

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

Auditorium  
Administration Building  
15 Charter Road, Acton

February 13, 2020  
7:00 p.m.

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Members Present: Diane Baum, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Tessa McKinley, Paul Murphy, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso  
Members Absent: Michael Bo, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin  
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

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1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

2. **OPEN MEETING**

Acton TV was thanked for taping the meeting and providing it on their website.

2.1. Chairman's Welcome

Annual Spring Town Elections

- Acton's deadline to submit papers was February 11 for the Election on March 31. Three candidates are running for three seats: Amy Krishnamurthy, Yebin Wang and Kira Wilson Cook.
- Boxborough deadline to submit papers is March 31 for Election on May 19

2.2. Public Participation - none

2.3. High School Student Representatives Update – none

2.4. Superintendent's Update

Mr. Light congratulated the Conant and Gates Schools for being recognized for their recent MCAS results. ABRHS teacher Mike Romano was also congratulated on being named a state finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The next Community Coffee is March 10 at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

3.1. **Negotiations Update** – *John Petersen and Marie Altieri*

3.1.1. Recommendation to Approve the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA)

Contract – **VOTE**

3.1.2 Contract Summary

3.1.3 Proposed Memorandum of Agreement

3.1.4 Comparable Data

John Petersen presented the slides and reviewed the summary of changes to the Agreement of Understanding that was agreed to by the Negotiations Subcommittee and the ABEA Negotiations Committee on January 27, 2020. The process began in October and although a lot of work, it was described as very collaborative. Changes included: Course Reimbursement and Credits, Sick and Personal Days, Salary Schedule (simplified Supermax), Cost of Living increases (FY21 = 1.5%, FY22 = 2.5%, FY23 = 2.5%), Anti-Bias and Universal Design Professional Learning, minor change to school calendar when school starts before Labor Day, and a list of smaller items.

Marie Altieri explained how the total COLA cost for 3 years was 6.5% (+ 0.7% from the FY20 split year). There was general agreement that split year COLAs are a poor contract structure because they make comparisons between contracts difficult and like end of year COLAs in year three, they create an obligation for the succeeding contract not funded in the negotiated contract. Members discussed what the cost of living (COLA) numbers mean. COLA increases are no longer tied to inflation as they were to some degree years ago when inflation was high (10-12%). Members liked the comparison graph. The tax levy impact and sustainability was of concern as they have been in previous meetings.

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

**VOTED:** To approve the proposed Acton Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) Contract for the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023, as set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement between the bargaining committees for the ABEA and the School Committee.

The Negotiations subcommittee, consisting of Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Paul Murphy, John Petersen and Administrators Marie Altieri and Andrew Shen, were thanked for their efforts. Marie was especially thanked for gathering all of the data during the negotiations process.

### 3.2. **Finance Update** – *Dave Verdolino*

3.2.1. FY20 2nd Quarter Report

3.2.2. FY21 State Aid Update

3.2.3. EDCO Update

Dave Verdolino reported that based on his Q2 report, the FY20 projected variance at yearend

would be:	Revenues	\$387K	(0.4%)
	Expenditures	\$(631)K	(-0.7%)
	Net Variance	\$(244)K	

He noted that these numbers, as usual, are conservative at this time of year and he expects more favorable results as the numbers get more solid. He believes that salaries and utilities should improve by end of the year. At this point, this is a significant difference from last year's 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter. Dave explained how the finance department has been doing a very thorough review of the departments and consolidated character codes and made some reclassifications that may be adding to this difference. More analysis will be done on the numbers and the Committee will be kept informed.

The Committee took their final vote on the FY21 budget on 2/6/2020 subject to reconsideration after the new school bond is issued (late February) to adjust the estimated first year debt service to the actual amounts.

Mr. Light wanted to voice concern about EDCO's finances. They ended FY19 with a gap of over \$1M. due to an amount that had not been anticipated. There were formula errors that then lead to a gap for FY20 so they are shrinking programs and working to address this deficit. See article 27. We have not heard about any financial impact to the school districts but it will be a priority to be sure EDCO is fiscally sound in the future.

## 4. **ONGOING BUSINESS** (8:15)

4.1. **Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 2/6/20** (*next meeting*)

4.2. **Director of Special Education Search Update** – *Marie Altieri*

4.2.1. Search Committee Members and Timeline

Marie Altieri reported that the first meeting was held today. They hope to have an appointment by mid to late March. She was very happy with the response for Search Committee volunteers.

With 22 applicants so far, a member hoped to see a good amount of diversity in the candidate pool. The deadline to apply was extended to increase this number. This type of position is hard to fill for most districts. In response to a question, Mr. Light said that if it seems like a very strong candidate may not be found, the District always reserves the right to decide to change course.

#### 4.3. Subcommittee and Member Reports

4.3.1. School Building Committee Update –*Peter Light and Marie Altieri*

4.3.2. FYI: Review of Exterior Design Concept slides, 1/30/20

4.3.3. Recommendation to Authorize the District to Enter into and be Bound by the Project Scope and Budget Agreement (PSBA) – **VOTE** – *Peter Light*

JD Head did an impressive presentation at last night's Building Committee meeting regarding how much the District will save with the solar panels - \$4M. Slides will be on line soon showing the color pallets using tree imagery. Douglas on the top floor will be blue sky. Gates and the bottom floor will be green tree and brown earth tones. People love the colors. Marie has been running 2-hour programming meetings with faculty that have been very exciting as the building is starting to come to life! The website is currently the best way for the community to stay updated on the project's progress. Once construction starts, Consigli will provide updates. Lynn Newman is keeping the Gates community informed. Abutters are also being kept in the loop for feedback. Regarding a question about insurance, Mr. Light said that Consigli picks up most of that cost and Dave Verdolino has reached out to MIAA to confirm any gaps.

Adam Klein moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to authorize the District to enter into and be bound by the Project Scope and Budget Agreement (PSBA)

#### 4.4. Budget – *Diane Baum*

At the meeting on 2/11/20 Dave Verdolino reviewed what was shared earlier in the meeting.

#### 5. Statement of Warrants

Tessa McKinley read the warrants into the record and members signed the documents.

#### 6. FYI

Mr. Light referred to the Lower Fields memo in the packet. The original Lower Fields committee is being contacted about possibly adding a couple of people to this new group for proper representation. If that happens, the memo may be revised for the next meeting.

Diane Baum requested that the School Committee appointed committee liaisons update the School Committee at their meetings on a more regular basis as a way to keep all better informed.

Angie Tso and Nora Shine reported on the EDCO Roundtable meeting that they recently attended. Topics included: changes in funding, new members understanding their roles in the communities, the Corona virus and the structure of the meetings. They are open to all School Committee members and can cover any topic.

Adam Klein moved, Nora Shine seconded and the ABRSC adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda with list