

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

May 17, 2018
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting
9:30 (approximately) Executive Session

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis (left at 7:30 p.m.), Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
 - 2.1. Bob Evans was presented with an ABRSD Chair and thanked for his many years of service on the Acton School Committees, Acton Finance Committee and School Building Committees. Bob recently retired from the Finance Committee and remains on the current School Building Committee.
 - 2.2. Brigid Bieber and Katie Neville were thanked for serving on the School Committees. Brigid retired after joining the Committee in 2006. Katie resigned after 1 ½ terms because she is moving. Both members will be missed.
 - 2.3. Recommendation to Approve Donation from the Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSASF) to the School District – **VOTE**
Student representatives and ABSAF President Linda Ahern presented a check for \$121,000 to the District. \$71,000 represented the annual donation for student activities and athletics and \$50,000 was a one-time donation from Middlesex Savings Bank to ABSAF.
Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept this donation from ABSAF with gratitude.
3. **Public Participation**

Residents of Maillot Drive in Acton expressed concern about the bus stop in their neighborhood outlining their meetings with JD Head and the Transportation Department starting in 2016. They distributed information to the School Committee that they had collected over the past two years. They requested that the Committee relook at the cul de sac transportation policy and consider it on a case by case basis. The Chair thanked them for the information and said that someone will contact the families after the information is reviewed.

Gary Kushner expressed frustration about the scheduling of the Jr High band concert and a baseball coaches meeting on the same night as Boxborough Town Meeting's second night. This has been an issue in the past. This issue was discussed at the last Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting and Bill McAlduff said that changes will be made to avoid this again.
4. **Merriam School Presentation**

Principal Ed Kaufman introduced Assistant Principal Juliana Schneider who will become the next Principal as Ed retires after 23 years at Merriam. They highlighted the focus on respect,

persistence and risk taking at the Merriam School, holding community at their center. Ed said that kindness and civility have always been key. The Gratitude Wall is something that they are very proud of and that the School Committee really appreciates. Committee members thanked Ed for his dedicated service to our district and families.

5. **ABRSD Battery Storage Project – JD Head, Kate Crosby**

5.1. Memo from 4/26/18 School Committee meeting (*see that meeting for more materials*)

5.2. Recommendation to authorize the Interim Superintendent to enter into a project agreement with EnerNOC – **VOTE**

5.3. Electric Services Agreement between EnerNOC, Inc. and ABRSD

Kate Crosby reviewed the project again. In exchange for hosting the array, the district would receive a portion of the revenue stream. EnerNOC would handle the state grant protocols, fund the non-grant parts of the project, and manage the software in exchange for the balance of the revenue stream. Revenue is generated through services provided by the battery array (for example, peak shaving). Peak usage times are very expensive so shaving off some of that time saves a lot of money. Kate reported that the District received two calls from organizations asking if AB would be interested in some of these exciting new projects because we have participated in earlier ones. It is anticipated that we will receive a 23% split, translating to approximately \$100,000 revenue per year. Batteries will be sourced from TESLA with soundproofing that is expected to bring the battery down to a zero decibel level. The fans used to cool the battery create the noise. Kate explained that people ask whether it will be charged with solar. She said that is possible but not the intention. This project is much more sophisticated in that the District stays on the grid but is balancing the need/load.

In response to a question about possible safety issues, Kate said there is nothing live, so it is not a concern for kids. She compared the array to the transformers that are around the campus. There are no hidden costs and only a small amount of staff time needed. EnerNOC is carrying almost the entire load. Kate is looking forward to the “spectacular” educational parts of the project. After 10 years, when the contract ends, EnerNOC must put the landscape back as it was, if the District desires. We will have the option to buy it (more information in a year or two on that) but there is no obligation.

JD Head stressed that the school district’s counsel reviewed the contract, as did our insurance carrier. Like JD, they are very comfortable with the agreement.

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

VOTED: to approve the contract.

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

VOTED: to authorize the Interim Superintendent to enter into a project agreement with EnerNOC.

6. **Single Tier Transportation Update – JD Head**

JD Head appreciated that the families shared their concerns earlier in the meeting and the opportunity to clear up some gray areas of transportation. He began by stating that he and Safety Officer Chris Prehl care deeply about the kids and they take safety very seriously. They do all they can to remove gray issues but it is often a question of what amount of risk is acceptable to tolerate.

The transportation department has spent a lot of time over the years examining the system trying to get to a single tier for all elementary students. Due to the change in school start times this fall, it will finally happen, resulting in an extensive review of routes and timing.

The Committee discussed the complexities of the school transportation system and the cul de sac issues of concern. There are well over 100 cul de sacs in Acton and Boxborough. It was noted that at the last meeting, the concern seemed to be more about buses backing up as opposed to turning in the cul de sacs. Routes have to be reconfigured every year based on the students and what school they are attending. JD explained that they assume 3 foot snow banks on all sides and landscape trucks with equipment when they consider a route. A large open area is not always available. They encourage students to wait safely for the bus, make eye contact, wait for the thumbs up from the driver, then board the bus.

Better signage, including blinking signs, on the roads could be helpful although sometimes signage is not up to the municipalities so they may have to work with the state.

The Committee returned to the discussion of the cul de sacs and whether some exceptions could be made for service. JD agreed that it is not black and white. They discussed how kindergarten students are transported. A member asked if a simulation could be done to provide the cost of going down all cul de sacs. If it is not prohibitive she would like to go back to doing it. Making that safety assessment is very gray in JD's opinion. He would encourage the conversation around cul de sacs to also be held about cluster stops. Cluster stops are less safe than the stop in front of someone's house. Drawing a line about safety and efficiency is JD's job. He really appreciated all of the feedback.

A member referred to the materials from the last meeting noting that there was a whole section about safety not just being the school's job, but families need to consider how they are sending their kids out to the busstop and sometimes that can mean escorting them to be sure they are safe. A member asked for information about the transportation cost of having school choice, as opposed to neighborhood schools. This was not a suggestion to end school choice, but to understand the cost of the transportation for it. It was agreed that the School Committee transportation policies will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

A member of the public spoke in support of her relative who lives on Maillet Drive, saying that she wanted to push back about the safety of all cul de sacs. She stressed that the Fire Chief gave the parents (who spoke earlier) the information and asked them to give it to the School District because of what has happened traffic-wise in that area.

7. **Recommendation to Approve FY19 ABRHS Handbook Changes** – First Read – *Dean of Students Peter Cavanaugh*

Peter Cavanaugh reviewed the suggested changes/additions, deletions, technical /grammatical edits and extensive language updates/changes for next year's handbook. The Committee had many questions. Topics included: summer Physical Education classes, the student rep on the handbook committee, interim time, translation services, assessments/testing and AP classes, the timing of tests, and grading.

Peter emphasized several times that students need to talk with their counselor to see what is best in their particular situation. It was suggested that parent volunteers be considered for doing some of the extensive translation work needed. Peter assured members that family situations are taken into account when it comes to fines and obligations. He explained that some of the changes describe the High School's practices (not policies) and are included because they then define the expectations.

Bill McAlduff thanked the committee for all of their close attention to the handbook. He reminded them that not all suggestions will result in a change. The High School staff thinks through all of this very seriously. The Handbook Review Committee is ongoing and that does not happen in every district. Bill thanked Peter for his presentation and the well thought out

proposals. He urged the School Committee to rely on the staff for this type of protocol information that is part of the handbook, although there is a process and options if School Committee members disagree with something that is proposed. Members also appreciated the High School staff's efforts.

Angie Tso said many students take Summer PE (physical education) because they want to free up a period so they can take elective or other courses. The change that the student has to free up a period even if they take the Summer PE will defeat the purpose for many students to take the Summer PE. Mary Brolin suggested leaving this open and having the students check with the counselors. Angie also suggested to include presentation as one of the qualified assessments to postpone a test, changed from 7 points to 5 points when to upgrade or downgrade a course, and allowing the student to request postponing a test 24 hours before the scheduled assessment instead of 48 hours.

Eileen Zhang asked that the changes she mentioned be considered because they come from parents who contacted her and asked her to suggest them. She believes parents' feedback should be considered by the Committee.

The Committee was reminded that this was a First Read. Additional questions can be submitted to the Superintendent and he will send them to Peter. It is very important that the vote to approve the handbook be taken at the next meeting so the High School can finalize it.

8. **ABRSD Budget Update**

8.1. FY18 Quarter 3 Report – *David Verdolino*

The reports show a projected estimated budget surplus for FY18 of \$1,061,152. As the end of the year gets closer, suggestions for strategic uses for end of year funds may be brought to the next meeting, per the budget subcommittee. These would be for high priority items on the capital list.

8.2. Boxborough Town Meeting (*May 14*) – *Brigid Bieber*

8.2.1. Presentation Slides

Brigid reported that Town Meeting went well. She thanked all who helped and attended.

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

9.1. Building Committee meeting on 5/9/18 (*oral*)

9.2. Building Committee meeting minutes of 4/11/18

9.3. Owner's Project Manager Approval Letter from MSBA to ABRSD, 5/9/18

Mary Brolin reported that Skanska USA Building, Inc. was approved as the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) by the MSBA. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for Designer Services has been developed and is waiting for approval by the MSBA. The goal is to release this by May 22 with a due date by June 12. The next step will be meetings with the MSBA on July 10 and 24th to review the applications, do interviews and make the selection. The District will be represented by 3 members on the Design Selection Panel: the Superintendent or his designee, one rep selected by the Building Committee and one rep selected by the School Committee. Incoming Superintendent Peter Light will appoint Marie Altieri as a member. It was suggested that the School Committee vote to appoint JD Head as their rep at the meeting on June 7th. Mary stated that JD has been integral to this process and he has been outstanding.

10. **Subcommittee Reports**

10.1. **Budget** - meeting on 5/4/18 (*oral*)

Brigid Bieber reported that a discussion of year end and capital planning was held. They have to reformulate the subcommittee if any meetings are needed before June 30

because Brigid and Katie Neville will be off the Subcommittee after the election on May 22, making a quorum not possible.

10.2. **Policy**

10.2.1. First Aid, File: EBB – Second Read – **VOTE** - *Dawn Bentley*
Paul Murphy moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was unanimously **VOTED**: to approve the policy as proposed.

10.2.2. Security Camera Systems, File: EEAEB – First Read – *Marie Altieri*
The policy subcommittee suggested that this policy be broken down into a shorter policy with procedures. There was a discussion of whether to include “as authorized by the School Committee”. Given that being a school committee policy means that it is authorized by the committee, there was a sense not to include that phrase. The main reason for updating the policy was because wording regarding student records that originally seemed appropriate has been reviewed by counsel resulting in a proposed change to the period of time that the video records are kept. Additional questions and comments may be sent to the policy subcommittee.

11. **School Committee Member Reports** (*oral*)

12. **Consent Agenda – VOTE**

The Chairperson read the items in the agenda and no holds were requested.

12.1. **Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes** (4/26/18 & amended 4/12/18)

12.2. **High School Field Trip to Norway 2/15/19 – 2/24/19**

12.3. **Donations to our Schools** – *Bill McAlduff*

12.3.1. MA Academic Decathlon, Inc. donation of \$800 to the ABRHS Academic Decathlon Team

12.3.2. Kbyte.com donation of \$1,900 to the ABRHS Science Team for the National Championship

12.3.3. The Sheth Sangreal Foundation donation of \$15,000 to the ABRHS Academic Decathlon Team

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda.

13. **Open Meeting Law Determination Letter** (*received 5/11/18*)

Mr. McAlduff reviewed the determination letter just received citing a violation of the Open Meeting Law by the School Committee’s failure to approve the January 11, 2018 meeting minutes in a timely manner. He explained that the district would respond to prevent this from happening again.

Earlier in the week, the Superintendent spoke with the Assistant Attorney General who sent the letter. She clarified that while no school/snow days are not business days for the District, the Attorney General’s office does consider them business days. An extension may be requested from the state if this causes hardship. Mr. McAlduff also told the Assistant AG that the Committee would be approving minutes from several meetings held last summer at this meeting and they were very aware of their lateness. She appreciated that the District has identified remedial steps that will be put in place to ensure that minutes are approved in a timely manner going forward.

14. **Approval of Open Meeting Minutes for 8/24/17, 8/1/17, 7/11/17 and 6/30/17**

Acknowledging the delay in approving these meeting minutes, a member stated that it is the entire Committee’s responsibility to be sure minutes are done in a timely manner, not just the secretary’s. Mr. McAlduff described a monitoring sheet that will be used for next year’s

meetings. The Superintendent, Chairperson and Secretary will check this sheet every time they review a meeting agenda to be sure that minutes are not late.

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was,

VOTED: to approve the meeting minutes as written.

(**YES:** Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Minkin, Murphy, Neville, Zhang **ABSTAIN:** Kremer, Tso)

15. **FYI**

- 15.1. Memo regarding scheduling School Committee Summer Workshop
- 15.2. Reports from Powers & Sullivan, CPS for year ended June 30, 2017
- 15.3. Schedule for the Last Day of School on Wednesday, June 27, 2018
- 15.4. May 1, 2018 Enrollment Report
- 15.5. MA Dept of Energy Resources Commendation Letter regarding Kate Crosby
- 15.6. US Dept of Ed Secretary DeVos Response to ABRSC Anti-Gun Violence Letter
- 15.7. Thank you to Anthony's Pizza for donation to the ABRHS Badminton Club
- 15.8. Save the Date: District Retirement Celebration on June 14th at 3:15 p.m.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:08 p.m., Amy Krishnamurthy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: To convene an executive session under M.G.L. Chapter 30A section 21(a) purpose 7, to comply with or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements - M.G.L. Chapter 30A, section 22(f) to consider approval and possible release of executive session minutes from previous meetings on 4/2/18, 3/12/18, 11/16/17, 10/3/17, 8/24/17, 8/1/17, 7/11/17, 6/22/17 and 6/13/17

(**YES:** Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Minkin, Murphy, Neville, Tso, Zhang)

The chair stated that the Committee would return to open meeting for the sole purpose of adjourning.

The ABRSC returned to open meeting and adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda, list of warrants, handout from parents during public participation regarding bus stops

Next School Committee Meetings: June 7 and June 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library