

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 15, 2018
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting
7:05 p.m. Annual Budget Hearing
7:30 p.m. (approx.) Open Business Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin (7:05 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Deanne O’Sullivan, Eileen Zhang

Members Absent: none

Others: Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino, Sally Dias from NESDEC

1. The ABRSC was called to order by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Chairman’s Introduction**
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Acton Election is March 27
 - Boxborough deadline to submit papers is April 3 for Election on May 22
3. **The FY19 BUDGET HEARING was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Amy Krishnamurthy.**

Please see material posted for 1/27/18 and 2/1/18 School Committee meetings at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>

1. **ABRSC FY19 Budget Presentation– Bill McAlduff and Dave Verdolino**
 1. FY19 Final Budget Presentation
 2. ABRSD Budget Summary and Line Item Detail
 - i. Budget Character Code - Summary and Detail
 - ii. Budget by Admin Responsibility – Summary and Detail
 3. Recommended Assessments and Table 6

Bill McAlduff presented the slides and invited the public to comment on the proposed budget. Priorities include: an expansion of resources available for capital needs, single tier busing at the elementary level, and the addition of 9.9 FTE positions being offset by a reduction of 3 FTE for a net total of 6.9 FTE of new personnel. The \$88,721,492 proposed FY19 budget is an increase of 3.06% from FY18. The change in assessment is an increase of 2.90%, translating to an increase of 3.90% for Acton taxpayers and a decrease of 2.09% for Boxborough.

John Petersen spoke from the audience stating that although he is fully supportive of this budget, he asked that the Committee consider the implications of it on Acton tax rates. He advocated reporting the assessment as a tax rate for Acton and for Boxborough in addition to current reporting. The tax rate computation would be performed by dividing the assessment by the property tax value (equalized valuation) and would not include the Minuteman assessment. He urged the committee to include school tax rates in the presentations to Acton and Boxborough annual town meetings.

A Boxborough fincom member asked what the 5% increase in salaries represented. For staff it reflects cost of living, staff steps, ERI, and COLA. All of this information is posted on the website. A reminder was also given for the Committee to be cautious going forward with a large building project coming up and the number of unknown expenses that could come up due to that. Mary Brolin stated that whenever costs are eligible for state

funds, the district will apply for them. There was some discussion about the need for a 5 year capital plan. The superintendent will be starting work on that with the budget subcommittee in the spring. This will be included in next year's budget binder.

At 7:45 p.m., Brigid Bieber moved to adjourn the FY19 Budget Hearing, Paul Murphy seconded and the Committee voted and approved the motion.

The ABRSC returned to their Business Meeting at 7:45 p.m.

4. Public Participation

A member of the public asked the Superintendent about the district's weapon policy. Mr. McAlduff explained that there is a policy and state statute that governs this topic. The policy can be found in the school handbooks. He knows there are concerns about a recent communication and internally they are looking at this carefully and will address it.

5. ABRSD FY19 Budget

5.1. Recommendation to Approve the FY19 ABRSD Budget and Assessments – VOTE – Bill McAlduff

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

VOTED: that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 be set at \$88,721,492, and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Regional Agreement and amendments thereto as follows:

Town of Acton \$59,981,960

Town of Boxborough \$11,351,353,

with the remainder to be accounted for by the following sources of funds:

Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid \$14,968,061

Anticipated Chapter 71, Section 16C Transportation Aid \$1,337,757

Anticipated Charter School Aid \$32,361

Anticipated Regional Bonus Aid \$25,000

Anticipated Federal Medicaid Reimbursement \$150,000

Anticipated Investment Earnings \$100,000

and a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$775,000.

Deanne O'Sullivan asked the Committee if they would be interested in drafting a joint letter in response to the recent gun violence at the school in Florida. As leaders in our district, Deanne felt they should start speaking up about this to our state elected officials and try to start some initiatives to make our own state safe. The Committee agreed that Deanne and Paul Murphy should draft a letter to be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Superintendent Search Update – Diane Baum

6.1. Announcement of Finalists

6.1.1. Recommendation to Accept the Finalists proposed by the Search Screening Committee – VOTE

Diane Baum thanked the 14 members of the Screening Committee and read her memo announcing Peter Light, Anthony Parker and Peter Sanchioni as finalists.

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the 3 finalists as recommended.

6.2. Draft Next Steps for Discussion

Sally Dias thanked the search committee and Diane Baum in particular. The Committee discussed the handout with possible steps, keeping in mind that the screening committee's work was now done and the School Committee was responsible for the remainder of the process.

Acton TV will tape the public interviews for those who cannot attend. They will not be broadcast until all 3 are done. Several committee members may be absent so Beth will look into remote participation with Amy Bisiewicz. Sally Dias will contact and schedule the finalists. The Committee discussed the merits of visiting finalists' districts. Brigid said that during the previous search, some people questioned how valuable it was. If done, the same people should do all of the visits for consistency. A visit can show how a candidate organizes his time and it is another chance to get to know him in a different setting. Mary Brolin offered to coordinate the visits. Paul and Eileen will join her. When finalists come to AB, members who are available can have an informal dinner with them prior to the community forums.

Sally said that candidates have been given a list of people to be called for a reference and they can add to it. She will give the lists to the School Committee members who will do the calls. Up to 3 people maximum should call to be consistent, then compare notes. Dennis Bruce, Brigid Bieber and Deanne O'Sullivan volunteered. Sally will send suggested questions. She advised that the same questions should be asked of everyone and they should call the same type of people for each candidate. The questions used for the interim search could also be used. Mary Brolin said that they did conference calls together and took turns writing them up. What is shared back with the Committee is high level only. The calls are confidential. NESDEC will check on the last degree only to be sure that it is valid. Anything else is up to the district. The Committee agreed that no further checks would be done, unless there was a reason to do so.

The Committee discussed how to do the interviews. Sally suggested topics to avoid such as age, marital status, children, religion, and plans to move. Members will send Amy their themes or interests regarding interview questions by Feb 23. They agreed not to have any discussion after each interview but to wait for the final meeting.

Amy asked that when it is time to discuss and eventually appoint the new superintendent, a motion not be made until every member has a chance to speak first. A motion was made very early in the discussion during the last process. The Committee agreed to let everyone speak before making a motion. They do not have to state a preference. The information resulting from the reference calls, visits and community feedback will be shared prior to the meeting to appoint. Mary and Tessa will compile the feedback forms.

John Petersen spoke from the audience saying that when there are more than 2 choices, a ranked choice voting system, not just a motion for one candidate, can be more transparent for the public.

Sally emphasized that the only liaison to the press would be the School Committee Chairperson. The contract discussion would be held in executive session. All School Committee members will get all of the information from each of the 3 finalists using a password from NESDEC, just like the screening committee did.

7. Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes

Amy Krishnamurthy read the warrant listing. Committee members signed the documents.

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously
VOTED: to approve the minutes of the meetings on 1/27/18 and 2/1/18.

The ABRSC was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants, NESDEC folder

NEXT MEETINGS:

- March 1 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library