

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

June 21, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo, Mary Brolin, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (7:05 p.m.), Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin (7:22 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Amy Krishnamurthy
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Diane Baum.
2. **Chairperson's Introduction**
 - 2.1. Elementary Student String Ensemble Performance
Mark Hickey presented a group of about 20 elementary school musicians and their teacher Katherine Green, who treated the Committee to several songs. This was done in appreciation to the Committee for their ongoing support of this program that began 3 years ago. Mark was also thanked for his 25 years of dedication to the district and students as he retires at the end of the month.
 - 2.2. Interim Superintendent Bill McAlduff was thanked by the Committee for his experienced and wise leadership this past year.
3. **Staffing Update – Marie Altieri**

Congratulations were extended to the district's 27 retirees, the largest number ever. A party was held last week for all. Marie reviewed the turnover in administration. They have been very busy hiring 35 – 40 new teachers for next year. An in depth staffing report will be provided for the August 23rd School Committee meeting.
4. **Public Participation**

Steve Ballard spoke from the audience and welcomed the new chairperson and incoming superintendent. He asked that they keep in mind the separation of power between the School Committee, principals, administrators and the two Towns' officials as they put together the subcommittees and assignments for the new year.

High School student Michael Cheng, a new representative to the School Committee, thought that the School Committee did a good job given the circumstances. He advocated for a stronger voice for the students in Committee discussions, and asked how progress on Challenge Success would be measured.

Another student representative to the School Committee, Arnav Mehra, introduced himself and said that the third representative will be Betty Markman. Arnav wanted to comment on the 2018-2019 School Improvement Plans but due to time, he chose to address midyear reform and the midyear assignment calendar. He stated that many students during finals week do not get enough sleep, have too much caffeine and are under much stress. He advocated for increasing the study days from 3 to 4 so teachers can review more and it would be a buffer for students. The Chair thanked the students for their input.
5. **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update – Amanda Bailey**

Membership recently voted to change their name to SEPAC (from SpEdPAC). Amanda reviewed some of the 2017-2018 goals including their work toward access and inclusion,

more efficient and effective communication, and parent support/education. A followup survey will be done in 2018-2019. The SEPAC newsletters reach 1300 families. New Co-Chair Carrie Weaver will be working with Amanda this year.

6. **New Superintendent's Entry Plan** – *Peter Light*

Mr. Light presented a broad overview of his entry plan for the ABRSD. The final version will be brought to School Committee at their August meeting. Periodic updates will be given from September - January with a report of entry findings in January 2019. The New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP) will assist him with his plan. He has enjoyed meeting with many staff members and attending several wonderful events already. Bill McAlduff told the School Committee that completion of this entry plan is some of the most important work that they will do with their new Superintendent.

7. **Preliminary 5 Year Capital Plan DRAFT** – *Bill McAlduff*

Bill McAlduff was excited to present this report because it outlines how the district will move forward with their 5 Year Capital Plan. Creating this Plan was a goal for the 2017-2018 school year. The Report consisted of a summary of coded projects and costs for each year of the plan, as well as a second document providing details and a description of each project. This work began with the Dore & Whittier Phase I Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in April 2017 that resulted in a \$14.1 million priority list of capital projects.

Bill emphasized that this is a draft, first look at the plan. The vision is that the internal working group of JD Head, Peter Light, Dave Verdolino and Marie Altieri, plus one elementary principal and a secondary principal, will be the primary group. They will reach out to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) after reviewing this plan to determine what priorities may need to be changed over the 5 years. They will also see if the bundling of work projects makes sense, as well as the construction sequencing. This will be done during the first part of the summer. Revisions will be shared with the School Committee's Budget/Capital subcommittee. At that point, it would go to the Acton and Boxborough Finance Committees for feedback, and then back to the Budget/Capital subcommittee for further feedback and final changes. At that point, the Budget/ Capital subcommittee would bring their recommendation to the School Committee for final approval. The focus should be on the FY20 year because the capital part of the budget will go through this process annually and will be the next year's capital list approved by the School Committee in the beginning of October and then the School Committee and staff will work on the remaining part of the budget after that capital part is decided on. At that point, they the move on to the FY21 year, etc. to see if priorities have changed. This will involve a lot of processing, discussion, revising, and then adding a fifth year. When the preferred solution for the building project is decided, that will have a large influence on the reviewing of the plan. This process will continue on a yearly basis.

Members thanked Bill and staff for the detailed proposed plan. Initially the cost figure was \$120 million and now it has been reduced to \$14 million. Bill explained that over the past 2 years the staff worked with Dore & Whittier fine-tuning the projects and better understanding them. They created a different classification system. Staff also realized that some of the identified projects could be done in-house and that would save money. There were some pricing concerns that some estimates were too high. Some work was already scheduled and budgeted for, so all of those situations brought the total down from the original \$120 million. Bill suggested that newer Committee members who have detailed questions might want to meet with JD Head for further clarification.

A member suggested that projects that have phasing steps be marked as such. Another member was very appreciative of the report stating that the Committee has asked for

something like this for years. Regarding the accuracy of the numbers, Bill explained that Dore & Whittier was very conservative in their estimates. General costs were based on current times so inflation has to be factored in. Forty five percent of the projects were “soft costs” that were added in. Each year that the Plan goes out, estimates will be reviewed and revised. It was noted that JD Head is also planning to take advantage of the state’s Accelerated Repair Program for some of the work.

8. **FY18 Year End Financial Status Update – Bill McAlduff**

At the last meeting, Dave Verdolino predicted a \$1 million end of year surplus, but after reviewing all the numbers, the figure is now \$1.7 million. Because of a very favorable bid for paving, the district encumbered the \$125,000 in the CIP and the Blanchard paving money as the company can begin by the end of June. Funds for a couple of other pieces of equipment have also been encumbered. Bill McAlduff asked for the Committee’s consensus for the additional paving using FY18 funds of \$50,000. He requested another \$50,450 for the Central Office relocation, mostly related to technology cabling and equipment for the final security plan for the Administration building. These proposed uses would leave approximately \$1.3 million that would go to E&D bringing that balance to \$3.8 million. This percentage would now be 4.2%, close to the maximum of 5%, and would replenish the \$575,000 used for FY18 for the tier 1 bussing and feasibility study.

There was consensus from the Committee that the Administration should proceed with these plans. A member noted that this helps the 2018-2019 budget if unexpected issues come up and it also accelerates our capital work.

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

9.1. Draft Minutes of meeting on 5/9/18

9.2. Recommendation to Approve Revisions to School Building Committee Membership including Change in Superintendent – **VOTE**

Mary Brolin reviewed the proposed changes to the Building Committee.

Angie Tso moved, Tessa McKinley seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revisions to the School Building Committee membership

Diane Baum reported that Pam Nourse has been reappointed to another 3 year term on the Minuteman Tech School Committee. Tours are being offered of their new building project. Diane suggested that the Building Committee might contact Ford Spaulding if interested.

10. **FY19 School Improvement Plans – Bill McAlduff**

10.1. Memo Regarding Superintendent’s Approval of Improvement Plans

10.2. School Improvement Plans from the 8 Schools

10.3. FYI: School Councils Policy File: BDFA

10.3.1. Procedures: School Improvement Plan, File: BDFA-R-1

10.3.2. Submission and Approval of the School Improvement Plan, File: BDFA-R-2

10.3.3. Conduct of School Council Business, File: BDFA-R-3

Bill McAlduff is reviewing the plans and will send the School Committee a memo regarding the approval process next week. Plans must be approved by July 1. Although a couple of members wanted to discuss the School Improvement Plans, the Superintendent declined and asked for comments to be sent to him by the end of the weekend. He provided copies of the policy and procedures because he is going to recommend to Peter Light a different process for developing the School Improvement Plans. For example, Bill thought it may be helpful for the Superintendent to discuss with the Senior Leadership Team (principals) what the statutory process for developing the plans is and the school council’s role in it including best

practices. The Plans should be unique to each school but there should be overlap with the district goals.

Bill recommended that the policy subcommittee review the policy and procedures this fall, in time for the next year's process. In the last year and a half, the statutory language has changed, and this was the third change since the statute was created in 1993. At that time, the School Committee was given authority to approve the plans, then it was changed to the superintendent, which is what our current policy says. In 2016, the language was changed again, still giving approval authority to the superintendent, but after consultation with the School Committee.

11. School Committee Workshop Update – Diane Baum

11.1. Monday, July 16th at 5:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library with MASC Field Director Dorothy Presser

12. Subcommittee Reports

12.1. Policy Subcommittee FY18 Report – *Maya Minkin*

The Committee was referred to the annual report in the packet.

12.2. Mary Brolin reported on the Health Insurance Trust meeting held that morning. She has replaced Bob Evans, who retired, as the new Chair. They have had great success in enrolling members in the new HSA plan. The school side had 109 families and 33 individuals. The Town of Acton side had 40 families and 11 individuals. Premium savings will be \$388,000 for this year as a result. This was much more than expected for the first year. Marie Altieri was thanked for heading up this successful outreach effort.

12.3. 2018 – 2019 Subcommittee Assignments

12.3.1. Memo from Chair Regarding Process

12.3.2. List of 2017-2018 Subcommittee Assignments

Diane Baum asked members to review this information carefully. She will be assigning roles at the workshop and the Committee will vote them at their meeting in August. Contact Diane if anyone has questions. Members should email Diane with their interests by July 2 with a cc to Beth.

13. School Committee Member Reports

13.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG)

13.1.1. Representatives for Meeting on June 28 at 7:30 AM in Acton Town Hall

13.1.2. FYI: ALG Charter and Ground Rules

Diane Baum explained that for the meeting on June 28th, typically the chair and Acton vice chair are members, so Diane and Paul Murphy will attend the meetings.

14. Consent Agenda – VOTE

14.1. **Statement of Warrants and Approval of Minutes of 6/7/18**

Diane Baum read the warrants for the record.

The minutes of the meeting on 6/7/18 were held from the Consent Agenda.

14.2. **Donations to our Schools**

14.2.1. Open Door Theater gift of replacing and upgrading lighting equipment in the Jr High Auditorium, valued at \$13,000.

14.2.2. AB Regional PTSO gift of \$1,025. to support ongoing student wellness activities at R.J. Grey Jr High

14.2.3. AB Regional PTSO gift of \$500. to help defray costs of the 9th Grade dance

14.2.4. Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation grant of \$1,000. to enhance summer and schoolyear enrichment programming during Extended Hours at Community Education

14.2.5. AB Softball Boosters gift of \$1500. to help fund an assistant coach at the High School

Paul Murphy moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda donations with gratitude to all of the donors.

The draft minutes of the meeting on 6/7/18 were reviewed including several amendments of additional comments that were offered.

Mary Brolin moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the minutes as amended.

15. **FYI**

- 15.1. Challenge Success Newsletter:
<http://abschoolswellness.weebly.com/challenge-success.html>
- 15.2. Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Update Memo
- 15.3. AB Cares Coalition Resource Cards
- 15.4. This Month in the Division of Open Government:
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-meeting-law-educational-materials>
- 15.5. June 1, 2018 Student Enrollment
- 15.6. Schedule for the Last Day of School on Wednesday, June 27, 2018
- 15.7. Schedule for the 2018 – 2019 School Year
- 15.8. Fall 2018 Schools Open House Schedule
- 15.9. FY19 School Committee Members and Officers
- 15.10. ***Best Wishes and Thank You to Additional Retirees***: Acton Town Manager Steve Ledoux, Boxborough Town Administrator Selina Shaw, Acton Library Director Marcia Rich and Boxborough Library Director Maureen Strapko. Welcome to their new counterparts: John Mangiaratti, Ryan Ferrara, Danielle Savin and Peishan Bartley!

16. **Year End Slide Show**

Marie Altieri shared a wonderful presentation of the school year's highlights.

As the meeting was concluding, Eileen Zhang expressed frustration that members did not have time to express their opinions on the School Improvement Plans at the meeting, although she understands that comments may be sent to the Superintendent. She also really wants the students to be heard from this year.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: list of warrants, see agenda