep the wording broad because the School Committee can decide later if they want to require something.

It was suggested that the screening committee be charged with finalizing the wording.

Katie Neville moved, Tessa McKinley seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Vacancy Announcement Letter with the edits made tonight, along with allowing the School Committee representatives flexibility to finalize the other language.

Disclosure Forms:

Mary Brolin suggested that members review the form included in the NESDEC material.

It was announced that the ABRSC meeting scheduled for November 30, 2017 was not needed.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: Agenda, Proposed NESDEC Agreement, Orientation Overview Memo (B. McAlduff), Draft Announcement Letter dated 11/19/17, Folder of NESDEC materials