

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES (approved 3/25/10)**

**Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**February 4, 2010
7:00 pm Joint Executive Session
7:30 pm AB Open Meeting
Joint Budget Discussion
Acton Public School Meeting**

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, Mike Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Terry Lindgren, Sharon Smith McManus, Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot (7:10 pm)
Members Absent: None
Others: Marie Altieri, Sue Horn, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr, Tess Summers

The Joint meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Sharon McManus and Xuan Kong.

JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:06 p.m., the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the governmental body.”

At 7:07 p.m., the Acton Public School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the governmental body.”

At 7:47 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session.

AB REGIONAL OPEN MEETING BEGINS

At 7:47 p.m., the Acton Public School Committee meeting was suspended and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting began.

EDUCATION REPORT

1. Craig Hardimon gave an update on RJGJHS, including trimester scheduling that may be implemented for next year, fundraising for Haiti, and coordinating efforts and fostering connectiveness between students, staff, families and the Youth Officers. When asked, he expressed disappointment that Mandarin was not going to continue due to budget cuts. Jonathan Chinitz wants to see Project Wellness included in the operating budget for next year because the parent community spends an inordinate amount of time making it possible. Mike Coppolino asked about new math books and if it was a new curriculum. Craig said the new series does a better job of identifying students’ needs. They agreed that the new MCAS Student Growth Percentiles will be valuable data. Other members asked about teaming/class size and measurable educational outcome. Terry Lindgren said that recruiting and keeping great teachers are as important as class size.

2. Susan Root and Kate Hermon spoke about the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation preparations being done at the High School. The Faculty has approved many of the reports. Once all are approved, they will be edited for

consistency. The process should be completed by June. Issues are more about fine tuning now, not the big issues of 10 years ago (such as building). Strengths include: counseling center providing mental health support to students, library resources/funding, parent communication and business relationships. Needs include: AB special education staff is stretched, HVAC is an area of concern, and a 5-10 year capital plan is needed. Oct 3-6, 2010 is the ABRHS site visit.

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #01-015 in the amount of \$2,214,059.99 and #01-016 in the amount of \$2,899,981.60 was signed by the chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL OF AB MINUTES

The AB minutes of January 7, 2010 were unanimously approved as written.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

8th grade field hockey players Bridget Ashton and Eleni Neyland spoke of the value of starting a new school as a 7th grade field hockey player. Being part of a team can make a real difference in this kind of stressful situation. They offered alternatives to cutting the 7th grade team including carpooling to the games to reduce transportation costs. The Committee appreciated that they came with a proposed solution.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. BLF Report

Nothing has changed. Boxborough still has a half million dollar problem. Last Monday night was BOS meeting with Rep. Jen Benson and Sen. James Eldridge. They felt it was prudent to continue at a 10% reduction to Ch 70 funds right now.

2. OBRA

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED - To Recommend that the District accept the provisions of Section 64D of Chapter 29 of the Mass General Laws, effective April 1, 2010
John Petersen abstained because his wife is a substitute at the High School.

Xuan Kong called the Acton Public School Committee back to order at 8:37 pm.

APS Resumed - Joint Meeting began.

APPROVAL OF JOINT MINUTES

The Joint minutes of January 7, 2010 and January 28, 2010 were unanimously approved as written by the Acton-Boxborough School Committee. The Joint minutes of January 7, 2010 and January 28, 2010 were unanimously approved as written by the Acton Public School Committee.

4. ALG Report

There is consensus at ALG that FY12 and FY13 should be looked at.

The sense of the School Committees was to assume a 2% budget increase for FY12 and FY13.

5. FY'10 Budget Discussion

Acton Boxborough RSD E&D Certification was received from MA DOR in the amount of \$1,545,953. Dr. Mills underscored that we continue to plan for difficult financial days and that his job is to be as efficient as possible.

6. FY'11 Budget Discussion

The All-Day Budget Session is on Saturday and the public is urged to attend and share their opinions and priorities with the Committees. Budget information is posted on the school's website under "Budgets". The parent of an incoming 7th grader spoke about importance of small classes at the Junior High, as well as the importance of playing team sports in 7th grade.

7. Health Trust Report

Budget assumptions of a 10% rate increase appear to be correct, although there was not a quorum at the last meeting.

8. Director of Finance Search Committee Update

The application deadline has passed and the response has been strong. The Search Committee will meet Tuesday morning to select candidates to be interviewed.

9. Review of District "SMART" Goals

Dr. Mills recently spent three hours in each school's classrooms to review progress on our SMART goals for this year.

Goal #1 - The Educational Values and Interests Survey was very valuable. Clearly stress is very much an issue at the JH and HS.

Goal #2 - This year's budget is very difficult. The staff and principals were commended for having the difficult conversations around these issues.

Goal #3 - Great work on NEASC at the HS and the professional development on English Language Learners. The Student Growth Model is being embraced because it makes the MCAS valuable for every single child.

Goal #4 - Great work with H1N1 issues. The Anti-Bullying Task Force has been very valuable with 6 meetings already.

Goal #5 - Our two separate school districts employ 650 people. The Applitracks automated application process is working well.

Goal #5 - There is significant leadership of cost savings, in addition to many daily tasks.

Dr. Mills expects to be evaluated by these goals at the end of the year.

Terry Lindgren asked that as much data as possible be included in MUNIS for the new Finance Director. Steve agrees that the technology needs to be integrated and will make this a goal for the rest of the year.

10. July School Committee Workshop Review

As agreed six months ago, the minutes of 7/1/09 and 8/27/09 were reviewed.

One Committee member asked the Committee to remember that the Staff is fully committed to tasks before replying to School Committee requests for information. Micro-managing by the Committee was discussed. Dr. Mills commented on how long the typical meetings last (ending between 10 and 11pm) and how effective discussion can be at that hour. Sharon McManus and Xuan Kong were complimented on doing a good job with the flow of the meetings, and putting only essential information in the packet. It was requested that an Action Item List be used and circulated.

Catherine Suess commented that we do like to reflect and think a lot. It is the ownership of our schools. We have one of the best leadership teams in our district and we are short staffed. Our elementary schools do not have assistant principals and she wondered why our Principals stay. She asked, "Where is the trust in the administration?" when extensive information is requested.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Update from Blanchard Feasibility Sub Committee

- a. Link to January 13, 2010 Presentation by Maria Neyland
<http://www.boxboroughschool.org>

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee VOTE

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

VOTED: To authorize the Superintendent and his staff to work cooperatively with members of the Boxborough School Committee (and their staff) regarding information needed to evaluate the feasibility of Boxborough regionalizing with Acton, grades K-12

Acton Public School Committee VOTE

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

VOTED: To authorize the Superintendent and his staff to work cooperatively with members of the Boxborough School Committee (and their staff) regarding information needed to evaluate the feasibility of Boxborough regionalizing with Acton, grades K-12

SUSPENDED APS - AB Open Meeting continued

3. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Choral Department/Music Trip to Costa Rica, February 19-25, 2011 - **VOTE**
4. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Trip to England, April 14 - 22, 2011 - **VOTE**
5. Recommendation to Approve use of accumulated interest in the student activities account to pay the costs associated with senior year activities for those students who are unable to afford them - **VOTE**

Motion: Move to approve a maximum amount of \$3000 to be expended by the High School Principal from the High School Student Interest Account to meet the needs of seniors who are unable to afford senior dues and prom tickets.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee VOTE

It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: To approve the three items on the Consent calendar as proposed.

Terry Lindgren abstained due to a conflict of interest.

At 10:03 pm, the Acton Public School Committee was called back to order.

JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:10 p.m., the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, "To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the governmental body."

At 10:10 p.m., the Acton Public School Committee was polled and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) according to Chapter 39 Section 23A Paragraph 3, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the governmental body.”

At 10:45 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session.

At 10:46 p.m., the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee adjourned.

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recommendation to authorize the Acton Town Manager to sign the solar panel project contract for Douglas School – **VOTE**

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration’s recommendation that Acton Town Manager Stephen Ledoux, be authorized to sign the solar panel contract with NexAmp for the Douglas School project.

2. ALG Discussion

There was consensus from the Committee that the Meals Tax question should be asked of voters at Town Meeting, and that the School Committee would not take a position on it.

The Minuteman High School Capital Project discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #201015 in the amount of \$153,538.33 was signed by the chair and circulated to the committee for approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Acton Public School Committee Meeting minutes of January 7, 2010 were approved as written.

The Acton Public School Committee adjourned at 11:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr