

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
MINUTES (approved)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

November 9, 2017
7:00 p.m.
9:00 p.m. (approximately) Executive Session (cxd)

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin (left at 8:40 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville (7:06 p.m.), Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Deanne O'Sullivan
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Amy Krishnamurthy, Chair.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
3. **Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.1. The meeting minutes of 10/30/17 were approved as written.
 - 3.2. The warrants were reviewed and signed by the Committee members. See list.
4. **Public Participation** - none
5. **Presentation: R.J. Grey Junior High School** - *Principal Andrew Shen*
 - 5.1. Annual School Report
Principal Shen shared new things happening at the Junior High this year, as well as the continued work with Challenge Success, Diversity & Equity, ELL Student Learning and Support, and Student Engagement & Socio/Emotional Health. The Committee loved hearing about the continued initiatives and the google site being used for homework. They asked about scheduling and funding for activities when students cannot afford it.
 - 5.2. JH Enrollment and Class Size Report
Overall enrollment at the Junior High has steadily declined since 2008-2009 when it peaked at 1003 students and fell to 888 in 2015-2016. In the past 2 years however, enrollment has been increasing with 964 students this year. The average team size in Grade 7 is 121.5 students and the average for Grade 8 is 119.5 students. Areas to monitor are:
 1. Students with non-traditional school backgrounds, interruptions in formal education, whose preparation is several years below grade level; often . receiving ELL services
 2. Team sizes
 3. Class sizes of team classes and ExploratoryQuestions were asked about the large class sizes. Mr. Shen said that some of the rooms are crowded. A few years ago a half team was added but it was not ideal. Some communities have received hundreds of children from Puerto Rico following the hurricane and many need ELL services. This is happening everywhere. Eileen Zhang asked about the math strategies being implemented. Andrew said that professional learning should be focused on this because it offers a wider variety of challenges to a larger group of kids learning math. He believes that all of the students are being addressed.
6. **Presentation: Annual Enrollment Presentation & Elementary Class Size Report** – *Marie Altieri*

- 6.1. Ashton Enrollment Projections Slides & Charts
- 6.2. Elementary Class Size Report Slides
- 6.3. Elementary Class Size Report Charts
- 6.4. October 1, 2017 Enrollment Report
- 6.5. NESDEC Preliminary Projections
- 6.6. NESDEC Acton and Boxborough Individual Enrollment Data

Marie Altieri began by saying that a lot of time has been spent analyzing enrollment projections. AB is transitioning to using the NESDEC projections in the future because this is the last year that the Ashtons will be available to do it. The MSBA meeting is next Tuesday in Boston. MSBA projections were lower than NESDEC or the Ashtons so Bill and Marie will try hard to make the case for the higher enrollment numbers that they believe are right. Marie outlined why they believe that the MSBA does not realize what is happening in the community. One example is that the 3 projections for Kindergarten – Ashton, NESDEC and MSBA, are all different. Marie thanked Karen Guzzardi at Boxborough Town Hall for data she provided on the new Paddock Estates student numbers.

Asked if our special education percentage has changed much with enrollment, Marie said that it had not, staying at about 17% for years. The district has increased a lot in the economically disadvantaged number of students. In response to a question, Marie confirmed that they do follow the rental market as well as the housing market. She noted that Bill McAlduff did the enrollment projections in Winchester so he has been a great resource.

Moving to number of sections for next year, the proposal included four Kindergartens at Blanchard for next year and one fewer Kindergarten in Acton. A 4th grade classroom would be added at either Conant or McT, not sure where yet. The administration proposed adding a 5th grade to Blanchard and one to a school in Acton. A 6th grade class would be eliminated. Adding 3 sections and taking away 1 would result in adding a total of 2. (Slide 7)

Bill emphasized that the MSBA is interested in a 10 year average so that is what he and Marie will concentrate on at the meeting. Marie added that our plan provides flexibility because we are thinking of a twin school with 8 preschool classrooms. Even with the MSBA numbers, we will have more classrooms than we have now. Marie is not sure if the district would actually make the building much bigger than the current plan, but it may impact the next building project more.

7. **Presentation: Finance** – *David Verdolino*

7.1. Student Activities Funds review and **VOTE** of approval

Next year Dave will do this vote at the same time as the imprest balance vote that was already done. He will send responses to Diane Baum's questions to the whole School Committee when he is ready. This vote is per policy JJ.

Diane Baum moved, and Mary Brolin seconded the motion:

“To approve the accompanying lists of proposed student activity funds for Blanchard Memorial School, R.J. Grey Junior High School and Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, each as recommended by the respective building principals, as the officially recognized clubs, teams and other organized student activities for the 2017-2018 school year.”

Paul Murphy asked if there is no advisor for those that are missing in the memo. Dave assumes that these roles have now been filled. He noted that some clubs may not be currently active.

The motion was **VOTED** and unanimously passed.

7.2. Q1 Financial Report

Dave reported that they project a budget surplus of about \$600,000 at this time for FY18. This is with minimal risk for revenue projections, and approximates the planned use of E&D for the MSBA Feasibility Study.

7.3. FY19 Budget Schedule/Timeline and Guidelines

The timeline and guidelines were previously discussed with the budget subcommittee.

7.4. FY17 End of Year Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Update

Dave described the packet information as an extract from a report from the advisors used at a meeting they did with Treasurer Margaret Dennehy. Margaret is the chair of the Board of Advisors which includes Dave, the School Committee Chair and representatives from each of the Acton and Boxborough Finance Committees. Paul Murphy noted that the earnings on the OPEB trust have really made the account grow. Mary Brolin agreed and said that keeping the commitment to add to it really helps bond ratings.

8. **School Building Committee Update – Mary Brolin**

8.1. Community Forums & Slides – working on building support in the community.

8.2. FYI

8.2.1 Draft Minutes of Building Committee Meeting on 10/11/17

8.2.1. Special Town Meetings in Acton & Boxborough on **Monday, 12/4/17** at 7:00 pm

8.2.2. Building Committee's presence on social media – Please share!

8.2.2.1. Twitter - [@ ABSBP](#)

8.2.2.2. Instagram - [abschoolbuildingproject](#)

8.2.2.3. Facebook - [abschoolbuildingproject](#)

Mary Brolin shared the presentations that will be used at the Special Town Meetings. Dennis Bruce will present in Acton and Mary will present in Boxborough with Building Committee members in attendance. School Committee members agreed with the Building Committee members sitting up front with Mary/Dennis so they could answer questions.

The Committee discussed what would happen if the articles did not pass. The district would fall out of the MSBA eligibility period meaning they are no longer a partner with MSBA. As a community we would then need to decide how to proceed or not, and funding would be on our own. They could choose to fund the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) items but that is only a 10 year fix so a short term solution. The net cost could be \$60 million of repairs, bringing buildings up to ADA compliance, etc.etc. The community would need to decide how to handle this. Concern was expressed about the significant opportunity lost for educational purposes.

9. **Merriam Principal Retirement Announcement & Search Update**

Marie Altieri reported that Ed Kaufman's retirement after 23 years at Merriam will be a big change for the Merriam community. The replacement process has begun.

10. **Permanent Superintendent Search Update – Amy Krishnamurthy (oral)**

10.1. ABRSC meeting with NESDEC for Orientation – Mon, Nov 20 at 7:00 p.m. JHL Amy will ask that NESDEC come prepared with an ad for the Committee to vote on so it can be placed right away. Bill said that he and Amy received a draft that includes some information for the Central Office to fill out. He will send this out shortly to School Committee members and have it ready to go on November 20th.

11. **Subcommittee Reports**

- 11.1. **Budget Subcommittee – Brigid Bieber**
 - 11.1.1. Minutes of meeting on 7/19/17
 - 11.1.2. Recommendation to Appoint New Member Diane Baum – **VOTE**
Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously
VOTED: to appoint Diane Baum to the Budget Subcommittee
 - 11.1.3. Recommendation to Approve Budget Subcommittee Charge – **VOTE**
Paul Murphy moved, Diane Baum seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the charge as proposed in the memo in the packet.
- 11.2. **Policy Subcommittee Consent Agenda – First Read**
 - 11.2.1. Graduation Requirements, File: IKF
 - 11.2.2. Personnel Records, File: GBJ
 - 11.2.3. Philosophy of Staff Development, File: GCIA
 - 11.2.4. Professional Teacher Status, File: GCJ
 - 11.2.5. First Aid, File: EBB
 - 11.2.6. Programs for Students with Special Education Needs, File: IHB
 - 11.2.7. Home or Hospital Instruction, File: IHBF
 - 11.2.8. Pregnant/Parenting Students, File: JIE
 - 11.2.9. Student Complaints and Grievances, File: JII

Katie Neville explained that these policies needed minor updating since regionalization and were up for a First Reading. Re” Graduation Requirements”, policy IKF, Dennis Bruce asked if AB still requires only 2 years of math. Marie Altieri explained that this policy was updated in 2012 to include the arts requirement. There is a lot of process around graduation requirements. It is for all students with all kinds of needs. For some students these are heavy duty requirements and Deb Bookis and the principals felt that this was appropriate.

Diane Baum asked why 504s are included in “Programs for Students with Special Education Needs”, policy IHB. Dawn Bentley explained that the P in IEP is program, not plan. This is part of the federal statute. Dawn explained the difference between 504s and IEPs. 504s are only about accommodation. Children with an IEP also have a 504 that is why it’s included. Amanda Bailey had a similar question.

Further questions or comments may be sent to Katie or Maya Minkin before the next meeting.

- 11.3. **Regional Financial Oversight – Mary Brolin (oral)**
 - 11.3.1. Recommendation to Appoint Amy Krishnamurthy to Vacancy – **VOTE**
This is year 4 of 5. Because Kristina Rychlik left, Mary needs someone who can commit to this committee for 2 years.
Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded with gratitude and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to appoint Amy Krishnamurthy to the Regional Financial Oversight Committee

12. School Committee Member Reports

- 12.1. **Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – Amy Krishnamurthy**
 - 12.1.1. Minutes and materials from meeting on 10/26/17

13. Donations to the School District - Bill McAlduff

- 13.1. **Recommendation to Accept \$10,000 Gift from Patriot Swim Club for ABRHS Pool – VOTE**
Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded with gratitude and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the Patriot Swim Club donation to the ABRHS pool.

13.2. Recommendation to Accept Regional PTSO Grants to the High School – **VOTE**
Paul Murphy moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept the PTSO’s three grants to the High School.

14. **Open Meeting Law Complaint** – *Bill McAlduff*

14.1. S. Ballard on 10/30/17 re Executive Session held on October 19, 2017

Bill McAlduff stated that an OML complaint was received from Mr. Ballard. Per the guide, School Committee members have received a copy of the complaint in the packet and must reviewed it at an open meeting. Bill summarized the points made in complaint and the action requested by Mr. Ballard. The School Committee has 14 business days to respond, which would be by November 17, 2017. Bill recommended that the Chair and Superintendent consult with legal counsel to create a response.

Mary Brolin moved, Diane Baum seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that the School Committee respond to this Complaint through the chair and superintendent’s office with consultation with legal counsel.

15. **FYI**

- 15.1. FY17 End of Year Audit Reports
-for discussion at meeting on 11/16/17 when Richard Sullivan will present
- 15.2. Kindergarten Registration Schedule
- 15.3. Green Communities Program 20% Reduction Goal Achieved by Acton
- 15.4. Acton Town Manager Search Committee online survey for community input
- 15.5. Homework Policy Implementation Information Night Slides, 10/24/17
- 15.6. Family Learning Series - FY18 Calendar of Presentations
- 15.7. Expanding our Notion of Success: <https://www.smore.com/8kd2q>
- 15.8. AG Issues Updated Open Meeting Law regulations, *effective 10/6/17*:
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/new-open-meeting-law-regulations-effective-october-6-2017>
- 15.9. Monthly Enrollment, 11/1/17

The Chair stated that the posted EXECUTIVE SESSION will be done at a future meeting.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants