

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
School Building Committee (SBC) Approved Minutes**

Superintendent's Conference Room, Administration Building  
15 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720

September 13, 2017  
7:00 p.m.

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*Members Present:* Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Bill McAlduff, Marie Altieri, Peter Berry, Jason Cole, Bob Evans, JD Head, Adam Klein, Lynne Newman, Katie Raymond, Mac Reid, Chris Whitbeck.

*Members Absent:* Rob Bukowski, Brian Griffin, Ted Kail, Steve Mielke, Maria Neyland, Damian Sugrue.

*Other:* Dave Verdolino, Karen Coll, members of the public.

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1. **Call to Order** – Mary Brolin called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. She introduced Interim Superintendent Bill McAlduff, followed by introductions of all.
2. **Minutes** - Marie Altieri moved, Bill McAlduff second, two abstained, and the minutes of the 8/9/17 Building Committee meeting were unanimously approved with one amendment.

Approved minutes from the 8/4/17 Working Group meeting were shared with the committee.

### 3. **Recommended Option**

The building project focus has narrowed from two options to one since the last Building Committee meeting. We are now only considering a twin school with two elementary schools and no separate ECC. This should make the plans clearer to the public, and will also avoid concerns about reducing the number of elementary schools from six to five.

### 4. **Update of School Committee Actions**

Members reviewed a memo and presentation to the School Committee on 8/24/17, with a good synopsis of the building project and the current option under consideration. The School Committee is supportive of this option, despite some regrets at the loss of an ECC.

### 5. **MSBA Update**

Nothing has changed in the MSBA process since the last update. EPQ and enrollment data were submitted 7/3/17, and Marie Altieri was told two weeks ago that they had our information and were working on it. Maintenance history and capital data must be sent to MSBA by 10/3/17, and they should get back to us to arrange a meeting with them by that date. District enrollment numbers are higher than projected; we had projected 298 incoming kindergartners and now have 352. Housing sales in both towns have been growing at a rate of about 30% per year. We will have an opportunity to discuss that with MSBA when we meet, and will bring updated enrollment data through either 9/15 or 10/1, depending on the date of the meeting.

### 6. **Schedule and Prepare for Special Town Meetings 12/4/17**

There are 12 articles on the warrant in Acton at this point, but the committee was told the building project would be first. Votes in both towns need to be concurrent because, if one town votes no before the other town votes, that would negate the second town's vote.

Information about the intent and scope of proposed warrant articles must be submitted to the Boxborough Town Administrator by 9/27/17, with final language due by 10/18 /17. Acton's deadlines are later, with drafts due by 11/6/17 and final language due by 11/13/17. Mary Brolin will ask Selina Shaw to put a placeholder into the warrant for the building project. Someone will need to write the project description that will accompany the warrants.

Final language for the warrant articles will need to be voted by the School Committee at their 10/3/17 meeting. This is an MSBA requirement; they will provide a form and language for the vote, which they must review to be sure it meets their requirements. Dave Verdolino has started working on the language, which is fairly standard, and will have lawyer review it. The regional School Committee counsel could review the language, but will need to know that it has to follow MSBA requirements.

## **7. Outreach Plan**

Mary Brolin has drafted an outreach plan, and Marie Altieri and Karen Coll developed a list of potential forum dates. The first forum will be 10/17/17, which is a little later than we might have preferred but is after the last of the Back to School open houses. Members liked the idea of holding a meeting on 12/2/17, just before the town meetings, especially with a tour of Douglas School.

A video tour of Douglas will be made, but it will not replace live tours. Seeing the building, with its limitations, in person can be quite powerful. The video will be posted on our website, and clips can be pulled from it for presentations.

Members discussed whether all or most of the forums should be held at Douglas and include a tour of the building, but decided that they should be held at a variety of locations, including in Boxborough. A forum at Conant will be added to the list. The date for the staff forum will also be confirmed, and perhaps two sessions will be held back to back to reach staff whose days end early, such as the HS, and those with later end times. Many staff members are town residents, and they also interact with families who may have questions about the building project. The limits on advocacy by staff and School Committee members need to be made clear; once the project moves into the ballot question phase, we will be prohibited from using district resources such as copiers and email for anything other than providing information, such as notification of upcoming meetings. Advocacy activities will have to take place away from school property and without using district resources.

Members will email their availability to help at the forums.

In addition to the community forums, committee members will plan a series of coffees, hopefully in every neighborhood, in late October and early November. Coffees are generally not publicly advertised; typically people invite their friends and neighbors and ask them to invite others. We can use neighborhood email lists to promote them. Other options for holding public events could be:

- True West in West Acton
- A table at the West Acton Oktoberfest on October 14<sup>th</sup>
- Organizations like the Lions and Rotary Clubs and others.
- Preschools such as ITC and the Acton Coop. Some preschools may see our program as a source of competition, so we need to emphasize that we are not planning to expand our preschool, just moving it to a new location.

Several members offered to host coffees or to contact clubs and organizations. Chris Whitbeck will contact the West Acton Village Merchants Association, which is organizing the Oktoberfest. Jason Cole will contact the Acton Coop. Karen will share a Google sign-up sheet.

A small working group should be formed to clarify the information to be presented at these events, and to develop presentation materials.

Prior to her resignation, former committee chair Kristina Rychlik had set up several social media accounts, including Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The younger families who will be most directly affected by the building project are likely to be active on social media, and the committee may be able to reach them effectively through those venues. The building project also has an extensive section on the district website, but that is fairly static so people don't keep going back to it regularly, and it has so much information that it can be overwhelming. Social media is a way to give a snippet, and then refer people to the website to learn more. JD Head, Chris Whitbeck and others already share a fair amount on social media. Members agreed not to open these outlets up to comments, which someone would have to monitor, but rather to use them just for informational purposes.

Adam Klein will work on developing the social media, with help from others who will provide him with information and messages. Other people will also have to reshare tweets, etc. Adam will report on his progress at the next meeting.

Members reviewed a flyer developed by JD, and made some suggestions about the wording. Once the dates of the public forums are finalized, those will be added, and eventually our social media will be added as well.

Members discussed the dollar amount to be included in the Town Meeting warrant articles. The amount needs to be affordable, but also enough for a thorough feasibility study to avoid the risk of unanticipated problems during the building process. The district would pay 100% of any remediation expenses. If there are funds left over from the feasibility/OPM phase, the excess can be applied to the building phase. While many other districts have requested \$750K - \$1MM to cover the feasibility process, it isn't clear what was included in those projects, and we have identified anticipated expenses in the \$1.3MM - \$1.5Mm range.

Jason Cole moved, JD Head seconded and it was unanimously

**VOTED:** that the school committee allocate \$1.3MM from E&D for the feasibility study, with the expected replenishment from the MSBA.

## **Public Comments**

A member of the public, after reviewing the results of the survey done last spring, asked about the possibility of conducting a follow-up survey now. She wondered whether it would be easier to promote a three-stage project spread out over 21 years than the current two-phase plan. Committee members responded that it was unclear whether the MSBA would offer reimbursement for projects other than the one that has already been approved to cover the Douglas School, and the current approach was felt to be the most equitable way to help the most students in the shortest period of time. Twenty-one years is a very long time to wait.

The community member followed up by asking if the principals would prefer single schools to a twin building. The principals present responded that they were very comfortable with the current option, and that they were excited to move forward. When the public was surveyed about their preferences in the spring, there was very little feedback about the concept of a twin school.

Another member of the public asked if the district had researched the rules and regulations from MSBA, the Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, FEMA and other agencies governing construction. He mentioned concerns about flooding and other issues. He had reviewed the D&W preliminary report on the school sites

and noted that the assessment focused primarily on building conditions not site conditions. Katie Raymond is a site civil engineer and agreed there are a number of potential issues on all sites. Superintendent Bill McAlduff noted that the purpose of the feasibility process is to study these issues in much more detail than the building committee has been able to do to this point, and to determine whether the site is workable. Bill said that Acton-Boxborough is actually way ahead of a lot of districts going into the feasibility process. Decisions will be made on an ongoing basis as issues are identified. MSBA is very rigid in working with districts. The proposed budget includes enough funding to evaluate a fallback option if necessary.

## **8. Adjourn**

Mac Reid moved, Jason Cole seconded, and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 8:26pm.

### Documents Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 8/9/17 Meeting
- 8/24/17 Memo and Presentation to the School Committee: Building Committee Update
- Special Town Meeting Timeline - Boxborough
- Draft Outreach Plan
- List of Potential Forum Dates
- Draft Flyer: Save the Date for Special Town Meetings

### Next Building Committee Meetings:

- October 11
- November 8
- December 13