ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Minutes (approved 11/4/10)

Library R.J. Grey Junior High October 7, 2010 7:30 pm Joint SC Meeting AB Regional Meeting to follow Joint Executive Session to follow

Members present: Brigid Bieber, Mike Coppolino, Herman Kabakoff, Sharon Smith McManus,

Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Xuan Kong, Terry Lindgren, Bruce Sabot

Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The Joint School Committee was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Brigid Bieber and John Petersen, respective chairs.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Brigid welcomed the new ABRHS School Committee representatives: Rosa Huang, Nikhil Manocha, Abha Patil, Allison Wang and Betty Yang.

John Petersen called the Acton Public School Committee meeting to order.

JOINT MEETING

APPROVAL OF JOINT and ABRSC MINUTES

The Joint and Regional minutes of September 2, 2010 were approved as written. Xuan Kong abstained because he did not attend the meeting on 9/2/10. The Joint and Regional minutes of September 15, 2010 were unanimously approved as written.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lauren Rozensweig Morton spoke from the audience about the Cauoette Simone farm vote coming up at Acton's Special Town Meeting on October 12. Last April Acton Town Meeting approved Community Preservation funds and more are needed to complete the transaction. More information can be found at www.acton-ma.gov

Maria Neyland publicized the AB Field Hockey team's "Play for the Cure" game on Oct 22 at 5:30 JV and 7:30 Varsity.

EDUCATION REPORT: MCAS Testing

Dr. Mills asked, "How do we measure, in a fair way, how effective a school is and how a student is doing?" MCAS is a small piece of this answer. Deborah Bookis began the presentation with the Leadership theme, "It's all about instruction." MCAS is used as a check in to see how students are doing. It is recognized that the MCAS do not measure some of the skills that our children will need for the 21st century. New assessments are being created. The focus at AB has been to teach all of the standards and try to measure using several different methods. One of the important things about the new growth model is that it should be used with

performance data, not alone. She gave an example of a girl who missed one question and it dropped her score significantly due to the SGP (Student Growth Pr. It is essential to understand the tools that are being used. A district wide literacy plan is being created to address this systemic weakness, as well as a systemic response to some of the math areas.

Liza Huber shared Pupil Services' Preliminary Action Plan for students with special needs. It was acknowledged that a math problem exists for some of our special education students. Liza thanked the SpedPAC for the ideas that they contributed to the action plan. RJGJHS is in corrective action status for math so she focused on that analysis. Other top communities are also experiencing difficulties with math issues. Typically, 5 students do not pass the 10th grade MCAS. They are given much assistance to pass on another try. Behavior plans have been created to help some of these students be more motivated to be successful with MCAS. Geometry is a key issue. A certified math teacher has been added to work with the special education class at the High School. Steps taken last year were very effective. Upcoming ones will make a tremendous difference.

Nancy Sherburne spoke for the Sped PAC. She referred to their letter in the packet saying that everyone is in agreement that our districts perform at a very high level, but the conversation should be focused on the subgroup that is not performing as well. Other communities post growth scores that are much higher than AB's, which are below average. Our student's scores are declining in 6th-8th grade. Lexington and Westford scores are better than ours.

Bill Guthlein asked who is accountable for students' improvement. He thinks the SGP should be used more deeply to help us understand what is happening, including for teacher evaluations. Teachers are the single biggest factor for students' education. SGP should be incorporated into the decision-making.

Nancy Sherburn noted that the district action plan only seems to address ELA at Merriam. She asked if ELA issues at McCarthy-Towne and RJGJHS would also be addressed in the action plan.

Mike Coppolino asked if when percentages were listed followed by substantially higher district percentages, were they aggregate? Liza said they were. Mike asked the Administration to be careful about comparing unlike data. He also recommended Education Development Center in Newton's (www.EDC.org) special education and math expertise.

NEW BUSINESS

1. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Related to Student Academic Outcomes and Time-bound) Goals, 2010-11

Dr. Mills described the district goals as an ongoing document. His staff has tried to quantify the goals and make them measurable so they can show progress and accountability throughout the year. A new goal will be added to chart a course and spend IDEA money on a targeted intervention for special education students at the junior high. Xuan Kong asked if the first goal related to professional development could be accomplished sooner than June 2011 so that the FY2012 budget can be adjusted to support the implementation of the proposed action plans. **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee:**

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: to accept the SMART Goals for 2010-2011 as amended.

Acton Public School Committee:

It was moved, seconded and

<u>VOTED</u>: to accept the SMART Goals for 2010-2011 as amended.

Both votes were unanimous by members at the table. Terry Lindgren was out of the room at the time of the votes.

VOTE TO SUSPEND APS MEETING

AB MEETING RESUMES:

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant # 11-006 dated 9/9/10 in the amount of \$1,481,483.75, # 11-006A dated 9/16/1010 in the amount of \$383,574.51, # 11-007 dated 9/23/10 in the amount of \$2,094,721.03 and #11-008 dated 10/7/10 in the amount of \$1,508,528.73 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. ALG Report/Acton FinCom Report

Xuan Kong reported that the FinCom had met twice and talked about the waterfall proposal. There are diverse opinions on it, particularly regarding the new education funding and whether it should be split. A vote has not been taken on this. Some School members felt they should discuss and have a statement on the waterfall. Bruce Sabot stated that this is the Acton waterfall model and if it adversely affects the schools, Boxborough members will be adamantly against it. Brigid Bieber said that the waterfall was discussed at the 2/25/10 regional meeting, but it was not voted on. She stressed the importance of talking to both Acton and Boxborough FinComs about this. Brigid stated that the Regional School Committee did not accept the waterfall model. Terry Lindgren and Sharon McManus want to better understand what the waterfall means. She asked for Table 6 data to see what the numbers would look like for both Acton and Boxborough. Brigid asked the School Committee reps (John, Xuan, Steve and Don) to take this message back to the ALG. The ALG meeting of 9/16/10 focused on understanding Acton's reserves. There are significant reserves and a push for tax relief from some citizens. Bill Mullin considers the EdJobs money appropriate for the waterfall model, but John, Xuan, Steve and Don disagree at this time. A new ALG spreadsheet is being created.

2. BLF Report

Maria Neyland reported that the BLF meet a few days ago. They certified their cash, and discussed a 10 year capital plan. Gary Kushner was in attendance.

3. Health Insurance Trust Report

John Petersen reported that he called in to the 9/23/10 meeting and did not know it was a violation of the new Open Meeting Law because the public was not able to call in. He was unable to attend in person due to illness in his family. Cash flow continues to be favorable. After an extended discussion of the coverage of young adults and the gap due to timing of when it would take effect, it was decided to

proceed as planned due to the significant cost of making changes. Marie Altieri sent out additional information to school staff and John Murray did so for the town.

4. FY'11 Budget Update

Dr. Mills spoke about his Recommendation for Use of Reserves and Table 6. He and Bill Mullin have been discussing scenarios if the sales tax is repealed and the governor invokes 9C cuts. Dr. Mills is being firm that no cuts be made to the school department budgets for teachers at the local and regional districts. Maria Neyland emphasized that Boxborough School Committee members cannot commit to the use of any amount of Boxborough reserves on their own. This requires a vote by Boxborough FinCom. Herman Kabakoff said that this is also true of the Acton School Committee members. Herman said the Committee should be talking about the allocation of revenues and what to do with money that at the time the model was being discussed, was unexpected. He feels a commitment was made regarding the allocation of revenues that come in higher than expected. He emphasized that town leaders are going to have to ask our communities for more money either in reserves or via an override in the near future. Terry Lindgren wants to stay focused on the quality of education, and not worry about lowering the tax rate. Sharon McManus asked where the \$150,000 deficit in local revenue in Acton fits in. A year ago, the region lowered their budget to help the town of Acton avoid a Special Town Meeting. She felt it was immature to consider discussing this now, when we will probably see 9 c cuts in January, and we may need E and D at that point. E and D does not regenerate as easily and quickly as free cash does. Spending it should not be done lightly.

Xuan Kong has two issues. He wants to acknowledge that the School Committees benefited from the waterfall model a year ago when we faced level 5 cuts and it helped us avoid layoffs of teachers. The EdJobs money has a 3 year window to spend and it is not Chapter 70 money. Xuan wants to acknowledge the waterfall model and balance what is given to us over the 3 year timeframe with what relief we can give the taxpayers. John Petersen appreciated that two important discussions were taking place, the mechanics of our finances and how we manage our reserves. The resources of Acton and Boxborough in total must be considered. Practical concerns include how hard we are willing to push against our tax base. The property tax base that we have supporting us places a great strain on the tax payers. We have to provide relief to them when we can. Due to the significant reserves we have right now, we have to consider giving back, even with the great need we see in the schools. Mike Coppolino has not formed an opinion yet and sees both sides. He wants to see what the FinCom says about it. Brigid Bieber agrees with Mike. The Committee has one month to consider the issues before these budget decisions need to be made.

5. FY'12 Budget

Dr. Mills emphasized that our schools' very high teacher to student ratio is a consistent concern. This is evident by walking through any of our schools. The FY'12 Budget Schedule was reviewed and the consensus was that a Saturday Budget Day event in early February would be valuable again.

6. Recommendation from Subcommittee re Naming of ABRHS Track

Steve Desy described the Subcommittee's process. Per School Committee policy, the Subcommittee consisted of 9 members of the community, including 3 from Boxborough and 2 students. Three proposals were received, including many letters of support for Dick Dow. The Subcommittee unanimously voted to name the track in Richard Dow's honor.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to name the ABRHS Track in honor of Richard Dow.

The dedication is expected to be held at the Oct 29th football game.

7. Bullying Policy update

Liza Huber reminded everyone that by Dec 31, all school districts must have a bullying prevention and intervention policy. The Task Force made recommendations last June for APS and AB and we have implemented them. The Policy Subcommittee will review this in the next two weeks and bring the proposal back to the next School Committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Recommendation to Modify the ABRHS Student Handbook

Steve Desy explained that the MIAA is self-policing so members must enforce their own rules. On a state level, it has become more strict, with tougher penalties. This modification makes our own handbook consistent with MIAA rules. This is the chemical health policy that changed after our handbook went to press. The rule stays the same, but the consequences are tougher.

Mike Farquhar spoke from the public. He asked that the policy be written more clearly and that it be made stricter. He urged the School Committee to address what he considers the serious drug/alcohol problem that we have at AB. Bruce Sabot agreed that we have a problem at our High School and parents have asked him about it. He asked Brigid to set aside some time to discuss this issue, but also pointed out that it is also a parent/family issue.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED</u>: To delete the "Violation During the Off-Season" section of the ABRHS Extracurricular Agreement for Athletics, found under the Chemical Health Policy of the ABRHS Student Handbook.

Xuan Kong requested that the other MIAA schools be asked if they have stronger Chemical Health policies than our own.

2. State Ballot Question 3 Discussion and Resolution

Herman Kabakoff questioned whether this was a School Committee issue. John Petersen said that if passed, members could share this statement with citizens if asked. He would also include it in a letter to the Beacon from the Chair. It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: to accept the following resolution: The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee opposes the state initiative petition question three which would reduce the Massachusetts Sales Tax from its current level of 6.25% to 3% effective January 1, 2011.

Herman Kabakoff was opposed. Bruce Sabot abstained.

3. Recommendation to Appoint ABRSD Treasurer

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED</u>: to appoint Tess Summers as the ABRSD Treasurer

This vote separates the offices of Finance Director and Treasurer from each other. Tess Summers is coming in 2-3 hours per week.

4. Revision to Nondiscrimination Policy (File: AC)

The Committee decided that this was the FIRST READING of this policy revision and that the vote would be taken at the SECOND READING to be held at the next Regional Meeting.

5. Recommendation to Approve Out-of-State ABRHS Day Field Trip to Museum of Modern Art in NYC

It was moved, seconded and

<u>VOTED</u>: to approve the Out-of-State ABRHS Day Field Trip to Museum of Modern Art in NYC on 10/22/10

The vote was unanimous by members at the table. Terry Lindgren was out of the room at the time of the vote.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 11.1 Recommendation to Approve Overnight ABRHS Basketball Field Trip to Cape Cod 12/10/10 12/11/10
- 11.2 Recommendation to Approve RJGJHS Field Trip to Waterville Valley, NH 1/22/11
- 11.3 Recommendation to Approve International ABRHS Field Trip to Dominican Republic 2/18/11 2/27/11
- 11.4 Recommendation to Accept Gift from International Institute of Education on behalf of the GE Star Awards program
- 11.5 Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Dan Rinaldi Heart Fund for Assistant Football Coach
- 11.6 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as ABRSD Representative to CASE, 2010-11
- 11.7 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as ABRSD Representative to EDCO as a Voting Board Member

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED</u>: to approve the consent calendar as proposed. The gifts were accepted with gratitude.

Herman wants to be sure that both male and female adults chaperone all field trips with male and female students. Xuan said that 2 years ago CASE was asked to cost out each special education program as opposed to providing aggregate costs. In voting for Dr. Mills as the Rep to CASE, he requested that CASE be asked for this information again. Mike added that another request was to review transportation systems in CASE because there were potential cost savings there.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. ABRHS Info

b. Discipline Report - Mike Coppolino asked why the numbers had risen so sharply. Dr. Callen said a number of students were under the influence at the last two football games. Issues were happening outside Leary Field so they

are watching that area closely now. John Petersen asked how the report ties back to the handbook.

c. Waiver of Athletic Eligibility Rule 53 for JH girls trying out for ABRHS hockey team

Alixe Callen, Steve Mills, Steve Desy and Brigid Bieber signed this form but the Committee took a vote to be sure procedurally Brigid could sign for the Committee.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED</u>: to permit Brigid Bieber to sign this waiver for the Regional School Committee

- 2. RJ Grey Junior High Info
 - a. Discipline Report
- 3. Pupil Services Info
 - a. Stimulus Visit, 9/27/10
- 4. Negotiations Update
 - a. Slides from 9/16/10 Acton FinCom Presentation
- 5. ABRSD ELL Student Population, October 2010
- 6. Monthly ABRSD Object Summary and SPED Financial Reports
- 7. October 1 Enrollment Report
- 8. Gift from Target's "Take Charge of Education" program
- 9. Public Records Request from an Organization

Dr. Mills said that Primary Source is a very valuable and reputable organization used as a resource by many schools.

- 10. Communications from the Community
 - a. Email from Corey re sports teams policy

FOR THE COMMITTEE

Proscenium Circus presents *The Witches,* Oct. 22, 23, 24, 29 and 30. For one complimentary ticket, Committee members should see Beth.

VOTE TO RESUME APS MEETING

At 10:10 p.m. John Petersen resumed the Acton Public School Committee Meeting.

The Acton Public School Committee agreed that they had read the revised Nondiscrimination Policy (File: AC) and invited the public to send them comments if they had any. This was considered a FIRST READING of the revised policy.

JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:14 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED by role call:</u> that the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

YES (Bieber, Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, McManus, Neyland, Petersen, Sabot)

This was done after Brigid Bieber declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board. She said the meeting was to discuss contract negotiations with the AEA union, and that the Open Meeting would reconvene only to adjourn.

At 10:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED by role call: that the Acton Public School Committee go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

YES (Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, McManus, Petersen)

This was done after John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board. He said the meeting was to discuss contract negotiations with the AEA union, and that the Open Meeting would reconvene only to adjourn.

At 10:16 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED by role call:</u> that the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.

YES (Bieber, Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, McManus, Neyland, Petersen, Sabot)

This was done after Brigid Bieber declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board. She said the meeting was to discuss a personnel matter and that the Open Meeting would reconvene only to adjourn.

At 10:17 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

<u>VOTED by role call:</u> that the **Acton Public School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.

YES (Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, McManus, Petersen)

This was done after John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board. He said the meeting was to discuss a personnel matter, and that the Open Meeting would reconvene only to adjourn.

At 11:50 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session and adjourned.

NEXT MEETING:

November 4 - 7:30 pm, AB SC Meeting at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

Respectfully submitted, Beth Petr

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL/JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Library R.J. Grey Junior High October 7, 2010 7:30 pm Joint SC Meeting AB Regional Meeting to follow Joint Executive Session to follow

AGENDA with addendum

1.0 (7:30) <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>

2.0 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Rosa Huang, Nikhil Manocha, Abha Patil, Allison Wang and Betty Yangnew ABRHS School Committee representatives

CALL APS SC TO ORDER TO BEGIN JOINT MEETING

3.0 JT APPROVAL OF JOINT and ABRSC MINUTES

- 3.1 September 2, 2010 (addendum)
- 3.2 September 15, 2010 (addendum)

4.0 JT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5.0 JT (7:40) EDUCATION REPORT: MCAS - Deborah Bookis and Liza Huber

- 5.1 JT MCAS AYP Letter sent to Grade 5 10 families
- 5.2 JT SES NCLB Letter
- 5.3 JT deleted
- 5.4 JT "US Test Goals Called Elusive", Boston Globe, 9/23/10
- 5.5 JT District MCAS Report, Spring 2010 Results D. Bookis (addendum) 7:40
- 5.6 JT Pupil Services Instructional Plan Liza Huber (addendum) 7:55
- 5.7 JT Pupil Services Preliminary Action Plan Liza Huber (addendum)
- 5.8 JT 7th Grade Math MCAS Analysis Liza Huber (addendum)
- 5.9 JT 7th Grade Math Analysis by Chapter *Liza Huber (addendum)*
- 5.10 JT AB Sped PAC Letter re Subgroup Performance on 2010 MCAS (addendum) 8:05

6.0 JT (8:15) <u>NEW BUSINESS</u>

6.1 JT SMART Goals, 2010-11 - **VOTE** - Steve Mills

7.0 JT. VOTE TO SUSPEND APS MEETING

(8:25) AB MEETING RESUMES:

8.0 STATEMENT OF WARRANT

9.0 (8:30) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 9.1 ALG Report / Acton FinCom Report Xuan Kong/John Petersen 8:30
 - a. ALG draft minutes of 9/16/10 (#3)
 - b. Agenda for 10/7/10 meeting (addendum)
- 9.2 BLF Report (oral) Maria Neyland 8:35
- 9.3 Health Insurance Trust Report John Petersen 8:40
 - a. Update from 9/23/10 meeting (addendum)
- 9.4 FY'11 Budget Update Steve Mills 8:45
 - a. Superintendent's Recommendation for Use of Reserves (addendum)
- 9.5 FY'12 Budget Steve Mills
 - a. Proposed FY'12 Budget Schedule
 - b. Boston Magazine data memo
- 9.6 Recommendation from Subcommittee re Naming of ABRHS Track Steve Desy (addendum) 8:50
- 9.7 Bullying Policy update (oral) Liza Huber

10.0 (9:00) NEW BUSINESS

- 10.1 Recommendation to Modify the ABRHS Student Handbook <u>VOTE</u> Steve Mills Motion: To delete the "Violation During the Off-Season" section of the ABRHS Extracurricular Agreement for Athletics, found under the Chemical Health Policy of the ABRHS Student Handbook. 9:00
- 10.2 State Ballot Question 3 Discussion and Resolution- <u>VOTE</u> John Petersen

 Motion: The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee opposes the state initiative petition
 question three which would reduce the Massachusetts Sales Tax from its current level of
 6.25% to 3% effective January 1, 2011. -9:05
- 10.3 Recommendation to Appoint ABRSD Treasurer <u>VOTE</u> Steve Mills 9:15
- 10.4 Revision to Nondiscrimination Policy (File: AC) <u>VOTE</u>- Liza Huber (addendum)9:20
- 10.5 Recommendation to Approve Out-of-State ABRHS Day Field Trip to Museum of Modern Art in NYC, 10/22/10 <u>VOTE</u> *Steve Mills* (addendum)

11.0 (9:25) CONSENT CALENDAR

- 11.1 Recommendation to Approve Overnight ABRHS Basketball Field Trip to Cape Cod 12/10/10 12/11/10 <u>VOTE</u> *Steve Mills*
- 11.2 Recommendation to Approve RJGJHS Field Trip to Waterville Valley, NH 1/22/11 VOTE Steve Mills
- 11.3 Recommendation to Approve International ABRHS Field Trip to Dominican Republic 2/18/11 2/27/11 <u>VOTE</u> Steve Mills
- 11.4 Recommendation to Accept Gift from International Institute of Education on behalf of the GE Star Awards program <u>VOTE</u> –*Steve Mills*
- 11.5 Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Dan Rinaldi Heart Fund for Assistant Football Coach- <u>VOTE</u> *Steve Mills*
- 11.6 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as ABRSD Representative to CASE, 2010-11 <u>VOTE</u> *Steve Mills*
- 11.7 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as ABRSD Representative to EDCO as a Voting Board Member <u>VOTE</u> *Steve Mills*

12.0 (9:35) FOR YOUR INFORMATION

12.1 ABRHS Info

- a. ABRHS Profile, 2010-11 (at November meeting)
- b. Discipline Report
- c. Waiver of Athletic Eligibility Rule 53 for JH girls trying out for ABRHS hockey team
- 12.2 RJ Grey Junior High Info
 - a. Discipline Report
- 12.3 Pupil Services Info
 - a. Stimulus Visit, 9/27/10
- 12.4 Negotiations Update
 - a. Slides from 9/16/10 Acton FinCom Presentation
- 12.5 ABRSD ELL Student Population, October 2010 (addendum)
- 12.6 Monthly ABRSD Object Summary and SPED Financial Reports (addendum)
- 12.7 October 1 Enrollment Report (addendum)
- 12.8 Gift from Target's "Take Charge of Education" program
- 12.9 Public Records Request from an Organization
- 12.10 Communications from the Community
 - a. Email from Corey re sports teams policy

13.0 FOR THE COMMITTEE

PC's production of The Witches, Oct. 22, 23, 24, 29, 30 - 1 complimentary ticket, see Beth

14.0 VOTE TO RESUME APS MEETING

15.0 (9:45) EXECUTIVE SESSION – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation

NEXT MEETING:

November 4 - 7:30 pm, AB SC Meeting at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

ADJOURNMENT